

Ritenour NEWS

A Ritenour School District Publication | July 2024

Ritenour Students and Staff Enjoy Spectacular Solar Eclipse

Ritenour students and staff had an incredible learning experience witnessing near totality of the solar eclipse on April 8. In the hours leading up to near totality, students learned about the eclipse and how to safely view it with their NASA-certified solar eclipse glasses. Ritenour provided special eclipse glasses for all staff and students.

Some teachers brought their students out both in the early phase of the solar eclipse, which began at 12:43 p.m., and then again during the height of eclipse so they could view the eclipse at 99.1 percent totality at 2 p.m., barely making it seem like dusk outside. The eclipse ended at 3:17 p.m. in the St. Louis area.

For some Ritenour students, this was the second near-total eclipse they have seen

while in Ritenour. The last near-total eclipse was on Aug. 21, 2017. During that eclipse, the St. Louis area experienced 99.9 percent totality, which caused it to be dark outside and caused crickets to sound.

Nyah Gladney, a seventh-grader at Ritenour Middle School, remembered looking at the solar eclipse when she was a first-grader at Wyland Elementary in 2017.

"I remember sitting in front of the school and thinking, 'Wow, this is really cool,'" said Gladney. "But now that I'm older and seeing it again, it's way cooler. I understand what I'm seeing a lot better. What a great experience to have two times."

Throughout the day on April 8, many of Ritenour's younger students were engaged in classroom activities that helped them better



understand what they would be seeing in the sky like role playing the sun, moon, and Earth, making diagrams, watching educational videos, and drawing pictures.

All Ritenour students had the opportunity to view the spectacular solar eclipse on Monday, April 8.

Ritenour High School Students Create Lasting Memories During 2024 Special Olympics

More than 350 Ritenour High School (RHS) students hosted more than 250 athletes on April 25 for the eighth annual Special Olympics Track & Field event. The athletes arrived at Ritenour High School's Moore Field from each of Ritenour's elementary and middle schools as well as from seven other schools in the St. Louis area.

Athletes competed in track and field events, collecting ribbons and smiles for their achievements. Athletes had a blast in running, jumping and softball-throw events while their RHS buddy cheered them on, shared high fives, and presented them with ribbons in each of their events.

Briana Reece, an RHS freshman, enjoyed

being a buddy for a Ritenour Middle School student.

"It's cool to be a buddy and enjoy new experiences with them," said Reece. "It's really great having fun with them and celebrating them during all of their events and activities."

Between the sporting events, RHS buddies escorted their athletes to a variety of activities outside the stadium in the student-run Special Olympics Village. The village featured several games like Plinko and a giant version of Connect Four. Each Olympian also had a blast with different sensory crafts such as decorating visors, making friendship bracelets and getting manicures. Other activities



included decorating with sidewalk chalk, racing toy cars, playing with bubbles, dancing to songs on KRHS radio and picking out free children's books.

Ritenour High School hosted more than 250 athletes on the track at Moore Field for the eighth annual Special Olympics.

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Superintendent Dr. Chris Kilbride



We were excited to celebrate the Ritenour High School (RHS) Class of 2024, which you can read about more in this edition of *Ritenour News*.

This graduating class demonstrated grit and determination during their time at RHS, overcoming many obstacles - including the global pandemic. Students spent their first two years of high school in the heart of the pandemic, transitioning from an all virtual learning environment back to in-person in our classrooms. Many students also overcame significant losses along the way. Needless to say, this has not been an easy journey, and we salute our students for persevering and becoming Husky alumni.

The graduating class established many impressive milestones including:

- With 418 graduates, the class of 2024 was the largest graduating class in recent memory.
- The class of 2024 earned more than \$10 million in scholarships, the most at RHS since 2017.
- Eleven students enlisted in the military - matching the largest number of graduates in the past 15 years.

In addition to the 418 graduates, we expect to honor some graduates in the class of 2024 who will complete the requirements for graduation over the summer. These students will be recognized at the summer graduation

ceremony at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 8 in the Ritenour Auditorium. The entire community is invited to join us for this special event.

Now our focus turns to the class of 2025 and beyond in keeping with our commitment to preparing students for success in the three “E’s” (enrollment in college or a trade school, enlistment in the military, or gainful employment). All Ritenour graduates will be positioned for success regardless of which “E” they select thanks to the many diverse programs we offer in our schools.

Research indicates that high schools must not only prepare students well to enroll in college but also prepare them to finish college with a degree. For students choosing this route, our goal is for them to enter with at least nine college credit hours. Bringing this many hours of credit to college greatly increases the likelihood that students will complete their degree.

For Huskies who choose the military, we want to ensure they enlist at the rank of E3, which is possible through participating in the JROTC program at RHS. Currently, we have 65 cadets in the program and are planning to grow the program this year.

We are also excited about how we prepare our students who choose to head right into the workforce after they graduate from Ritenour. Our Work-Based Learning program that provides job opportunities for our high school students supports the development of skills that will benefit students in the workplace after graduation.

Ritenour Board of Education Elects New Officers

The Ritenour Board of Education elected Dr. Brad Thomas as president and Jennifer Lohnes as vice president at its April 11, 2024 meeting. Thomas is the Board’s longest-serving member and has been a Board Director for the past 24 years. This is his third term as Board President, having served from 2003-2007 and 2015-2018. Lohnes has been a board member since 2016. This is her second term as vice president.

In addition, Alazaya Rhae Smith, Ritenour High School class of 2025, was announced as the new student representative on the Ritenour Board of Education. She replaces Hope Both, who served a one-year term as the student representative.

The Ritenour Board of Education meeting schedule, policies and historical information are available on the Ritenour website - www.ritenourschools.org.

We are partnering with our students, families and community to make these positive outcomes a reality. Thank you for your continued support of our school district - we’re looking forward to an amazing 2024-2025 school year!

“Thank you for your continued support of our school district - we’re looking forward to an amazing 2024-2025 school year!”
-Dr. Chris Kilbride

RITENOUR Board of Education



Dr. Brad Thomas
President



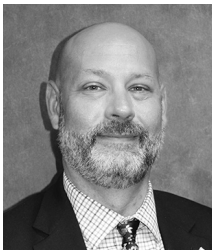
Jennifer Lohnes
Vice President



Dr. M. Stacey
Albin-Wilson
Director



Penny Degardin
Director



Rob Eaton
Director



Lisa Glover-Jones
President



Vanessa
Henriquez-Pimblott
Director

Dr. Chris Kilbride—Superintendent | DeQuinda Woods—Secretary | Dr. Phil Pusateri—Treasurer | Alazaya Rhae Smith—Student Representative

Ritenour Embraces Competency-Based Education for All K-12 Students

Ritenour School District is leading the way in Missouri's educational landscape by implementing Competency-Based Education (CBE) across all K-12 grades. This innovative approach focuses on students' mastery of specific skills and concepts, providing a more personalized and effective learning experience.

"CBE allows students to progress at their own pace, advancing to higher levels of learning as they demonstrate proficiency in academic content," said Superintendent Dr. Chris Kilbride. "This method gives both students and families more detailed insights into how learners are reaching proficiency with individual standards."

Dr. Denean Steward, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, said over the last two years CBE was implemented gradually at the elementary and middle school levels, with some Ritenour High School (RHS) teachers also piloting it in their classes.

"What we've witnessed over the past two years is that our students are taking greater ownership of their learning by practicing skills, reflecting on both what they are mastering easily and how they are improving on skills that are more challenging for them," Dr. Steward said, "There is a higher level of student engagement."

In classrooms throughout the district, students receive regular feedback on their mastery of specific skills. Teachers use this information to tailor lessons and form small groups, ensuring that each student receives the support they need. For example, a student struggling with adding fractions or analyzing themes in literature will receive targeted instruction and practice in these areas.

Ritenour is one of the leaders in Missouri for CBE and is one of 20 Missouri districts in the Success-Ready Students Network System Design Zone (SDZ), using growth-based assessments.

Parents and guardians can expect to see their children's progress in each subject area using a 1-4 scale to indicate proficiency levels. Letter grades (A's, B's, etc.) no longer will be used in any K-8 classes. RHS will use both letter grades and the 1-4 scale. The district will be using a new platform, called Empower, that will give parents and guardians access to view their children's standards-based grades.



Ritenour hosted three strategic planning sessions last school year to gather feedback about the move to competency-based education. The district will have full implementation of the innovative approach this school year.

Ritenour Welcomes New Administrators for the 2024-2025 School Year

Administrators began in new roles at several Ritenour schools and buildings for the 2024-2025 school year.

Dr. Phil Pusateri takes the helm as chief financial officer (CFO) for the Ritenour School District. He comes to Ritenour with nearly 20 years of administrative experience in St. Louis-area schools, most recently as CFO for the Jennings School District.

Dr. Rich Wilson is Ritenour's new director of technology. He brings 24 years of experience as a technology administrator in school districts in the St. Louis area, most recently as the director of technology at Francis Howell School District.

Dr. Matthew Schuler is the district's new director of data and student information system. He most recently served as the associate principal at Ritenour High School.

Buder Elementary welcomes **Dr. Melisha Mack** as its new principal. Dr. Mack brings 17 years of administrative experience, most recently as an elementary school principal in the Jennings School District.

Iveland Elementary welcomes **Rebecca Williams** as its new assistant principal. For the past two years, Williams has been a classroom teacher, interventionist, and instructional coach at Kratz Elementary.

Kratz Elementary welcomes **Orianna Moccio** as assistant principal. She served Ritenour High School as an assistant principal for the past two years.

At **Marion Elementary**, **Lisa Broadbent** has been promoted to principal after serving as interim principal last school year. **Melissa Crowley** is Marion's assistant principal after being in the interim role.

Dr. Kelsey Bodie and **Kayla Case** are the new leadership team at **Wyland Elementary**. Dr. Bodie, who served Wyland as assistant principal for the last two years, takes over as principal. Case brings 10 years of teaching and leadership experience and most recently served as principal at Momentum Academy in St. Louis.

Ritenour Middle School welcomes **Seneca Allen** as an assistant principal. He served as an assistant principal at Iveland Elementary during the 2023-2024 school year.

Ritenour High School (RHS) welcomes two new assistant principals: **Declan FitzPatrick** and **Austin Ferguson**. FitzPatrick comes to RHS with 16 years as a central office school district administrator, most recently in the Kirkwood School District. Ferguson comes to RHS from the Hancock Place School District as an assistant principal.



Use your camera app to scan this QR code on your smartphone to view photos and more information about new administrators.

Ritenour High School Celebrates Class of

The Ritenour community celebrated Ritenour High School's 106th graduating class with an unforgettable ceremony held at Chaifetz Arena on June 1.

The 418 graduates proved they could rise above the disruptions that the COVID pandemic caused during their first two years as a Husky, as well as the continued social and emotional impacts it left. The class of 2024 started high school with full-virtual learning during the first semester and hybrid learning as an option during the second half of the year. During their sophomore year, while in-person full-time, was marked with quarantines, COVID-related absences, and health precautions in place during most the school year.

Dr. Bruce Green, Ritenour's assistant superintendent for secondary education and lead administrator of RHS, inspired the class of 2024 to continue to make a positive difference in the world and the lives of others.

"Know that the best is yet to come," Dr. Green said. "You have been prepared for the next step in your journey. Class of 2024, I challenge you to go out, explore, dream, and serve the greater good. Graduates, we expect to hear great things about you in the future!"

Kimberly Kimani, who will be attending Washington University in the fall on a full scholarship as a Danforth scholar, reminded her fellow Huskies of their strength to move forward.

"All that we've done, let us continue to be strong Huskies, hold our heads high with dignity, stretching ourselves to accomplish the impossible and know that we can make it," said Kimani. "That is what makes us a Husky, the limits we've broken, the boundaries we've pushed, the things we've accomplished."

"Most importantly, remember the many Huskies who come after you," Kimani continued. "We had a bar to break, and now we've set an even higher one for the ones after us."

Cailan Wooten, who is one of 37 people worldwide to be awarded a prestigious full scholarship to the University of Toronto, also inspired her classmates to continue creating strong relationships as they work hard to build their future.



f 2024 Graduation



“The point of hard work is to share it with others, to better yourself and the world around you, Wooten said. “Don’t trade ambition for genuine relationships. Don’t be afraid to be vulnerable. Don’t be afraid to fail.

“Most importantly, don’t be afraid to lean on others,” she added. “Remember why and for whom you do the things you’re passionate about.”



Use your camera app to scan this QR code on your smartphone to view the video of the 2024 RHS Graduation ceremony.

<https://tinyurl.com/RitenourGrad24>

Highlights of the Class of 2024:

- Seniors earned a total of more than \$10 million in college scholarships.
- A record of 23 seniors graduated with the Missouri Seal of Biliteracy in Spanish and French.
- Seven students earned Industry Recognized Certificates from RHS and North County Technical School.
- Grayson Eaton and James Miller both earned a high school diploma and an associate’s degree from St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley through Ritenour’s dual enrollment program.
- Six seniors were admitted early decision to Washington University in St. Louis, and Lafayette University and Lehigh University in Pennsylvania.
- Nine student-athletes received scholarships to pursue their athletic careers in girls basketball, boys track & field, football, and softball at the following colleges: University of South Carolina Beaufort, St. Louis Community College, Maryville University, William Woods University, Graceland University, Lewis & Clark Community College, and Missouri Baptist University.

(From top left, clockwise)

With 418 graduates, the class of 2024 was the largest graduating class in recent memory.

The class of 2024 student speakers included Cailan Wooten (left) and Kimberly Kimani.

More than 4,500 family members and friends packed Chaifetz Arena on the campus of Saint Louis University to celebrate the class of 2024.

Students were thrilled to receive their diplomas and become Husky alumni as part of the 106th graduating class from Ritenour High School.



Prop S Construction of New Entryways Underway this Summer



Construction to complete a new entryway at Buder Elementary is expected to be completed by the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year. The update, funded by the Proposition S bond issue, is being made to increase the security at the building.

Thanks to the community's tremendous support of the Proposition S bond issue, improvements continue throughout the summer of 2024 with the construction of new secure main entrances at six Ritenour sites.

The new entryways provide a double layer of security with a secured vestibule at the main entrance. This allows office staff to screen anyone entering the school before giving them

access to the building. The new entryways with secure vestibules are under construction at the Administrative Center, Ritenour High School, Hoech Middle School, and Buder, Kratz and Marvin elementary schools. The new main entrances are expected to be

finished in time for the first day of school on Aug. 19.

New entryways at Ritenour Middle, Marion, and Wyland were completed during the summer of 2023. The Ritenour School for Early Childhood Center, Iveland Elementary, and Husky Academy already had secured vestibules at their main entrances.

Since the summer of 2020, nearly all Prop S projects have been completed, including a new fitness center and renovated and expanded cafeteria at Ritenour High School, 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.

Ritenour Announces Hall of Fame Class of 2024

Two amazing Ritenour alumni and a Lifetime Achievement Award recipient will be inducted into the Ritenour Hall of Fame during a special ceremony on Friday, Sept. 20 at Ritenour Auditorium.

The 2024 inductees are:

- **Robert (Bob) Courtney** | Class of 1957, a revered civic leader and successful businessman who has helped create life-changing opportunities for young people in the community.
- **Greg Ransom** | Class of 1978, a tremendously successful business and community leader who is known for his impressive and award-winning charitable endeavors that changed the lives of countless people in the St. Louis area and beyond.
- **Cathy Nickens** | (*Lifetime Achievement Award*), a retired Ritenour educator who has made a positive impact on the lives of thousands of Ritenour students, teachers, and the entire community.

Tickets for the Hall of Fame dinner and induction ceremony cost \$40 and can be purchased by calling Margarita Kramer-Gunther at (314) 493-6080 or emailing guntherm@ritenourschools.org. Reservations must be made by Sept. 12.

The Ritenour Hall of Fame was established in 1997 to honor graduates who have demonstrated outstanding professional accomplishments, civic involvement, and community service. The portraits of the 110 Hall of Fame members and 12 Lifetime Achievement Award recipients are proudly displayed in the lobby of the Auditorium at Ritenour High School.

Scan the QR code or visit www.ritenourschools.org to view the complete list of Ritenour Hall of Famers.



Notices and Policies

Each year, the Ritenour School District provides parents, students and community members with important information about federal and state regulations. The notices are related to students' rights and privacy, district policies and other educational procedures.

These notices are published on the Ritenour School District website, www.ritenourschools.org, and are available in all school offices and in the district Parent-Student Handbook.

Notices and Policies:

- Anti-Discrimination Notices (American with Disabilities Act/ Section 504, Sexual Harassment/Title IX and Age Discrimination Act of 1975/Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)
- Asbestos Notice

- Complaint Resolution Procedures
- Homeless Rights Notice
- Parent & Family Engagement Policy
- Parents Right to Know Notice
- Protection of Pupils Rights Amendment (PPRA)
- Safe Schools Act
- Services and Rights for Students with Disabilities
- Student Records/Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Notice

For copies of these notices or more information, please visit the Ritenour website at www.ritenourschools.org or call (314) 493-6055.

Ritenour Celebrates Staff Members at the 2024 Honors Dinner

The Ritenour School District honored special staff members at the annual Honors Dinner on April 25, 2024, in the Ritenour Auditorium.

The Night on the Red Carpet kicked off by recognizing Ritenour support staff who stepped up to become certified teachers in Ritenour classrooms. This year, **Aurora McCandless**, a Ritenour High School science teacher, received the Stepping Up Award.

Additionally, the district honored Diamond Circle Award recipients, First-Class Teacher and Make a Difference Awards, as well as 2023-2024 retirees and 25-year employees.

Ritenour is proud to honor **Sherita Ming**, a fourth-grade teacher at Iveland Elementary, as the 2024 Diamond Circle Teacher of the Year. **Juana Pintor**, Iveland’s daytime lead custodian, is the Diamond Circle Employee of the Year. The district also celebrated 10 other Diamond Circle teachers, an honor given to teachers who best exemplify the district’s commitment to quality education and service.

Brian Chance, a Special School District teacher at Ritenour High School, was honored as the 2024 Make a Difference Award recipient for his excellence in working with Ritenour students with diverse needs. **Emily Hahn**, an English language arts teacher at Hoech Middle School, is the district’s First Class Teacher for being an outstanding educator who is new to the profession.

2024 Diamond Circle Teachers:

- **Valerie Stanfill**, Ritenour School for Early Childhood Education
- **Emily Gabrisch**, Buder Elementary
- **Lauren Openlander**, Kratz Elementary
- **Dr. Meggan Bruner**, Marion Elementary
- **Amanda Bush**, Marvin Elementary
- **Ted Grabner**, Wyland Elementary
- **Maggie Drummond**, Hoech Middle School
- **Abigail Knoche**, Ritenour Middle School
- **Matt Elder**, Ritenour High School
- **Dr. Lisa Thompson**, International Welcome Center

Retirees

- **Linda Baker**, Ritenour Middle School
- **Nancy Bramsch**, Buder Elementary
- **Betsy Ceresia**, Hoech Middle School
- **Yen-yi Chen**, Kratz Elementary
- **Jim Coletta**, Ritenour Middle School
- **Bilal Ewing**, Marion Elementary
- **Mark Goldman**, Ritenour Middle School
- **Jason Graves**, Ritenour High School
- **Dr. Lisa Greenstein**, Wyland Elementary
- **Lori Greiner**, Ritenour High School
- **Dr. Fred Harlan**, District IT Department
- **Juanita Hartmann**, Ritenour High School
- **Jill Hodges**, Marion Elementary
- **Cheryl Jolly-Luster**, Ritenour High School
- **Carolyn Leuthauser**, Kratz Elementary
- **Dwight Lindhorst**, Administrative Center
- **Laura Maichel**, Marion Elementary/Special School District
- **Dr. Robert Mitchell**, Ritenour High School
- **Janet Sage**, Hoech Middle School
- **Lori Scissors**, Wyland Elementary School
- **Lisa Schiermeier**, Ritenour Middle School



Retirees (Continued)

- **Angela Small**, Ritenour Middle School
- **Bernadine Taylor**, Ritenour High School
- **Kim Weber-Dennigmann**, Marvin Elementary
- **Molly Welsch**, Ritenour High School

25-Year Employees

- **Dr. Meggan Bruner**, Marion Elementary
- **June Burkhardt**, Marvin Elementary
- **Megan Cilley**, Kratz Elementary
- **Amanda Connelly**, Iveland Elementary
- **Nicole Damaso**, Kratz Elementary
- **Leslie Fister**, Iveland Elementary
- **LaKisha Fouché**, Marvin Elementary
- **Wendy Gehner**, Marion Elementary
- **Amy Germain**, Marion Elementary
- **Wendy Jackson**, Administrative Center
- **Dr. Chris Kilbride**, Superintendent
- **Erica Largent**, Wyland Elementary
- **Angela Long**, Buder Elementary
- **Amie McGraw**, Marion Elementary
- **Karen Perry**, Buder Elementary
- **Nancy Pearl**, Marion Elementary
- **Carla Theiss**, Kratz Elementary
- **Brenda Westermayer**, Hoech Middle School
- **Becky Williams**, Kratz Elementary
- **Melissa Wortz**, Hoech Middle School

*Ritenour's top awards recipients included:
(l to r) Employee of the Year Juana Pintor; Diamond Circle Teacher of the Year Sherita Ming; First Class Teacher Emily Hahn; and Make a Difference Award recipient Brian Chance.*

Save the Date! 2024 Homecoming Set for Sept. 20-21



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

The weekend festivities will kick off on Friday, Sept. 20 with the Hall of Fame dinner and induction ceremony at 6 p.m. The three members of the Hall of Fame class of 2024 will be enshrined during the ceremony (you can read more about the new Hall of Fame members in the story on page 6).
On Saturday, Sept. 20, the football Huskies will take on their longtime rival, 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!



On June 1, Ritenour celebrated the 418 graduates in the Ritenour High School Class of 2024 at Chaifetz Arena on the campus of Saint Louis University.

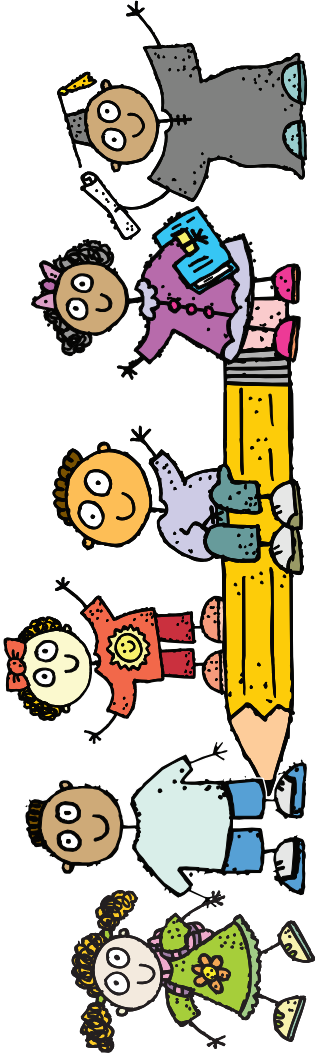
Congratulations Ritenour High School Class of 2024!

Ritenour New Student Registration

Families new to the district can register their children in grades K-12 at the Ritenour Administrative Center, 2420 Woodson Road in Overland, Mo.

Students must be 5 years of age or before July 31 to register for kindergarten.

Please visit the Ritenour Enrollment website at www.ritenourschools.org/enrollment for registration requirements and forms. For additional information, call (314) 493-6048.



The first day of school for the 2024-2025
school year is Monday, Aug. 19, 2024!