

BLYTHEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL A periodic newsletter produced by the BHS Journalism / Medic term (Fig. 4)

BHS Journalism / Media team: "The Arrow"

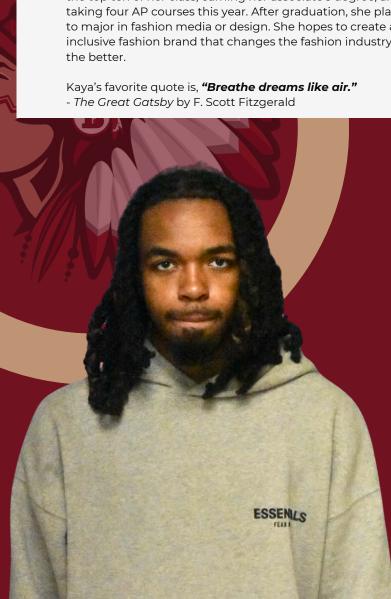


SENIOR SPOTLIGHT **KAYA WILLIAMS**

Kaya Williams is known for her whimsical, charming, and creative personality. She is a member of the Target Club, Science National Honor Society, French Honor Society, Science Club, FBLA, and Art Club. She also holds several leadership roles, serving as Beta Club secretary, Student Council treasurer, National Honor Society historian, and French Club co-treasurer.

Her favorite memory from high school comes from her sophomore year, when she experimented with fashion by wearing a different extravagant outfit every day. Her teacher, Candice Groves, has had the biggest impact on her because she is both a great teacher and a wonderful person.

Kaya's biggest accomplishments are maintaining her rank in the top ten of her class, earning her associate's degree, and taking four AP courses this year. After graduation, she plans to major in fashion media or design. She hopes to create an inclusive fashion brand that changes the fashion industry for the better.





SENIOR SPOTLIGHT JAYLYNN BROWN

Jaylynn Brown was born in Hot Springs and has attended Blytheville Schools since the third grade. As a participant of JAG, Jaylynn has long-term plans to pursue a career in day trading. After graduation, he intends to enroll at Clark University in Atlanta to study electrical engineering and temporarily work on elevators before investing in trades.

To Jaylynn, success is peace. "To be at peace is to not stress, to have everything planned, and to know that everything will work." His senior year has been his most successful by far, as he believes he's progressed mentally and enjoyed himself more, while also focusing on the present and making money.

Jaylynn's mom has been his biggest motivation through her encouraging daily words and constant support. She raised him to have good manners and stay respectful, while keeping up with his school work.

Learning to always stay humble has been a challenge that Jaylynn has overcome during high school; one that will have a lasting impact on him. He believes being humble is knowing your success, but not bragging about it. Jaylynn's parting advice to freshmen is,

"Slow down. Stop focusing on the future so much and enjoy the present."





RED RIBBON WEEK BHS



Ribbon Week is observed across the nation to smoking, and other drugs and violence. Red 1985, after the death of DEA agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena. Citizens of Camerena's hometown of honor, which symbolized prevention to marches in the community, and by wearing red

This year, students at BHS participated in a Red Ribbon dress-up week, with every day having a You!", and participants were encouraged to wear camouflage and red. Wednesday was Free". Students were to pair up with someone Concluding the week, Friday was "Say Boo to Drugs!" Students could wear school-appropriate Halloween costumes.







Addiction and substance use

- Addiction is a complex disease with behavioral characteristics
- 40 million Americans ages 12 and older have substance problems. Addiction and substance abuse affect more Americans than heart conditions, diabetes or cancer
- Another 80 million people engage in risky use of addictive substances in ways that threaten public health and safety, but do not meet the clinical criteria for this disease
- The earlier substance use starts, the greater the risk of addiction



Fast Facts about Addiction: From the Partnership to End Addiction

https://drugfree.org/article/fast-facts-about-addiction/

Substance abuse causes or contribute to more than 70 other conditions, including cancer, respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDS, pregnancy complications, cirrhosis, ulcers and trauma.



Teen addiction statistics

- 75% of all high school students have used addictive substances, including cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana or cocaine; 1 in 5 has a substance problem
- Almost half (46%) of all high school students currently use addictive substances
- 12% of all high school students and 1 in 3 current substance users have a substance problem
- Addiction is a developmental disease: more than 90% of people with a substance problem began smoking, drinking or using other drugs before age 18; more than 96% began using these substances before the age of 21
- 1 in 4 Americans who began using any addictive substance before age 18 has a substance problem, compared to 1 in 25 Americans who started using at age 21 or older
- 46% of children under age 18 live in a household where someone age 18 or older is smoking, drinking excessively, misusing prescription drugs or using illegal drugs



AKEARA GIBSON

Akeara Gibson is a member of FFA, FBLA, Target Club, Science Club, and Interact. She's also been a member of the band for seven years. Band introduced her to one of her biggest influences, former band director, Mr. Montgomery, because of the things he taught her. He led her in the right direction and opened her up to pursuing her interest in band in college. The best piece of advice she received from him was to "whoop that thang." Akeara shares, "If you have any challenge in your life, you don't have to be afraid of it. Get up and whoop that thang to overcome each obstacle by facing it instead of sitting in fear."

Akeara is most proud of her ability to socialize freely and be her authentic self without worrying about others' opinions. Her greatest accomplishment, so far, has been getting accepted into her top college, Winston-Salem State University. Akeara plans to study special education and teach elementary school in Texas.

To freshmen she says, "Just because things are hard now doesn't mean they won't get better. Success takes time. It is not a competition."





TEACHER SPOTLIGHT BILL BRANDON

Math Teacher

Bill Brandon is a dedicated teacher in his 47th year of teaching. Originally from Little Rock, he graduated from high school in Fayetteville, then moved to Blytheville in 1968 after serving in the US Air Force as a B-52 navigator for four years. After his service, Brandon worked as a speech therapist at a special education school in Missouri. It was then, while volunteering, that he discovered his passion for teaching and returned to school to earn his master's degree in special education.

Brandon teaches Algebra II and Quantitative Reasoning to 10th and 12th grade students. He's passionate about helping his students develop life long problem solving skills, saying, "although students say they won't need this material in the future, you are going to have to use a process of problem-solving skills for your whole life, and that's what math is all about and why we have it."

Brandon says that his biggest accomplishment was being the first recipient of the school's Golden Goose award, voted on by his fellow faculty members as an outstanding teacher. Brandon enjoys attending sports games, especially basketball, with his wife to support their grandchildren. He also enjoys spending time with his children, grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. His favorite Bible scripture is Romans 5:8, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," serves as his motivation and guidance.



Senior Night









SENIOR NIGHT

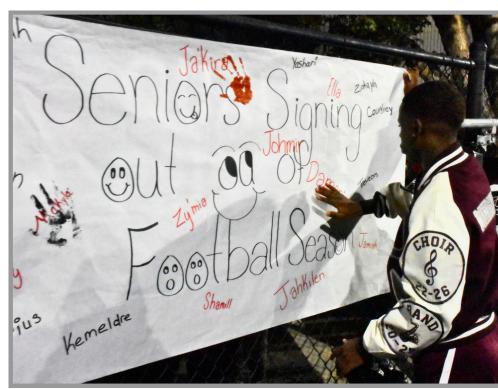
Seniors Signing Out

Blytheville High School recognized the class of 2026 during its annual Senior Night celebration, held on October 31. This year's event coincided with Halloween, adding a spirited and memorable atmosphere to the evening. Many attendees even embraced the Halloween spirit by arriving in costume.

Students, faculty, and families gathered to celebrate the accomplishments of the senior class as they approach graduation. BHS staff members, regarded by many students as extended family, played a key role in organizing and supporting the event. Their dedication to the success and well-being of the senior class was evident throughout the night.

The Blytheville High School Cheer Team also contributed to the celebration by distributing baskets filled with treats and tokens of appreciation to the seniors. Many seniors felt their efforts helped make the event both personal and memorable.

The evening served not only as a recognition of the class of 2026's achievements, but also as a reminder of the close relationships and community spirit that define Blytheville High School.





SENIOR SPOTLIGHT ZYNIESHA HORNER

Zyniesha Horner has made her mark at high school through dedication, hard work, and heart—both in the classroom and on the court.

A three-sport athlete, Horner plays basketball, track, and softball. This year, she's focused on helping her team achieve the 4A State Champion title in basketball. She credits her coaches and teachers, especially Ms. Williams, Mrs. Hill, and Coach J. Young, as her most influential mentors because of their honesty, encouragement, and support.

After graduation, Horner plans to continue her education while pursuing basketball at the next level. She has learned that with effort and confidence, she can achieve anything she sets her mind to, and she urges underclassmen to never take anything for granted.

Horner carries with her the strength and inspiration of her father's memory. "My father's legacy is the love he gave, the dreams he inspired, and the strength he instilled. I carry his spirit in my heart, and his memory guides my steps as I build my own legacy."





SENIOR SPOTLIGHT ERIN BELL

Erin Bell is a scholar, leader, and dedicated student. Her favorite memory comes from 7th period English 10, with Miss Bohannan, where laughter and learning made each day unforgettable.

While at BHS, Bell has been active in the French Club, Beta Club, Student Council, and National Honor Society; she also serves as the president of the BHS Choir. She describes herself as respectful, hardworking, and helpful to others. Bell credits Kim McGehee as a mentor, guiding her through academics and personal growth. Outside of school, Bell is a proud member of New Immanuel M.B. Church, led by her great-grandparents, Pastor Burton and First Lady Althea Furlow.

After high school, Bell plans to pursue a bachelor's and master's degree in psychology to become a psychologist. Bell is proud of her accomplishments so far and gives thanks to God, her greatgrandparents and her mother, Kierra Weaver, for their unwavering support. To underclassmen, she says, "your younger years shape your future," and she shares Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV) as inspiration:

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."



ADMINISTRATOR SPOTLIGHT ROD STINSON

Rod Stinson is the Dean of Students at Blytheville High School and is also the head football coach. He was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Growing up, Stinson wanted to be a professional athlete. In the classroom, he didn't get in a lot of trouble. He attended Pine Bluff High School and graduated in 1996.

Stinson attended the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, where he majored in kinesiology and completed 18 hours of graduate work in sports management. The development of young people has always been something that caught his attention. He found purpose in helping students reach their goals and make positive choices, just as others did for him.

"I've always had influential people in my life to help me make good decisions. It's kind of like me paying it back, being able to do the same for others."

His first teaching job was in the Pine Bluff School District in 2003. Afterwards, he taught for a year in Little Rock, went back to Pine Bluff, then moved to the Marion School District before coming to Blytheville High School. He is now in his 23rd year of teaching. Throughout his career, coaching has been a constant passion, allowing him to connect with students on and off the field while teaching lessons about teamwork and discipline.

Outside of school, Stinson enjoys traveling and following his kids around for the sports they play. His son RJ is 24, plays baseball, and just graduated from college. His daughter Jordyn just graduated from Marion High School and plays softball. He and his wife Tykisia have been married for 20 years. He says family is a huge part of his life and one of his biggest motivations.





What inspires Coach Stinson on and off the field?

Stinson is Blytheville's head football coach and is also a part of the Arkansas Coaches Association, which is a coaching group that benefits younger coaches and helps out student athletes. His favorite experience at BHS is the Friday nights. "That's what we worked for all summer long. And at the end of the day, being able to go out and play in front of the community and being with our coaching staff and our kids."

Stinson's biggest inspiration is his family, saying, "My dad was a teacher and coach for 20 years. My mom worked in social work, so I think those were the two biggest influences I had." A quote that keeps him motivated everyday is, "You the best."

If Stinson could give any advice, it would be for the seniors because they're about to go out and be young adults. "I think the biggest thing that you want to try to teach those that are about to graduate is to believe in yourself, set attainable goals, realistic goals, that you can achieve, and be the best you can possibly be."

Something that Stinson learned in high school that he wishes today's high school students knew now is patience. "With social media, every body wants everything right now, but some stuff you have to work for and just be a little bit patient or let it come to you."



RAPHEAL CRAIGHEAD

Raphael Craighead is a student whose passion for art has been a defining part of his life. For him, being a senior doesn't feel much different from past years, but he recognizes that this one marks an important step toward his dream of becoming a comic artist.

Outside of school, Craighead devotes most of his time to drawing, whether it's his original characters, realistic portraits, or outdoor sketches. He also enjoys playing Fortnite and Warzone and finds inspiration in the animated shows he grew up watching, like *Jimmy Neutron* and *Danny Phantom*. "Growing up, my art was better than most kids my age," he says proudly, crediting them as his original inspiration.

After graduation, Craighead plans to publish his own comic and grow his art platform. Motivated by his mother, Roshone, he strives to make her proud by finishing the year strong and graduating on time. He says he'll miss his teachers and family, especially his aunt Kesha, "another womanly figure in my life."

To underclassmen, he says, "When you're given the opportunity to turn in those assignments, turn them in. Don't procrastinate."





WALTER SYKES

Director of Choral Activities

Walter Sykes, Director of Choral Activities at Blytheville High School, leads the school's choir program with passion, faith, and dedication. Originally from Jonestown, Mississippi, he has been directing choirs since the age of fifteen and is now living his lifelong dream of being a choir teacher. A graduate of Coahoma Agricultural High School, Coahoma Community College, and Mississippi Valley State University, Sykes holds a Bachelor's degree in Music Education.

Since joining BHS in August 2023, he has worked to inspire his students both musically and personally, encouraging them to reach their full potential. His responsibilities include selecting music, organizing concerts, and helping students grow. His goals for the year include providing students with more opportunities.

His priorities are clear: "I prioritize my students, I prioritize God - because He's first in my life - and I prioritize my career."

Sykes lives by his own advice: "Do what you have to do now, so that you can do what you want to do later."



FINAL CONFERENCE GAME

Blytheville, having a promising season with a record of 6-2, meets a familiar foe for week ten: Southside, with a record of 8-1, who walked out with the victory last year, 36-32.

With big-time defensive players like Trevon Lewis, averaging 6.6 tackles, Treyvon Orr averaging 7 tackles, Xzavion Liddell averaging 6.9 tackles, and James Riley averaging 4.4 tackles, will the Chicks have enough force to stop the Southside offense?





Defensive Cordinator, Deontae Mitchell says, "Week one was about learning who we are, learning how to operate as a brotherhood. We were building our identity, our standards, and understanding of the process. We've learned how to lean on one another, stay together when adversity hits, and keep fighting until the final whistle. This week, as we prepare for Southside, our mindset is simple: be road warriors. We are going into their environment with the purpose of coming back home with a victory."



KADARIAN FRANKLIN

Kaderian Franklin, also known as "KT," describes himself as being real, caring, and funny. Franklin has achieved a 3.0+ GPA, and this year, he is looking forward to overall improvement, both personally and amongst students and teachers. His favorite memories of high school include the annual homecoming celebrations.

In his free time, Franklin enjoys designing clothes, playing basketball, and spending time with his girlfriend. After high school, Franklin plans to become a marketing or brand ambassador and clothing brand owner. He says that he loves every aspect of fashion. "Everything about fashion is amazing; fashion is a work of art and shows personality."

Franklin says his choir teacher, Walter Sykes, motivates him through constructive criticism to become a better person. He also says Coach Gerrett Howard, a former teacher at Blytheville High, inspired him, stating that Howard saw, "things I didn't see in myself that I could accomplish." A challenge that Franklin is glad to have overcome in his life is learning how to ask for help and not struggle on his own. He says that once he began asking for help, things became easier overall.





SENIOR SPOTLIGHT MAKYLA RAINER

Makyla Rainer is a senior at Blytheville High School who is active as a cheerleader and FCCLA member. She chose to join the cheer team because of her love for dance. Rainer began dancing around 4th grade and joined a dance team called the "Elite Diamonds." She says she loves the bonding, traveling, and excitement from the games that come along with cheerleading. It has also allowed her to make new and unexpected connections. Rainer looks forward to cheering during the upcoming basketball season, as she gets to see all the action on the court up close and personal.

Rainer has enjoyed the exclusive senior experiences of taking drapes photos and going to the Senior Sunrise event on the Haley Field. Rainer has been inspired by several people, notably her parents, who inspired her to keep going, even through the hard times. Others who have inspired her include Coach Gerrett Howard, a former teacher and coach at Blytheville High, and Coach Demoine Brown. When speaking about "Coach Jett" as many would call him, she stated that, "He always motivated [his students] to do better." After graduating, Rainer plans to attend the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to pursue a degree in social work. She was inspired by her career coaches, Jeff Echols, who helped her research colleges and more about her major, and Robilyn Key, who provided insight into her own experiences and advice as a former social worker herself.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: MARANGELI WILSON

Marangeli Wilson stands out as one of the most active parent volunteers at BHS. Her commitment to helping others continues to inspire students, staff, and families across the district. Mrs. Wilson has been an active volunteer at Blytheville High School for about 10 years.

Over the years, Mrs. Wilson has played an important role in a lot of BHS initiatives. From helping to organize teacher appreciation events and preparing goody bags for students to supporting PTO projects, her efforts have brought joy and connection to countless people. She takes pride in knowing that even small gestures — a snack, a thank-you note, or a friendly conversation — can brighten someone's day.





Beyond events and projects, Mrs. Wilson's true impact lies in the relationships she builds. Through volunteering, she has formed strong connections with teachers, staff, and fellow parents, all grounded in mutual respect and a shared commitment to supporting students. She believes volunteering not only strengthens the school, but also sets an example for her children about the importance of community and service.

For Mrs. Wilson, volunteering is about more than showing up — it's about showing heart. She encourages others to lead with compassion, be intentional, and find joy in giving back. Her positive attitude is summed up perfectly in one of her favorite quotes:

"No one ever injured their eyesight by looking on the bright side."

Blytheville High School is grateful for Mrs. Wilson's years of dedicated service. Her kindness, resilience, and unwavering spirit shows what it means to be a Chickasaw. Thank you, Mrs. Wilson, for making Blytheville High School a better place.



CAMERON MHOON

Cameron Mhoon has spent his entire life in Blytheville, and now, he is eager to give back to his community and embrace the new challenges that lie ahead.

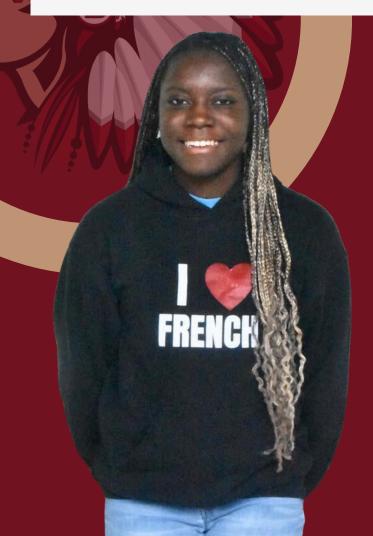
Cameron's high school journey has been shaped by memorable experiences, especially college trips in tenth grade. He credits his family, particularly his mother, for their unwavering support in pushing him to excel.

After graduation, Cameron plans to pursue a career in welding, driven by his passion and ambition. He has matured throughout high school, learning to prioritize his studies. As such, he advises freshmen, "Do not play your freshman year."

Despite facing challenges in getting good grades, he achieved A's and B's this semester by focusing on his responsibilities. Cameron hopes to contribute to local business growth after graduation.

Cameron enjoys cooking and participating in traditions like Spirit Week and Halloween with his friends. As he prepares for graduation, Cameron is excited about his new opportunities.





SENIOR SPOTLIGHT MARKIA LEA

Markia Lea was born in Chicago and raised Blytheville. Her favorite memory is participating in Disney's *Moana the Musical* in nineth grade. Markia credits her supportive parents for her success.

Markia is actively involved in extracurricular groups like the French Club and the Interact Club. After high school, she plans to attend the University of Central Arkansas or Missouri State. As a senior, Markia feels more independent and advises incoming freshmen to get involved and avoid all the drama.

Markia lives by the words of Kamala Harris, "What can be, unburdened by what has been," and, as a point of interest, shares that she is double-jointed in her fingers. She says that she's learned important lessons about time management and is proud of her self-sufficient color guard team.

After graduation, Markia hopes to promote compassion in her community. She believes her high school experience has prepared her for the future and aims to leave a legacy of personal improvement as she embraces her next chapter.



BSD WELCOMES A NEW SUPERINTENDENT

Vanessa Hopkins is a native of St. Louis, Missouri, and attended Missouri State University. She has taught in Georgia, St. Louis, and New York. She has extensive experience in the education field, as she said, "I've been everything from a paraprofessional to a school principal." She also noted her role in the school, saying, "I'm just here to help all the great things that are going to happen. I'm just here to tell the story."

COMMUNITY MEETING

Blytheville School District hosted a State of the District Meeting on Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 6:00pm in the BHS Auditorium. This meeting occurred in the Blytheville High School Auditorium.

During the meeting, several speakers, including Kristina Winters, Ebony Brown, Amanda Haynes, and our new superintendent, Ms. Vanessa Hopkins, spoke about the current state of the district and direction in which it's moving.

Kristina Winters, the interim superintendent, was the first speaker. She talked about where we were as a school last year, and where we want to go. Winters referred to this part as "The good, bad, and ugly." Next, the Elementary School principal, Ebony Brown, took the stage. She passionately spoke about her school and the positive steps they are taking towards growth. One of their biggest successes was their student and staff attendance rate, with the students at 94.3% and the staff at 95%. Brown highlighted many changes and the need for community support.

Amanda Haynes also spoke regarding the state of Blytheville High School. She mentioned the many steps BHS is taking toward getting all students on grade level. Some of these steps are GAME (Goals Are My Everything) and after-school tutoring. She also talked about the steps that have taken place to make BHS a more safe and secure environment for learning. Finally, the new superintendent, Ms. Vanessa Hopkins, was introduced. She spoke about her life, her professional accomplishments, and why she is excited to join the Blytheville School District.









TYLAN ECHOLS

Tylan Echols was born in Blytheville, Arkansas, and is proud to be a senior at Blytheville High School. After graduation, Tylan plans to attend college and work hard toward making "big money" while continuing to build a successful future.

During his time in high school, Echols' favorite memory is his freshman year. He says those moments set the tone for his high school journey and taught him a lot about perseverance and growth.

Echols' biggest inspiration is Coach Jeff Echols, who pushes him to be accountable for his actions and always to do his job the right way without excuses. Tylan says that the lesson has shaped how he approaches life both on and off the court.

Outside of school, Echols enjoys basketball, gaming, and exploring nature. His favorite scripture is 1 Corinthians 15:33, which says, "Bad company corrupts good character." Echols says his faith keeps him focused as he works toward graduating and making his family proud.





TEACHER SPOTLIGHT CRAIG O'NEAL

U.S. History

Craig O'Neal was born in Arkadelphia, Arkansas and raised in Bryant, Arkansas. He currently teaches ninth-grade U.S. History and is in his 19th year of teaching.

Originally planning to be a coach, O'Neal discovered a love for history while attending Southern Arkansas University, which led him to the classroom. Outside of school, O'Neal enjoys watching basketball and football and spending time with his family.

O'Neal proudly serves the community at Blytheville High School, which he chose for its strong sense of community and rich athletic tradition. His goal as an educator is to help students do their best at all times and prepare them for success after high school.

O'Neal states that he has learned many different things while being at Blytheville High School, and he hopes to continue to motivate and prepare his students for life after high school. He also hopes to continue being a role model for his students throughout the year.

VETERANS DAY

November 11, 2025



To All BSD Employees Who Served, We Honor You



Bill Brandon - USAF 6 years. Served during Vietnam-navigator on a B-52-flew 170 missions-separated from service with the rank of Captain

Lisa Guy E5 Sergeant- 15-year Regular Army/ Army Reserve/ National Guard

Latricia Williams Dority, Specialist United States Army National Guard for 8 years, honorable discharge.

Charli Brumley - Air Force

Larrie Bell - United States Marine Corps

Melissa Young - Army Reserves

Georgia Davis, Retired MSgt, Air Force

Darryl Grissom - US Army

Thank you
for your
service!





MEET OUR JOURNALISM/MEDIA TEAM



RYLEY WALKER
SENIOR EDITOR
12th grade
3rd year journalist



12th grade 3rd year journalist



RICO MOORE 12th grade 3rd year journalist



12th grade
2nd year journalist



KAYA WILLIAMS

12th grade

3rd year journalist



10th grade 1st year journalist

MCKINLEY WALKER



CIERRAH SPANN

12th grade
1st year journalist



llth grade lst year journalist



KE'NIYA WILLIAMS

11th grade
1st year journalist

Check out "The Arrow" newspaper page in the <u>NEA Town Courier</u> 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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