

March 2025

Northwest Middle's Erin Myers Named Hazelwood School District 2024-2025 Teacher of the Year



Erin Myers, an eighth-grade English language arts (ELA) teacher at Northwest Middle, is HSD's 2024-2025 Teacher of the Year! With 10 years in education, Myers began the journey as a preschool teacher. Fast forward to the present where for the past six years in HSD, Myers has found joy in observing her students' growth due to the impact she has made.

"Winning the Teacher of the Year award is an incredible honor," Myers exclaimed. "As I reflect on this achievement, I am reminded of the joy and dedication that comes with teaching. I believe that, 'to teach is to touch a life forever,' and this award signifies the collective support of my colleagues and the wonderful students I have had the privilege to teach." Myers added, "It has been heartwarming to witness their growth. I am proud to have contributed to their development and fostered a love for learning that I hope will stay with them throughout their lives."

Ms. Myers was given the award in her classroom during a surprise appearance by HSD Superintendent Dr. Collins-Hart and Northwest Middle Principal Twana Moore. She was emotional as students stood and cheered her on for her amazing and well-deserved honor. Ms. Myers was also recognized at the annual PTA Founder's Day event in February at Hazelwood Central. She was presented with a plaque and a golden apple. She addressed the packed audience and told everyone what the award meant to her.

Congratulations to all of the classroom heroes and all of the teachers nominated in the Teacher of the Year category. We are very grateful for your contributions to our students' lives.



Hazelwood School District

"A Culture of High Expectations and Excellence!"

Proudly serving all or part of the following communities:

- Black Jack
- Bridgeton
- Dellwood
- Ferguson
- Florissant
- Hazelwood
- Spanish Lake
- Unincorporated St. Louis County

Hazelwood School District

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From the Desk of the Superintendent

Council Scholarship this year.

Speaking of which, don't forget to sign up for the annual Hazelwood PTA Scholarship Run/Walk. This year's event takes place on Saturday, May 10th at Hazelwood Central, and registration is now open. For more information you can visit our website at hazelwoodschoools.org.

If you're looking for another spring activity for a good cause, the HSD Foundation has its annual Charity Golf Tournament on Saturday, April 26 at Florissant Golf Club. This event is another fun-filled day that helps raise money for a great cause. For more information including sponsorship opportunities, go to hazelwoodschoools.org/tournament.

Finally, state testing is on the horizon. We want to remind everyone that the District has made improving our state test scores a priority, including our **Be the Best on the Test** campaign, which includes initiatives that are District wide and also specific to each school. From Saturday prep sessions to "boot camps" to simple words of encouragement, every effort counts towards our goal of increasing scores. We want to thank all the families in the community as well for partnering with us in these efforts. We are excited and optimistic about the results from this year's tests.

Thank you to everyone for your continued efforts in supporting the District. I am filled with hope about the opportunities that lie ahead for our school community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nettie Collins Hart

Hazelwood School District Superintendent

Greetings Hazelwood School District Community,

In this issue, we continue to shine a light on the District's commitment to high expectations and excellence. There are so many examples of achievements and accomplishments from students and staff, and we are so proud to spotlight these examples.

We recently awarded the Teacher of the Year recognition to 8th grade English language arts teacher, Erin Myers, of Hazelwood Northwest Middle School. Ms. Myers' dedication in the classroom and inspiration to her students are to be admired, and we are happy that she was rewarded with this honor.

Congratulations to the Hazelwood PTA Council for another successful Founder's Day event. The Founder's Day program is a highlight of every school year because it's a rare opportunity for schools throughout the district to come together and celebrate the legacy of the District and highlight the work of our outstanding teachers and support staff, all while raising money for a worthy cause. Nearly \$25,000 was raised for the Hazelwood PTA

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HSD News is a news magazine created by the district's Communications and Public Relations Department.





Three Hazelwood Students Receive Drum Major Scholarships

The Hazelwood School District is celebrating three seniors, Jolaade Bada of Central High, Celina Bryant of East High, and Jaylen Stokes of West High, who are recipients of the Drum Major Scholarship through the Christian Hospital Foundation and Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) program. They received their recognition at the 9th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Luncheon at Christian Hospital in St. Louis.

The Drum Major Scholarship is awarded each year to CAPS students who plan to pursue a career in healthcare. With three distinct career pathways, each student shared their feelings about receiving the \$1,000 scholarship.

Jaylen, who has an interest in psychiatry, was shocked about being nominated. He explained, "Honestly, this surprised me. I never found myself as the so-called best or hardest working student because I felt there was always someone who could push themselves further than me." Jaylen added, "Having that opportunity taught me that maybe I can do this and not to give up. It taught me to stop thinking of myself as lower than others. I am grateful I was given the opportunity."

West High School counselor Marie Boesch nominated Jaylen because of his drive, motivation, and passion for what he is involved in. She stated, "Jaylen takes joy in what he is doing day to day, appreciates it as we have it; his compassion and empathy combined with his joy will help him be successful at making a difference in other people's lives."

Jolaade, the youngest of three children in her family — and the only girl — faced challenges of her own, but believed in herself enough to overcome her fear of failure.

"It felt like the odds were always against me, and I constantly had something to prove growing up in an immigrant household as the youngest girl," Jolaade explained. "Receiving the Drum Major Scholarship has inspired me to continue showcasing the qualities MLK left in his legacy while pushing new boundaries in the healthcare industry. Now I know that I can channel those emotions into something greater. I hope to become someone who always surprises people pleasantly and to gain more recognition in my career as a dermatologist."

Passionate about working with animals, Celina, who wants to be a wildlife veterinarian, was in disbelief when she heard she had been awarded the Drum Major scholarship.

"I truly could not believe it for a second because this was the first scholarship I had received and I was picked for it," Celina exclaimed. "I did not apply for this scholarship which made receiving it feel unreal. Once I found out it was true, I was honored. This scholarship helps me to believe that regardless if you are not the perfect student, anything is possible by believing in yourself."

The Hazelwood School District proudly celebrates the incredible achievements of our students through the Drum Major scholarship! We believe in each student's potential and are excited to support their journey to success.



West High Culinary Arts Students Take Center Stage at the Missouri Restaurant Association's Inaugural Ball

West High culinary arts students Brandon Borders, Noah Jackson, Cylus Ward, and Tamia Coleman-Hawkins demonstrated their dessert skills at the Missouri Restaurant Association's Inaugural Ball in January at Rose of the Hill by Favazza's in St. Louis. With a 250-member plus guest list, the students produced an extravagant array of desserts including French eclairs with an orange mascarpone filling, chocolate ganache, and a candied cranberry-orange relish.

"Our culinary instructor, Ms. Aubuchon, chose students for this event who wanted to further their education in culinary arts and who saw had a big following to the craft," Borders explained. "I have been cooking since age six and have been more interested in baking over the last six years." Borders added, "I was born in Louisiana, and we are big seafood and pastry fans. With my experience, I wanted to step up with something fun and extravagant from the last time or last event, and we agreed on eclairs."

their desserts before the inaugural ball. Everything came down to time and the constraints of prepping for a large crowd.

"We had some hiccups at first," Jackson noted. "One of the main issues we had was initially, the dough became very runny when it was squeezed down on the trays and flattened too much while in the oven. We had to run a couple of batches." Jackson added, "We all worked together the entire time. We all had our roles. Since my Culinary 3 class experience, I have worked numerous big catering events and felt confident about perfecting our eclairs after the batches were solidified."

"The greatest reward from this experience is that the networking we have done establishes a foundation for future businesses and projects we can pursue collectively and as individuals," Borders concluded.



Throughout two Saturdays, West High's culinary students dedicated time to creating and perfecting



The National Restaurant Association is a huge supporter of HSD's culinary arts programs. It offers students scholarship opportunities and connects them with industry professionals. We thank the National Restaurant Association for their support and look forward to the West High students continuing to showcase their incredible talents!



Central High Senior Earns Outstanding Score of 31 on ACT

Hazelwood Central High senior Julianna Busse has something to celebrate after earning a score of 31 on the ACT.

The ACT, or American College Test, is an entrance exam used by most colleges and universities to help with admission decisions. With the highest possible score being 36, Busse has accomplished an impressive feat.

“My parents have always told me, ‘school is your job.’ Growing up, this didn’t make sense because no one pays you for going to school, so what’s the point? Now that I’m older, I know better. Due to my test scores, I’ve received hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarship money,” Julianna said.

Julianna spent a lot of time preparing for the exam, including studying over the summer break. Her mother, Michelle Busse, said she was so happy to see her daughter get the score she not only earned, but deserves, having done so much prep and taking her education seriously.

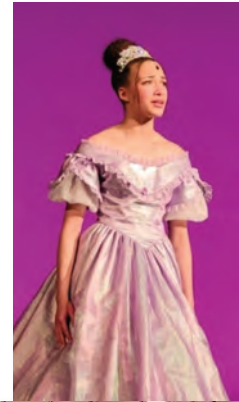
“Our reaction was of true excitement,” her mother said. “She studied every single day without fail.”

Julianna plans to study musical theatre, which she said is a much more rigorous major than it gets credit for. With the majority of the scholarships she applied to requiring an ACT score above 30, Julianna’s score presents the option to look at schools both in Missouri and out of state.

“When doing theatre, you do everything from dissecting complex literature to learning how to program lightboards. My ACT score shows programs that I can both analyze Shakespeare and figure out the technical elements of theatre,” she said.

Central High principal, Dr. Veronica Macklin, stressed the importance of ACT scores, especially with current efforts to get rid of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

“Due to the ongoing dismantling of DEI initiatives, African American students are facing unique challenges and systemic inequalities that will affect their access to educational resources and opportunities,” Dr. Macklin said. “In this context, performing well on tests like the ACT becomes even



more critical, as it provides a tangible way to overcome some of these barriers.”

“Success on the ACT can demonstrate resilience and academic strength, offering African American students a path toward higher education and helping them level the playing field in a competitive college admissions process.”

“Ultimately, it’s about ensuring that African American students continue to have access to the resources and opportunities that support their success, both in the classroom and in the broader landscape of college admissions,” Dr. Macklin said. “By taking the ACT, students are asserting their ability to take control of their academic future and pursue their goals, despite the challenges they may face.”

Julianna views her success on the ACT as a hard earned freedom to follow her passions and take control of her future.

“‘School is your job’ translates to ‘studying buys you freedom.’ The freedom to do whatever you want: leave Missouri, stay in Missouri, go to college, go to the military, anything,” she said. “And sure, as people of color, society will always try to keep us boxed in and discredit our accomplishments, but test scores never lie.”



Students from Central High delivered an impressive presentation on their greenhouse project, showcasing the innovative ways they plan to create sustainable, eco-friendly resources and environmental awareness in North County. Their hard work and dedication highlight the importance of engaging with our planet's future while meeting the community's needs.

Jaelyn Williams, a ninth-grade Central High student, talked about the greenhouse project's influence on her peers.

"I feel the greenhouse project could positively affect Central High. It can influence kids to do better with eating choices and responsibility; a lot of responsibility comes with maintaining a greenhouse."

Adding to that sentiment, ninth-grade student, Teckoh Dotou, emphasized who would benefit the most from the greenhouse.

"The greenhouse will help the cafeteria and science teachers to educate about animals and plants," Dotou explained. "It will help students learn something they might not have had to learn. Students having trouble learning about aquaponics will have a teacher who can speak fluidly about aquaponics and introduce those careers to students."

Led by the St. Louis Zoo, the University of Missouri St. Louis, and Central High School, the Greenhouse Project has provided students with opportunities for research, surveys, and focus groups. It is a Real-World Friday experience: Students embark on multiple field trips to collaborate with professionals, gaining insight into the need for greenhouses and the effort required to maintain them.

"In the heart of a community where fresh food is a distant dream, a group of high school students is planting the seeds of change," Central High teacher, Shene Redden, expressed. "With determination and vision, they are building a greenhouse

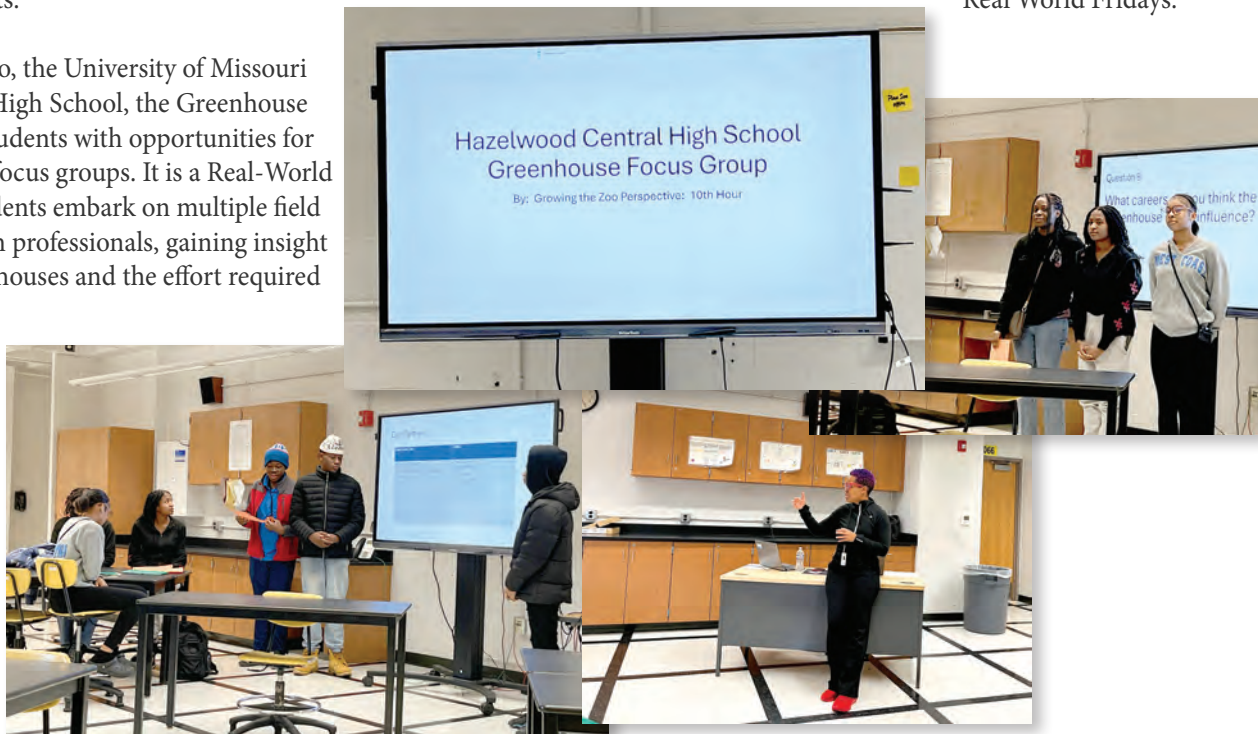
Central High Students Present on Greenhouse Project

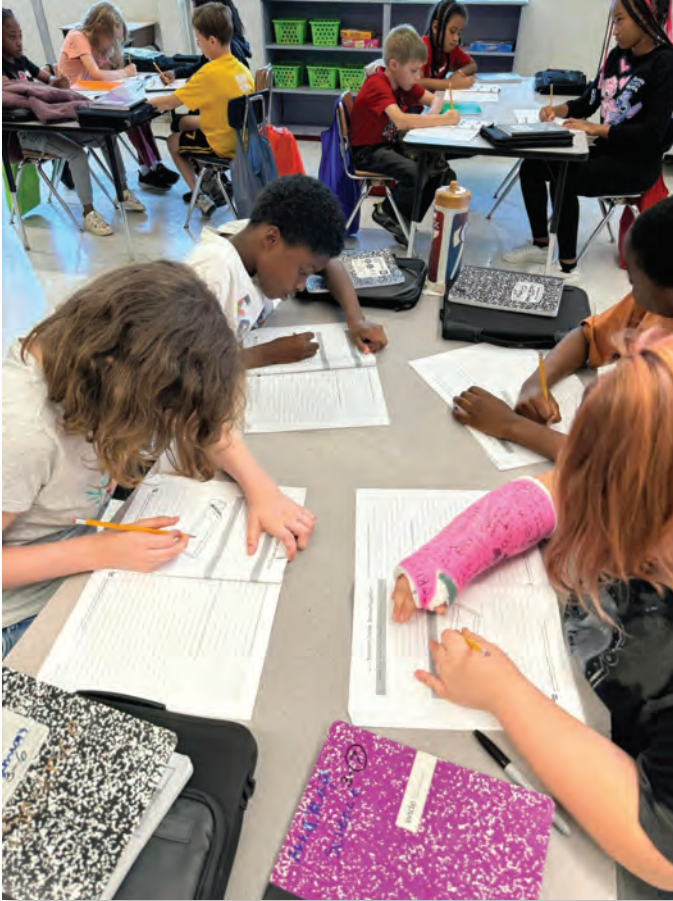
that will not only grow food but cultivate hope, resilience, and a future where no one has to go hungry."

As students embark on this greenhouse project, the concept-to-completion journey provides autonomy for students to dive deep and collaborate with district administrators, steering them on a successful path.

"The Growing the Zoo Perspective class is built around a co-design process, giving students an equal say in every decision regarding the greenhouse," St. Louis Zoo WildCare Park educator Emily Garrett explained. "For the focus group, students teamed up to create questions based on everything they'd learned and researched throughout the semester. They took the lead in discussions with administrators to ensure the greenhouse would meet its users' needs while sharing their ideas and getting district leaders excited about the project."

The District is excited about what Central High's greenhouse project will bring. This project empowers students to attain real-world skills and a sense of ownership while making a lasting impact on their school and community. It is a shining example of the types of programs highlighted at Central High during Real World Fridays.





Rising to the Top: Garrett Elementary Exemplifies Excellence!

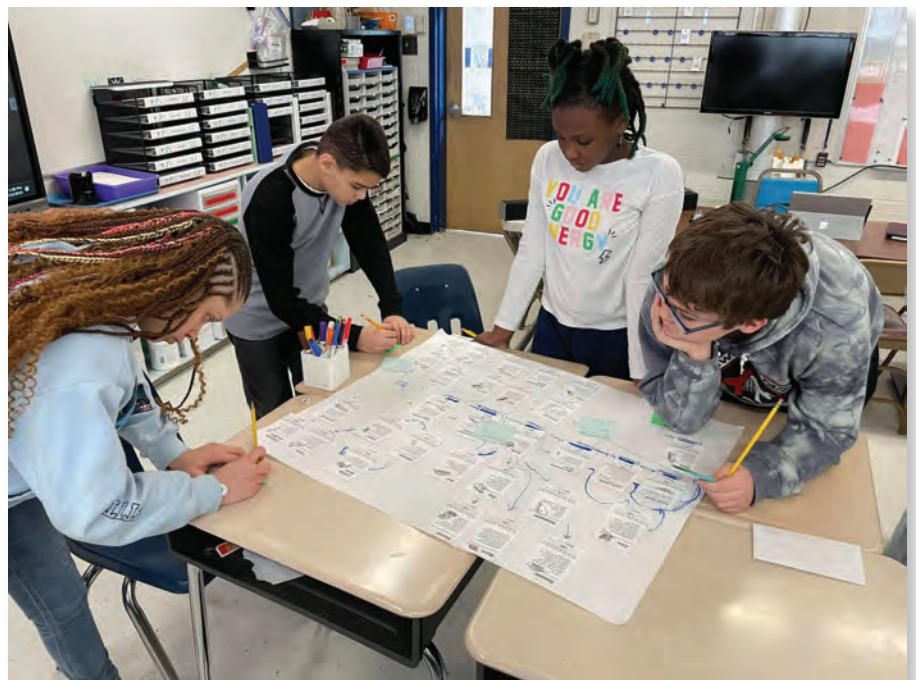
At Garrett Elementary School, academic excellence isn't just a goal, it's a reality. In 2024, Garrett ranked in the top 13% of all Missouri elementary, middle, and high schools that receive academic Annual Performance Report (APR) points! The APR is a percentage-based report that measures how well schools serve students and families. They are calculated using the Missouri School Improvement Plan (MSIP). The APR takes several factors into consideration to create scores, including student performance, college and career readiness, and attendance rate.

Garrett's latest achievement goes along with over a decade of excellence at the school, including multiple Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) awards, two state recognitions for being an exemplary school, and a Professional Learning Community (PLC) awards from Solution Tree (where Garrett was one of only 200 schools selected throughout North America).

Garrett principal, Dr. Rachael Younge, attributes the excellent APR score to the school's commitment to student success. "Garrett's high

scores are a testament to our commitment to providing all students with the opportunities they need to succeed, using any means necessary," she said. "This includes many ways of intervening and enriching instruction that supports individual student needs. My teachers and specialists are skilled at utilizing formative and summative data to guide instruction while ensuring focused pathways for implementing standards-based lessons."

Even though the APR achievement is impressive, Dr. Younge noted that Garrett isn't stopping there. She has a plan in place to keep the momentum going. "My top priority is to maintain a learning environment that fosters growth and success." She continued, "This includes cultivating strong adult-child relationships that support motivation, promote well-being, and create opportunities for achievement. I will continue to explore and apply best practices and strategies that are tailored to meet the needs of our student population." She added, "What we've accomplished so far serves as the foundation for the momentum we'll continue to build. Our goal is not to change what we do, but to enhance how we do it."



Congratulations to Garrett Elementary students and staff on this extraordinary achievement. We expect to hear more good news coming from the school in the future.



Meet the School Board Candidates Election Day: April 8, 2025

Two Hazelwood School District Board of Education three-year seats are open in the April 8, 2025 election. Biographies were written by the candidates, and they were not edited by the Communications and Public Relations Department.



**Rise'
Black**

With over thirty years of experience in elementary and middle school education, I've dedicated my career to shaping the young minds in both the Saint Louis Public and Riverview Gardens School districts. Throughout my tenure, I've assumed diverse

roles including special education teacher, regular education teacher, reading specialist, and instructional coach.

I have been a resident of the Hazelwood School District since 1994. I have a personal stake in the success of our scholars, including several nieces and nephews who attend HSD schools. My aspiration as an educator is to see students flourish academically, socially and emotionally. Drawing from my extensive educational background and professional experiences, I feel that I can contribute positively as a board member.

Outside of my professional endeavors, I am actively involved in community service as a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc, where I currently serve as the 2nd Vice President. My passion for education extends to volunteering in the chapter's educational programs. Additionally, I serve as a Member of the Board of Directors for Safe Connections further demonstrating my dedication to supporting and uplifting individuals in our community.

I have a lifetime commitment to learning. My higher education journey began at Harris Stowe State University where I earned a BA in Education. Building on this foundation, I pursued further studies, earning an MA from Webster University in Education, and an MA from Saint Louis University in Educational Administration, and culminated my educational journey with an EdD in Educational Administration from Lindenwood University.

In addition to my professional pursuits, I cherish my role as a mother to two daughters, grounding my dedication to education and community service in personal values and experiences.



**Curtis
Faulkner**

I have 20+ years of volunteer service and recognitions with various HSD projects, committees and mentorship's.

I started as VP of the Kirby Middle School PTSA. At the time, the school experienced a change in middle school

peer pressure in attire thefts and increased dropout rates. We attempted to address the issue of attire by gaining legal rights to adopt a uniform dress policy. Out of that body also came "Project Graduation".

As we approached 2005 serving 22,000 students, we tracked the needs of the district's increased needs for new and updated facilities. I served as a committee member to undertake and implement a public bond campaign to secure \$250M to address those needs. After successfully gaining those funds I served as chair of the budget committee to oversee the spending of those funds. I also served on the committee who adopted our districts parity policy on minority participation in the spending of those and all district funds. As a taxpayer and stakeholders in our district I've been one of 3 others who have been apart of our Superintendent interviews process for our leadership since Chris Wright. Who after leaving HSD became the State's Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. As such I worked with her office to acquire a \$1.6M grant for East High in 2012. I honorably hold all awards and volunteer recognitions the district has given.

In 2018-2023 I served as the district's representative on the board of the Special School District. (SSD) As the largest school district in the state, their board oversees some 10,000 employees and a budget that exceeds \$500M annually. There I instructed the organization's first "department of equity" that bought in Dr. Michael Maclin and his staff. In addressing the needs of N. County districts, I was able to gain \$6M in additional funding support for their children of special needs programs.



**Elizabeth "Betsy"
Rachel**

I have lived in North St. Louis County since 2001, and in the Hazelwood School District since 2007. I was first elected to

Hazelwood's Board of Education in 2018, and I have worked to be a good steward of our resources and to promote transparency throughout my board service. I believe a robust public education system has the greatest capacity to promote more equitable opportunities for success than any other social system.

I was born and raised in Jerseyville, a rural Illinois community north of St. Louis. Both of my parents were teachers, and impressed upon me the importance of providing quality public education for all children. My husband, Jeff, and I have been happily married for 17 years, and are blessed with two sons who currently attend Hazelwood schools. We love living in North County and are grateful for the opportunity to raise our family in a community with such rich diversity.

I earned my Bachelor's degree from Maryville University, and my Master's in Social Work from St. Louis University. I currently hold my Clinical Social Work license with the state of Missouri, and have several years of professional experience. In recent years I have been blessed to be a stay-at-home-mom.

I'm seeking re-election so I can continue to promote transparency and advocate for stakeholders. I believe I bring experience and stability of leadership to our school board.



**Carrie
Sansone**

I have lived in North County for 48 years and have 27 years of teaching experience in the Hazelwood School District. I teach in the Pattonville School District. I hold a Bachelor's in Elementary Education, a Master's in Middle School Social Science,

and a Master's +30 in Gifted Education from Lindenwood University.

I can offer valuable insights and suggest improvements for the Hazelwood School District. My commitment to the children and staff drives me to ensure they receive essential support. I will advocate for equity and hold leadership accountable for their impact on student outcomes.

Having spent my entire life in Florissant, I deeply appreciate the diversity of our community. I have participated in numerous professional development workshops focused on cultural diversity and equity. Additionally, I support restorative justice and have engaged in various workshops to develop effective implementation strategies for our students.

During my time with the district, I engaged in multiple committees and initiatives, including the Staff Resolution, Budget, and Middle School Committees, and received awards for my work on the Proposition H and Prop 4 Committees. I organized fundraisers with the PTA, served as a union representative, and participated in various committees focused on cultural awareness and student support. Additionally, I represented our building in the United Way fundraiser, earning the Pacesetter Award for three years and receiving two district awards for the gifted program.

As a teacher, I possess a unique perspective that could greatly benefit the board. With 27 years of experience in the district, I understand where we have been, our current status, and the areas in which we need to grow. My commitment to serving the Hazelwood School District remains a priority, as I believe our community thrives when Hazelwood school district succeeds, and the children of HSD deserve a quality education.



**Clem
Smith**

Clem Smith is a Stationary Engineer for The Phillips 66 Company and a former State Representative of St. Louis County's 85th district.

Clem has over 14 years of experience

in community advocacy, legislating, government oversight, and policy research. He served 8 years in the Missouri Legislature and 6 years as Senior Policy Advisor for State Senator Karla May.

One of Smith's notable achievements was passing the College Credit Disclosure Act in 2018. As the author of this legislation, he demonstrated his commitment to student success. The act provides transparency and support for college students by requiring institutions to disclose information about the transferability of college credits. He formerly served on the executive boards of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, the National Labor Caucus of State Legislators, and the Advisory Board of the Missouri Vocational Enterprise Program.

In 2023, Smith helped start the Uplift Foundation of Greater St. Louis to assist in youth mentoring, financial empowerment, and eliminating educational inequity. He is a member of the St. Louis Community College Alumni Association, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., Multiple Sclerosis Society, and the International Union of Operating Engineers.

Smith received the MLK, Jr. Political Service Award from the Urban League of Greater St. Louis & Saint Louis University, the YMCA of Greater St. Louis Legislative Award for Youth Development, and the Multiple Sclerosis Society Advocacy Award.

Clem earned his bachelor's degree from Columbia College, and Certificate of Specialization in Skilled Trades Industrial Training from St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley.



Every Minute Matters: Why Attendance Sets the Stage for Success

With so much going on in our students' school days, it's sometimes easy to forget a key for success: attendance. Simply being present — and on time — is a large part of achieving success.

With state testing approaching here in the Hazelwood School District, it's a great time to remind parents and staff why school attendance and punctuality are so important and why even arriving a few minutes early can make a big difference.

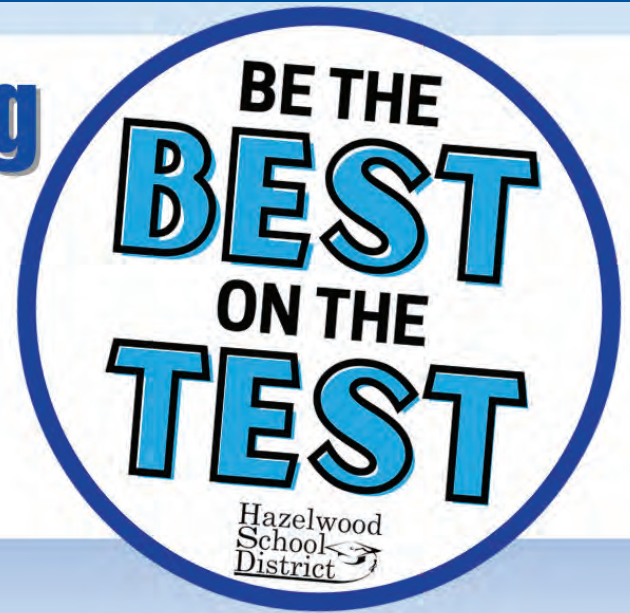
1. **Engagement and participation:** Missing class time, or being late, can translate to missing valuable instruction and participation. Because many lessons are built on previous ones, arriving on time can consistently ensure that our students don't miss out on important lessons, and it allows them to stay engaged in learning.
2. **Improved scores:** It's only natural (and studies bear out) that students who attend classes regularly and on time tend to perform better academically than those who are inconsistent in attendance. Those students who spend more time in the classroom have access to more instructional time and are better prepared.
3. **Consistency:** Consistent attendance and promptness are key to establishing a routine, which in turn helps to develop time management skills and discipline — skills that are not only valuable in school, but beyond the classroom.
4. **It all adds up:** Arriving five minutes late or leaving five minutes early (for instance, picking up a student early to avoid the car line) can add up and make a big difference overall. For example, if a student were to arrive five minutes late every day, that would equal to 25 minutes of missed school time for the week and nearly two hours over the course of a month. It may not seem like a big deal daily, but when it adds up, it leads to a big amount of school time that is missed or disrupted.

In conclusion, attendance is an undeniable factor in student success. Making attendance and punctuality a priority will pave the way, not only for academic achievements, but will give students the best opportunity to thrive.



Saturday State Testing Prep Sessions

**March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29,
and April 5, 2025**



Be the Best on the Test — with Saturday State Test Prep Sessions!

With state test season rapidly approaching, students and parents looking to get that extra edge have a golden opportunity with the upcoming Saturday State Test Prep sessions.

HSD students will take the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) and End-of-Course (EOC) tests starting in April throughout the district. These all-important tests can increase student scholarship opportunities, bolster confidence, and create a culture of high achievement. To get students prepared and support our mission to ***Be the Best on the Test***, the district is hosting Saturday State Prep Sessions. These virtual sessions are open to all HSD students in grades 3-8 and will be held via Google Meet.

Students will focus on test-taking strategies and skills. At the center of these sessions will be a review of key skills and concepts being assessed on the MAP and EOC tests.

Sessions will take place during March and April:

Dates:

March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, and April 5, 2025

Time: 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

To participate, simply go to hazelwoodschoools.org/state-test-prep on the day and time, then click on the appropriate link.

Dr. Audrey Wittenauer, federal programs specialist, noted why these virtual sessions can be a big help. “These sessions offer an important review of key concepts that will be on the MAP and EOC tests, which will ensure that our students are fully equipped to perform at their best.” She added, “Attending these sessions will help to reinforce the skills needed for success on tests, and boost confidence as we head into test season. They will be a key benefit to help set our students up for success.”

The key to achieving the campaign goal is participation from all stakeholders. The information explains specific ways each stakeholder group can support the campaign.



The *No Guns in School* campaign specifically targets guns and mobilizes students, parents, and the community to partner with the district to achieve one goal: **No Guns in School**. ***Did you know that a student who brings a gun to school will be suspended for up to 180 days? Additionally, barring extenuating circumstances, the student will be expelled, which means they will not be able to attend any public school in the state of Missouri.***

Armstrong's Dr. Kelly Kozlen Receives Exemplary New Principal Award

Armstrong Principal Dr. Kelly Kozlen has been honored with the Missouri Association of Elementary School Principals (MAESP) Exemplary New Principal Award. With over twenty years of experience in education, Dr. Kozlen is in her second year as Armstrong's principal and is grateful for this recognition.

"Receiving the Exemplary New Principal honor is truly humbling, as it reflects not just my efforts, but the collective dedication, support, and hard work of an incredible team," Dr. Kozlen shared. "Together, we've created something remarkable, and I'm thankful to share this achievement with those who inspire me daily."

Beyond feeling honored, Dr. Kozlen acknowledges that an exemplary principal sets higher standards and integrates best practices into the school's design, which helps shape its culture and community.

"I believe that best practices involve genuinely doing what is best for children," Dr. Kozlen explains. "This includes creating a safe and supportive environment, providing necessary resources, embracing restorative practices, and ensuring everyone feels valued and appreciated. These elements are key to building a successful school community."

MAESP is a statewide organization dedicated to supporting the elementary and middle school principals, assistant principals, and educators aspiring to become principals in Missouri. Each of the eleven MAESP Regional Networks nominates a member principal in their second or third year at the elementary or middle school level. To qualify, the principal must demonstrate outstanding contributions to the community and the field of education.

The District commends Dr. Kelly Kozlen for her outstanding achievement and we look forward to her continued success.





IBEW Minority Caucus Donates Nearly \$6000 to HSD Foundation

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) has continued to be a strong partner with HSD. The IBEW Electrical Workers Minority Caucus (EWMC) made a generous donation of nearly \$6000 to the Hazelwood School District Foundation. The donation was announced during their annual leadership conference that took place in January at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch. HSD Superintendent, Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart, accepted the donation on behalf of the district.

Dr. Collins-Hart remarked, "I have such gratitude for this donation to the HSD Foundation. This act of generosity will benefit our students through educational resources, which are more important than ever in our current environment. The District appreciates this donation, and we realize that it could be a springboard to inspire others to give back and support our students."

The local IBEW Minority Caucus also sponsors an annual coat drive for the District. The latest coat drive generated over 200 coats donated for students throughout the District.

The EWMC promotes equity, equal opportunity, and employment for minorities and underrepresented workers at all levels of the IBEW. In addition, they encourage workers to be greater activists in the community.

A huge thank you to the EWMC for the donation and for being an amazing community partner!



Be a Hero and Help HSD Students Fall in Love with Reading

Just thirty minutes a week spent reading with a Hazelwood School District student can make a

profound impact on the HSD students' love for reading.

Hazelwood Heroes trainer, Anjanette Clark, said HSD Hero Readers have been active in the school district for over 20 years, and they volunteer to read to and with students one-on-one for 30 minutes weekly.

"The student, chosen by the staff at the school, is generally one who struggles with reading or struggles to enjoy reading," Clark said.

The program is designed to enhance reading comprehension and encourage a love for reading in HSD students, and new volunteers are always welcome to become Reading Heroes.

Volunteers can choose which HSD elementary school they would like to visit, and no prior experience is necessary. All heroes will be provided with the training, materials, books, and

activities by the HSD Heroes program. Each volunteer also must have a completed background check.

Schedules for the volunteers are flexible, as Clark asks the volunteers for their preferred time, and the school then finds a student that is available and that can use the extra attention weekly.

While volunteers are only asked to dedicate 30 minutes of their week to reading with an HSD student, Clark said some volunteers elect to work with multiple students, spending hours volunteering at their chosen school site.

Clark said the HSD Heroes meet every six to eight weeks to refresh their supplies and to get trained on another strategy to share with their students.

The schools are asked to find a student and a quiet place for the reader and student to interact, with some schools providing a classroom or a quiet space in the library.

For more information or to become a Reading Hero, contact Anjanette Clark at aclark1@hazelwoodschoools.org or 314-953-5160.

East High's Solo Swim Star Shines with Top 10 Finish at MSHSAA Girls State Swimming Conference

In an impressive display of talent and determination, East High junior, Lakendris Howard, made waves at the recent Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) Girls State Swimming Conference. She secured a coveted spot in the top 10, placing fourth in the 50-meter freestyle, and sixth in the 100-meter freestyle. She was the only East girls swimmer to make the top 10. But that's because she's the only East girls swimmer!

"Honestly, it feels great placing in the conferences because now I know I can do it without having other people around," Lakendris shared. "I know it is going to be hard being alone versus the whole swim world, but as long as you are having fun and enjoying what you like to do, it does not matter." Lakendris added, "Now, I know it is possible to do anything you put your mind to as long as you stay consistent."

As a child, Lakendris's independent spirit for swimming was

sparked while she played in a big yellow tub at her grandmother's house. She became comfortable and embraced the water, an experience that proved useful when she eventually challenged herself to join the swim team.

"Lakendris has had such a standout season this year breaking all of her personal best times each week," East High swim coach Dr. Scott Kuse said. "I cannot wait to see how she performs next season as a senior!"

Congratulations to Lakendris, who led East High's swim team to a top-10 finish. This achievement showcases dedication and hard work. We are HSDProud!



West High Swim Team Becomes Four-Time Champs!

The West High Swim Team has done it again! For the fourth year in a row, they've claimed the top spot in the Suburban Conference. The wins showcased their hard work, dedication, and incredible talent. This reigning championship team continues to make a splash, proving once more that they are a force to be reckoned with in the pool.

"I am proud of us because we lost about six seniors from our team last year," swimmer Emily Vaughn explained. "It was special winning this year because many other schools said we were not as good this year because we lost our seniors."

With something to prove amongst themselves and the naysayers, the West High swim team rose to the occasion through perseverance and commitment to retaining their winning streak.

"It took a lot of work this year," swimmer Sara Pelot shared. "There was a lot of pressure for us to win again since we had a streak that we wanted to maintain. There was a lot more competition in the pool. We put in the work, and it was rewarding to compete."

West High swim coach Nick Kuper's impact on the team has been a catalyst for the team's success.

"I am incredibly proud and honored to be part of this amazing journey with such a talented group of young women," West High swim coach Nick Kuper shared. "Winning the championship takes countless hours of hard work, sacrifice, and dedication from every team member."

Congratulations to the West High swimmers on this phenomenal achievement!



Central High's Izy Prude Hits Major Scoring Milestone

Scoring 1000 points at the high school level takes a combination of skill, consistency, and work ethic. Hazelwood Central guard, Izy Prude, has all three of those attributes.

And you can add him to the list of players that reached the 1000-point mark in his high school basketball career.

Hitting the 1000 point mark is a milestone that not many players achieve in their high school basketball careers. It's an accomplishment that Izy is proud of, but that he chalks up to his dedication to the game. "It feels good, it feels like I'm part of a club that not a lot of people get into," remarked Izy. He added, "It's been a lot of hard work and improvement over the years."

However, he's sure to note that he didn't get to the mark just by himself; he had plenty of help and support from his teammates. "They're the ones putting me into position to score, and helping out, helping the team to win — along

with our coaches."

Speaking of which, Coach Kelvin Lee attributes Izy's success to practice and dedication. Lee said, "Izy has benefited from countless hours in the gym perfecting his form and shot." He added, "His father spent a lot of time with Izy to get him to this milestone."

When Izy was asked to offer advice to other players who aspire to hit 1000 points, he offered this guidance: "Just continue to improve every day, don't take any days for granted. Be grateful for the time you have and the ability to play basketball. Be thankful for the opportunity that you're given and make the most of it."

Besides hitting the 1000 point milestone, Izy has had other achievements including averaging 19 points a game and making All-Tournament for the Vianney and Webster Groves tournaments. In addition, Izy has also been featured as a St. Louis Post-Dispatch High School Athlete of the Week and has been featured on a KMOV Spectrum Athlete Spotlight segment.

Congratulations to Izy on his accomplishments this season. We're looking forward to much more from this outstanding student.

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