

April 2020

# the **BeaT**

Dear Students,

I'm missing someone right now...and that someone is YOU.

Beatrice Public School Staff Members





(above left) Carol Olman receives a Teacher Grant from the Beatrice Educational Foundation. (above right) Carol Olman works on masks during the pandemic. She is always willing to lend a hand.

## Oltman named Employee of the Month

Carol Olman has been an educator for 34 years. Carol wears many hats but the one she wears the most is helping people. Carol is always willing to assist students, teachers, and administrators. Carol is able to troubleshoot computer problems, Infinite Campus issues, and even more special is that she lends a compassionate ear and often very helpful advice in all aspects of the education field.

She shares new ideas, many related to new applications, activities, or new technologies and teaches plus demonstrates their use. "Carol will stay as long as it takes, often at the end of the school day to help problem solve," said her nominator. "If a problem or question arises during the day, she will not hesitate to drop what she is doing to go up to a classroom or help a student."

BHS has initiated a study group program during the lunch periods that is geared to provide extra time and attention to freshman that are struggling in one class or more. Students bring their lunch

trays in and eat while getting assistance with their classes. Carol is caring, patient, and focused on helping each student. She often talks to a teacher and then practices with a math worksheet or assignment prior to the study group so she can best help students with their specific problems or questions.

"Carol stays in tune with new trends, especially in technology," said her nominator, "she regularly attends conferences or workshops at the ESU, NETA, or other professional organizations." She is often asked to make presentations, once again to teach educators cool applications for their classroom use. She always comes back to share new knowledge and ideas with the BHS staff.

Carol also co-teaches the new Audio Visual Media class that generates content for and runs the new digital display in the O-Zone. She has spent numerous hours learning Adobe Premiere Pro and Photoshop, two key components for the content of the class. She was at every home

volleyball game to ensure the students were comfortable operating the video board system. She continues to seek out ways we can enhance the game-day atmosphere for our patrons.

"Carol truly cares about the district and its patrons and fills needs where there are gaps," said her nominator, "Carol started the clothing closet, a room off of the library that is filled with clothing, shoes, and other items that have been a blessing to many students." She arranges the library space to accommodate the students and give them an inviting, warm place to study or collaborate with other students. Carol wants all of the students at BHS to succeed in and out of the classroom and she truly does a superior job of meeting their need.

Carol is one of the most valuable resources to the students and staff at Beatrice High School as well as the entire school district—and very deserving to be honored as the Beatrice Public Schools Employee of the Month.

# Be

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[www.beatricepublicschools.org](http://www.beatricepublicschools.org)

## Ron Clark's Founding Principles

# Reaching out while staying apart

Making school feel like family has taken on a whole new meaning during the fourth quarter of this school year. From the Community Preschool asking the community to set out bears to the high school searching for ways to recognize its graduates, the district and the community have come together while staying apart.

### Community Preschool

The community preschool has asked the community to get involved by asking them to chalk their sidewalks, set bears in the windows and on their lawns and to post hearts to thank health workers.

For the first one, Missy Timmerman, Community Preschool director, read a story on Facebook about bears and then asked people to put bears in their windows and encouraged families to go on walks looking for bears. "It was a hit," said Timmerman. "The purpose was to spread joy and get people out of their houses for purpose and to bring everyone together."

She said there have been four walks so far and she said they may try another next week.

Facebook is the tool used to stay in touch with families. "Each classroom has its own page and they are posting activities each week," said Timmerman.

These pages are private so it is only the classroom families that have access.

In addition, teachers are having group and individual calls with students. "We are texting, calling and using the Remind App as well. Several teachers have sent notes to their students. "It is always fun to get something in the mail," said Timmerman.

She said after all restrictions are lifted the preschool plans to have its annual end of the year picnic for closure for everyone.

### Lincoln, Paddock Lane and Stoddard

Elementary teachers have been using a variety of techniques to stay in touch with students. Students were sent home with packets of materials to be completed. "The first 2 weeks were hard. Trying to be there for my students and parents but not wanting to be too overwhelming to them was hard," said Laura Koenig, kindergarten teacher at Lincoln Elementary

Foster an atmosphere where students, parents, staff, and community members work together to create a family environment for our learners.

*Ron Clark Academy Founding Principle*

She like many other teachers also had to work with her children to complete school work. "Plus I have 3 children myself and trying to figure out their school was tough," said Koenig, "I feel like I'm in a better routine now."

She communicates with parents through SeeSaw and posts one to two messages a day. "I take a video of myself reading a book or talking about a skill such as rhyming or counting. The videos are short, just three to five minutes each."



Koenig also messages parents she has not heard from just to make sure things are going well. "My main goal is just to make sure the parents and students know that I am here for them. I want to make connections still."

Keeping those connections with both students and parents is also important to Jenna Larsen, second grade teacher at Lincoln Elementary. "I mailed handwritten letters to each of my 24 students

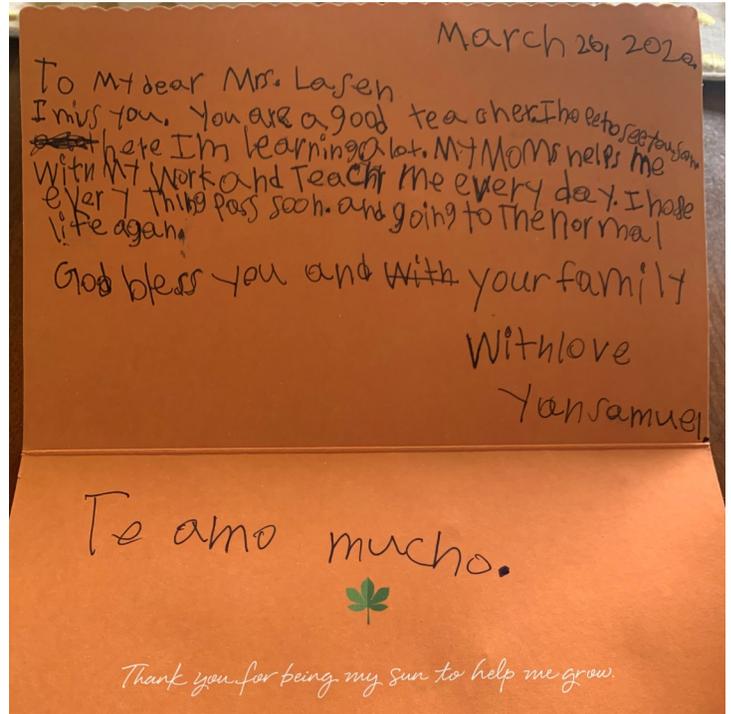
and have been super pleased to receive 7 letters back so far.

Larsen also took her students on a virtual field trip to Morrill Hall where they would have been going on an actual field trip during April. "It was a fun opportunity!"

She has also been using Zoom with students each week. She and the other second grade teachers at Lincoln also meet for a regularly scheduled Zoom meeting. "We plan reading, language, spelling, math, science, art, STEM and other enrichment activities together, put it in a document with clickable links and upload onto Seesaw.

# Ron Clark's Founding Principles

## Teachers let students know they care with chalk, emails, parades and cards

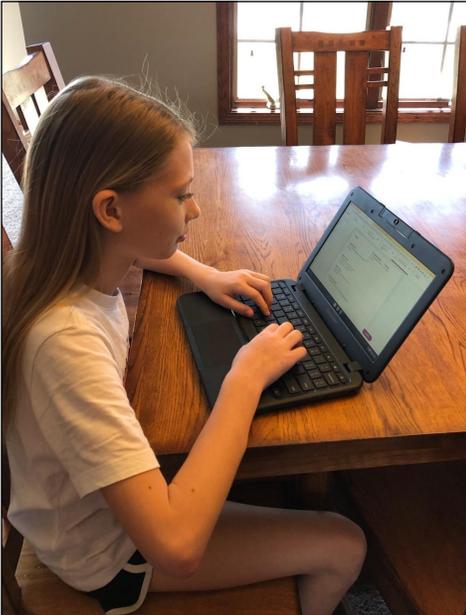


(above) Second grade teacher Jenna Larsen holds the handwritten notes before they were mailed to each of her students. (above right) Some students wrote her back including Samuel. "While I would love to actually be in the classroom with my students, I feel like we are doing a pretty good job keeping in touch," said Larsen. (below) The elementary schools and high school all held events so teachers and students could see each other.



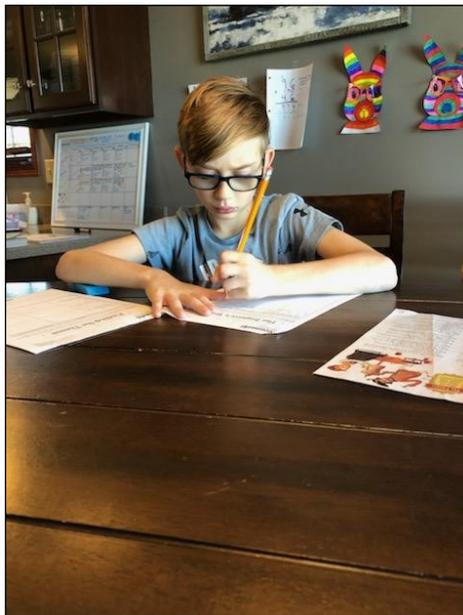
# Ron Clark's Founding Principles

## Learning takes effort by both students, parents



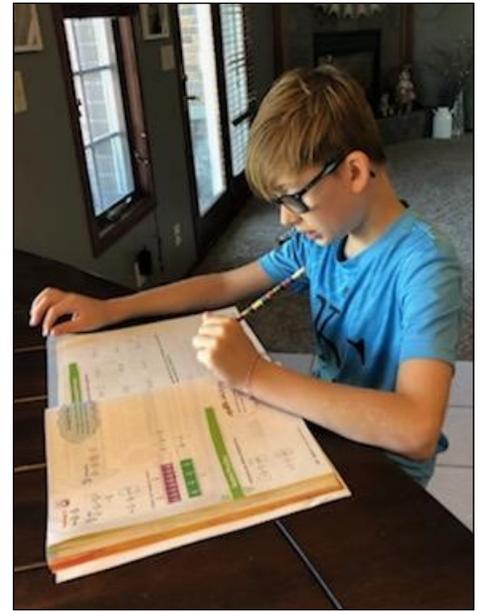
*Kailyn Vater learns about ocean currents in science,*

Jami Vater has been busy home schooling her sixth grade daughter, Kailyn, and her fourth grade sons, Jack and Parker. "I am starting to figure it out," said Vater.



*Jack works on "The Emperor's New Clothes in Story Works.*

Each of her children have weekly Zoom meetings. Her son's each have a "Would You Rather" question to answer each week. Each responds with an answer and explains the reasons for their answer.



*Parker works on fractions in his math workbook.*

Most of her daughter's assignments are online but she has been enjoying the hands on assignments Jan Smaus has been assigning in Family and Consumer Science.

## Schools also focus on social-emotional health

Counselors at all levels continue to reach out to both students and parents. "As the online learning progresses, our staff continue to do amazing things," said Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jackie Nielsen.

"First, our staff understand the importance of helping students review and understand the standards," said Nielsen, "however, our staff also understand the extreme importance of ensuring our students social and emotional wellbeing is a strong focus as well."

Nielsen said as educators, we are in the people business and our focus is on improving the lives of everyone we meet. "Throughout the pandemic, staff members have spent countless hours on phone calls, Zoom calls, and Google Hangouts helping students through this tough, tough time," said Nielsen.



*A high school student was surprised when he logged on to Zoom for some assistance from his teacher to see his friends and teachers there to wish him a happy birthday! It's great we are still able to make connections with students when we can't see them in person.*

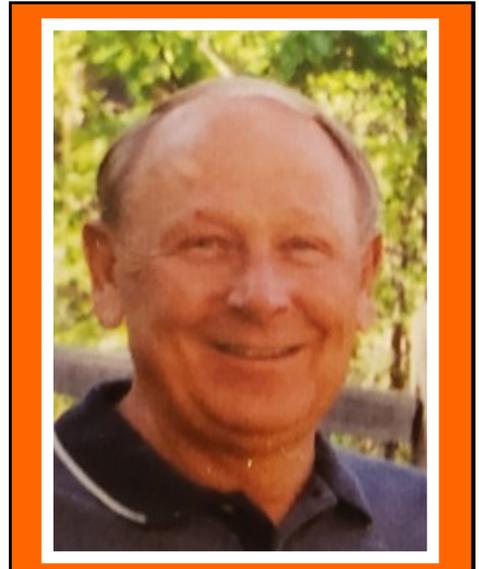
They first staked their claim with Beatrice Public Schools and are now making a difference every day

## *Burkel spent a career keeping us safe*



*'The city of Beatrice was a wonderful place to grow up. Great citizens who set wonderful examples. The faculty at BHS was second to none. Dedicated teachers and coaches. They all seemed to strive to prepare students for the next step in life. Leadership from the upper class students who were very important in teaching us to be leaders when our time came to lead.'*

**Lou Burkel**



Beatrice Public Schools All-Stars

**Lou Burkel, class of 1959**

Lou Burkel spent his career serving his country and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for Heroism and the Distinguished Flying Cross for Extraordinary Flight Achievement. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in 1967 in the United States Air Force and when he retired in 1993 as a Lieutenant Colonel he had a total of 3,282 total flying hours including 2,662 flying a B52 and 1,092 in combat. He spent 502 days in Vietnam flying 196 total combat missions.

He received 13 air medals, and 4 meritorious Service Medals. He is also a distinguished graduate of the Squadron Officer School and graduated from the Air Command & Staff College and the Air War College.

Burkel was then transferred to the United States Air Force Academy teaching physical education and coaching the gymnastics team using the skills he acquired while at Beatrice High School. He was a gymnast in high school and helped earn a state championship during his senior year placing second all around.

From 1979 through 2005 he was the head men and women's gymnastics coach, was named the NCAA regional coach of the year three times and served two terms on the United States

Gymnastics Board of Directors. He also served two terms as president of the Collegiate Gymnastics Association. He was recognized with an Honorary Lifetime CGA Membership Award in 2008.

Burkel is grateful for the role his hometown and high school played in his development. "Beatrice and Beatrice High School were so instrumental in my life, and I have many, many fond memories. First of all, Beatrice is

a wonderful city and a terrific place to grow up-kind of like Cheers, where everybody knows your name. Beatrice citizens are good people, and I am grateful to have been surrounded by so many great examples."

He graduated from BHS in 1959, the University of Nebraska and the Air War College.



*Lou Burkel inside a T-29 trainer for Air Force training.*

# Board approves strategic plan proposal

Carol Oltman, media specialist at the high school, was recognized as the March Employee of the Month. She received a plaque and \$50 in Chamber Bucks.

## *Committee of the Whole*

Doris Martin, board vice-president, said several topics, including social studies standards, cyber insurance quotes, strategic plan proposals and an update on budget and staffing, were discussed. Science teachers Dave Henning and Wes Garland addressed the board.

## *STANCE Report*

School board member Steve Winter provided an update on LB 974 stating that it remains in limbo with not enough votes to bring it back to the floor for discussion. He added that the education coalitions are in favor of the property tax reduction portion of the bill, but are opposed to the bill due to the harsh punitive parts that Senators Linehan and Groene are trying to apply to local schools.

## *School, Community & Staff Relations Committee*

School board member Janet Byars reported that the committee met at Lincoln Elementary and staff expressed appreciation for the full-time paras in the kindergarten classrooms. Staff continued to advocate for smaller class sizes and shared that Special Education needs continue to increase each year. Other topics discussed included: lapse between preschool and kindergarten, budget proposal, staff continuing to adjust to the grade level concept, inadequacy of bathrooms, and the maintenance of buildings and the lack of funding to address building issues.

## *Discussion*

Dr. Jackie Nielsen explained the revision to Policy 6212 Assessments is necessary to formally adopt the state social studies standards from November 2019.

Winter provided some background information on the discussions that have

occurred regarding possible renovation to Christenson field. He noted that the district is currently working with Southeast Community College and some city officials to look at renovation options. Estimates for putting field turf down on the infield and both bull pens have been received, but no formal bids are being accepted at this time. Superintendent Jason Alexander thanked Winter for taking the lead on this and added that grants are being prepared as the intention is to fund this renovation project through grants and private donations.

## *Action*

The board approved the cyber insurance proposal from Travelers Casualty and Surety Company of America.

The board also selected the strategic plan proposal from Cambridge not to exceed \$20,000.

The approval of the superintendent's contract was tabled.

The resignation of Charles Brockman was retracted so he could stay and help a potential candidate complete his student teaching requirements in the fall.

## *Administrator's Report*

Andrew Haake, middle school assistant principal, reported on his recent experience at the Ron Clark Academy. He stated that this was the best professional development experience of his professional career. He provided an overview of the academy environment and the house system that they incorporate. Haake informed the Board that Beatrice Middle School is planning to implement the house system to enrich the education experience for students. Doing so will directly relate to the district's strategic plan (Strategy 1, Action Plan 2) and also one of BMS' school improvement goals of increasing engagement within our classrooms. Next, Betty Replogle, Paddock Lane Elementary principal, expressed that the staff and herself who attended the Ron Clark Academy also felt it was the most valuable professional development

and investment in them that has ever been provided. She updated the Board on the pieces that Paddock Lane has implemented and future plans they plan to implement.

## *Superintendent's Report*

Alexander began by stating what a wonderful few weeks it has been for the district with state championships and Read Across America activities. Next, Alexander informed the Board that staffing is constantly being evaluated to work developing different options that will allow the district to maintain as much as possible from a curriculum and course offering rates for building construction.

## *Next Meetings*

The next Board meeting will be on May 11 at 7 p.m. at the Administration Building and the next Committee of the Whole meeting will be on May 28 at 6 p.m. at the Administration Building.

## **Beatrice Public Schools Board of Education**

**Janet Byars**  
**Erin Chadwick**  
**Doris Martin, Vice-President**  
**Lisa Pieper**  
**Eric Trusty**  
**Steve Winter**  
**Jon Zimmerman, President**

## **Board of Education Meetings**

*May 11, 7 p.m.*

Board of Education Meeting

*May 28, 6 p.m.*

Committee of the Whole Meeting

