

## Students Connect Learning to Real Life

Teachers in The School District of University City are giving students the tools to forge their own path. Through the concept of project-based learning (PBL), University City students discover that they can develop unique answers to solve everyday issues.

“We know that there are things that our students need. We know they need 21st Century skills in order for them to be future ready,” said Ian Buchanan, Ed.D., assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. “Project-based learning allows us to teach the content, but also ensures that students have the skills to be able to thrive in the world after high school.”

PBL is part of what Buchanan calls “connecting learning to life.” He explains, “We want to be able to help students make those connections – to be able to connect with the world outside of the classroom in a very authentic way. What project-based learning does is provide us with a way of engaging students in learning at what we call their instructional entry point. So every student who works on a project-based learning project not only engages with the content – whether it’s math, science, English, social studies – but they also engage with the world outside of the classroom in a number of ways.”

For Anne Cummings, a Brittany Woods Middle School resource teacher with Talented and Gifted Development (TAGD) (see related story on page 5), the concept is more

*Continued on page 9*



*University City High School juniors and seniors participated in project-based learning during an Oct. 18 Manufacturing Day with Boeing. The purpose of the field experience was to expose students to different career pathways and options after high school.*



## Showcasing Learning Reimagined

During a late November bus tour, representatives from agencies funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) spent the afternoon in The School District of University City. RWJF is the nation’s largest public health philanthropy and a supporter of the District’s America’s Promise Grant. The purpose of their tour was to learn more about the “Humanize” pillar of the District’s Learning Reimagined initiative as part of their exploratory rethinking of what “healthy” schools are doing.

Educators and students are using the art of circles within the school day to successfully talk about and tackle pressing issues. Special guests from across the country observed U. City students, staff and community partners engaged in “circle” discussions regarding restorative practices and social-emotional learning. During a restorative circle activity (pictured above), the group discussed the importance of well-being and mental health. The group also shared the successes of U. City Schools, as well as hope for the future, both locally and worldwide.

The community is invited to experience this restorative practice during a **Community Circle: Ubuntu “I am because We are”** event at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 19, 2019, in the University City High School Pruitt Library, 7401 Balson Ave. (63130). To save your seat at the Community Circle, register yourself and your guests at [www.ucityschools.org/Ubuntu021919](http://www.ucityschools.org/Ubuntu021919). Interested individuals without online access for registration, or those requesting more details, may contact Gary Spiller, executive director of Student Services and Innovation, at (314) 290-4045.

## District Launches Student Newscast

The School District of University City has launched a brand-new, student-led newscast, known as SDUC News. This groundbreaking production distinguishes the District as one of the few school systems in the region with a student-led newscast. The newscast is intended to inform students, teachers, staff, parents and the broader community about great things happening in the District. SDUC News is currently scheduled to be produced monthly and posted on the District’s YouTube channel and website at [www.ucityschools.org/sducnews](http://www.ucityschools.org/sducnews). University City High School alumnus and local media producer Rod Milam (UCHS Class of 1988) assisted with the auditions and provided the voiceover for the SDUC News introduction.

“The production of SDUC News is an exciting development for our students, parents, and the community of University City,” said Superintendent Sharonica Hardin-Bartley, Ph.D, PHR. “I am extremely proud of the students who are taking part and leading the way in showcasing the accomplishments of our district.”

Each newscast episode will be approximately 10-15 minutes long and will feature stories published on the District website, as well as PRIDE and U. Times newspapers.





# From our Superintendent of Schools



Sharonica Hardin-Bartley  
Superintendent

Dear University City Families,

As we celebrate the first half of the 2018-19 academic school year, I would like to thank each of you for your many contributions to The School District of University City. The accomplishments and successes are due to the collective efforts of our University City family.

Each time I visit with a school to see how our students are advancing and learning in the classroom, I continue to be encouraged by the progress. Our teachers challenge our students daily to reach their full potential.

As our progress continues, our community and alumni are taking notice. To mention just a few examples:

- A local U. City business, Hall Technologies, agreed to donate more than \$5,000 to University City High School’s chemistry department for the purchase of lab supplies and materials. Hall Technologies also plans to provide field experience opportunities and a paid internship for a UCHS student.
- The UCHS Class of 1968 made a few recent contributions, including ten cell phone lockers; \$1,000 for band equipment; and an additional \$6,000 towards three scholarships for graduating seniors at \$2,000 each. The Class of 1963 recently donated \$1,000 and more than 800 ties for the Tied to Success program. These donations will help students be more engaged

**“Our teachers challenge students daily to reach their full potential.”**

**Sharonica Hardin-Bartley, Ph.D., PHR**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

in classes, enhance the learning experience, and make a significant impact on the lives of students.

- The UCHS Robolions were awarded a Monsanto Fund FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics grant in the amount of \$5,000. FIRST was founded in 1989 to inspire young people’s interest and participation in science and technology.

I would like to thank everyone across the District including our community partners for supporting our students and staff. But most importantly, I would like to thank our parents for trusting us with your children.

While resources provide great benefits for our students, our greatest success is when we come together as a community and here in University City, we are rising to the occasion each and every day.

Please plan to attend our annual State of the District Community Meeting on Monday, Feb. 25, 6-7:30 p.m. in the University City High School Pruitt Library, 7401 Balson Ave. 63130 (Jackson Ave. entrance).

We will continue to grow stronger as a team, and we are confident our successes will surpass the first half of the academic school year. Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to the new semester.

In service to our children,

*Sharonica L. Hardin-Bartley*  
Sharonica L. Hardin-Bartley, Ph.D., PHR  
Superintendent of Schools

# From our Board of Education



LaVerne Ford-Williams  
Board of Education  
Director

Dear University City Families and Friends,

All children are entitled to a solid foundation that will ensure they have what is needed to build a skill set that will allow them to experience academic progress as they move successfully through our educational system. Ultimately, when that foundation is firmly planted in what we teach students and what students learn, this enables them to go on to pursue a career/college endeavor that can yield life-long success.

As an education specialist and a 37-year veteran educator, I am saturated in evidence, research, education and experience that speaks to the urgency of providing our children with solid foundations and quality building blocks through early education efforts. There are amazing educational and life outcomes when children participate in quality early childhood/preschool programs and difficulties when they are missing this critical experience. Research further supports the impact of children’s educational

journey if they get the opportunity to experience one year of preschool before entering kindergarten!

Strong foundations for children matter. High quality early learning environments provide social, emotional, developmental and cognitive foundations for our children. There is also overwhelming evidence that supports the value of positive, engaged partnerships between parents and early care/education provider teams. Together, we can build strong, confident and happy children who grow into strong, confident, equipped and empowered adults.

As a life-long educator, I believe whole-heartedly that the future of our world is sitting in our classrooms; we owe all of them our very best!

A special “thank you” for all that you do for our children.

Sincerely,

*LaVerne Ford-Williams*  
LaVerne Ford-Williams

*The personal opinions expressed in the letter above may not reflect that of the entire school board.*

## School Board Elections - Public Notice of Filing

The School District of University City encourages any qualified person interested in running for a position on the School Board to file to be a candidate in the April 2, 2019, election. There are two positions available with three-year terms. Interested persons may file at the Board office located at 8136 Groby Road, University City, MO 63130. For more information, contact Juli Ward at 314-290-4002.

Filing will begin December 11, 2018, at 8:00 a.m. and will continue during business hours, Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Except for the first and last day of filing, filing will not occur on days that the school district’s central offices are closed due to inclement weather. Filing will also not occur on the following holidays and breaks when the school district’s central offices are closed: December 24, 2018, through January 4, 2019. Filing will end on January 15, 2019, at 5:00 p.m.

For more information, visit [www.ucityschools.org/BOE](http://www.ucityschools.org/BOE).





## UCHS Academic “U” Letters and Pins Tradition Continues

University City High School (UCHS) and the UCHS PTO recognized students for exceptional academic achievement during the preceding school year. In a tradition unique to UCHS, students can earn academic letters and pins like student-athletes receive for athletic performance. This Letters & Pins ceremony (also known as Academic “U”) is a tradition that has existed at UCHS for more than 30 years.

This year, 69 UCHS students received academic letters. Another 74 students who had received an academic letter in previous years received a pin to recognize an additional year of academic achievement. In total, 143 sophomores, juniors and seniors received a letter or a pin for their 2017-18 academic accomplishments.

To qualify for an academic letter or pin, students must have earned

a minimum of a 3.0 (weighted) GPA for the preceding school year.

Graduating seniors are recognized during graduation based upon their GPA for the first three-quarters of their senior year (37 graduates were recognized in May 2018).

“We are proud of these students and their exceptional academic performance,” said Michael Peoples, UCHS principal. “This UCHS tradition recognizes students who show dedication and commitment to their education. We believe it is highly important to recognize students in this way for their classroom success, just as we do when they succeed on the field or court.”

For more information about Letters and Pins as well as other news stories like this one, check out District News at [www.ucityschools.org](http://www.ucityschools.org).

## Giving Back and Giving Thanks

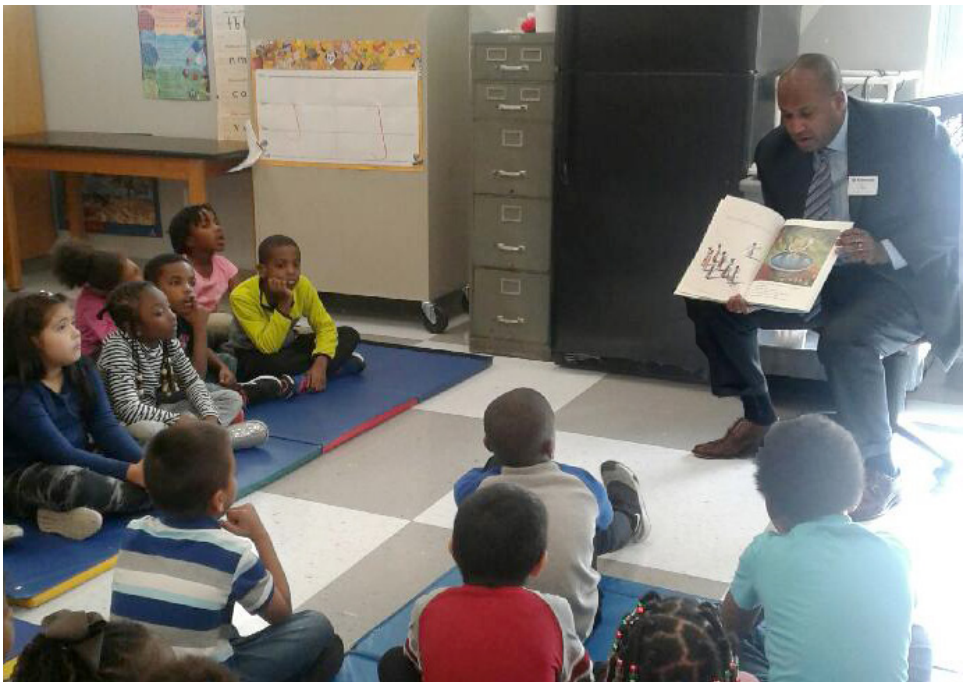
The School District of University City and our community have a holiday tradition of helping District families who are less fortunate. District social workers collect gift cards, personal hygiene items, cleaning products and more for District families. As part of the Districtwide Holiday Appeal campaign, various individuals and organizations adopted families through the school social workers, including the University City’s Fire Department, City Hall and Public Library.

“Usually, our school social workers are able to help about 75 families with children in our schools have an extra special holiday season,” said Gary Spiller, executive director of Student Services and Innovation. “A typical ‘adopted’ family receives a personal hygiene basket, gift certificates for groceries, laundry soap, toys and clothing for small children and clothing gift cards for teens – and they are all so appreciative!”

Here are some notable examples from the 2018 giving season:

- **Flynn Park students** participated in a Turkey Trot to raise funds for their annual Holiday Appeal giving campaign.
- **Davidson Surface/Air, Inc.** donated 400 100 oz. bottles of laundry detergent for District families. District social workers will have vouchers for those students and families who need this resource.
- **Jan O’Brien and the staff at MasterCard** have been supporting Pershing families for approximately eight years with snacks, hygiene packets, hats, gloves, coats and more.
- **All Nations Church** hosted a Happy Thanks Giveaway to distribute more than 150 meals with frozen turkeys and food baskets to families as identified by the District. Upon receipt, the families made an artistic contribution to a Thankful Wall as an ongoing reminder of gratitude.
- **The Gate Church** collected toiletry items in early December and donated 54 baskets for District families via school social workers.
- **All Saints Church** donated 12 turkeys and a box of food that included fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs and more.
- **Victory Christian Outreach Church** provided 17 families with a turkey and basket of food.
- **U-City Family Church** donated box dinners in November and teamed with **The Homework Club** to donated more than 100 food baskets in December
- **Oak Hill Presbyterian Church** donated \$500 in clothing gift cards for the Holiday Appeal initiative.

“So many members of our community have adopted families or dropped off gift cards,” said school social worker Christine Woodward. “As you can see, we have an amazing community.” But, the need for help continues throughout the year. For more information regarding how you can support District families, contact the school social worker in your neighborhood school or the office of Student Services at (314) 290-4045.



U. City Kiwanis volunteer Christopher Bowers, from Edward Jones, reads to Barbara C. Jordan second-graders.

## U. City Kiwanis Support Students

Chartered in March 2018, the new Kiwanis Club of University City gives community members the opportunity to help students locally and worldwide. The club was formed to inspire students’ service and leadership in community. It will focus on service projects in several categories, including literacy, community involvement, leadership opportunities for our students, and more.

For information regarding Kiwanis’ volunteering and meetings, email [ucitykiwanisclub@gmail.com](mailto:ucitykiwanisclub@gmail.com).

## RevTrak Provides Online Bill Pay

As a convenience to parents and students, The School District of University City is rolling out the online RevTrak Web Store, a new opportunity for 24/7 online payments for meals and other fees, in the new year. RevTrack will allow payments using Visa, Discover, or MasterCard debit and credit cards, plus eChecks.

“We believe RevTrak will help busy families save time, reduce trips to school offices, and eliminate the need to send cash or checks to school with students,” said Scott Hafertepe, chief financial officer. “Parents should be able to make a quick payment in the morning, evening or even during their lunch hour with just a few clicks.”

For more details, visit [www.ucityschools.org/RevTrak](http://www.ucityschools.org/RevTrak).



# District Art Students Find Opportunities To Learn, Showcase Work

Art students in The School District of University City honed their skills, learned from experts and showcased work through several events and learning opportunities.

On Sept. 23, four University City High School (UCHS) students were recognized at U. City in Bloom’s 2018 biennial Plein Air Art in Bloom Festival youth competition. Jade Morrow, Rebecca Rico and Shu’Rya Butler earned first-, second- and third-place honors, respectively; Shu’Rya and Andrew Immer were named Curator’s Choice. The students’ artwork was featured at the University City Public Library in October.

Marnie Claunch’s advanced art students at UCHS worked with Jennifer James, a COCA teaching artist, to learn painting techniques of figures and nature. Following a field experience to view “Figures, Fables, & Fiction” at COCA’s Millstone Gallery, students were inspired to create artwork that was exhibited at Millstone.

Barbara C. Jordan Elementary’s fifth-grade students Casey Beard, Zoe Binion and Jourdyn Jones-Mitchell, with guidance from teacher Catherine Mitchell, worked within a strict budget to curate art pieces purchased from the St. Louis Art Fair for the Oct. 18 Student Art Aficionados Showcase at Third Degree Glass Factory. The unique program allows students to explore the world of art curation.

On Oct. 19, three UCHS students participated in a day-long workshop and exhibit opening at the Saint Louis Art Museum with Kehinde Wiley, a New York-based artist who painted President Barack Obama’s official portrait. Wiley was the first African-American artist to paint an official presidential portrait for the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. The exhibit, which is on display at the Saint Louis Art Museum until Feb. 10, 2019, features 11 original portraits of people Wiley met in neighborhoods in north St. Louis and Ferguson.

Artwork by U. City students will be shown at the University City Public Library, Feb. 1-28, with a public reception from 4:30-6 p.m. on Feb. 5, 2019. Also mark your calendar for the Districtwide Arts Night on April 12, 2019, at UCHS.



Art teacher Marnie Claunch (center right) and students (left to right) Anaiah Easley, Nyjah Hudson and Shu’Rya Butler pose with artist Kehinde Wiley (center) during a special reception at the Saint Louis Art Museum on Oct. 19.

Mya VanSteedlandt (right) works on her project for the University City High School: “Figures & Grisaille” exhibit at COCA’s Millstone Gallery.

Barbara C. Jordan students contributed to the art displayed at Third Degree Glass Factory in October (below) by curating pieces from the St. Louis Art Fair.



## NAF Offers Another Option for Career Preparation

In today’s fast-paced world, the United States educational system cannot afford to rely on yesterday’s methods of preparing students to enter the workforce. “Education has to be nimble – to evolve with the times, or our students will be left behind,” said Susan Hill, director of Pk-12 College and Career Readiness and Access.

University City is taking a proactive approach and giving its students a competitive advantage through a partnership with NAF. Formerly the National Academy Foundation, NAF is a national network of education, business and community leaders working together to ensure high school students are prepared for their future.

“We’re excited about what this means for our students,” Hill declared. “NAF will help us to be cutting-edge and responsive to changes in the workforce.”

The School District of University City is the second school district in the St. Louis metropolitan area to partner with NAF. The organization helps school districts establish career academies at the high school level, allowing students to earn NAFTrack Certification and potential openings for jobs or internships with NAF’s corporate partners such as MasterCard, Hewlett-Packard or World Wide Technology. “And that can happen right after high school, or after the student earns a two- or four-year degree,” Hill added.

Beginning with the 2019-20 school year, University City will launch NAF Academies in biomedical sciences and engineering. To qualify for the NAFTrack certification program, students entering either ninth- or 10th-grade must take at least two classes in their chosen career path and also be enrolled at some point in a dual credit or college level class. Students will also have to complete a 150-hour paid internship in their career field.

“We want our students to explore their strengths and interests where that relates to career training, so they have a good idea of what their path will look like when they leave high school,” Hill said. “NAF will help prepare students to get to college, and to give them the skills and the



LAUNCHING 2019-2020

The School District of University City

**BE FUTURE READY**

Academy of Health Sciences, Biomedical Sciences  
Academy of Engineering

knowledge to get through it. Or, if they decide not to go to college, NAF will prepare them to go in whatever direction they choose.”

Hill noted, the route to a career doesn’t necessarily look the same as it did just 10 years ago. “In the past, a lot of high schools and school districts had the mindset of just getting students to college. But we know the data now shows that students are not finishing college at the rate they used

to. And that’s an American phenomenon -- that’s not just happening with students from University City,” Hill continued. “So there needs to be a big shift in thinking about the future of the workforce, because their world of work is totally different than ours was. A lot of businesses are now hiring students out of high school with certifications and then paying them to go to college as they work in the business.”

The District’s partnership with NAF aligns perfectly with other programs already in place

at University City, including the District’s use of curriculum developed by Project Lead the Way, a national organization that encourages students to pursue careers in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields. NAF’s mission augments programs such as Early College Experience and Dual Enrollment. It fits well with the District’s emphasis on project-based learning.

“All of these things are interrelated. They connect nicely with NAF and what they want to do in the classroom,” Hill said. “We are building high-quality programs of study at the high school. We feel that NAF aligns with our priorities and what we are trying to do for our students.”

Watch for more information about the District’s partnership with NAF at [www.ucityschools.org/NAF](http://www.ucityschools.org/NAF).

**“Education has to be nimble – to evolve with the times, or our students will be left behind!”**

**Susan Hill**

Director of Pk-12 College/Career Readiness and Access



# Innovative Teaching Strategies Help Students Learn in New Ways

In any organization, change can be challenging. Educators are often hesitant to alter a well-established style or process. However, change can also bring excitement and opportunity.

“So many teachers may think, ‘Here we go again, another new program,’ and they’ll assume that eventually, it’s just going to go by the wayside,” said Kimberly Fileccia, a seventh-grade English language arts teacher at Brittany Woods Middle School.

But, there was something different about the professional development program introduced to The School District of University City by Sharroky Hollie, Ph.D., a little more than a year ago. “I don’t feel this is going away,” Fileccia added.

“I feel it’s relevant.”

Just as important, Fileccia has found it to be effective.

According to Fileccia, “The outcome that we want is to increase student engagement, and that is what I see happening.”

Hollie is the executive director of the Center for

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning (CCRTL), whose goal is to help foster an atmosphere of cultural responsiveness within the community. Hollie has spent 25-plus years as an educator, at both the teaching and administrative levels. He is a professor in teacher education at California State University, as well as a visiting professor at Webster University in St. Louis. He has developed a system of strategies for use in the classroom, which Fileccia employs to better connect with her students. She noted, “We’ve taken old-school methods and made them newer, fresher and more relevant for the students.”

Ian Buchanan, assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, said the new methods align with the District’s three core pillars of Learning Reimagined: personalize instruction, humanize relationships and problematize to find solutions to real-world problems. “We want the students to feel nurtured, affirmed and brilliant,” Buchanan added. “This work is designed to equip teachers with the mindset and instructional tools needed to reach and educate any student who comes into the building, including those who are most on the margins.”

In August 2017, Hollie facilitated professional development for middle school and high school faculty members. Later, 20 educators volunteered to received additional personal coaching from Hollie and his CCRTL team who watched the teachers in class throughout the year and gave support on how to better incorporate the strategies.

“I’m not sure that every teacher ran with it the way I did, but I took what they said to heart and immediately changed my teaching and the

***“The outcome that we want is to increase student engagement, and that is what I see happening!”***

**Kimberly Fileccia**  
*English Language Arts Teacher  
Brittany Woods Middle School*



Seventh-grade English language arts teacher Kimberly Fileccia brings her cultural responsiveness training techniques into the classroom when engaging with Brittany Woods Middle School students.

strategies that I use now,” Fileccia said. “It’s made me a better teacher, it keeps me on my ‘A’ game.”

For this school year (2018-19), the program was introduced to faculty members at Julia Goldstein Early Childhood Education Center and the District elementary schools. So far, the feedback has been extremely positive. According to Elizabeth Gardner, director of Instruction, “Teachers are finding this professional development to be extremely powerful. They have more strategies for proactively de-escalating situations by validating and affirming students.” Gardner added, “They’re also much more prepared to use cooperative learning structures in very intentional ways that increase student engagement in their classrooms.”

Buchanan observed that student validation is a key step in the process. “One of the strategies that Hollie talks about is VABB: validate, affirm, build and bridge,” he added. “One of the ways you build relationships with students is by first validating and affirming them. After that, we help students build bridges to behaviors, statements and actions that are more aligned to school expectations. The purpose is to allow a student to maintain his or her dignity while offering them an alternative way to comport themselves.”

“Last year, it (cultural responsiveness) was rolled out to approximately half of our staff,” Buchanan shared. “This year, we rolled it out to the remainder of our staff.” Eventually, the hope is that it becomes part of the fabric of the District.

“It’s really more of a focus on getting an equity-oriented mindset and effective instructional strategies imbedded into the school culture,” Buchanan concluded.

To learn more about curriculum and instruction, visit [www.ucityschools.org/C&I](http://www.ucityschools.org/C&I) and follow them on Twitter at @UCityLearns.

## Gifted And Talented Education Evolves to Talented And Gifted Development

The School District of University City is dedicated to developing the potential of its students and transforming its programs to better meet the needs of diverse groups of learners. To achieve this, the District has made changes to transform the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program to the Talented and Gifted Development (TAGD) program. The TAGD program was designed to better support talent development of all students, while meeting Missouri guidelines for gifted services to high-ability students in second- through 12th-grades.

“Our goals are to help develop critical and creative thinking in all students and allow them to apply these skills to their daily work,” said TAGD Program Facilitator Lyndlee Mabry. “This year, we will begin screening all second- and fifth-grade students for gifted services, and once again in middle school and high school, if requested by a parent, guardian, teacher or even the student.”

At all levels, students who qualify through the District screening and evaluation process will receive gifted services. All elementary students (kindergarten through fifth-grade) will be immersed in opportunities to develop their thinking through a district-wide, whole-group and small-group, talent development curriculum delivered by TAGD resource teachers. At the middle-school level, there will be opportunities for students who do not qualify for gifted services to participate in talent development. TAGD resource teacher will actively seek students for these opportunities. At the high-school level, a TAGD resource teacher is available during lunch periods and seminar class time to consult and support students in a variety of ways. An independent-study class is also an option for juniors and seniors identified for gifted services.

For more information, contact the TAGD Resource Teacher in the student’s school or visit [www.ucityschools.org/TAGD](http://www.ucityschools.org/TAGD).



# BLACK & GOLD Traditions

## Parade brings together community

The Homecoming tradition in University City has been alive and thriving for the last 100-plus years. It is a day spent gathering together as a community to celebrate the school and Lions' pride on Saturday of Homecoming week.

On Saturday, Oct. 13, after the parade, the float competition winners were announced: Jackson Park Elementary School stood strong in third place; Julia Goldstein Early Childhood Education Center secured second place and Pershing Elementary School held onto their title of reigning champs for the fourth year in a row.

The annual appearances by all of the University City schools are an expected sight to see, but the businesses and groups who also participate every year show what University City can do as a community. This year, the parade included several floats from community

businesses and organizations including the Sparkling Divas, Agape Academy, Helping Hand Me Downs, Real Talk and Dazzling Diamonds.

"We are very fortunate that many people in our community asked to be in our parade," said Christine Woodward, social worker at University City High School. "We had a very good turnout."

UCHS Student Council sponsor Yul Amerson expressed his amazement with the community turnout. "[Before coming to UCHS two years ago,] I had never heard of a high school homecoming parade," Amerson said. "I thought it was going to be corny and no one was going to come out...I was shocked by our community support and how many students and families from all our schools participated. After my first year, I was all in!"

**HOMECOMING CONTENT PRODUCED BY UNIVERSITY CITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS  
STORY BY LINSEY SPARKS ~ PHOTOS BY LINSEY SPARKS AND IAN FELD**



Freshman Emma Scharff and senior Sydney Lucas throw candy from the UCHS field hockey float.



In an intense moment, junior Lawrence Coleman along with teammates seniors Givion Crawford and Lamarq Murphy push through the plays. "I was a little nervous to play in front of some of the alumni I didn't know," Coleman confessed.



Searching for an opportunity to score, senior Givion Crawford follows through on the play. "A lot of alumni who used to be on the team were there and I tried to impress them as much as they impressed me," he said.

## GAME ON!

### Students look forward to sharing Homecoming with alumni

Each autumn during Homecoming season, many traditions are carried on in University City. However, one tradition seems to stand above them all. At University City High School, the school week leading up to Homecoming, Spirit Week, ends with an all-school pep rally on that Friday. The football game is played on Saturday afternoon, and a dance is held that night.

One of the most enduring traditions is the return of our alumni for the Homecoming football game – recent graduates and long-time alumni.

"I've had a family member graduate

from U. City every year since 1982," said UCHS senior Kaya Blount, marching band drum major.

Although most students cannot share that same experience, many have family and friends who attended U. City and continue to come back – each from a time that they believe was U. City's heyday. This serves as fuel for current students to perform well.

"[My family members] graduated back when the band used to win a lot of trophies and awards," Kaya said. "We want to show that our glory days are still here."

UCHS senior Lamarq Murphy,

four-year varsity football player, agrees with Kaya. "When the alumni come back, it motivates me to play better."

UCHS students also want to show alumni that traditions have not died. According to Lamarq, "U. City football is a brotherhood." He believes this feeling of brotherhood is a tradition that should be passed down, so he wants to show the alumni that he and his senior "brothers" have passed the torch.

UCHS senior Logan Black, dance team captain, also feels she has something to prove. "There can be

pressure on us because we want [the alumni] to say good things," Logan said. "We want them to continue to be proud of where they came from."

When the alumni come back to visit, they bring support and a sense of family to our students. Ultimately though, they reinforce the sense of community that is strong within U. City as a whole.

Students also intend to come back and visit once they have graduated. "I want to leave for school [college], but I want to come back and see our new captains and their improvements," Logan said.

**STORY BY JULIAN ALBRIGHT ~ PHOTOS BY REBECCA RICO AND NATHAN HILL**



Dressed as superheroes, Jackson Park Elementary School students and staff stopped at various points in the parade to dance to Kidz Bop tunes.



Flynn Park Elementary students dressed as various characters from Marvel and DC Comics.



Brittany Woods Middle School cheerleaders stop and perform a routine while walking down Delmar Blvd. during the parade.



Girls from the Sparkling Divaz Majorette Dance Team march in the parade.



Performing at the Homecoming game against Normandy, sophomore Josh Rhiney anticipates the battle of the bands. "It was fun but it was different, I didn't like how we had an entire football field between our band and theirs," Josh said. "There were no judges, but I think we won."



Ka'yon Brison and Molly Holman, along with the dance team, entertain the crowd at Homecoming. "It felt really amazing because the alumni always encouraged and motivated us to be better than them, but also to keep the team held to the highest standards," Ka'yon said.



At the Homecoming halftime show, senior drum majors Kaya Blount and Shu'rya Butler lead the band. "I wish the alumni band was able to play, because it's their Homecoming, too," Kaya said. Since Normandy brought their band, it was decided that the alumni group would not play this year.



# Foundation Support Enhances District’s Educational Offerings for Students

The University City Education Foundation (UCEF), a 501c(3) not-for-profit corporation, has raised more than \$220,000 in the past 20 years in support of The School District of University City. UCEF is a long-term, self-sustaining program designed to enhance District schools beyond the limits of normal tax dollars and bridge the gap in state and federal funding. Since its inception, the UCEF Board has raised funds in support of District and Board goals for delivering a quality education accessible to all students in preschool through 12th-grade. The Foundation actively solicits private and public contributions and partnerships in support of enrichment opportunities, and, most recently, the District’s efforts to create a modern learning experience through Learning Reimagined.

In support of District, UCEF Board and community goals for our students, UCEF is focusing on three areas of emphasis: 1) early childhood education, 2) innovation and 3) college and career readiness.

**Early Childhood Education:** Increase the number of University City children and families who have access to early education. Studies show that early success is predicated on access to early education, teaching support and parental involvement. The Julia Goldstein Early Childhood Education Center provides services to University City children from birth (Parents As Teachers) to kindergarten. General education services are provided for 98 students and an additional 50 benefit from special education offerings. All students have access to the rigors of the student-centered Reggio Emilia education approach, with an emphasis on family participation. Educators from across the state and as far away as China have visited our program to see the innovative work being done. For more information, visit [www.ucityschools.org/JGEC](http://www.ucityschools.org/JGEC).

**Innovation:** Create a path for innovation and creativity in the educational experience, both inside and outside the classroom. Traditional education is no longer meeting the needs of today’s students. Hence, the vision behind the Learning Reimagined initiative is to create a modern learning experience. It addresses the needs of the whole child by building on the fundamental pillars of teaching and learning: personalize instruction for every student, humanize interactions and build relationships and problematize to find solutions to real-world problems. For more information, visit [www.ucityschools.org/LearningReimagined](http://www.ucityschools.org/LearningReimagined).

**College & Career Readiness:** Creating opportunities for early exposure to college options and test preparation, along with training and apprenticeships for positions in the trades. Just as early education is important, students need exposure to the concepts of higher education and training early in their educational careers. As is age-appropriate, UCEF wants to harness the support of partners and the community to provide information and guidance as students as they begin to realize their own unique talents and gifts. The District is also cultivating ways to support students in the transitional grades (sixth and ninth) and to help ensure that they retain their enthusiasm for continuous learning.

Teachers, administrators and community partners work hard to ensure that District resources are used wisely. UCEF continues to offer ways to provide teachers with additional avenues for testing their own ideas, concepts and theories as they work to provide what’s best for their students. Here are a few examples of how UCEF accomplishes these goals:



*Tammie Wright (above) received one of 22 Competitive Grants awarded to District staff for the 2018-19 school year. Barbara C. Jordan students will receive iPads and materials to support math facts fluency.*

Competitive Grants are designed to enhance learning and teaching. In November 2018, the UCEF marked American Education Week by awarding \$20,224.84 in annual competitive grant funding to 22 educators from across all grade levels. This year’s grant projects included requests for flexible seating, technology, art supplies and more. The presentations began with a visit from the UCEF Prize Patrol, led by Superintendent Sharonica Hardin-Bartley and UCEF Board members. The UCEF Competitive Grant program is open to faculty, staff, principals and administrators. Parents and other community members may submit a grant if sponsored by an eligible District employee.

PRIDE Projects are designed to assist the greatest number of students. School principals have the opportunity to secure \$1,250 to \$2,250 (based on grade level) annually for one or more projects that have an impact on the school as a whole. Successful projects developed by principals or other school-wide representatives fostering excellence are usually innovative. PRIDE Projects are intended to supplement and enhance, not supplant, the school program. For example, UCEF recently approved \$1,250 for a Sensory Path Hallway at Barbara C. Jordan Elementary School. Sensory Paths include activities that stimulate senses of touch, smell, taste, movement and balance, sight and hearing. These activities encourage better focus, self-regulation and ability to complete more complex learning tasks when returning to the classroom.

The Herskowitz Award is the UCHS Teacher Recognition Award established by the late Ira Herskowitz as a way to honor teachers. Students have a direct impact on this award by submitting annual nominations.

For more about UCEF, visit [www.ucityeducationfoundation.org](http://www.ucityeducationfoundation.org).

## Stay Connected with UCEF

While the University City Education Foundation (UCEF) will continue to share our annual report with our supporters, many have requested that this document and interim information be provided in a digital format. Therefore, options are now available. Stay connected with UCEF via:

- Website at [www.ucityeducationfoundation.org](http://www.ucityeducationfoundation.org)
- Social Media at [www.facebook.com/UCityEd](http://www.facebook.com/UCityEd)
- Sign up for emails or choose to continue to receive printed copies by completing the online form at [www.ucityschools.org/UCEF\\_Subscribe](http://www.ucityschools.org/UCEF_Subscribe).



**Attention Adults of University City**  
The University City Education Foundation  
invites you to

# Come & Play!

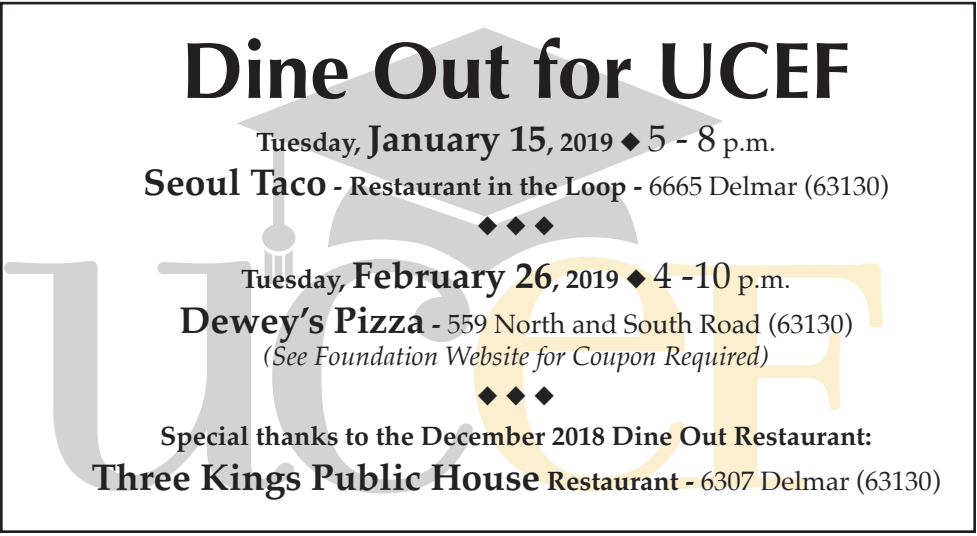
Wednesday, **Feb. 20**, 2019 • **6-8** p.m.  
**Brittany Woods Middle School**  
8125 Groby Road, University City, MO 63130

Thanks to our generous donors,  
UCEF just awarded funds to educators for the purchase of tons of cool, educational toys in our schools.  
Students in all grade levels are learning to use new technology and a host of other  
mind-bending, strength-extending and fun **never-ending** -- gadgets in their classrooms.

**But, why should kids have all the fun?**  
UCEF invites YOU, parents and community members, to come and test all this fun stuff!  
This is an “adults only” event, so please book the babysitter NOW!  
Call it a date night or “I just got to get out of the house” night.

**Just Come & Play!**  
Refreshments will be served!





# Dine Out for UCEF

Tuesday, January 15, 2019 ♦ 5 - 8 p.m.  
**Seoul Taco - Restaurant in the Loop** - 6665 Delmar (63130)

♦ ♦ ♦

Tuesday, February 26, 2019 ♦ 4 -10 p.m.  
**Dewey’s Pizza** - 559 North and South Road (63130)  
*(See Foundation Website for Coupon Required)*

♦ ♦ ♦

Special thanks to the December 2018 Dine Out Restaurant:  
**Three Kings Public House Restaurant** - 6307 Delmar (63130)



# Lions and Drones and Robots, “Oh My!”

## Second Annual U. City STEM Expo is a Roaring Success

It wasn’t a fantasy land with a yellow-brick road and “lions and tigers and bears”...rather, the Brittany Woods Middle School gymnasium was filled with lions and drones and robots.

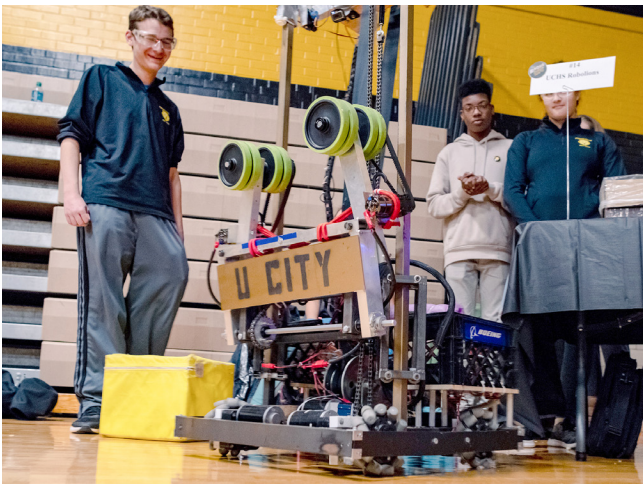
On Nov. 28, 2018, The School District of University City hosted its second annual STEM Expo, coordinated by the District’s department of Curriculum and Instruction. Nearly 75 schools, clubs and outside organizations created a “STEMulating” evening with interactive displays in topical areas such as coding, robotics and bio-medical sciences.

STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and math and has been integrated throughout District curriculum to create learning experiences that require complex thinking, problem-solving and discovery.

The aim of the annual Expo is to bring together community and school partners, including students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade, so they can all see and experience STEM education at every grade level. The Expo gives students the opportunity to see the potential for real-world STEM exploration and to connect with community partners such as Ameren, Washington University, Missouri Botanical Garden, Bayer, National Society of Black Engineers, Stormwater STL, St. Louis Science Center and more.

“Our STEM Expo is an amazing representation of our focus on STEM education,” said Superintendent Sharonica Hardin-Bartley. “Kudos to Beverly Velloff and the entire team for organizing such an awesome event for our community.”

For more information regarding the STEM Expo, including event participants, visit [www.ucityschools.org/STEMExpo](http://www.ucityschools.org/STEMExpo). Additional photos are available on the District’s Facebook page @UCitySchools.



## Project-Based Learning *continued from page 1*

accurately described as problem-based learning, because every unit begins with an “authentic problem” for the students to solve.

“We call it the ‘driving question,’ a real-world problem that the students are trying to address, and it’s the focus of everything that they do,” Cummings explained. “So now, what would be their response to the driving question?”

Students, working in groups, develop a unique project and work on it over a period of time, doing the necessary research to find a solution. The students demonstrate their knowledge and skills by developing a public product or presentation for a real audience.

“So it becomes student-centered and student-driven, and if the teacher designs it properly, then the result could be a variety of products. The answer can be any number of things,” Cummings added. “Often times, each group can come up with something completely different for an answer, but in every case, some sort of authentic audience is being served.” And in every case, the students are able engage more fully because they personalize the project and make it their own.

“It’s amazing. Once they catch that spark, then they’re begging to get to keep working,” Cummings continued. “I’m really not kidding. They’re

asking, ‘Can you write me a pass, I’ll come up during lunch,’ and I’ll get students who want to stay after school. Once they see the process truly is theirs and they’re creating a product, answering an authentic question for an authentic audience, the motivation really becomes internal.”

The District has nurtured this learning environment through a partnership with the Buck Institute for Education, a nonprofit organization that creates and shares PBL instructional practices and products. Buck also provides follow-up support for teachers, schools and districts. According to Elizabeth Gardner, director of Instruction, 55 District teachers have engaged in the professional development for PBL so far, with another 20 interested in future offerings. Gardner noted that the PBL concept meshes perfectly with the District’s three core pillars of Learning Reimagined – that is, to personalize instruction, humanize relationships and problematize to find solutions to real-world problems.

“The students are finding their own path and their own voice in their work,” Gardner shared, “and this type of learning gives students an opportunity to take action on issues in their local and global community, a skill that will be invaluable when they graduate from UCHS and enter college or a career.”



## Centennial Commons Recreation News

Join the University City Recreation Department for its upcoming winter events:

Saturday, Jan. 12, 2019

### Health and Wellness Fair

Saturday, Feb. 16, 2019

### Youth Strength for Sports for grades 3rd through 12th

Don't miss out on these activities to keep moving during the winter months and going into the new year!

For more details, contact University City Centennial Commons at (314) 505-8625 or Relay Missouri (800) 735-2966 (TDD).

## Go Red for Women Day – February 1

Go Red for Women Day! On Friday, Feb. 1, 2019, make sure to wear red for the 16th Annual National Wear Red Day to support all women in their fight against heart disease. Please wear red and join us on Feb. 1 at Heman Park Community Center, 975 Pennsylvania

(63130). To raise awareness for heart disease, we will be providing information, doing blood pressure/heart rate checks, showcasing vendors and more from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. We will also host a lunch and learn with a guest speaker. There will be door prizes and special giveaways.

This event is free to the public, but you must pre-register by Friday, Jan. 25, 2019. To pre-register, stop by Centennial Commons, 7210 Olive Blvd., during normal business hours, or register online [www.ucitymo.org/recreation](http://www.ucitymo.org/recreation).



## In 2019, Strive to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle More!

Here are five simple tips for cutting down waste in the New Year.

- 1. Bag-less is better!** Americans use **2,663 plastic bags every second**. The amount of energy required to make 12 plastic shopping bags could drive a car for a mile. Pick up a free reusable bag at City Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor – while supplies last!
- 2. Stop the paper junk mail!** (*This does not include The School District of University City's PRIDE newspaper nor the City of University City's ROARS newsletter.*) Junk mail is a huge waste of our natural resources and time. Take your name off those mailing lists at [www.catalogchoice.org](http://www.catalogchoice.org).
- 3. BYOC: Bring your own cup or container.** Instead of using a non-recyclable paper coffee cup, bring one from home that can be filled at your coffee shop. (*Bringing your own container can often save you some money – just ask.*)
- 4. Take back the tap.** St. Louis tap water far exceeds state and federal regulations and is more frequently screened for dangerous pollutants. Refill your own water bottle instead of wasting single-use plastic water bottles.
- 5. Turn your key, be idle free!** Ten seconds of idling uses more fuel than turning off the engine and restarting it. Modern engines don't need more than a few seconds of idling before they can be driven safely. Additional exhaust contributes to asthma, allergies and cardiovascular disease.

## University City Public Library News

Join the fun on Sunday, Jan. 13, 2019, and come meet J.D. Trafford, lawyer and author. Trafford is known for his legal thrillers and most recent work, *Little Boy Lost*, which is set in St. Louis. Friends of the University City Public Library will be hosting this event at 2 p.m. in the University City Public Library auditorium, located at 6701 Delmar Blvd. (63130).

**University City Public Library wants to hear from you!** While planning for the future, we would like to know the thoughts of our citizens in the University City community. Please share your thoughts, ideas and/or any concerns with the Library Board of Trustees online at [www.ucitylibrary.org](http://www.ucitylibrary.org) or call (314) 727-3150.

Please help us celebrate Black History Month by attending a screening of *Rejoice and Shout*, an acclaimed documentary tracing the 200-year evolutionary history of African-American culture and gospel music from early hymns to rap and hip-hop. This event will be held at the University City Public Library on Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019, at 6:30 p.m.

All University City Public Library events are free and open to the public.



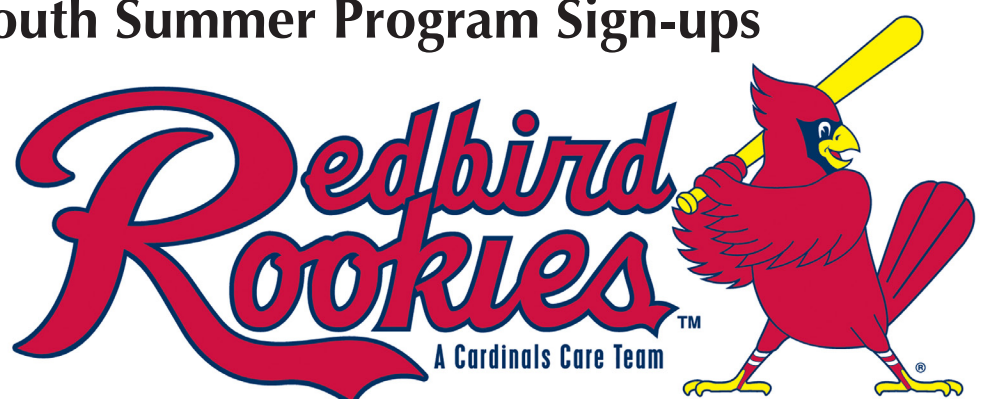
## Watch for Youth Summer Program Sign-ups

The University City District Athletic Committee (a joint partnership with The School District of University City and City of University City - Recreation Division) will again partner with the St. Louis Cardinals to provide this exceptional sports program for University City youth-kindergarten to sixth graders.

Be on the lookout for information this Spring about our "Summer Sign-Up Spectacular" registration for:

- Redbird Rookies
- Summer Youth or Teen Activities Camp

For more information, contact University City Centennial Commons at (314) 505-8625 or Relay Missouri (800) 735-2966 (TDD).





# UCHS Alumni Class Acts spotlight: Noted Jazz Musician Returns

Noted musician and professor Jeffrey Charles Anderson was named the Fall 2018 University City Returning Artist. This 1975 graduate of University City High School (UCHS) is an accomplished jazz musician, college professor and business owner. He visited with students across the District during the week of Nov. 12-16, 2018, and was honored at a public reception on Nov. 14.



Jeffrey Charles Anderson (left) and Kay Watts

The Returning Artist Program, coordinated by chairperson Kay Watts and the University City Municipal Commission on Arts and Letters, brings artistically renowned UCHS graduates to work with students and encourage them to investigate careers in the arts. Past returning artists included visual artists, glassblowers, writers, filmmakers, musicians, actors, singers and dancers. More information about the Returning Artist series is available at [www.ucityartsandletters.org](http://www.ucityartsandletters.org).

## Families Look to the New School Year During Transition Week

As we approach 2019, we look forward to all of the opportunities that come with a new year. Pre-kindergarten, fifth-graders, eighth-graders, seniors (Class of 2019) as well as the grades in between are preparing for their next great adventures! The School District of University City is also preparing for a smooth transition for students.

As parents and students make plans for the 2019-20 school year, they can rest assured the District has the educational infrastructure in place to ensure success at all levels. Online enrollment for new students will be OPEN for the 2019-20 school year during Transition Week, Jan. 29-31, 2019. Re-enrollment for current students officially begins after the conclusion of the current school year, and may be done through the family's established Tyler SISK12 Parent Portal in early summer. More details and links are available at [www.ucityschools.org/Enroll](http://www.ucityschools.org/Enroll).

The District's approach to delivering a modern learning experience, Learning Reimagined, along with complimentary initiatives and programs strengthens District offerings. New experiences await, across all grade levels, across all schools. Check out transitional opportunities at:

- [www.ucityschools.org/Welcome](http://www.ucityschools.org/Welcome) (for rising kindergarten and other prospective families)
- [www.ucityschools.org/SixthGrade](http://www.ucityschools.org/SixthGrade) (for rising fifth-graders planning to attend Brittany Woods Middle School)
- [www.ucityschools.org/Freshmen](http://www.ucityschools.org/Freshmen) (for incoming ninth-graders planning to attend University City High School)

Visit your neighborhood school to see all that the District has to offer. Call the school office to schedule your tour today or visit [www.ucityschools.org](http://www.ucityschools.org).

## Preparing for Inclement Weather

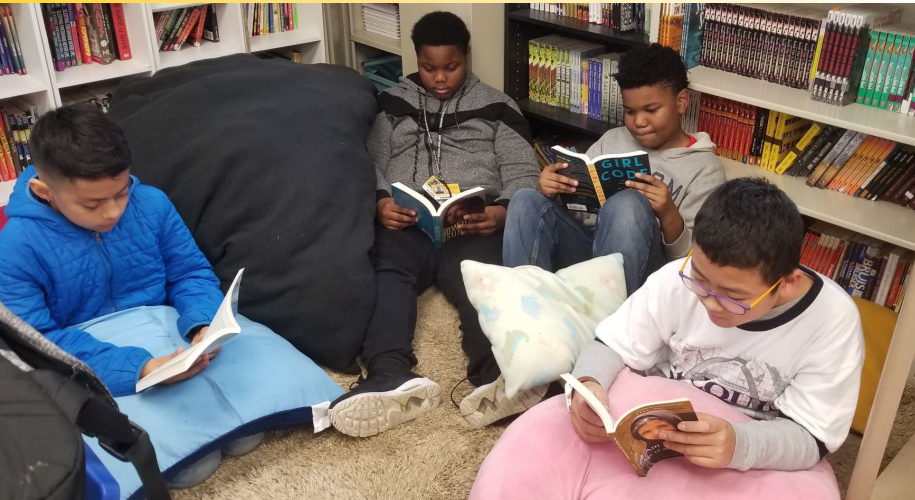
Up-to-date contact information in Tyler SISK12 Parent Portal is important in order to receive timely, accurate notifications should there be a change to the normal school schedule.

If school is closed or delayed, an automated call to the phone number on record is the primary way the school district will contact families with time-sensitive information. Parents and staff may also receive an automated email and/or text message. School closure notifications are also posted on the District website, app, Facebook, Twitter as well as local TV and radio stations

Parents are encouraged to review and update their contact information through Tyler SISK12 Parent Portal, available at [www.ucityschools.org/ParentPortal](http://www.ucityschools.org/ParentPortal), or contact the school office for support.

## Recent Grants and Donations Support Learning Opportunities

Several recent grants and donations to schools in The School District of University City are supporting exciting learning opportunities for students across grade levels.



The Dollar General Literacy Foundation awarded Brittany Woods Middle School a \$3,000 grant to support youth literacy. This grant is part of more than \$3.4 million the organization awarded to 915 recipients in 44 states this fall.



KidSmart distributed 2-3 boxes of school supplies to each teacher's classroom at Pershing Elementary School and Barbara C. Jordan Elementary School on Nov. 7. The total value of donated items at both schools equaled roughly \$26,000. KidSmart's current goal is to support all 90,000 St. Louis area students in need.

For more donation and grant highlights, visit District News at [www.ucityschools.org](http://www.ucityschools.org) and follow us on Facebook @UCitySchools.

# Hall of FAME

University City High School

## Nominations Open for 2019

University City High School is accepting nominations for the 2019 UCHS Hall of Fame induction class. Deadline for submitting is Friday, Jan. 25, 2019. Nomination form and a list of past recipients are available at [www.ucityschools.org/HOF](http://www.ucityschools.org/HOF).

For information regarding other District award nominations, visit [www.ucityschools.org/Nominations](http://www.ucityschools.org/Nominations).

### 2019 Spring Break - March 18-22

Schools & Offices Closed March 22

Schools closed: January 21 and February 18  
& for Parent/Teacher Conferences: February 21-22

Remaining Early Release Days:  
February 15, March 15, April 19 and May 22



**University City Board of Education**  
Joanne Soudah, President  
Kristine Hendrix, Vice President  
Chelsea Addison, Secretary  
Lisa Brenner, Ph.D., Director  
LaVerne Ford-Williams, Director  
Tracy Gritsenko, Director  
George Lenard, Director

**The School District of University City**  
Sharonica L. Hardin-Bartley, Ph.D., PHR  
*Superintendent of Schools*  
CarolAnn Cole, *Communications Specialist*  
Curtis Conyears, *Communications Specialist*  
**314-290-4000**  
**ucityschools.org**

Applicants for admission or employment, students, parents of elementary and secondary school students, employees, sources of referral and applicants for employment and all professional organizations that have entered into agreements with The School District of University City are hereby notified that the District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. In addition, the District provides equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. Any person having inquiries concerning the District's compliance with the laws and regulations implementing Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), the Age Discrimination Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) or the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, is directed to the respective Compliance Coordinator listed below, who oversees the School District's efforts to comply with the laws and regulations implementing the laws and regulations cited above. The School District has established grievance procedures for persons unable to resolve problems arising under the statutes above. The School District's Compliance Coordinator will provide information regarding those procedures upon request. Any person who is unable to resolve a problem or grievance arising under any of the laws and regulations cited above may contact the Office for Civil Rights, Region VII, at 8090 Ward Parkway, Suite 2075, Kansas City, Missouri 64114 or 866-268-4550. Adult and Employee Compliance Coordinator: Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Ronald E. McNair Administrative Building, School District of University City, 8136 Groby Road, University City, MO 63130, 314-290-4045.

*Dated Material. Distribute as soon as possible.*

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT of UNIVERSITY CITY  
8136 Groby Road  
University City, MO 63130

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# UCITY PRIDE

A publication for and about The School District of University City, Missouri

December 2018

## District to Host 33rd Annual U. City Dr. King Celebration

The 33rd annual University City Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 17, 2019, at University City High School, 7401 Balson Ave. (63130).

Please join us as we honor the legacy of Dr. King by presenting the University City Board of Education's MLK Spirit Award, along with student performances, speeches and more.

Special guest speaker Mary Beth Tinker, UCHS Class of 1970, will be celebrating her involvement in the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that clarified that students' freedoms of speech and expression do not stop at the classroom door.

For more information, visit [www.ucityschools.org/MLK2019](http://www.ucityschools.org/MLK2019), closer to the date of the event.



*You are cordially invited to attend our*  
**STATE OF THE DISTRICT**  
*Community Meeting*

**Monday, February 25, 2019**

**6:00-7:30 p.m.**

**University City High School Pruitt Library**  
7401 Balson Avenue (Jackson Entrance) 63130



For more information, call (314) 290-4002  
or email [shardin@ucityschools.org](mailto:shardin@ucityschools.org)



**THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF UNIVERSITY CITY**



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