



# Insider



NORTH KANSAS CITY SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

FALL 2022



## Welcome Back!

*Starting the school year with new spaces and familiar faces . . .Pages 4-5*

## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Fall is one of the most exciting times of the year in North Kansas City Schools! As we start a new school year, we have the privilege of welcoming back more than 21,500 students across our district. Classrooms, cafeterias and stadiums are full again as our kids return, and you can feel the energy and buzz in the air.

Nowhere is that excitement more visible than at the two new facilities we officially opened on August 22 through the community's passage of a zero-tax increase bond issue in June 2020: **Davidson Elementary** and **Maplewood Elementary**. Students, families, and staff alike are all thrilled to be teaching and learning in brand-new schools. The **Briarcliff** community is also celebrating their fully-renovated school building, completed with additional space and modern upgrades. **Chapel Hill** learners returned this fall to a new gymnasium and music room. Schools across the district benefited from improvements over the summer – there are simply too many to list!

NKC Schools can't thank you enough for supporting the zero tax increase ballot issues in 2020 and this past April! You have given us the ability to manage growth throughout the district while ensuring every child has a fantastic facility in which to learn no matter which school they attend. Your trust in our financial stewardship has allowed us to begin planning for the next phase of construction that will occur at **Crestview**, **Nashua**, **Rising Hill** and many other sites throughout the district. Our **Facilities Plan** will carry us far into the future. Sound leadership by our Board of Education ensures that we can address all challenges that may come our way, including increasing student needs and the impact of inflation.

Even as we reflect on this wonderful start to the 2022-2023 school year, our vision is on the horizon. The Board of Education recently adopted the district's next **Strategic Plan** that will guide our priorities over the next five years. North Kansas City Schools' mission charges us to serve as relentless champions for all students. We pledge to fulfill that promise for all those we serve.

Thank you for your support of our North Kansas City Schools family. I invite you to join us this fall at an open house, Homecoming or the Education Foundation Fall Breakfast as we celebrate the start of an exceptional new school year together.

Dan Clemens, Ed.D.  
Superintendent – North Kansas City Schools  
superintendent@nkcschools.org

## NORTH KANSAS CITY SCHOOLS

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## MISSION STATEMENT

As relentless champions for all students, North Kansas City Schools' mission is to develop self-aware, authentically empowered, future-ready learners through a rich array of purposeful learning opportunities in collaborative communities of belonging that are:

- ▶ culturally affirming
- ▶ academically challenging
- ▶ experiential and exploratory for each student.

# Your Vote Counts on November 8

## *Surtax Cut Would Reduce Much-Needed Services, Not Homeowners' Taxes*



*District residents will have an important decision on the ballot this November. We encourage you to be an informed voter.*

Commercial property owners in Clay County currently pay a surtax of \$1.59 as part of their overall property taxes. The presiding commissioner proposed a reduction of the surtax to \$1.44 per \$100 of assessed valuation. This 10% change would **only impact commercial property owners, not homeowners in Clay County.**

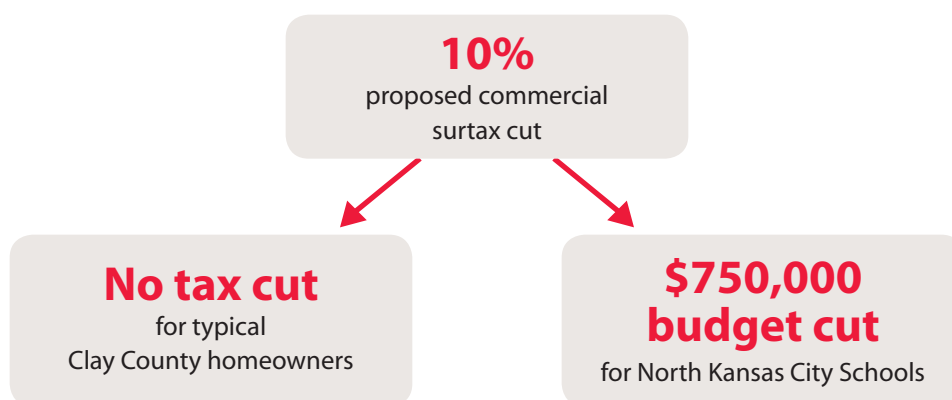
The greatest impact would be felt by cities, municipalities, libraries, the county's sheriff and health departments, mental health organizations and schools. As needs throughout the community have increased, each of these valuable service organizations would lose critical funding. Positions would be cut and jobs lost. **Important services for Clay County residents would be at risk of reduction.**

In North Kansas City Schools specifically, passage of this measure would result in a \$750,000 loss of revenue.

With nearly 75% of our total operating budget allocated for staff members, this hit would likely impact employees directly. Our **more than 21,500 students need us now** more than ever.

To make up for shortfalls, public service entities might need to ask communities for future levy increases. The domino effect of lowering the county surtax to help businesses could result in passing the burden on to residents to maintain services. Residents already contribute 75% of the tax dollars paid to Clay County, with only 25% coming from businesses. **November's ballot measure has the potential to further that imbalance.**

Our county is one of the fastest growing in Missouri. You've likely noticed many new businesses in our area. Michael Hicks, an expert on regional economics, cites research that shows tax rates don't drive economic decision-making, but rather the amenities those taxes pay for. **Good schools fuel great communities. Social services are imperative to thriving societies.** Lowering the commercial surtax would result in reduced funding for service organizations, ultimately impacting residents most.



**Please vote on November 8!**





*From the moment that you step into Mrs. Michael's third grade classroom, you know that you are witnessing something special.*

# Rachael Michael

## 2022 Regional Teacher of the Year

Mrs. Michael has a talent for connecting with each of her students and encourages their successes, both small and large. Every day, students have something to look forward to in her classroom! They set goals, celebrate accomplishments, encourage one another, and identify ways to improve. North Kansas City Schools is proud to celebrate Rachel Michael as a **2022 Missouri Regional Teacher of the Year**.

One of only six honorees in the Kansas City region, Rachael was selected from a pool of exceptional educators and surprised in June. At Rising Hill, Mrs. Michael is not only an innovative teacher, but an accomplished leader. She helped create the school's Tinker Room, a space where students can bring their ideas to life. Mrs. Michael creates incredible learning experiences for her students year-round! Highlights include the annual Small Mall, a Rising Hill tradition that empowers third graders to create and run their own small business. This past year,

students researched the Winter Olympics and held their own third grade Olympics, learning more about countries across the world through this project.

Mrs. Michael is the kind of teacher that we all aspire to be – and one that students wish they could have year after year. Parents attest to her greatness, noting that, “You hope your child gets a teacher who has great communication skills – keeping you updated on the important things, but also the small wins. I’ve never felt so involved in my child’s learning.” Rachael makes the effort to partner with families early and often throughout the school year. The classroom becomes a family, and students truly see their third grade experience as a real community.

Congratulations to Mrs. Michael on this well-deserved recognition for her creativity, dedication to students, and innovation in the classroom! She truly exemplifies what it means to serve as a champion for all students in North Kansas City Schools.



### What inspired you to become a teacher?

“Someday, your name will be in lights!” I still remember this comment written by my third-grade teacher, Mrs. Olson. In third grade, for the first time, I felt like school was fun. Reading could be a challenge, but Mrs. Olson helped me find books I loved: craft and cookbooks, rather than *The Babysitter's Club*. For my final third grade project, I baked rainbow cookies for my class, following a recipe that I had studied in a kids' cookbook. I was so proud, and decided that year that I wanted to help kids the way Mrs. Olson helped me. As a wise teacher once told me, every day matters, and every day counts.

— Rachael Michael, 2022 Missouri Regional Teacher of the Year



# CELEBRATING A NEW YEAR

More than 21,500 students arrived for the first day of school on Monday, August 22. As doors opened and the year began, classrooms were filled with smiles and joy! Students were excited to explore brand-new buildings at Davidson and Maplewood and significantly renovated learning spaces at Briarcliff and Chapel Hill. This investment in our older facilities and established neighborhoods was made possible by our community's support of the 2020 no tax increase bond. Thank you!



Briarcliff Bears spent the first day getting to know their classmates and testing out new classroom spaces.



Aubrielle and Jezmeralda, student leaders at Davidson, welcomed classmates on the first day and helped navigate their new building.



Sixth graders reconnected with friends over lunch at Gateway.



Middle school students learned their way around the library with a team scavenger hunt.





Teachers and staff were ready to welcome students and make them feel at home.



Hands-on learning and collaborative activities engaged our youngest learners at the Early Education Center.



Excited to enter the new building and ready for a photo op, families lined up outside Maplewood early!

## Our 2022 Convocation celebration

brought together 3,300 staff members to reconnect, recharge, and officially kick off the school year. Sponsored by the Education Foundation and featuring performances and inspirational messages, this annual time is a unique opportunity for all of North Kansas City Schools to celebrate our shared mission.



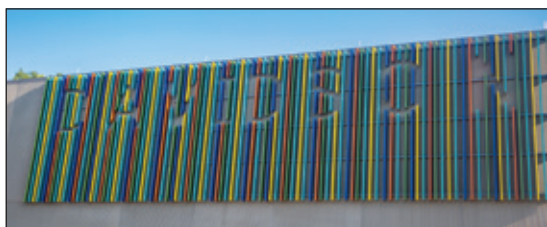


# CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

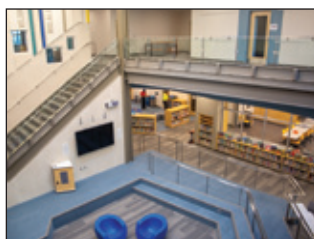
*There were smiles and a few tears of joy as students entered Briarcliff, Davidson and Maplewood elementary schools on August 22.*

Davidson and Maplewood are brand new schools and Briarcliff had massive renovations. The excitement wasn't just limited to the students, staff members in these buildings were just as thrilled as they moved in their new classrooms!

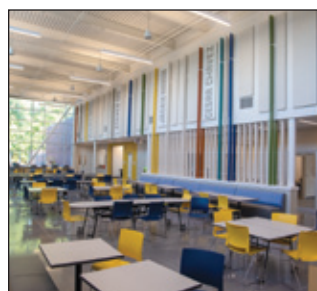
## Davidson Elementary



Colors highlight the exterior of the new Davidson Elementary School.



The new library media center is open in design to encourage collaboration between students and teachers.

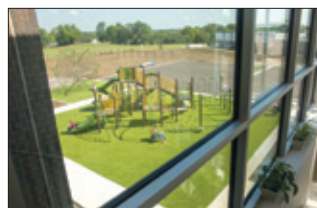


The new cafeteria is filled with color and light.

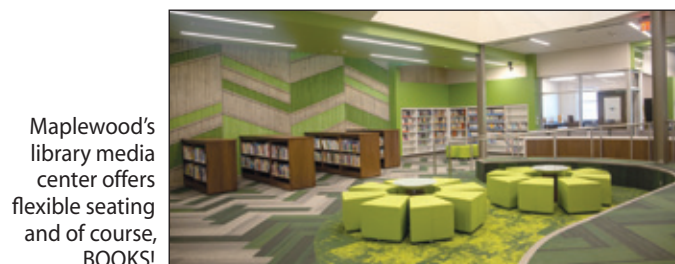
## Maplewood Elementary



Earthy tones and a nod to the school's name is evident in the wooden entry wall.



Stairwells capture natural light and show off the new playground.



Maplewood's library media center offers flexible seating and of course, BOOKS!

## Promises Made, Promises Kept

### Projects Completed – Summer 2022

- ✓ **Davidson Elementary School** – new building
- ✓ **Maplewood Elementary School** – new building
- ✓ **Briarcliff Elementary School** – complete renovation
- ✓ **Chapel Hill Elementary School** – new gym addition
- ✓ **Linden West Elementary School** – restroom renovations, new ceilings, new roof
- ✓ **Chouteau Elementary School** – new roof
- ✓ **Fox Hill Elementary School** – fire alarm upgrades, playground
- ✓ **Gracemor Elementary School** – new flooring
- ✓ **Meadowbrook Elementary School** – fire alarm upgrades, outdoor lighting, asphalt work, playground
- ✓ **Oakwood Manor Elementary School** – restroom renovations, HVAC work, ANSUL connection
- ✓ **Ravenwood Elementary School** – fire alarm upgrade, asphalt
- ✓ **Eastgate 6th Grade Center** – fire alarm upgrades, HVAC improvements
- ✓ **New Mark Middle School** – emergency lighting, restroom renovations
- ✓ **Northgate Middle School** – asphalt work
- ✓ **Oak Park High School** – interior painting, courtyard glass replacement, graphics
- ✓ **Winnetonka High School** – new dust collection system, interior painting, graphics

### Projects Started – Summer 2022

- ✓ **Districtwide IT Center** – Prospect Plaza
- ✓ **Districtwide Prof. Development Center** – Prospect Plaza

### Projects Completed – Fall 2022

- ✓ **Districtwide IT Center** – Prospect Plaza

### Projects Completed – Winter 2023

- **Districtwide Prof. Development Center** – Prospect Plaza

### Projects Started – Winter 2022/2023

- **Nashua Elementary School** – new building
- **Crestview Elementary School** – new building
- **Rising Hill Elementary School** – new addition
- **Chapel Hill Elementary School** – new addition

### Projects Completed – Fall 2023

- **Rising Hill Elementary School** – new addition
- **Chapel Hill Elementary School** – new addition

### Projects Completed – Summer 2024

- **Nashua Elementary School** – new building
- **Crestview Elementary School** – new building



## "I will never forget this experience..."



"D-Day beaches, Hill 262, Brecourt Manor... all these places I have seen in movies, TV shows, and books were right in front of me."

— Lorenzo Pecina, Staley



"Normandy Academy was the experience of a lifetime."

— Mirr Smalls, Winnetonka



"I learned a ton and felt like I knew nothing before in comparison."

— Ava Donegan, Oak Park  
(pictured left)

Thanks to the generosity of **Oak Park alumnae Linda Holwick Bond '76** and **Michele Evenson Lindsay '76**, the Education Foundation provided a scholarship to an incoming senior from each of our four high schools to attend the National World War II Museum's Normandy Academy in July. The 12-day immersive summer learning and leadership experience takes students to Normandy, France, challenging them to learn from the choices made before and during the historic D-Day landings.

**Aisatu Nakoulima (North Kansas City High School)** is pictured to the right with Madame Colette, a 93-year-old former French Resistance member and the subject of a 2021 Oscar-winning documentary. Aisatu shares, "[Madame Colette] had so many amazing stories about the resistance...She also told us about the value of education and how much we should be grateful for it since she finished school at ten due to the war. I will never forget this experience, for it was truly a life-changing moment for me."



## FALL BREAKFAST



### The future is bright!

By igniting the power of community at our annual **Fall Breakfast**, the Education Foundation connects generous hearts with our schools to provide opportunities for all students to discover their spark and excel through extraordinary educational experiences.

Join us on

**Thursday, October 20,**

at the KCI Expo Center for an inspirational event featuring a showcase of student achievements and performances, a spotlight on the Education Foundation's impact over the past year, and a message from Superintendent Dr. Dan Clemens.

Sponsorships range from \$100-\$25,000, and individual tickets are \$40.

**For more information and to RSVP, visit [nkschoolsfoundation.org/events/fall-breakfast](https://nkschoolsfoundation.org/events/fall-breakfast).**





# Thank You to Our YouthFriends



North Kansas City Schools' YouthFriends program matches students with caring adults in our community that provide academic and social support throughout the school year. These adults dedicate great time and care to our schools, and we are grateful for their commitment to our students! This spring, we celebrated those YouthFriends volunteers reaching milestone years of service. Congratulations, and thank you for all you do for our students!

YouthFriends are mentors who support students academically on a monthly basis. Applicants are screened and complete training before volunteering. Many opportunities are available, including serving as a tutor, library assistant, activity leader, cafeteria buddy or classroom helper.



For more information about YouthFriends and to get involved,  
call the Partners in Education office at **(816) 321-5018**  
or email [youthfriends@nkcschools.org](mailto:youthfriends@nkcschools.org).

## 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Kristi Babb

## 20 YEARS OF SERVICE

Jean Beatie  
Amy Maskil  
Debbie West

## 15 YEARS OF SERVICE

Danielle Costanza  
Stacey Evans  
Beth Huebener  
Tammie May  
Latisha McGinnis  
Kate Place  
James Scarrow  
Rochelle Servatius  
Andrea Smetana  
Amie Tjelle  
Trisha Vassmer  
Deyrle Wallace

## 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

Lynn Fleming  
Julie Knight  
Lania Majors  
Angela Nakoulima  
Melissa Wallace  
Jan Warman

## 5 YEARS OF SERVICE

Bnar Abdulla  
Kathy Bosaw  
Mary Brooks  
Mandi Brown  
Autumn Kastner  
Sarah Kelly  
Mark Lancaster  
Melissa Lancaster  
Nancy Myers  
Brooke Ravenscraft  
Stephanie Selby  
Nancy Smith  
Emily Snyder  
Katie Stokes  
Brooke Wiens  
John Wollam

Zimmerman Piano

2 Col. x 2.5"

Pediatric Care North

2 Col. x 2.5"