

AROUND

FALL 2023



THE MILL



HMC-1 Looking For
**RELENTLESS
COMMUNITY
PARTNERS**

Compass Elementary Named
**GOLD RIBBON
SCHOOL**

Igniting Change
**THROUGH
LEADERSHIP**

Getting Real
**LIFE
LESSONS**



AROUND THE MILL

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RELENTLESSLY PURSUING the Future We Want

When I joined the Hickman Mills family, we were determined to make decisions that helped the district move “Towards the Future We Want.” That is our district mantra, our promise to our students, staff, teachers, and community. But this year, our theme is **RELENTLESS**.

The word “Relentless” has many implications for our students AND community.

At HMC-1, we are **RELENTLESSLY** pursuing student achievement and improvement. We named our first Gold Ribbon school in September. Compass Elementary demonstrated a willingness to take action outside the box and work one-on-one with our students to help them gain sustained improvement in reading, writing, math, and science. We have several other schools that are right behind them! Our principals, instructional coaches, teachers, tutors, volunteers, community partners, and so many more are working daily to ensure every student is experiencing improvement in and out of the classroom.

Another focus is a sense of belonging. In today’s world, education is more than memorizing facts or learning random figures; it’s about finding your place in society. We are continually expanding our Real-World Learning program to offer various options where students can see where they belong before graduation. For example, at Ingels Elementary School, students are engaged in a program called “The World of Work” at each grade level. Every week, this program provides students with experiences and field trips in the finance industry, manufacturing, law, health, etc. This approach shows our youngest learners’ excitement and engagement in school.

HMC-1 is relentless in its journey toward excellence. You’ve heard it before, so what makes this year different? Recently, we made bold changes in our schools and we are already seeing benefits. Enter our new 6th and 7th Grade Center and experience what our school leadership has accomplished in the new middle school. It’s the epitome of excellence! And it’s not just the students who are excited to come to school each day; it’s our teachers and staff, too! We have quality, brilliant teachers and school leaders from around the metro coming to our district to join our team because of the great things happening here.

We are also relentlessly searching for **COMMUNITY PARTNERS** to join the HMC-1 family. **YOU** are essential to the success both in and out of the classroom. Several community partners work within our schools, and we thank you for your continued support! However, there is a continued need for additional volunteers in our schools. The HMC-1 leadership team is expanding our mentoring programs to offer reading guides, lunch buddies, science mentors, and more to assist our students on every level. If you have just an hour a week to volunteer, we invite you to join our team!

The adventure is getting exciting, and you are invited to join us on this relentless journey towards the future we want.



Yaw Obeng, M.Ed.
Superintendent of Schools

On the cover:

On the first day of school, Kansas City Mayor, Quinton Lucas visited Superintendent Yaw Obeng at Ingels Elementary, Supt. Obeng presented Mayor Lucas with a district Relentless shirt. Mayor Lucas and other city leaders have been vital to building community within the district. To see more pictures from the Mayor's visit, check out our Flickr page at: bit.ly/HMC1FirstDays2023.



Below:

Pre-kindergarten classes at Freda Markley Early Childhood Center took turns celebrating their Pre-K graduation in May 2023. Parents, guardians, and loved ones joined the celebration, including pictures, cake, and more. To see more photos, visit our Flickr page at: bit.ly/43uwffb.

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From the Co-Presidents

This school year, the HMC-1 Board of Directors developed an unprecedented solution to an unconventional issue and agreed to vote for Co-Presidents for the Director of the Board. Ann Coleman and Irene Kendrick have partnered to work together to benefit the school district and our community.

It has been an exciting start to the 2023-2024 school year! While serving as Co-Presidents of the Board of Directors is unconventional, we are relentlessly working together to develop solutions that best serve our students, families, and staff.

We are thankful for the opportunity to have built a strong foundation in the previous school year for our Board and our schools. Last year's levy now provides our teachers and staff the salary they deserve. We know they pour their hearts into our students and families, and now they are better compensated for their dedication. We are proud of our community for taking this bold action to support our staff! Other school districts are trying to pass similar legislation, and it's terrific that HMC-1 is THE LEADER in this area.

HMC-1 is also a leader in building improvements. Take a tour around the district. Our buildings look fabulous with new floors,

updated cafeterias, and even renovated bathrooms. The recent bond and subsequent capital investments have brought most of our schools up-to-date to the bright, beautiful buildings our students deserve. At the start of the school year, when other districts were struggling with high temperatures, our updated HVAC programs were also running smoothly. More work is needed; however, we have made significant strides.

As we look forward to this new school year, we are excited about our Real-World Learning Program. Last year, we partnered with T&L Welding. We hosted our first graduating class, where students earned their welding certification and had job offers available upon graduation. This year, we have expanded to include a new First Responders program to allow students to learn about Emergency Medical Technicians, Police, Fire, and more. In addition, HMC-1 is building a new Real-World Learning Center to invite Kansas City's extensive labor community to

become even more active within our district. This is just the beginning! More great things are on the horizon in our district, and we are excited to be at the helm, working together to steer the ship. We will continue to focus on student achievement, providing a warm, welcome place to belong, and closing the achievement gap.

We are here to support our teachers, administration, and staff. Our goal is to continue relentlessly working together toward the future we want.

Ann Coleman & Irene Kendrick
Co-Presidents, Board of Directors



(Left to right) Co-President Ann Coleman, Superintendent Yaw Obeng, and Co-President, Irene Kendrick.

JUMPING TO THE STATE PODIUM

This spring, members of the Ruskin High School Track & Field team competed at the highest level - the Missouri Class 5 State Championships. Two competitors stood on the podium and finished with hardware.

Pictured right, senior Ellis Cohen placed 8th in Missouri Class 5 Girls High Jump with a best jump of 1.57 meters. Senior Ty'Rique Roland placed 5th in Boys High jump with a best jump of 1.97 meters.

State Championship Qualifiers included:

- 400 Dash - Bailey Arceneaux
- High Jump - Ellis Cohen



- High Jump - Ty'Rique Roland
- Girls 4x100 Relay - Ellis Cohen, Samya Fontleroy, Dayvionna Hart, Rahkia Moore
- Girls 4x200 Relay - Bailey Arceneaux, Ellis Cohen, Samya Fontleroy, Rahkia Moore

Congratulations to all of the track team for a great season!

ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS from Fairy Tales

When students think of summer school, it's usually dull. However, for the first-grade students in summer school hosted at Dobbs Elementary, their summer was full of playing and building.

Led by Lesley Cook, typically a kindergarten teacher at the school, they explored the world of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math - or STEAM - through fairy tales.

Each week, students read fairy tales like *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Incorporating the books brought context into the subject as they studied the STEAM portion of the lesson. Fridays were building days where students were presented with a problem and given limited supplies to



make a solution, like helping the Gingerbread Man safely across the river by building a boat or raft. Friday afternoon, students tested their creations.

"The kids' problem skills flourished after the first challenge," Ms. Cook said. "We discussed that engineers don't get it right the first time and must make changes."

At the last challenge, students lined up to see who had the best bed or chair for Baby Bear.

"My favorite was building the bed for Baby Bear," student Bree said. "What I learned most was never stop and don't quit."

AS THE DISTANT SOUND OF thrumming came from the west, a large group of chatting high school students instantly went quiet and turned their eyes to the sky. In seconds, Kansas City's LifeFlight Eagle helicopter came into view. Just a few minutes later, the aircraft had safely landed on the practice football field at Center High School.

For this visit, the helicopter wasn't coming for an emergency. The visit was part of the first responders class, a Real-World Learning (RWL) partnership between Ruskin, Center, and Grandview High Schools.

Designed to provide students with hands-on experience in the different areas of first response – emergency medical technicians, fire, and police – the class is helping address the critical staffing shortages in fire departments and law enforcement. The course is one of the latest career pathways offered by Ruskin's RWL Program and a first in the Kansas City area.

"Our goal as a district is to provide each student with a Market Value Asset, or MVA," HMC-1's RWL Facilitator Bethany Kelly said. "Students in this class finish with their CPR and OSHA certifications. Research has proven that students who graduate with industry-valued experiences are more likely to thrive on their journey to professional success."

Ruskin Senior Catori Brown wants to serve as a paramedic or an emergency room doctor. She was eager to register for this class this year.

"Not many high school students know what they want to do yet," Catori explained. "I HAD to take this class. The first responders' class gives me first-hand experience, and I know this is right as I go to college next year."



Students from Ruskin, Center, and Grandview High Schools comprise the First Responders Class.

Getting Real LIFE LESSONS



Students in the first responders class are receiving practical, hands-on experience. Pictured: left, Ruskin Senior Catori Brown and right, Ruskin Junior Michelle Garrison.

The RWL program combines a traditional classroom-based curriculum with hands-on, experienced-based skills. The program provides a practical way for students to explore their interests and connect to careers by participating in real-world experiences as they build up market-value assets.

"Most students don't have this type of class in high school," Ruskin Junior Michelle Garrison said. "I want to be a neurosurgeon. Not only do I get to experience first-hand my anticipated field of study right now, but this will give me an advantage in my first years in college."

With several years of real-life experience and a military service background, Center High's school nurse, Roxanne Glover, leads the class.

"Nurse Glover is the perfect person to teach this class," Ms. Kelly said. "Not only is she sharing her experience, but she also has a special way with the students."

Since the start of school, students have met



Austin Jones Pucket, a Ruskin student, demonstrates how an injured party is transported utilizing the LifeFlight helicopter. Austin plans to go into the first responders field after graduation.

paramedics, firefighters, police officers, and now the LifeFlight Eagle helicopter crew.

Juniors who complete the class have the opportunity in their senior year to attend either Herndon Career Center or Summit Technology Academy for their specific first responders' category (Nursing, EMT, Police Science, Firefighter Academy, etc.).

"I am thankful I had the chance to take this class, and I look forward to the next year," Michelle said.

GET INVOLVED

Around the Mill

MINDING THE GAP: Building Relationships to Become a Bigger Part of the Community



Yes, it's a cliché, but that doesn't make it any less accurate. It truly does take a village to raise a child. In HMC-1, raising a child means preparing a student for future success, and the school district knows it can't do it alone.

"There is a lot of work to do to move our district forward," said Director of Communication and Community Engagement Justin Robinson. "I'm optimistic we can get there because I've met a lot of highly enthusiastic community members who truly enjoy working with our students."

One of those passionate volunteers is Zack Nicholson. He started volunteering in the district in 2016. He enjoyed it so much that he started his organization in 2020 called Minding the Gap. This year, Minding the Gap has over 50 volunteers working in HMC-1 weekly.

"We have developed amazing relationships with the students and the staff at the schools we work in, Mr. Nicholson said. "We find that the more we serve, the more our hearts come alive, and we feel a part of something bigger than ourselves. It truly takes a village to raise children, and we are blessed to have a small part to play in it."

Nicholson says he has had dozens of memorable moments in the last seven years of volunteering. The most notable is the one in late September 2023, after Compass Elementary School was awarded the first HMC-1 Gold Ribbon award.

"Compass Principal Erica Hoard thanked us and said that Minding the Gap played a big part in making that happen," Mr. Nicholson said. "Our team was encouraged to know that our labor is not in vain."

Ervin Elementary School Principal Eric Edwards has also seen the benefit of Minding the Gap working in the district. She says they've built bonds with students through multiple programs, and students see the volunteers as school community members.

"They will often ask to see them more frequently because of the time and attention given to them," explains Ms. Edwards. "We are intentional about having mentors and students engage in activities that help them get to know one another before they start assisting with school work. These efforts help build a strong, trusting relationship from the beginning. The connection carries the relationships through the school year and extends to their parent's partnership with the mentor."

Ms. Edwards believes HMC-1 could use more organizations like Minding the Gap and their volunteers because all students need to be listened to individually, and staff members can only sometimes provide that during the school day.

"Having community members dedicate time each week allows more kids to have their needs met during the school day," said Ms. Edwards. Volunteers remind students there's another caring adult to help them navigate their world as they grow and develop."

"We find that the more we serve, the more our hearts come alive, and we feel a part of something bigger than ourselves."

- ZACK NICHOLSON
Founder, Minding the Gap

Robinson couldn't agree more with Principal Edwards and the impact volunteers make.

"I just met Zach, and I'm very impressed with his work; we know there are more individuals and organizations in this community with the same heart as him, and

Learn how you can get involved around the district



Partners in Education



Mentor Program



Volunteers



Contributions



"I'm inviting them all to Join the HMC One Team," said Mr. Robinson.

The district's vision is to attract alumni and community members to get involved. The goal is to have all HMC-1 students get connected with a mentor.

"One of my favorite quotes is, it's only crazy until it happens," Mr. Robinson said.

"Getting mentors connected with 5,000

HMC-1 students might sound crazy right now... But wait until it happens!"

The district isn't only looking for mentors; you can join the HMC One Team as a volunteer, partner, or donor. All are necessary and participate in the district's relentless pursuit of the future we want.

Visit HickmanMills.org/GetInvolved and join the HMC One Team:

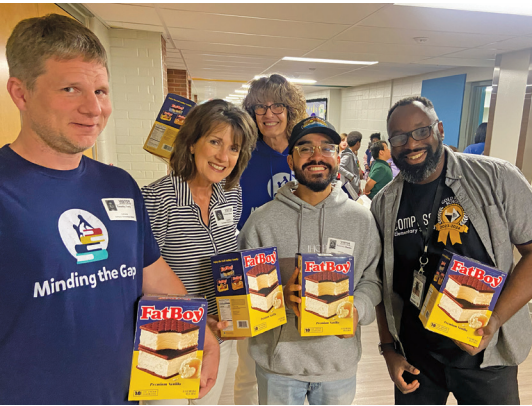
ONE TEAM VOLUNTEERS help enrich education programs by assisting with activities that enhance instruction and promote learning. They are unpaid individuals who donate time on an ongoing basis.

ONE TEAM PARTNERS such as businesses, non-profits, and government organizations support HMC-1 students, teachers, and administrators on projects that advance student learning, development, and growth

through services, resources, and programs

ONE TEAM MENTORS support, advise, and guide our students. Mentoring requires time to get to know students and use that understanding and the mentor's personal experience to help lead the student to success.

ONE TEAM DONORS play a pivotal role in enriching student success through financial contributions. Donations can take various forms, each with unique impact and benefits.



GET INVOLVED Around the Mill

Join the
HMC One Team
by visiting



HickmanMills.org/GetInvolved

WORK Around the Mill!



Join the **TOP PAYING DISTRICT** in the metro! HMC-1 is looking for quality candidates interested in working in the community where they live and play.

We are hiring for:

- {Paraprofessionals
- {Nutrition Services
- {Custodians and More!

Full-time employees receive excellent benefits, including paid health and dental options and a matching district retirement plan.

A full list of open positions is available on our website.

APPLY TODAY!
VISIT HickmanMills.org/Careers



IGNITING CHANGE

Through Relentless Leadership



DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

Casey Klappmeyer, Ed.S.



ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Katie Roe, Ed.S.



ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Kevin Robinson

When Superintendent Yaw Obeng, M.Ed., joined HMC-1, system alignment was one of his top priorities. Having the right people in the correct position is vital to an organization's success. Upon the retirement of Deputy Superintendent Dr. Carl Skinner this spring, Mr. Obeng saw this as an opportunity to restructure critical leadership positions.

For this school year, Casey Klappmeyer, Ed.S., is the new deputy superintendent for HMC-1. Mr. Klappmeyer has over 27 years in education and has served our HMC-1 students, families, and staff since 2007. With experience leading Operations, Human Resources, and Business and Finance, along with experience working as a principal, instructional coach, and classroom teacher, Mr. Klappmeyer is well-versed in multiple roles.

“Mr. Klappmeyer’s professional history, long-time service in Hickman Mills, and dedication to this community he lives in make him the perfect candidate to step into the deputy superintendent role,” Mr. Obeng said. “His knowledge of the district as a whole will benefit the families we serve.”

Adjusting the leadership structure, two assistant superintendents report directly to the deputy superintendent, allowing academic and student support services to work collaboratively.

A well-respected academic leader, Katie Roe, Ed.S., is the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services. Before coming to HMC-1 in 2015 as the Director of Professional Development/College & Career Readiness, she worked ten years as a teacher and administrator in the Grandview School District. Ms. Roe has won awards and recognition as the Grandview District Teacher of the Year,

Small Learning Communities Leader, and more. Her areas of expertise include Real-World Learning, Academic Improvement, Innovative Programming, and Curriculum Design.

Bringing more than 25 years of experience in education to the position, Kevin Robinson now serves as the Assistant Superintendent of Operations. He has worked as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal at multiple school districts across the United States and worldwide. He has proven invaluable leadership, project management, and his commitment to the betterment of students and staff.

“As we strategically position Hickman Mills as the school district of choice, putting quality people in the right positions is necessary,” Mr. Obeng stated. “Change is an opportunity to improve, and as we improve as a school system, we will change the lives of our students.”

Celebrating the Arts

Ruskin High School Theatre Department Earns Four Cappies Awards, 14 Nominations



The Ruskin High School Theatre Department received multiple 2023 Kansas City Cappies Awards nominations. The Theatre Department hosted the play *12 Angry Jurors* and the musical *Seussical* this past school year. The team received 14 nominations for the two productions through a jury of their peers. At the award banquet, Ruskin Theatre earned four Cappies awards.

This year’s winners include:

- Best Actor in a Supporting Role in a Musical: Desmond Walker
- Best Student Choreography: Terrell McGaugh and Kayana Ferguson
- Best Ensemble: Ruskin High School *Seussical* (Thing One and Thing Two)



- Best Lead Actor in a Female Role in a Play: Alexia Gillum

The Cappies organization is a national program that trains high school theatre and journalism students to see, critique, and write reviews about high school theatre. The

goal is to give high school theatre programs feedback and celebrate the arts community. The Ruskin High School Theatre program director is Payton Dishman, and the Theatre Department Chair is Kelly Michale. Congratulations to all of our students!

Compass Elementary: Leading with Improvement

Every school strives for improvement. However, the leaders and teachers at Compass Elementary have consistently found new and innovative ways to go above and beyond to help their students learn and grow in student achievement over the years. In September, HMC-1 Superintendent Yaw Obeng, M.ED., and other school leadership recognized Compass Elementary as the first HMC-1 Gold Ribbon School.

Leadership designed the Gold Ribbon Recognition Program to support the HMC-1 Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP). This plan focuses on three pillars, Our District, Our Schools, and Our Com-

munity, to guide the district's work. These pillars also ensure progress with accountability and set targets as the district looks toward the future.

"As a district, we have laid the foundation of what we must do to create student success," Mr. Obeng said. "To achieve our vision of every student reaching their version of success, we must rethink how we approach education. Our schools are working relentlessly to close the achievement gap. Compass has demonstrated the dedication and effort they are pouring into each of their schools is indeed working."

The Gold Ribbon Program is the schools' road map to achieve their educational



vision. Developed utilizing the Missouri Gold Star Schools' Program, which uses the same criteria as the National Blue Ribbon Schools. Schools that earn the Gold Ribbon Recognition demonstrate student achievement at high levels.

"We have relentlessly pursued academic excellence at Compass the past several years," Compass Elementary Principal Erica Hoard said. "Our staff is unified in working to execute the best instructional practices to help our students learn to be the best scholars possible. Our number one goal is to educate the whole child. We are proud to be the first school honored as a Gold Ribbon School."

Congratulations to Compass' teachers, administration, staff, scholars, and families for this fantastic achievement!



Fox4 Teacher of the Month

Congratulations to Ervin Elementary School Teacher Gabriel Livingston! He was named the Fox4's Teacher of the Month for September. An HMC-1 alumnus, Mr. Livingston teaches third grade, and works with students in the Theatre Club teaching them acting skills after school at Ervin.

Mr. Livingston was nominated by his volunteer grandparent, Elsa Morgan, who has been volunteering in his classroom since he started teaching in the fall 2020. According to Ervin Principal Erica Edwards, Mr. Livingston and Ms. Morgan make an excellent team.

"I always wanted to teach third grade," Mr. Livingston said. "They have a sense of fairness, started learning about civics, and increased their abstract thinking. I'm enjoying guiding them through that."

During a visit from Reporter Loren Halifax, he was presented with \$750 worth of gift cards. Thank you, Fox4 for honoring Mr. Livingston and Ms. Morgan for the nomination!



Ervin Elementary Third Grade Teacher Gabriel Livingston was named Fox4's Teacher of the Month for September.



LET'S GO EAGLES! SHOWCASING RUSKIN SPRING SPORTS

LET'S GO RUSKIN! SHOWCASING RUSKIN FALL SPORTS



Photos courtesy of the Ruskin Journalism Class & Ruskin Booster Club.





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GET INVOLVED in your community!



MAKE AN IMPACT within your community! Just one hour a week can make a world of difference in the life of a student.

Join the Hickman Mills schools as we launch an all-new mentoring program!

Different ways to be a mentor:

- {**Reading Mentors** - Read with a student a minimum of 30 minutes a week
- {**Lunch Friends** - Enjoy lunch with a student twice a month
- {**Math Mentors** - Tutor a student in math a minimum of 30 minutes a week
- {**Science Mentors** - Tutor a student in science once a week
- {**Leadership Mentors** - Meet with a student twice a month to serve as a guide by sharing experiences
- {**Career Mentors** - Meet with a high school student twice a month to discuss career guidance, plus provide encouragement and support

96%
of Mentors
find the program
a meaningful
opportunity



GET INVOLVED TODAY!
VISIT HickmanMills.org/GetInvolved