

# Ritenour NEWS

A Ritenour School District Publication | March 2024

## Ritenour to Receive 24 Electric Buses Thanks to Federal Grant

The Ritenour School District is one of two Missouri school districts selected to receive a grant for a fleet of electric school buses through the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Clean School Bus Program.

The \$9,495,000 grant, along with \$840,000 that the district will receive for selling its 24 diesel buses, will pay for 24 electric buses, their charging stations, and infrastructure needed at the bus depot located at the Husky Support Center.

Approximately 3,750 Ritenour students - slightly more than half of enrolled students - ride school buses daily.

Ritenour Superintendent Dr. Chris Kilbride said transitioning to electric buses aligns with the district's commitment to responsible stewardship of our resources.

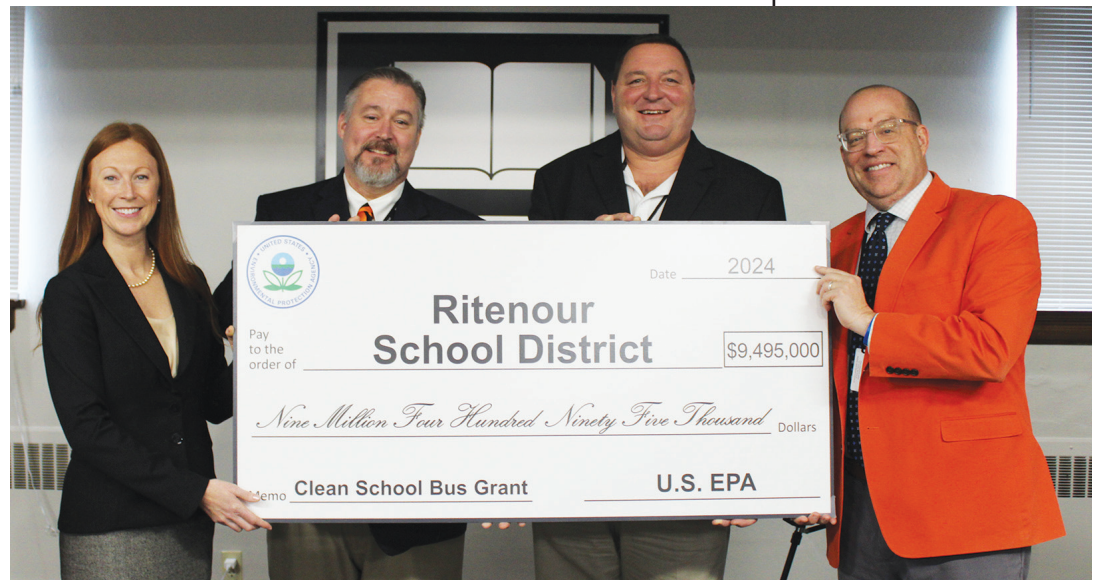
"Transitioning from diesel to electric school buses is a huge step forward in our commitment to fostering a healthier, greener future for our students and our community, said Kilbride. "Not only will these buses be more comfortable for our drivers and students with air conditioning, but they will also show we are embracing the shift to prioritizing sustainability and stewardship of our planet. We hope to set an inspiring example for our students, our community and our region."

Ritenour has a history of environmental stewardship. Since 2014, Ritenour schools have been using solar panels to generate some of the electricity needed. Ritenour also replaced school lighting with LED and updated HVAC systems to make the buildings more energy efficient. The district's newest building, the Ritenour School for Early Childhood Education, opened in 2010 with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) certification.

The new zero-emission electric buses will have air conditioning and be much quieter than Ritenour's current fleet. Ritenour bus drivers are also excited about the new electric buses, said Bryan Sanker, Ritenour's director of transportation.

"Our drivers are thrilled," said Sanker. "The electric models are much quieter and quicker to start up compared to our current buses that run on diesel."

The new buses will be quieter for neighbors living near the bus depot.



Sanker said he anticipates that these changes will enhance driver retention and attract new bus drivers to join the team.

Each electric bus can cover approximately 130 miles on a single charge, with only two out of the 24 buses requiring charging more than once a week due to longer routes. To maintain flexibility for extended trips, the district will retain four diesel buses.

"School districts in Colorado, Michigan and Maryland, as well as the St. Louis Bi-State Bus System, have shared with us that their electric buses have fared very well in extreme winter weather with very low temperatures and do not have problems starting or completing their expected routes," Sanker noted. "Their experience is that they start quickly compared to the time it takes for a diesel bus to start up in the winter."

The U.S. Department of Energy says that cold weather or extremely hot weather can reduce the total mileage that an electric bus has on a single charge, but Ritenour routes are only about 30 miles or less per day per bus -- well under the expected mileage per charge. The bus depot, which is located in the middle of the 9-square-mile school district, will have charging stations. If needed, though it's highly unlikely, Ritenour's electric buses can recharge between their morning and afternoon routes.

The new buses are expected to arrive in Ritenour by the spring of 2025.

EPA Region 7 Administrator Meg McCollister presents a check on Feb. 27 for a new fleet of zero-emission (clean) buses. Accepting the check are (l to r) Director of Transportation Bryan Sanker, Chief Financial Officer Dwight Lindhorst and Superintendent Dr. Chris Kilbride.



Use your camera app to scan this QR code on your smartphone to view more information about electric buses.

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# Ritenour Focuses on Serving the Whole Child Academically, Socially and Emotionally

## Superintendent Dr. Chris Kilbride



***“Together, we're shaping an educational landscape that meets the unique needs of every learner, ensuring success for all students in our district now and in the future.”***

***-Dr. Chris Kilbride***

In Ritenour, we continue our focus on redesigning our instructional approach around Competency-Based Education (CBE). It is a method that allows students to progress as they demonstrate mastery of academic content, regardless of time, place or pace of learning.

With Competency-Based Education, teachers can better design lessons in small groups to ensure that students are progressing at their own pace to address the skills that need additional support. We have been working closely with our educators, families and community while introducing CBE over the past few years. We are moving closer to fully implementing CBE in our district.

We must be very clear about the standards we want our students to master and on the evidence of student learning in CBE. This is a shift from traditional and current models of instruction, which most of us have experienced during our time in school.

Together, we're shaping an educational landscape that meets the unique needs of every learner, ensuring success for all students in our district now and in the future.

While we do this important academic work, we must not lose sight of the fact that we are also working to become a trauma-informed district at all levels. A trauma-informed school is a learning

environment that recognizes the prevalence of trauma in students' lives and takes steps to create a safe and supportive atmosphere that promotes healing and resilience. It focuses on understanding the impact of trauma on a student's academic, social and emotional well-being and is committed to providing the resources and support needed to help students cope and succeed.

We realize that consequences and discipline play a role in shaping student behaviors, but traditional approaches have relied almost entirely on disciplining students for inappropriate behavior.

When rules and consequences do not change the behavior of a student, then what is our role? We believe the answer lies in the trauma-informed approach. Staff have been learning about the method over the last several years and how to implement such an approach in Ritenour schools.

Our role as a district is to work toward getting at the root cause of dysregulation and realizing that behaviors result from a problem that occurred at another time that a student is struggling to solve. This approach is a more sustainable way to maintain emotional and physical safety in our schools.

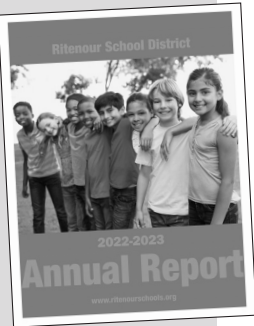
We want to set a solid foundation through our important work with CBE and trauma-informed schools to ensure that every student experiences success both in the classroom and in life.

## 2022-2023 Annual Report Available on Ritenour Website

The Ritenour School District's 2022-2023 Annual Report is now available on Ritenour's website under the "About Us" tab. The report includes information about the district's accreditation status, student achievement, demographics, staffing, the district budget and points of pride. Also included is information about enrollment, attendance and graduation rate.

The latest district news, upcoming events, alumni information, links to school websites and calendars can also be found on Ritenour's website:

**[www.ritenourschools.org](http://www.ritenourschools.org)**



## RITENOUR Board of Education



Lisa Glover-Jones  
President



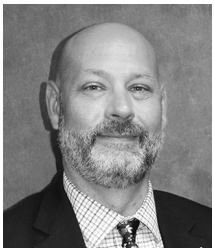
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# Ritenour Schools Celebrate Black History Month

Ritenour students and staff celebrated Black History Month with a variety of creative learning experiences, performances, and guest speakers throughout February.

- Some of Ritenour’s youngest learners at the **Ritenour School for Early Childhood Education** combined their knowledge of safety with Black History Month as they learned about Garrett Morgan and his invention of the three-way traffic light. Other preschoolers focused their attention on artist Lois Mailou Jones while they created their own masks.
- **Buder Elementary** filled their learning during special announcements throughout February about famous Black Americans. In addition, guest readers filled every classroom for Buder’s read-in on Feb. 2 sharing children’s books with African-American themes and characters. Third-grade teacher Josie Chapman also hosted a Black History Club after school. The school planned a spirit week in February with a culminating assembly called “Fulfilling the Dream.”
- Each **Kratz Elementary** class worked most of the month researching Black excellence. Each class selected a historical African-American and then made posters to line the hallways for a schoolwide gallery walk. Information about famous people like Dorothy Vaughan, Billie Holiday, Hank Aaron and many other notable African Americans gave students a tangible glimpse into the rich tapestry of Black excellence throughout history.
- **Iveland Elementary** students culminated Black History Month with a schoolwide performance, coordinated by teacher Sherita Ming, on Feb. 21 at Ritenour Auditorium. Each grade level showcased songs by Black artists with a grand finale by the fifth-graders who added dance and drums to their performance.
- **Marion Elementary** students participated in daily trivia during morning announcements with classrooms vying for prizes. Fifth-graders' research projects about a famous Black American who has made a positive contribution to the world were on display during Marion's Black History Living Museum on Feb. 28. Students dressed like their historical figure and presented their project during the event.
- **Marvin Elementary's** theme for Black History Month 2024 was Celebrating Black Artists. Throughout the month, students

learned about different African American artists. They then created artwork in the style of one of the artists they learned about for a schoolwide gallery walk on Feb. 23.

- At **Wyland Elementary**, two African American children's authors visited the third and fifth grades. Dr. Regina Ware read her book, "I Am Not Afraid Anymore," to third-graders and then talked with students about overcoming fears. Dr. Chajuana Trawick talked to fifth-graders about her children's books that focus on Annie Malone and answered questions about becoming an author.
- **Hoech Middle School** students filled their Husky time each week during February learning about Black teens who have made a positive impact in their communities and beyond. All students contributed to an amazing mural titled, “We Have the Power to Change History.”
- Each morning at **Ritenour Middle School** during February, Assistant Principal Sam Brotherton hosted music trivia, where students listened to music and guessed famous black artists and song titles to earn an entry into a prize raffle. Teachers shared lessons, and the student leadership decorated bulletin boards.
- **Ritenour High School’s** Game Changers social justice club hosted a Black History Month Vendor Fair on Feb. 29 at Ritenour High School, inviting dozens of locally Black-owned businesses to participate in the event.
- **Husky Academy** students were inspired by three young Ritenour High School alumni who have become successful entrepreneurs by starting their own businesses that serve the Ritenour community and beyond. RHS alumni Jeremy Fips, James Grayson, and Jasmin Woods each emphasized the importance of embracing challenges, learning from setbacks, and striving for success while uplifting others.



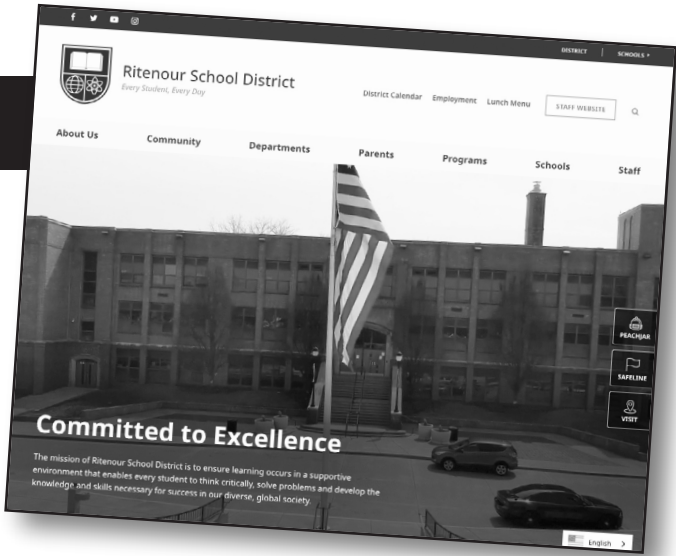
*Fifth-graders at Marion Elementary created a Living History Museum about famous Black Americans and dressed like the person they researched.*

## Ritenour Launches Updated Website

The Ritenour School District has launched an updated website with improved features and functionality. The website features a modern look with easy-to-use navigation and responsive design, making it accessible on any device.

The new website will elevate the district’s online presence and make it easier for parents, students, staff, and community members to find important information.

Visit [www.ritenourschools.org](http://www.ritenourschools.org) to view the updated website!



# Progress as Promised

# Ritenour Propos



*The new \$1.8 million fitness center at Ritenour High School offers plenty of space and equipment for Huskies to enjoy as student-athletes and as part of physical education classes. The community celebrated the opening of the fitness center on Oct. 24, 2023.*

Thanks to the community's tremendous support of the Proposition S bond issue, improvements continue at Ritenour schools and facilities to provide the best learning environment for all students and staff.

Since the summer of 2020, many projects have been completed, including a new fitness center and renovated and expanded cafeteria at Ritenour High School, new entryways at schools for improved safety and security, new and resurfaced parking lots, energy-efficient lighting upgrades, much-needed brick tuckpointing, replacement of playground pads and HVAC replacement and updates.

Proposition S is a \$19.5 million zero tax-rate change bond issue that voters overwhelmingly approved in June 2020. Ritenour has completed all of the updates and repairs without raising its tax rate for Ritenour residents.

“Thank you, Ritenour community, for making this possible,” said Ritenour Superintendent Dr. Chris Kilbride. “Together, we are building a stronger, healthier, and safer future for our students. These improvements continue to provide the best learning environment for all students and staff members. We appreciate your tremendous support.”

## **New Fitness Center at Ritenour High School**

Ritenour celebrated the grand opening of the new Ritenour High School Fitness Center on Oct. 24, 2023. Hundreds of staff members, coaches, students and community members were on hand for the ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house.

The new \$1.8 million center includes more than 6,000 square feet of space for Ritenour students to exercise and train. The state-of-the-art facility is designed to promote good health, wellness and physical fitness for students.

## **Enhanced School Entrances for Safety and Security**

The district has been able to make significant improvements to the entrances of almost every school building. The new entrances provide a double layer of security by creating a secured vestibule at the main entrance. Anyone entering the school is carefully screened by office staff before gaining access to the building. School staff verify the visitor's identification before allowing them into the school.

Entrances at Ritenour Middle, as well as at Marion and Wyland elementary schools were completed in the summer of 2023. In 2024, work will be completed to upgrade the entrances at Hoech



# Proposition S Projects

## Nearing Completion



*(above from l to r) Prop S is ensuring that each Ritenour school has a secured vestibule at its main entrance. Pictured above is the new vestibule at Ritenour Middle School. The newly renovated and expanded cafeteria at Ritenour High School offers a bright, inviting space to enjoy breakfast and lunch.*

Middle, Buder Elementary, Kratz Elementary, Marvin Elementary, Ritenour High School, and the Administrative Center.

### Cafeteria Upgrades

Ritenour High School students returned from winter break in January to an exciting surprise - the opening of their new cafeteria. Students and staff had been using the lower lobby of the auditorium for lunches during the first semester.

The upgraded cafeteria includes more space for students and staff, beautiful new tables and booths, an upgraded kitchen area and exciting new wall art and graphics. There is also a new outdoor space for high school students to enjoy during their lunch period.

The official grand opening of the new cafeteria space will be in late March.

### HVAC Repairs and Updates

Although HVAC upgrades are not the most visible Proposition S projects, they are among the most important for the health and comfort of Ritenour students and staff. Through Prop S, nearly every school HVAC system has been repaired or upgraded.

Because every Ritenour school building is more than 65 years old (with the exception of the School for Early Childhood Education) these repairs and updates are critical to keeping them operating efficiently on a daily basis.

**For more information and to view photos of the Proposition S projects, view the Prop S page under the “Community” tab at [www.ritenourschools.org](http://www.ritenourschools.org).**

### Ritenour Proposition S Projects

- **Fitness Center at Ritenour High School** (Completed in 2023)
- **School Safety & Security Upgrades** (In progress)
- **Air Conditioning and Heating Replacements & Upgrades** (In progress)
- **Lighting/Energy Efficiency Replacements & Upgrades** (Completed in 2022)
- **Replacement of Playground Pads** (Completed in 2020)
- **Cafeteria Upgrades** (Ritenour High School cafeteria upgrade completed)
- **Entry Canopies** (In the planning process)
- **Asphalt/Parking** (Completed in 2021)
- **Building Tuck-Pointing** (Completed in 2022)
- **Interior Finishes** (Completed in 2020)

# RITENOUR | SPOTLIGHT

- St. Louis Mayor Tishaura Jones declared Aug. 22, 2023, as “**Tavonda Palmer Harvey Day**” in St. Louis. Harvey, who is a Ritenour graduate and Director of **Husky Academy**, was honored on her birthday for her extraordinary efforts as a champion for students and educational equity, dedication, servant's heart and love for people.



- **Ritenour High School** (RHS) senior **Cailan Wooten**, was named the first-ever Ritenour student representative on the Overland City Council.
- The artistic talents of **Iveland** and **Marvin** elementary students were recognized in the St. Louis Symphony's Picture the Music Competition. Six remarkable pieces of artwork made it to the top 100 out of over 550 submissions including pieces by **Kai Boyd** (second grade, Iveland), **Aubrey Carpenter** (fifth grade, Iveland), **Brianna Bentum** (fifth grade, Marvin), **Penelope Vaughn** (fourth grade, Marvin), **Arianna Viney** (fifth grade, Marvin), and **Yadier Bravo Gonzales** (fourth grade, Marvin). Their artwork will be on display at the St. Louis Art Museum from April 8-21 and at the Butterfly House in Chesterfield from April 23- May 6.



- **RHS** freshman **Katrina Kesselring** was selected as a soprano for the St. Louis Suburban All-District Treble Honors Choir. She is a member of the RHS A Capella Choir and Symphonia Orchestra.



- The **RHS** cheerleading squad made it to the state competition after finishing second in the MCCA St. Louis Regional Competition last fall. The squad included **Brooklynn Garner**, **Harmoni Clay**, **Dalijah Mitchell**, **Jaliyah Butler**, **Amya Johnson**, **Iyana Hunt**, **Kennedy Beverly**, **Patrick Pitts**, **Aniyah Turner**, **Dejah Nunn**, **Terriah Sullivan**, **Kristine Nator-Mundin**, **Auriela McGinnist**, **Sh'Mauria Adams**, alternates **Skye Hernandez** and **Raylynn Martin**, and team manager **Lillian Evans**.

- **RHS** freshman **Samuel Noh**'s exceptional talent on the cello earned him a spot with the All-Suburban Orchestra Ensemble.



- **RHS** senior student journalists **Kya Merriman** and **Skylar Powers** each had a story published in the Nov. 16 edition of *Old Newsboys*, an annual printed newspaper that highlights local children's charities in the St. Louis metro area.
- Six outstanding **RHS** seniors are celebrating early decision acceptances to top-tier universities, earning impressive scholarships. **Allison Madrid**, **An Nguyen**, **Margaret Susovica**, and **Exauce Kadima** are headed to Washington University in St. Louis, **Cody Sears** secured a spot at Lafayette University in Easton, Pa., and **Johcer Godinez** is bound for Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa.

- Three **RHS** students were recognized for outstanding artwork at St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley. **Malina Rush** took home a first-place award for her ceramic sculpture; **Chloe Arndt** received an honorable mention for her Raku sculpture; **Gezel Urbina Torres** also received an honorable mention for her pencil drawing.

- **Buder Elementary** interventionist (and Ritenour graduate) **Nicole Eberenz** was named Ritenour's 2023 Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award recipient.



- The **Ritenour High School JROTC** program made its debut marching in the St. Louis Veterans Day Parade in November. The cadets also decorated more than 70 graves of veterans with holiday wreaths on Dec. 16 at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery.



- The **RHS Huskies Marching Band** received first place in the 2023 Ameren Thanks-for-Giving Parade in downtown St. Louis.

## Ritenour High School 2024 Graduation Set for June 1

Graduation for the Ritenour High School class of 2024 will be at 6 p.m. on Saturday, June 1 at Chaifetz Arena on the campus of Saint Louis University.

Tickets are not required, and the ceremony is open to the public.

**Ritenour High School Graduation 2024**  
**June 1 • 6 p.m.**  
**Chaifetz Arena**





# Ritenour Board of Education Candidates

Ritenour Board of Education directors Lisa Glover-Jones and Vanessa Henriquez-Pimblott will start new three-year terms on the Board in April of 2024. As allowed by Missouri law, the district will not hold an election for new terms on the school board because the number of candidates filing is equal to the number of open positions. All information contained in these statements was prepared by the candidates to better acquaint the public with their background and qualifications.

**Lisa Glover-Jones**

3548 Valleywood Dr.  
(734) 644-4158  
gloverjonesl@ritenourschools.org



**Spouse** | Gerald Jones  
**Length of Residence** | 14 years  
**Education** | Bachelor of Biology, Alabama A&M University; Master's in Physical Therapy, University of Tennessee Health Science Center  
**Employment** | Community Health Manager - Healthy Kids Express at St. Louis Children's Hospital  
**Children** | Londyn (21) and Giovanni (22) - Ritenour High School Graduates  
**Civic & Professional Organizations** | American School Health Association (ASHA), current Ritenour Board of Education director  
**Reason for serving on the board** | I am seeking re-election to the Ritenour Board of Education to continue serving as an advocate for our students. My hope is that students in our school district excel in academic advancement while maintaining safety and developing sustainable technology infrastructures that support students and staff. Ritenour possesses unique diverse characteristics that encourage the implementation of equitable practices. Having a background that includes working with children in foster care and patients with physical injuries, I have first-hand knowledge of providing individualized care. In my day-to-day role, I advocate for child health initiatives and sustainment of health outreach programs, which are a vital part of meeting the needs of the community we serve. These experiences as well as my willingness to collaborate from a strength-based perspective enhance my understanding and appreciation to meet the needs of students in the Ritenour School District.

Upon relocating to the district in 2010, I became actively involved in the Parent Teacher Organization, in addition, I served on the trust advisory, calendar, strategic planning and quality curriculum committees. Initially, I was appointed to the Ritenour Board of Education (June 2016) and later elected (April 2017) to the board to serve as a Director. During this time, it has been an honor to represent the students and community. Every day I continually learn more about educational policies that directly impact the district academically and financially. I believe Ritenour has the opportunity to continue to foster positive learning environments that support students where they are in order to nurture and develop the skill set of each student beyond their highest potential.

**Vanessa Henriquez-Pimblott**

8740 Susan Ave.  
(217) 621-9728  
vanessapimblott@gmail.com



**Spouse** | Jonny Pimblott  
**Length of Residence** | 7 years  
**Education** | Bachelor's Degree  
**Employment** | State Policy Coordinator - Missouri Workers Center  
**Children** | Judah (9) and Jesse (7) former Ritenour School for Early Childhood Education (RSECE) and currently Marvin Stars! Lena (2) will enter RSECE when the time comes!  
**Civic & Professional Organizations** | Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Inter-Faith Committee of Latin America (IFCLA), and Tomorrow Builders Fellowship (WEPOWER)  
**Reason for serving on the board** | I have served on the school board now for the past 3 years and am confident I can continue to serve with the same fervor, excitement, and ambition to learn as the day I was sworn in.

My understanding of a student's educational ecosystem has grown tremendously and with that so has my appreciation for every single teacher, admin, office professional, IT specialist, nutrition, transportation, maintenance and custodial team member, and all the many other incredible people that make up an entire day for a student.

We are uniquely positioned to be leaders of change in education in Missouri, and my sincere hope is that we take this moment to show the rest of the nation that a high-caliber educational experience has roots in equity, joy, and excellence, and is completely possible- for every student, every day.

## Save the Date! 2024 Homecoming Sept. 20-21

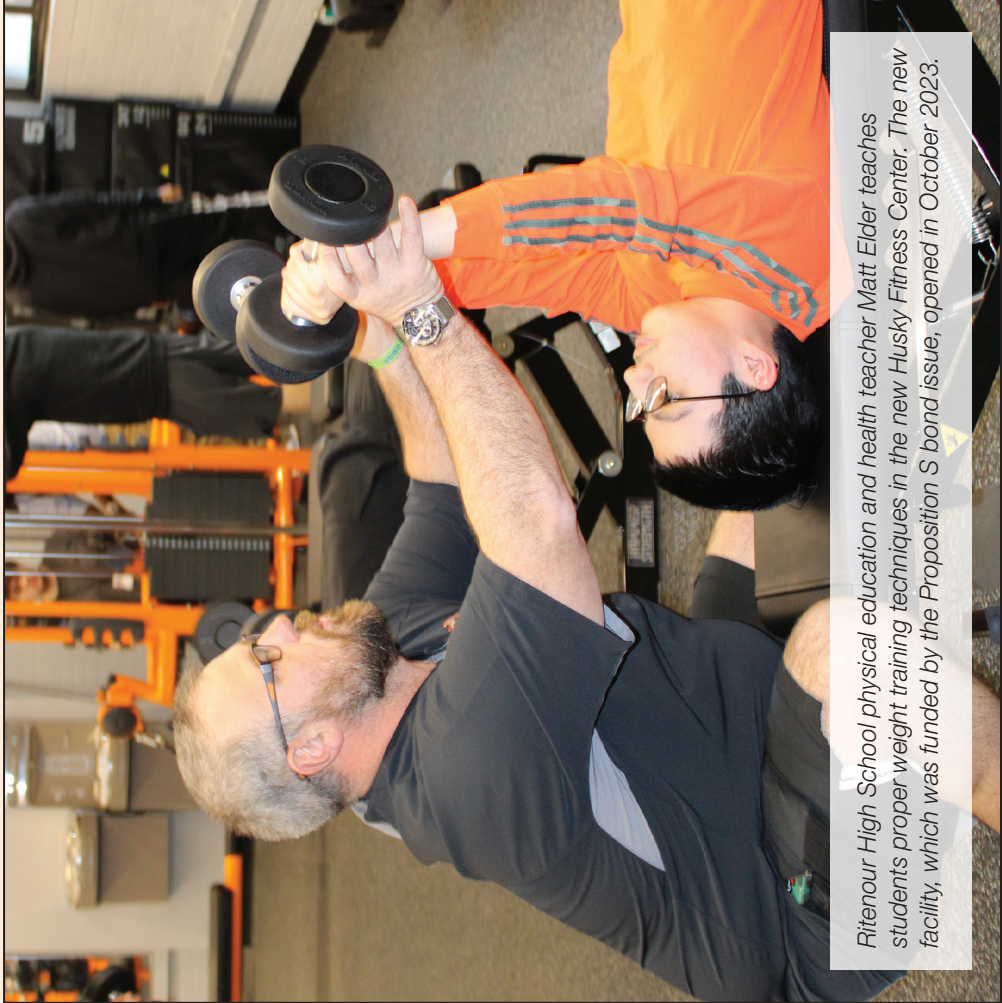


**The Ritenour School District will celebrate Homecoming on Sept. 20 and Sept. 21, 2024!**

The weekend festivities will kick off on Friday, Sept. 20 with the Hall of Fame dinner and induction ceremony at 6 p.m. The Hall of Fame class of 2024, which will be announced this summer, will be enshrined during the ceremony.

On Saturday, Sept. 21, the football Huskies will take on the Pattonville Pirates at 1 p.m. following the annual Homecoming parade at 9 a.m.

**We hope you can join us for this fun and exciting weekend!**



Ritenour High School physical education and health teacher Matt Elder teaches students proper weight training techniques in the new Husky Fitness Center. The new facility, which was funded by the Proposition S bond issue, opened in October 2023.

# Proposition S: Progress as Promised!

## Kindergarten Registration Underway in the Ritenour School District

The Ritenour School District is excited to welcome the class of 2037 this fall! Kindergarten registration is open for families who live in the Ritenour School District with children who will turn 5 by July 31, 2024.

Registration may be done from 8:30-10:30 a.m. or 1-3 p.m. Monday through Friday at the Ritenour Administrative Center, 2420 Woodson Road.

Currently, the district is only registering students whose parent or legal guardian can provide proof of residency in their name.

Enrollment for students with unusual situations, such as families or students in transition, foster care, or students with unique guardianship circumstances, will not take place until July 2024.

For more information, go to the Ritenour website:  
[www.ritenourschools.org](http://www.ritenourschools.org)  
or call (314) 493-6048.



Use the camera app on your smartphone to scan the QR code above to view more information about kindergarten registration.

