

# DISTRICT PROFILE

## **BLAIR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

Papio-Missouri River NRD

Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

2021

## Local Planning Team

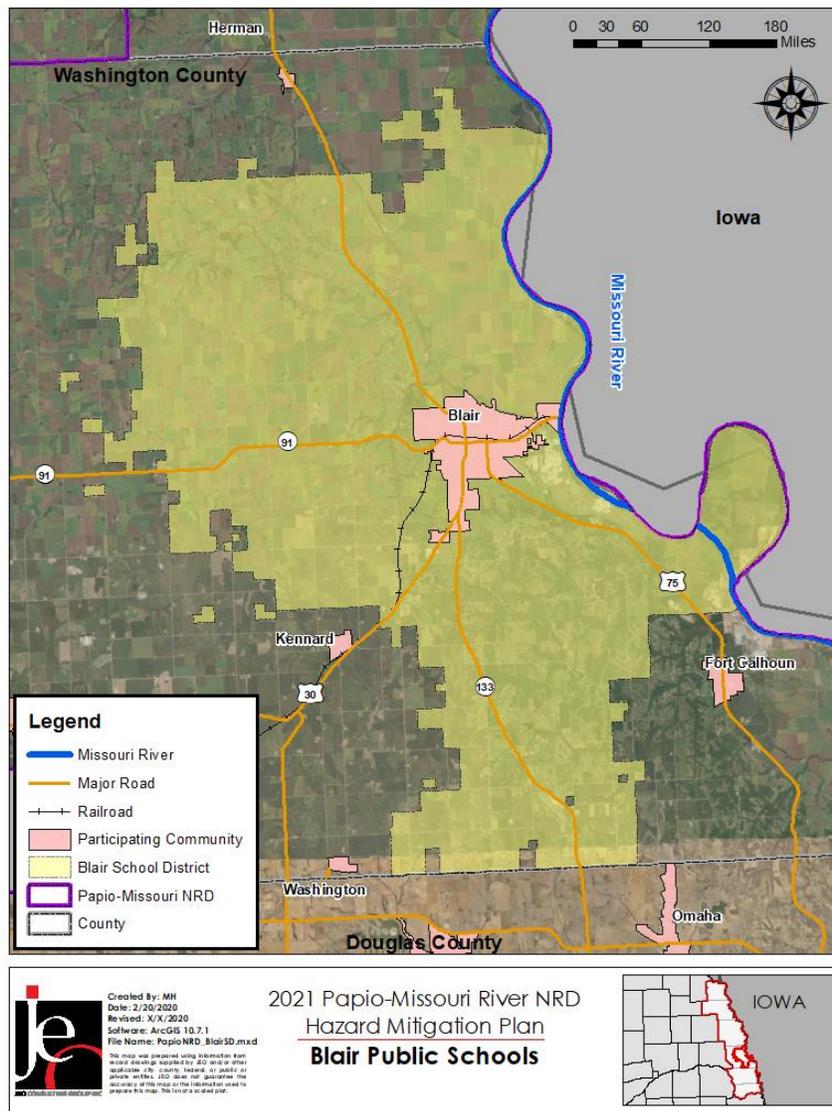
**Table BCS.1: Blair Community Schools Local Planning Team**

NAME	TITLE	JURISDICTION
<b>LEON HAITH</b>	Director of Special Services/Assistant Principal	Blair Community Schools

## Location and Services

Blair Community Schools operate six schools with three elementary schools (PK-3), one intermediate school (4-5), one middle school (6-8), and one high school (9-12). Across eastern Washington County, the school district covers over 142 square miles and serves students living in the City of Blair and rural areas of Washington County. The primary language spoken in the district is English; however, Spanish is also spoken. In addition to the services provided to the community of Blair, the school district also provides physical therapy services to Fort Calhoun’s Birth to 3 early intervention program.

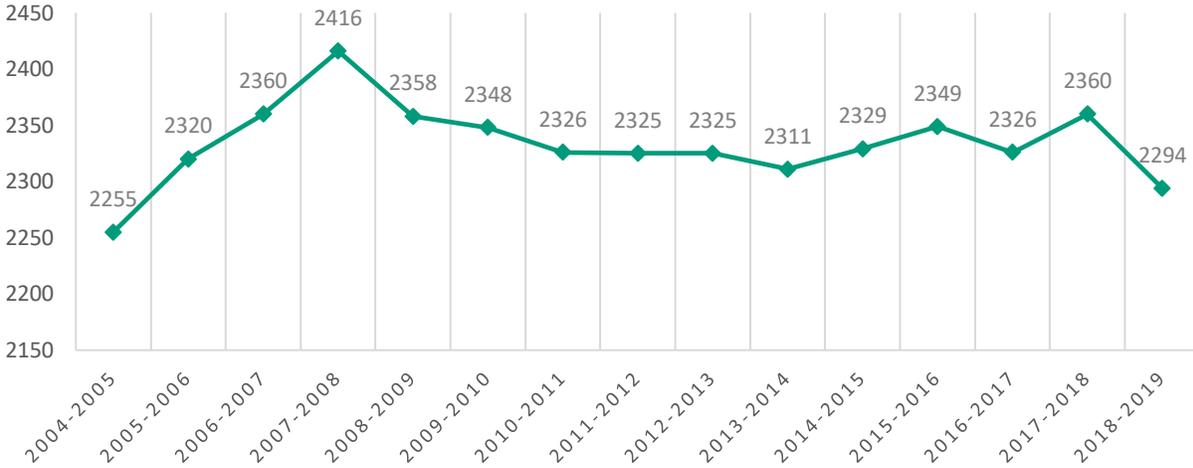
**Figure BCS.1: Blair Community Schools**



## Demographics

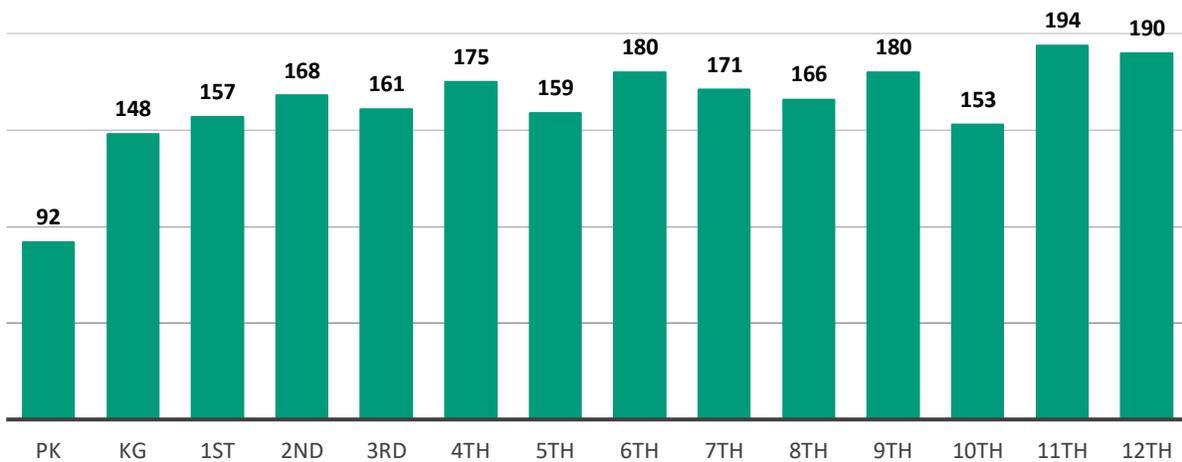
The following figure displays the historical student population trend starting with the 2004-05 school year and ending with the 2018-19 year. It indicates that the student population has held relatively stable with a small decrease in recent years. There are approximately 2,294 students enrolled in Blair Public Schools.<sup>i</sup> The district anticipates little change in the student population.

**Figure BCS.2: Student Population, 2004-2019**



Source: Nebraska Department of Education

**Figure BCS.3: Students by Grade, 2018-2019**



Source: Nebraska Department of Education

The figure above indicates that the largest number of students are in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, followed by 12<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grades. The lowest population of students are in Pre-kindergarten. According to the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), 25.14% of students receive either free or reduced priced meals at school in the 2017-18 year. This is lower than the state average of 45.21%. Additionally, nearly 15% of students are in the Special Education Program. These students may be more vulnerable during a hazardous event than the rest of the student population.

**Table BCS.2: Student Statistics, 2018-2019**

	DISTRICT	STATE OF NEBRASKA
Free/Reduced Priced Meals	25.14%	45.21%
School Mobility Rate	3.22%	4.61%
English Language Learners	0.64%	7.16%
Special Education Students	14.53%	15.48%

## Future Development Trends

Over the past five years the school administrative building and West Elementary School were sold. The district has begun the process of renovating the high school office, kitchen, and industrial arts areas. A new concession stand and restrooms are being built at the athletic field and the press box is undergoing renovation. Current building codes are being followed for all construction projects. New computers have been purchased recently for all students.

According to census data, the student population has declined in recent years. The planning team indicated that this could be partially due to the closing of Dana College and the jobs it provided to residents of the community.

## Critical Infrastructure/Key Resources

### Chemical Storage Fixed Sites

According to the Tier II System reports submitted to the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, there are 17 chemical storage sites that houses hazardous materials in Blair. These facilities may be located near Blair Community School facilities.<sup>1</sup> The planning team indicated that students and staff may be required to shelter in place at all buildings if a chemical spill occurs.

### Critical Facilities

The school district operates six schools and one bus barn. School facilities are listed below. Each participating jurisdiction identified critical facilities vital for disaster response, providing shelter to the public, and essential for returning the jurisdiction's functions to normal during and after a disaster per the FEMA Community Lifelines guidance. Critical facilities were identified during the original planning process and updated by the local planning team as a part of this plan update.

The following table and figure provide a summary of the critical facilities for the jurisdiction. The planning team indicated that all facilities now have a weather radio present.

**Table BCS.4: Critical Facilities**

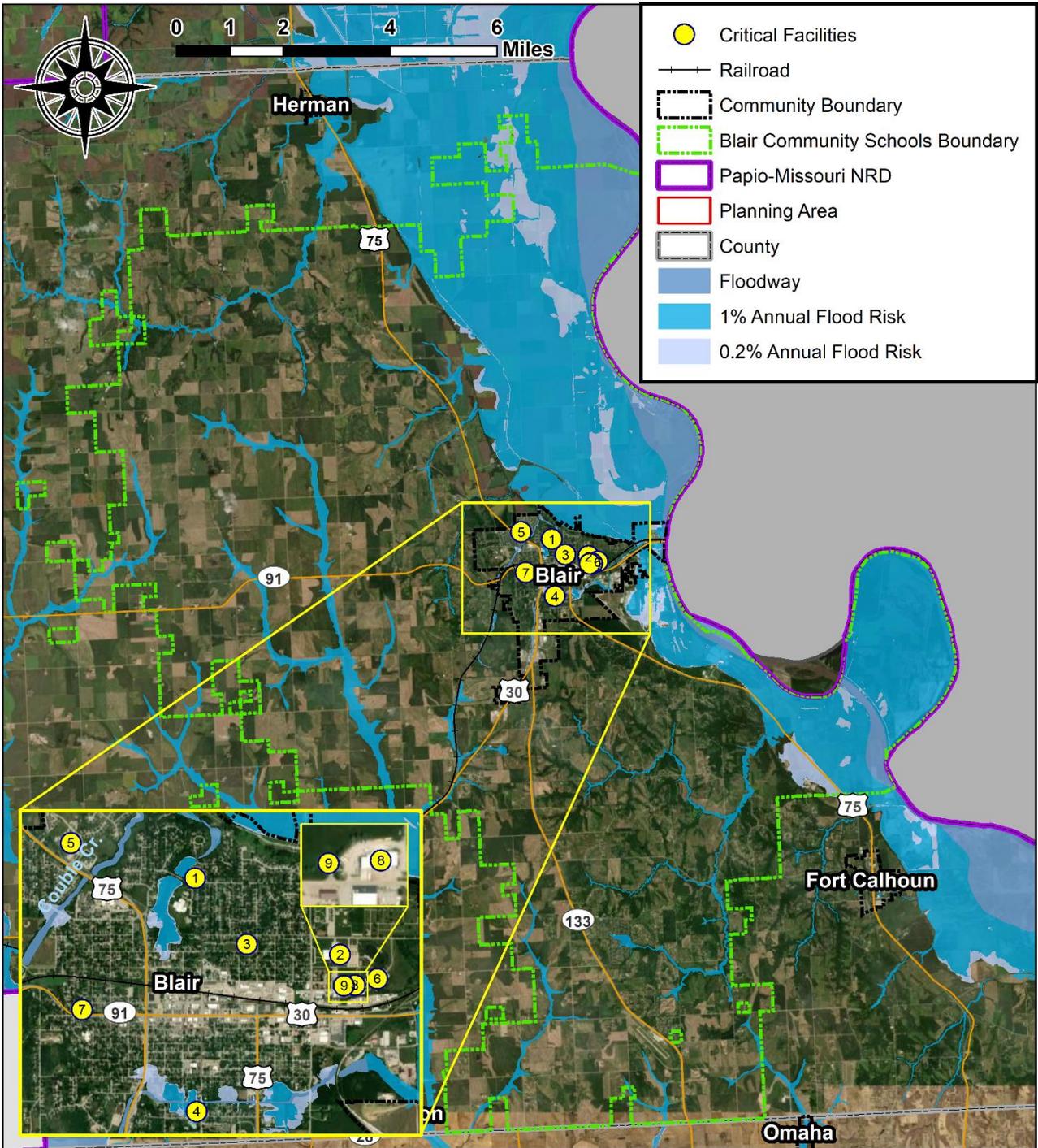
CF #	NAME	# OF STUDENTS	# OF STAFF	SHORT-TERM SHELTER (Y/N)	GENERATOR (Y/N)	FLOODPLAIN (Y/N)
1	Arbor Park Intermediate School	504	28	Y	N	N
2	Blair High School	700	48	Y	N	N
3	North Elementary School	133	12	Y	N	N

<sup>1</sup> Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy. "Search Tier II Data." Accessed February 2020. <https://deq-iis.ne.gov/tier2/search.faces>.

SECTION SEVEN: BLAIR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COMMUNITY PROFILE

CF #	NAME	# OF STUDENTS	# OF STAFF	SHORT-TERM SHELTER (Y/N)	GENERATOR (Y/N)	FLOODPLAIN (Y/N)
4	South Elementary School	134	12	Y	N	N
5	Deerfield Elementary School	304	21	N	N	N
6	Gerald Otte Middle School	508	32	Y	Y	N
7	Blair Community Schools Admin.	0	N/A	N	N	N
8	Bus Barn	0	N/A	N	N	N
9	Distribution Center	0	N/A	N	N	N

Figure BCS.3: Critical Facilities





Created By: MB, MW  
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PapioNRD\_BlairSchoolCF.mxd  
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2021 Papio-Missouri River NRD  
Hazard Mitigation Plan

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**Blair Community Schools  
Critical Facilities**



SOUTH DAKOTA  
IOWA  
COLORADO  
KANSAS

### **School Drills and Staff Training**

The district regularly conducts safety drills, including monthly fire drills, semi-annual tornado drills, and standard response protocol drills. Staff training for emergency procedures takes place at the building level. Students are educated and trained by staff about emergency procedures and School Messenger is used to communicate with parents and the community.

### **Historical Occurrences**

See the Washington County or City of Blair community profile for historical hazard events.

### **Hazard Prioritization**

For an in-depth discussion regarding area wide hazards, please see Section Four: Risk Assessment. The hazards discussed in detail below were either identified in the previous HMP and determined to still be of top concern or were added by the local planning team based on the identification of hazards of greatest concern, hazard history, and the jurisdiction's capabilities.

#### **Chemical Transportation**

The local planning team identified chemical spills during transportation as a top concern for the district. The school facilities are located near rail lines and heavy semi-truck traffic. It is not known what kind of chemicals or the quantity are transported through the City of Blair. The planning team indicated that shelter in place materials and training are needed in the future to improve the districts response to this hazard.

#### **High Winds and Tornadoes**

Although there has not been a recorded tornado that has impacted school facilities, tornadoes are common within the region. Tornadoes have the potential to cause loss of life and significant damages to property. Deerfield Elementary School does have a safe room available to students and staff. Twice per year students and staff conduct tornado drills. The district recently changed insurance companies so that replacement costs are now covered.

#### **Severe Thunderstorms (includes Hail)**

In June 2014, the school district suffered significant damage from a major hailstorm that hit the area with hail as large as 4.75 inches. The damage was variable across all the facilities in the district. The common threads of damage to all structures were roofs, HVAC units, windows, exterior wall panels, vehicle/bus damage, and interior water damage. As it was noted by the local planning team, any that was left in the open was vulnerable to the large hail and sustained some level of damage. Although there has not been damages at the schools as a result of flooding, the district is concerned when roads wash out from heavy rain and flash flooding. Some of the facilities suffered water damage after the hailstorm in June 2014. The hail damaged windows and siding which allowed water to infiltrate the building. The district's insurance company and associated contractors have been working diligently to assess damage, apply temporary fixes, secure all sites, and mitigate interior water infiltration and associated damages. Total damages are estimated at \$7.8 million. The district has since changed insurance companies so that replacement costs are now covered.

The planning team noted that no facilities were impacted from the flooding in 2019. Acquiring backup generators for all schools was identified as a project needed in the future.

## Administration/Capability Assessment

The school district has a superintendent, six principals, and three assistant principals. The school board is made up of a nine-member panel.<sup>ii</sup> The district also has a number of additional departments and staff that may be available to implement hazard mitigation initiatives.

- District Services
- Technology Department
- Curriculum & Instruction Director
- Student Services
- Food Services
- Transportation Services
- Maintenance Services
- English Language Learners Program
- Health Services

OVERALL CAPABILITY	LIMITED/MODERATE/HIGH
<b>FINANCIAL RESOURCES NEED TO IMPLEMENT MITIGATION PROJECTS</b>	Moderate
<b>STAFF/EXPERTISE TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS</b>	Limited
<b>COMMUNITY SUPPORT TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS</b>	Limited
<b>TIME TO DEVOTE TO HAZARD MITIGATION</b>	Moderate

## Plan Integration

The emergency operations plan for the school district is called the Emergency Management Procedure, and the manual is updated annually. Additionally, the district’s plan is reviewed with all staff members annually. As noted earlier, each year a number of mock drills are conducted with staff and students. Safety committees at each building regularly perform safety assessments. Furthermore, the Nebraska Department of Education requires a safety audit annually. These are completed in the spring of each year. Safety procedures are loaded into the Crisis Go app where they are available for staff to view.

## Plan Maintenance

Hazard Mitigation Plans should be living documents and updated regularly to reflect changes in hazard events, priorities, and mitigation actions. These updates are encouraged to occur after every major disaster event, alongside community planning documents (i.e. annual budgets and Capital Improvement Plans), during the fall before the HMA grant cycle begins, and/or prior to other funding opportunity cycles begin including CDBG, Water Sustainability Fund, Revolving State Fund, or other identified funding mechanisms.

The local planning team is responsible for reviewing and updating this community profile as changes occur or after a major event. The local planning team will include the Executive Director of Operations, District Safety Director, and Superintendent. The local planning team will review the plan no less than bi-annually and will include the public in the review and revision process by: reporting reviews to all district committees, Board of Education, and at board meetings.

## Mitigation Strategy

### Completed Mitigation Actions:

MITIGATION ACTION		EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION DEVICES
DESCRIPTION	Purchase, replace, or upgrade emergency communication devices such as portable radios for use during and after a hazardous event.	
HAZARD(S)	All	
STATUS	An emergency communication system has been set up county-wide.	

MITIGATION ACTION		WEATHER RADIOS
DESCRIPTION	Ensure adequate severe weather notifications to critical facilities by purchasing or replacing weather radios	
HAZARD(S)	All	
STATUS	Weather radios have been acquired and provided to each location.	

### Continued Mitigation Actions

MITIGATION ACTION		BACK-UP POWER GENERATORS
DESCRIPTION	Provide a portable or stationary source of backup power to schools, administration centers, supply centers, safe rooms, etc.	
HAZARD(S)	All hazards	
ESTIMATED COST	\$50,000+/generator	
FUNDING	General budget, HMA	
TIMELINE	2-5 years	
PRIORITY	Medium	
LEAD AGENCY	District Services	
STATUS	This project has not yet been started due to a lack of funding.	

MITIGATION ACTION		STORM SHELTERS/SAFE ROOMS
DESCRIPTION	Install or retrofit facilities to add safe rooms in needed schools for safety of students and staff	
HAZARD(S)	Severe Thunderstorms, High Winds and Tornadoes	
ESTIMATED COST	\$200-\$300/sf stand alone; \$150-200/sf addition/retrofit	
FUNDING	Bonds, HMA	
TIMELINE	5+ years	
PRIORITY	Medium	
LEAD AGENCY	District Services	
STATUS	This project has not yet been started due to a lack of funding.	

**New Mitigation Actions:**

MITIGATION ACTION		EMERGENCY EXERCISE	
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Participate in and/or conduct a chemical spill event exercise and training with Washington County		
<b>HAZARD(S)</b>	Chemical Transportation Spills		
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$15,000		
<b>FUNDING</b>	General Funds, HMA		
<b>TIMELINE</b>	2-5 years		
<b>PRIORITY</b>	Medium		
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	District Services		
<b>STATUS</b>	This is a new mitigation action. The district plans to develop and execute this exercise by 2023.		

<sup>i</sup> Nebraska Department of Education. December 2019. "2018-2019 Education Profile for District: Blair Public Schools." <https://nep.education.ne.gov/Districts/Index/89-0001-000?DataYears=20182019>.

<sup>ii</sup> Blair Public Schools. Accessed January 2020. <https://blairschools.org/>.