

What's New to River Bend 2022-2023

Throughout the school year and summer River Bend tries to update facilities, classrooms, curriculum and staffing. Through the 21-22 school year plans were created to address updates this summer. I am excited to share the hard work of our staff and the many new items to our District.

Staffing:

Staff are our most important resource and I value each of them and the job that they do each day to support children. This year we will be welcoming new staff members to our family.

New staff at Fulton Elementary School

Fulton Elementary school will be adding Katherine Gardner in kindergarten, Jaime Pfloderer, first grade, Samantha Whitney, first grade, Caitlin Maloney, second grade, Tara Rhoades fifth grade, Kelly Gosch, speech and language pathologist, Aimee Marten, moving to special education, Elizabeth Roos, moving to second grade, and Nicole Vanzuiden moving to kindergarten. FES also welcomed John Dail as the night cleaner, Jennifer Williams and Mildred Woods as a cook's helpers.

New staff at River Bend Middle School

River Bend Middle School will be welcoming Brianna Stuart, sixth grade math and Taylor Mabaga special education. In addition to new staff, several staff are moving to new positions in the middle school: Patrick Henrekin, principal, Lee Salazar, science, Elizabeth Mote, history, and Ashley Huizenga moving to language arts.

New staff at Fulton High School

Fulton High School will be welcoming Jeff Parsons, athletic director and assistant principal, Christie Houzenga, English, Haylee Mussman math, Stacey Bueno, secretary, and Marilyn Carswell cook's helper. Emily Johnson will be working with Ms. Piercy, technology director, as she plans to take over for the retiring Ms. Piercy at the end of the school year.

New District staff

Throughout the district we will be welcoming Taylor Whitney, transportation director, and Mark Burggraaf, driver and Rich Criss, driver. Megan Frick is being added as a fourth counselor to assist each building as she learns the role at the high school. Mrs. Schipper will begin her new role as the learning recovery and curriculum coordinator and Jennifer Griser will continue working in the district office as she plans to replace Virginia after this year.

We are grateful for each staff member that has decided to join the Steamer team and I welcome each of you aboard.

Building and Grounds:

New bathrooms at FHS on the second and third floors. Although not fully completed, ADA bathrooms will be added to the second and third floors of the high school. The existing bathrooms were small, not ADA compliant and had severe water leaking behind the walls. The new restrooms will all be ADA compliant and contain an additional bathroom. Due to supply chain issues the construction crews lost time over the summer. If all goes well, two of the bathrooms will be finished in late August or early September. The other two bathrooms will be gutted and updated in the evening hours so as not to disrupt school operations.

Installing a secured entrance at the high school- Safety and security is always being evaluated for possible improvements. The high school is taking a step to create a secured entrance so that visitors go directly into the office and can be helped or directed. A new set of doors that open directly into what will be the office have been installed. The teacher's work/lunch space is being converted to the main office. Mr. Snyder's construction class will be completing the work throughout the first semester. We are excited to provide real work opportunities for the construction class. Once the office has been remodeled, the existing office will become a multi-use space for staff and students.

High school art room is being upgraded- Many of the spaces in our buildings are continually being evaluated for remodeling and upgrades. The high school art room is being upgraded with new cabinets, tables, and chairs that will make the space much more user friendly for our art students.

New furniture at the high school and elementary school- For years the District has looked to update the furniture in all the classrooms. Last year the middle school received all new desks and chairs. This year the Fulton Elementary and Fulton High School will be getting new desks and chairs for all the classrooms. ESSER III/ARP funds are being used for 80% of the costs and District funds will cover the balance. The furniture is mobile and allows for students and teachers to be flexible with classroom design. The furniture also makes it much easier for students to work in groups and collaborate on projects.

Door closures throughout the district- Often schools must meet building and fire codes. Recently the state fire marshal insisted that all doors have automatic closures. The District made the investment in getting all doors up to code by adding the auto-closing hardware to the doors.

Updated electrical panels at the high school- Three electrical panels at Fulton High School were outdated and needed to be replaced. The three panels were updated to meet the current electrical code and provide safer electricity delivery.

Raised Vegetable Gardens- Fulton High School culinary art's instructor Carolyn Meurs worked with Jason Snyder to build vegetable gardens that will supply fresh vegetables for he classes and catering jobs in the Steamer Suite. Mr. Snyder's classes constructed the raised vegetable garden beds and helped landscape the space. Mrs. Meurs' classes helped plant the vegetable gardens and will be gathering the produce for class projects.

Additional security cameras and new NVR- Security cameras have been a valuable tool to increase security and monitor activities in and around our buildings. Blind spots exist and cameras are being added to reduce the number of blind spots. As we have expanded use of cameras it has become necessary to upgrade the Network Video Recording (NVR) system. A new NVR will allow for improved recordings and offsite access.

Curriculum Updates: Curriculum evaluation and adoption of new materials is typically on a six year cycle. Last year teachers and principals evaluated several new math curriculums to consider for adoption. During the 2022-2023 school year, English Language Arts curriculum will be evaluated with a recommendation to the board expected in the spring.

New math curriculum- The math adoption process worked as a team kindergarten-twelfth grade to provide a united approach to math instruction. Overall the new math curriculum will use both traditional skill building and application of math skills to solve problems and complete projects. Fulton Elementary school will be using Bridges math curriculum. Bridges focuses on building fluency, problem solving, and applications of concepts through direct instructional practices. Both River Bend Middle School and Fulton High School will be using Amplify Mathematics as its core curriculum. Amplify focuses on task based application through daily practice and use of skills taught to solve problems. Both programs have an on-line component that will help both students and families connect to the curriculum.

New Science curriculum at the middle school- The middle school science teachers evaluated several curriculums and have recommended McGraw Hill Inspire. The Inspire curriculum focuses on integrating science concepts at each grade level and builds upon student knowledge of science concepts each year by expanding student understanding of the concepts. The new curriculum also uses a great deal of hands-on activities that allow students to apply science skills to experiments.

Consumer Education at FHS- An updated curriculum from Dave Ramsey Solutions is providing Foundations in Personal Finance. The newly updated curriculum is full of content that teaches essential personal finance principles like how to budget, save, avoid debt, invest, and be a wise consumer. A digital and print version of the curriculum will provide students with tools to make wise financial decisions.