If you visit a classroom in the Park Hill School District, you might notice something very different than the classrooms you remember from your own childhood. Just as in days gone by, Park Hill students still get strong foundations in core academic skills like math and reading. But today, Park Hill teachers are also preparing students for life in ways that can't be measured as easily by a test.

Our teachers help students make connections to their learning and find a sense of purpose for their work and their futures. From kindergarten through 12th grade, students learn skills like creativity and problem solving, as well as emotional resilience and coping skills.

You can see this in special programs like the LEAD Innovation Studio and Professional Studies, but you can also see it in classrooms throughout the Park Hill School District. As Dr. Jeff Klein, our assistant superintendent for academic services, says, “We're moving from focusing on having good test scores to having highly capable and resilient graduates.”

Students at Union Chapel Elementary learned about energy transfer by using cards to represent the energy that members of the food chain receive from the sun. In order to live, students who represented plants had one card while rabbits needed to take two and wolves needed to get four. This interactive science lesson helps students understand this concept more deeply than they might if they learned it from a book.
Dear Park Hill Community,

The top moments from this semester reflect our variety of success stories. We have five National Merit Semifinalists and six Commended students. Our class of 2018 has a 22.3 ACT composite score that tops the state composite score of 20.4 and the national composite score of 21.0, and we appear to have the highest composite score in the Kansas City, Missouri, area, based on the results other districts shared with us. We had many student athletes win state championships and earn both athletic and academic awards.

I had the privilege of spending time with students, staff members, families and our community members, and these experiences are some of my favorite Park Hill memories so far this school year. From opening our LEAD Innovation Studio to breaking ground on our new middle school to visiting every building to update everyone on our enrollment-based, long-range facilities plan, every day is a reminder of how fortunate I am to serve as superintendent for a district defined by our commitment to students’ futures.

As we move forward, 2018’s important events will include our Board of Education naming our new elementary school and middle school in the spring and setting criteria for redistricting in the fall.

Your support inspires me as we celebrate the end of 2017, take our next steps in 2018 and plan for a future that continues to follow our vision of Building Successful Futures – Each Student – Every Day!

Sincerely,
Jeanette Cowherd
Superintendent

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**STRAIGHT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT**

**ANNUAL AUDIT**
The Board approved the fiscal year 2017 audit results from an independent auditor. The auditor told the Board that the district received an unmodified opinion, which is the highest possible result.

**ENROLLMENT UPDATE**
Our 2017-2018 enrollment is 11,461 students, which is a 1.5-percent increase from last school year. Our K-12 enrollment has increased for 34 consecutive years.

**NEWS WORTH KNOWING**

**BIG SAVINGS FROM PURCHASING**
The district saved taxpayers $103,772.15 during the last year by using a purchasing card, and we have saved a total of $423,777.86 from the time we joined the program through August.

Students, staff, Board of Education members and local elected officials all helped break ground at the future site of our fourth middle school in October. It will open in the fall of 2019.
DISTRICT SUCCESS STORIES

Visit our website at www.parkhill.k12.mo.us for more information on these success stories. We will have more news to share in our next edition.

QUESTBRIDGE AWARDS

Five seniors from Park Hill and Park Hill South high schools earned recognition as finalists for the QuestBridge National College Match program, qualifying them for full scholarship awards to one of 39 college partners if they are matched with one of the schools. Hanad Hirad, Derek Dillard, Josiah Dycus and Sophya Guwn from Park Hill High School and Elisabeth Andersen from Park Hill South High School are among the 5,759 finalists chosen out of the 15,606 applicants.

SOCCER TEAM ACADEMIC AWARDS

Park Hill High School’s 2016-2017 girls and boys soccer teams earned the Academic Award from the National Soccer Coaches Association of America. The girls earned a 3.90 grade-point average, and the boys team earned a 3.67 GPA.

CHOIR HONORS

Thirty one of our choir students are members of this year’s all-district choirs and honor choirs. Deanna Eberhart, Park Hill High School senior, alto, earned a spot in the all-state choir, and Sarah Storm, PHHS senior, soprano, is an alternate.

PSA AWARD

Sophomores Mary Garrett and Alexis Nigro and junior Chance Jeffrey earned second place in MIPA’s PSA Challenge. The students had two weeks to complete a challenge with the prompt “Every action has a reaction.”

ENERGY SAVINGS AWARD

We received an award from KCP&L for outstanding achievements in energy efficiency after we saved $882,633 on energy from October 2016 to September 2017. We saved a total of $6.3 million from October 2009 to September 2017.

TENNIS CHAMPION

Park Hill South High School sophomore Eva Kresovic won the state tennis Class 2 singles championship.
In an effort to keep the community informed, the “Park Hill Connection” goes to every home in the Park Hill School District, even those without students in our schools. Thank you for your support of your community’s schools!

**CALENDAR:**
- Dec. 14: Board of Education Meeting
- Dec. 19: First day to file for Board
- Dec. 22: End of first semester; half day
- Dec. 25 - Jan. 1: Winter break
- Jan. 2: No school for students
- Jan. 11: Board meeting

**GET CONNECTED:**
Our website has lots of ways for you to engage with Park Hill Schools. Find them all at www.parkhill.k12.mo.us.

- Social Media: Follow the district’s Facebook page and Twitter feed.
- First Hand E-mail News: Get district news and highlights from Board meetings.
- First Hand Mobile: Get text message alerts about weather and emergencies.
- Park Hill TV: See our videos on YouTube and Spectrum Cable channel 18.
- Online Comment Portal: Share your comments, suggestions for improvement and even your compliments.

*Ninth-grade student McKenzie Kidd worked on a practice math test about percentages and decimals at the Russell Jones Education Center.*