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SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGE

LAST MONTH, LSR7 WRAPPED UP A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL YEAR full of celebrations, strategic progress, and, of course, learning and growth for our students and staff.

While we miss our students over the summer, the end of the year always brings a special energy in our school community as we celebrate the milestones of students graduating to the next step.

I recently had the privilege of witnessing a special milestone for several aspiring educators.

Twenty-one future teachers have signed on to be part of our district mission to prepare each student for success in life — by participating in our Grow Your Own program.

Grow Your Own is in Year 2 here in LSR7, and empowers graduates studying to become teachers with professional development, career experiences, mentoring and, yes, financial assistance during their college years when they agree to bring their talents back to the district after graduation.

Read all about LSR7’s efforts to empower students who are passionate about public education to work, live and thrive in our district someday on page 2.

A feature on page 4 and 5 showcases another special experience fostered by LSR7 for aspiring educators — this time from across the world. Take a look at “day in the life” of several Japanese student teachers who spent time in Lee’s Summit through a program facilitated by the Summit International Studies Academy at Summit Technology Academy.

Head to page 6 to learn more about the amazing work and career opportunities that high school students are experiencing as part of our Diploma Plus initiative, which aims to graduate students with “real-world” credentials such as college credit, internships, client-connected projects and more.

Finally, it was a joy reading about East Trails Middle School seventh grader Ava Palmer’s experience announcing a draft pick for the 2023 NFL Draft. While I enjoyed reading about her once-in-a-lifetime experience, I appreciated her characterization of her school environment the most.

Strong students. Strong leaders. Kind teachers. That’s something we can celebrate across the district.

Have a healthy and happy summer. We can’t wait to see you next year.

With much appreciation,

DAVID BUCK, Ed. D
SUPERINTENDENT
The end of the school year is full of celebrations, graduation ceremonies, banquets, retirement receptions and for the second year in a row, a signing ceremony that is one-of-a-kind.

Twenty-one Lee’s Summit R-7 School District seniors signed contracts this week committing to return to the district, this time as teachers, as part of the district’s Grow Your Own program.

This is the second signing LSR7 has hosted since the district launched Grow Your Own as a means to guide students to becoming accomplished teachers by setting up support systems starting in middle school and lasting through college.

The program aims to identify students who are interested in becoming teachers, link them to experiences that give them valuable exposure to the profession in high school and support them with development and leadership opportunities in college.

LSR7 has multiple ways it exposes students to the benefits of being a teacher, from career day presentations and child development courses to Lee’s Summit Teacher Academy Clubs to the Summit Technology Academy half-day Teacher Educator program, which empowers aspiring teachers with field experience hours, UCM dual credit, paraprofessional certificates and more.
Students apply and interview to be a part of the Grow Your Own program as a senior. Students selected for the program receive a mentor and yearly professional development provided by the district while they’re in college, while committing to meeting specific requirements.

In addition, students have the opportunity to come back and earn a paycheck for the district throughout college while completing required classroom hours. In their final year, Grow Your Own students will complete their student teaching in LSR7 classrooms and be guaranteed an interview for a full time position. If hired by the district, those students will also be reimbursed $10,000 over their first four years in the district for student loans or graduate classes.

There are several ways a student can set themselves on the path to be a strong Grow Your Own candidate. Each middle school has a Lee’s Summit Teacher Academy for students with an interest in teaching or education. The program continues in high school, along with the opportunity to apply to the Teacher Educator Academy, a program offered through Summit Technology Academy.

Seniors in the Teacher Educator Academy, LSTA clubs and other profession-focused programs apply to be a part of the Grow Your Own program in March each year and interview for competitive spots in April. Those selected commit in May.

The first round (2022) of Grow Your Own participants just wrapped up their freshmen year. How many students of the first-year cohort are returning for their second year supporting education in the school district?

100 percent.
Eighteen student teachers from Musashino University in Japan visited Lee’s Summit R-7 Schools in February for a three-week classroom observation experience facilitated by the Summit International Studies Academy at Summit Technology Academy. The visit was designed to be an exchange of culture, giving the Japanese students an opportunity to experience a public school system in the United States firsthand while sharing with Lee’s Summit students and teachers about their lives in Japan.

The visit was structured to give students a view into classrooms at each building level — elementary, middle and high school — during their three-week stay. The Japanese students shadowed students, listened to lessons and asked our teachers questions.

“Programs like these are just phenomenal ways for our students to open their horizons,” says Mr. Curtis Cook, Summit International Studies Academy program director. “I think all of our students that were able to experience our Japanese guests are better for it.”
“Programs like these are just phenomenal ways for our students to open their horizons.”

CURTIS COOK  
SUMMIT INTERNATIONAL STUDIES ACADEMY PROGRAM DIRECTOR

“I think all of our students that were able to experience our Japanese guests are better for it.”

Musashino University student Ms. Washio listens as HHE 4th graders discuss an assignment.

Musashino University student Ms. Yamauchi oversees an art class.

Musashino University student Ms. Yamauchi listens as HHE 4th Grade Teacher Ms. Rowland discusses an assignment with students.
In LSR7, our Diploma Plus initiative gives high school students the opportunity to pick specialized programming and career pathways that empower them to graduate with credentials called “Market Value Assets” (MVAs).

MVAs look like interning with Faulkner’s Ranch, helping a community business with a client-connected project or repairing water pumps through a youth registered apprenticeship at JCI Industries. We call these credentials MVAs because they are a signal that our students have real-world experiences beyond a high school diploma.

As LSR7 continues to integrate real-world learning opportunities into the curriculum, students may have the opportunity to earn five different MVAs: Early College Assets, Client-Connected Projects, Internship Assets, Industry Credential Assets and Entrepreneurial Experience Assets.

All Diploma Plus work, from elementary to middle school, culminates in these real world experiences at the high school level. Each is designed to give students experiences that can be added to a resume or talked about in an interview. These MVAs form an essential bridge between classroom learning and careers available to students after graduation.
Weston H. measures liquids into a test tube during General Biology.

Machining students took a tour of the shop at JCI Industries, a company that offers youth registered apprenticeships to LSR7 students.

Miller Park Center students package goods for a customer at their Lee’s Summit Farmer’s Market booth. Students run their own business for the Farmer’s Market, which includes conducting market research, producing goods and developing customer service skills.

Weston H. is taking three classes this semester through LSR7’s partnership with Metropolitan Community College: Longview.
I was on student council last year and we did Fuel Play 60, it encourages kids to get active and eat healthy and I guess they must have been impressed with how I did with it.

It was crazy. We got to walk around a little bit and we got to sit in the theater and it was really, really fun.

I was backstage, I was really nervous, I was shaking. But as soon as I got offstage it felt so good, it was insane.

I mean I was only really looking at the front few rows because I didn’t want to stare at these thousands of thousands of people.

My first line was, “Hello Kansas City,” because I’m talking to my people, you know? Kansas City is my family.

It was surreal to just be able to, people are seeing me, people will know who I am. People will be able to say, “Wow! She did this!”

There’s a YouTube video that somebody posted and it has like 4.6 thousand views. And that many people saw me!

It’s kinda cool being in a new middle school. We get to set the precedent for the rest of the school. You know, we’re history. We are the history of this school.

It’s the end of the year and it feels like I’ve been here forever. It feels like [ETMS] has always been here.

We have strong students, strong leaders and our teachers are so kind. A lot of us are sharing this new experience.

I’m in theater and Scholar Bowl and I have a lot of new friends. I’ve met people I would not have met otherwise thanks to doing extracurriculars.
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