

Bluestone

Sharing New Spaces

On Monday, August 28, 2017, Bluestone Elementary School opened its doors to 560 new students who arrived in cars and buses, on bikes and on foot, to begin a new school year in a beautiful and inspiring building. The seventy-five member Bluestone team was excited and ready to welcome the children and families, who arrived with smiles and the many emotions that the first day of school brings. Just two weeks before, the BES staff was together for the first time for an overnight *Trailblazing Retreat*. Over two full days, this mixed group of new and experienced professionals from many locales shared personal stories in conversation circles, enjoyed camp-style meals, and discussed their vision for the school. A week before opening day, furniture was arriving and finishing touches were being completed inside and outside the building. Teachers, food service and custodial staff, Central Office leaders, and many helpful volunteers worked together on the most critical tasks. Although boxes continued to be delivered and playgrounds were yet to be finished, our focus was the creation of a learning space where all would feel welcome and valued.



Two days before school officially began, the doors at Bluestone opened to an eager group of children and families who attended Kindergarten Orientation and Open House. It was an absolute joy to see the expressions and hear the exclamations of those entering Bluestone for the first time. So many expressed appreciation for the features that the design and building team had worked hard to create. The learning space, designed to support human and environmental health, is filled with natural light, natural flooring, vibrant colors, furniture to support flexibility, open spaces to support shared learning, informational signage, and thematic design features. This new space inspires us and is a gift to the children and families of Harrisonburg. Each day, we are learning about what it means to explore and grow together at Bluestone. We are thankful for our school and the opportunities it affords and grateful to those who worked together to make it possible.

New School Dedication Dates

Bluestone Elementary: Tuesday, Sept. 26 at 9:30 am
Elon Rhodes Early Learning Center: Wednesday, Sept. 27 at 10:00 am

Spotswood

Giving Back This Summer

Spotswood Elementary School was full of super heroes this summer - Heroes for Service! The teachers of Spotswood decided to take a chance and experiment with the traditional summer school model. Teachers hypothesized that altering the summer school calendar, and incorporating a strong "Service to Community" theme, would enhance attendance, engagement, and community partnerships. This creative experience allowed our students to build bridges with the Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Department and several senior communities in and around the city, as well as give back to their school. Our students were able to explore local parks while participating in park beautification. Their service was rewarded with trips to the local pool. Students read and completed crafts projects with senior members of our community. Spotswood's two playground blacktop surfaces also received a colorful facelift! Now, all SES students can visit a different state at recess, walk the alphabet, take a trip around the world, or just explore the life cycle of an amphibian! Our kindergarten and first grade students also decorated the faculty/staff Member of the Month parking spot. It is now the happiest parking spot on our campus! STEM Field Day was also a highlight for our campers and staff. With the help of Amy Sabarre, Director of STEM Education, students at Spotswood were able to create and play arcade games.



Learning and service were incorporated into every aspect of our Summer Camp experience. At the end of each day, students journaled about how the experience made them feel, who they met, how they worked collaboratively with peers and teachers, and dreamed about new community service partnerships for the future. Summer is the right time for super hero blockbusters. We certainly had ours at Spotswood!

Annual Asbestos Notification

The United States Environmental Protection Agency, in conjunction with The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) of 1986, has required that all public and private schools inspect all buildings for the presence of asbestos. In addition, public schools must develop a management plan which identifies, defines procedures for managing, and schedules re-inspection of all asbestos present in the schools.

This regulation was compiled during 1989 and retesting was conducted in September 2004 by an accredited asbestos inspector with IMEC Engineers, Inc. A copy of the asbestos management plan for your child's school is stored in the office of the principal. Several schools have now been removed from the AHERA program since all the identified asbestos has been removed during the past 15 years.

We will continue to take the necessary steps to ensure both our students and employees have a safe environment in which to learn and work.

The school district is required to issue annual notification to parents and guardians.

SKMS
Building Relationships and Growing Community


The Skyline Falcons are off and SOARING! We recently had our first Falcon Fest community celebration of the year. The event began with grade level competitions, including a dance off between the teachers and students. The teachers won, of course! The celebration included guest speaker Chris Johnson who encouraged students to focus on having **CASH**—Character, Authenticity, Substance, and Humility.

We are also committed to academic excellence, and Skyline teachers are advancing academic achievement through the use of technology. This year, seven Skyline teachers won the HCPS Transforming Classrooms Technology Grant. Here are the amazing ways teachers are using the Chromebooks to enhance instruction:

8th Grade English: Students in Ms. Detamore, Ms. Maddox, and Ms. McClure's classes utilize Google Classroom to collaborate as they engage in the writing process. Students edit each other's work, in addition to receiving electronic feedback from teachers and computer programs. Google Classroom allows students to keep a portfolio of their valuable work.

7th Grade History: Students in Ms. Dawson and Ms. Spensieri's classes use Chromebooks to explore primary sources. This includes an analytical tool developed by the Library of Congress. Students use the sources to corroborate our historical understandings and research individual questions.

7th/8th Grade Science: Mr. Huyard's classes focus on paperless project-based learning. Students create electronic portfolios that use photos, text, drawings, and videos of authentic assessments.

Reading Intervention: Ms. Quimby's students boost literacy skills with the technology. Students use audio books through the Epic app and online Scholastic Action magazines. Students practice skills using online resources, and student progress will be monitored through Google Forms.



Waterman

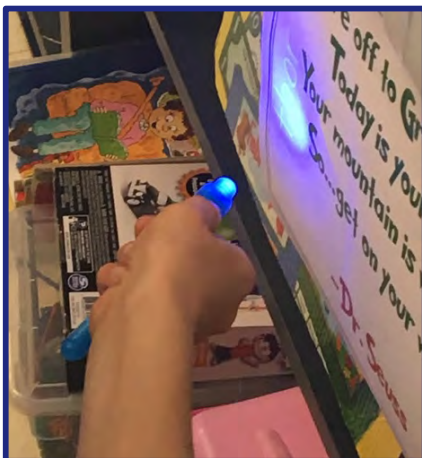
Students Start the Year by Breaking Out

This year, first, third and fourth graders at Waterman Elementary got to know each other in a very unique way. The students were asked to work in teams to locate clues around the classroom in order to unlock a variety of locks and “break out” a surprise that was locked inside a box. They had just 45 minutes to do this. These learning activities come from a website called Breakout EDU and they are based on the “escape room” concept. Breakout EDU describes itself as an “immersive learning games platform.” During one of these games, the students work together using the four Cs - collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity - in order to solve puzzles and challenges of varying levels of difficulty.



This group is working together to unlock this 3-digit lock in order to get the next clue.

This is the first year Waterman has used Breakout EDU in the classroom. The concept was introduced at the first faculty meeting of the year. Faculty members worked in teams to unlock the meeting agenda so that the meeting could be adjourned. The faculty at Waterman unlocked the box in only 10 minutes! “This just goes to show that when we work together we can accomplish amazing things,” Jill Hart, principal of Waterman, told her faculty.



A student uses an ultraviolet flashlight to find a clue written in invisible ink.

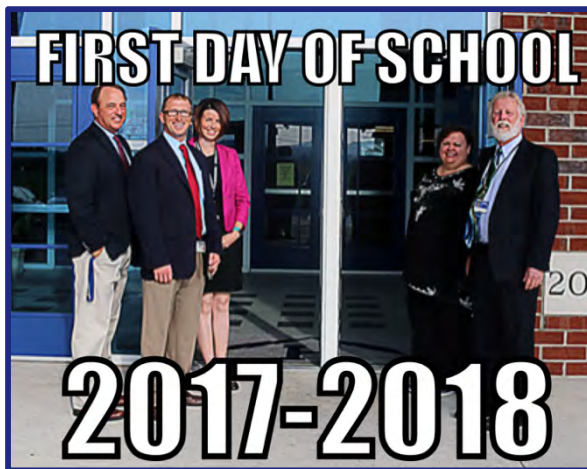
The teachers were so excited about their experience that they wanted to try it with their students right away. Third and fourth graders completed a game based on the book *Oh the Places You'll Go* by Dr. Seuss. The first-grade dual classes tried a game based on the book *If You Take a Mouse to School* by Laura Numeroff. Teachers found that they learned a lot about their classes, such as who has grit, who is comfortable being a leader, who plays a supportive role, and who can think outside the box. Students had an overwhelming positive reaction. “I love this,” said one fourth grader. “Can we do this again?”

To find out more about Breakout EDU and check out the free games that are available, go to <https://www.breakoutedu.com/>.

HHS Welcome to 2017-18!

Harrisonburg High School has a lot to celebrate and share as we open the new school year. Congratulations to one of our PE teachers, Amy Wheeler, for being the Virginia Physical Education Teacher of 2017. She will advance to compete for that honor in our region. Good luck, Mrs. Wheeler!

We are starting something new and exciting this year: Advisory. **Advisory** will take place for the first 30 minutes of Monday and Thursday. Students are mixed 9-12th grade, in groups of less than 20, with one or two teachers. The time is spent doing the Streaks Leadership circle conversations that were conducted during ELT last year, touching base with that teacher to track grades and attendance, and getting help communicating with class teachers and tutors. The purpose of placing Advisory separate from Extended Learning Time is that it allows ELT to be purely and purposefully academic. ELT will occur every Wednesday. Students asked for consistency in the timing and for a system that allowed them to plan homework, projects, retakes and studying. As a result, ELT will no longer be a combination of Streaks Leadership and Academics.



Also new: **Health Science Pathway**. We have expanded the STEM pathways to include one that starts in 10th grade and is aimed at students with a potential interest in the health field. One of the courses is taught by our new school nurse. We are looking forward to watching this pathway grow and make partnerships with community members in the health careers.

Also new: a **Certified Personal Trainer** class. This course is aimed at providing an additional PE elective that will have very real applications. As students continue to explore classes for college, this class is not only relevant as each person continues to learn and live a healthy lifestyle, but it can also be practical as a way to make money to pay for college.

Finally, we have expanded our clinic to include a **part-time nurse** to work with Nurse Angela. Presenting Wendy Miller! She is the teacher for the STEM section of the Health Science Pathway. She comes from working in the emergency room at RMH. We are excited about the potential in this partnership. We also welcome an additional **Athletic Trainer**, Timmy Huynh, who comes to us from JMU training. Both of these are growth positions that help us continue to keep our students safe and healthy and learning.

We are looking forward to many successes and happy memories for 2017-2018. Go Streaks!!

Highlighting Excellence in Harrisonburg City Public Schools

Upcoming Events

September 19: School Board Work Session – 5:30 pm – School Board Office
September 26: Bluestone Elementary Dedication Ceremony – 9:30 am
September 27: Elon Rhodes Center Dedication Ceremony – 10:00 am
October 4: School Board Meeting – 7:00 pm – City Council Chambers
October 13: Early Release Day



Photos by Bob Adamek

