

OUR SCHOOLS

GLENDALÉ | ROCK HILL | SHREWSBURY | WARSON WOODS | WEBSTER GROVES

SPRING 2022

- District Students Outperform State and National Averages on Standardized Tests
- High School Music Students Chosen for All State Groups
- Special School District Update: School Board Member Dr. Meredith Byers

Board of Education Honors School Nurses

The Board of Education honored all school nurses for going above and beyond on a daily basis to protect students, staff and families during the pandemic. The district is proud of all of its hardworking nurses! In this photo, from left, are Superintendent John Simpson, Cathy Hausel, nurse at Edgar Road School; Sara Dahms, Hudson School nurse; Rachel Huer-tas, district lead nurse and nurse at the High School; and Board President David Addison.



Our Vision

As a learning community, the Webster Groves School District will lead in purposeful innovation that challenges each of us to discover and pursue our passions and make a positive impact on the world.

Our Mission

The Webster Groves School District community is committed to academic and personal success for every student.

Eight File as Candidates in April Board of Education Election

Eight candidates have filed to run in the Board of Education election April 5. Three positions are open, including two with three-year terms and one with a one-year term.

Candidates for the two three-year positions in ballot order are:



Justin Hauke has lived in Webster Groves for over ten years. He is a dedicated single-father of two daughters at Clark Elementary and the proud “grandparent” of their various pets. Justin is a strong advocate for (and a product of) public education and has worked diligently to improve public education in the community.

He has served as treasurer/president of the Webster Groves Public Library and he currently serves as a Board of Education-appointed member of the Webster Groves School District Finance Advisory Committee. Professionally, Justin has spent the last 15 years working with public company boards on achieving corporate governance best practices, improving transparency and public communication and driving accountability as a vice president at Robert W. Baird & Co. He received undergraduate degrees in economics/mathematics from the University of Texas at Austin and a master of science in finance from Washington University in St. Louis.

“My family moved to Webster originally to take advantage of the excellent school system and the welcoming and engaging community that make this a great place to live and raise families,” he said. “We have great people and great teachers. Unfortunately, today, our district is not working as well as it can and should be. Test scores and district rankings have been steadily declining. Racial achievement gaps are widening, not narrowing. There are concerns about falling enrollment, staff turnover and a divided community. We can do better.”

“As a concerned single parent of children enrolled in the district, I want to be a part of the solution to restore educational excellence to the Webster Groves School District and stop the slide.”

Brian Middendorf—No information submitted at the time this publication went to press.



Alex Kahn (incumbent) is currently serving his first three-year term on the Webster Groves School Board. He’s employed by Nestle Purina PetCare Co., where he’s worked his entire career. He’s a highly motivated manager, currently serving in a sales/marketing role. Growing up, he attended K-12 in both the Uni-

versity City and Ladue school districts. He went to the University of Missouri-Columbia for his undergraduate degree and returned to St. Louis where he completed his MBA at Washington University. Finally, and most importantly, he and his wife Christy have a second grader who attends Edgar Road Elementary.

In addition to serving on the School Board for the past three years, Kahn has represented the community on the following committees: Strategic Planning Committee (for WGSD), Equity in Action Committee, Special School District Governance Board (WGSD representative), Issues (Staff & Administration) Committee, and the Legislative Advocacy Committee. Prior to serving on the board, he helped create and then served on the Peter and Paul Community Services (PPCS) Junior Board for three years. While serving for PPCS, he helped build awareness of the organization among young professionals in an effort to fundraise and ultimately “walk with people facing homelessness on their journey to lifelong stability” (PPCS mission).

Kahn believes in strengthening our community, not creating division. The current climate provides an easy opportunity to take an us vs. them approach. The solutions to dealing with each issue may lead to debate, but we all want what’s best for our children and our community, and that’s what makes Webster Groves so special. Finally, Kahn puts our students, their families and WG staff at the heart of every issue that is presented before him because those are the essential stakeholders in our district.



Allen Todd (incumbent) lives in Webster Groves with his wife and their two kids, a fourth grader and kindergartner at Bristol Elementary. Prior to his 2020 election to the Board of Education, Allen served as chair of the school district’s Finance Advisory Committee, a member of the district’s Legislative Advocacy Committee, and two years as president of the PTO at the Walter Ambrose Family Center. Allen also serves on the board of directors of Non-Profit Missouri, as the Secretary/Treasurer.

In his professional life, Allen is the director of partnerships and initiatives for Health Literacy Media. He has spent more than 20 years working in non-profit, governmental and public policy settings.

At the core of Allen’s service to our community has been a passion for public education and its role in preparing our children for their future, no matter what that may be. He believes the Board of Education’s role is to create a culture and atmosphere that allows every student to achieve their highest potential. He will continue to fight every day for the best interests of our children on the Board of Education.

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WGSD Receives Highest Rating on 2020-21 Audit

Auditors from CliftonLarsonAllen LLP issued a “clean, unmodified opinion” for the Webster Groves School District for fiscal year 2020-21, the highest rating possible. The auditors checked financial reporting internal controls to ensure that district assets are being safeguarded and found no deficiencies.

The unmodified opinion expresses that the financial statements are presented fairly in all material respects. No significant adjustments to the district’s financial statements were required and the district has complied with all requirements of the law.

“We are extremely proud to have once again received a clean rating as a result of the audit,” said Pam Frazier, WGSD chief financial officer. “It is a reflection of our employees across the district who strive to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars.”

Board of Education Approves Refunding of Bonds, Saving District \$1 Million

The Board of Education has approved a resolution authorizing the issuance, sale and delivery of general obligation refunding bonds, series 2022. This bond refunding will save the district approximately \$1 million. The district will also pay down an additional \$2 million in principal, which will increase the interest savings on the issue and free up bond capacity for a no-tax increase bond issue in the future.

Earlier this month, Standard & Poor’s issued the district an AA+ rating, making WGSD one of the highest rated districts in the state. Only one other K-12 district has that rating; four districts have a higher rating. In the credit overview S & P stated, “The district’s track record of robust financial performance and strong management practices position it well to maintain its stable credit profile over the next two years.”



Clark kindergartners are working on winter activities. Photo by Pat Weaver.

District Students Outperform State and National Averages on Standardized Tests

The average scores for Webster Groves School District students on the ACT and the Missouri Assessment Program once again rank higher than state and national averages. We congratulate the district’s students, teachers and families for this achievement.

The High School’s class of 2021 had an ACT composite score of 23.6, with 95 percent of graduating seniors taking the test. Comparing the scores over time, in the mid-1990s, an average ACT composite score for a graduating senior at WGHS was 22.4, with approximately 100 students testing each year. The 2001 senior class had an ACT composite of 22.7 (63% students tested).

In 2011, the ACT composite was 23.1 (85% students tested). Please note that even as the number of students taking the test increased, the scores contin-

ued to rise. Before the pandemic, the 2019 ACT composite for WGHS was 23.8, fifth highest composite among all public school districts in St. Louis and St. Charles counties.

In addition, average math and English scores on the state’s Missouri Assessment Program standardized tests rank the district among the top five school district’s in the region. WGSD, along with Clayton, Kirkwood, Ladue and Brentwood, topped the list of high performers, even as scores declined statewide. Fewer than half of Missouri students performed at grade level or above in math or English and state education officials have cautioned against comparing this year’s scores to others because of the difficult environment for testing caused by the pandemic.

Board of Education to Consider Bond Issue for Infrastructure, Moss Field Renovation

The Board of Education will consider putting a no-tax-rate increase bond issue of up to \$45 million on the ballot in the August 2 election, which would provide money for safety/security, accessibility and infrastructure projects throughout the district. The board will make a decision following review of information, including community feedback, April 28.

A major project would be renovation of Moss Field, which was built in 1948. Some of the issues include parking lot repairs, lighting for the lot, aging track, inadequate size of the track, crumbling concrete, several accessibility problems including seating and entry and exit points, insufficient restroom capacity and concession stand improvements.

Districtwide, safety/security items for consideration include mortar, brickwork and plaster issues; interior and exterior doors, expansion of badge access and building lockdown, upgraded burglar and fire alarms, water issues in educational spaces, accessibility of playgrounds, limited accessibility to approaches to schools, as well as exterior areas and interior areas of schools.

Infrastructure needs include replacement of aging boilers and heat pumps, roofs, tuckpointing, more efficient windows, aging cafeteria equipment and aging playground equipment.

In all, Chief Financial/Operating Officer Pam Frazier estimates the district has \$80-100 million worth of projects to do. Current bonding capacity would allow for up to a \$45 million no-tax-rate increase bond issue and potentially another no-tax-rate increase bond issue of approximately \$25 million in about five years.

The district will collect community feedback on the proposal this spring through in-person forums, surveys and online efforts. You can share your opinion in a survey at this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WGSDINFRASTRUCTURE>.

The district’s Building Advisory Committee and Finance Advisory Committee will assist in making recommendations for project priorities and the amount of the bond issue respectively. Currently the district ranks 16th out of the 23 St. Louis County school districts for the amount of its debt service rate, which is \$0.5699 per \$100 of assessed property valuation. The district’s total tax rate of \$4.4930 ranks 14th out of 23 county districts.

WGSD AA+ Bond Rating Among Best in State

The Webster Groves School District has received an AA+ long-term rating for general obligation bonds from S&P Global Ratings, ranking it among the highest rated school districts in the state. “The rating reflects our view of Webster Groves School District’s continued healthy financial position and ample reserves that help to mitigate revenue loss,” the rating report said. “...The district’s track record of financial performance and strong management practices positions it well to maintain its stable credit profile over the next two years.”

The rating reflects an assessment of three consecutive fiscal years of surplus results and ample reserves in the district, a diverse and growing tax base with high

income levels compared to the national average and good financial management policies and practices.

Pam Frazier, chief financial officer of the school district, said, “This rating is a solid indicator of the financial health of the Webster Groves School District as well as the measures we have in place to manage our budget and debt. An AA+ rating benefits our entire community. It means that we’ll be able to obtain low interest rates on the sale of bonds and have more money for students and learning. I’m very proud of the hard work and good stewardship that this rating reflects.”

The only other AA+ rated k-12 school district in the state is Lee’s Summit. There are also four AAA districts: Clayton, Ladue, Parkway and Rockwood.

Eight File as Candidates in April Board of Education Election

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Robert E. (Bob) Dorries Jr. is the band director and Performing Arts Department chairperson at McKinley Classical Leadership Academy High School and Middle School, a gifted magnet school in the St. Louis Public School District. During his 20-year tenure, the McKinley Goldbug Band Program has won national and regional band titles. He holds a master's degree in education administration from Lindenwood University and a bachelor's degree in music education from Webster University as well as Missouri certifications for secondary and elementary principal and lifetime K-12 teaching certifications.

Dorries is a proud member of the American Federation of Teachers Union, St. Louis-Local 420, where he has served as the McKinley HS/MS building steward and is also currently serving a three-year term as a regional vice-president on the Missouri American Federation of Teachers Executive Board. He was elected to and served a two-year term as an alderman for the City of Moline Acres. He worked for the Webster Groves School District at both Avery and Clark schools for six years as a site manager and was the parent of two step-children who graduated from the district. A Webster Groves resident for over 20 years, he resides in southwest Webster with his wife, Trisha.

"I believe that as a current educator, I would bring a very unique set of skills and differing viewpoints to the current School Board" he said. "We must regain our focus both educationally and financially in order to provide the best possible educational outcomes for all of our students and at the same time make sure that we are able to live within our means. I would also work to make sure that district decisions are as transparent as possible, within the scope of our laws."

The candidates for the one-year position are in ballot order as follows:



Tara Scheer has lived in Webster Groves for most of her life. She attended Bristol, Steger, Hixson and Webster Groves High School. She and her husband, Francisco Alvarez, are the parents of two children, Mavis, a sixth grader at Hixson, and Julian, a second grader at Bristol.

Tara's professional background is in strategic planning and market research. Most recently, at Enterprise Holdings, she collaborated with top executives to develop growth and organizational strategies focused on the company's long-term goals. In that role, she worked closely with business leaders across multiple divisions to understand and communicate complex issues and develop innovative solutions.

In late 2020, Tara left her career to support her children's education through a year of virtual learning. She served as a room parent for Mavis and Julian's virtual classes and found creative ways to help build classroom communities during a time of physical distance. An avid volunteer throughout her children's education, Tara believes in actively supporting our kids, teachers and schools. She assists with school events and activities, continues to serve as a room parent, and participates in several PTO committees, as well as other parent groups within the school district.

Tara hopes to use her perspective, experience and professional skills to support the Board of Education as it embarks on the strategic planning process for the Webster Groves School District.



Barbara (Barb) Strang is running for the Webster Groves School District Board of Education "to work with the others to reinstate educational excellence in our school district. Our district scores and rankings have fallen sharply from 16th in 2016 to 38th in 2021. We must stop the slide by improving School Board transparency and leadership. Our children deserve better than what they are getting now. Students deserve a Five-Star education."

Strang is a 22-year resident of Webster Groves. She and her husband have an adult daughter who attended Webster schools. An educator, a former elementary and secondary school teacher and teacher of adult professionals, she holds a master's degree in mathematics from Wesleyan University and has a lifetime Missouri Teacher Certificate in mathematics.

An accomplished project management professional and process improvement engineer, she's served as a board member for the St. Louis Chapter of the Project Management Institute and managed projects for six different types of industries including education, finance and telecommunications. She specializes in team building, conflict resolution and leading diverse teams.

In addition, she has directed, acted and served as board member for the Theater Guild of Webster Groves, supported the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis. She also volunteers at the Animal Protective Association, where she presents training on school bullying and animal care.



Courtney Schaefer (she/her/hers) is a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW). Her education includes a bachelor's degree from Indiana University, a master's in public administration from the University of Southern California, and a masters' in Social Work from Washington University. Courtney has a private practice, Family & Play, LLC, where she sees children, youth and families. Recently, she was a Special School District School social worker in the Jennings School District for more than six years.

Courtney has worked in and around public schools for more than 30 years, including a brief time as a substitute teacher in the WGSD. She is the daughter of a lifelong educator of educators; her mother retired this year from the Educational Leadership Program at Saint Louis University. Throughout her career, Courtney has been involved with care and support for children and youth. Recently, she has focused on inclusion for learning differences/neurodiversity, mental health, equity in education and breaking the school-to-prison pipeline.

"As a school social worker, it has been my job to care for students in crisis by collaborating with teachers, parents and others. Given the current circumstances, I want to use my experience from that work to serve the school district in this community I call home," she said.

Courtney and her family (husband, Tom; son, Claude Thomas; Danish exchange daughter, Jo) are proud to live in Webster Groves where members of her family have attended Webster Groves public schools for over 100 years.

Equity in Action Committee Community Recognition

The Webster Groves School District's Equity in Action Committee <https://mo02202299.schoolwires.net/Page/9395> values and encourages peer-to-peer recognition for equity work. The EIA just developed and launched a Community Recognition initiative, which provides an opportunity for members of the community to recognize individuals (i.e. students, teachers, parents, friends, community members, etc.), schools, businesses and organizations who make significant contributions toward creating and cultivating a culture of dignity that values all human beings within the WGSD. To learn more about this opportunity and to make a recognition, please go to Community Recognition <https://mo02202299.schoolwires.net/Page/23953>. The deadline is March 25.

PAT Staff Gets Creative in Reaching Out

The district's Parents as Teachers staff got creative this year when the pandemic curtailed in-person meetings with families. The PAT program supports families with young children with services that promote child development, learning and child health. Staff members delivered activity bags to homes and then followed up with calls to parents to get feedback, talk about their child's development and support them by answering any questions they may have.



Meghan Casey, Courtney Baker and Chris Steger show off some of the activity bags they've been delivering to families.

Board Candidate Forum 7 p.m. March 30

The League of Women Voters will moderate a School Board Candidate Forum at 7 p.m. March 30 in the auditorium at Hixson Middle School.

To submit a question for the Board Candidate Forum, please visit: <https://forms.gle/jzWRvTG8m6yNpp6L6>. Questions will be passed on to the moderator in the days before the forum. You can submit as many questions as you like, but only one question per form. No questions will be taken through the link at the time of the forum.

The forum will be live streamed for those who wish to attend from home. A link to the live stream will be added to the district website on March 30.

Clark First Grade “Famous Faces” Project

First grade students had the chance to learn more about famous characters in history this semester by choosing someone to research, then portraying them in a video. In the photos, these students are (top) Ainsley Ruiz, dressed as Pocahontas; Miles Petter as Walt Disney and (bottom) J.T. Murdock as Orville Wright and Milo Phelps as President Barack Obama.



Four Named National Merit Scholarship Finalists

Congratulations to four Webster Groves High School students who have been named National Merit finalists. They are Matthew Curtis, Ella Kelly, Benjamin Miller and Emma Rohrs. They will compete for some 7,500 National Merit Scholarship awards worth more than \$30 million, which will be offered this spring. They are among approximately 15,000 finalists moved forward from a nationwide pool of 16,000 semifinalists chosen in September. Finalists represent the highest-scoring entrants in each state on the 2020 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.



National Merit Scholarship finalists from left are **Ella Kelly**, **Matthew Curtis**, **Ben Miller** and **Emma Rohrs**.

#TeacherFeature Stephanie Holt, Walter Ambrose Family Center Preschool

By Sarah Jane Hornberger



down the road.

Ms. Holt worked in the corporate world for many years and it wasn't until she stopped working to become a stay-at-home mom that she realized that she wanted to become a teacher. "When I came to Ambrose, it was one of the best career choices I have ever made," she said. "Ambrose is such a phenomenal place to work, but not only that, it's like being with family."

Stephanie Holt became a teacher because she is very passionate about children. "I remember as a teenager teaching Sunday school class every week for several years and how much I enjoyed teaching, learning and working with kids at that time," she said. However, she didn't follow that passion until much later

One of the most exciting moments she has had in teaching was when a parent sent a video of their four-year-old reading a book about Jack and Annie from the "Magic Tree House" series. "It brings me so much joy to see and hear the excitement in children's voices and in all the things they learn to do. I love being an inspiration to all children. Children also inspire me to grow and learn along the way too," she said.

She chose to teach in Webster because it's a wonderful community, the schools are great and it's aesthetically beautiful. Some of her favorite things about Webster are that it has plenty of local restaurants that offer indoor and outdoor dining, shopping and banking are within walking distance depending on where you live and so many beautiful homes and churches can be found throughout. She said, "It's just such a beautiful place."

In her free time, she likes to travel, bake, spend time with family and friends and simply relax! While she did not attend Webster Groves schools herself, her children all went to Webster from kindergarten through graduation.

You can read more #TeacherFeatures on the district Facebook page.

High School Music Students Chosen for All State Groups

Webster Groves High School music students have been chosen for the Missouri All-State Orchestra and Missouri All-State bands.

Five students were chosen for the All-State Orchestra. They are Silas Garrett, cello; Myka Stewart, cello; Celia Alexander, violin and Isabella Pantano, viola.

The competition, which included 451 music students from across the state, was held at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Sixty-eight students were chosen for the orchestra.

For the ninth year, WGHS has come away with more students in the All-State Jazz Band than any other school in Missouri. Out of 961 eligible schools, more than ten percent of all-state jazz musicians over the last 17 years have come from WGHS.

Band students selected for all-state honors this year are: Taliyah Roash, 2nd flute, Missouri All-State Orchestra; Sarah Veldhuizen, principal oboe, Missouri All-State Band; Evan Christman, 1st alto saxophone, Missouri All-State Jazz Band; Miles Cole, 1st trombone, Missouri All-State Jazz Band; Zach Andrews, bass trombone, Missouri All-State Jazz Band; Shiloh Roash, honorable mention French horn, All State Band.

bass trombone, Missouri All-State Jazz Band; Shiloh Roash, honorable mention French horn, All State Band.

In addition, Sarah Veldhuizen, Miles Cole, Evan Christman and Zach Andrews were named top-ranked players in the state.

Five students were chosen for the All-State Orchestra. They are (left to right) **Silas Garrett**, cello; **Myka Stewart**, cello; **Celia Alexander**, violin and **Isabella Pantano**, viola.



Band students selected for all-state honors this year are (left to right) **Sarah Veldhuizen**, principal oboe, Missouri All-State Band; **Zach Andrews**, bass trombone, Missouri All-State Jazz Band; **Evan Christman**, 1st alto saxophone, Missouri All-State Jazz Band; **Miles Cole**, 1st trombone, Missouri All-State Jazz Band; **Taliyah Roash**, 2nd flute, Missouri All-State Orchestra; and **Shiloh Roash**, honorable mention French horn, All State Band



Webster Groves High School Echo Receives Honors

The staff of the Webster Groves High School *Echo* and teacher Donald Johnson have been chosen for the Columbia Scholastic Press Association Crown Award, the highest recognition given by the CSPA to a student print or digital medium for overall excellence. During Crown consideration, publications are judged on their excellence as shown by their design, photography, concept, coverage and writing.

In addition, the National Scholastic Press Association awarded the WG *Echo's* online version a First Class rating with marks of distinction for

- Interactivity & Community
- Breaking News

The *Echo* staff earned 453 on a 500 point scale. The judge said, "From the moment a reader goes to *The Echo*, they are engulfed by a site that brings a lot of great, concise content that provides the latest information in a timely fashion. The addition of video and podcasts helps the site take advantage of being a digital publication and that's vital in 2022. What's perhaps the most impressive is that all this is being done with a fairly small staff."



Five members of the High School *Echo* staff have been approved for membership in Quill and Scroll, the international honorary society for high school journalists. They are from left, junior **Owen Crews**, senior **Emily Goben**, junior **Maren DeMargel**, sophomore **Calum Shank**, with junior **Izzy Poole** seated in front.

Kindergarten Enrollment for Fall 2022 is Open

continued from front cover

mentation, the parent/legal guardian should call the Learning Support Services Office at 314-961-1233 to schedule an appointment to determine their eligibility to enroll in the Webster Grove School District.

A valid driver's license/Government-issued photo ID with the address you are using to register your student plus one document from List A and two documents from List B.

You can fill out enrollment forms and upload documents at this link <https://fs9.formsite.com/WgL6Mt/qb8peox0p2/index.html>

Please call the Student Services office if you have questions at 961-1233.



Edgar Road kindergartner works on counting. Photo by Pat Weaver.

List A—One Document

- Mortgage Statement & Current Occupancy Permit (Original document within 30 days)
- Property Deed & Current Occupancy Permit (Original document within 30 days)
- Real Estate Tax Bill & Current Occupancy Permit (Original document within 30 days)
- Residential Sales Contract & Current Occupancy Permit (Original document within 30 days)
- Signed Residential Lease Agreement & Current Occupancy Permit (Original document within 30 days)

List B—Two Documents

- Current Utility Bill (electric, gas, water, sewer within the last 30 days)
- Current Homeowner's Insurance Policy
- Current IRS Tax Statement
- Current Personal Property Tax Statement
- Current Social Services, Social Security Benefits Statements, or Other Legal/Court Documents

'Inspiring Coach' Award for High School's Jon Petter



High School teacher and boys cross country coach Jon Petter received the Brooks Inspiring Coaches Award, sponsored by the Brooks Running Shoe Co. As part of the national award, Petter will be featured in a monthly video by the company and on the Brooks Facebook page. Describing the program, the company said, "Coaches are the mentors and inspiration behind millions of athletes. This program honors high school coaches who help and motivate young runners every day."

Scholastic Art Awards for Three at WGHS

Three Webster Groves High School students have received Scholastic Art awards, presented annually to students with "exceptional artistic talent."

Senior Rachel Sebastian-Asbed received a Silver Key for her portfolio "Fleeting Moments," a collection of 6 graphite drawings.

Senior Isabella Pirozzi received an Honorable Mention for her ceramic piece "Caught in a Web."

Junior Norah Rohlfing received an Honorable Mention for her painting "All Eyes on Me" and a Silver Key for her illustration "Roadkill Tribunal."

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are presented by the nonprofit Alliance for Young Artists & Writers.

The award winners are (from left) **Rachel Sebastian-Asbed**, **Norah Rohlfing** and **Isabella Pirozzi**.



Special thanks to Webster Groves High School seniors **Emily Goben** and **Sarah Jane Hornberger**, who are interning with the district Communications Office for their contributions to this issue of *Our Schools*.



Karlie Kloss Visits with High School Thrive Students



Karlie Kloss

Karlie Kloss, model, entrepreneur, founder of Kode with Klossy and WGHS Class of 2011, visited with students from the Thrive Program through Zoom recently. The Thrive Program combines education, professional guidance and personal development to help high school juniors

and seniors acquire critical business and entrepreneurial skills.

Kloss spoke to the students about her love of learning, as well as her time at Webster Groves High School. She expressed gratitude for the innovative ways that WGHS allowed her to continue her education while pursuing a career in modeling and she shared her personal experience in the business and entrepreneurial world. She encouraged all students to learn about coding and computer science, one of her passions, and she reminded them that learning takes place throughout a lifetime.

To learn more about the Thrive Program, visit: <https://bit.ly/3IJusIA>. To learn more about Kode with Klossy and Karlie's other initiatives, visit <https://www.kodewithklossy.com>.

WGHS Students Chosen for Fashion Show

Three Webster Groves High School fashion design students were chosen to participate in the annual Lindenwood Fashion Show. They are McKenna Williams, senior; Greta Eames, senior and junior Letta Thompson. The students submitted their work in October. They modeled their designs in the New York-style runway show at Lindenwood University.



Fashion design students at the Lindenwood Fashion Show are (left to right) **Greta Eames**, **Letta Thompson**, teacher **Amie Shea** and **McKenna Williams**.

Special School District Update: School Board Member Dr. Meredith Byers

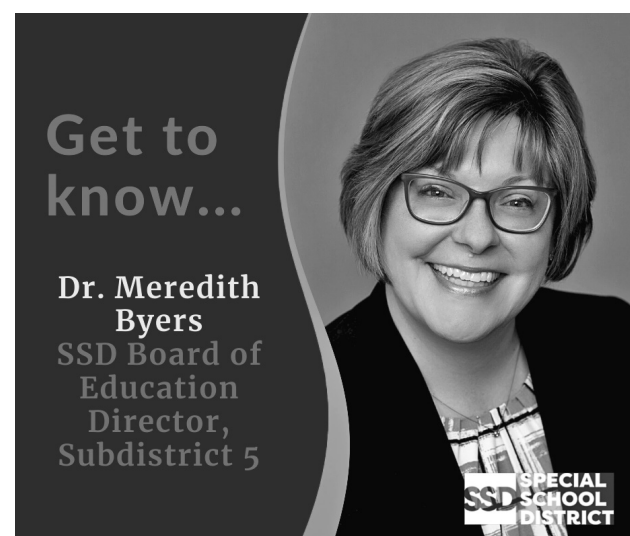
Ask Dr. Meredith Byers what she's most proud of accomplishing in her life and she doesn't hesitate with an answer.

"That's an easy one—my family," she says. "We're trying really hard to grow good humans in our house. That's easier said than done at times. They're all very different. We're not so concerned about grades or making the team or getting a part in the school play—we're proud we're growing kind, compassionate people."

A resident of Kirkwood, Byers has represented Subdistrict 5 on the Special School District's Board of Education since 2021. Her subdistrict covers the Webster Groves School District as well as Brentwood, Kirkwood, Lindbergh, Maplewood-Richmond Heights and Valley Park districts. She and her husband, Dr. Derek Byers, have three children who attend public schools and have received services from SSD.

Byers and her husband were introduced to SSD when their oldest child was a toddler and began showing signs of a learning disability. A parent educator in Kirkwood's Early Childhood Program recommended getting him evaluated. By kindergarten, he had an IEP that fit his needs. She credits SSD with providing her children with the strategies they needed to be successful in school.

"As a parent and a community member, the beauty of my oldest son going to a school that has SSD ser-



vices is that his therapists became our friends and part of our community. His classmates are people he's known since they were all preschoolers. They see him as their longtime friend. Our lives have been integrated with SSD from the beginning."

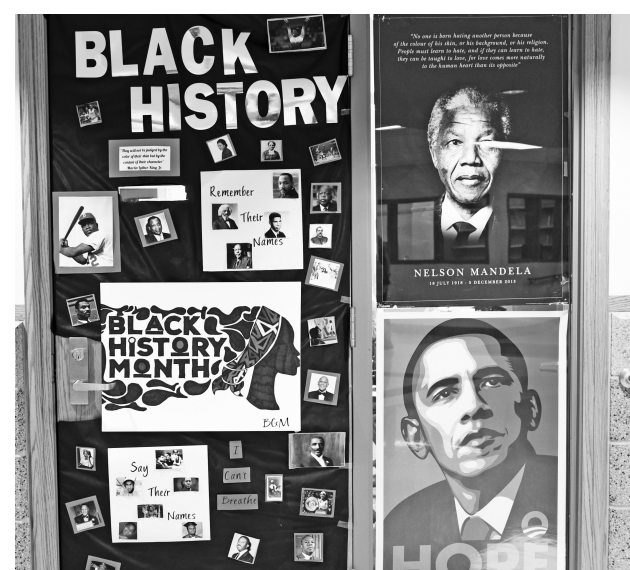
Professionally, Byers is a radiologist who specializes in women's health. She is thrilled to be working her "dream job" at Central Radiation Group, a practice that serves women in St. Louis and St. Charles counties, especially in the zip codes hit hardest by COVID-19. She previously worked at Washington University, where she was an assistant professor for 15 years.

District Schools Celebrate Black History Month

Enjoy a few highlights from the school district's celebration of Black History Month this year.

Schools celebrated with daily announcements with Black history facts, door decorating contests, information about influential African Americans on bulletin boards, read alouds and assemblies.

While the month has ended, we continue to learn about, celebrate and value Black achievements and contributions.



(above) Teachers and students decorated doors at Webster Groves High School for Black History Month.

(left) Rock Hill Mayor Edward Mahan was a guest reader at Givens School.

(lower left) The St. Louis Black Rep performed at Givens School.

(below) Ambrose Preschool students learned more about Walter Ambrose, their school's namesake and the district's first African-American School Board president.



WGSD Moves to ‘Masks Recommended’ in K-12 Schools

Beginning March 7, the school district is recommending, not requiring, the use of masks in all buildings for k-12 students, staff and others. If the building COVID-19 positivity rate exceeds 1.5% at an individual school, students, staff and visitors will be required to wear masks at that school for at least two weeks.

The district will continue to publish daily updates on the number of cases for each school on our online dashboard <https://www.webster.k12.mo.us/Page/23966> and will notify families, staff and students if a change in masking status is needed. You can also find a chart at the link showing each building and what 1.5 percent of the population is.

The new “mask-recommended” environment will allow choice for individuals so long as certain criteria are met at each school, including percentage of positive active cases (using the seven-day cumulative average). If the percentage of active cases exceeds 1.5 percent of a school’s population (students and staff), masks will be required in that building for at least two weeks. To resume “mask-recommended” status, the percentage of positive cases must be 1.5 percent or less after the two-week period.

Given that most preschool children are not eligible for vaccination, all preschool staff and students will continue to wear face coverings at this time. Preschool staff can choose “mask optional” when not in the presence of children. As we continue to monitor internal and local data, this decision will be revisited. Please note that because masking will continue at the pre-K level, modified quarantine rules will apply in the three to five-year old rooms, meaning students can continue to come to school even if someone tests positive.

In addition, all students must continue to wear face coverings on school transportation, as required by federal law.

We continue to encourage vaccination or boosting, and please continue to have your child stay home if they are symptomatic.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you saying masks are “recommended” rather than optional?

The district continues to align its mitigation practices with guidance from the St. Louis County Department of Public Health, which has advised recommending mask usage. With that in mind, WGSD will continue to recommend, but not require, that all students and staff wear masks.

Will non-vaccinated students and staff be required to use a mask?

No. The Webster Groves School District is committed to honoring staff and student privacy about vaccination status. District health professionals can ask for information about vaccination status during contact tracing, however parents are not required to disclose this information.

I would like my children to continue wearing a mask. Can you ensure that they do so?

We encourage you to discuss expectations with your children so they understand what you want them to do during the school day. Teachers and school staff will not be able to require a student to wear a mask in these circumstances.

Are there any circumstances when masks would be required even when positive cases remain at or under 1.5 percent?

Masks will continue to be required on buses, as required by federal guidelines, as well as for preschool children.

There are also some specific instances when an accommodation for an immunocompromised student or staff member may mean students must wear masks. In addition, when students and staff are outside school as part of a school-sponsored event (field trip, away games, etc.), they will follow the expectations of the school or business they visit. Staff or families can contact your school’s administrator if you feel accommodations may be necessary.

My child is worried about transitioning to “mask recommended.” How can I ease these concerns?

District staff are working on ways to make sure we’re prepared to support our students on these changes, while ensuring that everyone is respectful of others’ choices. If you have specific concerns, please call your school counselor. You can find some online resources at this link: <https://mo02202299.schoolwires.net/Page/23982>

Are students required to get vaccinated?

No. The Missouri school immunization requirements for students don’t include the COVID vaccination.

What mitigation strategies will remain in place in the schools?

Other than requiring masks, all of our current mitigation strategies will remain in place.

Does the move to mask-recommended change what happens if someone tests positive or is required to quarantine?

A student/staff member who tests positive will still need to stay at home for a minimum of 5 days. If they are asymptomatic or their symptoms are resolving (without fever for 24 hours) they may return to school on Day 6 or thereafter. They should continue to wear a well fitting mask around others at home and in school for 5 additional days (days 6-10) after the end of their 5-day isolation period. If they are unable to wear a mask when around others, they should continue to isolate for a full 10 days. As testing remains a key mitigation strategy, we encourage testing on Day 5 or shortly thereafter.

Close contacts who are required to quarantine will still need to stay home for at minimum 5 days. If they develop symptoms, they are to get tested immediately and isolate at home until they receive their test results. If they do not develop symptoms, they should return to school on Day 6. They should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others at home and school for 5 additional days (Days 6 through day 10) after the end of their 5-day quarantine period. As testing remains a key mitigation strategy, we encourage testing on Day 5 or shortly thereafter.

One Hundred Days of School Celebrated

Kindergarten students across the district celebrated the 100th day of school with fun activities centered on showing what 100 is. They strung beads, decorated shirts and wore special crowns with 100 written on them. These photos show boys at Givens School working on an activity and a 100th day parade at Avery School.



‘Twos Day’ in WGSD 2/22/22

Elementary students in the district celebrated Twos Day (2/22/22). At Hudson School, first graders made time capsules to be opened when they’re high school seniors, on 3-3-33. In the photo, the students are showing off their handprints, which will be included in the time capsules. They also included pieces of yarn measured out to show their height, a written list of their favorite things and more. At Edgar Road School, second graders participated in the celebrations. (photo below)



Hudson students are showing the hand prints they made for their time capsules. They are from left Bradley Zenker, Nicholas Hopfinger, Jane Lohmeyer, Clara Kellogg and Neva Cammon.



Second graders at Edgar Road took part in the “twos” celebrations.

Our Schools

Our Schools, a publication of the Webster Groves School District Community Relations Dept., is published during the school year to inform the community about the schools.

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Board of Education

2021-2022

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The Board of Education meets regularly in open meetings on the second Thursday of the month, September through June, in the School District Central Office, 400 E. Lockwood Ave., at 7 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Additional workshop meetings are conducted as needed.

The Webster Groves School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law in its programs and activities. In addition, demeaning or otherwise harmful actions are prohibited, if directed at personal characteristics including, but not limited to, socioeconomic level, gender identity and sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination and accessibility policies: Tina Scott, director of learning support services, 400 E. Lockwood Ave., Webster Groves, MO 63119, 314-961-1233.

Special Education Services

All students between the ages of three and 21 who reside in St. Louis County are eligible for special education and vocational education services offered through the Special School District. Students with disabilities attending parochial and private schools have the right to appropriate special education and related services.

The Special School District serves county students with disabilities classified as cognitively impaired, emotionally disturbed, physically impaired, specific learning disabled, speech/language impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, blind or partially seeing, deaf-blind,

multi-handicapped, autism, traumatic brain injury and other health impaired.

The Special School District staff also provides routine and in-depth hearing, and speech and language screenings as well as educational diagnostic evaluations for more than 100,000 children each year. Special education classes for three- and four-year-old students with disabilities and home teaching for home- and hospital-bound students also are offered by the Special District.

Additional information regarding special education and the Special District is available by calling the Special District at 989-8100.

Disability Services

The Webster Groves School District conducts an annual survey of all children with disabilities under the age of 21 who live in the district and are not now served by the Special School District of St. Louis County.

The survey complies with Missouri statutes, the federal Rehabilitation Act, Section 504 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, which ensures confidentiality of all information.

Child's name _____ Date of birth _____
Sex _____ Age _____ Birth certificate number _____
Nature of disability _____
School _____
Parent/Guardian _____
Address _____
City, State _____ Zip _____
Phone number (day) _____ (evening) _____

Return completed form by May 4 to Survey, Webster Groves School District, 400 E. Lockwood Ave., Webster Groves, MO 63119. For further information, please call Catina Lyles, 989-8277.

Kindergarten Enrollment
for Fall 2022 Is Open

Photos by Pat Weaver

Enrollment has opened for children who will enter kindergarten in August. Families are encouraged to enroll their students as soon as possible so that the district can plan class assignments and allocate resources. Children are eligible for kindergarten if they are five years old before Aug. 1, 2022. Enrollment is online. To enroll your kindergartner, you'll need the following:

1. Three or more documents are required to establish the residency and domicile of the parent(s) or guardian(s) with whom the student resides within the District. (See below for specific details on acceptable forms of proofs of residency.)
2. If the student is residing with a court-appointed legal guardian who resides within the Webster Groves School District, a certified copy of the court order granting legal guardianship to such person.
3. A copy of the student's birth certificate.
4. A copy of the student's health information and immunizations record as required by the state of Missouri.
5. In the event that the parents of the student are divorced, and either (a) the parents share physical custody of the student, or (b) the parental rights of one of the parents has been



Kindergartners at Bristol share a book.
Photo by Pat Weaver.

terminated, a copy of the parents' Decree of Dissolution of Marriage or the other Court Order terminating parental rights.

Residency Requirements

In order to enroll a student in the Webster Groves School District, the parent or court-appointment legal guardian of the student must provide a valid driver's license or photo ID and documentation from each of the lists below.

All documents provided must be current and display the name of the parent or legal guardian, as well as their residential address within the WGSD (private information may be blacked out.) If the parent/legal guardian does not own the property within the district, or does not have the required docu-