

The Scratching Post

April, 2025

Time to Say Good-Bye

Retiring Staff - Bill Gifford, Sue Talkington, Dr. Browne

As the school year comes to an end, a teacher's career begins to shift directions. Mr. Gifford will retire this year after teaching for 15 years and coaching for 25 years. He has been a strong and delightful addition to the school, giving the students an exciting education.

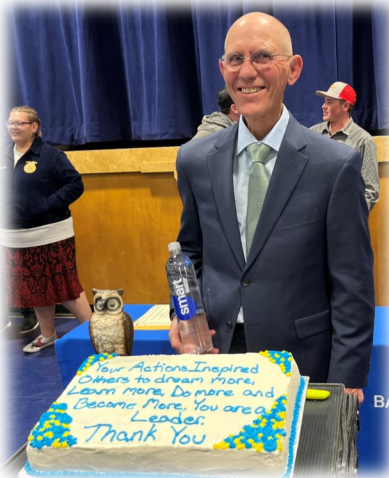
Gifford was inspired to become a teacher after he started to coach. He really enjoyed helping kids reach their potential and meet their goals. Mr. Gifford has coached many roles throughout his years. He has been a coach for youth, HS, and JH wrestling, FFA, HS and JH football, HS and JH track, and one season as HS and JH cross country. He took on big roles and handled them with great success!

Gifford has had a lot of experiences throughout his time here, and many have left an impact on him. Still, according to Gifford, one that stuck out to him the most was, "Seeing a kid coming in as a freshman with no experience, who probably wins at least one match throughout the season. The next year, he comes out again and may win two matches, but he keeps coming out and working hard. By the time he's a senior, he's won about 30 matches and has placed at the state tournament! That's inspiring because someone who stuck

it out and worked hard when they weren't having the best luck." Gifford loved inspiring his students and athletes.

After 15 years at the school, Mr. Gifford has impacted many students and staff. He has helped the school in many ways, including assisting students compete at state in various extracurricular events. Now that his career is shifting, he hopes to focus more on his work at home, traveling, and backpacking. Thank you for everything you have done for the school and the students. We wish you the best of luck, and we will miss you!

By- Kyrie Roldan



Sue Talkington—Page 4, Dr. Browne—Page 5

BANNER COUNTY SCHOOL

PREPARING THE STUDENTS OF TODAY FOR THE WORLD OF TOMORROW!

Ag Mechanics	37/60
Blake Green	182/239
Micah Dittbenner	203
Tobey May	54 Blue Ribbon
Brentsen McGowan	156
Environmental & Natural Resources	51/77
Tobey May	96/308 Red Ribbon
Leeigh McGown	210
Isaac Olsen	183
Brentsen McGowan	294
Junior Livestock Judging	11th Place Blue Ribbon
Blake Green	149/240
Karlie Dittbenner	188
Shawnie Mason	37 Blue Ribbon
Wilbur Reichenberg	231
Livestock Management Team	21th Place 8th in Beef 6th in Equine
Abby Jones	Isaac Olsen
Kambree Hottell	Logan Mason
Micah Dittbenner	Wilbur Reichenberg
AgriScience	84/133
Wilbur Reichenberg	473/524
Shawnie Mason	219
Makynna Boettcher	400
Austin West	447

STATE FFA RECAP

Banner County School took 14 students to the State FFA competition. Sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Gifford, these students took Lincoln by storm. Even with their busy schedule, Mr. Gifford made sure that all participants arrived at their competitions on time. Highlights from the trip included listening to the opening speaker and his incredible story about summiting Mt. Everest. Another highlight came when a few FFA members met Nebraska's (former) head volleyball coach, John Cook. Between a hypnotist, arcade games, mini golf, laser tag, and their competitions, our FFA members wouldn't slow down. Students took away new strategies on how to approach challenging topics and ideas. Isaac Olsen said, "I enjoyed the leadership academy and learning to be a better leader in the community." The State FFA competition was an excellent way to cap off another successful year of FFA competitions. Great job representing our wonderful school; we can't wait to see how much you improve before next year!

—By Jayden Marx



Best of the West

The "Best in the West" invite is a competitive track and field event that attracts teams from the Nebraska Panhandle and southeast Wyoming. The event was held on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at Bearcat Stadium in Scottsbluff.



Three Banner County students qualified for Best in the West: Kassie Loutzenhiser, Callie Woodral, and Braedyn Bojorquez. Banner County was represented well with Kassie finishing 2nd

with a jump of 15'3.75" and Callie finishing 6th with a personal best time of 18.21!



Hilbert Sponsors Upcoming Educational Trip of a Lifetime

Adventure awaits you, but only if you are brave enough to seek it. Scottsbluff's Brooke Talkington has invited Mrs. Hilbert, Banner County students, currently in grades 6th—11th, and their parents to join them on this once-in-a-lifetime educational tour. But where, oh where, will this tour take place? This island, located south of the Arctic Circle, is known for its volcanoes, warm springs, glaciers, coastlines, and majestic scenery. This old Nordic country is also known for its unique city names, Reykjavik, and its heritage tied to the Vikings. The location of this fantastic trip is Iceland, the land of fire and ice!

This eight-day educational tour will take place at the end of May 2026. Hosted through EF Tours, participants will experience tours through national parks, scenic beaches, lava tunnels, historic landmarks, and iconic Icelandic structures. This tour includes hotel accommodations, round-trip airfare from Denver, breakfast and dinners, entry fees, excursions, 24/7 Expert Tour Director, city guides, guided tours and activities, and a private deluxe motor coach.



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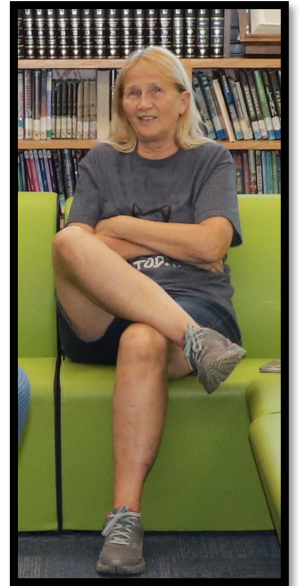
You will not want to miss this opportunity! There are only 15 spots available. Contact Mrs. Hilbert, angie.hilbert@bcswildcats.org, as soon as possible to reserve your spot for this adventure of a lifetime.

Retiring Staff – Sue Talkington

Sue Talkington is officially beginning a new chapter in her life after 25 years of working for Banner County Schools. Sue has been working loyally for Banner County in various roles, including cook, custodian, bus driver, and summer maintenance worker. Sue says one of her favorite memories is when a young Keira Bolander followed her around as she worked as the school's custodian. She also says, "Another one of my favorite memories is making Cinnamon Rolls until midnight with Stephanie Farro for a football fundraiser."

Sue has been described as hardworking, caring, lively, dependable, and honest. She stated that she will miss the structured schedule she created here and seeing the kids daily. Despite everything she will miss, she says she looks forward to spending more time with her grandkids and having time to herself. She also plans on traveling more.

Sue has created a fun and exciting environment throughout the school during her 25 years here. Thanks to the amazing memories she has given to the students and staff, Sue will be missed by everyone at BCS. We wish her the best of luck as she starts her new adventure with her family and friends. –Kesmera Palu



**IT'S TIME TO
CELEBRATE
THE CLASS OF
*2025***

**Join us on May 17th at 3 pm
as Banner County's Seniors
take their first big step on
their next journey.**



Patrons' Day May 19th.

Come cheer on our Wildcats at this year's track and field day!
Title I Parent Meeting at 8:15 AM followed by Elementary Awards
Field Events at 9:00am
Concessions will be available





Saying Farewell to an Old Friend

Dr. Browne has been superinten-

dent at Banner County Public Schools for approximately 3,679,200 minutes, about 7 years, but she will be retiring at the end of this year. She has worked in education for around 13,140,000 minutes, or 25 years. She hasn't always been a superintendent. She has been a classroom teacher and taught Spanish in grades K-8. She has also been a curriculum supervisor. Dr. Browne has faced multiple challenges throughout her career, but she still struggles with why people do not communicate their concerns directly to the person most likely in possession of the answers.

While her departure leaves a void that will quickly be filled with the new superintendent, we are excited for her new adventures and life outside of our quaint little town. Dr. Browne plans to move to Ireland to be closer to her family. Given her long tenure, her impact will not be easily erased. Her legacy will most likely never be forgotten, considering she is the superintendent who started OEF and the four-day school week. – Rhys Belden

Save the Date For Upcoming Banner County Events!

Thrifty to Nifty Event

Bring an item worth \$10 or less to the Shelter. Swap it out for a random item and give it an upgrade in this new competition. Check in your "new" entry from 8:30-9:30 am on June 14th for a chance to win at Historical Days.

Swap Meeting

May 22nd at 7:30 pm
Banner County Museum
Cash Prize for 1st and 2nd Place

Homemade Apron Contest

Time to show your style!

Make an apron and check in between 8:30 – 9:30 am on June 14th at the shelter.
Cash Prize for 1st and 2nd Place
Contact Linda Barrett at (308) 241-2163 with questions and details about the Thrifty to Nifty and Homemade Apron competition events.

Banner County Historical Days

June 14, 2025

Schedule TBA

Harrisburg, NE

Email bchistsoc@yahoo.com for details.

Banner County School Teachers Rock!



TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

Remember to thank your teachers this week!

Without teachers...there are no other professions!

FFA Flower and Vegetable Sales

Saturday, May 10th, the FFA will be hosting a flower and vegetable sale from 9 am-1 pm. There will be fresh coffee and donuts in the morning and hamburgers provided by the FFA boosters for lunch. A variety of flowers, vegetables, and hanging baskets will be available for purchase.

4x4 pots- \$5

1 Gallon Pots-\$8

Hanging baskets- \$25

Vegetables 6 pack - \$2.00 per plant

Credit Card, Cash, or Check are accepted.

Thank you all for supporting the Banner County FFA!



Banner County is hosting it's 1st Annual Four-Person Golf Scramble!

Date and Time: June 8th, 2025 at 9:00 am.

Location: Riverview Golf Course

\$400/Team

This tournament will help us raise funds for school activities and camps to improve our skills and fundamentals. Join in the fun and register by calling 308-235-5008 or email Wittni Boettcher at wittni.boettcher@bcswildcats.org. Hope to see you there!



JOIN US TO CELEBRATE...

The Preschool and Kindergarten are taking their next big step on their journey of learning!

We invite you to celebrate with the preschool students as they join the elementary and the kindergarteners as they officially become 1st graders!

When: Preschool's ceremony begins at 1:30 pm.
Kindergarten will start at 2:30.

Where: Both events will be held in Banner County's Big Gym.





Board Briefs

April 14, 2025

Awards and Recognition

President Douglas Olsen commended the following students and staff:

- Luke Olsen tied for 3rd place out of 65 competitors at the State Spelling Bee.
- State Speech team results: Isaac Olsen finished 9/19 in Informative; Abigayle Jones finished 10/19 in Serious. All team members performed well: Lydia Grant, Keira Bolander, Karleigh Leslie, Makynna Boettcher, Kesmera Palu.

- NSAA Academic All-State: Isaac Olsen, BB and Speech; Leeigh McGowan, BB
- MAC Music Competition: Isaac Olsen, 1st place Low Brass; Isaac Olsen & Abigayle Jones, 1st place Duet.
- All Conference BB: Leeigh McGowan and Hunter Fankhauser, Honorable Mentions; Isaac Olsen, 1st Team & state leader in rebounding
- State FFA Results: (See page 2)
- Priscilla Stauffer for heading up the March Reading Madness Bracket: Gannon Scheer, 4th grade, had an almost perfect bracket.
- Kinsey Groves for coaching LadyCats VB and taking the 5-8 grade girls to play at the Twilight Tournament in Gering. Our LadyCats are Kassie Loutzenhiser, Madi May, Natali Cordero, Kambrie Loutzenhiser, Bella Young, Callie Woodral, Destineey Soto, Tacey Cross, and Aili Cooper. Shout out to Stephanie Stricker for driving Kinsey's bus route and helping out with practices.
- Olivia Terrones for hosting girls' basketball skills camp on Thursday evenings.
- External Review: Mr. Holmberg and MTSS Committee, Jessica Stauffer, Kinsey Groves, Katie Armstrong, and Stephanie Stricker for their preparation and logistics for our successful External Review. Thanks to our staff members who participated in the interviews and for their flexibility throughout the process in providing class coverage.

Presentations: Students of the Month: Judd Stauffer, PK; Erica Davison, 1; Delilah Hughes, 3; Shawnie Mason, 9.
Iceland Tour May 2026: Mrs. Hilbert shared information on a travel opportunity for students and community members.

Accept Certified Staff Resignation

Accept the resignation of Olivia Terrones with appreciation. Passed with a motion by Laura Baker and a second by Jake Knaub.
Laura Baker: Yea, John-Robert Faden: Yea, Ronald Johnson: Yea, Jake Knaub: Yea, Douglas Olsen: Yea, Ryan Olsen: Yea

Approve Certified Personnel Contract

Approve a teaching contract for Christy Lecher at BA+18, Step 10. Passed with a motion by Jake Knaub and a second by Laura Baker.
Laura Baker: Yea, John-Robert Faden: Yea, Ronald Johnson: Yea, Jake Knaub: Yea, Douglas Olsen: Yea, Ryan Olsen: Yea

Approve Request for Bids to Purchase School Bus

Approve a motion to seek bids to purchase a low-mileage or new 60-passenger school bus. Passed with a motion by Jake Knaub and a second by Laura Baker.

Laura Baker: Yea, John-Robert Faden: Yea, Ronald Johnson: Yea, Jake Knaub: Yea, Douglas Olsen: Yea, Ryan Olsen: Yea

Comments from the Audience

Deb Griebe thanked the Board for their continued support of student programming and staff.

Angie Hilbert thanked board for approving activities related to the Iceland 2026 tour.

Complete Minutes of the April 14th, 2025 BOE Meeting at: www.bcswildcats.org



Thursday, May 8

5:00pm-7:00pm

**Good Shepherd of the Plains
Episcopal Church
Harrisburg**

Please come and take what you need free of charge.
Perishable and non-perishable food items available for you to select from.

NAME YOUR PRICE YARD SALE

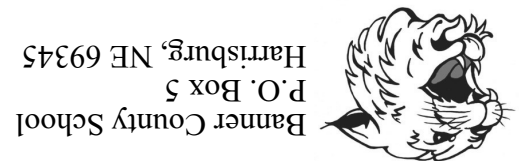
MAY 10

9:00am-5:00pm

Supt. House (on the northside of
the school entrance)

*Anything that doesn't fit into 3
suitcases must go!*

CURRENT RESIDENT or PO BOX
HARRISBURG, NE 69345



2025 School District Census Report

The School District Census Report provides the Department of Education with a count of children ages 5 – 18 that reside in a school district as of June 30. This information is used in the calculation of several types of state and county funding sources distributed to public school districts. If your child DOES NOT attend Banner County School, and you live in Banner County, please complete the following information and return to: [Kindra Olsen, BCS School Secretary, PO Box 5, Harrisburg, NE 69345](#)

Head of Household _____

Address _____

Child's Name _____ D.O.B. _____ Gender M F

Child's Name _____ D.O.B. _____ Gender M F

Child's Name _____ D.O.B. _____ Gender M F

Child's Name _____ D.O.B. _____ Gender M F

Child's Name _____ D.O.B. _____ Gender M F