CONNECTION

Fall Edition | ISSUE NO. 25

In this edition

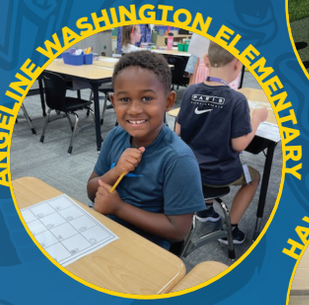
- New Spaces, New Opportunities
- Angeline Washington History
- Celebrations!



// *Park Hill High School students in their new gym*

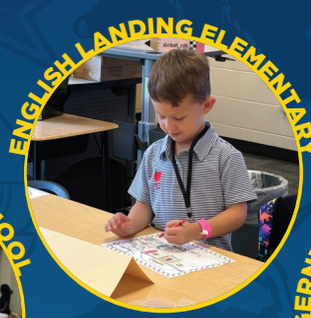
Park Hill School District

Building Successful Futures • Each Student • Every Day







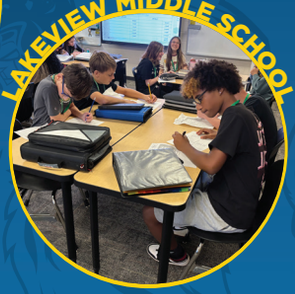












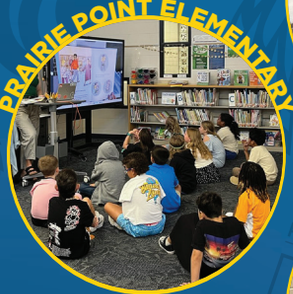
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Building tomorrow together









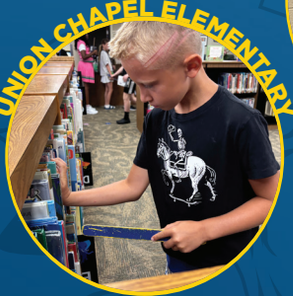


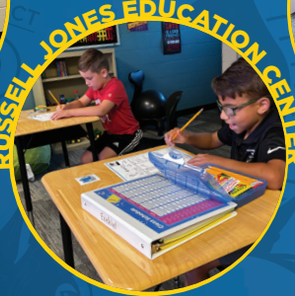














Welcome to the CONNECTION

Connection is a publication of the Park Hill School District, distributed quarterly without charge, to every household within the Park Hill School District boundaries. Thank you for your support of our community schools.

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// Line Creek Elementary students enjoy new playground equipment and play fields



STRAIGHT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

This fall we've had the opportunity to experience some firsts. We've opened an upgraded aquatics center, a new elementary school, new competition gyms, weight rooms, team rooms, performing arts spaces, common areas and more at both Park Hill High School and Park Hill South High School. These new spaces have had ribbon cutting events and open houses where we welcomed students, families, staff, coaches and community members to see the beautiful new facilities for our community.

As a growing and thriving community, your support of our schools is seen, valued and appreciated. These projects are a testament to the community's support of our students, families, neighborhoods, teachers and staff, coaches and our schools.

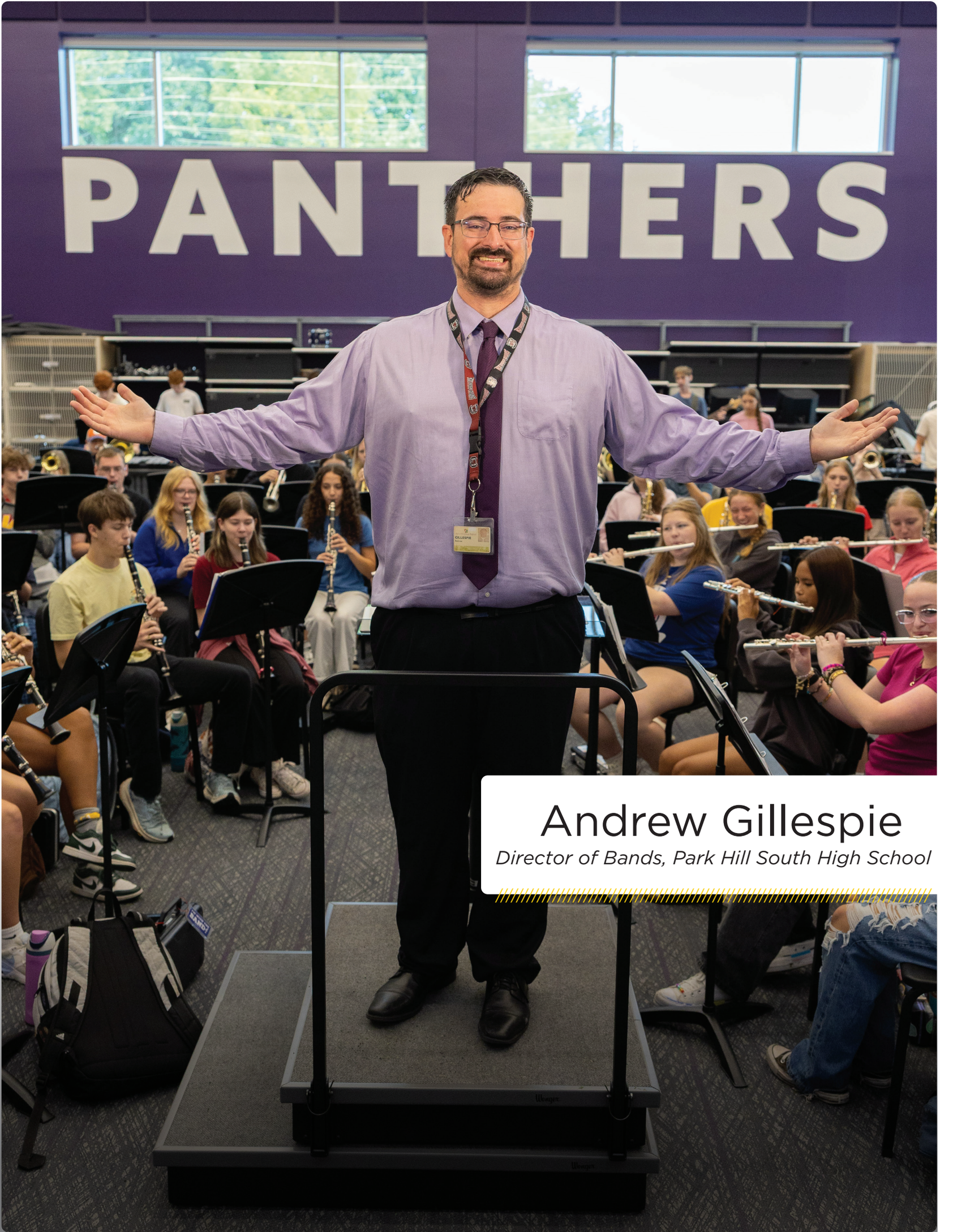
As we watched the students enter their new spaces for the first time, I'm continually reminded how amazing our commitment is to them and our families.

Another first for us this fall includes new policies around electronic device usage. We are adjusting to policies around Senate Bill 68 and the banning of cell phone use during the school day. I've gotten to talk to several students about this change, and while it's difficult and 'tough' for them (in their own words), they are also seeing some benefits of engagement and productivity. We'll continue to watch how this adjustment affects our school community as we navigate this new policy.

Here's to the school year ahead!

Michael J Kimbrel

Dr. Mike Kimbrel
Superintendent



Andrew Gillespie

Director of Bands, Park Hill South High School

STRAIGHT FROM OUR *Staff*

Q **How do the new facilities support the needs of different types of music groups, such as concert band, jazz band or small ensembles?**

A The new facility helps by providing a large flexible space that can be used for many mediums. In addition to holding the entire PHS Marching Band, the room has created space for an additional choir class and additional after school opportunities that would normally conflict with other department activities.

Q **How have the new rehearsal spaces changed the way you teach ensemble or section work?**

A The new space has allowed for instructing more students at the same time. Before the addition, the marching band was so loud inside the school that it was difficult to distinguish what was between different instruments. The new space allows us to rehearse indoors while providing proper feedback to what the students are executing.



Q **How do the new spaces promote collaboration between the choir, orchestra and theater programs?**

A The new spaces have allowed PHS to host MSHSAA events for all areas of the performing arts. This year we will be hosting districts for MSHSAA One Act and MSHSAA Large Group Performance Assessment.

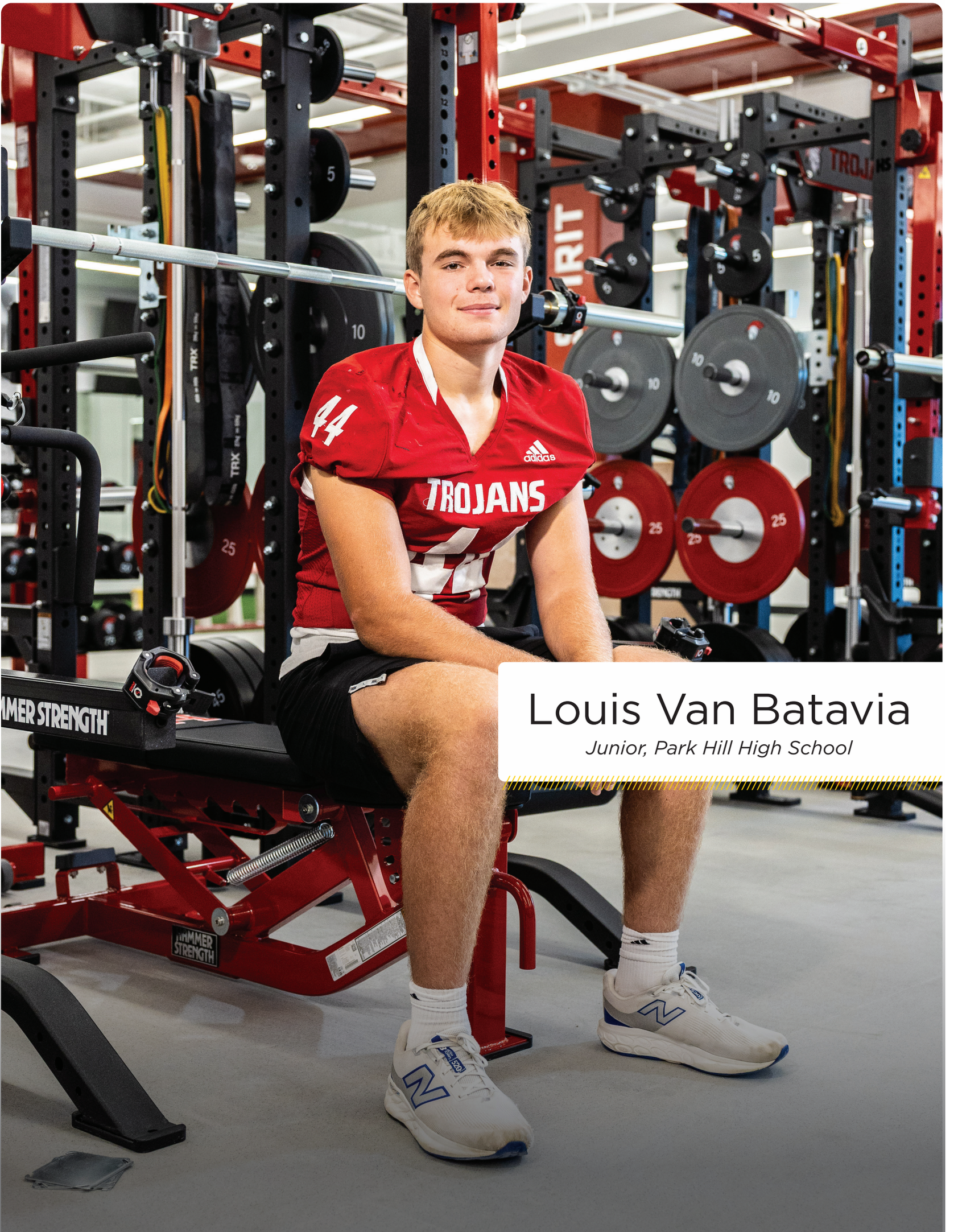


Q **How are the students reacting to the new spaces? Are they more engaged or excited about performing?**

A The band students have not only been grateful for the new space, but respectful as well. They make sure not to bring food into the room and to make sure items are where they belong.

Q **Looking ahead, how do you hope this new space will shape the future of your students' musical journey?**

A We hope this new space will allow more students to be involved in the performing arts. By having more room, we have created space for more opportunity for Park Hill South students.



Louis Van Batavia

Junior, Park Hill High School

STRAIGHT FROM OUR *Students*

Q What's the first thing you notice when you walk into the new weight room?

A I noticed how impressive it looked. It's a lot bigger than the old weight room, and the equipment is clean. Everything is so well organized.



Q What improvements stand out the most compared to the old weight room?

A The equipment is modern and safe. Nothing is rusty.

Q What's your favorite part of the new gym and weight room?

A My favorite part are the dumbbells – now they go up to 100 lbs.

Q Do you think you'll feel more motivated to work out since the facility has been upgraded?

A I definitely want to work out in this new weight room. I'm looking forward to my first weights class in the new space.

Q Do you think training in the new weight room will help you perform better on the field? Why or why not?

A I think it will help me perform better because I'll be able to train better.





NEW SPACES, NEW *Opportunities*

If you're a regular reader of ***Connection***, you know that upgrades, improvements and new spaces have been underway since the fall of 2022. Fast forward to the fall of 2025, and students across the district are enjoying enhanced learning environments, new playgrounds, new gyms and more.



// Park Hill South High School

Through voter support of our no-tax-increase ballot propositions in 2022, the district invested in renovations and upgrades across the district. While some projects are still in progress, Park Hill and Park Hill South High Schools are already using their new facilities. Fine arts students now have updated spaces for classes and performances, students and athletes are training in new gyms and weight rooms and redesigned commons are bringing a renewed sense of connection to both campuses.







Park Hill South High School

The Panthers were the first to show off their new spaces to the community with a ribbon-cutting and open house in September. “These spaces not only strengthen the student experience but also enrich our community,” Principal Dr. Corey Willich said. “I’m proud knowing that Park Hill South will continue delivering top-tier fine arts and athletic programs — recognized both across the metro and throughout the state.”

The backstage greenroom and stagecraft area are game changers for the school, enhancing one of the strongest theater programs in the metro and opening the door to even more opportunities for students. Meanwhile, the band room gives the growing program the space it deserves to continue reaching new levels of excellence.

The new weight room provides student-athletes with the space and safety they need to train effectively and with floor-to-ceiling windows, offers arguably one of the best views of the downtown Kansas City skyline. And for the first time since the building opened in 1998, the entire school can come together as one for school-wide gatherings as well as athletic events in the new competition gym.

Park Hill High School

Park Hill High School students are also enjoyi
updates that support both academics and athletic

The current Park Hill High School building opened
1958. Now, nearly 60 years later, students and staff a
enjoying new spaces on a campus that last saw ma
improvements in the late 1990s with the addition o
gym and auditorium.

Today, the school has a new competition gym, weig
room, theater spaces, stagecraft area and a dedicat
athletics and activities entrance, much like Park H
South. Upgrades like these may change the buildi
but they haven't changed the Trojan spirit that ru
through it.

"Our students are proud to be Trojans," Principal
Brad Kincheloe said. "They are proud of our lon
standing traditions, our community and our hi
expectations. And now they can have a sense of pri
in our building and facilities."

During the school's ribbon-cutting ceremony, Boa
of Education President Daryl Terwilleger shared
the excitement and pride around the new spaces.
"From the amazing theater space and competiti
gym to the weight room and team rooms, the
upgrades will inspire students, elevate programs a
impact lives for generations," Terwilleger said.

// Park Hill High School



The upgrades aren't just about building additions — they give students the spaces they need to grow and succeed. Updated theater areas let creativity thrive while the new gym and weight room support athletes in performing their best. The competition gym also serves as a gathering space for assemblies, performances and school events, giving Trojans a place to connect across grades and programs.

"Our students are proud of our long-standing traditions, our community and our high expectations. And now they can have a sense of pride in our building and facilities."



Playgrounds and more

Elementary students across the district are now enjoying upgraded playgrounds, also made possible by the community's support of the 2022 Bond Issue. The most recent improvements were completed at Chinn, English Landing, Line Creek and Southeast elementary schools, where students now have accessible options and new turf play areas.

In addition to the larger facility upgrades, several smaller-scale projects were completed across the district. These included classroom and media center enhancements such as new lockers, student furniture, cabinets and countertops, LED lighting, specialized equipment and expanded learning spaces. Together, the district-wide improvements enhance daily life and foster connection throughout our schools.

With the final 2022 bond projects set to finish in the summer of 2026, the district is excited to conclude this phase of its ongoing effort to create modern, flexible and student-centered learning spaces — just in time to celebrate the next chapter made possible by voters' support for Propositions G and O last April. We still have exciting projects ahead - the phased replacement of Park Hill High School and stadium upgrades at Park Hill South High School. Onward!



// English Landing Elementary



Just inside the doors of Angeline Washington Elementary, a history wall is sparking reflection, curiosity and conversations.

Designed to help students connect with key moments in American history — and see where their own stories fit in — the wall has quickly become a must-see for visitors.

"We have visitors who will come and mention that they were told they needed to 'check out' the wall," said Principal Dr. Vanna Easley. "Many families will stop and take in the wall for minutes at a time."

The idea for the wall came from Dr. Jasmine Briedwell, assistant superintendent of academic services, who drew on her past experience as a teacher when the school was being designed.

"When I taught third grade, I noticed that students often confused when historical figures like President Abraham Lincoln and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. lived, thinking they were from the same time period," she said.

That confusion, she explained, stems from learning about slavery and civil rights together. It also showed her how timelines can help students make deeper historical connections, and understand when their own relatives may have lived during key events.

Easley helped bring the interactive timeline to life, starting last fall when she was principal at Graden Elementary. She asked her students and future Angeline Washington Owls what history mattered to them. Their ideas, including the launch of YouTube and the Chiefs winning the Super Bowl, were combined with pivotal moments in U.S. history, such as Ruby Bridges and the Voting Rights Act, along with highlights from Angeline Washington's life.

"Our school theme this year is 'Legacy Starts Here,'" Easley said. "You can't start a legacy without remembering what came before. We're honoring history and Angeline Washington while building our own."

For Briedwell, the timeline is a reminder of how one person can shape a community.

"Angeline Washington, a formerly enslaved woman, opened a school and a church, raised a family, and led with resilience," she said. "Her story reminds us that each of us has the power to shape our communities for the better, leaving a legacy that can inspire generations to come."

It's a legacy that continues not just on the history wall, but in the everyday moments happening inside Angeline Washington Elementary.

DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH

Park Hill is proud to celebrate and observe Disability Awareness Month which is nationally recognized as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This month offers an opportunity to reflect on the experiences of individuals with disabilities, advocate for greater inclusion, and recognize the many ways disability enriches our community.

Several national recognition days also fall within this month, helping to raise awareness and spark conversation around disability-related issues, including:

Oct. 6 – World Cerebral Palsy Day
Oct. 9 – World Sight Day
Oct. 10 – World Mental Health Day
Oct. 15 – White Cane Safety Day
Oct. 19-25 – Invisible Disabilities Week
Oct. 25 – World Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Day

PARK HILL

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.

WE ARE #ParkHillProud

These are just a few of the awards and accolades Park Hill staff and students have received recently. Visit our website to catch up on the latest honors!

Visit
www.parkhill.k12.mo.us/news-and-stories
to catch up on the latest.

According to *U.S. News & World Report*, Park Hill and Park Hill South rank as the top two traditional public high schools on the Missouri side of the Kansas City metro area. Statewide, **Park Hill ranks 10th and Park Hill South ranks 12th among Missouri high schools.** LEAD Innovation Studio student performance is included in their home high schools and is reflected in this recognition as well. Congratulations to our students, staff and families on this well-deserved recognition.





Congratulations to the **2024–2025 Park Hill High School boys and girls volleyball teams** for earning the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) Team Academic Award Sponsored by INTENT. This national honor recognizes teams that maintained a year-long GPA of 3.3 or higher on a 4.0 scale.

An extra shoutout to the girls team for also earning a spot on the AVCA Team Academic Honor Roll, placing them in the top 20% of GPAs nationwide by division!










We are #ParkHillProud of our six National Merit Semifinalists! Congratulations to **Park Hill High School's Malcolm Hunt, Kai Soo and Angela Villamayor and Park Hill South's Jonah Hicks, August Sturm (LEAD) and Jason Worcester.** Out of 1.3 million entrants nationwide, these seniors are among just 16,000 students who earned semifinalist status in the National Merit Scholarship Program, thanks to their exceptional performance on the 2024 PSAT/NMSQT.

Our semifinalists now have the opportunity to compete for approximately 6,930 National Merit scholarships, collectively worth nearly $26 million, to be awarded next spring.

We are #ParkHillProud of our Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, **Dr. Amy Dillon**, who has been named the 2025 Human Resources Administrator of the Year by the Missouri Association of School Personnel Administrators (MOASPA)!

Recipients for this award are nominated by their peers and selected for their significant contributions to the betterment of the District they serve, involvement in regional or state committees, boards or organization leadership.

Pictured are Dr. Linda Kaiser, Sasha Kalis, Dr. Dillon and Dr. Josh Colvin at the MOASPA Conference, where Dr. Dillon was recognized.



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PARK HILL Highlight

Everyday heroes! Congress Middle School Principal Dr. Ryan Smith jumped in to help a family with a very flat tire during car rider line at dismissal last month. Thanks for saving the day, Dr. Smith!

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

