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# Summer 2021 CLAYTON INSIDE

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## Honoring Dr. Sean Doherty's Contributions to the School District of Clayton

Since becoming superintendent in 2015, Dr. Sean Doherty worked tirelessly as our community's "lead learner." The Clayton Education Foundation launched a campaign to commemorate his contributions to the District. Because he began his career as an elementary teacher and served as principal at Captain Elementary School, this campaign will fund a book collection for each of the District's three elementary school libraries. Books for the Dr. Sean Doherty Collection will be selected by each school's librarian and identified by a custom bookplate picturing Dr. Doherty and his rescue dog, Gryff. The Clayton Education Foundation raised \$22,500!



"The overwhelming support from our Clayton community demonstrates the depth of the relationships Dr. Doherty has developed with students, their families and residents," said Foundation Board President Alex Berger III. "Since becoming superintendent in 2015, he has worked tirelessly as our community's 'lead learner.' This book collection represents the gratitude we all feel for his service to our District."

This library collection lets him continue making a positive impact on student learning long after he has retired from the District. The campaign ran from April 30 - May 31. •

## Steve Singer Appointed to Fill BOE Vacancy

The Board of Education (BOE) has appointed Steve Singer to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of David Gulick. Singer, who previously served on the BOE from 2002 to 2011, was selected on June 15 and sworn into office on June 16. He will serve until



April 2022, when a special election will be held to fill the final year of Gulick's original three-year term. Singer has already made it clear that he does not plan to run in the April election.

He served as the president of the Clayton BOE for three of his nine years

on the board. His previous board experience, which included supporting a superintendent transition, multiple ballot issues and community conversations about the voluntary student transfer program, will benefit the Board. Board President Amy Rubin noted that each of the eight people who applied to fill the vacancy provided the Board with a unique opportunity to grow as a group.

In addition to the regular BOE election in April 2022 (the terms of Joe Miller and Stacy Siwak expire in April), a special election will be held to elect someone to fill the remainder of Gulick's term, which expires in April 2023. The Board's next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 4. •

## SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CLAYTON

Administrative Center  
#2 Mark Twain Circle  
Clayton, MO 63105  
Phone – 314.854.6000

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

- **Amy Rubin**, President
- **Gary Pierson**, Vice President
- **Stacy Siwak**, Board Secretary
- **Kimberly Hurst**, Treasurer
- **Joe Miller**, Director
- **Steve Singer**, Director
- **Jason Wilson**, Director
- **Aitana Rosas Linhard**, Student Representative
- **Nisha Patel, Ed.D.** Superintendent
- **Tony Arnold, Ed.D.**  
Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources
- **Robyn Wiens, Ed.D.**  
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
- **Milena Garganigo, Ed.D.**  
Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

*Inside Clayton* is published by the Office of Communications for School District of Clayton residents, businesses and families. Its purpose is to foster open communication, build understanding and promote accountability between the District and our stakeholders. Please submit comments, letters and questions to:

Office of Communications  
School District of Clayton  
#2 Mark Twain Circle  
Clayton, MO 63105  
314.854.6038  
communications@claytonschools.net

**Chris Tennill**, APR  
Chief Communications Officer

**Ali Lenger**  
Communications Coordinator

**Todd Schumacher**  
Digital Communications Specialist

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## DR. NISHA PATEL SUPERINTENDENT

# From the Superintendent...

Dear Clayton Community,

It is an honor to write to officially introduce myself as superintendent of the School District of Clayton. I am incredibly humbled by the faith each of you and the Board of Education has shown in me, and I look forward to working with all of our stakeholders to lead our District from excellent to transformational.

From a very early age, I have always believed that anything is possible when you put your heart and mind to it. As I entered the field of education, that belief turned into reality as I committed myself to always making student-centered decisions and to believing in the power of yet for my students. Here in Clayton,



we have already developed a fluid roadmap for the next few years through our strategic plan—a plan I wholeheartedly support. This plan provides us with direction, focus and clarity on our next steps as a District.

For us, beginning with the end in mind to develop the competencies our community outlined in our Profile of a Clayton Graduate is central to this work. With these competencies, our students will indeed be ready to be leaders who shape the world through independence, creativity and critical thinking. A focus on equity work and fostering a sense of belonging is a must in addition to a much needed balance between social emotional learning and academic success. Now, more than ever, our world needs us to be a place for everyone to grow as learners in head and heart.

As we begin this next chapter of our journey as a learning community, my commitment to you is to work my hardest, always do what is in the best interest of our students and live out my personal mission statement of



elevating others through my actions to help change the world. Without a doubt, we have the best students, staff and families and together we will continue to create a community that is focused on building relationships that are grounded on trust, respect and treating one another with dignity. Our learners deserve nothing but the very best from us, and we will give them our very best.

I would welcome the opportunity to connect and interact with each of you on social media, so please consider following me (@claytonsupt) on Twitter and Instagram. I once again thank you for giving me this opportunity. I am honored to partner with our students, staff and community to continue to see the School District of Clayton thrive!

A handwritten signature of Nisha Patel in black ink.

Nisha Patel, Ed.D.  
Superintendent





# Fifth and Eighth Grade Promotions Celebrate End of School Year



Fifth-Grade and Eighth-Grade Promotions serve as a time for students, teachers and families to celebrate their successes while excitedly anticipating future endeavors.

Fifth-grade students were promoted to the next chapter in their education

during a special ceremony on Thursday, June 3. Students at each of the three elementary schools including Captain, Glenridge, and Meramec celebrated in different ways.

A group of students at Captain Elementary gave a speech about their experiences at the school and their excitement to go to Wydown Middle School.

Glenridge students performed with their musical instruments at the beginning of the ceremony.

Meramec elementary students held a celebration for their fifth-grade students in the hallway.



Eighth-grade students held their promotion at the Wydown “Cheer You On” Parade held on Wednesday, June 2. Wydown teachers and the community lined Wydown Blvd. to cheer the eighth graders moving on to high school. This line of spirited staff and members of the Clayton community started in front of WMS and stretched East toward Skinker. All WMS eighth grade families were welcome and encouraged to drive by with their students any time during the 90-minute period.



More photos can be found in the articles: “2021 Fifth Grade Promotions” and “2021 Wydown ‘Cheer You On’ Parade” located on the School District of Clayton website. •



## Teachers Nominated and Honored with Various Awards

CHS science teacher, **Jennifer Adams**, was nominated for the Saint Louis Science Center/Carol and Jerome Loeb Prize for excellence in teaching. Each year, the Challenger Learning Center-St. Louis recognizes current teachers who inspire future generations of explorers and innovators.

The 2021 award consists of five nominees with one first place winner, one second place winner, and three runners-up. The nominees are teachers in the fields of math and science who improve the performance of their students through impactful mentorship and leadership. An awards ceremony was held on May 20 at the Saint Louis Science Center in the Omnimax Theater for the finalists and award winners.

Adams was honored to be a runner-up for the award. She believed a key to her success was the support from the District to have the freedom to shape her teaching.



WMS/CHS Instrumental and Band teacher, **Mike Kanaan**, was nominated for and is the recipient of SLSMEA’s Outstanding Music Educator Award for 2020-2021.

“I have been teaching music education for the School District of Clayton for 17 years and am humbled by this great honor,” Kanaan said. “It’s been an amazing journey and the passion I have for teaching my students and watching them develop musically is just remarkable.”

SLSMEA is the professional organization for music educators for member schools of EducationPlus. It sponsors numerous festivals throughout the year which include Large Ensemble Music Festival for Bands, Orchestra, and Choirs; Solo and Ensemble Music Festival for Bands, Orchestra, and Choirs; and Honor Group Ensembles for Bands, Orchestras, and Choirs for high school, middle school and elementary students. •



# WMS Students Score at Science Olympiad

The Wydown Middle School Science Olympiad Team finished fourth at the 2021 Missouri State Science Olympiad competition in April 2021. In partnership with a group of coaches from the Washington University Campus Y program, the team studied harder than they had ever before and formed strong friendships along the way.

They competed in six national tournaments including National November, Pearl City, National December, Westlake, Sierra Vista, West Ottawa, Regionals, and State. They won six first place spots in events at Regionals. At state, they finished fourth out of 37 schools and won ribbons and medals in 14 out of 19 events. Please see the roster below for results. •



- **9th Grade:** Nicholas Sheppard, Kevin Beyer, Art Chen-Wei
- **8th Grade:** Hansini Mahajan, Mohini Mahajan, Henry Lee, Casey Chu, Robert Gabel, Joseph Gabel, Logan Huyette, Jynx Falk, Lavanya Mani, Alzhraa Mahmoud, Aoife Mahoney, Alyssa Edwards, Erin Dorris, Memphis Christman, Janelle Swinigan, Sophia He, Donna Do, Saahil Doshi
- **7th Grade:** Aria Asghari, Ivy Liao, Jamie Griffin, Katherine Nguyen, Wenxu He, David Lin, Aalaa Mahmoud, Raghav Mani, Yijia Mao
- **6th Grade:** Lorenzo Buitrago, Ben Cutler, Ruben Haroutounian, David Kerschensteiner-Soto, Joey Mohr, Mathew Nguyen, Nathan Wang, David Wharton, Kei Handzic-Smith, Samanyu Tumuluru

### State Results:

#### 2nd Place:

- **Experimental Design** - Hansini Mahajan, Mohini Mahajan, Ivy Liao

#### 3rd Place:

- **Agribio** - Katherine Nguyen - Jamie Griffin
- **Write it Cad it** - Katherine Nguyen - Jamie Griffin
- **Density Lab** - Mohini Mahajan - Joseph Gabel
- **Road Scholar** - Nicholas Sheppard - Henry Lee
- **Water Quality** - Casey Chu - Henry Lee

#### 4th Place:

- **Crime Busters** - Jynx Falk - Lavanya Mani
- **Food Science** - Hansini Mahajan - Ivy Liao
- **Fossils** - Hansini Mahajan - Saahil Doshi
- **Heredity** - Jynx Falk - Lavanya Mani
- **Meteorology** - Alzhraa Mahmoud - Aria Asghari
- **Ornithology** - Nicholas Sheppard - Casey Chu

#### 5th Place

- **Circuit Lab** - Mohini Mahajan - Lorenzo Buitrago
- **Dynamic Planet** - Robert Gabel - Alzhraa Mahmoud

# Captain Student in Finals for National Kindness Speech Contest



Andrew Fei, a Captain Elementary student, made it into the top 20 students for the National Kindness Speech Contest.

This contest was created by the nonprofit organization, ThinkKindness. ThinkKindness is a nonprofit organization that

visits schools across the country to inspire acts of kindness in the communities of the schools with the help from motivational speakers.

Each contestant had to film themselves answering the question: "If you had a megaphone that could reach the entire planet, what would you say to inspire everyone to make our world a kinder place?"

In his video, Fei answered, "Kindness can fill our hearts with compassion and warmth. Kindness brings respect, attention and even admiration wherever you go. Is it hard to be kind? No! You can show kindness by smiling or giving a friendly wave to someone. You can say kind words or give a hug to someone

who needs encouragement. You can also show kindness by sharing a book or a toy with other kids. And you can help your parents out by doing some chores in the house."

The contest was open to children ages 5 to 18 years old and each speech had to be two minutes long. Each speech was judged by a panel of motivational speakers, nonprofit leaders, previous winners, and more.

The first place winner will receive \$500, a trophy, and a homepage feature on the ThinkKindness website. The second place winner will receive \$250, and the third place winner will receive \$100. Fei plans to donate his prize if he wins.

Once Fei entered the top 20, he was paired with a speech coach to prepare for the finals. His speech coach is Chase Mielke, an award-winning educator, writer, and speaker.

"(He) suggested that I make bigger gestures, start my speech with a question, and end it with a call-to action, which really improved my speech," said Fei.

Watch Andrew's video from the link in our Featured News article. Voting has closed and participants are awaiting results. Learn more about the contest at [thinkkindness.org](http://thinkkindness.org). •



# Glenridge Fifth Graders Turn their Literacy Projects into Works of Art

Glenridge fifth graders had a chance to explore some creative learning in literacy classes taught by Cara Barnes, Kacie Cline and Susannah Scotino.

The students have been reading nonfiction books as a class, in pairs and individually - mainly narrative nonfiction books that teach them information about history told in a story.

As they read, they selected a topic of history they were interested in learning



more about. Each student had the flexibility to choose any topic they wanted as long as there was a history component to the topic.

All three classes worked together first and focused on the same topic; the history of the Macy's Day Parade.



"This was really fun," said Barnes. "It was done during virtual learning days but the students did get to make floats out of balloons and I think they truly enjoyed the learning experience."

For the writing portion of this learning activity, the teachers have been helping their learners focus on how to become better informational writers. They are achieving this by practicing, studying mentor texts, revising, studying craft and simply writing.

Each student was asked to write three vignettes related to their main topic - many wrote more than that. These learners also examined text features from mentor texts and worked to add these to their writing as well. •

## Connecting with the Community Through Postal Pals



With help from the Oasis Postal Pals Program, Oasis tutors remain connected with children in the School District of Clayton, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Students in **Heather Pinson's second grade class** at Meramec Elementary each have an Oasis Postal Pal - which they have made great connections with by writing back and forth. They also sent their Oasis Postal Pals valentines and St. Patrick's Day well wishes.

"It's been so amazing to see my students engage with their pen pals," said Pinson. "(I)t's heartwarming to watch my

learners reach out to their pen pals through artwork, writing and sharing personal experiences."

Through Postal Pals, District students and Oasis tutors exchange letters with each other, which helps improve students' reading and writing skills, fosters relationships with their pen pals and is a way for the students to connect with the greater community. Both the students and Oasis volunteers equally look forward to their exchanges.

Oasis is a national education organization dedicated to enriching the lives of adults age 50 and older through lifelong learning and service. Volunteers in this program enjoy the rewarding experience of working with students in kindergarten through fourth grades at Clayton's three elementary schools. The focus of the Oasis program is to build reading skills, self-esteem and a positive attitude toward reading. •

## Family Center Celebrates Earth Day

The Orange Room students of the Family Center got the opportunity to learn about the environment in a unique way on Earth Day.

As a part of Missouri's bicentennial celebration, they planted a River Birch tree in Shaw Park with the help of the City of Clayton's Parks Department.

"We regularly go on field trips as a part of our curriculum and go on nature walks at Shaw Park," said Susan Goldwasser. The students would regularly learn about the different plants and trees in Shaw Park as part of their nature



walks. It was a great way to learn and explore the outdoors.

One of the books they read, "The Boy Who Grew a Forest: The True Story of Jadav Payeng," had inspired them to take action. They decided to do something a little different and came up with the idea to plant a tree.

"Our kids have been learning all year long how to be agents of change," said Emily Andes. "In developing and understanding how to be an agent of change it is important to take action." •





# Class of 2021 Prepares for the Next Chapter

Clayton High School's Class of 2021 celebrated its accomplishments over the past 13 years and prepared for new challenges and successes during its commencement ceremony on Thursday, May 27 at the Powerplex. With their parents and teachers in attendance, the students reminisced about their achievements as a class and as individuals. And while they are ready to move on to the next chapter in their lives, none of these seniors are likely to forget how Clayton's schools laid the foundation for their future success. Visit [claytonschools.net/chs](http://claytonschools.net/chs) to view commencement photos. •







# Moving On to Higher Education

Members of the Class of 2021 have chosen to attend the colleges and universities listed below. The number of graduates attending each institution is included in parentheses.

Agnes Scott College (1)	Indiana University (2)	St. Olaf College (1)	University of Illinois
Alabama State University (1)	Indiana University	Santa Clara University (1)	- Champaign (2)
Arizona State University (2)	- Bloomington (2)	Southeast Missouri State	University of Iowa (1)
Arizona State University	Indiana University Kelly School of	University (2)	University of Kansas (4)
- Tempe (2)	Business (1)	Southern Illinois University	University of Kentucky (1)
Barnard College (1)	Illinois State University (2)	- Edwardsville (1)	University of Maryland (1)
Boston University (1)	Iowa State University (3)	Southern Methodist University (1)	University of Miami (1)
Boston College (1)	Lipscomb University (1)	St. Charles Community	University of Minnesota
Bradley University (1)	Louisiana State University (2)	College (2)	- Twin Cities (1)
Bryn Mawr College (1)	Loyola College (1)	St. Louis Community College (15)	University of Missouri
Case Western	Loyola University - Chicago (1)	St. Louis Community College	- Columbia (12)
Reserve University (1)	Loyola University - Maryland (1)	- Forest Park (1)	University of Missouri - St. Louis (4)
Carleton College (1)	Marymount Manhattan College (1)	St Louis Community College	University of Oklahoma (1)
College of Charleston (1)	McKendree University (1)	- Meramec (1)	University of Southern California (1)
Colorado State University (1)	Missouri State University (1)	Tennessee State University (1)	University of South Carolina
Colorado School of Mines (1)	Missouri University of Science &	Texas A&M University (1)	- Columbia (3)
Columbia College - Chicago (1)	Technology (2)	Texas Christian University (1)	University of Tampa (1)
Columbia University - New York (1)	Northeastern University (2)	Truman State University (2)	University of Toronto (1)
Converse College (1)	New York University (1)	Tufts University (1)	University of Utah (1)
Cornell University (1)	Northwestern University (2)	Tulane University (2)	University of Vermont (1)
Dartmouth College (1)	Oberlin Conservatory of Music (1)	University of Alabama (2)	University of Washington
Drake University (3)	Ohio State University (1)	University of Arizona (4)	- Seattle (1)
DePaul University (2)	Otterbein University (1)	University of Arizona - Tucson (1)	University of Wisconsin
Drexel University (1)	Oxford University	University of Arkansas (2)	- Madison (3)
Duke University (1)	- St. Hugh's College (1)	University of California	Vocational/Tech School (2)
Elon University (1)	Parsons School of Design (2)	- Los Angeles (2)	Wake Forest University (1)
Emerson College (1)	Purdue University (3)	University of California	Washington University
Florida International University (2)	Quincy University (1)	- San Diego (2)	in St. Louis (16)
Fordham University (1)	Rochester Institute of Tech (1)	University of Chicago (2)	Webster University (2)
Fort Lewis College (1)	Reedley College (1)	University of Colorado	Wesleyan University (1)
George Washington University (3)	Rice University (2)	- Boulder (2)	Western Washington
Goucher College (1)	Sarah Lawrence College (1)	University of Denver (1)	University (1)
Grinnell College (2)	School of the Art Institute of	University of Hawaii - Manoa (1)	Westminster College (1)
Harding University (1)	Chicago (2)	University of Health Sciences and	Xavier University (1)
High Point University (1)	Spelman College (1)	Pharmacy - St. Louis (1)	Yale University (1)
Hollins University (1)	St. Louis University (2)	University of Houston (1)	
Humboldt State University (1)	St. Louis University - Madrid (1)		

# Alumni Hall of Fame Postponed to April 2022

Classes of 2020 and 2022 to be Honored April 22 & 23, 2022.

Due to continued limitations on gathering sizes, the Clayton Alumni Hall of Fame and Distinguished Educator Awards are being postponed until April 22 and 23, 2022. The Induction Ceremony will be held at Clayton High School the evening of Friday, April 22 and the Gala Celebration will be held at the Saint Louis Club on the evening of Saturday, April 23.

As a result of this change:

1. All nominations for the previously announced Class of 2021 will instead be held and considered for the Class of 2022.
2. Any nominations that were not selected in 2020 will also be held and considered for the Class of 2022.
3. Nominations for the Class of 2022 will be opened again in September for any additional submissions.
4. Class of 2022 Honorees will be selected and announced in October.

Thank you for your continued patience through these challenging circumstances! Please follow the Clayton Education Foundation on Facebook or Instagram to stay up to date on all news and activities!



CLAYTON ALUMNI

HALL OF FAME

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## CLASS OF 2021 PREPARES FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER: Page 6 & 7

The CHS Class of 2021 celebrated its accomplishments over the past 13 years at their commencement ceremony.



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