



Enriching learning and recognizing educational leaders



Thanks to the support of the Columbia Public Schools Foundation, student learning throughout the district continues to be enhanced, and outstanding local educational leaders are recognized.

Since 1996, the Columbia Public Schools Foundation (CPSF) has operated as an endowment to provide funding for programs that directly impact and enhance student learning throughout the district. This year, a grant of \$8,500 was awarded to Hickman High School to provide for the equipment necessary to establish the e-gaming club room. With this new addition, Hickman now leads the nation in providing e-gaming opportunities for students. This club room, which supports two e-gaming clubs, allows space for students to refine the skill sets that many employers are seeking, such as problem-solving, creativity and teamwork.

“The Columbia Public Schools Foundation is proud to provide this grant.”

Cindy Mustard, CPSF board president, says “The Columbia Public Schools Foundation is proud to provide this grant and continue our tradition of supporting innovation in our public schools.”

To commemorate the new e-gaming club, students at Hickman competed against Superintendent Peter Stiepleman and Abe Bahadori, CPSF president-elect, in an e-gaming competition.

In addition to funding programs that enhance learning, CPSF also hosts the annual Hall of Leaders event to recognize educational leaders who have made significant contributions to the district. Award recipients include alumni, educators and volunteers who give of their time and talent.

This year’s Hall of Leaders event was held in mid-October and recognized 11 outstanding leaders.

The CPSF is a private foundation established by community volunteers to enrich public education through community giving. The foundation has funded projects in every school, allocating more than \$1.2 million to enhance education in the Columbia Public Schools.

2019 HALL OF LEADERS

Outstanding Alumni

Sally Cooper Myers
Marcella Ng
Stephanie Price
Donna Claycomb Sokol

Outstanding Retired Educators

Jack Jensen
Owen Jackson
Pat Jackson
Julia Marsh
Marilyn Skipper

Outstanding Volunteers

Lisa Fritsche
Jan Mees



Place-based learning connects students to nature and community

Columbia Public Schools is always seeking new ways to better connect students and education. One way to create connections is through nature and the community.

Mike Szydowski, K-12 science coordinator for CPS, enjoys leading students and faculty on the Grand Teton/Yellowstone Adventures each summer, and fifth graders to the Smoky Mountains each fall. These trips not only allow students to explore the natural world in a diverse and extraordinary region, but recently inspired a type of learning that better connects students to nature and their community.

Place-Based Learning

Place-based learning immerses students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes and experiences as a foundation for study across the curriculum. These schools, frequent in Grand Teton, Wyoming, promote learning that is rooted in what is local, including the area ecology. Diana Demoss, principal of CPS' first place-based school Fairview Elementary School, says that instruction is still based on the same curriculum as elsewhere in the district, but students are not confined to learning in the classroom.

“ Instead of reading maps, we go out to the wooded area and create maps.”

“Instead of reading maps, we go to wooded areas and create maps,” says Demoss. “We identify trees and learn why they grow where they do. We also explore being part of our community and being better citizens, taking care of our parks and our schools. It’s a marriage of traditional curriculum and hands on, experiential learning.”

Demoss says conversations about introducing this type of learning into CPS started several years ago, and the location and existing relationships with the City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Department made Fairview the perfect location to start. Last year, faculty at Fairview participated in professional development with Teton Science Schools, and this

year they are part of the place-based network. Fairview began this year transitioning fourth and fifth graders to place-based learning and will transition two additional grades each year as they build knowledge and resources.

Outdoor Classroom

Derby Ridge Elementary School will soon have an outdoor classroom built by students, their families, staff and community volunteers. Features include a Whale Watch (team building seesaw), science sand station, reading club house and more.

Szydowski says there are many benefits to this type of learning. “It fosters more creativity, renews the enjoyment of being outside and incorporates team-building apparatuses, which improve skills such as problem-solving, communication and leadership.”

Szydowski notes that both these learning environments are made possible through a grassroots effort, with all materials and labor donated by student families, local businesses and other community partners.

“It’s the kids and families building it all. I love seeing how hard the kids work when they are enthused. They truly own these spaces.”

Nature School

On the south side of Columbia, next to Three Creeks Conservation Area, CPS students and those from other Boone County districts will soon have access to a new nature school, thanks to a donation of 207 acres from Hank Waters, former *Columbia Daily Tribune* publisher, and his wife, Vicki Russell, associate publisher.

The space, which will consist of four classrooms and lab spaces, is being created through a partnership between CPS and the Missouri Department of Conservation. Students will also have access to Three Creek’s more than 1,000 acres to learn about nature and the environment.

Field trips to the area will begin in September, and classrooms are slated to be completed within two years. The final project will be an outdoor learning space for 1,400 – 1,500 students across Boone County.



25 Years: Assistance League of Mid-Missouri

For 25 years, the Assistance League of Mid-Missouri has provided help to thousands of individuals throughout the mid-Missouri area, including funding and assistance to Columbia Public Schools' teachers through the Links to Learning program.

The Links to Learning program has awarded more than \$1.5 million to help enhance classrooms and provide experiences that would not otherwise be available. This year, the program awarded more than \$155,000 to fund 187 grant proposals submitted by CPS teachers. Some of the proposals funded include:

\$155k
awarded
this year

- **The Lunch Bunch Book Clubs**, *Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary School*
- **Can You Picture It: Graphic Novels in the Classroom**, *Blue Ridge Elementary School*
- **Engaging Lil' Engineers**, *Derby Ridge Elementary School*
- **English Through Textiles**, *Douglass High School*
- **Disc Golf Baskets for PE**, *Blue Ridge Elementary School*
- **Movin' and Bangin' (music supplies)**, *Fairview Elementary School*
- **Creating an Outdoor Classroom**, *Gentry Middle School*
- **Women Who Dared to Be Brilliant (book purchase)**, *Gifted Education Center*
- **Creativity Meets Rebar (field trip/City Museum)**, *Douglass High School*
- **Sustainability Mural**, *Grant Elementary School*
- **Coding: Learning to Read, Write and Create for the Future**, *West Boulevard Elementary School*
- **Engineering Literacy: Developing 21st Century Skills**, *Two Mile Prairie Elementary School*
- **World History: A New Perspective (field trip/WWI museum)**, *Mary Paxton Keeley Elementary School*
- **Experience Music Outside Our School Walls (field trip/musical performance)**, *New Haven Elementary School*



Sheila Schmidt,
Jefferson Middle
School. Pictured
with Lynnanne
Baumgardner



Kelly Ray,
Hickman High
School. Pictured
with Jan Mees



Suzanne
Jackson, Two
Mile Prairie
Elementary
School. Pictured
with Kristen
Palmer

Mary Humlicek, president of the Assistance League of Mid-Missouri board of directors, says the Links to Learning program provides teachers the ability to enhance classroom experiences without having to utilize personal resources. "Links to Learning is one of our first projects, and in our first year we were only able to award \$1,000. In the 25 years since then, we have been able to raise amazing amounts."

Humlicek also speaks to the longevity of the program, saying "It's pretty amazing. You certainly have to think about the people who planted those first seeds."

**"In the 25 years since
then, we have been
able to raise amazing
amounts."**



John Warner Middle School



Locust Street Expressive Arts Elementary School

Bond update: Dollars at work

**\$35
million**

JOHN WARNER MIDDLE SCHOOL – The new middle school project is moving forward right on schedule. Newly named principal, Jimmy Hale, is deep into the process of ordering equipment and new furnishings, which will be placed as soon as the interior of the building is completed, estimated to be late spring of 2020. The Board of Education voted to name the new school John Warner Middle School. Warner was a police officer with the Columbia Police Department for 27 years and served as a DARE officer for 20 of those years. He was also a school resource officer in CPS middle schools until his retirement in 2014. Warner passed away in August 2019.

**\$6
million**

LOCUST STREET EXPRESSIVE ARTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – This has been one of the larger projects for the district, requiring a partial remodel of the existing building plus the addition of new instructional space and upgrades to the playground. The existing building remodel is expected to be completed by fall of 2020, at which time students will be moved back into the building. There should also be a significant amount of the new addition completed by fall of 2020, and by winter break the new wing is expected to open. Due to the size of the project, a phased completion was planned so that the campus would only be closed to students for a single school year.

**\$1.2
million**

BLUE RIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RENOVATION – The updates to Blue Ridge were completed over the summer and included all new flooring, case work around doors and new finishes and painting. During the process, security upgrades were also made. This is an approach CPS has taken throughout the district, to include security upgrades as well as needed ADA updates whenever a building remodel is scheduled. The \$1.2 million renovation was paid for with district capital project funds and is part of the district's long-range facility plan to maintain and improve existing buildings.

**Phase 1
complete**

OAKLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL RENOVATION – Phase one of the project was completed over the summer. Improvements include sprinkler system replacements and new ceilings, along with new flooring and fresh paint. Phase two, which will be completed next summer, will include security upgrades.



Parent-Community University is an opportunity for parents and community members to learn more about the programs, supports and long-range planning of Columbia Public Schools. Whether you have a child in elementary, middle or high school, each event will have information for you!

To sign up to attend upcoming events visit www.cpsk12.org/pcu



6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Columbia Area Career Center

How does CPS provide a full educational experience?



7:00 – 8:30 a.m.
Moberly Area Community College, Columbia Campus Parkade Center

How does CPS help students plan and prepare for the future?

News You Can Use

Physics Teacher of the Year

Hickman High School Physics Teacher **Alex Soper** has been recognized by the Physics Teacher Education Coalition (PhysTEC) for excellence in the classroom. He is one of eight teachers nationwide to be recognized for his outstanding commitment to his school and the physics community. The PhysTEC Teacher of the Year award is designed to highlight the impact of recent graduates from physics teacher preparation programs in the classroom. Soper was nominated by the University of Missouri-Columbia.

CPS earns budget award

Columbia Public Schools is the recipient of The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, awarded by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government entity and its management. The CAFR has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, which includes demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR.

Battle High School student named Norman Borlaug Scholar

Battle High School student **Ava Kitzi** has been named a Norman Borlaug Scholar as part of the World Food Prize Youth Institute. Each year, these institutes across the country convene high school students, teachers and experts to explore and solve local, national and global hunger issues. To apply, students submit a paper on a global challenge related to hunger and food insecurity. Ava was selected to participate in the Missouri Youth Institute hosted by the University of Missouri with the generous support of the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR), the Missouri 4-H and the Missouri FFA. She will represent CPS at the Global Youth Institute in Des Moines, Iowa, and is qualified to be a candidate for the prestigious Borlaug-Raun International Scholarship.

Fairview choir to perform at state conference

The **Fairview Elementary School Songbirds**, under the direction of Music Teacher Sara Dexheimer, has been selected to perform at the 82nd Annual Missouri Music Educators Association Conference in January. Selection to perform at the conference is the highest statewide honor to which a school music ensemble can aspire. Fairview is one of 33 music ensembles, 13 of which are choirs, selected from 180 applicants from across Missouri to perform at the event. The Missouri Music Educators Association Conference hosts 3,600 registrants with total foot traffic of 10,000 attendees over the course of the four-day event.



To keep up with the latest news and information for your student's school, visit the CPS website and select your school of choice from the drop-down menu in the top left corner of the homepage: www.cpsk12.org. You can also stay informed by downloading the free CPS mobile app. Search Columbia Public Schools on iTunes or Google Play.

www.cpsk12.org

VISION

To be the best
school district in
the state

VALUES

Trust
Integrity
Collaboration
Transparency
Empathy
Grace

MISSION

To provide an
excellent education
for all students

When the snow falls

School will be canceled or a 2-hour delayed start will be implemented only after roads are tested. Should cancellation or a 2-hour delayed start be necessary, efforts will be made to notify radio and television stations by 6 a.m. Information also will be sent to parents via the district's parent messaging system, posted on the district's website at www.cpsk12.org and on CPS-TV.

Parents may make the final decision regarding a child's attendance. If the parent views the weather too severe or the road conditions too dangerous, absences will be excused. Difficulty in contacting parents usually prevents early dismissals, but under appropriate circumstances the district may dismiss early. On inclement weather days, please listen to local radio and television stations for news of early dismissal. Additionally, information will be sent via the district's messaging system.



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Learning and Science

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Bond Update



★ WINTER 2019 ★

QUARTERLY CONNECTION



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