SUMMER EDITION | ISSUE NO. 20

CONNECTION

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Student of the Week Review
Park Hill Voices
Celebrations



Park Hill School District

PARK HILL *CONNECTION* GOES TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD IN THE PARK HILL SCHOOL DISTRICT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.



Straight from the Superintendent

For this superintendent who has a daughter as a 2024 graduate of Park Hill South High School, this has been a special and sentimental time for us as a family and for me as a Superintendent helping celebrate all of our graduates.

At this time of year, I continually reflect on all that we've accomplished with our students, families and staff to ensure our students' success upon graduation. The work put in, the time spent, the joys experienced, the challenges met, the struggle overcome... all of it worth it.

This school year we've worked through our Park Hill 2034 long-range planning process and will be sharing final plans with our Board of Education and community this summer. We look forward to sharing the plans we've drafted – all from ideas and suggestions that our students, staff, families and community have told us are important. This includes ideas around our oldest facilities and how we want to ensure that our facilities and amenities are top-notch experiences for our community.

In addition to our long-range planning, we've been leaning into Restorative Practices, future ready assets and internships for post-graduate success, hiring quality staff to take care of our students and continuing work on our strategic initiatives across the district.

Our high schools have also recently been ranked as the top two traditional public schools in the Kansas City metro area and the only Kansas City traditional public high schools in the top 15 in the state. Our students are performing at high levels and we're so proud of the work they've demonstrated.

We wish you a refreshing and rejuvenating summer, full of time with family, friends and experiences. Thank you for continuing to support our school district – where we all work to build successful futures, each student, every day.



Dr. Mike Kimbrel
Superintendent

Welcome to the *Connection*!

Connection is a publication of the Park Hill School District, distributed quarterly, without charge, to patrons within the Park Hill School District boundaries.

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SCHOOL SNAPSHOTS:

STUDENTS IN ACTION ACROSS OUR DISTRICT!



CHINN ELEMENTARY



CONGRESS MIDDLE SCHOOL



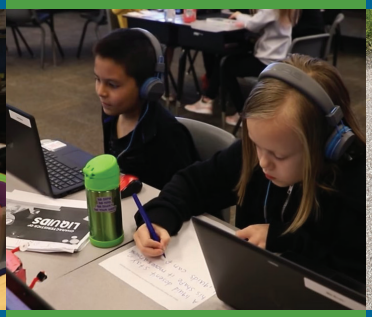
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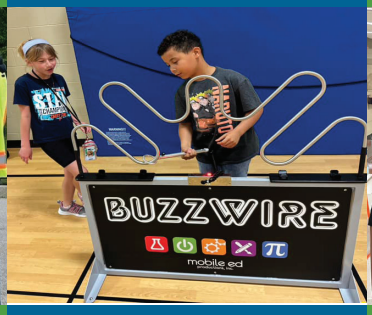
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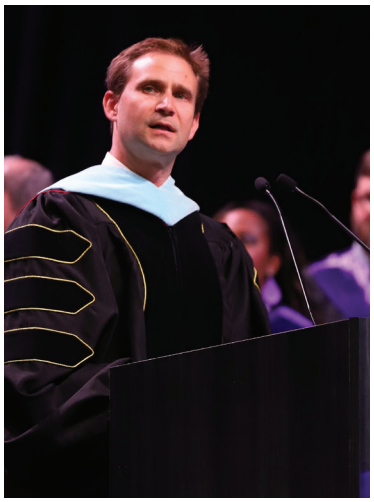
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WALDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL



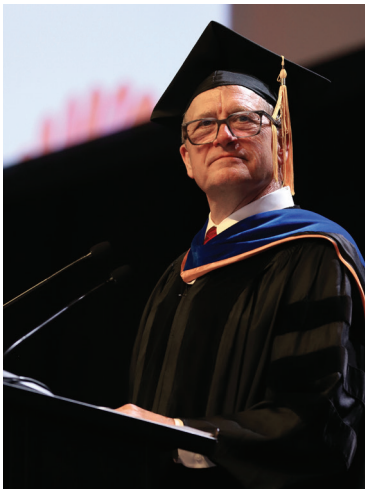














Learn more about two members of the Class of 2024 on pages 7 and 8.





GRADUATION 2024 *Congratulations!*

Park Hill High School and Park Hill South High School had their graduations on different nights, but both kicked off in the same exciting way. The Class of 2024, including seniors who attend LEAD Innovation Studio and graduate with their home high schools, entered to enthusiastic applause, cheers and whistles from the crowd at HyVee Arena, celebrating the students' years of hard work and personal growth.

A total of 431 Park Hill High School (PHHS) students received their diplomas on May 18. Among them, 66 students graduated with a 4.0 GPA or higher, and 21 maintained straight A's throughout high school.

The class was led by co-valedictorians Lauren Oakley and Meredith Bell, who thanked their teachers and staff for their guidance. Class President Kaden Seeger reminded his classmates of the lessons they had learned over the past four years and encouraged them to transform the world.

On May 20, 439 students from Park Hill South High School (PHS) received their diplomas. Ninety-four students graduated with a 4.0 GPA or better, and 36 maintained straight A's all four years. Brady O'Hara and Thai Dao were co-valedictorians.

O'Hara, Sylvia Nguyen, Maevry Nelson and Ysabella Olsen shared reflections on the theme "Memories Made." From remembering the importance of ordinary days to exploring fearlessly and pursuing dreams, the graduation ceremony was one last shared experience for the Class of 2024.

In a notable similarity, PHHS Principal Brad Kincheloe and PHS Principal Kerrie Herren each highlighted how the Class of 2024 persevered from the start, facing an unconventional beginning to high school due to the pandemic. Also of note, both classes graduated from two of the top high schools in Missouri, according to *US News & World Report*.

Congratulations to our 2023-24

Students of the Week

Our *Students of the Week* embody our district values through their dedication to academic excellence, leadership and high expectations. Their commitment to creating a positive and inclusive school environment makes them outstanding *Students of the Week*.

CHINN


Campbell Alsup


Jovie Heermann

ENGLISH LANDING


Bode Hogue


William Lopez Nieto

GRADEN


Leo Drew


Jack Sander

HAWTHORN


Kiley Alvarez


Henry Wooldridge

HOPEWELL


Abner Habtom


Jasmira Rakhimova

LINE CREEK


Eliyana Clark


Sarah MacDonald

PRAIRIE POINT


Ja'Bri Hudson


Annie Marticke

RENNER


Rhealina Chiren

SOUTHEAST


Skyy Matthews


Jackson Rau

TIFFANY RIDGE


Elliot Stuchul


Dionness Triunfel

CONGRESS


Maya Oladitan

LAKEVIEW


Sophie Hall

PLAZA


Mikayla Chutaro


Tristen Hilton

WALDEN


Rosie Mascal


Maddox Osei

LEAD


Karis Barton


Corbin Moyer

PARK HILL


James Barrie


Kegan Sanchez

PARK HILL SOUTH


Grady Burns


Claire Richardson

GERNER


Robel Talargachew

RUSSELL JONES


Satar Madadi


Antwaun Zeno

Straight From Our Staff

Dr. Corey Willich, Assistant Principal at Park Hill High School

PH: Does being the Student Council Administrator change your perspective of the school or the students?

Dr. W: It allows me to see the great work our student leadership continues to do for our school community at Park Hill High School.

PH: With graduation season here, what has it been like watching our students grow throughout their four years in high school?

Dr. W: Our senior class started their freshmen year on a hybrid schedule, attending school every other day due to COVID protocols. Transitioning to high school is tough enough on a yearly basis, and our class of 2024 showed lots of grit and resilience to overcome this challenge. COVID took a toll on many students early on in their transition to high school, but I'm super proud of how students worked through these challenges to meet their graduation requirements and create lasting memories as soon-to-be Trojan alumni.

PH: Is there anything you learned this year that you will take with you into 2024-2025?

Dr. W: I want to continue to value student voice and agency while working to enhance the culture and climate of the Park Hill student experience.

PH: Looking back on the school year, what are you most proud of?

Dr. W: Our STUCO members and staff sponsors have made inclusion an important aspect of the school community and have enhanced the experiences for our special education students at PHHS.

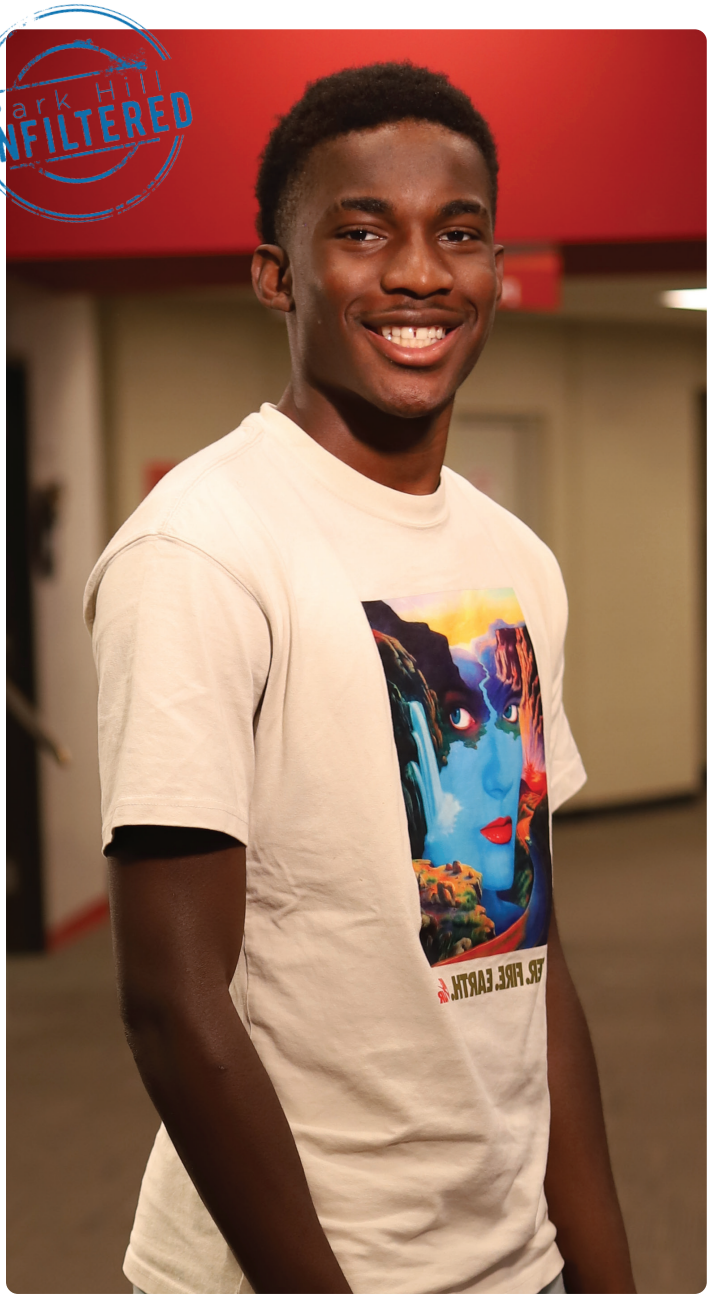
PH: What advice would you give our graduating seniors?

Dr. W: Adversity builds character is one of my favorite sayings. I believe that we all go through challenges in life, and it is up to each of us to determine how we choose to handle the challenges we face. Be fearless and show compassion for others. Get to know others for who they are and how they show up in this world. If we do these things...the world will be a better place.



Straight From Our Seniors

Desire Tonye Nyemeck, Jr., Senior at Park Hill High School



Park Hill: How do you feel as your high school career comes to a close?

Desire: Over these last couple of weeks, it feels like time has come to a standstill – classes become longer, and the halls become shorter. I feel very excited; I don't have any regret or animosity towards Park Hill and the people. I'm ready for the next chapter in my life and for my goodbyes and new beginnings that I will come across. However, there are some things that I wish I could've changed back then, like taking classes more seriously, taking more online classes and even taking sports more seriously. But everything happened for a reason, and I'm glad for the person I am today.

PH: Looking back on your time in high school, what experience or moment stands out the most to you?

D: Looking back, I just don't have a specific moment that stands out to me. High school had numerous moments and events that I came across. But sports had some big moments in my life. Going to football games on Friday nights, cheering on my friends on the field and supporting the team was very fun. Traveling to different schools and meeting different people who became friends also was incredibly fun.

PH: What extracurricular activities or clubs have you been involved in, and how did they shape your high school experience?

D: I've been involved in a couple of clubs and activities. I played football during my freshman year. It was a good experience, and I got to learn different things and try as many new things as possible because freshman year is a year of experiences. Basketball was by far the biggest thing I've done. I loved playing basketball. It brought many friends who became family, and it has always been my favorite sport. Track was also my favorite, especially since I do the high jump. I've grown so much in the past year that I am now one of the best in the country to do it. My coaches have become more than just coaches; they've become people I can depend on and rely on and are called family.

PH: What advice would you give to incoming freshman or new students?

D: The advice I would give is to try everything; it's going to be hard because, as a freshman, you are scared to try new things, maybe because you might get made fun of, you are not comfortable with something, or maybe you just don't know if you will like it or not. But I would strongly suggest trying as many activities and clubs as possible. Focus on your schoolwork early so you won't have to worry about it in the future. Get to know your teachers and build connections because, eventually, you will want to have them write references for you. Also, building connections overall gives learning a better experience. Most importantly, have fun and surround yourself with good people who don't force you to be someone you are not.

PH: What are your plans after high school?

D: My plans after high school are to go to a four-year college and study business, and maybe go into business marketing. I'm also going to do track and field at a Power Five college and compete. Hopefully, after that, I will be able to compete in the Olympics and represent my country, Cameroon!

Straight From Our Seniors

Ysabella Olsen, Senior at Park Hill South High School

Park Hill: How do you feel as your high school career comes to a close?

Ysa: It is a bittersweet feeling. I am very grateful to my parents, friends, teachers and administrators who supported me tremendously. I know that their influence has given me the skills to pursue my dreams after high school. I will definitely miss the small moments with my friends in high school: eating lunch, walking in the hallways during passing periods, or just laughing during a free moment in class.

PH: Looking back on your time in high school, what experience or moment stands out the most to you?

Y: I learned a lot about myself during the Aspiring Medical Professionals class. During this course, I was able to shadow at four metro-area hospitals for a combined 50 hours. My most impactful experiences in the Emergency Department and the Labor and Delivery units made me recognize that I am passionate about improving community health through crisis response. I am so grateful for the real-world clinical experience that I received and the opportunity to learn from phenomenal healthcare professionals in the Kansas City area.

PH: What extracurricular activities or clubs have you been involved in, and how did they shape your high school experience?

Y: I ran cross country all four years; that team was my home and whole heart. The lessons I learned from Coach Jurgensmeyer and the memories made with my best running friends have truly made me the young woman I am today. Park Hill South, in collaboration with the American Legion Auxiliary, gave me the opportunity to attend Missouri Girls State and Girls Nation. This empowering experience allowed me to cultivate my leadership skills by learning from several Missouri women politicians. HOSA-Future Health Professionals was another activity where I spent much of my time – thank you, Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Landuyt. HOSA gifted me with service opportunities and the chance to compete in healthcare events against students across the state and the world. Finally, I'd like to mention Student Sense of Belonging and Panther Mentors, which have allowed me to make a positive impact on our school culture under the guidance of Dr. Markley.

PH: What advice would you give to incoming freshman or new students?

Y: Create meaningful connections with the adults and role models at your school. Build a support system that you can rely on to help you through your challenges and triumphs. For all Park Hill School District students – college is possible for you if it is the path you want to take. Make the most of the opportunities, scholarships, classes and fun school spirit experiences that are available while you are in Park Hill. I believe in you!



PH: What are your plans after high school?

Y: I am very honored and excited to attend Princeton University next fall! I will be majoring in Politics and Global Health Policy. Go Tigers!

Park Hill Celebrates Success Around our District

These are just a few of the awards and accolades Park Hill staff and students have received recently. Visit **www.parkhill.k12.mo.us/news-and-stories** to catch up on the latest honors and accolades.

TOP RANKED HIGH SCHOOLS
U.S.News & WORLD REPORT

Top High Schools in the State and Region

U.S. News & World Report ranked Park Hill High School and Park Hill South High School as the top two traditional public schools in the Kansas City metro area (Missouri side) and the only Kansas City traditional public high schools in the top 15 in the state.

LEAD Innovation Studio student performance is included in their home high schools and is reflected in this recognition as well.

Congratulations to Park Hill High School and Park Hill South High School – top in the region and state!



Greater Kansas City Regional Champions

After winning the Greater Kansas City Regional, Park Hill South's FIRST Robotics Team 5126 Electromagnetic Panthers (EMP) headed to The FIRST Championship in Houston. Out of the 3,600 teams worldwide, EMP was one of 600 teams competing at the international competition.



Exemplary Principal

Congratulations to Kirsten Clemons, principal at Lakeview Middle School, on her recognition as the Missouri Association of Secondary Principals (MoASSP) Jim L. King Missouri Middle School Principal of the Year!



STN Convention Winners

Congratulations to the broadcast students from Park Hill South who recently brought home awards from the Student Television Network Convention (STN) in Long Beach.

We are #ParkHillProud of Tannah Jones and Brayden Josendale, who took second place in Sports Highlights! Plus, the South Side Scoop staff achieved the Silver Standard (Outstanding Achievement) for Daily Live Show led by Executive Producers Regan Lea, Macy Morris and Lillia Thomson! Lea also did a great job presenting at the STN Closing Ceremonies. She was one of only 26 students selected nationwide to present awards at STN.

This was also the first year the school's film program, South Side Studios, competed in the national competition.





Perfect ACT Scores

Congratulations to Park Hill South's Stephen Mitchell and Park Hill High's Lauren Oakley. The two seniors achieved perfect scores (36) on the ACT, placing them in the top less than one percent of test takers. Way to go, Stephen and Lauren! #ParkHillProud



Scholar Bowl Champions

Congratulations to the Park Hill South High School Scholar Bowl Team, who traveled to Maple Woods Community College to compete in the 40th Edition of the MCC–Maple Woods Scholar Bowl Tournament and came home as champions!

Twenty teams started the day, but only four advanced to the championship round, where PHS walked away with a two-point lead and a first-place victory. We are #ParkHillProud of James Fales, Jesse Juarez, Benjamin Shepherd and Rohan Venkatesh.



Skills USA State Champions

We are #ParkHillProud of our students who brought home first-place wins from the Missouri SkillsUSA Leadership and Skill Competitions through the Northland Career Center. The students will travel to Atlanta in June for the National Competition.

From LEAD Innovation Studio: Noah Beck, Community Action Project Team

From Park Hill High: Caden Duarte, Aviation Maintenance Technology

From Park Hill South: Reghan Hewitt, Crime Scene Investigation Team and Roman Lewis, Community Action Project Team



Project Adam Certified Schools

We are #ParkHillProud of our new Project Adam certified schools. Congratulations to Chinn, Graden, Hawthorn, Lakeview, Plaza, Prairie Point, Renner, Tiffany Ridge and Union Chapel.

Each school has a Cardiac Emergency Response Team (CERT) and has implemented emergency response drills in their buildings. We are on track to have every school Project ADAM certified by 2025.



Assistant Principal of the Year

Congratulations to Park Hill High School Assistant Principal Dr. Corey Willich! He was named Assistant Principal of the Year by the Greater Kansas City Missouri Principals Association. Pictured are Willich (center) with our Director of Secondary Education, Dr. Keelie Stucker and Superintendent, Dr. Mike Kimbrel.

WANT YOUR AD HERE?

Contact Samantha Fitzgerald at
FitzgeraldSa@parkhill.k12.mo.us
or call 816-359-6716



The Park Hill Education Foundation has invested **more than $1.8 million** in the future of our Park Hill students.

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Community Breakfast
Oct. 24, 2024

Night With The Stars
Apr. 9, 2025

Upcoming Events

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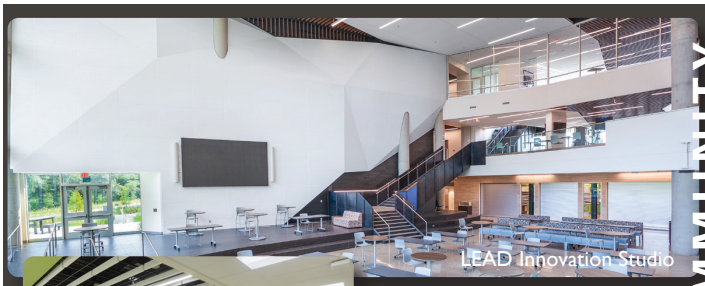
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Park Hill Highlight

One of Park Hill South High School's leading scorers got to rub shoulders with the NCAA all-time scoring record holder!

Addison Bjorn was at the Iowa Hawkeyes game when Caitlin Clark broke the NCAA scoring record in March. Addison scored her 1,000th career point at South and is considered one of the top high school basketball players in our area. She has already had some recruiting conversations, including with the University of Iowa.

For more moments like this, be sure to follow our social media channels on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X) and YouTube.

