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Number 2



**20
26**

HOME OF THE CHICKASAWS

BLYTHEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

A periodic newsletter produced by the
BHS Journalism / Media team: "The Arrow"



Required State Testing

ATLAS INTERIM 1

September 9-12, 2025

As we enter the month of September, ATLAS Interim I is right around the corner. **ATLAS (Arkansas Teaching & Learning Assessment System)** is an assessment program for Grades 3-10 that utilizes adaptive tests to assess students' understanding and mastery of grade-level standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science.

Blytheville School District began using the ATLAS testing system in the 2023-2024 school year, and this year, Blytheville High School will conduct two interim assessments, in September and January, and one summative assessment in April/May. ATLAS Interim I begins on Tuesday, September 9, with the 9th and 10th grade ELA Reading assessment, and will continue through Friday, September 12, assessing students in ELA Writing, Algebra 1, Geometry, and Biology. All students who are enrolled in any of these courses will be assessed regardless of their grade level.

The District Test Coordinator (DTC) is Amanda Haynes, and our BHS Building Test Coordinators (BTC) are Candice Groves and Kim McGehee. In preparation for testing, students are advised to get a good night's rest, eat a good breakfast, and not to stress, but to simply do their best! It is also important for students to arrive at school in plenty of time to get to their assigned testing room before testing begins.

TESTING
DO NOT
DISTURB



IMPORTANT:



**No cell
phones or
electronic
devices!**

- Turn off your phone or device **NOW**.
- Put it away before you enter the test room.
- Keep it out of sight until you leave the test center.

If you don't follow these rules:

- You will be dismissed.
- You will receive **NO** test score.
- Your phone or device may be taken away.

ACT

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2025-2026 BHS Testing Dates



**Arkansas Teaching & Learning
Assessment System**

ATLAS Interim 1

Sept. 9 - ELA Reading 9th/10th
Sept. 10 - ELA Writing 9th/10th
Sept. 11 - Algebra 1 & Geometry
Sept. 12 - Biology

ATLAS Interim 2

Jan. 13 - ELA Reading 9th/10th
Jan. 14 - ELA Writing 9th/10th
Jan. 15 - Algebra 1 & Geometry
Jan. 16 - Biology

ATLAS Summative

Apr. 28 - ELA Reading 9th/10th
Apr. 29 - ELA Writing 9th/10th
Apr. 30 - Algebra 1 & Geometry
May 1 - Biology



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

KALEIGH MIDDLEBROOKS

Kaleigh Middlebrooks, a senior at Blytheville High School, has attended the Blytheville School District since Pre-K. She is known for being cool, funny, and easy to talk to, and she's also a talented singer. She plays small forward on the Lady Chicks Varsity Basketball team, competes in track, and is active in TRIO, Target, Beta Club, National Honor Society, French Club, and Interact. Outside of school, she plays drums at Saint James Word of Faith.

Over the summer, she participated in Nucor's NuCamp, calling it a great experience where she learned about Nucor and made some money. Her favorite high school memories include football games and 9th grade Homecoming, which she says was **"a moment to never forget."** One of her proudest accomplishments is making it to the basketball state competition.

Kaleigh plans to study engineering and hopes to one day land a leadership role at Nucor. Inspired by her mom and coach, she lives by the verse:

"God is within her, she will not fail." – Psalm 46:5



TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

ORISSA WILLIAMS

Art Teacher

BHS art teacher, Orissa Williams, was born in Fort Knox, Kentucky, and spent part of her childhood in Hanau, Germany. She graduated in 1993 from BHS. She always dreamed of being a fashion designer, which is why she studied fashion at the University of Arkansas and Arkansas State University. After working in product and furniture design, she decided to begin teaching at BHS in 2018.

Her classroom is known for its creative and welcoming environment where students can express themselves. In addition to teaching art, Williams also sponsors the Art Club and coaches volleyball.

"I had great coaches growing up who kept me on track. I want to be that for someone else."

Outside of school, Williams enjoys refurbishing furniture, balloon design, and collecting high heels. A favorite quote of hers is: ***"It's not the load that weighs you down, but how you carry it."***





**STUDENT
COUNCIL**

STUDENT COUNCIL

Student Council is a club made up of students and student-elected officers that speak for the student body regarding concerns, upcoming activities, and events. The goals of the Student Council are to boost student morale, plan student events, fundraise, and advocate for the student body.

The Student Council sponsor is Melissa Hill. She has been heading the group for the past four years. She notes that not only will the Student Council continue their traditional activities and events, they also plan to include some new activities.

Student Council allows students to become better leaders, while developing their communication skills. It gives students the opportunity to have their voices heard in what happens at Blytheville High School.



Student Council elections are approaching!

If you are interested in becoming a member or running for an officer position, see Mrs. Hill to pick up a form.

Ms. Melissa Hill
Student Council Sponsor





SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

DAMARION RUCKER

One of many stand out artists at Blytheville High School is senior Damarion “Dee” Rucker. As a self-taught seamster, he is credited for making some of the area’s most beautiful gowns.

Beyond his accomplishments in fashion and design, Rucker is also active in the performing arts. He has been a dancer and saxophone player since middle school and a choir member since his freshman year.

As a senior, Rucker describes the experience simply as “good,” and he’s excited to enjoy all the senior activities this year while looking forward to the ultimate milestone—graduation.

After high school, Rucker plans to pursue a fashion career and attend college, combining his artistic vision with professional goals. When asked what advice he’d give to underclassmen, he simply said:

“Stay consistent. Don’t give up.”



TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

MADISON GROVES

Life Science Teacher

Madison Groves teaches science classes at BHS including Biology, AP Biology, and Anatomy & Physiology. She is a Blytheville native and graduated from Blytheville High School in 2017. After completing her bachelor’s degree at Arkansas State University in 2021, she returned to BHS to begin her career as an educator.

Groves finds that teaching teenagers comes with its own set of challenges, especially when it comes to dealing with young emotions and figuring out how best to engage each student. ***“Every day is different, and you have to be adaptable to the emotions and personalities in the room,”*** she explains. She believes that despite the challenges, the changing classroom environment helps her stay positive.

This year, Groves has big plans for her students. ***“I want them to have opportunities to experience science in ways they might not get to in the classroom,”*** she explains. On top of her teaching responsibilities, she’s also working on her master’s degree in Biology.

“It’s a lot to balance, but it’s important for me to keep learning and growing as an educator.”





FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS: SEASON OPENER

CHICKASAWS PREPARE TO
FACE THE OSCEOLA
SEMINOLES IN A "BLACKOUT"

The Blytheville Chickasaws are ready to open their 2025 football season this Friday at 7 p.m. against the Osceola Seminoles. The game will be played at home, and the student section theme is BLACKOUT. Students are encouraged to dress in black and fill the stands with energy.

With a new coaching staff, a stronger mindset, and a team full of leaders, the Chicks are looking to make a statement in front of their community. Head Coach, Rod Stinson, and his staff have brought a fresh culture to the program. Offensive Coordinator, Demoine Brown, said that the biggest improvement is in the team's mindset: **"Little things like being on time, being a good leader, being a good teammate. Everybody's on the same page and got the same goal."** Defensive Coordinator Coach Deontae Mitchell agrees, adding that discipline and focus have made the biggest difference.



Player Spotlights: Leaders to Watch

The Chickasaws have several key players ready to shine Friday night. Junior quarterback Chad Bell (#3) will make his first start, aiming to stay consistent and avoid turnovers. On the line, Jordan Holton (#56) promises intensity, saying, **"We're gonna show everybody that Blytheville is different, and we are not the team to be played with."**

Senior star Courtney Rogers (#24) has set a bold goal of three touchdowns and 200 yards, reminding fans, **"This is a new program. We are not the same Chicks from last year."** Meanwhile, senior Darius "Pug" Rogers (#52) stresses accountability and urges the community to come out and support the Chicks.

Together, these players bring leadership and firepower to a team determined to make a statement.

"It's a different year, and now it's a different culture. The Blytheville Chickasaws are [going to] shock the state."

Deontae Mitchell
- Defensive Coordinator



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: NICOLE ESKIN

Nicole Eskin is a longtime member of the Blytheville community who takes pride in giving back to those who once gave to her. Born in New Jersey and raised in Blytheville, Eskin has dedicated herself to volunteering for twelve years. She got her start in community service by working with Healing in the Hood/ the Daddy Diamonds organization, which introduced her to the youth leadership programs at BES and in the BHS Chickasaw Academy.

Eskin's passion for community service stems from a genuine love for people—especially those in her community. She says, ***"I love, love."*** For her, the most rewarding part of volunteering is seeing the pure smiles of those she serves. Giving back while creating joy is what continues to drive her. Two of Eskin's biggest projects are the Daddy Lacy Project and Acts of Hope. Daddy (Zeak) Lacy was her algebra teacher in junior high, and took Nicole in as a daughter, so as a way to honor the impact he had on her, she started this math tutoring project.



Youth Leadership Academy held at the Chickasaw Academy.

One of Eskin's biggest challenges, which also became her motivation, was becoming pregnant when she was 15 years old. As a teenage mother, Eskin believes that God led her to work on Acts of Hope as a way to give to others what was once given to her.

"It is an encouragement to know and share that life does not end. It may slow down, but it does not end."

Eskin's journey proves that volunteering isn't just an action to her, but a way of life that has helped her to help others.

Do you have a great story idea? Want to see your club, activity, or event featured in our newsletter? Email us at cgroves@blythevilleschools.net.



WHAT IS GAME TIME?

Intervention Through Technology

G.A.M.E. is an acronym for “Goals Are My Everything.” Every student at Blytheville High School has a 30-minute dedicated intervention time between fourth period and lunch where they work in online educational programs including Lexia and IXL.

Lexia is a program that focuses on Word Study, Grammar, and Comprehension to help students build their literacy skills through personalized lessons and assessments. As students progress, they can earn completion certificates for their mastery.

IXL relies on diagnostic testing to create a personalized learning experience for students in math, language arts, science, and social studies. IXL pinpoints the skills that are lacking, and then differentiates lessons and activities that will be most beneficial to the student. Teachers can also use the data they gather in IXL or in the classroom to help them assign extra help or enrichment activities in the platform.

“We need [GAME] interventions to provide extra support for students who are struggling, close learning gaps, and ensure all students can meet grade-level standards.”

***- Kim McGehee,
Math & Science
Instructional Facilitator***



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

KYLE LOVE

Kyle Love is a dedicated and reserved high school student focused on his academic achievements and personal growth. His membership in the National Beta Club is a highlight of his high school journey, reflecting his hard work and determination. French was his favorite class, as it offered him the chance to learn about a new culture and expand his horizons. He appreciates the collective support from his teachers, which has greatly impacted his educational experience. Kyle encourages incoming freshmen to ***“prioritize their studies, develop a strong work ethic, and seek help when needed,”*** emphasizing personal responsibility for their futures.

Although his friends would describe him as "quiet," he possesses a passionate side regarding certain issues. After graduation, Kyle plans to attend college and go to medical school, aiming to become a positive contributor to society. With his commitment and thoughtful approach, he is poised to achieve great things in the future.



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

CHLOE LOVE

Chloe Love is an aspiring artist with a passion for animation, game design, and anthropology as she approaches graduation. She plans to attend college while keeping her options open for future opportunities. Chloe aims to create her own animated series, drawing from her imaginative ideas. Her art teacher, Orissa Williams, has been the biggest influence in her positive experience in school by fostering a welcoming environment. Although initially seen as quiet, Chloe's vibrant personality shines through in comfortable settings, especially in her close relationship with her twin brother, Kyle. Grateful for the supportive community at Blytheville High School, she encourages incoming freshmen to ***“prioritize their interests in course selection for a well-rounded education.”***

Chloe values her parents' guidance, particularly lessons about overcoming procrastination, which has motivated her to focus on time management. She enjoys participating in the Art Club and has found her AP Biology class enlightening. Embracing resilience and optimism, Chloe believes that challenges can strengthen personal growth, and she is determined to leave her mark in the world of animation and beyond.





BHS CHOIR

BHS CHOIR GOES TO THE STATE CAPITOL

Blytheville High School Choir students attended a commemorative vigil at the Arkansas State Capitol on August 28 honoring the "57th Anniversary Commemorative Vigil" of the March on Washington in 1963. This annual event is usually held in April, but because of severe weather, it was rescheduled as a "Back to School Event."

To honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., students across Arkansas were invited to participate by creating pieces visual art inspired by Dr. King's historic address delivered on August 28, 1963. This special celebration provides an opportunity for students to reflect on Dr. King's dream, while engaging in meaningful and creative expressions.

The "Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. The Commission" (AMLKC) is committed to promoting and preserving Dr. King's legacy in Arkansas. As part of the trip, BHS students had the opportunity to tour the State Capital, engage with students from other schools, and hear a variety of speakers. Teacher chaperones for the event included Walter Sykes, the choir director, and Melissa Hill, the Student Council sponsor.





**CANDIE
GROVES**
TEACHER/SPONSOR

MEET OUR JOURNALISM/MEDIA TEAM



RYLEY WALKER
SENIOR EDITOR
12th grade
3rd year journalist



ELLA MILLER
12th grade
3rd year journalist



RICO MOORE
12th grade
3rd year journalist



ANNIE PERDUE
12th grade
2nd year journalist



KAYA WILLIAMS
12th grade
3rd year journalist



MCKINLEY WALKER
10th grade
1st year journalist



CIERRAH SPANN
12th grade
1st year journalist



CHAD BELL
11th grade
1st year journalist



KE'NIYA WILLIAMS
11th grade
1st year journalist

Check out “The Arrow” newspaper page in the NEA Town Courier to see more about what’s happening at Blytheville High School!

BHS Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/blythevillehigh

BSD Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/BlythevilleSchoolDistrict

Blytheville School District: www.blythevilleschools.com

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