

New Play Spaces Support Student Growth, Enjoyment

The summer months give students across the District time to focus a little more on playing, whether it be through games with their friends, visiting the pool in Shaw Park or stopping by their school to enjoy some time on the playground. This summer, playing is also a focus for staff members and parent volunteers in the District as the long-awaited playground renovations at Meramec Elementary School and the Family Center come to fruition.

Meramec Elementary students will return to school this fall to discover a new play structure on the school's current blacktop, complete with slides, tunnels, climbing structures and swings. The equipment, which is all age-appropriate, also includes shaded spaces for students to congregate and play and a climbing net perfect for active, young learners. Phase two of the renovation is set to be completed by the end of the 2018-2019 school year and will include a nature area in place of the school's current playground.

"From the new nature area with secret pathways and sensory gardens to a new play structure with a rope climber and swings, we are confident that our Meramec students are going to have a blast on this new playground," said outgoing Meramec PTO President **Jenny Abeles**.

The Family Center's new play space under construction this summer also dovetails with the school's focus on nature education. Phase one of the upper playground renovation adjacent to the school's urban forest includes the installation of swings, a geodesic climbing dome, hand-over-hand bars and a sunshade. The school is continuing to fundraise for the second phase of the upper playground renovation, which will include a mud kitchen, sandbox and tunnels.



Phase one of the new Meramec Elementary playground (above) is slated to be completed in August, with a nature area scheduled for completion by the end of the 2018-2019 school year.

"Open-ended play equipment enhances imaginative play, inspires creativity and cooperation, and allows children to experience appropriate risk-taking," said Family Center Director **Debbie Reilly**. "Children will love playing on this new equipment!"

The playground renovations at both schools will include the installation of ground surfaces that will keep students safe as they play. The Meramec playground will include Eco Turf, a synthetic grass with a sand infill and a safety shock cushioning pad. At the Family Center, an engineered wood fiber will be installed.

The new Meramec and Family Center playgrounds have been several years in the making, relying heavily on the involvement of staff and parent volunteers throughout the planning and fundraising process. The time invested by these individuals, along with financial investments through donations from their school communities and through grants, has ensured these play spaces are not only developmentally appropriate, but they also provide a fun way for students to continue the learning process - even during recess. •



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DR. SEAN DOHERTY
SUPERINTENDENTFrom the District's
Lead Learner...

What do we want for all graduates? What are the cognitive, personal and interpersonal competencies we want for EVERY student who graduates from our District? In this edition of *Inside Clayton*, you will find the listing of colleges and universities our 2018 graduates will attend next school year. Behind each school listed is both a unique story and an individual learner. I believe beyond supporting ALL students in determining their post-graduation plans, we need to develop their capabilities for navigating an ever-changing world. We want our students to be adaptable, innovative and collaborative to handle both the novel experiences and the challenges they will face.

Over the past five years, we have supported the individual needs of our students using the following strategic themes as our guide.

- **Academic Excellence** - We will promote excellence in learning experiences and outcomes, fostering intellectual and personal development for each student.
- **Teacher and Administrator Excellence** - We will attract and retain high-quality, diverse teachers and administrators and encourage career-long growth and development to foster a culture that positively impacts student learning.
- **Growth and Development of the Whole Child** - We will foster students' intellectual and personal development by supporting their physical, social and emotional well-being.
- **Resource Management** - We will be prudent stewards of our resources through rigorous planning and budgeting and by working to enhance community, public and private support.

The impact of our strategic plan can be seen daily in our schools. Recently, we developed and initiated the Clayton Catalyst Program, which provided entrepreneurial

opportunities for high school students. Our Technology Integration Plan is coming to fruition with new devices and technology being more accessible and mobile for students at all levels. We aligned our resources with our focus on the whole child and hired social workers to support the social/emotional health of our students. We also initiated a Parent Speaker Series to support the development of parents. The Clayton Education Foundation provided \$40,000 worth of grants to support the innovative ideas of our teachers.

As we move forward with our next strategic plan, we need to start with strategic *thinking* to decide what we want for our students. We are going to first develop a *Profile of a Graduate* that will prioritize the competencies we want for every Clayton graduate. This profile will allow us to work backwards (starting with students first) as we collaborate to develop our next strategic plan. I envision a plan that will influence our approach to learning and challenge the mental models of what our schools look like for our students. In August, I will start seeking community support in this process. I would appreciate if you would consider participating.

The District has been and continues to be a good steward of the resources we receive from the community. However, in order to maintain and enhance our excellence, we need to have our financial resources aligned with our goals to ensure they are sustainable. As a result, our Board and administration are looking ahead and exploring the possibility of asking the community for a tax increase in the near future. Please refer to the article on Page 5 for more information.

Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

The School District of Clayton's strategic plan, approved in 2013, guides the work of the District's teachers, administrators and staff members every day. Throughout this newsletter, the icons below indicate the strategic themes highlighted in each article.



Academic Excellence



Growth and Development of the Whole Child



Teacher and Administrator Excellence



Resource Management

District Welcomes New Administrators

The School District of Clayton is pleased to welcome new administrators to the District for the 2018-2019 school year.



Patrick Fisher

Patrick Fisher has been named principal at Meramec Elementary School. Fisher previously served as principal at Wild Horse Elementary School in the Rockwood School District for the past five years, where he led the school to be named both a Missouri School of Character and a National School of Character. He also has served as an assistant principal, administrative intern, school counselor and fifth-grade teacher in the Rockwood School District. Fisher holds a Master of Education in Elementary Administration, a Master of Arts in School

Counseling and Bachelor of Science degrees in both Elementary Education and Philosophy. He began his tenure in Clayton on July 1.



Stephanie Robbins

The District's food service provider, Chartwells, has appointed **Stephanie Robbins** as the District's new director of dining services. Robbins joined Chartwells and the District in April after earning her Master of Arts in Family and Consumer Science from Fontbonne University and completing her dietetic internship. Prior to that, she earned a Bachelor of Applied Health Sciences in Nutrition and Dietetics from Indiana University. •



Back-to-School Resources Available

It's never too early to start preparing for the upcoming school year! Check out your school's website for school supply lists and other helpful information about the start of the 2018-2019 school year. Download the District's mobile app from the App Store or Google Play to have the latest school and District news and information at your fingertips. •

Important Back-to-School Dates

Aug. 13

- CHS Freshman Orientation, 8:30 a.m.
- New to CHS Student Orientation, 1:30 p.m.
- WMS Walk-Throughs
 - Seventh and Eighth Grade, 3:30 p.m.
 - Sixth Grade, 5 p.m.

Aug. 14

- CPT Kickoff, 9 a.m.
 - New Family Orientation, 8:15 a.m.
- GLN Meet Your Teacher Day, 3:30 p.m.
 - New Family Orientation, 2:30 p.m.
- MER Meet Your Teacher Day
 - New Families in K-5, 2:30 p.m.
 - Returning Families in 1-5, 3:30 p.m.
 - Popsicles on the Playground for K-5, 4:15 p.m.

Aug. 15

First Day of School

Aug. 21

- GLN Open House/Curriculum Night, 6:30 p.m.
- CPT Open House/Curriculum Night, 7 p.m.
- MER Open House/Curriculum Night, 7 p.m.

Aug. 23

- CHS Freshman Parent Night, 6 p.m.
- CHS Open House, 7 p.m.

Aug. 28

WMS Open House, 7 p.m.


Sept. 6

FC Open House, 7 p.m.



Wydown Middle School Seventh-Grade Social Studies Teacher **Emily Szyman** talks with then seventh-grader **Tyler Gant** and his father, **Brian**, during the 2017-2018 Walk-Through.

Class of 2018 Prepares for the Next Chapter

Clayton High School's Class of 2018 celebrated its accomplishments over the past 13 years and prepared for new challenges and successes during its commencement ceremony on Thursday, May 31, at Chaifetz Arena. 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. • 



Far right: The Class of 2018 gathers at Chaifetz Arena for the commencement ceremony on May 31.

Right: CHS graduates (from left) **Lauren Praiss, Sophie Bernstein, Ethan Bernstein and Audrey Goedegebuure** pose for a photo prior to the start of their commencement ceremony.



Moving On to Higher Education

Members of the Class of 2018 have chosen to attend the colleges and universities listed below. The number of graduates attending each institution is included in parentheses.

Alabama A&M University (2)	ECAM Lyon	New York University	Tulane University (3)
American University	Emory University	North Central College	University of British Columbia
Arizona State University	Harvard University (2)	Northeastern University (3)	University of California, Berkeley
Barnard College	Harvey Mudd College	Northwestern University (2)	University of Chicago
Belmont University	Hawaii Pacific University	Occidental College	University of Colorado, Boulder
Beloit College (2)	Howard University	Purdue University (3)	University of Denver (2)
Boston University	Indiana University, Bloomington (2)	Ranken Technical College (3)	University of Kansas (2)
Bowdoin College	Iowa State University	Rice University	University of Kentucky
Bradley University	Jackson State University	Saint Louis University (5)	University of Miami
Bryant University	Johns Hopkins University	Santa Clara University	University of Michigan (2)
Bryn Mawr College	Johnson & Wales University, Denver	Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville (2)	University of Mississippi
Butler University (2)	Kansas State University	Spelman College	University of Missouri, Columbia (18)
Carleton College	Kenyon College	St. Bonaventure University	University of Missouri, Kansas City (3)
Case Western Reserve University	Lake Forest College	St. Louis Community College Forest Park (12)	University of Missouri, St. Louis
Centre College	Langston University	Meramec (7)	University of Pennsylvania
Clemson University	Loyola Marymount University	St. Olaf College	University of Southern California (4)
Colorado College (2)	Loyola University, Chicago (2)	Stanford University	University of Toronto
Colorado School of Mines	Lynn University (2)	Tennessee State University (4)	University of Virginia
Colorado State University	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	The American University of Paris	University of Washington
Columbia College, Chicago (2)	McGill University	The George Washington University	University of Wisconsin, Madison (2)
Columbia University	Miami University, Oxford (3)	The Naropa University	Washington University in St. Louis (9)
Concordia University Wisconsin	Missouri Baptist University	The Ohio State University	Webster University (3)
Dartmouth College	Missouri State University, Springfield (2)	The University of Alabama	Wheaton College
DePaul University	Missouri State University, West Plains	The University of Edinburgh	Xavier University
DePauw University	Missouri University of Science and Technology (3)	The University of Iowa (3)	Yale University (2)
Dominican University of California	Missouri Valley College	Truman State University (4)	
Drexel University	Missouri Western State University		
Eastern Illinois University			

District Named a 2018 Top Workplace by *Post-Dispatch*

The School District of Clayton has been named a 2018 Top Workplace by *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. The list is based solely on employee feedback gathered through a third-party survey administered by research partner Energage, LLC. The anonymous survey measures several aspects of workplace culture, including alignment, execution and connection.

“Top Workplaces is more than just recognition,” said **Doug Claffey**, CEO of Energage. “Our research shows organizations that earn the award attract better talent, experience lower turnover, and are better equipped to deliver bottom-line results. Their leaders prioritize and carefully craft a healthy workplace culture that supports employee engagement.”



This is the first year the District has participated in the program, and only 150 area employers scored high enough to make the list. More than 350 Clayton staff took the survey, which represents about 77 percent of the District’s staff.

“It’s an honor to be recognized as a Top Workplace but even more special when you realize that our employees were our evaluators,” explained Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources **Dr. Tim Dilg**. “Clayton has a wonderfully passionate, dedicated and innovative group of employees who come to school each day to educate, inspire and empower our students, making it an exceptional place to both learn and work.” •



2018-2019 Budget Update

Last month, the Board of Education approved the budget for the 2018-2019 school year. Budget highlights include the following.

- The operating revenue budget is projected to decrease by \$812,000, or 1.64 percent to a total of \$48.6 million, largely due to a reduction of the District’s overall assessed valuation and subsequent payback of protested taxes, which is anticipated to be approximately 40 percent of total collections.
- The operating expenditure budget is projected to increase by \$783,000 or 1.47 percent to a total of \$54.0 million, despite how the District continues to work to control costs and align resources with priorities while also looking at other strategies to achieve financial balance with minimal impact on students and classrooms.
- Operating revenues will fall short of operating expenses causing a reduction in the operating fund balance of \$5.4 million.
- The net operating fund balance is projected to be \$10.1 million or 18.8 percent of budgeted operating expenditures, which is slightly above

the Board’s fund balance goal of 18 percent of budgeted operating expenses.

The District’s largest source of revenue is local property taxes, which account for approximately 75 percent of operating revenues. Missouri’s constitution, specifically the Hancock Amendment, restricts the District’s ability to increase its revenues from local property taxes, rendering them flat and essentially unable to keep pace with expenses. Stagnant revenue, inflationary pressures increasing expenses and slow new construction growth have caused operating expenses to exceed operating revenues for the past three years and draw down fund balances.

While deficit spending is part of the natural cycle of school finance, it cannot be sustained indefinitely, as it erodes the District’s fund balance. A school district’s fund balance serves two main purposes:

- to ensure adequate cash flow for operations throughout the fiscal year
- to offset expenditures in years when a district’s expenditures exceed revenues

Community Elects Rubin, Wilson to BOE

School District of Clayton parents and residents **Amy Rubin** and **Jason Wilson** were elected to the District’s Board of Education during the April 3, 2018, election. The pair was sworn-in to three-year terms on the Board at its meeting on April 11.

Rubin, an incumbent, was also re-elected to her position as Board Secretary. Additionally, the Board voted to retain President **Kristin Redington**, Vice President **Lily Raymond** and Treasurer **Joe Miller** in their officer positions for a second yearlong term. •



Amy Rubin



Jason Wilson

A school district builds its fund balance in the years when revenues exceed expenditures, usually following a voter-approved tax increase or a revenue increase from other sources. Districts then spend down their fund balance once operating expenses begin to exceed operating revenues. When a district’s fund balance falls below its required minimum, it must either engage in short-term borrowing, reduce its expenditures, increase its revenues or a combination of all three. Current projections, which include new revenue from projects currently under construction in Clayton’s Central Business District, indicate the District will fall below its fund balance goal during the 2019-2020 school year.

The District’s most recent voter-approved operating tax increase was in April 2003 (prior to that, the last operating levy increase was approved in April 1988). Please look for opportunities this fall to learn more about the District’s current financial situation as we consider what steps to take to ensure that we can continue to provide the high-quality education our community expects and explore the possibility of asking the community to approve an operating tax increase in April 2019. •



Important Dates

More information on School District of Clayton events is available at claytonschools.net.

August	
9-10	Teacher Preparation
13-14	Teacher Preparation
13	CHS Freshman Orientation, 8:30 a.m.
13	CHS New to CHS Student Orientation, 1:30 p.m.
13	WMS Seventh- and Eighth-Grade Walk-Through, 3:30 p.m.
13	WMS Sixth-Grade Walk-Through, 5 p.m.
14	CPT New Family Orientation, 8:15 a.m.
14	CPT Kickoff, 9 a.m.
14	GLN New Family Orientation, 2:30 p.m.
14	GLN Meet Your Teacher, 3:30 p.m.
14	MER Meet Your Teacher, 2:30 p.m. (new K-5), 3:30 p.m. (returning 1-5)
14	MER Popsicles on the Playground, 4:15 p.m.
15	First Day of School
21	GLN Curriculum Night, 6:30 p.m.
21	CPT Curriculum Night, 7 p.m.
21	MER Curriculum Night, 7 p.m.
23	CHS Freshman Parent Night, 6 p.m.
23	CHS Open House, 7 p.m.
28	WMS Open House, 7 p.m.
29	BOE Meeting, 7 p.m.
Sept. 6	FC Open House, 7 p.m.

KEY	
BOE	– Board of Education
CHS	– Clayton High School
CPT	– Captain Elementary
FC	– Family Center
GLN	– Glenridge Elementary
MER	– Meramec Elementary
WMS	– Wydown Middle School

The School District of Clayton does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age or disability.

STAY INFORMED WITH OUR MOBILE APP!

Stay up-to-date on the latest District and school news and events by downloading the School District of Clayton's mobile app. The app allows you to customize the news and notifications you want to receive, add District and school events directly to the calendar on your mobile device and readily access school websites, staff directories, lunch menus and much more!

Prepare for the upcoming school year by downloading the app today in the App Store or on Google Play. •

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NEW PLAY SPACES: Page 1

Students at the Family Center and Meramec Elementary School will enjoy new play spaces this fall thanks to the efforts of District staff and parent volunteers.



Educate. Inspire. Empower.

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INSIDE CLAYTON

July 2018