

COMMUNITY NEWS

Around Town



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Accountability meets equity

Most people and organizations will agree they support equity, even when they don't truly understand what it is. When addressing equity in education, I personally believe the No Child Left Behind Act has been the most impactful force in defining what has happened in public schools during my 40-year career.

The overall goals of No Child Left Behind, and now the Every Student Succeeds Act, are to raise national standards, address academic improvements and accountability, and incorporate school reform in an effort to raise educational excellence for all students. Clearly, our legislators and we as educators have missed the mark because our children and what they know cannot be measured in a testing marathon in a defined few days. I propose we change how we view school reform and accountability and add equity as a partner.

In my opinion, the educational system not only fails to address equitable needs for all students, but also fails to support schools or give credit to schools in addressing those needs. I submit that true equity

would include multiple measures of how a school addresses the whole child. Why not focus on growth that will encourage our students, teachers, and staff?

For example, we know that if we continue to simply track student progress in our traditional ways, we can predict the outcome for diverse student populations. Yet we continue to rank and sort students based on the same traditional measures. We then proceed to pat ourselves on the back for doing a good job of educating students who need us least, give ourselves a score for how well we have educated them, then announce our successes to the public, comparing the progress of those students to students whom we have traditionally underserved.

Let us marry equity and accountability by providing resources and training to support the diversity of students we now serve so that districts do not eventually become unable to support our students financially. Reframe teacher education programs so that teachers are trained to work with real students, not just those we used

to consider ideal students. We should focus on funding, piloting, and conducting case studies that reflect innovative practices where individual schools and classrooms try different approaches based on a smaller scale to address the needs of diverse students.

I am proud to be a part of what I can only hope will spark a change for students. I stand ready to continue to be a voice for our students in the Hazelwood School District and beyond, and advocate for a change in education.

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.

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Hazelwood School District launches Redefining Ready initiative

The Hazelwood School District (HSD) launched Redefining Ready on Nov. 1, a new, district-wide initiative designed to ensure every student leaves the district college-, career-, and life-ready.

Redefining Ready provides students at every grade level with innovative academic programs, career-specific learning experiences, and social and emotional services. Students and parents can monitor student achievement using a set of indicators that show progress toward being college, career, and life ready at each grade level: elementary school, middle school, and high school.

"We know that students learn in different ways, and as a district we must continually adapt how we provide those learning experiences and evaluate how well we're meeting student needs," HSD Superintendent Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart said.

"Through a true district-wide effort, we are able to continue to improve student achievement and cater to the individual needs of each student with Redefining Ready."

Parents can find out if their students are considered on track to be college and career ready by following an online Redefining Ready Platform, which includes personalized information about each of the indicators. Parents then can use that information to determine in which areas their student may need more support to be successful.

"We believe students are more than a test score and that to determine whether or not a student is college, career, and life ready, we need to look beyond standardized tests and academic measures," HSD Director of Curriculum and Educational Programs Dr. Patty Ulrich said.

"We also believe it is our responsibility as a school district to provide students with experiences that will prepare them to be successful once they leave Hazelwood."

The standards of Redefining Ready were developed using extensive research done by a district committee of more than 30 teachers, counselors, parents, and administrators during the 2017-2018 school year. The committee worked to define and establish specific benchmarks that would be used to gauge the college, career, and life readiness of students.

For example, indicators of career-readiness include participation in a service learning project, volunteering in the community, or earning an industry credential. Life-readiness indicators focus on a student's real-life application of what is learned about college and career options. The goal is to combine these indicators with academic achievement to ensure students are prepared for life after high school in a variety of ways.

For more information about Redefining Ready, visit www.HazelwoodSchools.org.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Barrington Elementary teacher named 2019 Emerson Teacher of the Year

Barrington Elementary School teacher Rebecca Bockhorst has been named 2019 Emerson Teacher of the Year for the Hazelwood School District.

The fourth grade English Language Arts teacher was recognized for her commitment to student development and leadership.

"I am a proud product of the Hazelwood School District via Jana Elementary, Hazelwood Junior High and Hazelwood Central. It is an honor to be recognized by my peers to represent the district that gave me such a solid foundation," Bockhorst said.

"My accomplishments and successes started with the Hazelwood School District and seem to have come full circle with this award."

Bockhorst has taught at Barrington for the past 17 years, and also contributes to both school and district professional development opportunities and devotes time to numerous extracurricular activities.

"Ms. Bockhorst is a true example of a teacher who sets high expectations for both students and staff," Superintendent Dr. Nettie Col-



Photo courtesy Hazelwood School District

Barrington Elementary School teacher Rebecca Bockhorst (left) stands with Hazelwood School District Superintendent Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart.

lins-Hart said.

"Her dedication to students is evident in countless ways and I am proud of her leadership and commitment to excellence in our schools."

The Emerson Excellence in Teaching Awards program, sponsored by Emerson, annually recognizes more than 100 educators in the St. Louis metropolitan area – from kindergarten teachers to college professors – who are examples of excellence in their field.

Hazelwood School District Celebrates 70th Anniversary

The Hazelwood School District (HSD) is celebrating its 70th anniversary and will induct nine honorees into the HSD Hall of Fame in December. The District will host the 70th Anniversary Hall of Fame Awards Gala and Dance on Saturday, Dec. 14 at the Renaissance Hotel to celebrate the anniversary and Hall of Fame class. The Hazelwood School District was founded on Dec. 10, 1949; since then, countless individuals and organizations have contributed to the district's success.

The Hall of Fame class will honor several alumni, community members, and community partners who have made a positive impact on the district and in their field:

Individual Alumni Athletic Award

- Carey Davis, Hazelwood Central High School Class of 1999, member of Super Bowl XLIII winning Pittsburgh Steelers, current head football coach at Central High School

Team Alumni Award

- 1995 Hazelwood East High School Football Team, Missouri Class 5A State Champions Individual Alumni Award

- Missouri State Senator Brian Williams, Hazelwood Central High School Class of 2001, Missouri State Senate District 14

- Charles "Ed" Brown and Dan Brown, Hazelwood East High School Class of 1977 and 1980, respectively, Brown & Brown Attorneys at Law

Distinguished Retired Educator Award

-Dr. Chris (Wright) Nicaastro, former HSD Superintendent and retired Missouri DESE Commissioner of Education

Lifetime Humanitarian Award

- Ann Gibbons, former HSD Board of Education Director and 40-year District volunteer

Community Partnership Award

- Hazelwood PTA Council, for raising almost \$3.5 million in student scholarships, impacting more than 3,500 students

- Ameren, for a long history of community partnership, scholarships, and offering utility assistance to District families in need

Superintendent's Hall of Fame Award

- Lottie Wade, serves on the Board of Directors for Spanish Lake Community Association and a longtime volunteer and advocate for HSD

The District invites alumni, staff, and community members to the Hall of Fame Gala on Dec. 14. All proceeds from the event will benefit student scholarships. For ticket and sponsorship information, visit www.HazelwoodSchools.org or bit.ly/hsd70paypal.

The Independent News



Above: Mrs. Jessie Fellenstein with her class in the late 1960s at Twillman Elementary. Below: Cold Water School, located in front of present-day Hazelwood Central High School, shown in 1969.



Hazelwood English Teacher Wins Teacher of the Year Award

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Rebecca Bockhorst (left) with HSD Superintendent **Nettie Collins-Hart**.

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"Her dedication to students is evident in countless ways and I am proud of her leadership and commitment to excellence in our schools." The Emerson Excellence in Teaching Awards program, sponsored by Emerson, annually recognizes more than 100 educators in the St. Louis metropolitan area – from kindergarten teachers to college professors – who are examples of excellence in their field.