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District 20 Celebrates Spring Wood Alumnus Jackson Kent's MLB Debut

A decade after appearing in a school display promoting "Encourage Each Other," Jackson Kent takes baseball's biggest stage with the Washington Nationals.

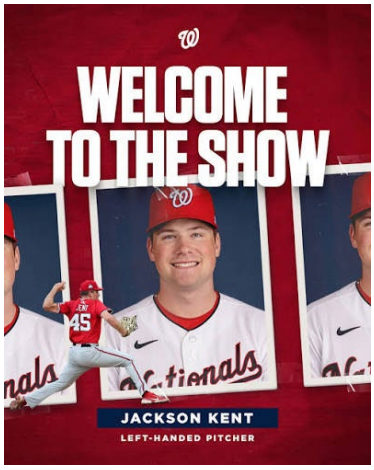
Spring Wood Middle School alumnus Jackson Kent is pictured in a 2016-17 school photograph alongside his Washington Nationals baseball card. The display was created by Spring Wood Middle School to celebrate Kent's Major League Baseball debut.

HANOVER PARK, Ill. (August 12, 2026) — The Keeneyville School District 20 community is celebrating a historic milestone as Spring Wood Middle School alumnus Jackson Kent takes baseball's biggest stage, making his Major League Baseball debut with the Washington Nationals against the Chicago Cubs. The Nationals recently announced Kent's promotion as he joins the club to make his first Major League start.

A Hanover Park native and District 20 alumnus, Kent is reaching baseball's highest level after years of dedication, perseverance and hard work. After being selected by the Washington Nationals in the fourth round of the 2024 Major League Baseball Draft, Kent quickly advanced through the organization's minor league system, earning an opportunity to make his Major League debut at age

23. Kent's accomplishment has become a source of pride for students, staff, families and alumni through the District 20 community.

To commemorate the occasion, Spring Wood Middle School created a special display featuring a photograph of Kent as a student during the 2016-17 school year alongside his Washington Nationals baseball card. The original student photo was part of a school display carrying the message, "**Encourage Each Other**," a fitting reflection on Kent's journey and the positive impact he made on classmates and teammates during his time in District 20.



The Washington Nationals welcomed Jackson Kent to the Major Leagues with a "Welcome to the Show" graphic shared on the club's social media channels Aug. 12, 2026. Courtesy of the Washington Nationals (@nationals)

"Jackson's Major League debut is an exciting moment for our entire school community," said Spring Wood Middle School Principal Phil Aliano. *"We are incredibly proud to see one of our former students achieve such an extraordinary goal. It's especially meaningful to look back at a photo that highlights the importance of encouraging others, a value that continues to define our school community. Our motto is 'Arrive as Friends, Leave as Spring Wood Family,' and Jackson will always be part of that family. Once a Charger, always a Charger."*

Spring Wood Middle School alumnus Jackson Kent is pictured in a 2016-17 school photograph alongside his Washington Nationals baseball card.

District leaders say Kent's accomplishment serves as an inspiration for current students, demonstrating how determination, character, and commitment can help turn aspirations into reality.

"Our students benefit from seeing examples of former students who have pursued their goals with dedication and perseverance," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Omar Castillo. *"Jackson's achievement reminds students that their dreams are worth pursuing and that success often begins with the lessons, relationships, and encouragement they receive along the way."*

As Kent takes the mound for his Major League debut, the District 20 community joins family, friends, former teachers, classmates and baseball fans in celebrating a remarkable achievement years in the making.

Jackson Kent pitches for the Rochester Red Wings, the Triple-A affiliate of the Washington Nationals, before earning his Major League call-up. Kent made his Major League debut against the Chicago Cubs on Aug. 12, 2026.
Photo credit: Shawn Dowd / USA TODAY Network via Imagn Images.

About Keeneyville School District 20
Keeneyville School District 20 (KSD20) is a public elementary school district located in Hanover Park, Ill., serving approximately 1,350 students from preschool through eighth grade across four schools: Greenbrook Elementary, Waterbury Elementary, Spring Wood Middle School and the Early Childhood Center. Founded in 1887 and renamed for local developer Albert F. Keeney, the district has a proud history rooted in community growth and educational innovation. With more than 230 dedicated staff members, KSD20 supports families in Hanover Park, Bloomingdale, Keeneyville and Roselle. As the largest feeder to Lake Park High School District 108, the district is dedicated to ensuring every student can belong, grow, and thrive.

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