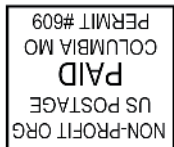


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QUARTERLY CONNECTION



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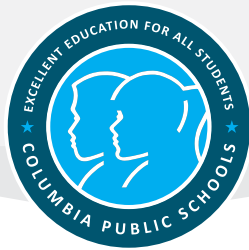
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Couch Coins for Critters

Throughout a teacher's career, they often find some assignments become so much more than what they anticipated. Midway Heights Elementary School Teacher Linda Bozoian's fifth grade writing assignment about endangered animals was one such moment.

"It's been a tough year," Bozoian said. "I wanted a topic that students would have a high-level of interest in. Animals always are for kids. It started as a persuasive/research writing assignment and it grew from there."

Students wrote a five-paragraph essay about an endangered animal, then together, decided they wanted to create a project to help their animals.

Bozoian said the students were passionate.

One evening they held a rally in downtown Columbia with several families and posters that read "Honk if you love animals!" This led to the idea to use their classroom PTA money to adopt four animals from the World Wildlife Fund, which fueled them to organize a fundraiser. Couch Coins for Critters was born.

Students first voted on the animals they wanted to adopt and decided on a panda they named Oreo, an eagle they named Mr. E, a capuchin monkey they named Cleo and an arctic fox they named Snowball. They then wrote a detailed plan for the fundraiser and submitted it to Principal Angie Gerzen for approval. Various project groups formed, including one for marketing and one focused on safety.

Marketing efforts included creating educational posters about the human impact on endangered animals, writing commercials for morning announcements, and creating fliers about the fundraiser to send home to families.

Safety measures consisted of social distancing rules, procedures around the school's drop-off traffic, wearing gloves and masks while taking donations, and encouraging coins to be donated in Ziploc bags.

The week of April 11-16, students stood outside Midway Heights Elementary School at drop off with buckets to encourage and collect donations. They raised \$577.26 in five days.

Bozoian said it was exciting to see the students pull in so many different activities. She also enjoyed the opportunity to tie in different curriculum, including science, writing and math.

"Watching their excitement was amazing," she said. "We were able to tap into their passion and creativity. These kids will remember what they did, and they learned a lot in the process."

Most of all, Bozoian said the students realized they have a voice and can do amazing things.

"Often kids think adults don't listen to them," she said. "They saw they were able to raise that money and learned they can change the world."

Bozoian said she is proud of what her students accomplished and she hopes it inspires others too.



CPS reading curriculum and instruction fosters student success



Alignment with state standards

With continued efforts to help each individual child reach their greatest potential, Columbia Public Schools implemented revamped reading instruction for kindergarten through eighth grade during the 2020 – 2021 school year.

“One goal is for students to master reading and writing skills so they can aspire to future endeavors of their choice,” Elementary Language Arts Coordinator Jana Schmidt said.

The update stemmed in part from a need to re-align with the new state standards and expectations, which were updated in 2016. Other drivers included aligning district materials with national expectations for text complexity, support the district's work with standards referenced grading (SRG) and provide culturally relevant materials that reflect our community.

Kristin Shinn, the district’s director of curriculum and instruction, said the process began with a robust effort to engage stakeholders.

“The schools are a reflection of the community and you have to be able to ensure that all voices are heard,” Shinn said.

Teachers, administration, coordinators, parents, Board of Education and community members provided feedback related to multiple aspects of literacy.

With input from these key voices, Shinn said they then carefully evaluated which resources would meet state standards.

The new curriculum provides teachers and students with access to resources that support components of reading, including working with sounds, phonics instruction, fluency instruction, vocabulary and comprehension.

At the elementary level, a year-long project in all 21 buildings provided a trial before the district selected materials.

“I think this program is far better than any ELA [English Language Arts] curriculum I’ve used in the past in CPS,” Blue Ridge Elementary Kindergarten Teacher Taylor Morales said. “I love the academic vocabulary my students are using,

the guided reading texts and whole group texts, as do my students,”

Because the path to learning to read and write may be more difficult for some and easier for others, Schmidt said a multi-tiered system of support is necessary to meet the needs of individual learners.

Under the new curriculum, students are assessed for proficiency related to reading components. Through a team approach, teachers at various grade levels come together to talk about how best to support and deliver assistance to students who need additional help. These teams are then able to divide their time to facilitate working with students who need more help. These methods of intervention are in place district-wide.

Additional curriculum materials are also available to help enrich students who have already mastered standards and skills, extending their learning and tapping into their interests.

Another aspect of the new curriculum includes aligning standards to work better with students who may move from one building to another throughout the district during a school year.

Schmidt said that although things may look different instructionally from school to school, expectations of proficiencies and what and when students should learn must be the same.

“Education should not be designed by zip code,” Schmidt said. “We are one, so the foundation needed to be consistent.”

Teachers are in the process of learning the new materials adopted this year and how they relate to state standards. There are many different components to consider, including comprehension, vocabulary, phonics and fluency.

“Teachers have done a fabulous job adopting this new curriculum within a pandemic,” Schmidt said. “They have been gracious and innovative, having to learn new materials and then how to use them virtually. It takes a tremendous amount of dedication.”

Finally, the new curriculum is much more reflective of the diverse student body, with materials that provide culturally relevant text representing all members of the community.

“It is important for students to see themselves reflected in text through characters, informational experts and authors,” Schmidt said.

The feedback from all stakeholders has been positive, including that of the students.

“During the project, we got to visit different classrooms and talk with individual students,” Schmidt said. “They really like some of the

Access to more resources

Systems of support

Supports reading essentials

materials. The response has been very positive.”

The new curriculum also integrates science and social studies by providing more opinion/argument-based instruction.

Schmidt said ideally this approach will stimulate students to expand their aspirations. She said the reading growth under this updated curriculum is significant.

Shinn said the district will continue to regularly examine the standards, as curriculum is alive and consistently changing.

“You have to respond to the learners and the needs of the community,” Shinn said. “We will continue to improve and provide the best education for all students. We have to meet the needs of our learners and continue professional learning opportunities for educators.”

Both Schmidt and Shinn agree that the ideal outcome of the new curriculum will be realized in student performance and understanding of different aspects of learning.

“The ultimate goal is that no matter what profession they pursue or what they decide to do with their future, they have a competency in literacy that helps them win,” Schmidt said.

Columbia Fund for Academic Excellence Awards

Congratulations to the Columbia Public Schools’ educators who have been selected as Columbia Fund for Academic Excellence honorees for the 2020 – 2021 school year.

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

For 50 years, the Columbia Fund for Academic Excellence has served to recognize more than 250 educators in Columbia Public Schools for their outstanding teaching, leadership and student support. Outstanding educators are nominated each year by parents and peers.

The fund began through the work of 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 CPS students.



Trina Liebhart
New Haven Elementary School
Outstanding Elementary Educator
Grades PreK-2



Nikki Kunkel
Cedar Ridge Elementary School
Outstanding Elementary Educator
Grades 3-5



Jamie Lazechko
Lange Middle School
Outstanding Middle School Educator



Andrew Kinslow
Rock Bridge High School
Outstanding High School Educator



Lori Osborne
CPS District Health Services Coordinator
Outstanding Administrator



Rebekah Terrell
Douglass High School
Outstanding Beginning Teacher



Sharon Stemmons
Media Specialist
Mill Creek Elementary School
Outstanding Educator in a Specialized Area

News You Can Use

HICKMAN HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR NAMED PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR

Hickman High School senior **Justin Eddy** has been named a Presidential Scholar in Career and Technical Education. U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona announced the 57th class of U.S. Presidential Scholars on May 13, recognizing 161 high school seniors for their accomplishments in academics, the arts, and career and technical education fields. The 2021 U.S. Presidential Scholars are comprised of one young man and one young woman from each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and U.S. families living abroad, as well as 15 chosen at-large, 20 Scholars in the arts and 20 Scholars in career and technical education. The Presidential Scholars Class of 2021 will be recognized for their outstanding achievement this summer.

THREE COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WIN NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS

Congratulations to Rock Bridge High School students **Shruti Guatam** and **Vignesh Kumar** and Hickman High School student **Alice S. Tang** for each receiving a \$2,500 National Merit Scholarship. These students were among the 2,500 selected nationwide, and of 46 in Missouri, to receive the scholarship. They were chosen from a pool of approximately 16,000 finalists. Finalist selection was based on academic records, scores on the Preliminary SAT or National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, participation and leadership in school and community activities, a submitted essay and a recommendation from a school official.

SMITHTON STUDENT WINS 2021 REGIONAL SPELLING BEE

Smithton Middle School eighth grader **Jiya Shetty** won the *Columbia Missourian* Regional Spelling Bee with the word "joskin." She advanced to the Scripps National Spelling Bee. She competed in five rounds of the national spelling bee before losing in the sixth round when she misspelled the word "anticaries."



Jiya Shetty



Jeanne Snodgrass



Katherine Sasser

NEW CPS BOARD MEMBERS

Two new members were elected to the Columbia Board of Education. Katherine Sasser and Jeanne Snodgrass will each serve three-year terms on the seven-member board.

CPS FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADERS COMPETE IN MARCH MATHNESS

Twenty CPS fourth and fifth graders placed in the top 10 during the March Mathness competition hosted by Mu Alpha Theta, the Rock Bridge High School Math Honor Society. The competition, held March 20, was open to fourth and fifth graders across the state of Missouri. More than 180 students took the timed, 25-question test. **Lucas Lai** of Fairview Elementary School placed first for fourth grade and **Izzabella Tranmer** of Two Mile Prairie Elementary School placed second for fourth grade. **Abhi Goswami** of Beulah Ralph Elementary School placed first for fifth grade and **Aanya Shetty** of Paxton Keeley Elementary School placed second for fifth grade.

ROCK BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR NAMED PURDUE UNIVERSITY STAMPS SCHOLAR

Rock Bridge High School senior **Gianna Durante** has been named one of the incoming Stamps Scholars at Purdue University, where she will also be a member of the Honors College. The Stamps Scholars Program covers a student's full cost of attendance (tuition, room and board) and connects students with a national network of dedicated peers. With the support of benefactors Roe Stamps and his late wife Penny, the award also gives scholars access to an academic enrichment fund of up to \$10,000 to finance activities such as academic conferences, study abroad experiences or internships.

COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS WINS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM OF THE YEAR AWARD

Columbia Public Schools' Early Childhood Education Program received the Early Childhood Education Program of the Year award from FutureBuilders, the educational foundation of the Missouri School Boards' Association. The award will be formally presented at the 2021 MSBA Annual Conference later this year. The MSBA FutureBuilders Early Childhood Education Program of the Year recognizes public school districts that have implemented programs to advance quality early educational opportunities for children.

School Year Calendar

August 23

Jump Start Day (grades 6 & 9)

August 24

First Day of School (grades 1-12)

August 26

First day of Kindergarten

September 6

Labor Day (school not in session)

September 22

Teacher Work Day (school not in session)

October 4

Teacher Work Day (school not in session)

October 28 - 29

Teacher Work Days (school not in session)

November 12

Teacher Work Day (school not in session)
Parent-Teacher conferences (elementary and middle school)

November 24 – 26

Thanksgiving Break (school not in session)

December 22 – December 31

Winter Break (school not in session)

January 3

Teacher Work Day (school not in session)

January 17

Martin Luther King Day (school not in session)

January 25

Staff Planning (2.5 hour early dismissal)

February 18

Teacher Work Day (school not in session)

February 21

President's Day (school not in session)

March 4

Teacher Work Day (school not in session)
Parent-Teacher conferences (elementary and middle school)

March 16

Teacher Work Day (school not in session)

March 28 – April 1

Spring Break (school not in session)

April 13

Staff Planning (2.5 hour early dismissal)

May 11

Staff Planning (2.5 hour early dismissal)

May 20

Douglass High School Graduation (A.M.)
Battle High School Graduation (P.M.)

May 21

Rock Bridge High School Graduation (A.M.)
Hickman High School Graduation (P.M.)

May 30

Memorial Day (school not in session)

May 27 & 31, June 1-3, June 6*

Built-in Snow Days

June 6

Last Day of School (2.5 hour early dismissal)

June 7 – July 1

Summer School

** Snow days are built into the calendar (May 27 - June 6). If the district uses fewer than 36 hours of inclement weather during the year, the unused days will be removed from the end of the school year.*