Renner Elementary’s fifth-grade teachers are covering the same curriculum this year as they did last year, but the way they are teaching is entirely different, and they say students are much more interested in their learning.

For example, when students in Derek Hutchinson’s, Lindsay Koerner’s and Meredith Reynolds’ classes learned about the human body last year, they listened carefully to lessons about the circulatory system, the respiratory system and the digestive system. Then they took tests to measure their learning.

This year, the teachers broke their classes into teams of students that created persuasive campaigns to convince a panel of teachers that their assigned body systems should not be shut down. Through their own research, they learned more about body systems than students in the past could through traditional teaching methods. Students came away with a deep knowledge about how the body works and how the systems interact with each other.

And while the students learned this science lesson, they also practiced skills like creativity, problem solving and communication.

This is project-based learning, and it is creating a lot of excitement for students in the fifth-grade classes at Renner, Line Creek and Southeast elementary schools, who are participating in the Future Learner Project (FLiP).

Students ask to stay in from recess and they create additional, unassigned homework for themselves because they are so interested in their work.

The FLiP one-student-to-one-laptop pilot program makes this possible, but the technology is just a tool that makes the real classroom transformation possible.

“I thought the technology would allow us to do all this cool stuff, which was true, but that wasn’t what changed the class,” Mr. Hutchinson said. “It was the shift in the way we teach, which the technology made possible.”
GET CONNECTED ...

SOCIAL MEDIA
Be one of the first to know what's going on in Park Hill. Follow the Park Hill School District's Facebook page, Twitter feed or Google+ page. The links are on our website, www.parkhill.k12.mo.us.

FIRST HAND E-MAIL NEWSLETTER
Get weekly updates on what is happening in the district and highlights from the Board of Education meetings. Sign up for the First Hand e-mail newsletter at www.parkhill.k12.mo.us.

FIRST HAND MOBILE
“First Hand Mobile” sends text message alerts about weather closings, emergency information or important news alerts directly to your text-messaging enabled mobile phone. To sign up, go to the district website at www.parkhill.k12.mo.us.

PARK HILL TV-CHANNEL 18
For an inside look at what is going on in the Park Hill School District, tune in to Park Hill TV-Channel 18 (for Time Warner Cable subscribers). Videos of the programs are also on the district website at www.parkhill.k12.mo.us.

PARK HILL SCHOOL DISTRICT WEB SITE COMMENT FORM
Park Hill is always looking for ways to improve. With that in mind, we have a comment form on the district website. Please check it out under “Quick Links” and share your comments, suggestions for improvement and even your compliments.

IMPORTANT DATES:
See www.parkhill.k12.mo.us for info

Principals’ Day: March 6

Gerner Center Enrollment Starts: March 19
4-7 p.m. at the Gerner Center, 8100 N. Congress

Northland Ethnic Festival: March 23
11 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at Park Hill South High School, 4500 NW River Park Dr.

Education Foundation’s Night with the Stars: March 27
5:30 p.m. at the AMC Barrywoods theater, 8101 NW Roanridge Rd.

Board of Education Election Day: April 2

MAP Testing Window: April 29 - May 10

Park Hill School District Arts Festival: May 4, 12-7 p.m. and May 5, 12-4 p.m. at Park Hill South High School, 4500 NW River Park Dr.

Kindergarten Roundup: May 8, 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m., all elementary schools
The Park Hill School District is very careful with taxpayer dollars, spending money conservatively so that every dollar provides the most benefit to students. The graphic below illustrates how Park Hill's budget gets distributed. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Dr. Paul Kelly, assistant superintendent for business services, at (816) 359-4020.
Red Quill Legacy Award
Park Hill South received a 2012-2013 Red Quill Legacy Award from ACT’s Midwest Regional Office. The Legacy Award goes to schools that already received the Red Quill, and Park Hill South first received the award in 2007. South is being recognized for its long-term commitment to best practices in the application and analysis of data to promote college and workplace readiness.

Seniors Nominated for U.S. Service Academies
PHHS seniors Michael Bidwell (pictured, left) and Lane Holmes (center) received nominations to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and Park Hill South senior Thomas Prinslow (right) received a nomination to the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Missouri Special Olympics Hall of Fame
Plaza Middle School math teacher Linda Wiederholt was inducted into the Special Olympics Missouri Hall of Fame for her years of service to the program. Because of her induction, she was also enshrined in the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame on Jan. 27.

Scholastic Writing Awards
Students from both high schools received 2013 Scholastic Writing Awards, including (pictured from left to right) senior Ben Shinogle, gold key; junior Sarah Nelson, honorable mention; junior Ilse Dulle, honorable mention; freshman Caleb Seymour, honorable mention; freshman Zachary Horton, silver key; and senior Samantha Koelliker, honorable mention.

International Budget Award
For the sixth year in a row, the Park Hill School District received the Meritorious Budget Award from the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO). The district received this award because its 2012-2013 budget demonstrates effective use of taxpayer dollars in a user-friendly format. ASBO requires districts to adhere to strict standards for good fiscal management.

South Student Wins Otis Taylor Football Award
Park Hill South High School senior Craig Scott (below) was awarded the Otis Taylor Award, which is given to the best wide receiver or tight end in the Kansas City area.
Senior Wins National Journalism Competition
Park Hill South senior Kylie Vandeven (above) earned first place for her newspaper page-one design at the National Scholastic Press Association’s Adobe Design of the Year competition.

Fifteen Students Advance to County Spelling Bee
The district’s spelling bee champion is eighth grader Madison King from Congress Middle School. The second-place winner is eighth grader Ryan Decker from Congress, and the third-place winner is sixth grader Bethany Andrade from Plaza Middle School.

The other students who placed in the top 15 to qualify for the Platte County bee are Peyton Wiebel, fifth grade, Graden Elementary; Christian Holferty, seventh grade, Lakeview Middle School; Arianna Hughlett, fifth grade, Prairie Point Elementary; Anna Cooper, fifth grade, Graden; Lucas Dorrell, sixth grade, Plaza; Alyssa Linn, fifth grade, Line Creek Elementary; Joey Schwass, sixth grade, Plaza; Morgan McGhee, sixth grade, Plaza; Alexis Alfieri, sixth grade, Plaza; Ashley Gilland, seventh grade, Congress; Quinn Bieberly, fifth grade, Plaza; and Simon Gosserand, fifth grade, Line Creek.

Three Teachers Receive Board Certification
Three teachers recently earned National Board Certification. The district now has 63 staff members with the prestigious certification. The teachers are (pictured, left to right) Patsy Crawford, Tiffany Ridge Elementary; Ann Jacob, Congress Middle School; and MeladDee Patterson, Park Hill South High. They put together several professional portfolios and took a rigorous test to qualify for the certification.

Scholar Bowl Team
Lakeview Middle School’s Scholar Bowl team took second place in the state of Missouri and 31st in the world in the fall Knowledge Master competition.

The Lakeview students on the winning team were Blaaze Booth, Joshua Boster, Joe Cummings, Brett Currey, Lawrence Fang, Madison Flynn, Alec Higgins, Arjun Joshi, Eryn Kennedy, Thomas Kindle, Nick King, Aidan Leiker, Alex Lindsay, Sean Macken, Kadin Mahmood, Karsten McCullough, Trey Rouse, Carson Schutter, Abby Waller, Ethan Wissmann and Jake Young.

Students Earn National Broadcast Awards
Park Hill South High School students earned two top awards at the Student Television Network fall national competition.

Sophomore Brittany Coffey took first place in the sports feature category for her piece “From the Mat to the Track,” which featured fellow student Jimmy Carpenter.

Rachel Schisler, senior; Rachel McMillan, senior; and Emma Frazier, senior, took third place in the human interest feature category for their piece, “Crowning Achievement,” which featured fellow student Alyssa Bruckeck.

Volleyball Teams Raise Money to Fight Cancer
The PHHS and Park Hill South volleyball teams raised $4,000 dollars at their annual Dig For a Cure game held last October. They donated the funds to the Susan G. Komen Foundation and Camp Quality, a camp for children battling cancer.

Two Alumni Join Hall of Fame
Dave Cummings and Scott Hedrick, both of the Park Hill High School class of 1987, were inducted into the Alumni Hall of Fame.

Dave Cummings’ company Tradebot uses computer models to make millions of stock trades each day. He also started BATS, a computerized stock exchange, which is the third largest stock exchange in the US and the largest in Europe. Dave is now the chairman of the boards of both companies and the owner of Tradebot. He and his wife Jamie live in our community, and their two children go to Lakeview Middle School and Park Hill South High School.

Scott Hedrick took his family’s sports equipment store, ProAthlete, and made it 100-percent online. Today, Justbats.com and Justgloves.com are the largest online sellers of bats and gloves in the country. Scott’s company has also been nominated three years in a row for the Best Place to Work in Kansas City award. Scott and his wife Sherri live in our community, and their three children go to St. Therese School and Park Hill South High.

The district also honored a Business of the Year, First Student, and a Partner of the Year, the Northland Childhood Hunger Initiative, as well as all the students who received national awards in 2012.
NEWS WORTH KNOWING

Important Information from the Park Hill District

Board Approves 2013-2014 Calendar
The Board approved the 2013-2014 academic calendar that the calendar committee recommended. The committee developed the calendar using input from a community survey, and it includes an Aug. 14 start day, a week-long spring break that coincides with neighboring districts', and a last day on May 23. You can find the complete 2013-2014 calendar at www.parkhill.k12.mo.us.

Refinancing Saves Almost $1 Million
The district saved almost $1 million by refinancing bonds, based on the net present value benefit. The sale provides a net savings in the debt service fund of $535,276.

Superintendent Announces Review
Superintendent Dr. Scott Springston said that in order to keep the district on the path to continuous improvement, we will be surveying other districts across the region to find out what their staff compensation packages look like for every employee group. He explained that this will allow the district to remain competitive, so we can continue to recruit and retain the staff members that make Park Hill such a high-achieving district.

Eleven File for School Board Election
Filing closed Jan. 15 for the four open seats on the Park Hill Board of Education, and 11 candidates plan to participate in the election. The candidates will appear on the April 2 ballot in the order they filed. See www.parkhill.k12.mo.us for more information on the candidates.

Students Entering Kindergarten in Fall 2013
Children who will be entering Park Hill School District kindergarten in August 2013 may enroll now by visiting their local elementary schools between 7:45 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, through May 8. For more information, to download the enrollment packet or to find the location of your elementary school, go to www.parkhill.k12.mo.us.

Enroll Your Child Today!
Enroll now for part-time and full-time preschool at the Gerner Family Early Education Center! New families are invited to enroll from 4-7 p.m. March 19. Spaces fill up fast, so don’t wait! The Gerner Center is a wonderful place for your child, and it is accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Enrollment packets are available at the Gerner Center and online at www.parkhill.k12.mo.us.

Community Education:
Help Community Education Celebrate its 30th Anniversary.

Thirty years ago, the Park Hill Community Education started offering classes. Today, as the program celebrates its 30th anniversary, offerings are up-to-date and include everything from buying and selling on eBay to Tai Chi to Zumba.

To view all classes and register, visit www.parkhill.k12.mo.us.
Southeast Elementary FLiP pilot fifth graders are participating in a virtual book club with online book discussions.

Lakeview Middle School students learned how to extract strawberry DNA in the Missouri Western BioLab that visited the school.

Fourth grade students at Renner Elementary helped taste test some new healthy items that might be added to the lunch menu.

Park Hill South High School's art club, Art Space, decorated Mardi Gras themed masks that were displayed at the PTA's After Prom Dinner and Auction.

Students at English Landing Elementary who participate in the Beyond the Bell program work with teachers on homework and educational games.

Park Hill High School DECA students asked fellow students to pledge not to use marijuana with signs in the courtyard of the school.

Third graders at Graden Elementary received books from the Turn The Page KC program.

Line Creek fifth graders participating in the FLiP pilot took a field trip to the Google Fiber space and learned about the new technology coming to the Kansas City area.
Free Admission
March 23, 11 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
at Park Hill South High School

Celebrating Our Stars ...
Join the Park Hill School District Education Foundation for our annual Night with the Stars on Wednesday, March 27 at the AMC BarryWoods Theatre. Attendees will enjoy a fun-filled evening of conversation, delicious food and a movie at this wonderful benefit.

- Doors will open at 5:30 p.m.
- Presentation begins at 6:45 p.m.
- Movies begin at 7:15 p.m.

Proceeds from this event support the Park Hill School District Education Foundation.

Please contact Susan Van Hooser at (816) 359-4071 or visit the website at www.parkhillfoundation.org to make a reservation.

10th Annual Northland Ethnic Festival
See the world at this free family event with music, dance, authentic ethnic food, displays, arts and crafts, family history and genealogy help.

March 23, 11 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
at Park Hill South High School
4500 NW River Park Drive, Riverside, Missouri 64150 (I-635 & 9 Hwy.)

FREE ADMISSION