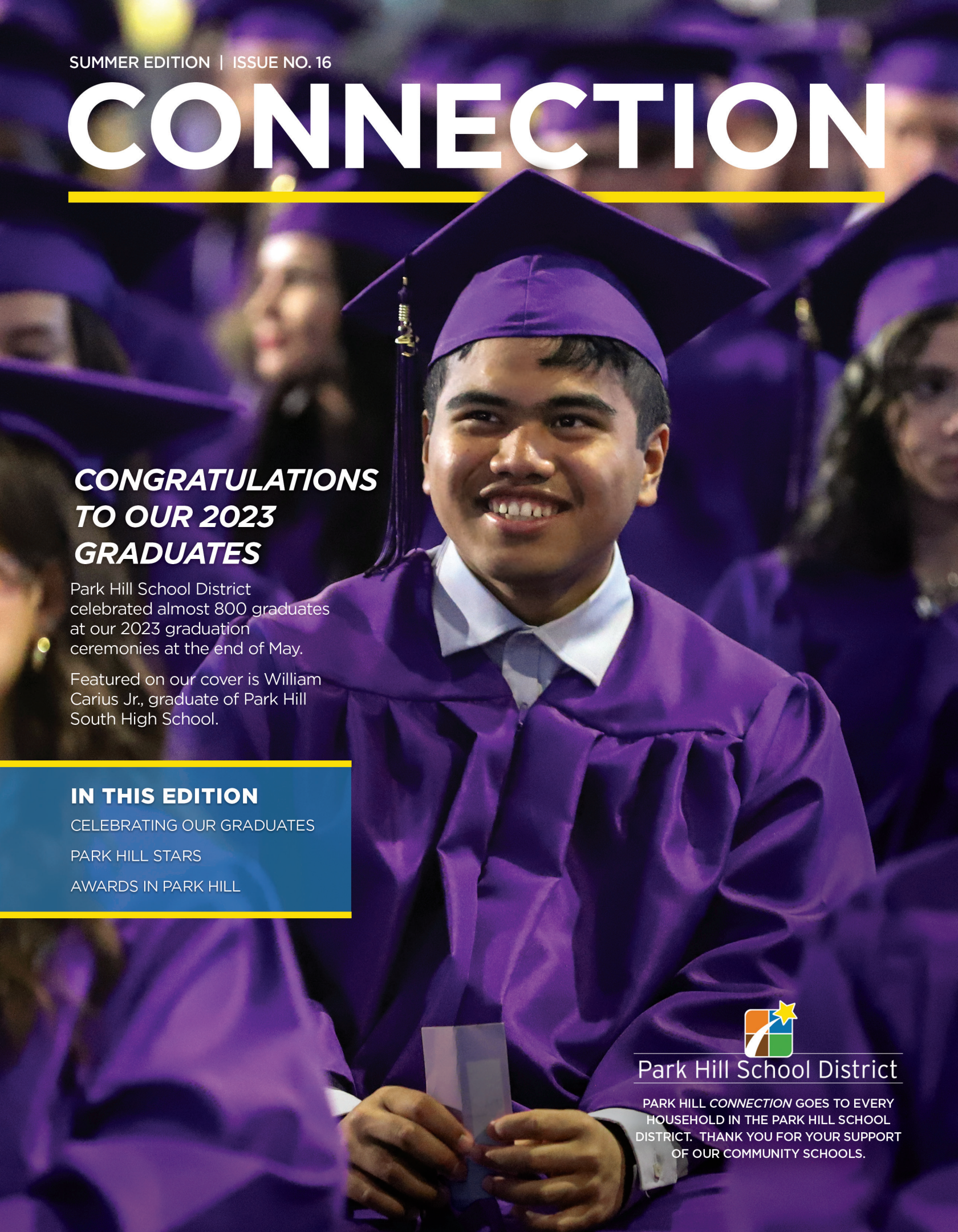
SUMMER EDITION | ISSUE NO. 16

CONNECTION



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2023 GRADUATES

Park Hill School District celebrated almost 800 graduates at our 2023 graduation ceremonies at the end of May.

Featured on our cover is William Carius Jr., graduate of Park Hill South High School.

IN THIS EDITION

CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATES

PARK HILL STARS

AWARDS IN PARK HILL

Park Hill School District

PARK HILL *CONNECTION* GOES TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD IN THE PARK HILL SCHOOL DISTRICT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.



Straight from the Superintendent

Dear Park Hill Community,

The culmination of our early childhood through high school experience happens each year with our Park Hill High School and Park Hill South High School graduates walking across the graduation stage in preparation for life after high school. In Park Hill, we have a suite of offerings that prepare our graduates for their next adventures in life. From future-ready assets (industry and college-level credentials or distinctions that make students more marketable after graduation) to internships and advanced course work, our students earn valuable experiences during their time with us. From early childhood programming through elementary school and middle school, our programs and experiences provide our graduates with the knowledge, experience and passion to go confidently in the direction of their dreams.

As we celebrate our graduates this season, we hope you take some time to congratulate a student, whether a young student or high school student, on their work and dedication to being a young person in public education today. Our students dedicate most of their week to us during the school year. They deserve a congratulations and a celebration for that time and energy. Thank you for helping us spread gratitude to them.

And to our Class of 2023, thank you for letting us help you build a successful future for yourself. You make us proud.

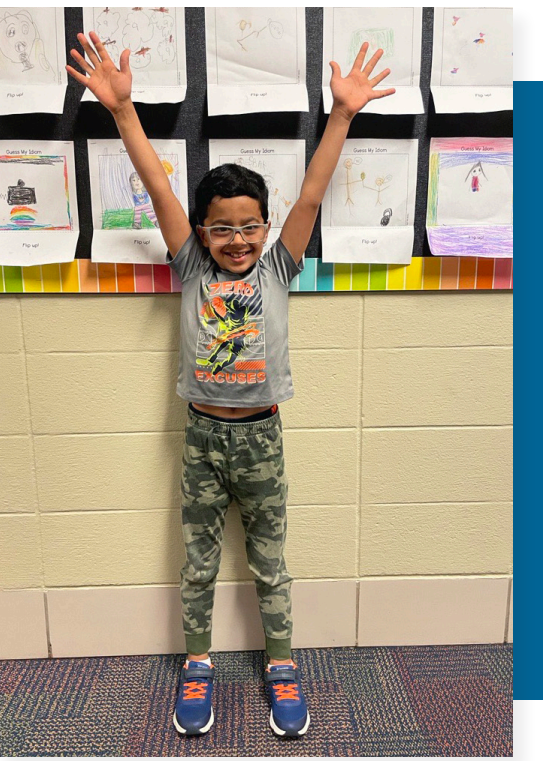
Sincerely,
Dr. Mike Kimbrel
Superintendent

Welcome to the New *Connection*!

Connection is a publication of the Park Hill School District, distributed quarterly, without charge, to patrons within the Park Hill School District boundaries. Our new magazine format launched in the fall of 2022.

Park Hill Board of Education

Brandy Woodley, President
Daryl Terwilleger, Vice President
Janice Bolin, Treasurer
Layla Barbur, Member
Shereka Barnes, Member
Scott Monsees, Member
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AROUND THE DISTRICT


CHINN ELEMENTARY


CONGRESS MIDDLE SCHOOL

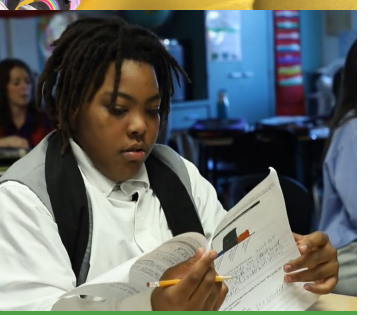

ENGLISH LANDING ELEMENTARY


GERNER FAMILY EDUCATION CENTER


GRADEN ELEMENTARY


HAWTHORN ELEMENTARY


HOPEWELL ELEMENTARY


LAKEVIEW MIDDLE SCHOOL


LEAD INNOVATION STUDIO


LINE CREEK ELEMENTARY


PARK HILL HIGH SCHOOL



PARK HILL SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL


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WALDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL

GRADUATION



It was a time of reflection on Saturday, May 20, as Park Hill School District celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2023 – the culmination of years of hard work and personal growth.





Lessons Learned was the 2023 Park Hill South High School graduation theme, with 431 seniors receiving their diplomas during the mid-day ceremony at HyVee Arena. Senior class speakers Ashlee Kelley, Valedictorian Ryan Kempton, Bode Eisenmenger, Class President Griffin Gregg and Sophie Nguyen shared lessons from their time at South – from facing immense change to learning to appreciating the small joys – as the class heads off to its next big adventure.

Later that evening, 379 Park Hill High School seniors received their diplomas during their graduation ceremony. Class valedictorians Shad Hassan and Shawn Walden and senior class president Emily Pella addressed their classmates, encouraging them to continue learning and growing and to focus on what comes next. And to remember that whatever happens, they are and always will be Trojans at heart.





We are #ParkHillProud of the Class of 2023. From our early childhood programming through elementary and middle school to the comprehensive education offered at Park Hill South High School and Park Hill High School and the project-based education from LEAD Innovation Studio, we know our students are equipped to boldly face their futures.

Congratulations to Our 2023 Park Hill Stars

Our employees help contribute to our success, and we like to recognize them for all they do for our students. That is why we present the Park Hill Star award once a month to a pre-K or elementary teacher, a secondary teacher and a support employee. Anyone can nominate an employee for this award. Nominations will open again in August.

JANUARY



Shalia Stamper
Tiffany Ridge



Janie Smith
Park Hill High



Vicki Thurston
Russell Jones

FEBRUARY



Jenni Miscavish
Chinn



Andrea Keairnes
Walden



Laura LaVine
Union Chapel

MARCH



Johna Martinez
Graden



Christy Weymuth
Walden



Ashley Hendrickson
Park Hill High

APRIL



Chasity Vorbeck
Union Chapel



Kristi Cox
Lakeview



Jessica Smith
English Landing

MAY



Aimee McDonald
Renner



Amanda Shanks
LEAD



Duane Muckenthaler
Park Hill High

SEPTEMBER



Becca Martin
Prairie Point



Brittanay Dickerson
Line Creek



JJ Collins
Plaza

OCTOBER



Katie Gray
Southeast



Nichole Oothoudt
Congress



Ryan Stewart
Chinn

NOVEMBER



Kate Guier
Graden



Angela Siegel
Park Hill South



Hezron Navas
Plaza

DECEMBER



Kristine Douglas
English Landing



Lisa Sickel
Lakeview



Molly Kelley
Gerner



Straight From Our Staff

Jessica Grider has been a teacher in Park Hill School District since 2010. She taught English Language Arts at Park Hill High School for 12 years before moving to her current position as Library Media Specialist - also at the high school. She has a bachelor's degree in English Education from Northwest Missouri State University and will complete her Master's degree in Library Information Science from Emporia State University in 2024. Jessica was a finalist for Park Hill Teacher of the Year in 2022.

Park Hill: With graduation season here, what has it been like watching our students grow throughout their four years in high school?

Jessica: Graduation season is always a bittersweet time. It's sad to say goodbye to students with whom I've been close over the last four years, but also exciting to see them off to their next endeavors. I've been lucky enough in my career to teach underclassmen, so I've had the experience of seeing students come into high school as wide-eyed and brand-new ninth graders then watching them mature into ambitious, confident young adults. Watching students' growth in real time is such a privilege, and I love getting to reflect on their high school achievements as graduation nears every year.

PH: You have a special vantage point as a teacher who's moved to the Library Media Specialist position. Has this move been what you expected? Did you miss being in the classroom?

J: This school year has been an excellent transition year for me, but it feels very different than being in the classroom. As a librarian, my to-do list is a mile long every day and I never reach the end, but it's because there is always a steady stream of students coming to the library who are looking for books, asking research questions or just seeking out a welcoming space. We like to joke that this job is one of constant interruptions but in the best way. The thing I miss most about being in the classroom is having a group of students who feel like my own. I miss getting to see the same groups day in and day out, getting to know them and their lives and watching their academic growth. However, one of the best things about moving to the library is getting to see so many more students than I did when I was in the classroom. I get to talk to hundreds of students who I wouldn't have known if I were still in the classroom.

PH: Looking back at your first year as a librarian, what stands out to you the most?

J: Looking back at my first year as a librarian, what stands out to me the most is how vast this role is. During any given school day, I can help an Advanced Placement (AP) student access a database through our Mid-Continent Public Library partnership, create a display of fiction and nonfiction books to highlight a specific heritage, show students how to navigate our online catalog system, push in to a classroom and co-teach a lesson, complete diversity audits of the new materials I purchased, and the list goes on. No two days are alike, and that keeps me on my toes.

PH: Does being in the Library Media Center change your perspective of the school or the students?

J: One of the things I like best about being in the Library Media Center is I am now in the hub of the school, which means I get to see so many cool things our teachers and students are doing. Our Spanish III students used library space to complete a yoga workout narrated 100% in Spanish; our AP Research students used a library room to conduct experiments for their research; students who applied for Aspiring Professionals completed interviews in the library conference rooms. There are so many wonderful things happening in our school, and I now feel like I have a front-row seat to all of it.

PH: What advice have you given our seniors as they graduate this year?

J: Set realistic goals and create a step-by-step plan to achieve them. Make choices that help you thrive and stay safe. Create healthy boundaries with family, friends and other peers. Protect your peace.



Straight From Our Seniors



Hadley Ratzlaff
Park Hill High School

Park Hill: How was your senior year experience?

Hadley: It was really great. For years, my mom has told me how amazing her senior year was at Park Hill, and I am happy to say that mine has definitely lived up to my expectations. I have made so many memories this year that the end is definitely bittersweet. My experience will stay with me forever.

PH: What are your plans for life after high school?

H: Next year, I will attend the University of Kansas. I plan on majoring in Human Biology and then attending the University of Kansas Medical School. I would like to then go on to become a trauma surgeon. I would love to work at the KU Medical Center after my residency.

PH: What is your favorite Park Hill memory?

H: My favorite memory is when I was at Universal Studios with the Park Hill Dance Team. I was with my best friend Megan, and we were going on the two newest rides, the VelociCoaster and Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure. We were sprinting around the park much faster than we ever ran at morning practice. We stayed at the park until the second it closed. This is why I was so glad I got involved in sports/clubs at school, as it gave me so many experiences.

PH: What advice would you give to your younger self (and our younger Park Hill students)?

H: Finding a balance is so important. I've been involved in just about every club, as well as Varsity Dance Team, and taking five-plus AP classes. But on top of all of this, I have had the time of my life with my friends. It's great to do it all, but don't overload yourself. Remember that you will one day look back on your high school years and want to go back, so cherish your time and make as many memories as possible.

PH: Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?

H: Ten years from now, I hope to be in the middle of my residency at KU Medical Center, on my way to becoming a surgeon. Hopefully, by this time, I will have made even more wonderful memories and will be nearly starting my career.

Park Hill UNFILTERED

Park Hill: How was your senior year experience?

Dulce: My senior year felt like a roller coaster of emotions. One moment, I was daydreaming with my friends about the memorable and silly adventures ahead of us. Other times, I was fighting senioritis asking myself *why am I still here* hours before a final exam. Somedays, I missed my childhood. Other days, I longed for the freedom to pursue my dreams. This roller coaster ride finished in the blink of an eye; it taught me many skills and lessons that I will take into my new chapter of life and education.

PH: What are your plans for life after high school?

D: I plan to continue my academic journey at Kansas State University and major in Animal Science on a pre-vet track. To expand my knowledge and embrace my passion of veterinary medicine, I will continue interning in various areas of veterinary medicine to develop the skills necessary for my field interest and personally grow through the mentorship of others. I plan to also be involved in the cultural-based organizations at my university.

PH: What is your favorite Park Hill memory?

D: Organizing 'Faces of South' is my favorite Park Hill memory. 'Faces of South' was a cultural fair in which students, staff and families came together to celebrate and explore the cultural diversity at Park Hill South High School. The dishes, dances, cultural dresses and art were extraordinary and mind-opening. Seeing my friends and peers shine in their brightest colors at the cultural fair was memorable and the highlight of my high school career.

PH: What advice would you give to your younger self (and our younger Park Hill students)?

D: The advice I would give to my younger self is to never underestimate our potential to succeed. Opportunities and chances are like shooting stars; they are easy to miss. Don't let this become a cycle of misery. Overcome that procrastination, overcome that stress...don't wait until tomorrow to do what you can do now. Two hours of concentration prevents many days of stress.

PH: Where do you see yourself 10 year from now?

D: Ten years from now, I see myself as a small-animal veterinarian working alongside an amazing team in Kansas City, Mo., where my support lies. I will also be giving back to my community through financial assistance and veterinary medicine services. My passion for wildlife and animal rehabilitation services will also lead me to do specialty studies and travel to under-resourced wildlife sanctuaries. There's no doubt that by then, my home will also be owned by several rescued animals.



Dulce Reyes
Park Hill South High School

Celebrating Success Around Park Hill School District

These are just a few of the awards and accolades Park Hill staff and students have received this spring.

Visit www.parkhill.k12.mo.us/news-and-stories to catch up on the latest honors and celebrations.



Perfect ACT Score

Three juniors from Park Hill South High School earned a perfect score (36) on the ACT. Congratulations to Sylvia Nguyen, McKelvey McDaniel and Austin Felton! According to ACT, their perfect scores put them in the top less-than-one-percent of test takers.



Emerging Leaders

Congratulations to the LEAD Black Student Union (BSU) for receiving the 2023 NKC BSU Sankofa EMERGING LEADER Award from North Kansas City High School's NKC Black Student Union Officer Committee.

The LEAD BSU was chosen because it worked tirelessly on campus and in the community to bring people together and demonstrated initiative by seeking ways to impact the future positively. Way to go, LEAD BSU!



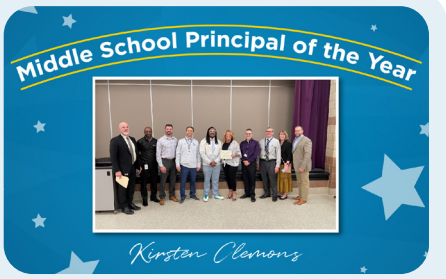
DECA State Champions

Congratulations to Park Hill High School seniors Milkey Sarbessa and Daniel Lynn for being named state champions at the DECA State Career Development Conference. Milkey won for her Integrated Marketing Campaign (Product) and Daniel took first place with his Independent Business Plan.



RAMP Designation

Hawthorn Elementary recently earned the RAMP designation from the American School Counselor Association for its counseling program. RAMP stands for Recognized ASCA Model Program and recognizes schools committed to delivering a data-informed school counseling program. Hawthorn will be honored during a special ceremony at the ASCA's Annual Conference for its diligence and dedication to its students.



GKCMPA Middle School Principal of the Year

Congratulations to Kirsten Clemons, principal at Lakeview Middle School, on her recognition as the Greater Kansas City Missouri Principals Association (GKCMPA) Middle School Principal of the Year!



Top Scholars

Three seniors in Park Hill School District earned recognition in Missouri Scholars 100, a statewide program that honors 100 of Missouri's top academic students in the class of 2023.

Congratulations to Ari Staggs from Park Hill and Sophia Nguyen and Ryan Kempton from Park Hill South, who earned the top recognition and were honored at a luncheon in Columbia, Mo.

The Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals sponsors the Missouri Scholars 100 program. The students must have a minimum GPA of 3.750, a minimum ACT score of 29, or a minimum SAT score of 1,280, be ranked in the upper ten percent of the class, plus take high-level courses in mathematics, science, English and foreign language. The student must also have excellent attendance, be an exemplary school citizen and be involved in the school activity program.



Leading the Way

Park Hill South senior Ashlee Kelley was awarded a Distinguished Leader Award from the Missouri Association of Student Councils. She was one of 61 student leaders from across the state to receive the award based on leadership, school involvement and community presence. Ashlee is vice president of PHS's Student Council. Congratulations, Ashlee!



Missouri Scholars Academy

Congratulations to the Park Hill School District sophomores who earned spots at the Missouri Scholars Academy summer program at the University of Missouri! Scholars from Park Hill High School are Avyam Bansal, Isabel Tott, Nathan Chen and Isabel Nolker. Scholars from Park Hill South High School are Avery Swanson, Maya Villanueva and Alexander Smith.

The Academy is a three-week academic residential program for 330 of Missouri's academically gifted students. Students earn their spots based on several factors, including grade-point averages, student essays and teacher recommendations that described the students' leadership, creativity, curiosity, problem-solving ability and initiative.



Positive Behavior Support

Twelve Park Hill School District schools earned Awards of Excellence from the Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support program for exemplary teaching and reinforcing behavioral expectations. This process is designed to improve student behavior, maximize instructional time and increase student engagement.

Staff members use engaging lessons to teach expectations, use small symbolic rewards to connect good behavior to success, organize groups to build social skills and use feedback to improve the process.

GOLD RECOGNITION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Chinn Elementary
Line Creek Elementary
Union Chapel

This is the seventh consecutive year Union Chapel Earned the Gold Recognition.

SILVER RECOGNITION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Hopewell Elemntary
English Landing Elementary
Prairie Point Elementary
Lakeview Middle School
Walden Middle School

SILVER RECOGNITION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Graden Elementary
Hawthorn Elementary
Russell Jones Education Center
Tiffany Ridge Elementary



Board Member Certification

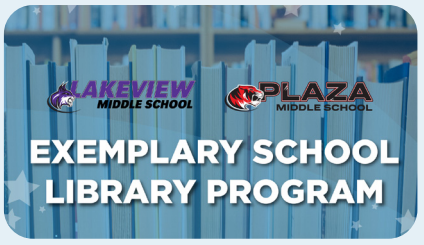
Congratulations to the Park Hill School District Board of Education members receiving certification from the Missouri School Boards Association (MSBA). The certifications are achieved by taking additional trainings and participating in professional development and networking events.

Shereka Barnes, board member, Advanced Certification

Janice Bolin, board treasurer, Master and Distinguished Certification

Brandy Woodley, board president, Advanced and Master Certification

The trio will be recognized at the MSBA Igniting Great Ideas Summit.



Exemplary Library Program

Congratulations to Lakeview and Plaza Middle Schools for receiving the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Exemplary Library Status for their programs. Julie Robaska is the Library Media Specialist at Lakeview. Sharon Rigos is the Library Media Specialist at Plaza. Way to go, Julie and Sharon!

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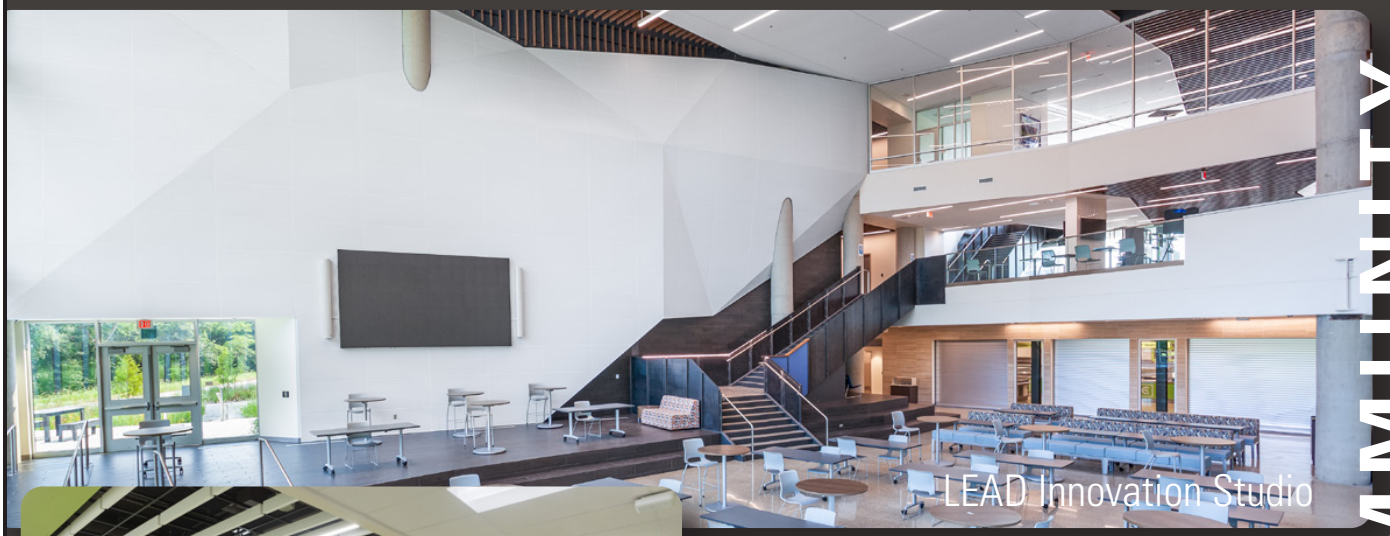
All programs are available for boys and girls.

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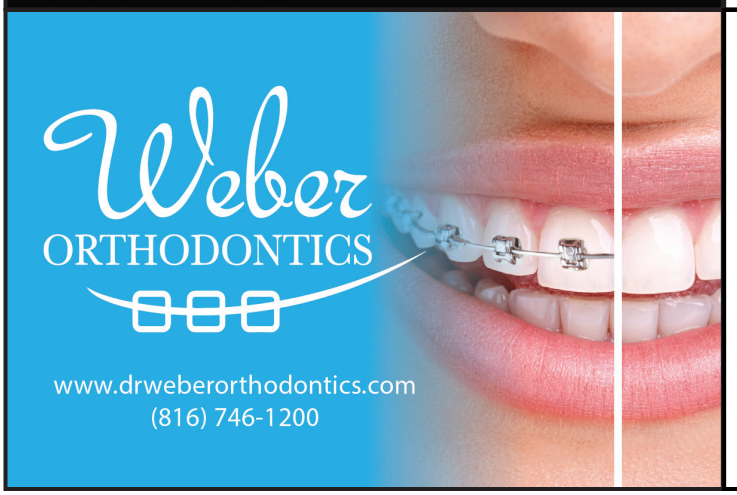
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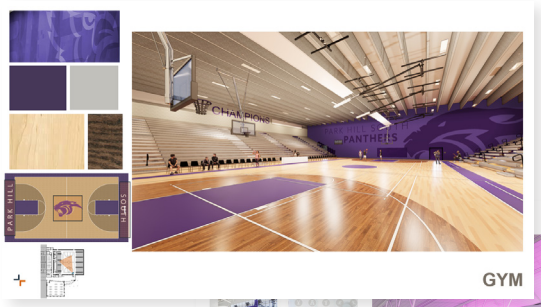
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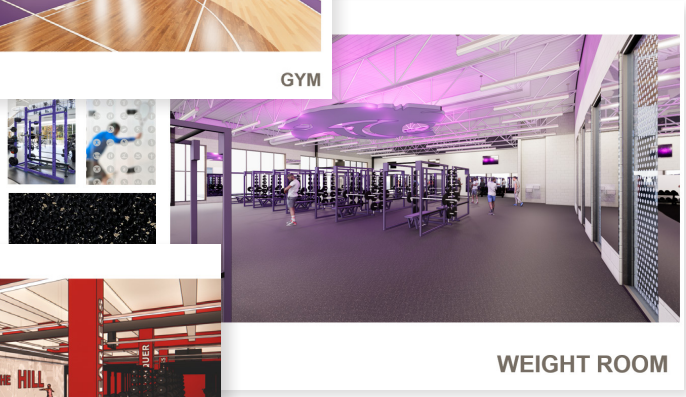
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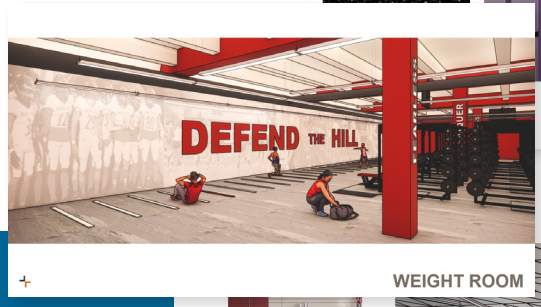
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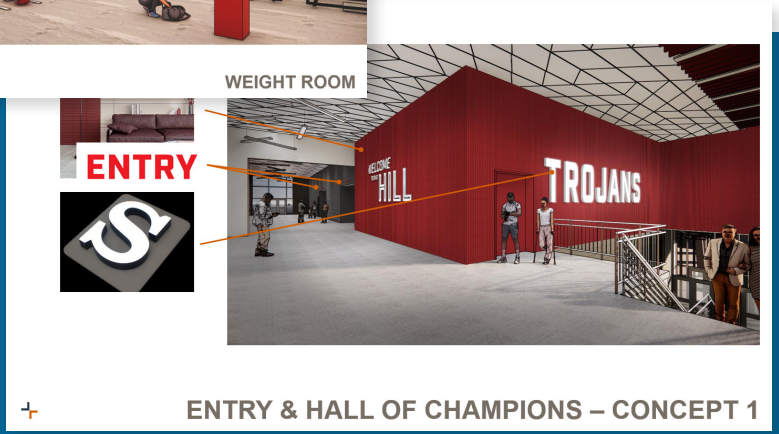
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Park Hill Highlight

Hollis + Miller Architects have shared exciting updates about our bond projects during recent board meetings. During the May 11 meeting, the architects shared renderings of the projects at Park Hill High School and Park Hill South High School.

You can see more from the high schools and Russell Jones Education Center on our website, www.parkhill.k12.mo.us.

While you're there, be sure to check out our timeline and project overviews for the many projects ahead.

For more moments like this, be sure to follow our social media channels on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

Park Hill School District
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www.parkhill.k12.mo.us