



WASHBURN RURAL HIGH SCHOOL

JUNIOR BLUES NEWSLETTER



FEATURED STORY

UNSUNG HEROES

Washburn Rural High School students in Brad LeDuc's AP Studio Art class continued a special tradition with this year's Unsung Heroes portraits – larger-than-life works inspired by contemporary artist Chuck Close.

Over three weeks, students conducted interviews, wrote essays, and brought each design to life before unveiling the finished works during a special ceremony. This year's honorees included Primo Josef Arbon, a teacher his students describe as so much more than that. Students also honored former classmate Miles Timberlake, who passed away in July after a courageous 16-month battle with cancer. Miles is only the second student to be honored in the 17-year history of Unsung Heroes.

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From the Desk of Our Principal



Greetings once again! I'm thrilled to share that the school year is off to an incredible start! Our students are working hard, and we're fully engaged in the hustle and bustle of fall activities and athletics. So far, it's shaping up to be an exciting and dynamic year!

I'd like to draw your attention to an important upcoming event: Student-Led Conferences. These will take place on Wednesday and Thursday, October 14 and 15. The specific conference times are as follows:

- Wednesday, October 14, 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- Thursday, October 15, 7:30 – 11:00 a.m.
- Thursday, October 15, 12:00 - 3:00 p.m.
- Thursday, October 15, 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.

As parents, one of the most impactful things you can do to support your child's success is to establish regular, open communication with their teachers. It's equally important to stay informed about the courses and programs your student enjoys, as well as how their high school experiences connect to future goals. Student-Led Conferences provide a fantastic opportunity for these conversations, with the support of your student's Advisory Teacher.

At these conferences, Freshmen will share insights from a personal strengths survey and set goals for their high school journey. Sophomores will reflect on various surveys they've taken, such as the Strengths Explorer and Career Cluster Finder, and align these with their future aspirations. These assessments in Naviance offer valuable information on students' personalities, interests, and potential career paths. Juniors will discuss future plans and the goals they've set, while Seniors will reflect on their Career Interest Profiler and how it relates to their post-secondary plans, charting out the next steps toward achieving their goals.

We'll be utilizing myconferencetime.com platform for scheduling both student-led and regular class conferences. Students will sign up for their Student-Led Conference during Advisory, after which you'll have the opportunity to schedule meetings with your student's other teachers. These 15-minute appointments can be either virtual or in-person, based on your preference. Our Counseling and Administrative teams will also be available through the platform, and we encourage you to schedule time with us if needed.

As we near the end of the first 9-week period, we recognize that some students may be facing challenges. Our Tuesday/Thursday After School Tutoring Labs have started, offering a great chance for students to spend extra time on campus to catch up. If your child is referred, we appreciate your support in encouraging their participation to ensure their success. Our goal remains to help every student reach their fullest potential. We're eager to hear how your student is progressing and look forward to seeing you during conferences.

Finally, we are looking forward to celebrating Homecoming at Washburn Rural High School! Our Student Council has been hard at work planning activities to make this a fun and memorable time for our students and staff. Homecoming festivities will culminate on Friday, October 2, with our traditional parade, tailgate activities, football game, and the crowning of our Homecoming King and Queen. We look forward to welcoming families and community members as we celebrate together and showcase the many clubs, organizations, activities, and traditions that make Washburn Rural such a special place. The celebration will continue with our Homecoming dance on Saturday, October 3. We hope our students enjoy a safe, spirited, and memorable Homecoming weekend!

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Raines". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Ed" and last name "Raines" clearly visible.

Ed Raines, Principal
rainedw@usd437.net

WRHS Counseling Office

[Counseling Website](#)

Crisis Hotline: 785-232-5005 or 988

Junior and Senior Planning Letter

All juniors and seniors and their parents/guardians were emailed a [Junior Planning Letter](#) and [Senior Planning Letter](#) in September. Families are encouraged to review this letter closely.

Apply Free to Kansas Colleges October 5-9

The first step in going to college is to apply! For many students, applying to college can be a daunting task. WRHS is joining the Apply Kansas month-long, state-wide initiative to increase the number of students applying, enrolling, and succeeding in college or other postsecondary goals. From [October 5-9](#), Kansas applications are free!

PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Competition (NMSC)

The PSAT will be offered on October 12 and 13. Registered students should check their email for PSAT updates. The night before the exam, they should get rest and in the morning, eat breakfast in order to do their best. Practice materials can be found on the [PSAT website](#).

Free ACT for Juniors on March 2

The State of Kansas offers a free ACT to juniors on March 2. Juniors must register by October 31 to take the test. Registration must be completed from a USD 437 student email. The form is [HERE](#).

ASVAB

WRHS will be hosting the Student ASVAB (Armed Services Career Aptitude Battery) test for 10th, 11th and 12th graders on November 13. Students who registered by October 8 will receive details by email. The Student ASVAB is the first step in helping students determine their strengths and possible career paths through the Career Exploration Program supported by the military. A qualifying score for any branch of the military (minimum 31) could count as a student graduation asset as a part of the new high school graduation requirements.

College Planning Resources for Low Income Students

Many college planning resources and programs are available to students who qualify for free/reduced lunch (fee waivers, scholarship programs, etc). We encourage families to research opportunities and visit with your school counselor about these programs. Click [HERE](#).

Essentials for Parenting Teens

The CDC offers several resources on parenting teens between ages 11 and 17. Topics include understanding the teen years, managing emotions, encouraging independence, and praising your teen. The resource can be found [HERE](#).



AND BEYOND

TWO POST SECONDARY ASSETS REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION

COMPLETE ANY 2 OF THE FOLLOWING . . .

TEST SCORES FOR:

STATE ASSESSMENT (ENGLISH, MATH OR SCIENCE): 3+
ACT: 21+, AP: 3+, IB: 4+, ASVAB: 31+

95% ATTENDANCE
2 HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES
KBOR SCHOLARS CURRICULUM
9 COLLEGE HOURS
JROTC (ONE YEAR)
WORKPLACE LEARNING
SEAL OF BILITERACY
40 HOURS COMMUNITY SERVICE
INDUSTRY RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION
EAGLE SCOUT OR GOLD AWARD
SENIOR EXIT SURVEY

VISIT YOUR COUNSELOR FOR DETAILS





KANSAS APPLICATION LINKS

IMPORTANT DATES

SEPTEMBER 8

Advisory lesson on
sending official
transcripts

Unofficial transcripts

- Campus Portal
- Documents

SEPTEMBER 23

WRHS College Night

OCTOBER 5-9

Apply free to
Kansas colleges

- ✓ EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY
- ✓ FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY
- ✓ KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
- ✓ PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
- ✓ UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS
- ✓ WASHBURN UNIVERSITY-FREE
- ✓ WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

MORE INFORMATION :

-  SENIOR PLANNING LETTER
-  WRHS COUNSELORS



REFER TO THE
COLLEGE WEBSITE
FOR DEADLINES

AFTER SCHOOL LABS

Tuesdays & Thursdays
3:05-4:15

Library

English, Math, Science, Social Studies

AF-JROTC

Room G2342



NEED A RIDE?

**Sign up in the Main Office before
6th Period**

October Advisory Activities

Freshmen

- Sports World Speaker
- Student Led Conference Prep
- Working with Your Teachers Presentation
- Educator of Excellence Nominations
- Naviance Career Cluster Finder Assessment

Juniors

- Academic/Attendance Check
- Student Led Conference Prep
- Educator of Excellence Nominations
- Update 4 year Individual Plan of Study

Sophomores

- Student Led Conference Prep
- Academic/Attendance check
- Educator of Excellence Nominations
- Feedback for for Advisory Activities

Seniors

- Update College List in Naviance
- Explore Scholarships
- Work on College Applications and/or Resume
- Student Led Conference Prep
- Educator of Excellence Nominations
- Academic/Attendance Check

2026-27 UNSUNG HERO PORTRAIT

-Mr. Arbon-

Students enrolled in this year's A.P. Studio Art class started the school year by collaborating on a massive 7' x 9' portrait in the style of contemporary artist Chuck Close.

Students began the project by selecting their topic from any person in our local school community, based on who they wanted to honor as an Unsung Hero. After contacting their Hero, they shot photos to work from, laid out a grid to enlarge the photos for proper proportions, and began work on the portrait. The project promoted communication within the group and required them to work collectively, striving to create a work with unity/variety that captured the likeness of their Hero.

Artist Chuck Close (1940-2021) was the project's inspiration. Close reinvented the "portrait" in the late 1960s by working on a large-scale format. He became an overnight sensation in the art world when he created a series of seven portraits, beginning with himself, done with one tube of black Mars acrylic paint applied with an airbrush. His original portraits were done on canvas in a similar size, using a grid to assist in a photorealistic image transfer from his photograph to canvas. Chuck Close recently passed away on August 19, 2021.

Special thanks and congratulations to Mr. Arbon for being selected as one of this year's Unsung Heroes!

Below are the students responsible for the creation of the portrait:

Juniors: Via Cummings and Ella Reily

Seniors: Xander Berg, Macey Cathcart, Lexi French and Audrey Gathers

To view process photos of the project, [click here](#).

MR. ARBON

By Macey Cathcart and Lexi French

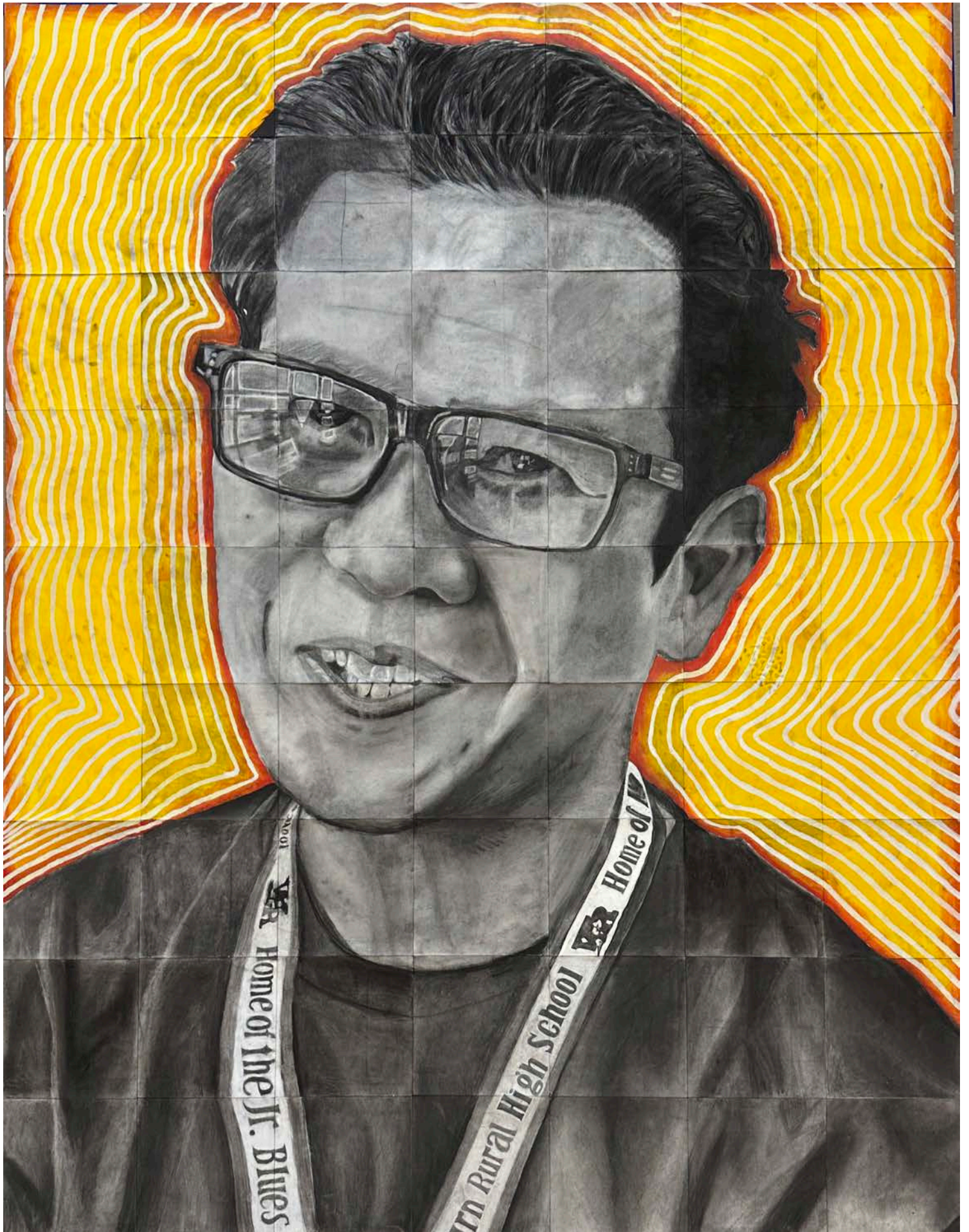
Let's begin this with an important quote directly from Mr. Arbon's Classroom:

"Okay everybody, listen up."

A high school math class is probably the least inspiring place you could think of, until you meet Mr. Arbon. Mr. Arbon not only teaches math, but he teaches students how to be better human beings. He deeply cares about every soul that enters his classroom, and he strives to help every student reach their full potential. When the bell rings, he doesn't start with math; he begins class by connecting with the students. Mr. Arbon starts class with a story to grab everyone's attention, then he sneaks in a life lesson at the end. He once said something along the lines of "hearing is not the same as listening," meaning that listening is something you have to put effort into. If you sit in his classroom and listen just past the words that come out of his mouth, he is teaching about life, not just math.

He gets students to truly engage in his class. He makes personal connections to their lives and remembers small details. Mr. Arbon says, "I'm not really a teacher actually. I just want to help." He sees that every student is unique and has different talents and he's trying to help students see it in themselves. Mr. Arbon knows that every person has a different way of learning, and a good teacher needs to embrace that. He says: "you need to meet halfway." Someone that only expects the students to have one way of thinking cannot get very far with teaching. Mr. Arbon asked, "Can you imagine that?! 30 different personalities and trying to think in one mind." This is why Mr. Arbon became a teacher. He wanted to help. Every day, Mr. Arbon gets up and wants to help his students achieve their goals. He never dreamed of being a teacher, but as he says, "The best things are unplanned." For Mr. Arbon, knowing math is the easy part. The difficult part is connecting with the students and building a relationship where they feel inspired to listen.

Mr. Arbon has been through many hardships, but always finds hope through his faith and family. He believes strongly in hard work, helping others, and challenging yourself. Our group believes that Mr. Arbon is such a unique and personal teacher. We hope that he will always remember how much he has impacted our lives and how special he is to us.



2026-27 UNSUNG HERO PORTRAIT -Miles Timberlake-

Students enrolled in this year's A.P. Studio Art class started the school year by collaborating on a massive 7' x 9' portrait in the style of contemporary artist Chuck Close.

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Special thanks to Miles's family for joining us in celebrating the life of an amazing child, student, and good friend to many. Miles will forever be remembered and loved.

Below are the students responsible for the creation of the portrait:

Juniors: Madelyn Butcher

Seniors: Ren Beard-Alvarado, Jonathan Fernkopf, Cora Heble, Winter Manrose, Lucy May and Rande Porter

To view process photos of the project, [click here](#).

Miles Timberlake Essay

Written by Ren Beard-Alvarado

Miles Timberlake was a good person. They were a dancer, artist, singer, “blue drink appreciator”, “piercing aficionado”, and a “bro to many”. Throughout the 3 years of them being here, they were involved with theater, choir, and the arts here at Washburn. Every moment and every class they were in felt like there was always a bundle of joy and energy surrounding them. They believed that everyone should be respected and loved in this lifetime.

In Miles' younger years, they were always creating with paints, clay, sewing, and more. Dancing had always been an important part of their life ever since they were 6. They had been in The Nutcracker every year, in multiple Ballet Midwest productions, played fiddler in Fiddler on the Roof, and their last show was Romeo and Juliet, where they convinced their dad to participate. One of their pastimes was seeing musicals with their family, like Hamilton, Hairspray, The Lion King, and Mean Girls.

Middle school was full of struggles with mental health, but they sought help through therapy and finding themselves in their own spiritual journey. Miles expressed a desire to be a high school biology teacher and a dance instructor on the side, as well as travel the world.

People they looked up to were their family, teachers, and their best friend Faith, who had known them for 4 years.

Miles was diagnosed with Ewing Sarcoma at the age of 15 when they were an all-A student who did dance 4 to 6 days a week. The cancer never stopped Miles from being a loving and caring person to the teachers, friends, and family who surrounded them. They didn't feel sorry for themselves but instead “faced cancer with a positive outlook and strived to lift others' spirits as well.” Their outlook on life had changed after the diagnosis, and they tried to find joy and purpose in every situation. They wrote their book, “The Art of Being Sick,” to help share their experience with cancer, saying that their “greatest hope for this project was for other teens with cancer to feel seen and heard.” With the book came countless paintings and drawings expressing themselves, followed by a reading of their book and a solo art show at the Blue Gallery in the art hallway.

On June 3rd, Miles suffered a stroke where they couldn't talk or move the right side of their body. They were able to get their father's attention and went to Children's Mercy, where they mostly recovered but still had to use a walker or a wheelchair. Three weeks later, they were able to go on a Make-A-Wish trip to London.

Miles was a really good person. They lifted everyone around them and advocated for the rights and freedom of others. To the person reading or listening to this:

Get out there and live your life!

Thank you to:

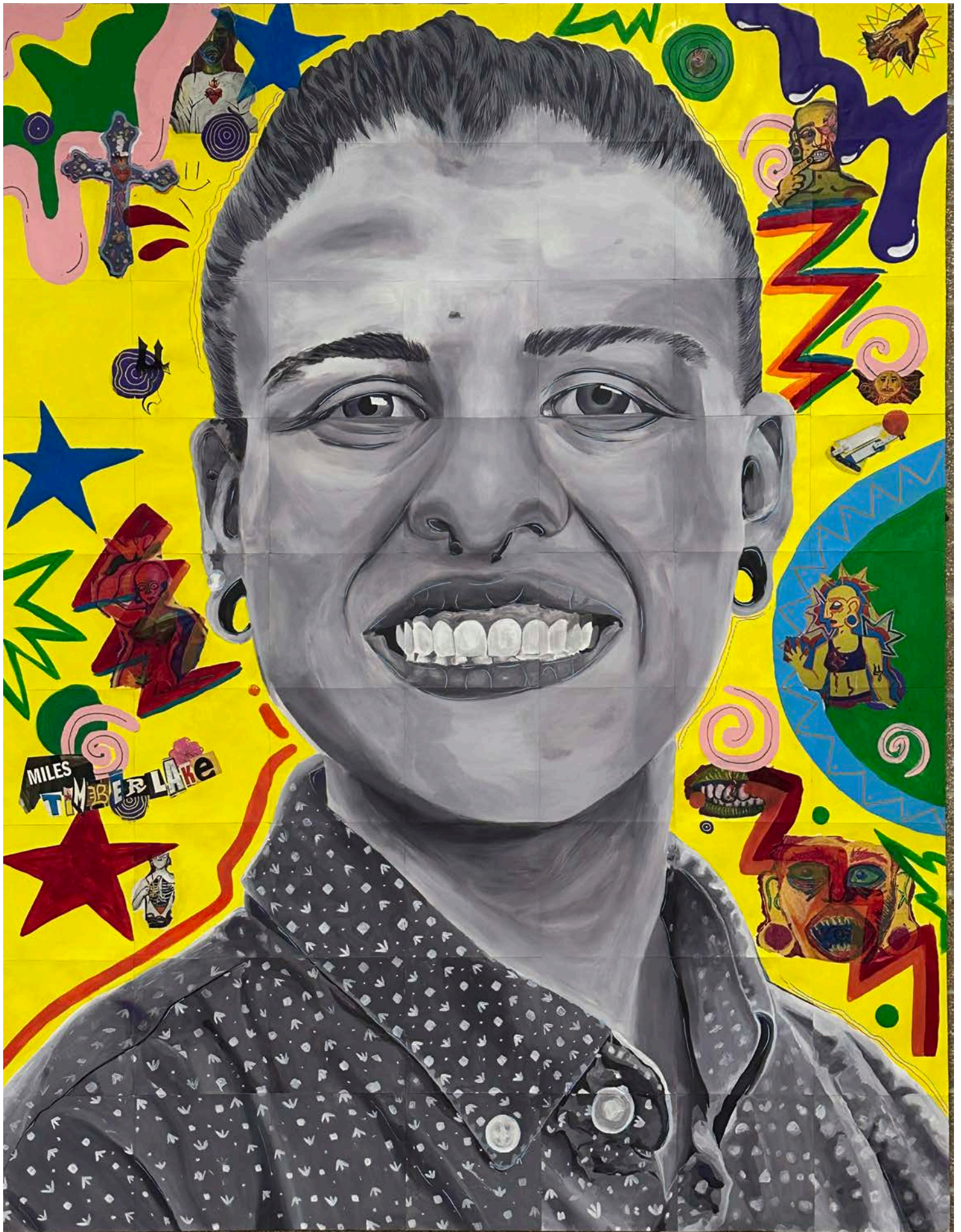
Miles parents

Faith Buchan

And everyone who wrote letters

We couldn't have done this without you.

◆ Art Department



◆ National Merit Semifinalists

Washburn Rural High School is excited to announce that two WRHS seniors have been named National Merit Semifinalists in the 70th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Kennedy Wright and Shri Chidambaranathan are among approximately 16,000 Semifinalists selected nationwide.

These academically talented high school seniors now have the opportunity to continue in the competition for approximately 6,930 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$26 million, which will be offered next spring. To compete for a National Merit Scholarship, Semifinalists must advance to the Finalist level by fulfilling several additional requirements. Approximately 95 percent of Semifinalists are expected to attain Finalist standing, and about half of the Finalists will earn a National Merit Scholarship and the prestigious Merit Scholar title.

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), a not-for-profit organization established in 1955, conducts the annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Scholarships are supported by NMSC as well as approximately 300 business organizations, higher education institutions, and individual donors that share the organization's goal of recognizing academic excellence and encouraging students to pursue their educational goals.

More than 1.3 million juniors from approximately 20,000 high schools entered the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2025 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). The PSAT/NMSQT served as the initial screening for program entrants. The nationwide pool of Semifinalists represents less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors and includes the highest-scoring students in each state.

WRHS is also proud to recognize two National Merit Commended Students, Sophie Miller and Carter Allen. Commended Students represent approximately the top five percent of students nationwide who entered the National Merit Scholarship Program.

To become a Finalist, each Semifinalist and a high school official must submit a detailed scholarship application that includes information about the student's academic record, participation in school and community activities, leadership abilities, employment, honors, and awards. Semifinalists must also have an outstanding academic record, receive endorsement and recommendation from a high school official, write an essay, and earn SAT or ACT scores that confirm their earlier performance on the qualifying test.

More than 15,000 of the approximately 16,000 Semifinalists are expected to advance to the Finalist level, with students being notified of their Finalist status in February. All National Merit Scholarship winners will be selected from this group of Finalists. National Merit Scholarship winners are selected based on their skills, accomplishments, and potential for success in rigorous college studies.

National Merit Scholarship winners for 2026 will be announced through four nationwide news releases beginning in April and concluding in July. These recipients will join more than 389,000 other distinguished young people who have earned the Merit Scholar title.



2026 IB Citizen Scholarship

2026 IB Citizen Scholarship Winner

Congratulations to Valentina Garcia Muñoz! Valentina was selected by the WRHS IB staff as the 2026 IB Citizen Scholar. Valentina is not only a talented and hardworking student, but she also actively finds ways to lift people up and improve her communities. The award is well deserved, and we wish her all the best as she pursues her postsecondary studies in Guadalajara.



What is the IB Citizen Scholarship?

The WRHS IB Citizen Scholarship is a \$500 award offered to one WRHS IB senior who demonstrates an outstanding commitment to developing traits of the IB Learner Profile. This is not just an academic scholarship. Rather, it is a reward for candidates who embody character traits that we believe represent excellent citizenship in our modern world. The scholarship is funded by the WRHS International Baccalaureate activities account and is managed by the IB coordinator.

Profile of Valentina's IB Work

Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) Project: Valentina, through her Smiles Delivered project, collected new and gently used toys from the Topeka community through donation boxes and delivered them to children in underserved communities as well as to children with disabilities in Pachuca, Mexico, in partnership with the nonprofit organization Teletón.

Theory of Knowledge (TOK) Exhibition Topic: Does our knowledge depend on our interactions with other knowers? Valentina explores this question by reflecting on the Mangyongdae Revolutionary Institute of North Korea, the 1927 Fifth Solvay International Conference in Belgium, and her grandmother's rice recipe.

TOK Essay Topic: To what extent is doubt central to the pursuit of knowledge? Valentina argues that doubt is essential in the beginning stages of the pursuit of knowledge; however, it must be limited when it hinders our potential understanding or when it harms cultural interpretations.

Extended Essay Topic: How do musical decisions across three historical stages— evangelization, independence, and imperialism— reflect the evolving role of music in shaping identity and resistance in Latin America?

Valentina's College Plans: Valentina will study medicine at Universidad de Guadalajara.

IB Learner Profile

Inquirers—Caring—Thinkers—Communicators—Balanced—Principled—Risk
Takers—Knowledgeable—Open-minded—Reflective

For more information on our diploma program, please visit the [WRHS IB website](#).

◆ Food Service

Washburn Rural High School has welcomed a new face to the school cafeteria this year. Joyce Thomas, the new Food Service Manager at WRHS, brings more than 25 years of experience in the food service industry and a passion for cooking, working with young people, and creating meals students will enjoy.



Food service has been a big part of Joyce's life from an early age. Growing up in a large family where cooking was a regular part of life, her love for food started at home. At just 16 years old, Joyce began working in the kitchen at Topeka State Hospital. Later, a job in the dish room at a long-term care facility, alongside her mother, sparked an even greater interest in the food industry.

Over the years, Joyce worked her way up from cook to kitchen supervisor and district manager. She also spent about 10 years as the kitchen director at Topeka Presbyterian Manor.

Outside of school, Joyce continues to pursue her passion for cooking. She is a chef and owns J's Catering with her son. Some of her favorite dishes to prepare include red velvet cake, banana pudding, and homemade peach cobbler. Baking during the holidays is especially enjoyable.

After spending many years working in long-term care and traveling between different facilities, Joyce decided it was time for a change. "I wanted to work with kids," Joyce explained. As a youth director at church, working with young people has always been important to her. Her new position at Washburn Rural provides an opportunity to combine that passion with her love of food.

Joyce hopes to spend the next 10 years working with students before eventually retiring.

One of the most exciting parts of her new position is learning something completely different. School food service is much different from long-term care food service, and Joyce is looking forward to learning the regulations, programs, and routines that come with serving a high school.

Food Service

Her first impression of Washburn Rural? “It’s really big!” The students, however, have made an even bigger impression.

“The students have been awesome and great to work with,” Joyce said. Although lunch periods move quickly, making it difficult to have long conversations, getting to know students and staff has been a highlight of her new job.

One of Joyce’s goals is to continue improving the quality and flavor of the meals served at WRHS. While the cafeteria follows established recipes and nutritional guidelines, she is looking for ways to add more seasoning and variety while working within school food service requirements.

So far, one of Joyce’s favorite meals to prepare has been the breakfast sandwiches, which she describes as amazing.

For students who may be looking to try something new, Joyce recommends the loaded chicken bowls.

And if she could choose only one food to eat for the rest of her life, the answer would be easy: pizza!

Joyce also has some big culinary dreams. A major goal is to appear on Beat Bobby Flay. “I just want to be him so bad,” Joyce joked about celebrity chef Bobby Flay.

If given the opportunity to cook for any famous person, Joyce would choose Patti LaBelle. Coming from the South and sharing a love of Southern cooking, Joyce would want to challenge LaBelle by preparing one of her specialties, peach cobbler.

Joyce wants students to understand that the cafeteria staff is working hard every day with students in mind. “They think about the students and have them in mind when they’re preparing their food,” Joyce explained. The staff pays attention to what students like and dislike and understands that students often judge a meal by its appearance before they even take the first bite. Most importantly, the cafeteria staff enjoys talking with students and getting to know them.

Joyce has one simple wish for students at lunchtime: to actually enjoy their meal. Students can help make that happen by speaking up. “I would like for students to be more vocal about the things they like and dislike,” Joyce said. “We would love to hear what students like and dislike about the food. That’s the reason we’re here.”

So the next time you grab lunch at Washburn Rural, take a moment to say hello, try something new, and share your thoughts. You never know; you might be helping inspire the next great menu item at WRHS.



WARU
THEATRE

A Midsummer Night's Dream

November 5-7 | 7 pm | WARU Auditorium
5900 SW 61st St, Topeka, KS 66619

\$7 for students

\$10 general
admission

Career and Technical Education

Workplace Experience Opportunities

Work-based learning provides high school students with valuable hands-on experience and exposure to real-world work environments. By participating in job shadow experiences or internships, students have the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they learn in the classroom to practical situations. This practical experience helps students develop a deeper understanding of a career field, gain valuable industry-specific skills, and build professional networks. Work-based learning prepares high school students by equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and confidence to succeed in the workforce after graduation. If you are interested in WPE contact Kim Sommers by email at sommekim@usd437.net

Certificates and Industry Recognized Credentials being earned by WRHS Students in several CTE Pathways.

[YouScience](#) is a valuable tool for classrooms that helps students explore their interests, skills, and potential career paths. It provides personalized assessments and career recommendations based on a student's aptitude and interests. The platform also allows teachers to check completion of competencies standards in each CTE course. With YouScience, students can make more informed decisions about their future education and career choices, leading to greater engagement and success in the classroom.

[NCCER](#), or the National Center for Construction Education and Research, offers industry-recognized credentials for high school students in construction-related fields. By participating in NCCER programs, high school students can gain valuable skills and knowledge that prepare them for careers in construction and related industries. NCCER certifications provide students with a competitive edge in the job market and open doors to a wide range of opportunities in the construction industry. Students are eligible to participate this semester.

Ms. Dible is offering the [ServSafe](#) Food Handler and Manager exams in the culinary courses. These exams verify that a manager or person-in-charge has sufficient food safety knowledge to protect the public from foodborne illness, ensure proper personal hygiene, prevent cross-contamination, control time and temperature when handling food, and proper cleaning and sanitizing.

Biomedical Research Students will be preparing for the [BACE](#) certification exam, which will take place in the spring. The exam serves as a hiring benchmark, providing evidence for mastery of industry-defined standards. This may reduce training time, allowing for rapid transition to higher-level classwork or supporting a move from school to work.

Students in the Teaching & Training Program complete the Master Teacher [Paraeducator Title 1 Certification](#) validates skills, qualifies for jobs, and offers a pathway to advanced educational roles by providing essential training and ensuring professional competency for supporting students in the classroom. Earning a certification proves a fundamental understanding of educational principles, enabling individuals to assist teachers and students effectively, especially those with special needs, while also enhancing their opportunities in the field of education.

Students in our application-level classes in Construction and Manufacturing complete the [OSHA 10 Certification](#). This certification is offered for construction or general industry, training supervisors and workers on workplace hazards and safety best practices, helping them understand safety regulations, identify hazards, and use protective equipment. Completing the course and passing the final exam provides a DOL card that many employers require for safety-related and supervisory roles.

[Excel in CTE](#) was launched in 2012 as a plan to enhance career technical education in Kansas and better prepare high school students for college and careers. Kansas high school students qualify for state-funded college tuition in approved technical courses offered by Kansas technical and community colleges. WRHS

◆ Career and Technical Education

students have the opportunity to attend [Washburn Tech](#) as part of their regular school day, or they may elect to take online courses outside of school hours.

Resources

Naviance and YouScience are resources available to all students and can help students explore career options, employment trends in those industries, and the training or education needed.

Community Partners

Advisory committees assist in the development and operation of the CTE cluster/pathway by keeping instructors up to date on industry standards and trends. They also provide students the opportunity to build a professional network and may offer job shadow experiences or internships.

If you are interested in serving on one of our pathway Advisory Boards, please connect with Kim Sommers, at sommekim@usd437.net



Why CTE Matters

The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) provides guidance and resources to support Students' Right to Know in Kansas, helping students in grades 7–12 and their families make informed decisions about education and career pathways. This page connects you to key information on postsecondary options, workforce demand and potential earnings. Whether you are a student planning your next steps, a parent supporting those decisions or an educator guiding career exploration, this page provides the tools and information needed to understand how education connects to future opportunities.

To ensure distribution of the degree prospectus information published by the Kansas Board of Regents, [DegreeStats](#) is available to students grades 7-12 and their families. Students should be researching and planning for their future careers.

- The [Kansas Training Information Program \(K-TIP\)](#) report.
- Other information relevant to the student's understanding of potential earnings.
- [Kansas Labor Information Center \(KLIC\) - LMI Home Page \(ks.gov\)](#)
- The potential earnings of the branches of the armed services of the U.S. military.
 - [KBOR Military and Veteran Resources](#)
 - [CareerOneStop \(Includes Military Options\)](#)
 - [O*NET OnLine \(onetonline.org\)](#) (Military Crosswalk)
- [Kansas Career Guidance Handbook 2026-2027 \(ksde.org\)](#)

◆ Career and Technical Education

Guest Speakers - KBS Constructors, INC

CTE Students in Construction and Manufacturing classes had the opportunity to welcome, Sam Stallbaumer and Scott Coon, from KBS Constructors, Inc., a premier commercial construction firm headquartered right here in Topeka, Kansas. Founded in 1989, KBS Constructors has built a regional reputation as the region's foremost specialist in Critical Environment Construction. They tackle complex, highly sensitive commercial and industrial projects where precision is paramount—ranging from bioscience labs and data centers to community landmarks like the Topeka Zoo's Tiger Trails. Driven by the core philosophies of "listening first" and fostering deep community roots, the leadership team at KBS brings a wealth of knowledge on: The Future of Regional Development: Driving innovation through community projects like the Link Innovation Labs. Operational Excellence & Safety: Executing high-stakes build strategies utilizing Total Quality Management principles. Collaborative Leadership: Aligning multi-office talent across Topeka, Lawrence, and Kansas City to build stronger local economies. We appreciate KBS Constructors taking the time to share their unique insights on building local impact, scaling a business with integrity, and what goes into engineering "knowledge beyond structures."



WRHS Students Gain Real-World Experience Through DECA Stock Market Game

Students in Mr. McFall's Consumer and Personal Finance classes and members of the Washburn Rural High School DECA chapter are putting their financial knowledge into practice by participating in the DECA Stock Market Game.

Through the simulation, students have the opportunity to experience what it is like to research companies, make investment decisions, monitor stock performance, and manage a portfolio. Students are learning that investing involves both potential rewards and risks, while seeing firsthand how market conditions can affect their investments.

The Stock Market Game provides students with a hands-on way to apply concepts they are learning in the classroom, including diversification, risk and return, investment research, and long-term financial planning.

The activity is part of the Business Department's ongoing effort to give students real-world experiences and help them develop the financial skills they can use throughout their lives.

◆ Career and Technical Education

Programming & Software Development

WRHS senior and former Game Design student Brian Rodecap recently returned to the Game Design classroom to give students a live demonstration of his game, The Last Signal. Brian shared, “The Last Signal started as an idea for a class project and ended up becoming something I was genuinely proud of. It was really cool seeing an idea I came up with turn into a game people could actually play.”

He showed students the ins and outs of his game, including assets, tilemaps, scripts, and more. Students also had the opportunity to playtest the game and ask Brian questions about his experience and advice for the year ahead.

Brian was a dedicated student who took advantage of every opportunity to develop his game. It was exciting for current students to see what is possible when they set their minds to a project!

Carter Allen, a senior Game Design student, shared how Brian’s presentation impacted him: “For pretty much all my life, I’ve been playing, studying, and conceptualizing video games. I’ve worked with all of the individual aspects in a vacuum—art, design, story writing, balancing, coding, game mechanics, music—but putting them together is something else entirely. I think it’s been insightful to see the vast amount of work that goes into solo-developing so much as a demo of a small game, even with the help of AI.”

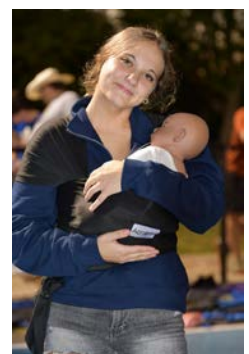
Brian and other 2025-26 Game Design students have their game portfolios available here on our website:
<https://sites.google.com/usd437.net/gd-portfolios>



FACS

Ms. Fike’s Family Studies has begun sending out the RealCare Babies.

RealCare Baby Infant Simulators (originally known as Baby Think It Over) is a line of advanced, interactive infant simulators developed by Realityworks. Widely used in Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), child development classes, and health education programs, these lifelike simulators provide students with hands-on parenting and caregiving experiences. They track student performance through built-in sensors and automated reports to teach real-world responsibility and empathy.



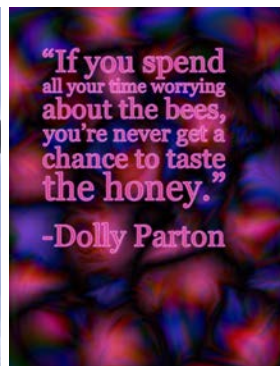
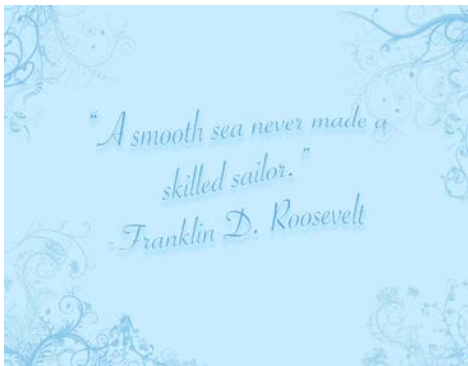
◆ Career and Technical Education

Digital Media Design & Production

Students in the Photo Imaging course at Washburn Rural High School are developing their digital design skills through a Photoshop Quote Assignment.

As part of the project, students are creating visually engaging documents using Adobe Photoshop's Type Tool, Text Effects, and Brush Tool. Through this assignment, students are learning how to combine typography, creative effects, and digital artwork to bring their favorite quotes to life.

This hands-on project gives students the opportunity to practice essential Photoshop techniques while expressing their creativity and developing skills used in photography, graphic design, and digital media.



Former WRHS Yearbook Students Return to Share Their Photography Expertise

Washburn Rural High School recently welcomed back former students, Aiden Droge and Jayde (Berroth) Droge, who returned to share their experiences and expertise with current students.

Aiden and Jayde were both members of the WRHS yearbook staff during the 2021–2022 school year, where they developed their passion for photography and storytelling. Their time on the yearbook staff also led to something special, they fell in love and were married just three months ago!

Both are recent graduates of the University of Kansas. Jayde is currently working for a new wedding venue in Lawrence, while Aiden serves as the Manager of Photography for KU Athletics.



During their visit on Friday, September 18, Aiden and Jayde spoke with students about sports photography, sharing their experiences, knowledge, and insight into working in the field. Students had the opportunity to learn more about photography as a career and hear firsthand about the journey from high school yearbook staff to professional photography.

It was a fun and inspiring day for WRHS students to welcome back two former classmates and see where their experiences at Washburn Rural have taken them!

◆ Career and Technical Education

Entrepreneurship

Students in Ms. Doyal's class recently combined STEM principles with real-world economics during a hands-on classroom activity called the Marshmallow Tower Challenge. Designed to help students understand the advantages and disadvantages of different business ownership structures, the activity transformed students into "Engineering Entrepreneurs" who were tasked with operating their own consulting firms.

To experience how organizational structure can impact decision-making, students were randomly assigned to one of three types of businesses using drawn playing cards:

- Sole Proprietorships: Individual owners worked independently and made all design decisions on their own.
- Partnerships: Teams of two to three owners had to communicate, negotiate, and reach an agreement on each design decision.
- Corporations: Larger teams first elected a Board of Directors and then used formal voting to make strategic decisions.

After forming their businesses, students worked together to design and construct the tallest freestanding tower possible using marshmallows and other classroom materials. The challenge encouraged students to apply communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, creativity, and decision-making skills while experiencing firsthand how different business structures can affect the way a company operates. By combining entrepreneurship with a fun STEM challenge, Ms. Doyal's class gave students an opportunity to see that running a business involves more than simply having an idea, it also requires effective communication, thoughtful decision-making, and the ability to work with others.



◆ Career and Technical Education

Support a Great Cause with Every Cup!

Washburn Rural High School DECA students Alea Colley and Madyson Nelson have been hard at work this semester on their Sales Project, and it's finally here!

Meet Blend 437, a delicious coffee option that tastes great and gives back to our local community. For every bag sold, \$5.00 will be donated directly to the Helping Hands Humane Society to support animals in need!



Profits go directly toward improving the shelter stay for animals like Daya and helping them find their forever homes! Daya is an incredibly smart pup; she has shown signs of being trained and is incredible on a leash. So if you want a companion for your walks or an outgoing partner to explore the world, check her out and many other animals on the [Helping Hands website!](#)

Where to pick up your bag:

[PT's Coffee \(Wheatfield Village Store\)](#)

[Hy-Vee](#)

[WRHS Common Grounds](#)



Helping Hands has a best friend for everyone, from dogs to guinea pigs; your new bestie could be waiting for you!

Pictured from top left to bottom right:

Hamazon Prime, Ruby Ann, Lottie, and Queen!

Grab your coffee today and help make a difference for shelter pets!



Good Coffee Greater Impact

OUR PURPOSE

WRHS DECA is proud to support Helping Hands Humane Society. \$5 from every bag purchased is donated to help support their mission.



WHERE TO BUY

- PT'S
Wheatfield Village
- Hy-Vee
- Common Grounds



SCAN NOW!



HyVee®

WRHS

BANK

WIN \$500

DRAWING AT THE END OF THE YEAR

- REQUIRES MONTHLY DEPOSIT OF \$10
- GIFT CARD DRAWINGS EVERY MONTH

Join the Jr. Blue Crew!

- Easy to open an account
- Save/ Invest in your future
- Use Cash or Check to Deposit!

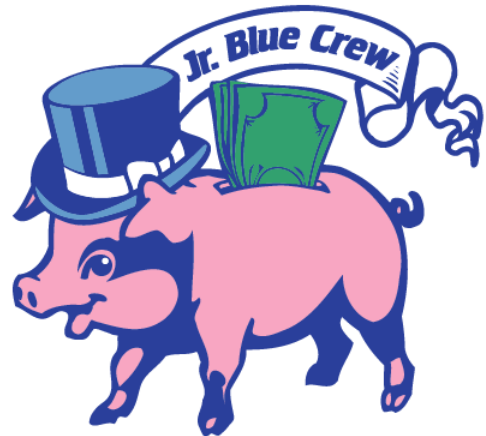
FAQS:

- **How do I open an account?**

Come to the WRHS bank during lunch
and bring \$10 & your student ID

- **How do I access my funds?**

Bank Funds are managed in person
Stop by the bank during lunch to
make deposits/withdrawals



WRHS Bank
Let your change make a change!

3.5% INTEREST



@wr.bank



@WRHSbank

WHAT'S NEW AT THE SHACK?



**SCAN
ME!**

*Be sure to check out
our clearance products
and other merch
available on our site!!*

ruralspirit.square.site



WHAT IS THE SHACK?

The Shack is a student-run spirit wear store at Washburn Rural High School. Students gain real-world experience in customer service, marketing, networking, and business management while working with customers and vendors to create high-quality designs.

Looking for spirit wear for your organization? We can help! Set up an online store, shop our inventory, or visit us in person during school hours. **Email us at theshack@usd437.net!**

CLASS OF 2027
MAKE PLANS TO TAKE YOUR

SENIOR PORTRAITS



THE DEADLINE FOR PORTRAIT
SUBMISSION IS FRIDAY, DEC. 4TH

Questions?
Call WRHS Journalism @ 339-4252
See the next page for more details!

SENIOR PORTRAITS

Senior Portrait Specifications for Yearbook

The WRHS Yearbook staff encourages every senior to submit a senior portrait. These images are placed in the PEOPLE section of the book in alphabetical order. Pictures are due to the yearbook staff on/before the **first Friday in December**.

OPTION #1: Inter-State Studios

Inter-State is the school portrait photographer.

This is at no cost to the student. The yearbook staff will have access to these images.

Senior portraits can be taken during enrollment or during the retake date in the fall.

Please see the WRHS school calendar for specific portrait dates.

Example:



OPTION #2: Select Your Photographer & Submit Your Image

Students/families do this option on their own.

We would prefer your image be sent electronically. Please send the ORIGINAL (non-cropped) file in JPEG format. Name it with the student's first and last name.

Example:



Send your portrait file to:

wrhsporraits@usd437.net

(Important: send Senior Salute images in a separate email to wrhssalutes@usd437.net)

- Head-and-shoulders shots are preferred.
- Attire must follow school handbook.
- Plain backgrounds preferred.
- No studio imprint (I.D.) on file.
- Photos must be vertical (or they will be cropped to fit a vertical space).

Please note: We will post a list of seniors who HAVE turned in portraits after the deadline. The list will be posted outside the Counseling Office and announcements will be made. **Seniors are responsible** for checking the list to make sure portraits have been delivered and received by the yearbook staff.

We cannot be responsible if we do not receive your photo.

WRHS Yearbook Senior Salutes

It's Your Child's Senior Year!

Here's your opportunity to purchase senior salute space in the yearbook!

Senior salutes are spaces for parents, grandparents and friends to congratulate, honor and recognize their senior with photo(s) and text.

Salute sizes range from 1/8 of a page to a full page and are available in color or black & white.

To order a salute:

(1) detach and fill out the form below. Sample layouts can be selected from the inside pages of this flyer.

(2) gather your pictures.

-baby photos can be mailed with order form. If you'd like photos returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

-additional senior portraits can be sent from you or your photographer

(3) prepare your message based on the word count listed with each layout. All word counts are approximate.

Two Ways to Send: (Option 1): Mail these items to WRHS Journalism Department, Attention: Senior Salutes, 5900 SW 61st Street, Topeka, KS 66619. If you'd like the pictures returned, simply include a self-addressed and stamped envelope, and we'll send your photos when the salute is complete.

(Option 2): If your content (photos & text) is digital, email content + order form to wrhssalutes@usd437.net

*Photos MUST be high resolution scans: 300 dpi - if not, mail original images.

Payments must be mailed or delivered to WRHS prior to the deadline.

Hurry, space is limited!

Salutes and/or payments submitted after the deadline may not be published.

Salute deadline: first Friday in December

wrhssalutes@usd437.net

wrhssalutes@usd437.net

Yearbook Salute Order Form

Purchase Information - (Salutes will not be printed until payment is received.)

Buyer's Name: _____

Senior's Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ (in case we have questions)

Buyer's E-mail: _____

(so we can send you a salute proof when completed.)

Payment Type: Cash or Check # _____ (to WRHS Yearbook)

**Salute Deadline:
first Friday in Dec.**

Questions? Please call 339.4252
or email: wrhssalutes@usd437.net

Salute Size & Color

(check size & circle layout letter - sample layouts included)

Black & White Salute Space

____ 1/8 Page \$50 Layout: A B C D (circle)

____ 1/4 Page \$100 Layout: E F

____ Half Page \$200 Layout: G H I J

____ Full Page \$300 Layout: K L

Color Salute Space

____ 1/8 Page \$100 Layout: A B C D (circle)

____ 1/4 Page \$200 Layout: E F

____ Half Page \$300 Layout: G H I J

____ Full Page \$400 Layout: K L

Salute Layout Options

Examples are smaller than actual size

1/8 Page Options

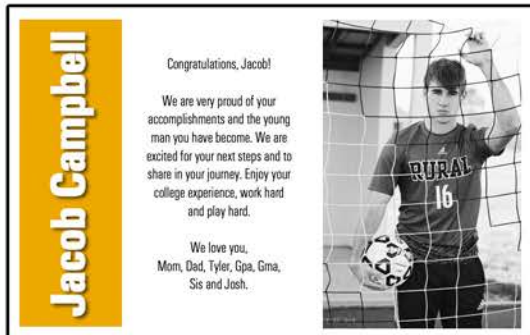
Salute A: Two Vertical Photos; No Words



Salute B: One Horizontal Photo; No Words



Salute C: One Vertical Photo; 50 Words or Less

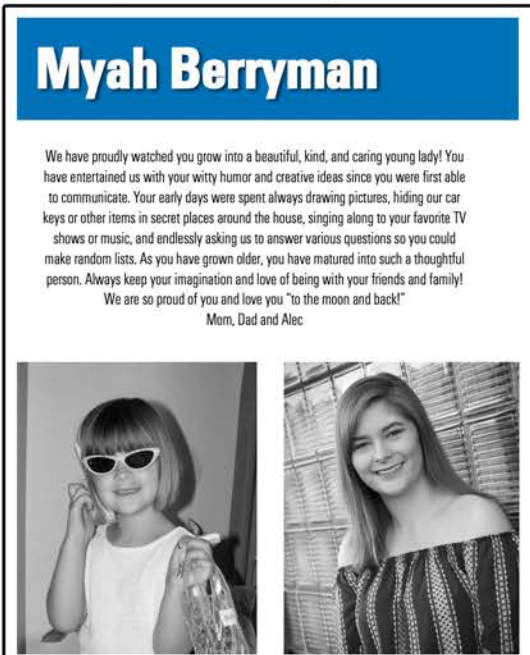


Salute D: Two Horizontal Photos; 50 Words or Less

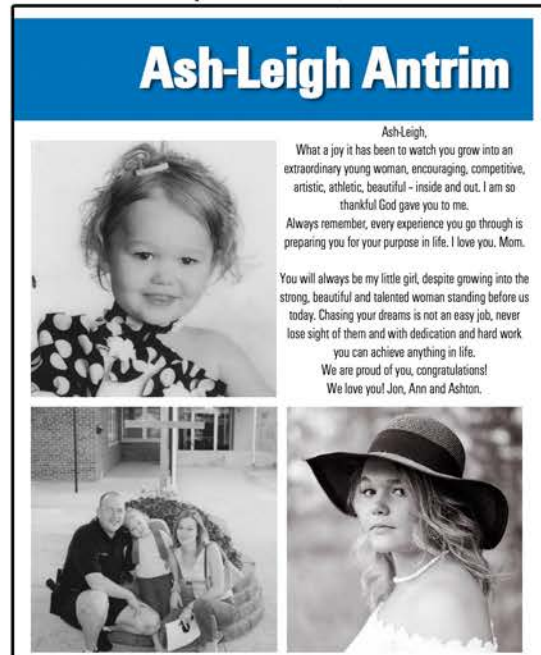


1/4 Page Options

Salute E: Two Vertical Photos; 100 Words or Less



Salute F: Three Square Photos; 100 Words or Less



2027

WRHS YEARBOOK

Name: _____

Grade: 9 10 11 12

Yearbook Prices: \$60.00 ☐

\$75 for available extra copies at 2028 enrollment

Name to appear on the cover (optional): \$5.00 ☐

Total \$ _____

Make checks payable to WRHS YEARBOOK

Check # _____

Paid Date _____

Mail Order form & Payment to: WRHS Yearbook
5900 SW 61st Street, Topeka, KS 66619

OR ORDER ONLINE!

www.yearbookordercenter.com
school code: 33333

READ BETWEEN THE LINES



YOUR MONTHLY LIBRARY NEWSLETTER FILLED WITH: FEATURED BOOKS, READING CHALLENGES, BRAIN BREAKS, & NEWS FROM MRS. FINNEY & THE WRHS LIBRARY!



Green Screen!

The WRHS Library has a mobile green screen backdrop for use by students and staff. All you need is a camera, editing software, and you're good to go!

Browse the stacks challenge:

A book with dragons!

Add some whimsy to your October and escape the school year by finding a book on your library shelves about dragons! Bonus points if you stumble across a new series and have multiple books to read. Remember, if you finish the monthly challenge, let Finney know what you read and get a bonus entry into the monthly you've been caught reading drawing!



FEATURED BOOK

The Dark Place

Britney S. Lewis
F LEW



Hylee keeps disappearing. Literally. One minute she is here in the real world, and the next she is transported to a twisted, alternate history that might explain what happened the night her brother went missing. Then one day she meets Eilam, and it's like they've met before. Can the two of them work together to figure out what is happening to Hylee before it's too late?

SIMILAR TITLES INCLUDE



Connect with us for:

- technology support
- homework help
- reading recommendations
- area job openings
- school activities and more



After school, connect with us @wrhslib

Message for assistance:
Marcy Sandberg sandbmar@usd437.net
Victoria Finney finnevic@usd437.net



Public Library Support and Resources for High School Students

TSCPL @ School

TSCPL @ School

Resources for Students

Test Proctoring

How it works

How to participate



If you are a student at a participating Shawnee County school, you already have a library card! That means you can check out books, movies, & digital resources like online databases, digital ebooks, digital audio and streaming videos!

For most schools, your student number now works as a library card number. **It's your very own library card!**

Get your Homework done faster and easier!

You can access our electronic resources 24/7! Find great books to read, download or stream. Or visit the library to use the internet, print or check out a book to read. We even have a [growing collection of apps](#) to download to your mobile device.

What are you waiting for? There is an entire library for you to explore and you already have access.

How it works

Your library card is your school district number followed by your student ID number. You'll also need your PIN to check out library materials and access digital resources. Your initial PIN is your graduation year. If you have trouble logging in, ask your school librarian or contact us at school@tscpl.libanswers.com, call [785-580-4400](tel:785-580-4400) or text [785-322-4099](tel:785-322-4099).

School Districts	Prefix + Student ID	Library Card
Seaman	345 + 123456	345123456
Auburn-Washburn	437 + 123456	437123456
Shawnee Heights	450 + 123456	450123456
Topeka Public	501 + 123456	501123456

Email a WRHS Librarian for assistance,
Mrs. Sandberg sandbmar@usd437.net Mrs. Finney finnevic@usd437.net

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR KANSAS

The State Library of Kansas provides reputable, reliable content through a partnership with Gale. Together, we can make an impact by delivering essential content and user-friendly technology that empowers curious minds, turns research into results, and fosters lifelong learning.



Authoritative vehicle maintenance and repair guidance.



Full-text, scholarly articles from the world's leading journals.



Popular full-text general periodicals and magazines.



Age-appropriate, curriculum-related content to support young learners.



Research topics and content aligned to middle school curriculum.



Cross-curricular content to support research and critical thinking skills.



A comprehensive overview of our nation's past.



Source for major events, periods, cultures, and civilizations.



Global view on the environment, energy, and natural resources.



Business intelligence relevant to today's global business environment.



Guidance on how to plan, fund, start, and manage a business.



Up-to-date information on a range of health care topics.



Education-related journals, reports, and reference content.



The largest curated online collection of literary criticism.



A way to explore readers' advisory by topic, genre, and more.



Detailed test prep, college planning, and career exploration resources.

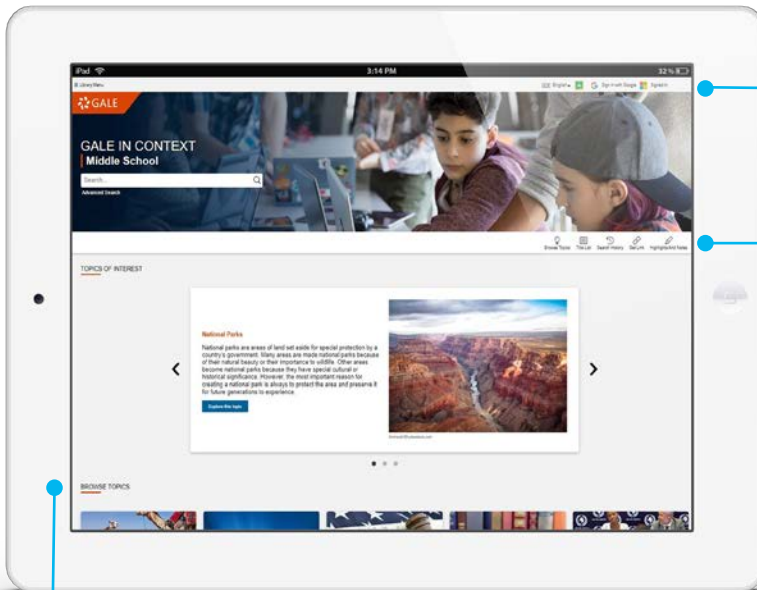


Health-focused magazines, reference content, videos, and more.



Global newspapers, images, broadcasts, and transcripts.

See website for a complete list of resources.



Product screen captures as of June 2024. Actual interface may vary.

TOPIC FINDER

Encourages further exploration through visualizations that group commonly occurring themes to reveal connections.*

CITATION TOOLS

Automatically generate APA, MLA, Harvard, and Chicago citations and export to EasyBib, NoodleTools, ProCite, and more.

LANGUAGE TRANSLATION

Translate Gale content into 50+ languages on demand; some include audio as well.

CUSTOMIZABLE DISPLAY OPTIONS

Allows users to increase readability by selecting different text size, color, or font, including the OpenDyslexic font.

LISTEN

Make content more accessible with audio versions of any article, and download for anytime listening.

INTEGRATED COLLABORATION TOOLS

Easily access, share, and save content with Google Workspace for Education and Microsoft 365 tools.

CONTEXTUAL TOOLBAR

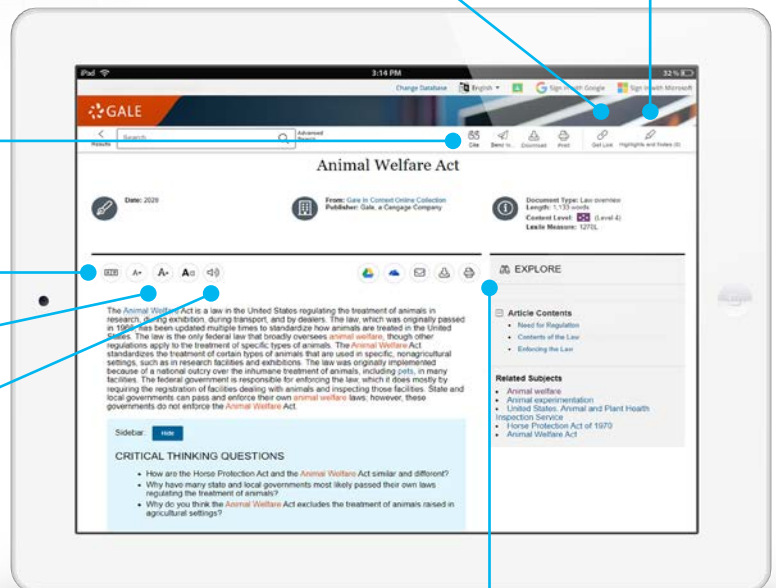
Scrolls with users as they read and maintains easy access to valuable research aids.

GET LINK

Copy persistent URLs at the article level to embed in course syllabi, e-newsletters, LibGuides, etc.

HIGHLIGHTS & NOTES

Select and highlight text, add notes, and export so users can keep just the content they need.



Explore Support for Your Gale Resources

Access tools to manage, use, and share the value of your Gale resources:

- Webinars, training videos, resource guides, tip sheets, user activities, and more
- Marketing materials, like customizable bookmarks, social media posts, email templates, and flyers (some in Spanish)
- MARC records, direct URLs, usage reporting, and technical documents

Plus, your Gale customer success manager is available to help you make an impact with your Gale resources.

EXPLORE PANEL

Highlights "More Like This" recommendations and supporting information of value without detracting from core content.

SMARTER SEARCH RESULTS

Provides important evaluative information to support successful user outcomes and help users discover relevant content.

LMS INTEGRATION

Expand access and increase discovery at schools and academic institutions by allowing educators to access and embed Gale content within their learning management system (LMS).

*This feature is available in select products.



ACTIVITY PASSES & SINGLE GAME TICKETS

ON SALE NOW

VARSITY EVENTS

ADULTS | K-8 WITHOUT PARENT | HS STUDENT WITHOUT ID — \$7
K-8 WITH PARENT | HS STUDENT WITH ID — \$5

SUB-VARSITY EVENTS

\$5

ACTIVITY PASSES

ADULTS — \$60 | STUDENTS — \$40

Friday Night Lights and other exciting sporting events are right around the corner! Skip the line by securing your Washburn Rural High School activity passes and single game tickets today!

Purchase online at

<https://www.gobound.com/ks/schools/washburnrural/tickets>

REMINDER FOR FANS 62 AND OLDER: You qualify for a lifetime activity pass that grants access to every home athletic event (excluding post-season KSHSAA-sponsored events). Stop by the Shuler Education Center during business hours to claim your pass!