



COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

QUARTERLY CONNECTION

WINTER 2016

SPRING



SUMMER



FALL



Blues in the Schools 10th anniversary

Success and happiness do not inspire good blues music. However, good blues music can and does inspire great things—and for a decade now, musicians like T.J. Wheeler, Jordan Thomas, Glen “Bummer” Ward and James “Smitty” Smith have been bringing the blues to Columbia Public Schools as part of a collaboration with the annual Roots & Blues & BBQ festival.

As is customary, students from four of the schools that participated in this year’s Blues in the Schools program—Grant Elementary, Benton Elementary, Lange Middle and Battle High—took to the stage at Stephens Lake Park to perform

for a live audience as part of the festival.

In 2007, the program began at Grant Elementary School. Ten years later, a total of 30 area schools have benefitted from the Blues in the Schools program.

“The benefits of this program are astronomical,” said Lange Middle School vocal music teacher Robert Battle. Sixty Lange students took to the stage to perform songs by Prince, Natalie Cole and Stevie Wonder under a blanket of dark gray clouds—perfect blues weather. “Blues is a genre of music that tells the

stories of people who are dealing with turmoil and pain. It’s a way to express yourself in a positive, creative way. Our students have a lot to deal with in society these days, and the blues are a good teaching tool.”

The Blues in the Schools program provides music education and brings award-winning musicians and internationally recognized music teachers to mid-Missouri classrooms. Students have the opportunity to write and perform with these artists, and such hands-on learning gives children a better understanding of American blues history, traditions, diversity and culture.

For more information about the Blues in the Schools program, visit missouribits.org

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WHEN IT SNOWS

School will be cancelled or a 2-hour delayed start will be implemented only after roads are tested. Should cancellation, a 2-hour delayed start or altered bus routes 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 (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.

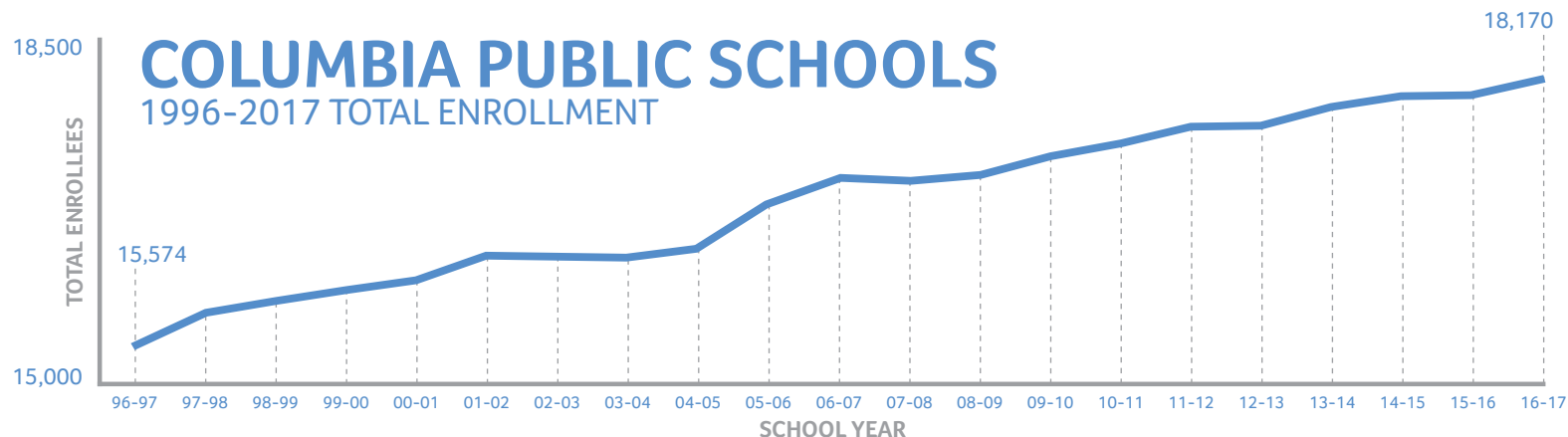
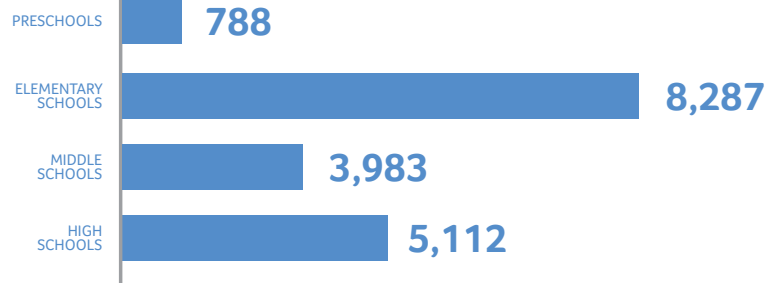
Difficulty in contacting parents usually prevents early dismissals, but under appropriate circumstances the district may dismiss early. On inclement weather days, please listen to local radio and television stations for news of early dismissal. Additionally, information will be sent via the district's messaging system. Altered bus routes for district buses will be run at times when inclement weather makes some roads too hazardous for safe travel. School bus snow routes are available through schools as well as the school district website, www.cpsk12.org.

Missouri's Largest School Districts

2015 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

1. **St. Louis City** 26,134
2. **Springfield R-XII** 25,780
3. **Rockwood R-VI (Eureka)** 22,144
4. **North Kansas City** 19,853
5. **Fort Zumwalt R-II (O'Fallon)** 18,393
6. **Hazelwood (Florissant)** 18,264
7. **Columbia** 18,170
8. **Lee's Summit R-VII** 17,834
9. **Francis Howell R-III (St. Charles)** 17,831
10. **Parkway C-II (Chesterfield)** 17,547

COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2016-2017 PK-12 ENROLLMENT



NIGHT UNDER THE STARS

Columbia Public Schools Foundation celebrates 20 years



Planning an outdoor gala to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Columbia Public Schools Foundation (CPSF) took a leap of faith. Would the weather cooperate? There was no Plan B if the night turned out to be sticky or soggy. That faith was rewarded, as a postcard-perfect evening greeted all guests to *A Night Under the Stars* at Cedar Creek Resort. It wasn't the first time fate smiled brightly on CPSF.

"I am thankful for the outstanding children, parents, teachers and administrators of this community."

—Lynn Barnett, CPSF president

Twenty years ago, faith was all Lynnanne Baumgardner and a group of enterprising Columbians had to draw from as they envisioned, planned and set into motion a foundation to help support and supplement Columbia Public Schools. In the time since, the Columbia Public Schools Foundation has raised well over \$2 million and helped more than 18,000 students, with more than 100 grants totaling in excess of \$1 million being awarded over the years to help support initiatives in history, mathematics, service learning, multicultural programming and more. Those numbers reflect how CPSF's acronym is also an abbreviated version of its mission statement: Columbia Puts Students First.

This year, emcee Nischelle Turner helped unveil one of CPSF's new grants for the 2016-17 school year—\$20,000

for author visits and novels for all six Columbia Public Schools middle schools. The grant effectively supports literary initiatives for the nearly 4,000 middle school students in Columbia.

Since 1999, CPSF has hosted *A Night of Stars* to recognize outstanding alumni, retired educators and volunteers of Columbia Public Schools. There would be no new additions to the CPSF Hall of Leaders this year, however. This night was more for reflecting on 20 successful years and projecting what the next 20 could bring.

Columbia Public Schools Foundation president Lynn Barnett is living testimony to the importance of a strong public school system—past, present and future. Barnett's CPS experience began as a second grader at Parkade Elementary in 1958, and she spent more than 30 years working with the school district in a variety of roles, including assistant superintendent. Through CPSF, she's able to pass the gift of quality education to five of her grandchildren who live in Columbia and attend public school.

"Columbia Public Schools is fortunate to be in a community of people who actively support public education," Barnett said. "As the community continues to get to know the Columbia Public Schools Foundation, I have faith that the endowment (currently in excess of \$1 million) will grow and we can provide additional opportunities for the school district to do what it does best—teach our children."

GENE HUFF SCHOLARSHIPS

Darrough, Laughlin express humility at winning funds

Thirteen years ago, Columbia Public Schools lost a stalwart in former principal and administrator Dr. Gene Huff. His spirit and mission live on in a pair of scholarships that boast his name, and both recipients of the 2016 grants were humbled and honored by their selections.

Lexie Darrough, a fourth-grade teacher at Derby Ridge Elementary, was awarded a \$1,000 fellowship in teaching scholarship and has devoted those funds to building her classroom's library and implementing a flexible-seating program. Darrough has purchased yoga balls, crates, pillows, stools and lap desks as seating options for her class, with the intention of learning what sort of arrangement works best for each individual student. The program seeks to increase movement and engagement within the learning process.

Each year, the fellowship in teaching scholarship goes to



Lexie Darrough (center) used some of her scholarship funds to purchase flexible seating options for her classroom, including crates, yoga balls and stools.

a teacher who, like Huff, demonstrates professionalism, leadership and a strong desire to make a difference.

"Our students deserve the very best education and that means having the necessary resources," Darrough says. "Any financial help like scholarships and grants are greatly appreciated by teachers and students. I had many joyous tears after hearing the news; I couldn't believe I was selected because I knew how tough it must have been to select me out of so many incredible teachers."

Hickman High School's David Laughlin was the recipient of the \$1,000 career advancement scholarship, which is awarded to a teacher pursuing an advanced degree in education. Laughlin, the World Languages department chair and a Spanish teacher at Hickman, is working toward a doctorate in education from the University of Missouri.

"The Huff scholarship is very beneficial to employees at CPS," Laughlin said. "There are many that are pursuing advanced degrees and have to pay out of pocket or add to their student-loan debt to do this. This is a huge financial help when pursuing advanced degrees. Darlene Huff and the Gene Huff scholarship is a huge blessing to me."

The late Gene Huff worked in a variety of roles within Columbia Public Schools from 1965-1998, including principal at Oakland Junior High and director of human resources for the school district. Darlene Huff was his wife.



Darlene Huff presented David Laughlin with his career advancement scholarship on the final day of school last year.

Hickman student earns perfect ACT score

Congratulations to Hickman High School junior Veer Sangha for achieving a perfect 36 on his ACT exam in June. Less than one-tenth of 1 percent of students who take the ACT earn a perfect score.

Jefferson Middle students raise \$1,400 for flood relief

Students at Jefferson Middle School raised more than \$1,400 for the Red Cross and flood relief in Louisiana by doing Penny Wars with their classmates. Classes competed against each other to collect the most pennies, and the eighth grade won. Student council members also produced a video to promote the efforts, which you can watch at: <http://bit.ly/2eSKwxF>

Fairview Elementary School PTA receives National PTA honor

The Fairview Elementary School PTA has been recognized by the National PTA organization for its leadership and work to build strong, effective family-school partnerships as a National PTA Schools of Excellence recipient. Fewer than 200 schools from across the country were recipients of this national designation. Learn more about the program at: <http://www.pta.org/excellence>

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Rock Bridge Elementary science teacher named Teacher of the Year

Rock Bridge Elementary School teacher Emily Reynolds has been named the Missouri Science Teacher of the Year for primary elementary teachers by Science Teachers of Missouri (STOM). She was recognized by the organization at its conference in October.

STOM is the only state organization affiliated with the National Science Teachers Association and is one of the largest state science organizations in the country, with more than 2,500 members.

Boonslick Kiwanis provides support to Parents as Teachers

The Boonslick Kiwanis club presented Parents as Teachers with a \$500 donation to purchase basic supplies for families. Parents as Teachers used the funds to purchase crayons, markers, play dough, wooden alphabet blocks, counting dice and other items to provide to families in need during home visits. The club has donated more than \$2,000 to support families served through the Parents as Teachers program over the years and volunteered at countless events.



Boonslick Kiwanis members David Cox, Ann McGinity and Nancy Burke with Parents as Teachers Coordinator Belinda Masters (second from left).

Parents as Teachers is a home-school-community partnership that supports parents in their role as their child's first and most influential teachers from birth to kindergarten entry.