



INSIDE ISSUE:

Black History Mobile Museum

Outstanding Educator Awards

Uncertain Times

Partners in Education

Bond Progress and Updates

Nature School



★ SUMMER 2020 ★

QUARTERLY CONNECTION



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CPS Students Explore Black History Firsthand

A two-week visit by the Black History 101 Mobile Museum in March provided middle and high school students in Columbia Public Schools with up-close access to hundreds of years of history and worked to pose some tough questions to students.

“The goal is to provide access to museum quality artifacts to students who don’t usually have access to this kind of experience,” said Dr. Khalid el-Hakim, founder and curator of the museum. “To use these items to teach and educate and to fill in some of the blank spots in history. I have been working 29 years to tell a story that really has not been told in K-12 curriculum.”

The approximately 150 items on display, culled from the museum’s collection of more than 7,000 original artifacts, include restraints used in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, signed documents from Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King Jr. and music tracing the history of modern hip-hop.

A grant from the Columbia Public Schools Foundation (CPSF) made Dr. el-Hakim’s visit possible.

Lindsey Troutman, former CPS Social Studies Coordinator, wrote the grant to the foundation, and said she hoped the experience will encourage students to use analytic and social science skills, to become empowered to look back while looking forward and to be little social scientists.

“The Columbia Public Schools Foundation is proud to provide this unique mobile museum experience to our students,” Cindy Mustard, CPSF board president said. “Students have the opportunity to examine and explore history firsthand and make important connections to our community.”



Columbia Fund for Academic Excellence Awards

Typically, the Columbia Fund for Academic Excellence awards are presented under false pretenses of meetings, or other events in order to fully surprise award recipients. This year, due to the COVID-19 virus and subsequent school district closure, administrators had to get a little more creative.

Administrators presented the awards over Zoom under the guise of faculty meetings. You can view the video to see the recipients’ surprised reactions on CPS-TV on the district’s website at www.cpsk12.org/cpstv.

RECIPIENTS FOR THE 2019 – 2020 SCHOOL YEAR

- **Shaina Cox of Parkade Elementary School**
Outstanding Elementary Educator, Grades PreK-2
- **Matthew Kuensting of Grant Elementary School**
Outstanding Elementary Educator, Grades 3-5
- **Brian York of West Middle School**
Outstanding Middle School Educator
- **Amy McKenzie of Rock Bridge High School**
Outstanding High School Educator
- **Nokomis LaTasha Tilford of Hickman High School**
Outstanding Beginning Teacher
- **Ryan Link of Rock Bridge Elementary School**
Outstanding Administrator
- **Sharon Salmons of Shepard Boulevard Elementary School**
Outstanding Educator in a Specialized Area

Each honoree received an award of \$1,500 along with an engraved silver tray.

ABOUT: For more than 40 years, the Columbia Fund for Academic Excellence has recognized outstanding educators throughout Columbia Public Schools. The late Ray and Jeanne Lewis, committed to the idea of excellence in education, established the fund through an initial contribution and extensive fundraising. The fund continues each year thanks to generous contributors.

A Global Pandemic: CPS Efforts During Uncertain Times

When the COVID-19 virus caused a global pandemic and forced the closure of public schools across the country, school districts of all sizes had to quickly change how they delivered services to those in their community. The lingering impacts also mean districts have to make plans for the 2020-21 school year.

District leaders are providing families with two options in the fall.

1. In person, five days-a-week learning
2. Online learning

"We know every family situation is different and has different circumstances and we want to offer our families the ability to choose the best option for their situation," Superintendent Peter Stiepleman said.

We are committed to improving upon what we have created, including training teachers for online instruction, he said. District teachers participated in professional development opportunities to prepare for online instruction in the fall through a partnership with Columbia College.

The online learning platform for elementary students is the result of an innovative new partnership between Columbia Public Schools and Mizzou Academy, offering a dynamic online learning option.

This free education opportunity aligns with Missouri Learning Standards (MLS) and offers teacher-led instruction for K-5 students. Highly qualified, certified CPS teachers will provide instruction online and work with students and parents to make sure learning outcomes are met.

In addition to the online options for K-5 students, CPS will also provide online learning options through CPS Virtual for students in grades 6 through 12.



More information about both options:

www.cpsk12.org/Fall2020



REFLECTION ON THE END OF THE 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR

As Columbia Public Schools closed, district leaders managed an immense amount of considerations impacting each of nearly 20,000 students in different ways.

In addition to developing alternative learning plans, CPS' leaders focused on addressing special circumstances, including academic plans for English learners, communication with families, technology and access for all students across the district, nutrition and mental health, students with special needs and more.

"Our community was tremendous in allowing us to pause and figure out how to streamline things so as not to overwhelm parents and students," Stiepleman said. "The first thing we had to do was attend to the emotional and psychological care of families. We followed the rules to keep people safe from COVID-19 virus. We tried to lead with compassion and empathy, and then closely behind, follow up with academics."

Thanks to the coordination of five operational departments, the district was able to remain operational day-by-day until the official end of the school year. District leadership instituted regular meetings via Zoom for all departments. These meetings continue throughout the summer.

"We have the most amazing leaders," Stiepleman said. "They are forward-thinking and exceptional planners, taking action and so kid-focused and devoted to their area. To see our people living out our values is heartwarming and inspiring."

Chief Operating Officer Randall Gooch said he credits the dedicated directors of these departments for their commitment to the mission.

"It's amazing the amount of work that happened, and is still happening, behind the scenes," he said. "My role has primarily been to eliminate obstacles for these remarkable teams."

In order to provide meals for students who depend on school meals, Gooch said the district's Nutrition Services really stepped up.

"We have been able to feed a lot of our students thanks to coordination between food service and transportation," Gooch said. "The Grab-and-Go meal delivery for students began March 30 consisted of eight buses, which run multiple-stop routes Monday through Friday. The district also received support from many community partners, faith-based groups and local businesses and communicated information about available meals to families." Grab-and-Go meals will continue through the end of July.

A key element in continuing remote instruction is technology. Even many individuals who had access before the schools closed did not have enough to accommodate everyone at home. Gooch says the technology department worked hard to get internet access to families and students in need, turning on more than 800 hotspots and turning on guest Wi-Fi at all schools.

Custodial Services initiated deep cleaning protocols and worked to prepare the buildings to be safe upon the in-person return of students.

"They've been working almost non-stop while we've been out," Gooch said.

Stiepleman said virtually every sector of the community has come together in support of our kids.

"Anytime there is a crisis, it amplifies areas in which we can learn, so we are learning lessons," Stiepleman said. "On the other side of this, we will be a stronger district."

CPS Celebrates Partners in Education

ABOUT: Partners in Education is a program that was developed for Columbia Public Schools 35 years ago out of a vision by educational leaders Russell Thompson, Jim Ritter and Jolene Schulz. The program was designed to partner local businesses and organizations with schools, in order to build a better bridge between the real-world and education.

Partners in Education celebrated several milestone partnerships this year.



3M AND SHEPARD BOULEVARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

35
years

3M began its partnership with Shepard Boulevard Elementary School in 1985 as an opportunity to expose students to unique experiences they might otherwise not have.

“As a science-based company, we saw this partnership as a chance to help get kids excited about science, by sharing our expertise through engagement and education,” Jim Burkhardt, plant manager said.

One way 3M interacts with its partner school is by co-hosting the annual STEAM fair, at which 3M employees display homemade, interactive experiments.

“It’s satisfying to get others excited about what we do,” Burkhardt said. “It reminds us why we do what we do.”

The partnership allows the 3M staff to contribute to areas of need within the school and provide resources students and teachers might otherwise not be able to access.

3M staff believe the company motto, “Science Applied to Life,” is exemplified in the Partners in Education program and recognize the importance of cultivating young minds who could be 3M’s future scientists, inventors, physicians and engineers.

“It’s about having a positive influence on the community through the students at Shepard Elementary,” Burkhardt said.

He reiterated his appreciation for the Shepard educators who have worked to sustain the partnership for such a long time.



MEM AND GENTRY MIDDLE SCHOOL

25
years

Missouri Employers Mutual (MEM) began its partnership with Gentry Middle School shortly after the company was established in 1995, feeling that the vision of the program aligned with many of the MEM core values. As a company that promotes safety, MEM saw an opportunity to deliver important safety messages that could set a foundation for students early on.

Lynne Glindemann, a long-time MEM participant in the program, said that in the beginning staff would put on skits and fun presentations about safety issues, often reinforcing lessons taught by teachers.

MEM employees have also participated in many Jump Start nights, grilling hot dogs and welcoming incoming sixth graders and their parents to the school.

Laura Gerding of MEM said student visits to the building always infuse a lot of energy and recalls choir presentations and other fun celebrations.

Both women said MEM encourages employee participation, which they appreciate.

“There are lots of ways we can contribute from safety lessons to contributions that fill a need that might otherwise not be met,” Gerding said. “We’ve had really meaningful ways to contribute over the years.”

One interaction that was popular before digital calendars was producing wall calendars showcasing student artwork.

“We’ve had to be more creative as times have changed, but judging and displaying the artwork was always a favorite,” Glindemann said.

In 25 years, both organizations have experienced some turnover. Glindemann credits the sustainability of the partnership to both sides making it a priority.

“We’ve always kept it on the forefront and hopefully we both reap the benefits,” she said.

PEAK PERFORMANCE AND CPS ATHLETICS

20
years

Mark Dempsey was already acclimated to the benefits of being a Partner in Education through a former company when he started Peak Performance, and said it was just natural to continue. The partnership with CPS Athletics, which began in 2000, affords Peak Performance a stronger

relationship with the community and the satisfaction of knowing they are doing something helpful for the students and the district.

One of the major interactions of the partnership is Peak Performance's provision of on-site athletic trainers at all CPS home games.

Dempsey said Peak Performance teaches at all three high schools, offering education for coaches on different protocols for safety.

Peak Performance has also provided opportunities for students to participate in clinic shadowing to explore a career path in sports medicine and/or occupational therapy.

Dempsey said students seem to enjoy the exposure to the clinics. If they get hurt, they have familiarity with treatments and the trainers, providing a level of comfort by taking away much of the unknown.

"We're very proud to have been affiliated with Columbia Public Schools all these years," Dempsey said. "I've spent most of my career here with them."

KAPPA ALPHA THETA AND RUSSELL BOULEVARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

10
years

In 2010, Kappa Alpha Theta became the first University of Missouri Greek organization to become a Partner in Education. Ten years later the relationship is still going strong.

Rebecca Jones, advisory board chairwoman and Kappa Alpha Theta alum, said that as an organization founded on a position of charity, philanthropy and service, it made perfect sense to engage this partnership.

"This gives us an opportunity to get into the community and make a contribution," she said. "The kids love having role models to interact with and the special one-on-one attention."

Jones said it is rewarding for the Theta women to be able to present a positive perception about education, and that their goal is to be there for teachers and touch the kids' hearts.

The interactions of the partnership vary depending on what teachers and students need. The Kappa Alpha Theta members bring unique ideas and are always up for trying something new. They have volunteered their time to run the annual school carnival, provide one-on-one tutoring, fill in as special friends on party days when a parent or grandparent can't come, serve as guest readers and more.

Amanda Ruyle, assistant principal for Russell Boulevard Elementary School, says that the young women of Kappa Alpha Theta are always eager to be involved. She says students love it when the Thetas come to visit.

"We are so thankful for them because they reach out and are always asking if there are other ways to help," she said. "There is a 'cool' factor about a college student coming to visit, and they are great role models for the kids."

Nature School Forges Onward

The new Nature School, currently in development on the south side of Columbia, is moving forward despite delays due to the COVID-19 virus and subsequent quarantine.

The project is the result of a partnership between Columbia Public Schools and the Missouri Department of Conservation. Land for the school was donated by Hank Waters and Vicki Russell.

Phase One construction includes the building of the pavilion, funded by the Missouri Department of Conservation, and construction of the Council House, made possible by a gift from the Audubon Society. Additional support from the Orscheln Foundation and the Columbia Public Schools Foundation, brought the project funds to 75 percent of the goal.

The house will be a circular structure where students will convene each day. It will accommodate about 140 students with four classrooms, a fireplace and an adjacent accessible restroom. Phase One also includes prairie restoration to enhance natural features, which will be implemented by the Missouri Department of Conservation. A library, large laboratory and demonstration kitchen are also in the plan.

Superintendent Peter Stiepleman said the Nature School offers accessibility without barriers, a key element in the district's commitment to achievement, enrichment and opportunity for all students.

"Every child in Columbia Public Schools and throughout Boone County will have the opportunity to experience place-based learning through this project," he said.

Upon completion, the Nature School will be an opportunity for fifth graders throughout Boone County to be immersed in experiential, nature- and place-based learning with access to experiences such as hiking and fishing through Three Creeks Conservation Area. About 6,000 students will be able to use the space in the first year.

Although COVID-19 has impacted fundraising efforts for the project, the goal is to have the project completed in October.



Boone County
Nature School



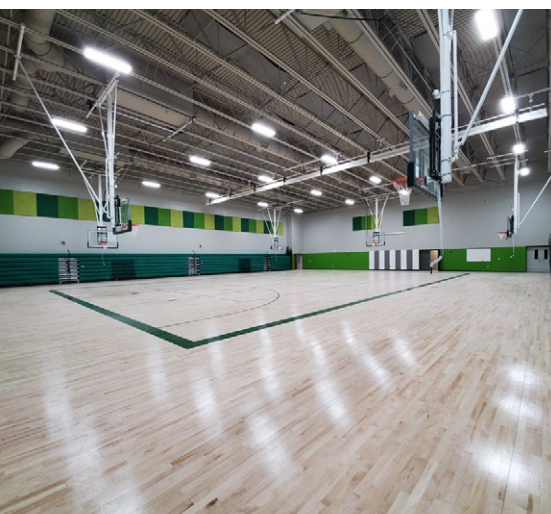
- 1 Native plants in bio-retention area for on-site rainwater treatment & collection, as well as natural habitat restoration
- 2 South facing awning provides covered space for outdoor classroom space & reduces heat gain
- 3 PV solar panels for on-site renewable energy production
- 4 Standing seam metal roofing is durable, recyclable, and contains recycled content
- 5 Rain chains & rain garden swale
- 6 Structurally insulated roof panels provide energy efficiency & noise reduction
- 7 Local natural stone veneer
- 8 Clerestory windows provide natural daylight

Bond Progress: Construction Updates



All interior work is nearly finished at **JOHN WARNER MIDDLE SCHOOL** on Sinclair Road, as technology wiring wraps up the final stage. The exterior finishing touches are under way and all major construction has been completed.

Principal Jimmy Hale describes the new school as a “wonderland” designed for collaboration for both students and teachers. The building has serene features such as picture windows, many trees and some small ponds.



“Our media center, which will be our hub of creativity and productivity, has a maker-space lab and three different instructional areas,” Hale said. “There are collaboration nooks outside of core classrooms throughout the different grade level wings, with soft seating, display screens and whiteboards for small groups to work on projects outside of the classroom.”

As a middle school, John Warner was constructed to enable a large population of students to be broken down into smaller groups, allowing individual attention to help students adjust.

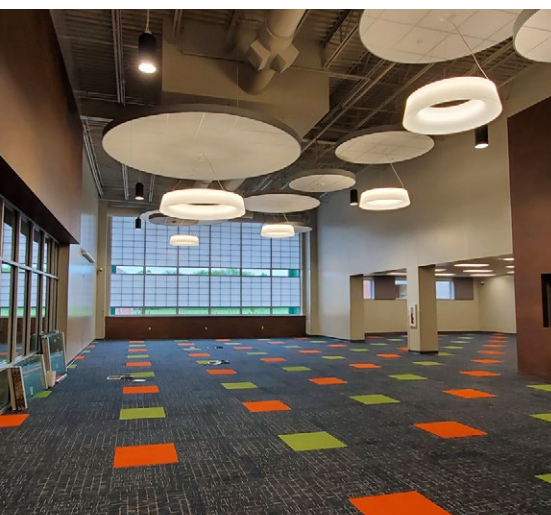
The teachers and staff are eager to see their new spaces. Hale sends them photos from time to time and keeps them apprised of the progress.

“It was important to find teachers who could recognize the amazing resources available in this new building,” Hale said. He said he is pleased they have hired amazing, creative teachers who have a lot of positive energy with which to impact students and empower them to perform at their highest level.

Students and parents are excited, too, and had input choosing the school colors and selecting the Grizzlies mascot with sneak peeks of the team uniforms. Many are already buying school spirit apparel through the online store.

Updates on the progress of the school are posted every two to three weeks on the webpage, and outreach to incoming sixth graders is taking place via Zoom sessions with school counselors.

A virtual tour is viewable on the John Warner webpage of www.cpsk12.org/jwms.



ROCK BRIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In ongoing efforts to remove trailers, which have served as temporary classrooms throughout the district, preparation is underway for construction of a new addition at Rock Bridge Elementary School.

The COVID-19 virus quarantine and social distancing guidelines have caused delays and made it difficult to find safe and appropriate ways to conduct pre-bid walk-throughs, but the design work is mostly completed. The new addition will not only replace the existing trailers, but will expand the building’s capacity to allow for future growth.

LOCUST STREET EXPRESSIVE ARTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The anticipated re-opening of Locust Street Expressive Arts Elementary School is now planned for second semester of the 2020-2021 school year. Delays result from wet winter and spring weather combined with challenges obtaining building supplies due to the COVID-19 virus precautions. Students will continue in the fall at Cedar Ridge Elementary School.

*John Warner Middle School progress –
exterior, gym, and media center*