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Winter 2021
INSIDE CLAYTON

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Wydown Middle School Named a National Blue Ribbon School

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) alongside the U.S. Department of Education announced eight Missouri Gold Star Schools and National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2021. Wydown Middle School was recognized for both of these awards.

Dr. Margie Vandeven, Missouri's Commissioner of Education, visited WMS in August to award WMS for being one of eight schools in Missouri to be named a Missouri Gold Star School for 2021. Also in attendance were Missouri State Board of Education Vice President, O. Victor Lenz, Jr., Ph.D.; Missouri State Board of Education member, Pamela Westbrook-Hodge; Missouri State Representative, Ian Mackey; Missouri DESE Area Supervisor, Craig Larson; and Missouri State Senator, Brian Williams. From the district, Superintendent, Dr. Nisha Patel; BOE President,



Amy Rubin; BOE Vice President, Gary Pierson; BOE Secretary, Stacy Siwak; and BOE Director, Joe Miller, Director were also present.

Dr. Vandeven presented a plaque for WMS being one of Missouri's Gold Star Schools and Missouri State Senator Brian Williams gave WMS an Official Resolution recognized by the State of Missouri. The Missouri Gold Star School program recognizes schools for their academic achievement and or serve a significant amount of disadvantaged students.

In September, WMS was named a 2021 National Blue Ribbon School. WMS was nominated in the



Dr. Margie Vandeven, Missouri's Commissioner of Education, visited a science class at WMS and learned about the students' current projects.

Exemplary High Performing Schools category. This is the second year in a row, and third time since 2016, that a Clayton school has been named a National Blue Ribbon School. WMS joined a select list of schools, which already includes Clayton High School and Clayton's three elementary schools, across the country who have received this award more than once since the program began in 1982. Overall based on academic achievement or in closing gaps amongst student subgroups, this program recognizes schools for their dedication to excellence.

"Wydown Middle School provides an outstanding learning experience for our students and their families," said Superintendent Dr. Nisha Patel. "Our teachers and staff do amazing work supporting our students at a crucial stage of their academic journey with us," added Patel. "It's a school that not only represents everything

we value about the Clayton experience, but also exemplifies the high standards of a National Blue Ribbon School." •



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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:

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DR. NISHA PATEL SUPERINTENDENT

From the Superintendent...

Dear Clayton Community,

By the time you're reading this, we will be well into the second quarter of our school year and close to finishing up the first semester. While it has not been without challenges, it has been quite an amazing year so far, most of which can be attributed to the hard work, dedication and commitment of our teachers, administrators and staff. They work every day to provide our students with the best Clayton experience, creating defining moments that will stay with our graduates long after they finish their journey through our schools.

As you will read in this edition of *Inside Clayton*, Wydown Middle School was named a 2021 National Blue Ribbon School in September, making it the third Clayton school to receive that honor since 2016. All of our schools have received this recognition at least twice, with this being Wydown's third Blue Ribbon since 1982. Moreover, all of our schools continue to be ranked among the best in the country, most recently in the 2022 Niche Best Of rankings. As a District, Clayton was ranked in the top 20 in the country and, not only the best place to teach, but also the district with the best teachers in Missouri. CHS is recognized as the top public high school for STEM, Wydown the top middle school in the state and our elementary schools grabbed three of the top four spots in the state, with Meramec ranked as the best public elementary school in the state of Missouri.

Our teachers are one of the main reasons we are able to accomplish such great things in this District. We feature two of them in this issue who have recently received state and national accolades. However, if you're familiar with our teachers, you know that all of them are worthy of recognition. You can also read about our students, who are always growing as learners, being recognized as scientists, journalists and National Merit Scholars. (Nationally, less than one percent of all students are recognized as National Merit Schools. However, this year more than seven percent of our CHS seniors received that honor.)

We continue to navigate the world of teaching and learning during a global pandemic. Our parents,



students and staff have partnered together to help keep each other safe, healthy and learning at school. We have implemented a vaccination or weekly testing program for our staff and are requiring any visitor, vendor or volunteer who will be interacting with students to show they are fully vaccinated or they have tested negative for COVID-19 within the 48 hours preceding their visit. Everyone's commitment to staying safe and healthy has allowed us to keep focused on learning and the important work we are doing as part of our strategic plan: fostering a sense of belonging, developing a common understanding of empowered learners and working to meet the social and emotional needs of our students. Anyone can see examples of this work throughout our schools, whether it's students at the Family Center working together and problem-solving to move a tire up a hill, our high school students thriving in athletics and activities or PAC-ED or one of our parent support groups working to increase awareness and building hope for post-secondary experiences for students of all abilities. Our learning community is doing great things!

Of course, everything we do would not be possible without the ongoing support of the Clayton community. Many of you move into the District because you believe in our schools and the experiences they will provide for your children. Your belief and commitment is what allows us to make decisions, embrace innovation as a mindset and work everyday to ensure our schools are a place for everyone to grow as learners in head and heart. Thank you for your ongoing support. It is truly a privilege to have the opportunity to lead such an outstanding school district.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nisha Patel".

Nisha Patel, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Family Center Students Learn Through Outdoor Play

The Family Center understands the importance of outdoor play. On the Gay Ave and Clayton High School campuses, there are a number of resources and ways that students interact with nature. The FC teachers focus on providing as many opportunities as possible for children to learn new skills outdoors.

“At the Family Center, we value children having the opportunity to have both structured and unstructured time in nature,” said Catherine Katz, FC Nature Educator.

There are gardens at both locations that students help maintain throughout the year and grow their own harvest. These gardens are filled with flowers, vegetables, herbs and native plants. Learning gardening skills contributes to their knowledge about and respect for the environment.

Butterfly habitats on one of the playgrounds act as learning labs for young students to use their scientific skills to observe the life cycles of a butterfly.

“Outdoor play offers many health benefits and supports development in all areas of our curricular strands - social emotional development and approaches to learning, language and literacy, mathematics, science and nature education, and music, movement and dramatic play,” said Kristen Retter, FC Early Childhood Curriculum Coordinator.



The Gay Ave. campus includes a large nature space. The area has evolved since the FC moved to this location in 1990. It began as a wooded area with an obscured nature trail.

As time went on, trash and invasive plants were removed, mulch was added and the space became a wonderful area for children to explore. A fence surrounding the area was added a few years ago. The Nature Space became the beautiful, inviting area it is today through the FC’s collaboration with the community: the City of Clayton Parks and Recreation department, district facility services, staff and volunteers from the District and Clayton community volunteers. Students now get their exercise and challenge themselves as they climb trees and balance on fallen logs. They create social bonds with others as they explore new spaces, engage in pretend play and work together to build forts out of nature. They can even learn to identify different plants, animals and bugs in nature through these experiences.

“During outdoor activities, children are developing their gross motor skills, social interactions and taking healthy risks, which builds confidence in young children,” said Katz. “Nature education provides children with a foundation for a life-long relationship between themselves, the earth and its natural resources.” •



District Highly Ranked in 2022 Niche Best Schools Lists

The 2022 Niche Best Schools rankings have been released. The District has been ranked as the second best school district in the state and as the 17th best district in the country. The District has also been ranked as the best place to teach in Missouri and the top district with the best teachers in Missouri. The District has also been ranked in the following categories:

- Best Public High Schools: #2 in Missouri
- Best High Schools for STEM - Combined Private and Public School Ranking: #6 (Top ranked public high school) in Missouri
- Best Public Middle Schools: #1 in Missouri
- Best Public Elementary Schools: 3 of the Top 4 in Missouri (#1 MER, #3 CPT, #4 GLN)

Niche K-12 website’s rankings are based on data collected from various sources including the U.S. Department of Education, directly from the schools, reports from Niche users, and many other specialized sources for each category. They have garnered almost 2.5 million reviews in total from students, parents, teachers, and others. •



CHS Students Shine as UMSL STARS



Yiyun Xu

Jiabei Han and Yiyun Xu, students at Clayton High School, were accepted into the Students as and Teachers as Research Scientists (STARS) program from the University of Missouri in St. Louis (UMSL). They were two of 36 students chosen. The program ran from June 7 to July 16.

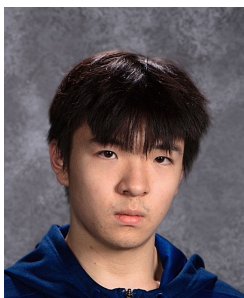
According to the UMSL website, "The mission of the STARS program is to enhance the understanding and augment the application of the philosophy and processes of science and mathematics for teachers and their students through expertly guided, real life experiences in inquiry and discovery."

As a part of the program, students spend their program creating a research paper on a scientific topic of their choice. Each student was assigned a professional mentor. Throughout the six weeks, they completed research and participated in activities and lectures. STARS offered daily lectures from professors on topics based on knowledge from their respective fields. In addition, college admission counselors met with students with tips on how to apply to college. To accommodate the current conditions, UMSL included remote/online work to replace on-campus work for the program.

Yiyun Xu's project was based on analyzing and reviewing all of the different rodent OS models from published papers. This included the type of cell injected, methods of injection, tumor outcome, etc. Their goal was to discover the type of model that best fits the criteria for properly studying the IMT. The final paper was titled "Effect of osteosarcoma on the induced membrane technique: a review of current rodent osteosarcoma models." They worked with Dr. Sara McBride-Gagyi in completing the lab research. Yiyun's favorite part of the STARS program was collecting and analyzing data.

"I really enjoyed my experience at STARS because not only was I able to conduct professional level research, I was also able to meet many other high schoolers around the region with the same passion..." said Yiyun Xu.

Jiabei Han researched biogeochemistry and the temptations of pyrite formations. The final paper was titled "The Temptations of Pyrite Formations: Why Variability in a Sample Exists." They worked in the Fike (Stable Isotope Biogeochemistry) Lab at Washington University in St. Louis. •



Jiabei Han

District Receives Communications Awards

The School District of Clayton's Communications Team received several awards from the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) for their 2021 award program. The District was honored in the following categories: Golden Achievement Awards and Publications/Digital Media Awards. These awards are a reflection of our amazing teachers, students and staff for providing the opportunity to tell stories about their incredible work. Chris Tennill, Chief Communications Officer, and Todd Schumacher, Digital Communications Specialist, attended the 2021 NSPRA conference to present on the Diversity Recruitment Fair campaign. Read on below to learn more about the awards and which projects were awarded. •



NSPRA's Publications and Digital Media

Excellence Awards Finalists: These awards recognize outstanding education publications and marketing/informational materials in both print and electronic form, video/radio/television programs, social media and websites. The top submissions in each category receive the Award of Excellence. Awards of Merit and Honorable Mentions are also given.

Award of Excellence

- Clayton Education Foundation (Annual Report)
- 2020-2023 Strategic Plan (Special Purpose Publication)
- Family Center Virtual Tour/Marketing Video (Video Produced In House)

Award of Merit

- Inside Clayton 2020-2021 (Print Newsletter - External Audience)
- Diversity Recruitment Fair Social Media (Social Media)
- CHS COVID-19 PSA (Video Produced In House)
- Strategic Plan 2020-2023 Rollout Video (Video Produced In House)

Honorable Mention

- eNews (E-Newsletter External Audience)
- CHS National Women In Sports Day (Video Produced In House)

NSPRA's Golden Achievement Awards: These awards recognize exemplary work in all aspects of school public relations, communication, marketing and engagement.

Diversity Recruitment Fair Campaign

- Campaign included social media, digital and radio campaigns to recruit attendees.

Black History is Essential

- A video campaign collaboration between all three elementary schools.

Students Create Buttons to Advocate for Upstanding Behavior

Jill Warner's sixth grade health classes as well as other health classes at Wydown Middle School have been learning about advocacy in a creative way. As a part of National Bullying Prevention month in October, they made buttons with their own messages around the message of being an "upstanding" person. They created two each; one for themselves and one to give to a fellow student, teacher, parent, or friend. The intention

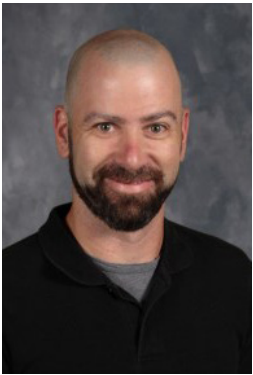


behind this project was to give students a reminder to be courageous and encourage students to take positive action in the moments when doing what's right can be difficult.

For educators looking for similar activities to promote inclusivity, resources can be found on PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center website (<https://www.pacer.org/bullying/nbpm/>). •



Captain Teacher Selected as the MOSHAPE Teacher of the Year



Keith Baker, a Physical Education Teacher at Captain Elementary School, has been awarded the Missouri Society of Health & Physical Educators (MOSHAPE) District Teacher of the Year Award for 2021 for the St. Louis district.

The mission of MOSHAPE is to "support, encourage, and provide assistance to promote programs in health, leisure, and movement-related activities for the enrichment of human life." As a MOSHAPE Teacher of the Year nominee, Baker went through a rigorous application process and the selection committee was impressed by his experience and supporting letters. He was awarded to be recognized across Missouri for his role as an educator and knowledge of the field of physical education and health.

Baker has been teaching for 21 years in the District. He received his bachelor's degree in science in education with an emphasis in physical education in 2000 from the University of Missouri in St. Louis (UMSL). In 2004, he received his master's degree in secondary education with emphasis in physical education. To further his knowledge as an educator, he returned to UMSL to earn a second master's degree in school counseling.

Nominations for the 2022 MOSHAPE awards are already open. Administrators, parents, colleagues all can nominate a MOSHAPE member. For more information, you can visit the MOSHAPE website. MOSHAPE Membership is free for all educators and administrators. •

Visitor Management System Makes School Even Safer

The School District of Clayton will begin the BadgePass visitor management system in the 2021-22 school year and has replaced the paper-based logs. It allows schools and buildings to produce visitor badges, monitor volunteer hours and electronically check all visitors against registered sexual offender databases. The overall goal is to better control access to all schools, thus providing enhanced protection for our students and staff.

BadgePass is a visitor registration system that enhances school security by reading visitor driver's licenses, mapping the visitor to a specified location or employee, comparing visitor information to an official database, then printing a visitor badge that can include the person's photo. The BadgePass reader recognizes all state-issued IDs, driver's licenses and military IDs.



The safety of our students and staff is our highest priority, and parents have told us that school visitor management should be a focal point. BadgePass will provide a consistent system to validate the identity of visitors. The system quickly prints visitor badges that can include a photo, the name of the visitor, time, date, destination and purpose of visit. It also provides a more secure visitor record history and prevents new visitors from seeing the identity of other visitors on the old paper logs. School and district administrators can run reports on who has been visiting quickly and easily. •

CHS Science Teacher Receives 2021 Yale Educator Award

CHS Science Teacher Nathan Peck is a recipient of the 2021 Yale Educator award sponsored by the Yale Office of Undergraduate Admissions. This award recognizes educators internationally who inspire their students to perform their best and ignite a passion for achieving excellence.

Peck was nominated by Koray Akduman, CHS Class of 2021 and Yale Class of 2025, for having a significant impact on their life. He was then selected as a winner by a committee in the Yale Office of Undergraduate Admissions. Part of why he was nominated was for his ability to encourage his students to pursue their goals.

“This award is special to me because of the student who made the nomination. Koray Akduman was one of the most inquisitive students I’ve ever taught. He always exhibited a genuine curiosity about how nature works and he conducted many extracurricular experiments outside of our curriculum. He’s the type of student that every educator hopes to interact with at least once in their career. Koray was an exceptional and memorable person,” said Peck.

Yale attributes the exceptional quality of the Yale student body to educators like these recipients of the 2021 Yale Educator Award, who shape their students long before they attend Yale.

Peck has served beyond his role as a teacher as an Academic Challenge in Engineering and Sciences (ACES) staff adviser for the team that has won many awards. He has also received the 2005 Loeb Prize that recognizes excellence in teaching math and science.



Peck was one of 50 teachers chosen to receive this award out of 305 nominees from 38 states and 17 countries.

“It has been an honor to work alongside so many talented and amazing teachers at Clayton High School that stayed devoted to developing meaningful relationships with our students throughout the pandemic and virtual learning. I believe that every teacher here deserves this award as much or more than I do, which makes me feel both humbled and proud to be a part of this community,” said Peck. •

The Globe declared a 2020-2021 Pacemaker Finalist

The Globe has been named an NSPA Pacemaker finalist for the 2020-2021 school year. The National Scholastic Press Association has named 66 scholastic student newspapers, newsmagazines and specialty magazines as finalists in its prestigious Pacemaker competition.

Finalists were invited to attend the NSPA Awards Ceremony by registering for the JEA/NSPA Fall National High School Journalism Convention to be held virtually. The winners were announced during the ceremony at 3 p.m. CT on Saturday, Nov. 13.

At the ceremony, the Globe was included in the following categories: honorable mention for the Digital Story of the Year for the Multimedia Feature Story on “American Policing,” and fourth place for the Local Climate Change Reporting for the Climate Change News Story called “In Danger.”

The Editors-in-Chief for the 2020-2021 school year were Angela Xiao, Sofia Erlin and Shane LaGessee. Congratulations to them and the staff on a job well done!•



Owen Auston-Babcock and Ella Cuneo help prepare the next edition of The Globe.

Thirty-two CHS Seniors Named 2022 National Merit Scholars

Sixteen CHS Seniors have been announced as 2022 National Merit Semifinalists for the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC®) scholarship program. Nationally, less than one percent of all students make the cut to become semifinalists. The 16 Semifinalists at CHS represent more than seven percent of the class of 2022. Approximately 16,000 Semifinalists in the annual National Merit Scholarship Program were named this year.

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation’s (NMSC) mission is to “recognize and honor the academically talented students of the United States.” The NMSC promotes a respect for learning, recognizes talented students and connects organizations who wish to create scholarships to those with high academic achievement.

The academically talented high school seniors who are named have an opportunity to continue in the competition for 7,500 National Merit

scholarships worth more than \$30 million offered next spring.

To be considered for a Merit Scholarship® award, Semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance to the Finalist level of the competition. About 90 percent of the Semifinalists are expected to attain Finalist standing, and about half of the Finalists will win a National Merit Scholarship, earning the Merit Scholar® title.

Sixteen students have been selected as 2022 National Merit Commended Students. They are being honored for their excellent performance on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) and placing among the top 50,000 students in the competition. Although they will no longer be in the competition for the National Merit Scholarships, we as a District are extremely proud of their academic achievements. •



National Merit Semifinalists

Mark Anzilotti	Jessie Lin
Tudor Belean	Gaby Madriz
Madeline Brown	Isaac Millians
Miguel Buitrago	Margaret Mooney
Tom Dupor	Alexander Pompian
Thomas Gustafson	Zachary Wang
Kylee Kest	Yiyun Xu
James Lenze	Tobias Zaidman



National Merit Commended Students

Jack Blase	Madison Miller
Vivian Chen	Naveed Naemi
Aaradhya Diwan	Natalie Noonan
Jiabei Han	Heidemarie Panzer
Sarah Heath	Jacob Strand
Pablo Kerschensteiner Soto	Sarah Taylor
Kathleen Ko	Benjamin Torio
Camilla Meyers	Abigail Van Emden

Hall of Fame and Distinguished Educators

Nine Clayton High School alumni have been selected for induction into the Clayton Alumni Hall of Fame's Class of 2022 and three educators have been honored as 2022 Distinguished Educators. Members of both the Class of 2020 and Class of 2022 will be recognized during a joint ceremony hosted by the Clayton Education Foundation on April 22 - 23, 2022. View 2022 honorees below:

HALL OF FAME HONOREES

- Katherine Bernhardt (1993)
- Jairus Byrd (2005)
- Chuck Cohn (2004)
- David Garfield (1974)
- Larry Gellman (1966)
- Claudia Newman Henry (1984)
- Vanessa Merit Normberg (1993)
- Steven Prstojevich (1978)
- John Rosenfeld (1970)

DISTINGUISHED EDUCATORS

- Suzanne Billhmer
 - Nick Otten
 - Rex Rice
- Visit the CEF website (www.claytoneducationfoundation.org) to learn more. •



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This is the second year in a row, and third time since 2016, that a Clayton school has been named a National Blue Ribbon School.



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