Advancing Initiatives:
Checking in on LSR7’s peak priorities

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DISTRICT’S CAREER AND COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS
SEE MASON ELEMENTARY’S NEW LEARNING SPACES
FIND UPDATES ON LSR7’S EQUITY PLAN
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SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGE

HAPPY SPRING, LSR7!

Nearly 18 months ago, a collaborative group of students, staff, parents and community members began the important process of developing the district’s 2021-2024 strategic plan. The team studied district data and demographics, surveyed the community and evaluated district needs in order to shape LSR7’s priorities.

Our Comprehensive School Improvement Plan serves as a roadmap for the district in support of our mission to prepare each student for success in life. This issue explores just a snapshot of the exciting work being accomplished around our C.L.I.M.B. priorities: career and college preparedness, leadership, instruction, mental wellness and belonging.

On page 2, learn how LSR7 is infusing work experiences and career exposure into the classroom at every level. These opportunities are possible in part because of the strong and supportive partnerships we have with our community and business partners.

Responsible leadership means investing in the future leaders of tomorrow, and I was proud to see three LSR7 high school students represent our district well at a recent legislative lunch hosted by the district. Our students shared their own priorities around public education with local legislators, community members and R-7 staff; read some of what they shared on page 4.

LSR7 continues its emphasis on high-quality instruction. Learn about updates to our computer science pathways that help make our computer science students even more competitive in our global workforce and view photos showcasing what future-ready learning looks like at Mason Elementary’s recently renovated campus on pages 5 and 6.

Finally, we continue to emphasize the importance of meeting the multi-faceted needs of all of our students. Learn more about a new partnership with Burrell Behavioral Health to help us link families with valuable mental health services provided at our school sites on page 7 and read a quick update on an exciting milestone in our efforts to ensure dignity and belonging for every student in LSR7 on page 8.

With much appreciation,

DAVID BUCK, Ed. D
SUPERINTENDENT
CAREER & COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS

Lee's Summit High School Civil Engineering & Architecture students present designs for a trailhead to Paragon Star and Land3 Studio as part of a client-connected project.

THERE’S LOTS TO CELEBRATE IN LSR7 WHEN IT COMES TO CAREER AND COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS.

- The Career Education Department is working with the Department of Labor and local business partners to establish registered youth apprenticeship programs in LSR7. Find our LSR7: Summit Up podcast on Apple and Spotify platforms to learn more.

- LSR7’s Diploma Plus program continues to provide real-world work experiences for LSR7 students before graduation. Take Lee’s Summit High School’s Civil Engineering and Architecture class, which pitched designs for new Village at Paragon Star trailheads to Land 3 Studios professionals this winter.

- In order to support career experiences at the middle and high school level, students need to explore their passions and personalities. Elementary students in LSR7 engage with RIASEC (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional) personality themes in order to build self-awareness and explore their strengths.

- Students in the Lee’s Summit R-7 School District received recognition as finalists in the 2022 National Merit Scholarship Program. Lena Baker, James Moore and Bella Washburn from Lee’s Summit North High School and Sophia Knehans and Emma Wang from Lee’s Summit West High School are among 15,000 finalists nationwide. Their high scores on the PSAT distinguish them as the top 1% of the country’s seniors to take the test. They can now apply to be one of the finalists, who compete for 7,500 National Merit Scholarships worth approximately $30 million.

- Thirty business students from Lee’s Summit High School, Lee’s Summit North High School and Lee’s Summit West High School earned 122 industry certifications through Microsoft. Students develop their skills with the help of exceptional educators in our Computer Business Applications courses. The students demonstrated excellence with software programs in order to receive Microsoft Office Specialist: Associate Certificates & Expert Certifications this past fall.
Children’s book illustrator Sam Ricks speaks with Lee’s Summit Elementary students about how he built a professional career in art.

Cecilia H. and Jaden C. work on a self-directed research project in their Medical Interventions class at Summit Technology Academy.
At a recent event to build relationships with local legislators, three students spoke from the heart about the value of their public education.

“Extracurriculars are just such a big aspect of our lives. They allow us to apply our learning and apply our initiative thinking into our everyday lives. Just being able to have the opportunity to be listened to from our teachers and our administrators and Dr. Buck has been really great. I feel we are capable of achieving great things.”

- MATHEW KIMAKU, LEE’S SUMMIT WEST

“The amount of college credit courses I was able to complete before leaving for college is important. I’m coming in as a second semester freshman instead of having to do all the prerequisites. I love that I was able to do that here in Lee’s Summit.”

- KYRA BROWN, LEE’S SUMMIT NORTH

“One thing about our educators is that they are people who care, people who put a lot into their students. I know that if I need something I can reach out to someone and they’ll be there for me or try to make things work.”

- KARA MOULDER, LEE’S SUMMIT WEST
Industries that rely on computer scientists are in need, and the need is growing. How does LSR7 respond? By completely rethinking how we prepare students to be future-ready for a promising career in information technology.

The number of current postings in the KC area grows every month, in most categories by double digits. In October, there were a total of 6,672 local jobs listed at companies including Garmin, Cerner, Humana, Honeywell, and more, according to the KC Tech Council. Occupations topping the list include Software Developer, Information Security Analysts, and Network and Computer Systems Administrator, among others.

LSR7 teachers, with the help of the Curriculum and Instruction Department, worked with our industry partners to identify skills needed in the workforce. Valued business partners shared trends through an advisory board and continued to be available for consultation. Educators learned as technology transitions to be more cloud-based, there is a clear shift from siloing specific skills to a need for cross-categorical training so professionals have a deep understanding of multiple concepts.

Our computer science teachers and curriculum specialists got to work to develop a pathway that helps students explore their interests and give rich learning opportunities to prepare them for their futures. As a sixth-grader in middle school, students will be enrolled in an “exploratory wheel” course which will help dip their toes into Information Technology (IT). From there, semester and year-long courses will further their core base knowledge.

High school courses differentiate to let students choose IT courses connected to Media and Web, Computer Science and Programming, as well as Hardware and Operating Systems. High schools also offer more rigorous curriculum through AP options. Students who are passionate and are ready for the next steps have additional options at Summit Technology Academy at the Missouri Innovation Campus (STA).

The computer science pathway at STA is recognized as a Cisco Lighthouse Academy. Next year, there will be 8 different semester courses in a “choose your own adventure” style curriculum. After mastering the foundational courses, options to dive deep into software languages, data and artificial intelligence, and app development will all be available. Additional capstone courses in networking and cybersecurity will also be offered, giving access to the cross-categorical training that industry demands. Multiple certifications, 20+ hours of college credit, and even access to internships through the MIC accelerated bachelor program with more than 50 businesses across the KC metro area are available which give students a clear advantage after graduation.

Just as the IT industry constantly changes, LSR7 computer science educators continue to meet the needs by revising the curriculum, equipping students for their future careers.

- By Emily Hobbs, Summit Technology Academy career navigator
Mason Elementary Principal Beth Ratty explains the shared spaces in the kindergarten suite to the Business Roundtable Committee.

Dr. Buck speaks with a BASS YMCA student at Mason Elementary during a tour of the building.

Members of Dr. Buck’s Teacher Advisory Committee explore a Makers Space lab during a tour of Mason Elementary this February.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, REIMAGINED, AT MASON ELEMENTARY

The Mason Elementary bond renovations have concluded on time and on budget. The future-ready learning spaces promote innovative, flexible and collaborative learning and will serve as a prototype for future elementary projects.
The Lee’s Summit R-7 School District has partnered with Burrell Behavioral Health to launch a pilot program providing school-based mental health services at seven LSR7 schools. The partnership was finalized on Thursday, Feb. 24, when the Lee’s Summit R-7 School District Board of Education unanimously approved a memorandum of understanding that will allow LSR7 students to benefit from Burrell’s multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) approach to school-based mental health care.

“The partnership with Burrell provides valuable social-emotional and behavioral support services to students in the setting where children spend a significant amount of time: school,” said Dr. Rexanne Hill, executive director of student support for the Lee’s Summit R-7 Schools. “This program, coupled with the meaningful support that LSR7 students receive from our dedicated counseling and ed therapist team, empowers us to expand our commitment to student and staff wellness at a time when supporting the mental health of our school community is as important as ever.”

In February 2022, school-based mental and behavioral health centers began at Lee’s Summit High School, Pleasant Lea Middle School, Lee’s Summit Elementary, Meadow Lane Elementary, Trailridge Elementary, Sunset Valley Elementary, and Underwood Elementary. Onsite therapeutic and case management services are available for eligible students and families, in addition to training and consultation for school faculty as needed. Linking students and families to support services and increasing student engagement at school are just a few of the outcomes of the partnership. The remaining schools in LSR7 will have a semester phase-in process, and every school will receive this opportunity over the next two school years.

“Schools are perhaps the most important place for life-saving behavioral health services to be accessible to students and families,” said Burrell Behavioral Health President & CEO Dr. C.J. Davis. “As a Lee’s Summit High School graduate myself, I know first-hand the quality of education LSR7 students receive. Burrell is proud to supplement this learning with evidence-based, trauma-informed mental health services that will change lives.”

The implementation of school-based health centers in LSR7 aligns with the district’s strategic plan commitments dedicated to student and staff wellness.

“At Burrell we’re just excited for this program,” said Tiffany Hall, a school-based clinician with Burrell Behavioral Health, “We’re already in the schools seeing our very first clients, and we look forward to this program growing. We just want to be able to work collaboratively as a team.”
Students participate in conversation during a Dignity, Inclusion and Belonging student meeting this fall.

**EQUITY PLAN UPDATE:**

The district continues its strategic commitment to its Equity Plan, which aims to ensure our school environments promote individual dignity and belonging for all students. In December, the Board of Education unanimously approved the district’s Equity Policy, Board Policy ACIB. The policy was shaped through a collaborative process and reflects LSR7’s expectations for diversity and inclusion.

Our collaborative process is ongoing. This year, staff, parents and students formed Dignity, Inclusion and Belonging teams to provide input on R-7 efforts. The teams focus on school-specific action plans to build belonging and a culture of dignity in our district and examine Board Policy ACIB and its impacts.

Hazel Grove Elementary students participate in a teamwork-building game during a Nest meeting. Nest groups meet quarterly and are made up of students from all grade levels to foster relationships among students of different ages.

Hazel Grove Elementary students walk together to their Nest meeting.
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