



HAPPY NEW YEAR, HERD Family!

One of our primary goals at Buffalo Ridge Elementary is to support and evolve our students' social and emotional wellbeing by exploring their subconscious patterns and triggers and providing systemic supports throughout the school day. Ultimately, we want to know our students personally, honor their successes, celebrate their failures, and help them grow as individuals.

Throughout this school year, I have been so impressed with our students' ability to adapt to new and unforeseen situations. Despite the obstacles placed before them, each of our students has adjusted their sails and continued moving forward. Their perseverance is honorable and inspiring.

This year, BRE teachers and support staff have worked diligently to create a learning environment that is welcoming, authentic, and collaborative. We want our students to feel comfortable in their classroom, safe to share their learning, and excited to problem solve with their classmates. One of our most significant adjustments has been the incorporation of morning meetings. Despite the grade level or classroom teacher, all students begin their day as a cohesive unit sharing their experiences, developing intrapersonal coping skills, and strengthening their relationships with classroom peers and their teacher.

While this tweak to the master schedule might seem minor, it has made a world of difference for our students. Over the past semester, the school administration has dramatically decreased office referrals, student behaviors, and peer conflict. Our students feel confident in themselves and are willing to navigate through difficult situations. It has been exciting to watch.

Another adjustment Buffalo Ridge has made for the 2020-2021 school year has been flipped learning for our Second Step curriculum. To meet the diverse needs of in-person, remote, and hybrid learning, Ms. Nardi, our school



counselor, has begun prerecording social/emotional lessons, so teachers can support their students at a time that works best for their schedule. As a result, students are receiving more Second Step lessons than ever before.

This school year has provided me with a lot of life lessons, but my most significant grounding has been realizing that we must continue to focus on what matters most; internal happiness. While student learning lies at the heart of our everyday work, only one thing supersedes this goal, student wellbeing. I, Dr. Thelen, and the entire BRE staff, will stop at no length to ensure that Buffalo Ridge is a safe and happy for all entering our building. It is a goal that we deeply believe in and one that we always continue to improve.

Happy New Year!

Warmly,

Jen and Rob

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