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Winter 2023

INSIDE CLAYTON

claytonschools.net

All In Clayton Coalition is All In For Clayton

What began as a group of concerned parents has grown into a full time community initiative. The All In Clayton Coalition, founded in 2016, is now made up of parents, students, staff and community members making an effort to reduce substance misuse, which some feel is a growing concern within the Clayton Community.

"It's an all hands on deck situation," says **Lily Schliesser**, who joined the coalition as Project Coordinator in July 2022. With her background in communications, almost 10 years of prevention coalition experience and a personal history with substance use, Schliesser brings a wealth of knowledge to her daily work. Schliesser continued "we need even more involvement from the community to foster a culture shift."

A culture shift is exactly what the student coalitions at both Clayton High School (CHS) and Wydown Middle School (WMS) hope to accomplish. "Working with All In makes me feel empowered because they listen to my ideas, and I can get involved in community work," says **Graham Keller**, Class of 2024 and a member of the CHS coalition.

Their message is simple, substance use never has been cool.

Made up of volunteers, the CHS and WMS student coalitions are committed to making a culture shift. By giving their time, being open contributors and working as a team they hope to be the change their community needs. Their message is simple: substance use has never been cool.

"One thing that I want other students to know about substance use is that it is in no way "cool." It never was and never will be. Don't let peer pressure ever force you into something or do something that you're uncomfortable with," says **Olivia Lin**, Class of 2028 and a member of the WMS coalition. These student coalitions are working on strategies to combat the substance use issues they see first hand. Schliesser says her student coalitions "look at the data, identify the big need areas, and

create and implement strategies to address them." Their agenda currently includes strategies to reduce access to alcohol, campaigns to foster parent-child conversations and a strategy to reduce risk factors associated with cannabis use.

"Adults and youths should work together to work towards a common goal, making our community safer and better."

The coalition is currently in its fourth year of a five year federal Drug Free Community (DFC) Grant. They recently completed their parent survey with a very strong response. That survey will help with planning and implementing programs to aid Clayton youth in making healthy decisions and reaching their potential. The coalition is currently working on a Needs Assessment survey which will impact the coalition's logic model and action plan based on its outcome.

"Clayton has been an extremely supportive environment. This is an upstream solution that will provide students with healthy coping skills that follow them," Schliesser said, "If we act as a community, we can foster a culture where our youth make healthy decisions for life."

To make, and sustain, their "culture shift," the coalition is always looking for more involvement from the community as a whole. So what experience can you lend? The All In Clayton Coalition meets every month at the Admin Center. All are welcome. The more experience brought in through its members, in a variety of fields, the better the outreach and outcome

of the coalition's goals. Just ask Lin. She believes, "adults and youths should work together to work towards a common goal, making our community safer and better. I believe communication is key in trying to understand each other and work together to make healthy decisions." We couldn't agree more. •

To read more about All In and how you can get involved, visit their website at allincoalition.com.



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CLAYTON

Administrative Center
#2 Mark Twain Circle
Clayton, MO 63105
Phone – 314.854.6000

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Inside Clayton is for School District of Clayton residents, businesses and families. Please submit comments and questions to:

Office of Communications
314.854.6038
communications@claytonschools.net

Chris Tennill, APR
Chief Communications Officer

Meredith Reese
Community Relations Specialist

Todd Schumacher
Digital Communications Coordinator

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DR. NISHA PATEL SUPERINTENDENT

From the Superintendent...

Dear Clayton Community -

The first half of the 2022-2023 school year is in the books and it's been filled with some incredible teaching and learning in our schools. A big focus of this year has been a deeper dive into our strategic plan, ensuring all of our actions help make our schools a place for everyone to grow as learners in head and heart. Last year, our administrators worked together to really dig into the ways they can make our schools a place for everyone. (The first goal of our strategic plan.) This year, our focus has been on empowered learning (The second goal of our strategic plan.) and how we as lead learners continue to empower our students to take ownership of their learning. We are also working with our teachers to explore all the different ways we can embed (and evaluate) the competencies in our Profile of a Clayton Graduate throughout our students' PK-12 educational journey.

We can see elements of our strategic plan or the competencies from our Profile of a Graduate on display in the stories throughout this edition of *Inside Clayton*. The cover story shares the good work of the students and adults who are involved in the All In Clayton Coalition, a group working to keep Clayton youth safe from the effects of substance misuse while also building a community that prioritizes drug prevention as a vital part of developing healthy, thriving young people. Student coalitions at Clayton High School and Wydown Middle School work hard to promote a culture shift that will ultimately make our community safer and better.



Speaking of students, the center spread of this issue takes a look back at the Class of 2022, their achievements and where they ended up continuing their journey after leaving Clayton. Our student news publication at CHS, *The Globe*, has been a perpetual award winner and this year is no exception. You can read more about our *Globe* students on page 6. A number of members of the Class of 2023 were named National Merit Scholars, which you can read more about on page 3.

When you have students who are regularly recognized on many levels, it only follows that the District would be recognized as well. The District was recognized as the top public school district in Missouri in the 2023 Niche Best Schools rankings. Learn more about this and where each of our schools ranked on page 6. (Hint: No school finished lower than fourth in their respective categories.)

Of course, none of this is possible without the support of this amazing Clayton community. We are so grateful for your continued support and pledge to keep working to ensure our schools continue to meet the high expectations of our community while also providing the best possible learning experiences for our students.

Sincerely,

Nisha Patel, Ed.D.
Superintendent



Nineteen CHS Seniors Listed as 2023 National Merit Scholars

Fifteen CHS Seniors have been announced as 2023 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 15 Semifinalists at CHS represent more than seven percent of the class of 2023. Approximately 16,000 Semifinalists in the annual National Merit Scholarship Program were named this year.

National Merit Semifinalists

Ian Bennett
Katherine De La Paz
Hannah Do
Bek Handzic-Smith
Anisha Jarang
Ariana Kroeger
David Liang
Ken McAvoy
Scott A McCary
Ivy Reed
Ismael Robles-Razzaq
Samuel Rosenzweig
Alice Wang
Esther Wang
Elaine Yoo



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.



National Merit Commended Students

Four additional students have been selected as 2022 National Merit Commended Students.

Tiancheng Fan
Jackson Leonard
Oliver Pollock
Sava Tamanaha

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. •

WMS Teacher Receives 2022 Emerson Teaching Award

Wydown Middle School Gifted Specialist **Frankie Synovec** is Clayton's 2022 Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award recipient. Teachers are nominated by their peers with the winner being selected by a committee of Clayton's past Emerson Award recipients.

Frankie is brilliant and kind. She inspires staff to focus a little more closely on student well-being and to take themselves less seriously in the classroom. She always brings her energy and knowledge of how to build community. She shows that we can be caring and also have high expectations of our students academically.

In her nominations this is part of what her peers had to say about her:

"Frankie is a leader in the building, an innovator in the classroom, a fount of optimism in the hallway, and a master relationship builder with students. She is great with technology and is always seeking to find a way to make education more accessible and fun for ALL students. At the same time, she knows how to joyfully personalize a lesson to each student's needs." •



Wydown Middle School Gifted Specialist Frankie Synovec poses with Superintendent Dr. Nisha Patel.

Class of 2022: A Look Back

Clayton High School's Class of 2022 celebrated its accomplishments over the past 13 years and prepared for new challenges and successes during its commencement ceremony on May 26 at the Chaifetz Arena downtown.

With their families and teachers in attendance, the students reminisced about their achievements as a class and as individuals.

The School District of Clayton is nationally known for its academic excellence. Administrators, teachers and District staff alike are committed to making Clayton a place for everyone to grow as learners in head and heart.

Clayton's Profile of a Clayton Graduate defines the qualities we want our students to have when they complete their PreK through twelfth-grade journey through our schools. When our graduates leave us, we want them to be self actualized, intellectually curious, empathetic, culturally-competent, creative thinkers and collaborators. Clayton High School offers 27 Advanced Placement courses and graduated 99 percent of its seniors in 2022 with 91 percent of them advancing to two- and four-year colleges.

Visit claytonschools.net/chs to view commencement photos. •



**91% of the Class of 2022
advanced to a two
or four-year college.**

Moving On to Higher Education

Members of the Class of 2022 have chosen to attend the colleges and universities listed below. The number of graduates attending each institution is included in parentheses.

Agnes Scott College (1)	College of Charleston (1)	Hendrix College (1)	Maryville University (1)
Alabama A&M University (1)	Colorado State University (1)	Houston Community College (1)	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (2)
American University (2)	Columbia Chicago College (1)	Indiana University (3)	McDaniel College (1)
Appalachian State University (1)	Concordia University Wisconsin (1)	Ithaca College (1)	McGill University (1)
Arizona State University (5)	Dallas College (1)	Johns Hopkins University (1)	Miami University (2)
Boston College (1)	Denison University (2)	Kansas State University (1)	Missouri University of Science and Technology (3)
Boston University (1)	DePaul University (2)	Kenyon College (2)	Moberly Area Community College (1)
Bradley University (1)	Dillard University (1)	Knox College (1)	Mount Holyoke College (1)
Butler University (1)	Emerson College (1)	Lawrence University (1)	Northwestern University (1)
Carnegie Mellon University (1)	Fashion Institute of Technology (1)	Lewis University (1)	Oberlin College (1)
Chapman University (2)	Fontbonne University (1)	Louisiana State University (3)	Occidental College (2)
Clark University (1)	Grinnell College (1)	Loyola University Chicago (6)	Politecnico di Milano (1)
Clemson University (2)	Hamilton College (1)	Loyola University Maryland (1)	
Colby College (1)	Harvard University (2)	Marquette University (1)	



CLASS OF 2022
**NATIONAL MERIT
SCHOLARS**
15 Semifinalists
15 Finalists



Purdue University (4)	University of Alabama (1)	University of Mississippi (1)	University of Southern California (2)
Regis University (2)	University of California - Los Angeles (UCLA) (2)	University of Missouri (14)	University of Tampa (1)
Saint Louis Community College (8)	University of Central Missouri (1)	University of Missouri - Kansas City (2)	University of Texas at Austin (1)
Saint Louis University (7)	University of Chicago (3)	University of Missouri - Saint Louis (UMSL) (1)	University of Washington (2)
San Diego State University (4)	University of Colorado Boulder (3)	University of New Mexico (1)	University of Wisconsin (2)
Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville (SIUE) (2)	University of Denver (1)	University of North Texas (1)	Virginia Commonwealth University (1)
Southern Methodist University (2)	University of Evansville (1)	University of Notre Dame (1)	Washington University in Saint Louis (14)
St. John's College (1)	University of Illinois Urbana - Champaign (3)	University of Oregon (1)	Webster University (4)
Syracuse University (1)	University of Iowa (1)	University of Pennsylvania (2)	William & Mary (2)
Temple University (1)	University of Kansas (1)	University of Puget Sound (1)	Xavier University of Louisiana (1)
Texas A&M University (1)	University of Michigan (2)	University of Richmond (1)	
Truman State University (4)	University of Minnesota Twin Cities (1)	University of Rochester (2)	
Tulane University (2)			

District Highly Ranked in 2023 Niche Best Schools Lists

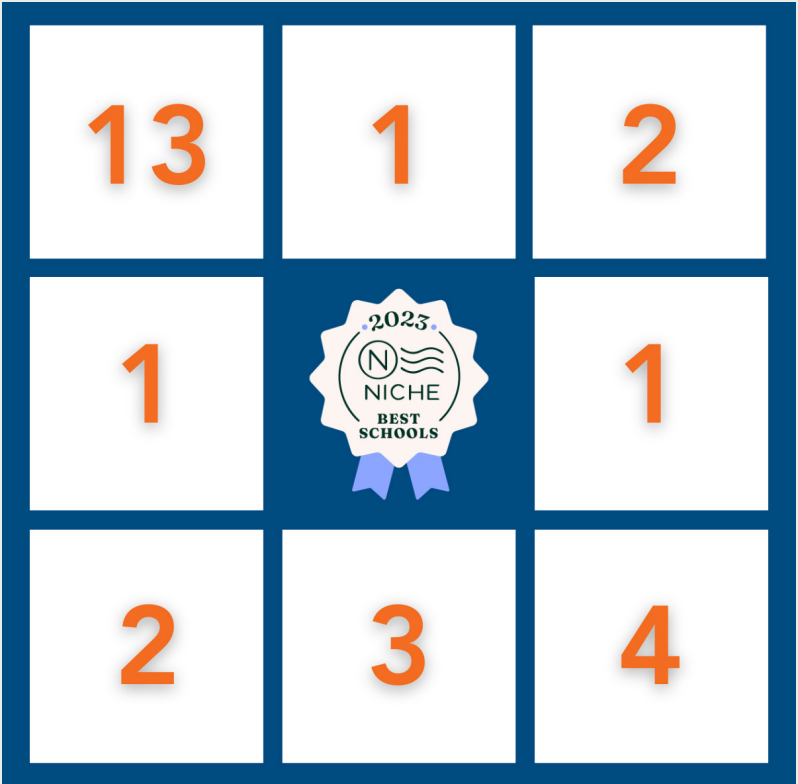
The 2023 Niche Best Schools rankings have been released. The District has been ranked as the best school district in the state and as the 13th best district in the country. The District has also been ranked as the best place to teach in Missouri and the top district with the best teachers in Missouri.

The District has also been ranked in the following categories:

- Best Public High Schools: #2 in Missouri
- Best Public Middle Schools: #1 in Missouri
- Best Public Elementary Schools: 3 of the Top 4 in Missouri (#2 MER, #3 CPT, #4 GLN)

The District was also ranked #6 in the Best High Schools for STEM - Combined Private and Public School Rankings. The top ranked public high school in Missouri.

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. •



“The Globe” Named a 2022 Pacemaker Award Finalist



Clayton High School’s “The Globe,” was recognized as a 2022 Pacemaker Finalist at the recent NSPA awards ceremony. They are only one of two schools in Missouri, and one of 36 in the United States to be nominated. Finalists were recognized at an awards ceremony

on Saturday, Nov. 12, as part of the JEA/NSPA Fall National High School Journalism Convention, in St. Louis.

Also, recent CHS graduate and 2022 recipient of the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award for high school print news, **Owen Auston-Babcock**, placed second in the nation in the “Feature Story of the Year” category. His story, titled “Unlivable Wages,” was published in December 2021.

During the ceremony on Nov. 12, The Globe was also recognized on “The Pacemaker 100” list by the NSPA. This award recognizes the top 100 journalism publications in the country for the last century. The Globe was one of four newspapers in Missouri on the list.

Editors-in-Chief for the 2021-2022 school year were **Shane LaGesse**, **Ella Cuneo** and **Ivy Reed**. •



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Asking Our Stakeholders to Help Check Our Work

Student work isn't the only thing that should be periodically checked in Clayton these days. It's also important for the District to check its work and that's exactly what happened back in November when students, parents, staff and community members gathered to give their perspective on how the District is doing with its strategic plan.

"It's an opportunity to for you to contribute to conversation and ultimately contribute to making the school district better,"
Dale Lee, Clayton parent.

Our strategic work in Clayton is focused on ensuring our schools are a place for everyone to grow as learners in head and heart. That focus, along with using the Profile of a Clayton Graduate as our north star, guides every student's PK-12 journey through our schools. An important step of this work is periodically asking stakeholders to share their thoughts about how that work is going.



The District has a rich history of regularly checking in with its community about important decisions involving planning for the future and has always relied on community feedback to help inform its strategic direction.

"I think it's great that we can all come together in one place and have like a very discussion of people from all over the district who fulfill many different roles, whether they're learners, educators or parents,"
Charlie Rubin, CHS Junior.

Participants in the November Community Engagement session had the opportunity to share their perspectives about each of the goals within the District's strategic plan as well as provide some insight to ensure the plan will evolve to continue to meet the needs of Clayton's students and staff. •

Hurst, Growe and Pierson Re-Elected To the Board



Kim Hurst



Jason Growe



Gary Pierson

Filing for the April 2023 Board of Education Election closed Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2022, at 5 p.m. **Kim Hurst, Jason Growe** and **Gary Pierson** were the only candidates to file for the three open positions. Missouri statutes (RsMO 115.124) do not require a school district to hold a Board of Education election if the number of candidates who file is equal to the number of positions to be filled by the election. No election will be held and all three candidates will be sworn in to office in April 2023.

Growe is starting his first full term on the Board, having been elected last year to fill the final year of a three-year term. He is the owner and CEO of a home healthcare business and has two daughters enrolled in elementary school. Hurst, who is beginning her second three-year term on the Board, leads strategy and mergers/acquisitions at Benson Holl, Inc. She has three children in the District, one at Wydown Middle School and two who attend Clayton High School. Pierson is set to start his third term on the Board of Education. He has three children, a daughter who attends CHS and two who are proud Clayton graduates. •

District Maintains Rollback Of Residential Tax Rate

The School District of Clayton's Board of Education approved the 2022 tax rate last fall, approving a slight decrease in the residential tax rate. The residential rate will decrease from \$4.0373 to \$4.0326, while the commercial rate will increase slightly from \$4.7658 to \$4.8014. In keeping a promise the District made during the 2019 Prop E campaign, the residential operating rate includes a 15 cent voluntary rollback in order to only collect the additional revenue that was projected in the original request for an operating levy increase.

A "voluntary rollback" is a term used to describe the action taken by a taxing body such as a school district to not levy or charge the fully approved and taxpayer authorized tax rate. •

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All In for the All In Clayton Coalition: Page 1

All In Clayton Coalition members decorate their float before marching in the Clayton High School Homecoming Parade last Fall.



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