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July 9, 2020

COMMUNITY NEWS

Hazelwood School District rises to the challenges of the day

Our lives as educators forever changed in 2020. It's when we were forced to look at the manner in which we supported our children in all aspects of life, and in an instant, rewrite the book. The same goes for every essential service in our community. Despite difficult circumstances, I've seen our community rally together to continue meeting needs, and the Hazelwood School District is no different.

Our school buildings closed on March 18. That very same day, just one day removed from a 'typical' school day, our district found a way to deliver more than one thousand take-home meals to students. On May 11, our staff delivered more than 32,000 meals. How does that happen? It takes belief and dedication to the idea that we must continue meeting student needs in creative ways, whether they are in our buildings or not. I am so proud of our essential staff members, notably our nutrition, safety, transportation, and maintenance staff, who truly have risen to the occasion and helped our district meet an unprecedented challenge.

Meals are a critical, but small part of the equation. What about curriculum?

How do you teach without a classroom? While our district already had a number of technological and virtual initiatives in place to supplement learning, providing education exclusively through virtual means was new. But, given a challenge, the teachers and administrators of HSD found a way. By mid-April, students were learning at home thanks to a commitment by our teachers to learning new online platforms and how to deliver a modified lesson. It has been remarkable to see the changes we've made in such a short time, and that is a testament to our teachers and their leadership.

Even with our high points, there is no way to fix the heartbreak we feel for the Class of 2020. As the school closure wore on, it was clear that a traditional commencement likely was off the table, but our seniors persevered through uncertainty. We honored their hard work with a virtual graduation event in June; while it looked different than anything our district has done previously, I hope our seniors know that what makes their class different than any other is their character, something I know they will carry with them and use to continue growing later in life.

Our community was challenged by this pandemic, but it was not fazed. I want to thank all of our essential workers in North County who have continued to make a difference for our families and citizens. Along with that, our numerous community partners have been essential to helping the Hazelwood School District move forward, and for that I thank you. While the past several months have been some of the most trying in our careers as educators, I believe it would be difficult to find one educator who disagrees that the collective effort we have made for our children has made those same months some of the most rewarding.

Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart is the proud Superintendent of Schools for the Hazelwood School District serving approximately 18,000 students in the second-largest district in St. Louis County and seventh-largest district in Missouri. She was named 2019 National Superintendent of the Year in August by the National Association of School Superintendents.



The opinions expressed in this column are the columnist's alone and do not reflect the opinion of the owners or staff of *Community News*.



Hazelwood District Names Anthony Kiekow P.R. Director

Hazelwood School District (HSD) has announced the appointment of Anthony Kiekow as Director of Communications and Public Relations effective July 1, 2020. He will replace the current Kimberly McKenzie who will be leaving the district to pursue another opportunity.

Kiekow will shape external and internal communications for HSD, including media relations, crisis communications, and social media. With a strategic focus on student, parent, staff, and community engagement, Kiekow will use his storytelling skills to build on the district's culture of high expectations and excellence.

Kiekow brings a wealth of communications and media experience to HSD. Prior to this appointment, he served as executive director of communications for Riverview Gardens School District.

Kiekow honed his strategic communication skills as a public relations manager for the St. Louis Symphony. The Associated Press award-winning writer also spent seven years as a television reporter for media outlets across the country, including News 4 and Fox 2 in St. Louis.

St. Louis Public School teachers hold sit-in in hopes of getting a safe plan to deal with Covid for the school year



Megan O'Brien started her career in the St. Louis Public Schools before heading to the Hazelwood School District. She was among many St. Louis Public Schools teachers and their supporters to hold a sit-in outside the district's downtown administration office, Monday, July 13, 2020.

https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/photos-st-louis-public-school-teachers-hold-sit-in-in-hopes-of-getting-a-safe/collection_a9d9c986-afc6-566d-af54-a9949899f2c3.html#4



Hazelwood School District shares proposal to bring students back to classrooms part-time

<https://fox2now.com/news/hazelwood-school-district-shares-proposal-to-bring-students-back-to-classrooms-part-time/>



SLPS teachers and parents concerned about reopening plans

https://www.kmov.com/news/slps-teachers-and-parents-concerned-about-reopening-plans/article_ff5d5740-c4f5-11ea-ac58-779e70f26376.html



St. Louis area schools working on return to classroom plans

https://www.kmov.com/news/st-louis-area-schools-working-on-return-to-classroom-plans/article_6ba0cc0c-c2fd-11ea-8b90-37b431c7990c.html



Hazelwood School District clears up confusion about waiver shared on social media

The district said the waiver is only for parents who have kids that plan to participate in athletics

<https://www.ksdk.com/article/news/education/hazelwood-school-district-waiver-covid-19/63-5e0d13a2-e053-4b13-a67e-ac9b27f454db>



Hazelwood School District preliminarily approves plan that allows for 100% online education option

Parents will be able to choose between a 100% virtual education or blended education for their child

<https://www.ksdk.com/article/news/education/hazelwood-school-district-plan-covid-19/63-db0dfcb1-4399-423d-8192-f83ad639f3e1>