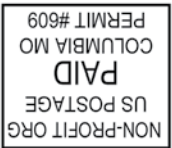


QUARTERLY CONNECTION

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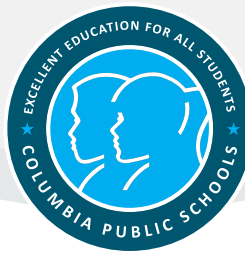
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Suzette Waters
Blake Willoughby

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Board of Education



Chicken race measures student growth at CPS elementary school

Blue Ridge Elementary School students are racing chickens to measurably improve academic performance, behavior, attendance and come together as a school community.

“When people hear about our chicken race, most people think we are using actual chickens, Blue Ridge Elementary School Principal Mark Burlison said. “Once we clarify the chickens on the track are photos of the real chickens who reside at Blue Ridge, people are almost as excited about the race as our students.”

Every week, Burlison and Assistant Principal Rebecca Babcock recognize grade levels for attendance, behavior and academics by awarding points associated with improvement in those categories and moving the chickens forward on the track.

“Beyond incentivizing our students to be at school on time and ready to learn, we are trying to get students to understand that they can ask for breaks and that taking a break is not a problem,” Babcock said.

“The inspiration for the chicken race came from brainstorming with Director of Curriculum and Instruction Kristi Shinn and reviewing our data and then coming up with ways to keep students motivated,” he said.

The chicken race, which started in January, gives the students ownership of their participation in school, including getting to school on time.

“Students are going home and telling their families about how their chicken is moving and telling their families, we need to be here on time,” Burlison said.

The chicken race is not just an incremental reward in seeing the chickens move along the wall and coming together as a grade level, but it also includes tangible rewards such as a pizza party for the winners.

“When you see classrooms working so hard together, not just on assessments, but on working collaboratively every day and learning how to self-regulate, it makes such a difference in the school overall,” Burlison said.

“It is our main focus. Kids love it, families love it and we are looking forward to bigger and better things with it next year,” he said.

Next year, the chicken race will be four cycles over the course of the school year and include individual tracking elements, as each student will be able to track their own data along the way.



Mark Burlison & Rebecca Babcock recognize grade levels for attendance

“ Kids love it, families love it and we are looking forward to bigger and better things with it next year. ”

Mark Burlison

*Blue Ridge Elementary School
Principal*

Constuction updates



Russell Boulevard
Elementary School



Rock Bridge
Elementary School



Jefferson Middle School

be used to complete additional smaller projects including approximately \$1 million to replace energy recovery units throughout several CPS buildings. These improvements not only provide for better air quality for students and staff, but also make buildings more energy-efficient, resulting in long-term savings.

Ground has been broken for the two-story addition at **Russell Boulevard Elementary School**. The addition will add new classrooms, a multi-purpose room, special education rooms and an elevator, increasing capacity to 650 students. Additional improvements include a storm shelter for improved safety during severe weather and adjustments that will enable a safer, more accessible arrival and dismissal process. The completion of the project is slated for fall of 2023.

The new space at **Rock Bridge Elementary School** is open and full completion of the space is slated for the upcoming fall semester.

Work at **Jefferson Middle School** is progressing, with the construction of both the gymnasium and elevator underway.

Approximately \$15 million in HVAC improvement and replacement projects are slated to be completed throughout the district over the next year and half.

HVAC Award

Columbia Public Schools was one of eight school districts recognized by the White House for its best-in-class efforts in the category of Efficient HVAC Technologies. This award, part of the federal action plan for Building Better School Infrastructure, will be used to fund substantial HVAC upgrades throughout the district. CPS Facilities and Construction Services has worked over the last several years to earn this award and recognition. These funds will also

News you can use

TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Congratulations to **Mallory Sims**, speech/language pathologist at **Blue Ridge Elementary School**, for receiving the 2022 Missouri State Teachers Association Northeast Region Elementary Teacher of the Year award.

STUDENT'S DESIGN SHOWCASED AT KANSAS CITY FASHION WEEK

Hickman High School student **Elsi Grabau** showcased her designs during Kansas City Fashion Week. She designed and created seven dresses that models wore at the event.

NORTHEAST REGION MIDDLE SCHOOL DISTRICT ATHLETIC DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

Sam Bornhauser, athletic and activities director at **Gentry Middle School**, has been named the Northeast Region Middle School District Athletic Director of the Year by the Missouri Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association.



CPS STATE CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS

Hank Benter (Hickman High School) won the MSHSAA Class 4 Individual Wrestling State Championship in the 106 lb. weight class. **Hayden Benter (Hickman High School)** won the MSHSAA Class 4 Individual Wrestling State Championship in the 126 lb. weight class. **Carter McCallister (Rock Bridge High School)** won the MSHSAA Class 4 Individual Wrestling State Championship in the 138 lb. weight class. **Olivia Liddle (Rock Bridge High School)** won the MSHSAA Class 2 Individual Diving State Championship.



Carter
McCallister



Olivia
Liddle



Hank
Benter



Hayden
Benter

New board members

Suzette Waters and **Blake Willoughby** have been selected to fill two seats on the Columbia Board of Education. Waters is new to the board and a longtime Columbia resident. Waters said she hopes to increase support in the district and in the public school system by pushing for school success and increasing class options. Willoughby will be serving his second term on the board and said he wants to help the community and district heal from the COVID-19 pandemic.



Columbia Fund for Academic Excellence Awards

Columbia Public Schools is proud to recognize seven educators as this year’s Columbia Fund for Academic Excellence honorees.

Since its inception in the 1979-80 school year, the Columbia Fund for Academic Excellence has served to recognize more than 250 educators for their outstanding teaching, leadership and support for students. Each year, educators are selected from nominations submitted by parents and peers as outstanding educators.

All honorees receive a \$1,500 cash award and an engraved silver tray.

The fund began through the work of the late Ray and Jeanne Lewis, with an initial contribution and extensive fundraising efforts. The late Mr. Lewis was a local attorney and former Board of Education member. The late Mrs. Lewis was a former teacher. Thanks to the contributions and support from individuals, businesses and organizations, Columbia’s best educators continue to be recognized each year for their contributions to young people.



Taylor Morales
Blue Ridge Elementary School
Outstanding Elementary Educator
Grades PreK-2



Jim Steelman
Grant Elementary School
Outstanding Elementary Educator
Grades 3-5



Sean Dwyer
Jefferson Middle School
Outstanding Middle School Educator



Cortni Gonzalez
Hickman High School
Outstanding High School Educator



Laina Fullum
CPS Nutrition Services Director
Outstanding Administrator



Jake Floyd
Cedar Ridge Elementary School
Outstanding Beginning Teacher



Amanda Brown
Strategic Communications Manager
Columbia Area Career Center
Outstanding Educator in a Specialized Area

STEP program provides valuable experiences for CPS students with disabilities

For the last 12 years, Columbia Public Schools students with disabilities have had the ability to learn job-related skills while still in high school through the STEP program.

Though Hickman High School Senior Levi Shafer was initially reluctant to participate in the Seamless Transition through Enhanced Partnerships (STEP) program, he said participating changed his life.

“It’s really the best thing, and it’s been the best year and best experience of my entire life,” he said.

For the last 12 years, Columbia Public Schools students with disabilities, like Levi Shafer, have had the ability to learn job-related skills while still in high school.

Former Superintendent Chris Belcher, retired Director of Special Services Lou Ann Tanner-Jones and retired Deputy Superintendent Dana Clippard started STEP in 2010. While many young adults with developmental disabilities successfully complete high school and find work, STEP includes the added benefit of a dedicated internship with support, collaboration and mentoring to learn all the aspects of being successful in the workplace.

The partnership between CPS, Alternative Community Training (ACT), Vocational Rehabilitation and Boone County Family Resources (BCFR), is designed to improve employment outcomes for youth with developmental disabilities. Participants gain valuable, real-work experience and confidence in their abilities and in themselves.

Students selected for the STEP program must meet identified criteria, including being a student with Columbia Public Schools. Students are recommended for the program by a variety of CPS personnel such as their case manager, the special education department chair, building principals and counselors. A selection committee of representatives from each of the member agencies reviews the applications, conducts the interviews and selects the participants.

“Hearing about the program and success stories convinced us this would be a good opportunity for him,” Levi Shafer’s mother Stephanie Shafer said.

District Transition Coordinator Dr. Katie Siegel said watching her students, like Levi, learn job skills and apply those skills is not just life-changing for the students, but for her as well.

Levi Shafer is currently employed at Level Up. His supervisor, Dana Montgomery, said his skills have continued to grow during his internship and employment.

“He started with a set list of tasks and as he’s mastered those, I’ve been able to add more,” Montgomery said. “He doesn’t have a limit.”

Levi’s parents said they both have also noticed an increase in his confidence.

“We’re excited about the confidence that he’s gained through the program,” Levi’s father Damien Shafer said. “He’s become a very good advocate for himself.”

Stephanie Shafer added that Levi is great at asking questions and communicating with his employer, which is something he has also started doing more at home.

There are nearly 30 Columbia businesses partnered with CPS to support work programs and classes for special education students.

The current STEP program business partners are Tropical Smoothie Cafe, McDonald’s at Stadium, Old Navy and Millard Services at the Columbia Mall. In the last few years, the STEP program has expanded to include additional opportunities for students and dedicated learning space in the Columbia Mall.

“The move to the Columbia Mall has created endless opportunities for CPS to partner with businesses to create work-based learning experiences,” Siegel said.



Levi Shafer
participates in the
STEP program

“Hearing about the program and success stories convinced us this would be a good opportunity for him.”

Stephanie Shafer
Levi’s mother

Columbia Public Schools Foundation celebrates 25 years

Twenty-five years ago, Lynnanne Baumgardner envisioned a group of enterprising Columbians coming together to create a foundation to help support and encourage innovative learning experiences for Columbia Public Schools students.

That vision created the Columbia Public Schools Foundation and at the first event, a breakfast, CPSF raised \$70,000.

Since CPSF was founded in 1996, teachers and students have received 118 grants totaling more than \$1.4 million to help support initiatives in history, mathematics, service-learning, multicultural programming and more. Some of the Foundation's more recent grants include seed money for a math class project to build a tiny house and an e-gaming club for high school students.

Those numbers reflect how CPSF's acronym is also an abbreviated version of its mission statement: Columbia Puts Students First.

"Seeing the Foundation succeed and flourish in helping students learn by supporting quality education experiences has been tremendously rewarding," Baumgardner said. "Thanks to the help and generosity of so many in the community, Columbia students have had many exciting learning experiences."

Sally Silvers currently serves as the current Foundation secretary and was a founding board member.

"In the beginning, we did small grants for individual teachers, but as we grew, we wanted to cover more than just a classroom, so the grants went to grade levels and curriculum and entire schools," she said. "As we raised more money our grants grew to reach as many kids as possible."

Though some of the early grants, such as a set of encyclopedias and a roll cart at Rock Bridge Elementary School to carry them, are vastly different from the \$2,500 each school received this year, some of the early requests foreshadowed the technology we rely on today.

Silvers said she remembers an early grant for Parkade Elementary School requesting computer software.

"At the time Bill Fairman was on the committee and the rest of us didn't think computer programs were much more than a passing fad," she said. "Bill looked at us and said, 'This is one we should fund, this is cutting edge, trust me,' and we did and he was right. We've funded so many pilot projects and not one of them has failed."

Current Board President Cindy Mustard said she is most impressed with the Foundation's growth as indicated by the types of grants funded and how so many are for new technology.

"We started off with basic things like whiteboards. To see the change in what we can provide now with international trips and our work with True/False is astonishing," she said. "We are excited about the trust we've built and the work we do with the gifts we've received."

CPSF hosted a 25th Anniversary Celebration on April 21 to reflect on 25 successful years and project what the next 25 could bring.

To learn how you can support the
Columbia Public Schools Foundation, visit cpsf.org.

"We are excited about the trust we've built and the work we do with the gifts we've received."

