



**Black River Middle and High School  
Annual Education Report (AER)**

February 15, 2023

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER), which provides key information on the 2022-23 educational progress for Black River Middle and High School. The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school's report contains information about student assessment, accountability, and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact Peter Middleton, Dean of Academics, for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following website [Black River's 2023 AER](#)

For the 2022-23 school year, schools were identified based on previous years' performance using definitions and labels as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school is one that had at least one underperforming student subgroup in 2018-19. An Additional Targeted Support (ATS) school is one that had a student subgroup performing at the same level as the lowest 5% of all schools in the state in 2017-18. A Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school is one whose performance was in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state or had a graduation rate at or below 67% in 2016-17. Some schools are not identified with any of these labels. In these cases, our school HAS NOT BEEN GIVEN ONE OF THESE LABELS.

We continue to use Connected Mathematics Project (CMP), a math curriculum for students in grades 6–8. It uses interactive problems and everyday situations to explore mathematical ideas, with a goal of fostering a problem-centered, inquiry-based learning environment. At each grade level, the curriculum covers numbers, algebra, geometry/measurement, probability, and statistics. We are focusing on improving student math performance as a result of learning loss from the previous pandemic effect of student achievement—especially in grades 6-8.

A staff with a collective belief that what they do CAN and WILL make a difference in student achievement provides the greatest chance of student success and improvement. Installation of these collaborative practices and routines leads to this collective teacher efficacy. These routines are designed to position classroom teachers in the collaborative role of guiding each other in the ongoing quest of instructional improvement. We aim to improve 11<sup>th</sup> grade SAT EBRW and M-STEP and 8<sup>th</sup> grade PSAT EBRW by 3% by 2024. Formative assessment is a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended

disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become more self-directed learners. As a part of our district provided professional development (DPPD), we will continue ongoing support for HS curriculum alignment, in-service workshops and grade level meetings work toward meeting this goal.

## **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

### **Open Enrollment**

Open enrollment for the next academic year always begins on the first school day in October and concludes at 4:00 pm on the last Wednesday of February. If the last Wednesday of February is not a school day, open enrollment will close at 4:00 pm on the next school day.

Following the close of open enrollment, if the number of applications exceeds the number of open seats, a random selection lottery determines acceptance. If the number of applications does not exceed the number of open seats, all applicants are accepted for their respective grades.

### **Lottery**

Lotteries will be held for any grade in which the number of applications exceeds the number of openings. Names are randomly selected, by priority grouping, and applicants are accepted based on the order in which they are selected. The lottery continues until all names are drawn. Applicants who are not accepted will be placed on a waiting list in the order their names were drawn.

### **Priority Group Preferences**

The order of priority in which spaces for each grade will be filled will be as follows:

#### **Priority Group #1**

Students enrolled for the current school year are automatically re-enrolled unless formally withdrawn. (Students with an Individual Education Plan active on the first day of the following school year are automatically re-enrolled unless formally withdrawn).

#### **Priority Group #2**

Siblings of currently enrolled students will be given enrollment priority if an enrollment application form for each sibling is completed and returned on or before 4:00pm on the last Wednesday of February. Sibling preference is defined as children who have at least one common parent/legal guardian. For the purposes of enrollment priority, a parent's children, stepchildren, adopted children, foster children, and same household children, in which a parent or guardian resides, are all considered to be each other's siblings. This preference is not available to applications received after open enrollment has closed.

Child(ren) of a person employed full time at Black River Public School will be given enrollment priority if an enrollment application form for each child is completed and returned on or before 4:00pm on the last Wednesday of February. Employee - child preference is defined as children where at least one parent or legal guardian meets the requirements as outlined by the employee handbook. This preference is not available to applications received after open enrollment has closed.

If space is not available in any grade level for this priority group, a lottery will be performed to determine the order of the sibling wait list.

### **Priority Group #3**

New students accepted prior to the lottery. If the number of applicants for a grade is less than or equal to the number of spaces available for that grade, all new applicants for that grade are accepted and are enrolled prior to the lottery drawing for admissions.

### **Priority Group #4**

Siblings of newly-enrolled students. When, at the close of open enrollment, one sibling is validly accepted into a grade that is not oversubscribed, or is accepted by lottery, any of that child's siblings who have timely applied, may enroll if space is available in their respective grades. If space is not available, they advance to the sibling wait list. This preference is not available to applications received after open enrollment has closed.

### **Priority Group #5**

All remaining applicants. If there are more applicants than spaces available, a random selection lottery will be used to determine the order of those enrolled and wait listed. This preference is not available to applications received after open enrollment has closed.

### **Priority Group #6**

Applicants after the close of open enrollment. For grades that are not oversubscribed at the end of open enrollment, applicants will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis until the grade is full, at which time further applicants are placed on a wait list. For each grade with a wait list, all applications received will be placed on the wait list.

### **Foreign Exchange Students**

Foreign Exchange students must follow the same enrollment process as detailed in the Admissions Policy. Please understand that Black River Public School is unable to accept Foreign Exchange students who are citizens of the United States that do not reside in Michigan. Foreign Exchange students cannot earn a diploma from Black River Public School.

### **Kindergarten**

For the 2023-24 academic year, if you are applying for kindergarten, your child will need to be 5 years old by September 1, 2023 or as permitted by Section 1147 (3) below.

380.1147 Enrollment of child in kindergarten; age; eligibility; notification.

Sec. 1147.

(3) If a child residing in the school district or a child eligible to enroll in and be counted in membership in the school district under section 105 or 105c of the state school aid act of 1979, MCL 388.1705 and 388.1705c, is not 5 years of age on the enrollment eligibility date specified in subsection (2), but will be 5 years of age not later than December 1 of a school year, the parent or legal guardian of that child may enroll the child in kindergarten for that school year in a public school operated by the school district or, for a community district or a school district that does not directly operate schools on its own, in another public school located within the geographic boundaries of the school district if the parent or legal guardian notifies the public school in writing that he or she intends to enroll the child in kindergarten for that school year. A public school that receives this written notification may make a recommendation to the parent or legal guardian of a child described in this subsection that the child is not ready to enroll in kindergarten due to the child's age or other factors. However, regardless of this recommendation, the parent or legal guardian retains the sole discretion to determine whether or not to enroll the child in kindergarten under this subsection.

### **Admission is Conditional**

Applicants are required to fully complete all required enrollment materials and provide all necessary information. This includes, but is not limited to, the enrollment application form, copy of birth certificate, immunization information, and proof of current grade level via grade report or transcript (not applicable for kindergarten applicants). Making an omission of a material fact or a false statement in enrollment application materials may be sufficient cause for denying an applicant consideration for enrollment or for expulsion after enrollment.

### **Compliance with the Code of Conduct**

All students and prospective students must abide by the Black River Public School Student Code of Conduct and are subject to disciplinary action for violations thereof, up to and including expulsion. A prospective student is subject to the all school policies, practices and procedures (and consequences for violations), even before their first day of class.

### **Equal Educational Opportunity**

Black River Public School does not charge tuition and does not discriminate in its pupil admission policies or practices on the basis of:

- a. intellectual ability
- b. athletic ability

- c. achievement or aptitude measurements
- d. handicap or disability, or
- e. any other basis not permitted by federal and/or state law.

Some testing may be required to determine the proper placement in a subject area but such tests are administered after a student has been accepted for admission.

## **THE STATUS OF THE 3-5 YEAR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Black River Public School's Middle and High School submitted its 2022-2023 School Improvement Plan with the Michigan Department of Education. For specific information in support of comprehensive school improvement goals, please consult this report.

Black River Public School submitted its Middle and High School 2022-2023 School Improvement Plan to the Michigan Department of Education in September of 2022. For specific information in support of comprehensive school improvement goals, please consult this report.

School Improvement Plan Goals:

Goal 1: Restructure the elementary math curriculum in order to improve elementary math growth by 5% by 2023.

Goal 2: Collectively define a shared vision of Montessori education, in order to improve our staff culture and improve teacher retention by 2023.

Goal 3: Implement Interactive Read Alouds in order to improve elementary reading growth by 5% by the end of the 2022-2023 school year.

Goal 4: Current MS and HS Continuous School Improvement Goals:

We aim to improve 11<sup>th</sup> grade SAT EBRW and M-STEP and 8<sup>th</sup> grade PSAT EBRW by 3% by 2024.

Goal 5: Each student that is low scoring in 2022 on standardized middle school tests or NWEA to improve 1 grade level by the fall 2023.

## **A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EACH SPECIALIZED SCHOOL**

The elementary grades at Black River Public School follow the Montessori Method of instruction, with accommodations made for standardized testing requirements. This method differs from the style of instruction to which most parents and students are accustomed. The following characteristics embody our Montessori philosophy:

Mixed Ages: Classes are grouped according to the Montessori philosophy of mixed ages, in rooms of first through third graders and rooms of fourth through fifth graders. Social and intellectual development is enhanced by this method of age grouping. Learning within these

groups stimulates greater interest and encourages cooperation. The younger children learn through observation of the older children. In addition, the older student has the opportunity to become a leader and reinforce their knowledge as they help their younger friends. This legacy of responsibility and helping others is passed down in class.

**Independence:** The Montessori Method stresses that children learn and progress at their own pace so that quicker learners are not held back, and slower learners are not frustrated by their inability to keep up. The program is designed to allow development at the student's own pace. It provides for a wide range of developmental needs of the student. Our Montessori-trained teachers present the curriculum in a manner that best fits the student, rather than making the student fit the curriculum. While core benchmarks and proficiencies in language, reading, mathematics, history, and science are required to advance through the grade levels, students are encouraged to stretch beyond these basic competencies toward higher cognitive levels of learning.

**Freedom and Responsibility:** The Montessori environment strikes a fine balance between structure and freedom. The concept of freedom associated with responsibility is gradually introduced from the first day. Montessori students have a wide variety of constructive paths to choose. They gain the skills and tools to accomplish their choices and they are taught the social values that enable them to make enlightened choices. Dr. Montessori believed that freedom does not involve simply being able to do what you want to do. It does involve being able to distinguish what is constructive and beneficial and being able to carry that out.

Black River Public School's secondary school, grades 6-12, uses a college preparatory framework as a foundational curricular approach to "prepare students for college and life." A unique feature of Black River is their small class sizes; with an average of 20 students per class, combined with block scheduling, the teacher/student ratio offers more time invested in individual learning and less time is needed for classroom management.

The middle school curriculum is aligned, with a shared curricular focus in each grade level's history, English and visual arts curriculum; for example, 6<sup>th</sup> grade focuses on Africa/Egypt, 7<sup>th</sup> grade Asia, India, Australia and the Middle East, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade uses an Early European focus. This rich curriculum, enhanced with experiential and project-based learning, does not necessarily align with the grade level focus of Michigan's standardized testing, the curriculum builds and by the time students are in high school, their test scores exceed state and national averages, and is a leader in most subject areas in the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District.

Additionally, Black River's high school provides opportunities for students to dual enroll, take Advanced Placement courses for college credit, and have many options for elective courses throughout their middle and high school experience. Black River Public Schools complete their academic year with final examinations in early May. During the last month of the school year, students choose from a myriad of Project Term classes; these experientially-based elective

course are two or four weeks long, meeting for three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon.

**IDENTIFY HOW TO ACCESS A COPY OF THE CORE CURRICULUM, A DESCRIPTION OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION, AND AN EXPLANATION OF THE VARIANCES FROM THE STATE'S MODEL**

Curriculum information relating to the Montessori expectations can be located on the school website at: <https://www.blackriverpublicschool.org/1/home> or <https://www.blackriverpublicschool.org/mshs/Content2/program-of-study>

**THE AGGREGATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS FOR ANY LOCAL COMPETENCY TESTS OR NATIONALLY NORMED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS**

Assessment data is available on the following website: <https://bit.ly/3CCgPnc>

**THE NUMBER AND PERCENT OF STUDENTS REPRESENTED BY PARENTS AT PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

376 students or 68%

**FOR HIGH SCHOOLS, ONLY ALSO REPORT ON THE FOLLOWING:**

- a. **THE NUMBER AND PERCENT OF POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENTS (DUAL ENROLLMENT)**  
4 students, .007%
- b. **THE NUMBER OF COLLEGE EQUIVALENT COURSES OFFERED (AP/IB)**  
Advanced Placement 17
- c. **THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COLLEGE EQUIVALENT COURSES (AP/IB)**  
77 Advanced Placement, 4 Dual Enrolled, 15% of high school students enrolled
- d. **THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS RECEIVING A SCORE LEADING TO COLLEGE CREDIT**  
58 students, 72%

This year will certainly be exciting for the students, faculty, and parents of Black River Elementary School. We anticipate serving students and families in the best possible ways and look forward to working together to meet the mission of our school: "Preparing students for college and life."

Sincerely,

Shannon E. Brunink  
Head of School  
Black River Public School

