

CONNECTION

IN THIS EDITION:

- ★ Redistricting this fall in Park Hill
- ★ Construction progress around the district
- ★ Celebrations

"You are braver than you believe,
stronger than you seem
and smarter than you think."
Christopher Robin Winnie the Pooh



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

Happy new school year, Park Hill community! We've been preparing for this school year all summer and are so glad to have our staff and students in our schools working through their schedules, coursework and learning again. While most of our staff and students were enjoying a summer break, others were busy working in partnership with construction crews across the district.

We've been fortunate, with the community's support, to enjoy upgrades and facility improvements across the district. Our new competition gyms and weight rooms at both high schools are coming together quickly. At several elementary schools, students are already enjoying upgraded, accessible and inclusive playgrounds. Meanwhile, enhancements to co-curricular spaces — including band rooms, performing arts areas, aquatics centers and field improvements — are

progressing steadily across all our schools. It's so exciting to see all these improvements take shape in so many areas of our schools. We continue to thank you for your support of our community schools!

In addition to these facility improvements, we've been focusing on our people. At our all-staff convocation in August, we had the opportunity to welcome over 2,000 employees with the message that they are the real deal. The real deal when it comes to helping raise students in their youngest years to graduation from high school. And they are the real deal in how intertwined they all are in the lives of our community. How powerful for us in education to be so connected to our students, our families, our neighbors and our community. We are so lucky to have this responsibility.

With this responsibility, we again welcome you to the 2024-25 school year. May it be filled with wonder, realness and belonging!

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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WELCOME BACK!

Park Hill welcomes our students and families for the 2024-25 school year



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PRAIRIE POINT ELEMENTARY



RENNER ELEMENTARY



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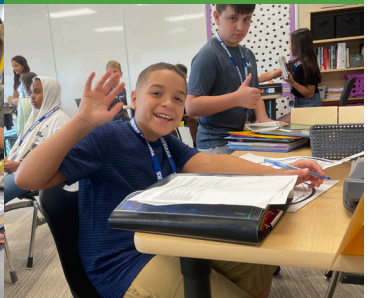
SOUTHEAST ELEMENTARY



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WALDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL

MAPPING THE FUTURE

New school boundaries ahead

By this time next year, students at Angeline Washington Elementary School will be settling into their new building and routines. To prepare for this, our district is creating new boundaries to establish a “direct feeder” system: three elementary schools will feed into each middle school. The balanced enrollments at Congress and Plaza Middle Schools will lead to Park Hill High School, while Lakeview and Walden Middle Schools will lead to Park Hill South High School.

To guide the redistricting process, the district formed a Redistricting Advisory Team to ensure all students have access to quality education while keeping enrollments balanced. This team will evaluate criteria including enrollment numbers, socio-economic balance, transportation, neighborhood factors and impacts on current

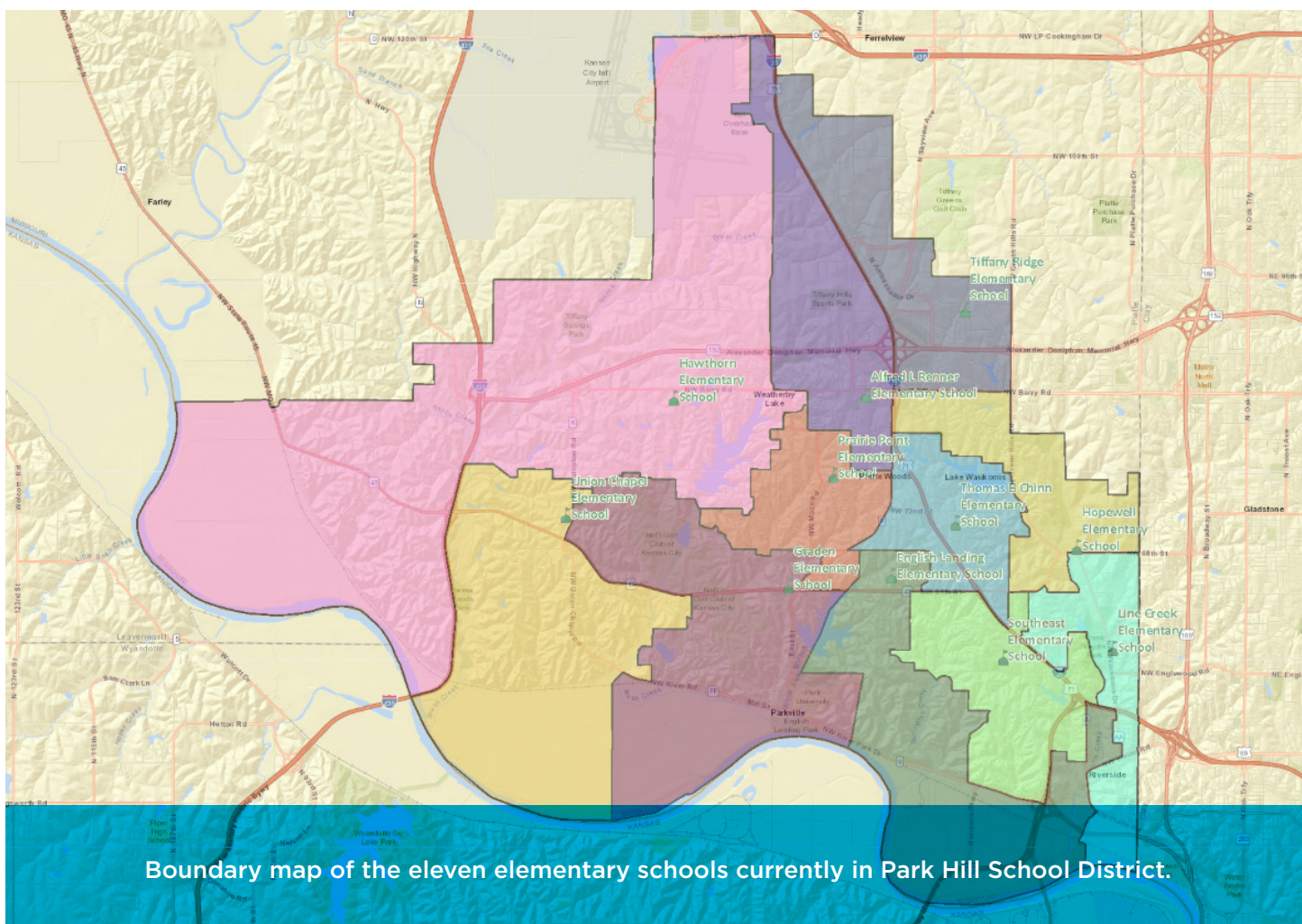
attendance areas. The Board of Education approved the advisory team at an August Board meeting.

More than 125 people applied to join the team. Keeping in mind that the team is advocating for the entire Park Hill community, members were selected based on recommendations from school principals and district leadership as well as written responses on the application form.

“We were looking for diverse perspectives and unique experiences and roles in our schools and the number of schools a person might represent. We needed to have representation from across the district,” Superintendent Dr. Mike Kimbrel said.

The 60-person team includes 22 parents/patrons who represent 34 school touch points along with elementary and middle school principals and district leadership. One of those parents is Robin Henley who not only has students at Hawthorn and Lakeview but is also a Teaching Assistant at Hawthorn.

“It’s a daunting and exciting process to be a part of and being on the team is one way I can give





Construction of our 12th Elementary School: Angeline Washington Elementary

back to the Park Hill community,” Henley said.

The Redistricting Advisory Team will meet throughout the fall to develop a redistricting plan that will be presented to the Board of Education in November. The Board will vote on the team’s final recommendation at its December meeting.

“There are a lot of different emotions around redistricting,” Dr. Paul Kelly, assistant superintendent for business and technology and advisory team chair, said. “We have the next few months to work through them and meet our goal of new school boundaries and balanced school enrollments.”

A Partner for the Process

The district is partnering with Woolpert as our Redistricting and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Analysis firm, to create new boundary maps based on our enrollment and demographic data. Woolpert will use the district’s goals to provide data for each map’s metrics and criteria. [You can find these criteria and metrics on our website: https://www.parkhill.k12.mo.us/about/redistricting.](https://www.parkhill.k12.mo.us/about/redistricting)

“Redistricting is a tough process, but it’s more acceptable when grounded in data,” said Karen Jackson, Woolpert’s project lead.

The team will review and evaluate the first concepts from Woolpert at its September meeting, followed by an opportunity for the community to share feedback.

Community Voices Matter

Public input is a key part of our redistricting process, with multiple opportunities to provide feedback both in-person and online. Community input will help ensure the new boundaries reflect the community’s needs and values. We’ll share these opportunities through our

district e-newsletter, social media and our website.

“People love their schools,” Superintendent Kimbrel said. “Even after redistricting in 2018, families still loved their schools. Change is hard, but we’re building a beautiful new school and have great schools across the district. We want to give families plenty of time to plan for fall 2025.”

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There will be multiple opportunities to provide feedback both in-person and online, throughout the Redistricting process. More details about these opportunities will be shared via our district e-newsletter, on our social media channels and on our website.

Sept. 20-30

Online Engagement Window Open

Oct. 14

In-Person Open House at Plaza Middle School Gym from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 15

In-Person Open House at Lakeview Middle School Gym from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

NEW SPACES, NEW OPPORTUNITIES:

Update on district construction projects

It was a busy summer with construction projects happening across the district.

Our new competition gyms and weight rooms at both high schools are coming together quickly. At several elementary schools, students are already enjoying upgraded, accessible and inclusive playgrounds. Other upgrades – like new kitchens, upgraded infrastructure, new walls, new furniture, new workspaces and countertops and more – were completed at Prairie Point, Renner, Union Chapel, Graden, Tiffany Ridge and Plaza Middle School.

We also recently celebrated the completion of a whole new addition with collaboration spaces, an outdoor courtyard, upgraded classrooms and a school-run coffee bar at Russell Jones Education Center.

Meanwhile, enhancements to co-curricular spaces – including band rooms, performing arts areas, aquatics centers and field improvements – are progressing steadily across all our schools.

And speaking of fields, the Park Hill High School Softball team had a New Field Celebration and ribbon cutting before its game against North

Kansas City on Sept. 5 – complete with a tailgate and giveaways.

And we can't wait for the opening of Angeline Washington Elementary next fall! Be sure to check out our social media channels for a look at the school's mascot.

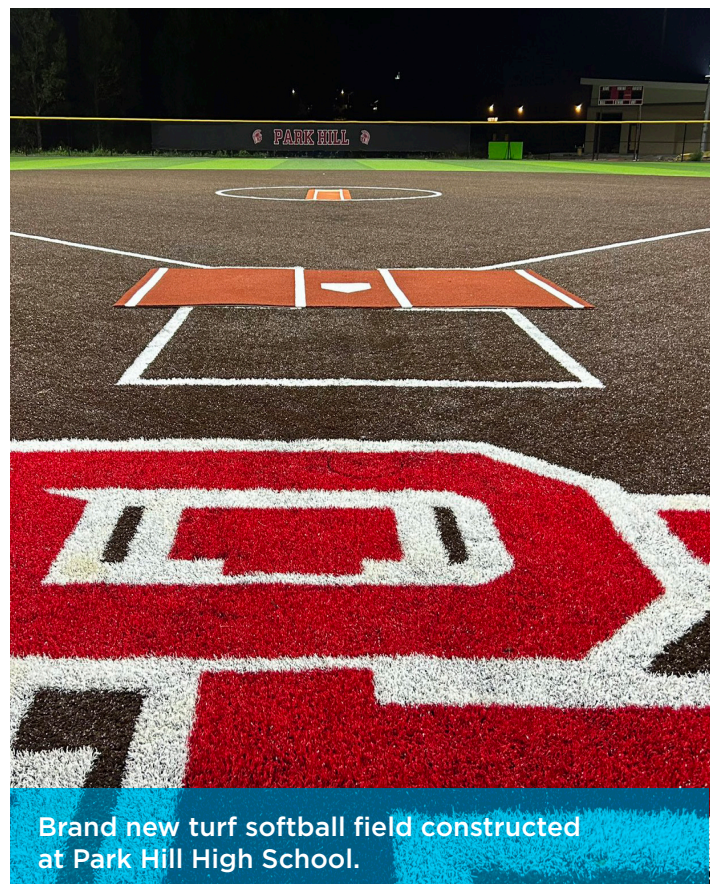
Soon we'll be moving on to the second phase of school playgrounds and enhancements at more of our schools.

These and our upcoming projects are all possible through the No-Tax-Increase Ballot Propositions approved by Park Hill voters in 2022. Thank you for your flexibility and patience as we continue to work through these projects around the district to maintain the community's investment in our facilities and bring them up to date.

If you'd like to learn more about our projects, visit the Bond Projects Update webpage on the district's website.



Students playing on the new playground equipment at Graden Elementary.



Brand new turf softball field constructed at Park Hill High School.

Straight From Our Staff

Dr. Denisha Johnson, Principal, Renner Elementary

PH: Due to construction, you spent the summer at Tiffany Ridge. What was it like to return to a refreshed Renner?

Dr. Johnson: Returning to Renner was exhilarating for us all. Everyone was excited to see and learn about the many additions to the building. Tiffany Ridge was hugely supportive, and we can't thank Ms. Kalis, principal at Tiffany Ridge, enough for providing space for our office staff throughout the months of June, July and the beginning of August leading up to the start of school. It was an incredibly busy summer but we're so excited to see the many changes.

PH: Tell us more about the renovations at Renner. How are they benefiting students and staff?

Dr. J: The majority of the renovations included classroom learning spaces. Our classrooms were completely gutted, adding additional space and upgrading those spaces to be more functional and modern. Another huge aspect of renovations involved a complete rewiring of technology and LED lighting throughout the entire building. All spaces received advanced, state of the art interactive learning walls. The new interactive TVs allow for instant access to information and enhances the overall experience of learning for all students. Being able to utilize this type of technology creates active engagement and creates pathways to instruction that meet the needs of all of our learners. Our teachers and staff are so excited for these new additions. Continued professional development throughout this school year will be provided to staff.

PH: How does Renner help students do their best, both in the classroom and beyond?

Dr. J: At Renner, we believe that all students should have access to quality education and be able to thrive in an environment that fosters an authentic sense of belonging. We believe that by fostering culturally responsive educational practices in all of our processes, our students become independent learners who can access and achieve learning at every level. We strive to prioritize Park Hill initiatives and processes in our everyday journey. Those initiatives include Restorative Practices, AVID, MTSS and PBIS. While implementing these important initiatives throughout the building, we also believe it's important for students and families to understand the "why" behind our processes and how they each are impacted. We believe it's important to partner and build strong connections with our families to create a strong culture where each of our students can thrive and be successful.



PH: What are you most excited about this year?

Dr. J: As part of Park Hill's strategic plan, our entire Renner staff participated in Restorative Practices training prior to the start of school. This training provided staff with proactive strategies to work towards strengthening relationships, building community and fostering a school culture where quality academic instruction is at the forefront. I am so excited to continue this journey throughout this school year. I truly believe that when our students and staff feel heard and validated, it creates a space where learning can fully take place.

PH: As you consider the school's future (or district's future), what are you most hopeful about?

Dr. J: I continue to be extremely grateful for the amazing students, staff and families that I have an opportunity to form lasting relationships with each day. Our staff is completely dedicated to providing authentic learning opportunities for our students. I'm hopeful that Renner will continue to be a place where meaningful learning experiences are created, strong relationships are built, students become leaders, families feel connected, staff feel supported and our students leave Renner knowing they were loved and cared for. We know that our kids are amazing and capable of greatness and I'm excited to see our students' success come to fruition.

Straight From Our Staff

Dr. Danny Todtfeld, Prairie Point Elementary



PH: Due to construction, you spent the summer at Chinn. What was it like to return to a refreshed Prairie Point?

Dr. Todtfeld: Returning to a refreshed Prairie Point has been an incredible experience. Thomas B. Chinn Elementary was a great host during summer school, but it's great to be back. I was actually able to work in my office throughout the summer. It was very exciting watching the entire construction process unfold and seeing the "behind the scenes" parts of the remodel.

PH: Tell us more about the renovations at Prairie Point. How are they benefiting students and staff?

Dr. T: The vast majority of the renovations occurred in learning spaces — classrooms, intervention spaces, etc. Our classrooms were completely gutted, this includes all of the old furniture, cabinetry, carpet and instructional technology. New this year, all learning spaces have an interactive display. Our staff received specific training on these displays during pre-service and we have additional professional development planned throughout the year to ensure we are using all of the amazing features. One of the coolest features of the displays is the ability for

teachers to allow students to share their screens directly. This means that as groups of students work on projects or participate in problem solving activities, they can show their work and thinking easily with the rest of the class.

PH: How does Prairie Point help students do their best, both in the classroom and beyond?

Dr. T: At Prairie Point, we believe deeply in building successful futures for each student, every day. Our teachers work extremely hard to meet the needs of every student in their classrooms. Over the past few years, our MTSS practices have also become more efficient and effective, allowing us to support the whole child. This means we have systems in place to support students academic, behavior and social-emotional needs. The most important piece of this is our partnership we work to build with families. I'm very proud of the work teachers do to connect with families to create a partnership in support of all of our students.

PH: What are you most excited about this year?

Dr. T: One of the things I'm most excited about for this year is to see how teachers continue to develop their classrooms and turn them into incredible learning spaces. The district did a great job designing our classrooms, but it's truly the teachers' touch that makes it magical. I've already seen teachers being creative in how they create collaborative spaces for kids to work together. I look forward to the year progressing and seeing how teachers continue to make our school a magical place to be.

PH: As you consider the school's future (or district's future), what are you most hopeful about?

Dr. T: As I look to the future of Prairie Point, I'm most hopeful about the possibilities that lie ahead for our students and community. With the recent renovations, we now have state-of-the-art facilities that will support innovative teaching and learning experiences. I'm excited to see how our dedicated staff will continue to inspire and challenge our students in new ways. But more than anything, I'm hopeful about the strong, supportive community we've built — a community that will continue to work together to ensure every student reaches their full potential. The future at Prairie Point is bright, and I can't wait to see what we accomplish together.

Straight From Our Students

Jackson Westrich, Russell Jones Education Center 7th Grade

Park Hill: Welcome back! Russell Jones looks a little different than it did last year. How do you feel about the changes at your school?

Jackson: It looks so much cooler than before. It's bigger than last year. I am excited about students being able to come. The differences make a positive change in my learning. There are bigger areas to run and play ball.

PH: What's your favorite part about the new spaces in the school?

J: I love the bean bag in the active sensory area. There is more room outside too. I love the bigger basketball court. There are more comfortable areas to sit.

PH: How do you think the new spaces have changed your school day?

J: There are more areas to relax at. More areas to explore or cool down. I really like the trail and sidewalks. I now get to eat in the lunchroom and get out of my classroom more.

PH: What is your favorite part of the day at school?

J: I get to work towards an afternoon break. It's great to get outside or play a game at that time. I also get dragon dollars. Overall, I like the new kids I get to see and how helpful our teachers are. I also like recreation therapy. The gym and makerspace are great.

PH: What are you excited about this year?

J: I think doing science experiments is going to be the best. We also get a kitchen to do more in. I think we will get to do new games at Russell Jones because of the new spaces. That's awesome.



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.



Perfect ACT Scores

Congratulations to Park Hill South High School's Zachary Hilzinger and Park Hill High School's Kai Soo. The two students achieved perfect scores (36) on the ACT, placing them in the top less than one percent of test takers. Way to go, Zach and Kai! #ParkHillProud



Pioneer in Education

We are #ParkHillProud of former Superintendent Dr. Jeanette Cowherd, who was named a Pioneer in Education by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) at the 63rd Annual Cooperative Conference for School Administrators.

During Dr. Cowherd's time in Park Hill School District, she developed our Smart Start Early Literacy program and helped pass a \$110M bond issue, which led to the building of Hopewell Elementary and Walden Middle School, as well as the implementation and construction of the LEAD Innovation Studio.

For 49 years, the Pioneer in Education award has honored distinguished contributors to public education in Missouri. Dr. Cowherd was one of six Pioneers recognized this year.



2024 Governance Team Award

We are #ParkHillProud of the Park Hill School District Board of Education for earning the 2024 Governance Team Award, recognizing their commitment to ongoing learning, continuous improvement and public school advocacy. They are among 31 school boards in Missouri to receive this honor.



MSBA Certification

Congratulations to Park Hill School District Board of Education Member Shereka Barnes and Board of Education President Daryl Terwilleger on their certifications from the Missouri School Boards' Association (MSBA). Barnes was awarded Master Board Member Certification and Terwilleger earned Advanced Board Member Certification.

The certifications are achieved by taking additional trainings and participating in professional development and networking events.



HR Office Professional of the Year

We are #ParkHillProud of our Human Resources Analyst Judith Perry, who was named Missouri’s HR Office Professional of the Year by the Missouri Association for School Personnel Administrators (MOASPA)!



Premier Distinction

Congratulations to Park Hill High School and LEAD Innovation Studio senior Corbin Moyer for achieving Premier Distinction, the highest degree in the National Speech and Debate Association Honor Society!

Fewer than 3% of NSDA members earn Premier Distinction before graduation. This milestone celebrates the hundreds of hours Corbin has spent preparing, practicing and competing to hone his communication and leadership skills.

PHHS Volleyball Team Academic Award

Congratulations to the 2023-2024 Park Hill High School girls volleyball team for earning the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) Team Academic Award for the ninth year!

More than 1,400 collegiate and high school volleyball programs maintained a year-long grade-point average of 3.3 on a 4.0 scale (or 4.1 on a 5.0 scale), to earn the award for their classroom excellence during the recently completed academic year. The team had a 3.77 GPA.



Park Hill School District

Building Successful Futures • Each Student • Every Day

Dr. Mary Miller Richter Award

The Park Hill School District has been awarded the Dr. Mary Miller Richter Award from Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support (MO SW-PBS)!

Named in honor of Mary Richter, Ph.D., founding director of the MO SW-PBS initiative, the annual award honors one school and one school district that exemplify the ideals, principles and practices of positive behavior support.

The winning school and district demonstrate a firm commitment and dedication to improving the lives of students, the educators who teach them and the community in which the school or district resides through innovation, creativity, and/or a firm commitment to staying the course despite barriers.



Distinguished Gateway Schools

We’re proud to announce that all of our middle schools, Congress, Lakeview, Plaza and Walden, have been named Project Lead the Way 2023-24 Distinguished Gateway Schools for their commitment to increasing student access, engagement and achievement in their PLTW programs.





N O M I N A T E A **PARK HILL STAR**

Anyone can nominate an employee at parkhilllistens.com.

Our employees are the reason we are so successful here in the Park Hill School District, and we would like to recognize them for all they do for our students.

That is why we present the Park Hill Star award once a month to a pre-K or elementary teacher, a secondary teacher and a support employee.

Visit the district's Facebook page to see past Park Hill Star winners.



P A R K H I L L **HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS**

Visit parkhilllistens.com to nominate someone today.

Each January, the Park Hill School District inducts three alumni into the Alumni Hall of Fame. This award honors those district graduates whose lives and careers are models of achievement and community service.

Do you know an alumnus or alumna who deserves to be in the Park Hill Alumni Hall of Fame? The nominee must be a graduate of Park Hill High School or Park Hill South High School who graduated five or more years ago. We accept posthumous nominations.

The 2024-2025
Sponsorship Program
is under way!

Friends of the Foundation

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



Learn More
Today!

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Community Breakfast - Oct. 24, 2024

Visit our new website at parkhillfoundation.org



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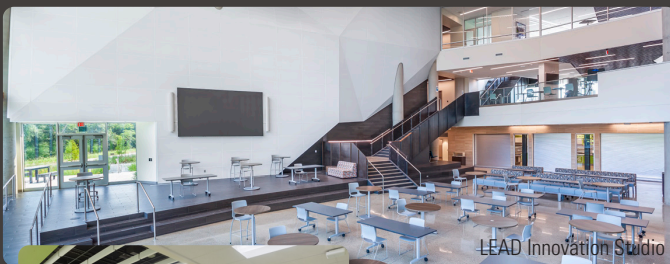
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BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY



LEAD Innovation Studio



Hopewell Elementary



District Transportation Center



Walden Middle School



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Tiffany Ridge Elementary

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Park Hill Highlight

As progress continues on our construction projects around the district, students and administrators at Park Hill South High School made their mark by signing one of the 18 structural double T beams that will be used as a roof structure for the new gymnasium.

This project, along with others funded by the April 2022 Ballot Propositions, helps us maintain the community's investment in our facilities, bring them up to date and build our 12th elementary school.

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

