



Blackcat News

Mission Statement:
"Educating Today for a Better Tomorrow"

VOLUME 29 ISSUE 91 SCHOOL YEAR 2024-2025 November 21, 2024



Herculaneum Girls Take Second at State



Back row: Coach Kyle Davis, Coach Becky Wright, Kaylee Wood, Khloe Black, Maddie Roberts, Coach Lance Hyde, and Coach Jim Kasten.

Front row: Brylee Wishard, Aubri Shadowens, Emerson Reeves (26th, All-State), Amaya Ferguson (17th, All-State), Clair Davis, Finley Hamtil (23rd, All-State), Rylie Pruett

The girls cross country team ran to a second-place finish in the Class 3 State Championships. "They killed it. They did even better than we thought on paper," according to Coach Kyle Davis. They were undaunted by the rain and mud on that cold Saturday morning in Columbia. Three runners received All-State honors, and one just missed the mark. Our top three runners were freshman Amaya Ferguson, followed by sophomores Finley Hamtil and Emerson Reeves. Junior Clara Davis, the coach's daughter, usually leads the Blackcats or comes in second. She slid in the mud, which led to a fall. Getting upright and restarting in the muck cost her valuable time. She was the 4th Blackcat to cross the finish line, followed by three freshmen: Aubrianna Shadowens, Brylee Wishard, and Rylie Pruett.

The ground was saturated from the overnight storm that continued throughout the morning. The top finishers in the first race of the day were all slower than the year before, and the conditions continued to deteriorate. Before the gun went off, Coach Davis told them, "Prepare for the worst and welcome the worst." What happened over the next 20-plus minutes was nothing short of inspiring. Ferguson, our number one runner, tied her personal best. Coach Davis says, "Emerson got a 10-second pr (personal record) in this weather, which is mind-blowing. Our 5 and 6 girls didn't pr, but they were close to it. It was a full-team effort; it was awesome."

The boys team didn't make it to the podium this year, finishing in 8th place. Our top two runners were well shy of their times from the previous year. No one was more upset about their finish than Nate Wright. The senior has a drawer full of medals from his running career at Herculaneum, but he was fighting an illness all week that couldn't be overcome by willpower. Davis says it wasn't an awful race for the team, just an average race. Next year, the boys team will lose Wright and Nathan Clampet. However, the following three fastest runners are two freshmen and a sophomore. Junior Joseph Stahl should break into the top five, and the team will be reinforced by a couple of talented 8th-grade runners entering high school.



Senn-Thomas Middle School Fall Festival

Saturday, November 23rd
1:00-5:00 pm

*All students must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Admission:
Donation of a canned food item for the local food pantry

Family Engagement
Board Games
Concessions
Vendors
Family Art Activity



Pevely Elementary School

OFFICIALLY

Most packaged food boxes toppled in a domino fashion.



AMAZING

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Message From Board President

As the fall season settles in, I wanted to update you on the exciting developments within our school district and share some important information impacting our students, families, and staff. It has been a busy start to the school year, and I am proud to share the progress we have made together. With the upcoming holidays, please take the time to enjoy your family time, relax, and recharge.

We are thrilled to see our students embracing the opportunities for learning as we continue to focus on high academic standards. Our teachers and staff have worked hard to implement curriculum updates and resources designed to foster critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving.

In addition to our focus on academic and student well-being, we've been busy making significant improvements to our school facilities. Over the summer, we finished several renovation projects. Our secure vestibules at Pevely Elementary and STMS are completed, as is the new turf field at the high school. We continually see progress on the new gym and facility building that will house our technology and maintenance departments. These enhancements will create a better learning environment and provide students with the tools they need to excel.

As always, I am deeply grateful for the dedication of our teachers, staff, and administrators,

who work tirelessly to create a supportive and engaging environment for our students. I would also like to thank our parents and guardians for their continued support and involvement in our school community. Together, we can ensure all our students have the resources and opportunities to thrive.

Thank you for being an essential part of our school community. We are excited for the year ahead and look forward to continuing to work together to support the success of every student in our district.

With Blackcat Pride,
Tammy Heidland,
President Dunklin R5 Board of Education



Dr. Freeman's Message

Blackcat Community:

We have had a positive experience so far in the Dunklin R-5 School District this semester! A successful semester is a testament to the hard work of students, teachers, parents, and staff who are dedicated to creating a supportive and effective learning environment.

As we approach the holiday season and the end of the calendar year, I want to share some important updates and information regarding the Dunklin R-5 School District.

Proposition Safe Schools Update:

The new safe and secure entryways at Pevely Elementary and Senn Thomas Middle Schools are completed, and I am happy to report that both projects were finished under budget. Earlier this week, we enjoyed cutting the ribbon to the new entrance at Senn-Thomas Middle School. The high school has a beautiful turf football field, and the new facility building will be completed next week.



Attendance is critical to student success in the Dunklin R-5 School District, as it is in most educational systems. Regular attendance not only helps students keep up with daily lessons and assignments, but it also allows them to build strong relationships with teachers and peers, which can enhance their overall educational experience.

When students attend consistently, they are more likely to stay on track with learning goals, feel engaged in school, and improve both academically and socially. Missing school frequently can lead to gaps in knowledge, making it harder for students to catch up and succeed long-term. The Dunklin R-5 School District has policies to monitor and encourage regular attendance, which is essential for promoting a culture of responsibility, preparedness, and achievement among students. We appreciate your assistance in making sure kids are in class each day.

I want to extend my gratitude to our parents, community members, and staff for your dedication and continued support. Together, we will ensure that the Dunklin R-5 School District remains a place where every student can thrive and reach their full potential.

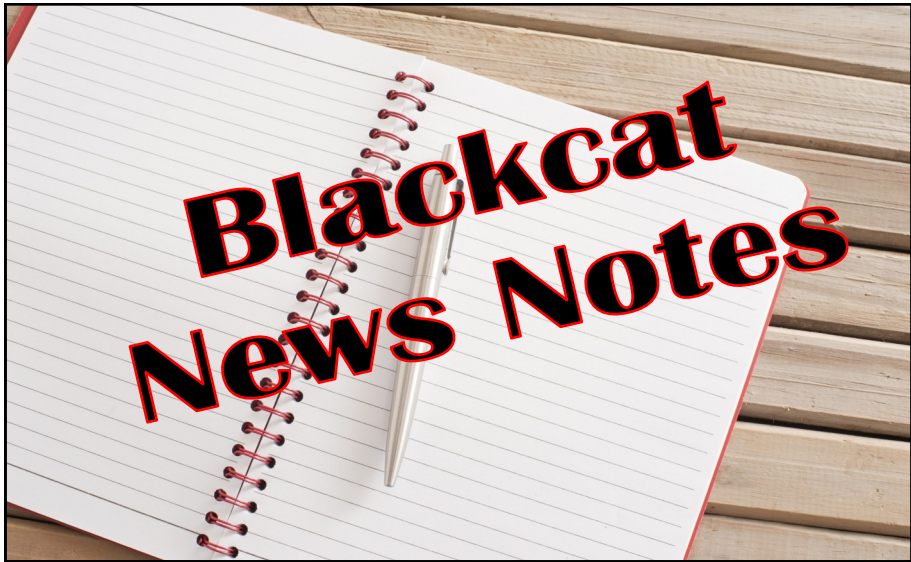
Visit our website at www.dunklin.k12.mo.us for the latest information. You can also follow us on Facebook at Dunklin R5 School District and me on Twitter at @DrClintFreeman.

I am wishing you a safe, joyful, and restful holiday season. May it be filled with laughter, peace, and quality time with loved ones. Happy holidays!

Dr. Clint Freeman
Superintendent of Schools

For updates and District news, including inclement weather school closing information, follow Communications Director Matt Lichtenstein on Twitter:
@BlackcatMatt





Congratulations: Senior Stephen Stenzhorn signed with Central Methodist University to play baseball. He'll major in marketing and advertising and have a minor in digital and graphic design. Kaylyn Yamnitz signed with Southeast Missouri State to play softball. She'll study Exercise Science.

Parent ProTech will be at Pevely Elementary on Friday at 2 pm, during Family Reading Day, to give tips and answer questions. The security service helps protect kids online and is free for Dunklin R-5 families.

Bus Drivers Wanted: If you know someone who loves kids, this may be a good fit. We offer paid training, competitive wages, and health benefits. To start your application, go to the Dunklin R5 website and click "Join Our Team" at the top right corner of the page.

The book fair at Senn-Thomas Middle School will be open on Saturday between 1 pm and 5 pm during the Fall Festival.

Looking for Blackcat gear? Go to the Dunklin R5 website and click on the

button labeled stores.

Choir Concerts: The middle school and high school choir concerts will be on December 17th. STMS students will perform at 7 pm, and HHS students will perform at 8 pm.

No School: November 27th-29th is Thanksgiving Break. December 20th is an early release day leading into Winter Break. Students return on January 6th.



New members of the National Junior Honor Society: Preslie Adams, Sage Asinger, Tatum Bahr, Katelyn Blair, Tristen Beykirch, Jackson Eberhardt, Khaled Elgharbawi, Virginia Gobble, Layla Hattemar, Ashlyn Horn, Riley Ijames, Willow Jakubs, Paxton LaPlante, Sophie Lewis, Riley Loveless, Jax Marshall, Akila Mehmedovic, Brooklyn Propst, Aiden Pruitt, Savanna Smith, Christopher Spiros Destini Stinson, Oscar Thone, Lillian Trusty, Tristan White, Victor White Paxton Winebaugh, Alexander Wood, and James Zipprich.



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Family Art Activity

DUNKLIN R-5 SCHOOL DISTRICT

497 Joachim Avenue ▪ Herculaneum, MO 63048 ▪ (636) 479-5200

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Board Meetings are Open to the Public

The Dunklin R-5 Board of Education meets on a regular basis on the third Tuesday of each month. The meetings are held at 7:00 pm. Check the website for the location. The meetings are open to the public. Patrons may view agendas and items from the meetings by going to our website www.dunklin.k12.mo.us, and clicking on the Board of Education tab.

Dunklin R-5 School District is an equal opportunity employer



Anchor Room

Pevely cut the number of discipline problems in half after creating an Anchor Room. In the 2021-2022 school year, the elementary school had 343 office referrals, a substantial number for roughly 750 students. The following year, it got worse, totaling 524 referrals. Each starts with a student being sent to the office. They would wait to speak to an administrator who had to communicate with the teacher, counsel the student, and eventually call a parent about the issue. Sometimes, other resources would be deployed depending on the situation. The repetition of discipline problems took a lot of time, negatively impacting school culture. Something had to change.

That summer, Principal Katie Dunlap met with Special Services Director Tom Moreland, whose responsibilities include all the special education programs in the district. They devised an idea to help the students and support teachers. It was strengthened by Director Charissa Kappler and Assistant Superintendent Joe Willis. Upon their return, the elementary school's assistant principals contributed, and the idea continued to evolve. The final touches were made by counselors, teachers, and the Anchor Room staff. The concept brought together parts of established programs, knowledge of child psychology, and data from studies. They referenced "Conscious Discipline," by Dr. Becky A. Bailey, as well as information from a U.K. organization called Beacon House. The program was launched when students returned in August of 2023. The theme that year at Pevely Elementary was Anchored in Success, so they called the small classroom an Anchor Room. After a year, the number of referrals dropped 45.8 percent to 284.

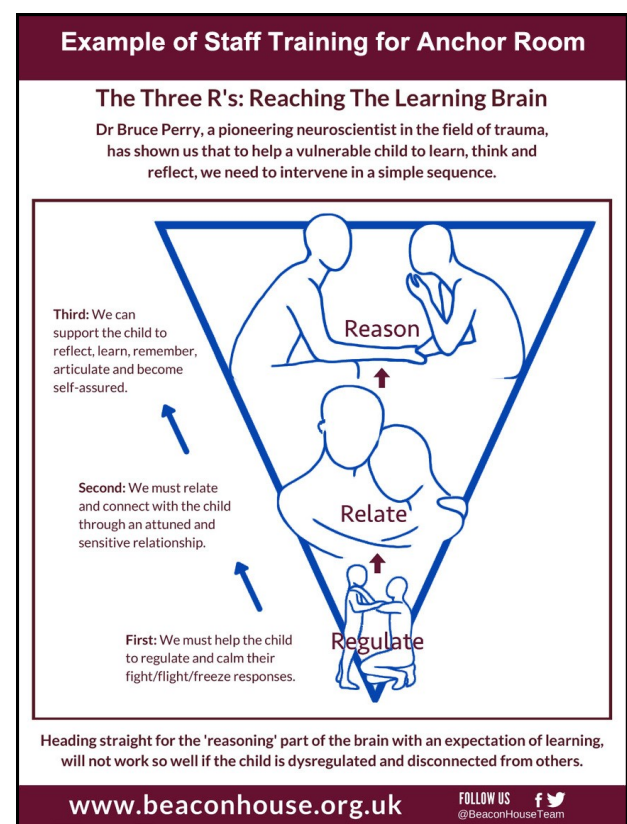
How does an Anchor Room work? When a teacher has difficulty with a student, they fill out a ticket. A staff member, usually a paraprofessional, will come to the classroom, pick up the student, and go to the Anchor Room. Nothing is said in front of the other students in the class. Upon their arrival, the paraprofessional will try to calm the student, relate to their situation, and finally reason with the child. While there is no predetermined time limit, there are goals. The staff member works with the students to get them in the right frame of mind to return to the classroom. The student needs to complete any missed schoolwork, and the child needs to make it right. That could be an apology to the class or cleaning up a mess they made. An email is sent to the parents if their child visits the Anchor Room, and the student's teacher will reach out to them after school.

One key to success is staff training. Moreland says that before launching the program, the paraprofessionals received several days of intensive training to essentially become behavior coaches. Since the beginning, the Anchor Room staff has been supported by the assistant principals, who still handle some issues, track case data, and offer guidance to teachers and paraprofessionals. Adam Dixon says if there is a serious discipline problem, an administrator will handle it. He'll also assist in the Anchor Room if the staff member doesn't feel like they are connecting with the student.

Dunklin asks teachers to cover a lot of information during the school year, and they plan their lessons accordingly. However, if a student is having a bad day, it's distracting and slows the

group's progress. Dunlap says, "It is frustrating if you have a student that just needs some time alone, and it's nice to know you have that support if you need it." Some teachers have never used the Anchor Room, but they like knowing it's there. Dunlap says word of their success has spread, and applicants to Pevely Elementary have mentioned the innovative program. Recently, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Joe Willis joined Dunlap and Assistant Principal Michelle Lyles to present the program during a Missouri School Board Association conference. Missouri public schools are always happy to share their success stories with other districts.

Moving forward, there is still room for improvement. About a third of last year's referrals took place on a school bus. While those behaviors were outside of the building, they still count. Administrators are evaluating their options, including reinforcing expectations to students and making additional training available to bus drivers.



Guinness World Record

Teacher Hallie Cheney came up with the idea to set a world record, as she loved going through those books as a kid. But what do kids love today? Watching her daughter eat her favorite food, mac and cheese, the gears started turning. It would be a community service project getting the kids excited about giving back. They would collect thousands of boxes of mac and cheese, line them up in the hallways, tip them over in a domino fashion, and then donate them to churches and food pantries. Guinness said the record was 5,000 boxes for that particular feat.

Everybody loved the idea, and the collection began. Principal Katie Dunlap says, "You could hear the boxes rattle in the backpacks of students getting off the school bus." Their goal was to collect 5,000 boxes, but they ended up with almost 12 thousand. They lined a portion of them up so students could see them fall. However, adult volunteers came in during spring break on March 29th to go for the record. Guinness said they would get one shot at getting

them to fall.

After a couple of hours, the boxes of mac and cheese were lined up four wide, going down six hallways, and stretching 790 feet. It took 2 minutes and 31 seconds, but all 11,936 boxes tipped over. Cheney said, "I tried not to cry. I was very excited." She submitted video evidence of the effort and documentation from independent counters with the City of Pevely. However, Guinness takes the time to verify world records. We were officially notified in late October that we broke the record for the most packaged food boxes toppled in a domino fashion. Cheney and Dunlap surprised the staff with the news during a professional development day. Precision Graphics donated the banner that reads, Officially Amazing.



"Go Blackcats"

Caps and Crayons



Sunrise and sunset came together on the 50-yard line. Kindergarten students, just starting their educational experience, met with seniors who will soon be called alumni. The idea of lining both groups up in opposite endzones before marching toward the center was made popular on social media. Herculaneum High School Principal Stephanie Dix was sent a copy by Cheryl Aylesworth, but there were similar videos being shared on TikTok and Facebook. After speaking with the student council sponsors and the elementary school principal, they decided to go for it. Dix says, "We wanted to get the younger kids excited about being Blackcats and give our big kids an opportunity to share their school spirit. It a sense, they were passing the torch."

Pevely Principal Katie Dunlap says everything about the experience was exciting for the kindergarten students. She says it was their first field trip, first time on a school bus for many, first time on the football field, and first time meeting the mascot. Dunlap heard one student say, "This is a real stadium."

Dix welcomed everyone to Dugan Memorial Field and set the event in motion. The song "Never Grow Up" by Taylor Swift played on stadium speakers as they started a new homecoming tradition. Parents were invited, and Herculaneum's underclassmen watched from the stone bleachers. When the two lines randomly came together at mid-field, many seniors took a knee to interact with the kindergarten students. They exchanged gifts, with the 5-year-olds handing over their coloring pages and the seniors presenting plastic cups with the Blackcat logo. The phrase "Once a Blackcat, Always a Blackcat" was printed on the cups and was part of the crayon drawings. Smiles were plentiful, followed by high-fives, hugs, or fist bumps. In the background, the soft melody encapsulated the moment with the lyrics, "Oh darling, don't you ever grow up, don't you ever grow up, just stay this little."

When the Class of 2025 and the Class of 2037 had enough time together, they headed toward the scoreboard for pictures. According to Dix, the seniors really enjoyed it. She said, "They weren't in any rush to leave the scene, which told me they were having a good time." The symbolism may have been lost on the 5-year-olds, but the excitement of doing something for the first time will always be remembered.



Homecoming King and Queen

This year's Homecoming King and Queen were Seniors Anthony Gallina and Jill Jarvis.



Donkey Basketball



Pictured: Senior Emma Johnson

It was more than a fundraiser. It was a show, a competition, and a great memory for all who attended. Donkeys are strong, sure-footed, obstinate animals that move at their own pace. They are decedents of African wild asses, and those jockeys who accidentally hit their hind quarters were unceremoniously dismounted. Senior Jill Jarvis says, "I think the hardest part was

getting on the donkey and staying on the donkey. It was hard to keep your balance." The varsity athlete was able to navigate up and down the court but hit the hardwood more than once. She says, "I was sore the next day." Some jockeys thought standing in front of their donkey and pulling the reins would be faster. They soon learned that a donkey wearing non-slip rubber shoes always has the advantage.

Bringing Dairyland Donkey Ball to Herculanum was initiated by HHS Student Council Sponsor Lindsey Fitzgibbons. She says, "I am always looking for new, fun ways to get the kids/community involved and raise money at the same time." StuCo raised a little over \$1,800 from Donkey Basketball.

Between games, kids in the audience got the opportunity to take a ride. Parents couldn't wait to take pictures of their child on a donkey. Knowing the routine, the donkeys were exceptionally gentle, maintaining a slow pace up and down the basketball court.

Gametime was a bit different. Due to his size, Keaton Reeves sat farther back on the animal, which sometimes triggered a bucking motion. Reeves says, "They told me it was a rowdy donkey when they gave it to me." The football coaches may have gotten heartburn watching their quarterback play cowboy, but the junior eventually found his groove and was able to shoot the basketball. When asked to describe the experience, he said, "It wasn't that bad, kind of smelly, but not that bad."

Dairyland Donkey Ball Owner C.J. Cordell says, "We are currently operating three donkey basketball units but are considering expanding to a fourth unit in the next couple of years. We perform over 200 events each year in at least 25 states." Fitzgibbons says, "All the feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive." She says our kids are already asking her to bring the donkeys back to Herculanum High School.

Jane Howard Turner Enters Blackcat Hall of Fame

Her life is novel-worthy, starting with her education at Douglas Elementary during segregation and ending with letters of praise from Queen Elizabeth. Jane Howard Turner from the Class of 1964 is the newest member of the Blackcat Hall of Fame. She spent her career as a nurse but is also an author, composer, philanthropist, minister, content creator, and volunteer. Although hardships and disrespect were part of her formative years, there is not a trace of bitterness in her interactions with others. At the banquet, Cheryl Aylesworth said, "Jane's love pours out in everything she does. You can't image the magnitude of her goodness. Being around Jane calms my soul."

While attending Douglas Elementary School in the 1950s, Turner was told she would go to Taylor Elementary with the white kids next year. She soon learned that being the only black girl in her grade was a lonely experience. Her friendships ended at the school's doors. She would hear about classmates getting together after school but never received an invitation. This was during an era when black people had to learn which restaurants would serve them, which would not, and if they were allowed to order food to go. Over time, she made three true friends in school. One of them, Carol Dorlac Sanquinette-Howe, shared their story at the banquet.

When the intercom crackled to life at Herculanum High School, the world had changed. Students heard a news reporter's voice saying, "The President has been shot. Our President has been shot." The audio was cut, but a moment later, a school administrator tried to calmly tell the students that President Kennedy had been assassinated. Young people loved Kennedy, and the news left them shocked. The hallways were filled with students upon dismissal, but those same corridors remained silent. Carol Dorlac went to a downstairs bathroom to break down. She thought no one could hear her crying, but Jane came out of a stall with tears in her eyes. They hugged and comforted each other. It was part of their shared history they've never forgotten.

Turner graduated from the Herculanum High School with honors. She received the school's journalism and library awards and was the first black co-editor of the Blackcat Newspaper and yearbook. Turner attended Jefferson College the first year it was opened, often taking evening classes at Hillsboro High School. Education was important to her family and her family tree includes many advanced degrees. She established the Taylor-Howard Scholarship for graduates of Herculanum High School, which is still being given out today.

In 1980, Turner became a licensed minister and, 15 years later, was the pastor of Mt. Pilgrim Free Will Baptist Church. In 1998, she became the pastor and cofounder of Rock Free Will Baptist Church, where she remained until 2012.

Turner moved to Arizona and began working in the Foster Grandparent Program in public schools. She is a member of the Arizona Elder Council, which advocates for other seniors in the area. She then created a children's charity called Granny Cares. Turner was recognized for her community service with the President's Lifetime Achievement Award and a personal



Pictured: Jane Howard Turner, Mark Madison, and Jason Gillman

letter from President Joe Biden. Tuner says, "We all have challenges. I found out giving is such a blessing."

Her mother, Thelma Taylor, asked her if children would be interested in a book about a baby bird that didn't want to learn how to fly. They became co-authors of The Raymond Redbird series and The Friends of Raymond Red Bird series. Letters of congratulations for her books were received from Queen Elizabeth and Laura Bush. As a side note, Jane Howard Turner has also written and copyrighted ten pieces of gospel music. As much as she has given the world, she was humbled by the Blackcat Hall of Fame recognition. She said, "You have blessed me beyond measure."

Board Meetings are Open to the Public

The Dunklin R-5 Board of Education meets on a regular basis on the third Tuesday of each month. The meetings are held in the Dunklin R-5 Central Office beginning at 7:00 p.m. The meetings are open to the public. Patrons may view agendas and items from the meetings by going to our website www.dunklin.k12.mo.us, clicking on the District tab and clicking on "Paperless Board Meetings".



Salute to Veterans



The Dunklin School District's Salute to Veterans included a complimentary breakfast, reverse parade, and patriotic assembly. During the breakfast at Senn-Thomas Middle School, students beamed with pride, showing off the veterans in their families. Then, it was time for students to line the sidewalks with signs of support for the parade. After driving past all four schools, many of our guests stayed for the assembly at the high school. Two or three students graduating from Herculanum High School enter the armed services annually.

Lucas Asinger,
first time blood donor.



Annual Blood Drive

The HHS National Honor Society held its annual Red Cross Blood Drive in late October. Sophomore Lucas Asinger donated blood for the first time. He says, "A lot of people need blood, like kids in car accidents. It's the only way they can get it." Sponsor Erin Graves says students and community members donated 44 pints of blood, two more than last year. Each donation can save up to three lives.

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK ON THE BLACKCAT NEWS!!!!!!

The Blackcat News is a quarterly communication tool that we use as one way to keep you informed about Dunklin R-5 School District. We want this publication to be useful to you as a patron of our schools- "Must-Read Material!"

Is there...

- Something you've read that you don't understand?
- Information that you would like to see included that is not?
- Something you want to see more often or less frequently?

We value your input! Please email your feedback to our Communications Director, Matt Lichtenstein, at mlichtenstein@dunklin.k12.mo.us Don't use email? Call Mr. Lichtenstein at 636-479-5200 ext. 1010



Pencils for Pevely

His daughter is a 5th-grade teacher in the Northwest School District, so he knows about the need for school supplies. Pevely Police Chief Mark Glenn was sitting at his desk when he was struck with an idea: Pencils for Pevely.

After talking to Pevely Elementary School Principal Katie Dunlap, they started collecting items during Pevely Days and promoted the collection on Facebook and during face-to-face conversations. They placed a box in the lobby of city hall and it was soon filled with pencils, crayons, backpacks, and glue. They replaced it with a larger box, which church groups and other community members topped off.

Glenn says, "Pencils matter for kids. If they are missing items that their classmates have, it puts them in a bad place." Glen is thrilled with the response, as this is the first year. Last month,

Police Chief Mark Glenn, Officer Joe Biel, and Sharon Shaffer delivered 15 boxes of school supplies to Pevely Elementary School.



Ones to Watch

West Plains has the best boys cross country program in Missouri, with 14 first-place finishes. They were tied with Herculaneum at 13, but earlier this month, West Plains edged out Festus in Class 4 to bring home another championship. The possibility of Herculaneum climbing the mountain once again will rely on the pipeline of talent at the middle school.

The Senn-Thomas Middle School boys cross country team won the JCAA Conference Meet against larger schools like DeSoto, Hillsboro, and Festus. They followed that with a victory at the Doe Run Invitational in Haggard City Park. Winning any race is praiseworthy, but that's especially true in Jefferson County. Coach Lance Hyde says, "Our conference has been the most successful in the state by far when it comes to top-four finishes and All-State runners." He says Festus and Hillsboro have been carving out their own great programs which is to our benefit. Quoting the late Coach Willie, he says, "If you race against champions, then you get to be champions."

Only two 8th-grade boys ran cross country this year, Noah Fitzgerald and Darren Schmitt. When Noah Fitzgerald was in elementary school, he ran the mile in 6:36, which impressed his father, Lonnie Fitzgerald (Class of 2008). Lonnie ran cross country at Herculaneum, and his team, coached by Ryun Kasten, won the state championship in his senior year. The father told his son they should start running together every day. For Noah, the first week was painful. He says, "I told my dad I don't want to do this. My dad said to give it two weeks, and after a month, I started to like it." During cross-country races this fall, Noah won races and set course records. Coach Hyde says he set a course record on October 8th at the Jefferson Middle School Cross Country Invitation with a time of 10:04.64. The next fastest runner finished at 11:14.23. You don't hear footsteps when you are a minute ahead of the next guy. There's no one on your shoulder trying to pass you. However, the young man isn't looking backward to stay motivated. Fitzgerald says, "I'm chasing the Gator." That's the 4-wheeler that leads the runners so they stay on course.

Darren Schmitt, who was tied for 4th at the Doe Run Invitational, is another top-tier athlete. Schmitt's running career got off to a rough start last year. He says, "It was terrible. I wasn't good, and I'd always try to stick up front with the faster guys." He struggled to figure it out but realized his talent after a successful track season. A strong group of 7th-graders backed up Schmitt and Fitzgerald. Coach Hyde says, "This year's team stands out due to their exceptional dedication and camaraderie. They've consistently supported each other, both during training and competitions, fostering a cohesive environment that has significantly enhanced their performance. Their commitment to rigorous training schedules and a shared passion for cross-country has been pivotal in achieving our goals this season. Not to mention,



Pictured: Front Row, Darren Schmitt, Noah Fitzgerald, Sam Laupp. Back Row, Aiden Dieser, Adam Dwinell, Tristan White, Carter Rose, Owen Tucker, Brayden Emberton, Victor White, Jacob Milton, and Jordan Worch.

when you have a Hall of Fame coach like Jim Kasten by your side, you can make a runner out of almost anyone."


There are a lot of miles between these Senn-Thomas runners and competing for a state championship at Herculaneum High School, but it's possible. Part of Schmitt's motivation is to "...get my name on the board." The high school gym has large signs or boards celebrating championship teams and listing the names of each athlete. Fitzgerald has the same vision. He says, "I want to win a state championship when we get to high school. Especially when the 7th-grade boys join us, they are really good." Those goals align with a motto often repeated by Blackcat coaches, "Show up, work hard, make history."

Buddy Bench










A new bench will be installed at Pevely Elementary School next month in memory of a former student. Morgan Anderson was 11 years old when she unexpectedly passed away in 2019 from complications of an asthma attack. This semester, Pevely's P.E. teachers have encouraged students to collect plastic lids that can be melted down and turned into a bench. Each classroom has a collection bucket, and a few have been filled over 20 times. The collections will come to an end next week.

After her passing, Morgan's family and friends created the Morgan S3 Foundation in her memory. Morgan advocated for volunteering and showing kindness. One way to fulfill that mission is to create a bench where students can relax and connect with a friend. Members of the foundation will gather the plastic lids and send them off to the manufacturer. The new bench will be installed and dedicated on December 18th at 2:30 p.m. on the south playground.



Dunklin R-5 School District 2024-2025 Calendar Highlights

SENN-THOMAS MIDDLE SCHOOL FALL FESTIVAL See Page 3	Thanksgiving No School Nov. 27th-29th 	Winter Break Early Release Friday, Dec. 20th Dec. 23rd to Jan. 3rd  First Day Back is January 6th	P.D. Day & MLK Day No School Jan. 17th-20th 
P.D. Day & President's Day No School Feb 14th-17th 	P.D. Day No school March 21st 	Spring Break April 18th - April 21st 	Last Day May 21st It's an early release day. 

Summer School will take place from May 28 to June 28, 2025.
There will be no classes on June 19, 2025

