



# QUARTERLY REPORT

COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WINTER  
2015

## DARKROOM | STUDENTS MAKE MUSIC

Students, and even faculty, of Columbia Public Schools have a new outlet for their musical and lyrical talent. Darkroom Studios is open to record their songs and ideas.

"Music is so motivating for students," said David Aulgur, Darkroom Studios coordinator. "This is a phenomenal opportunity for them to grow."

The opportunity originally came from Craig Adams, Columbia Public Schools' practical arts coordinator, who approached Aulgur about starting a recording studio. He had a small set of equipment, so the task was to find a suitable space.

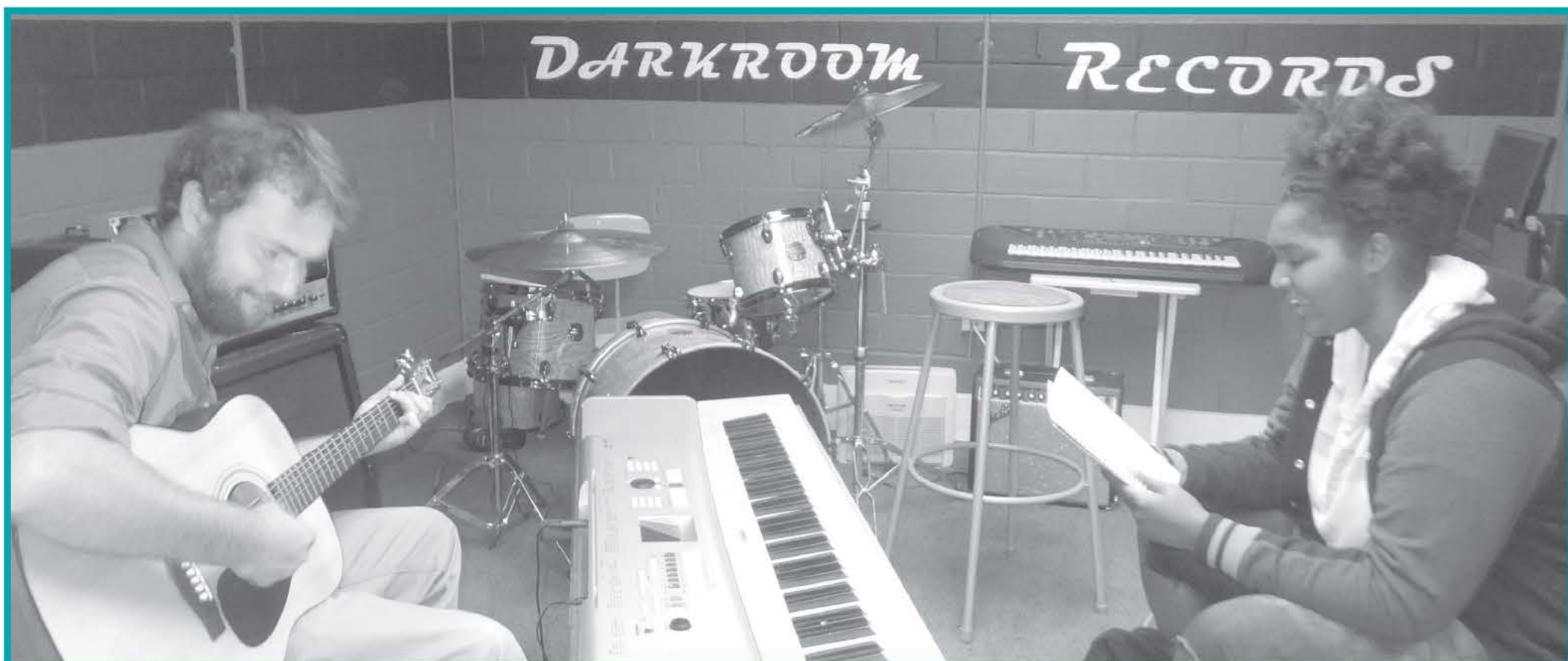
"We wanted to find a central location in a district building that could bring in kids from all across Columbia," said Aulgur. "We want it to be all of Columbia - all ages, all schools." That location is now Hickman High School, in a room that had been previously used as a darkroom, lending itself to the studio's name.

"There is not one part of this studio that did not have kids' input in the design," said Aulgur. "Nothing in CPS runs without students as the primary motor. My job is to keep the access open."

A small stipend from the district, along with donations, helped to fill the space with a drum kit, bass, microphone, keyboard, guitars and the digital equipment necessary to record what the students want to perform. Recording began in March and has continued into this school year. The Darkroom's calendar is filled with everything from a fleet of trumpet players to a hip hop group of 12 kids, one as young as seven.

"This is giving talented people an opportunity they would not have had the resources or access to otherwise," said Morgan Jones, a Hickman High School senior who was working on her own original song with Aulgur.

"I am so happy our district found the time and initiative to put something like this together," Aulgur said. "This makes music so much more accessible and shows the students you can do anything you put your mind to."



A STUDENT RECORDS HER OWN SONG AT DARKROOM STUDIOS.



## BLUES | IN THE SCHOOLS



TJ Wheeler and the Blues in the Schools program returned this fall for its eighth year, bringing music, as well as lessons in history and social studies, to Columbia Public Schools' students.

Blues in the Schools was established in 2007 at Grant Elementary School as a community outreach program by The Roots 'N Blues 'N BBQ Foundation. The foundation has worked to expand Blues in the Schools, which is currently providing the program across the school district, as well as all over the Mid-Missouri area.

## BUSES | RENOVATED TRANSPORTATION FACILITY

The opening of Columbia Public Schools' newly renovated transportation facility on Clark Lane this summer marked not only an improved home for buses, but also a new partnership with Student Transportation of America (STA).

"What we noticed about them was a culture of compassion and caring with a focus on safety and customer service," said James Whitt, Columbia Board of Education president. "Their proposal also indicated, and I quote, 'We view the school bus as an extension of the classroom and believe the first and last class of the day is the ride that our students take on the bus.' They give their local leadership autonomy and encourage them to focus on customer service. That customer service focus is really key to us."

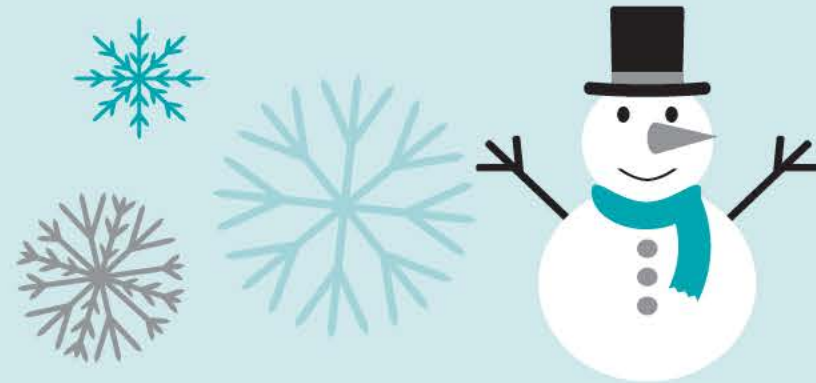
"We are really excited about STA and the facility renovations," said Peter Stiepleman, Columbia Public Schools' superintendent. "Charlie Oestreich and his team have overseen an incredible renovation of a building that about 18 months ago had one set of bathrooms and was a pretty dingy place. Now it is an amazing place for staff to meet and have their trainings."

"STA is committed to making sure our customers, our kids, and our schools are fully and absolutely attended to," said Stiepleman.

Denis Gallagher, CEO of Student Transportation of America, was on hand and described how the company he started from scratch now has over 14,000 employees, or as he put it, "family members," in 22 states. "It is a fast growing company, but it is also a family business," said Gallagher.

"This is an investment we have made. Over 200 brand new vehicles are here, an over \$16 million investment in your community. We literally picked you out two years ago. We were working to get here. We didn't tell you we were working to get here, but we had boots on the ground and we can see that this is the capital. This was an opportunity for us to show the people of Missouri what good school transportation and partnership really is."

Seeing this facility, which is a publicly owned facility, and seeing that fleet, which is a private fleet, is the perfect example of a public/private partnership. So many school districts are working together to use their resources together," said Gallagher.







STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education is a growing nationwide topic. Columbia Public Schools is seeking to further expand its STEM offerings. The creation of the Columbia STEM Alliance and an October meeting of district and community members to gather ideas and expand STEM education in Columbia are steps in that direction.

"For a while we have been struggling with getting it started," said Craig Adams, Columbia Public Schools' practical arts coordinator. "The intent of the meeting was to get people talking about getting plugged into STEM education – getting businesses and the community plugged into CPS."

The mission of the Columbia STEM Alliance is to create a collaborative network of educators, business affiliates and organizations to inspire interest in science, technology, engineering and math careers in order to generate a robust force of related professionals for our community.

October's meeting, which included district employees, parents and business members, yielded immediate returns. Several business representatives asked about volunteer opportunities in the district, something Adams and the school district were happy to make happen.

"It is about resources, advocacy and connections," Adams said of helping the STEM program continue to grow in the district. "We solicited the people who came to the meeting from various parts of the community and asked them questions like 'how can we get to a certain point in five years? What do we need to do?'"

Interested in learning more about STEM or joining the Alliance? Contact Craig Adams at [cadams@cpsk12.org](mailto:cadams@cpsk12.org).



The Columbia Public Schools Foundation celebrated its 19th year of funding grants to expand the learning experiences of all children with its annual Hall of Leaders: Night of Stars event. The evening served the dual purpose of raising funds for CPSF and honoring 12 individuals who have either attended the district or served as volunteers or educators. Those honored were:

#### OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS

Stephen Calloway  
Kerri Packard

#### OUTSTANDING RETIRED EDUCATORS

Harold Bossaller  
Marilyn Parker  
Vickie Robb  
Joy Underdown  
Linda Walker

#### OUTSTANDING ALUMNI

Shana Farr  
Mitchell Humphreys  
Lora Lynn Lannotti  
Patty Kespohl  
James Nunnelly



Stephen Calloway



Kerri Packard



Harold Bossaller



Marilyn Parker



Vickie Robb



Joy Underdown



Linda Walker



Shana Farr



Mitchell Humphreys



Lora Lynn Lannotti



Patty Kespohl



James Nunnelly





## FIFTEEN COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS STUDENTS NAMED NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALISTS

Fifteen Columbia Public Schools' students qualified as National Merit semifinalists. To qualify for a National Merit scholarship, students must take the preliminary SAT, the first screening for entrants to the program. The number of semifinalists in a state is proportional to the state's percentage of the national total of graduating seniors. About 16,000 finalists will advance to the finalist stage, and 8,300 scholarships totaling about \$32 million will be awarded in the spring. The semifinalists are: Hickman High School: **Adam Brooks, Alex Harmata, Joseph Katz, Katarina Peterson** and **Zhourui Xie**. Battle High School: **Dillon Haller**. Rock Bridge High School: **Annie Barnett, Hannah Chen, Luke Chval, Sergey Gruzdev, Zoya Khan, Jenna Liu, Derek Wang, Javan Whitney-Warner** and **Joshua Whittom**.

## CPS STUDENTS EARN PERFECT ACT SCORES

Congratulations to Hickman High School seniors **Amanda Sun** and **Alexander Harmata** and Battle High School senior **Dillon Haller** for earning a perfect 36 on the ACT exam. Less than one-tenth of one percent of students who take the ACT earns a perfect score.

## ROCK BRIDGE YEARBOOK RECOGNIZED IN DESIGN CONTEST

The National Press Association (NSPA) named finalists for its 2015 Design of the Year and Picture of the Year contests. In the Design of the Year contest, designer and recent Rock Bridge High School graduate **Bailey Washer** of the Flashback yearbook staff from Rock Bridge High School was named a finalist in the Yearbook Page/Spread category. Winners will be announced at the JEA/NSPA Fall National High School Journalism Convention in Orlando, Nov. 12-15. You can view Bailey's entry by visiting the NSPA website.

## COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS RECEIVES GYSBERS SUCCESS DESIGNATION AWARD

The Guidance and Counseling Services Section of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the

Missouri School Counselor Association selected Columbia Public Schools' guidance department as the recipient of the Gysbers Success Designation Award. The award recognizes the district's commitment to fully implementing a comprehensive guidance and counseling program, focusing on the academic, career and personal/social development of all students. Full implementation signifies that the program incorporates a results-based approach in the evaluation of its program using relevant student data to demonstrate the impact of guidance interventions on student outcomes.

The Gysbers Success Designation is a state award named in honor of Dr. Norman C. Gysbers, a retired Curators Professor of Educational/School & Counseling Psychology at the University of Missouri – Columbia. As a major contributor to the field of guidance and counseling, he is considered by many to be the 'Father of Modern Guidance and Counseling' and is best known for his work in comprehensive school counseling and for his many national leadership positions.

"There is a growing body of evidence at both the state and national levels that more fully implemented comprehensive guidance and counseling programs make a value-added contribution to student achievement and other positive student outcomes. The work of your school counselors in the delivery of Columbia Public School's comprehensive guidance and counseling program is further testament to those findings," said Dr. M. Rene' Yoesel, director of Guidance and Counseling with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. "Fully implementing a comprehensive guidance and counseling program does not occur without the support of the central office and building administrators, teachers, parents and students. This award recognizes that Columbia Public School District has demonstrated that commitment through its willingness to provide the resources that allow school counselors to devote their time to working with students to promote their academic, career and personal/social development," he said.



STUDENTS GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE WITH STEM-TEACHING TOOLS.

## CPS FOUNDATION | GRANT

This year's Columbia Public Schools Foundation grant will help Columbia Public Schools implement some of its STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) goals by providing funds for Makerspaces in media centers.

"Makerspaces is a place for the students to tinker around and explore new worlds," said Kerry Townsend, Columbia Public Schools media specialist coordinator. "We want our students to develop problem-solving skills and become engaged with making technology, not just using it."

The \$25,000 grant, which was matched by Veterans United Home Loans, will provide the money to buy 10 Project Lead The Way kits for elementary schools in the district. The kits allow the students to have hands-on experience with STEM-teaching tools such as snap circuits, Lego robotics and green screen moviemaking.

"These kits teach foundational engineering skills," Townsend said. "The students can touch, work with and create what they learn about in class."

The long-range goal is to use the kits to teach at least one Project Lead The Way unit during this school year to grades three, four and five and to also offer one school-wide Maker program monthly.



## ASBESTOS ABATEMENT EFFORTS

Columbia Public Schools continues the longterm task of monitoring all asbestos in district buildings. In order to comply with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act passed in 1978, asbestos surveillance occurs every six months or less; a complete inspection happens every three years.

Copies of the asbestos management plans can be reviewed at the Aslin Administration Building, 1818 West Worley Street, during regular office hours. Copies of each school's building plans are also available for review at each school.

## CPS-TV ONLINE

You can view all sorts of Columbia Public Schools' cable-access videos, like special events and school board meetings, right at your computer.

Stream CPS-TV from the Columbia Public Schools' website live and on demand at [cpstv.columbia.k12.mo.us](http://cpstv.columbia.k12.mo.us).

## WHAT TO DO WHEN IT SNOWS

School will be cancelled or a 2-hour delayed start 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 will also be sent via Parentlink/Blackboard, posted on the district's website and on CPS-TV.

Parents may make the final decision regarding a child's attendance. If the parent views the weather too severe or 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.

## STAY INFORMED

- Check the school district website: [www.cpsk12.org](http://www.cpsk12.org)
- Download the district's free mobile app. Search for Columbia Public Schools in iTunes or Google Play
- Tune in to CPS-TV on Mediacom 81, Century-Link 97 and Charter 985 or view the live and on-demand streaming on the CPS-TV website at [cpstv.columbia.k12.mo.us](http://cpstv.columbia.k12.mo.us)

# BOND UPDATE | FALL GROUNDBREAKING

The fall groundbreaking and construction of the Columbia Public Schools' Early Childhood Learning Center marks the continuation of the district's focus on young learners and preparing Columbia's youth to enter the school system.

"We have eight organizational goals," said Peter Stiepleman, Columbia Public Schools' superintendent. "Our second one is that we will partner with our community so that children enter school ready to learn. For so many years we have asked our early childhood teachers and our programs to be really flexible and find space in our elementary schools. So today, we are here to break ground on something that is a permanent structure for our early childhood program."

That structure will be nearly 55,000 square feet and will be dedicated to early childhood learning with space for the district's Parents As Teachers and special education programs, among many others. The building will house at least 400 students.

"This facility was approved in our 2012 bond issue," said James Whitt, president of the Columbia Board of Education. "We hope to have it open at the end of 2016. It is a part of our overall strategy of educating our young people, and we really believe in getting an early start so they are prepared when they come to school."

### SOME FEATURES OF THE FACILITY, LOCATED ON THE LANGE MIDDLE SCHOOL PROPERTY:

- \$9.5 million cost
- 54,000 square feet total space - Main level: 42,000 finished square feet, Lower level: 12,000 unfinished square feet
- Seven early childhood special education classrooms
- 10 Title 1 preschool classrooms
- Eight speech therapy classrooms
- Parents As Teachers offices and resource space
- Lower level includes space for seven additional classrooms



**GROUNDBREAKING BEGINS AT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING CENTER.**



**THE NEW STRUCTURE IS ANTICIPATED TO OPEN LATE 2016.**





(Pictured Left) Rachel Bennett, assistant principal at Muriel Battle High School, was awarded the Dr. Gene E. Huff Career Advancement Educational Scholarship Award. Samantha Bratcher, a fellows program educator of mathematics at Muriel Battle High School, was awarded the Dr. Gene E. Huff Fellowship in Teaching Scholarship Award.

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**ECRWSS  
POSTAL CUSTOMER**

Aslin Administration Building  
1818 W. Worley  
Columbia, MO 65203

Non-profit org  
US postage  
**PAID**  
Columbia, MO  
Permit No. 13

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