

SCHOOLnews

Summer 2023



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From the Board

Jacquie Lightcap, Board of Education President

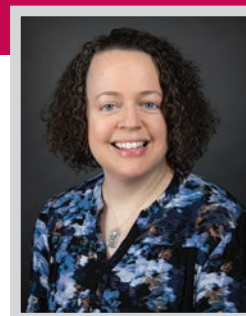
Happy Summer! I hope you're able to take a little time off from the sometimes- hectic school-year schedule and enjoy at least a few of the "lazy, hazy days of summer" with your family. While classes aren't in session on a daily basis over the next couple months, there is still plenty to do to make sure everything is ready come mid-August. From the School Board perspective, July is the start of our new year, and we elect a new Board president and vice president.

It's been my honor to serve as your Board president over the last year. Although we each take a turn in these leadership roles, I wasn't quite sure what was expected of me a year ago. If I've learned anything in my five-plus years on the Board, it's that there is always an opportunity to learn more. That's one of the reasons I love being a school board member in general, no matter my title. I've learned about topics I never would have guessed—the pros and cons of different types of lighting, how a bond election works, traffic studies, how to read and interpret building

design plans, and much more!

My favorite "task" though, has been giving a diploma to each 2023 graduate. Getting a chance to look each of them in the eye, say congratulations, and shake their hand is pretty much the highlight of my time as president. Graduation is always the best event of any year, and I feel lucky to be part of it.

In other Board news, we welcome Brad Noller and thank Tara Dimick for her years of service. It may sound cliché, but I truly mean it when I say it's a privilege to work with each and every member of our Board. Although we come from different backgrounds and surely have varied opinions on many issues, we keep our focus front and center: "Inspiring, challenging, and preparing every child, every day." Thank you for the roles you play in supporting our district all year long. We couldn't do it without you. ★



From the Superintendent

Dr. Scott McWilliams, Superintendent of Schools

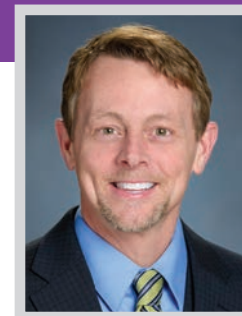
It was a very positive and productive 2022-23 school year in Auburn-Washburn. The support that you provide to our students, staff, and families is noticed and appreciated greatly; thank you! We are extremely fortunate to have such an engaging school community.

Each school year is busy, but this year was busier than most due to working on bond projects. After spending nearly 12 months in design, we have moved into construction this summer on the following four bond projects:

- Early Childhood Center at Pauline Central
- Innovation Center at Washburn Rural High School
- Updating 24 classrooms at Washburn Rural Middle School
- Middle School 2 located on the northeast corner of 29th Street and Auburn Road

Due to leadership provided by our Board of Education, I am proud to state that each project is on-schedule, on-budget, and local subcontractors have been awarded nearly 80% of the bids.

During the upcoming 2023-24 school year, design work will continue at Washburn Rural High School, and it will begin at Indian Hills and Jay Shideler elementary schools. Each project will provide tremendous benefits to students and the Auburn-Washburn school community for many years to come. ★



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On the cover:
Auburn-Washburn broke ground for the district's new middle school on May 25.
Photo credit: Melissa Kasprzyk, Centerpiece Photography



POINTS of Pride

Auburn Washburn Unified School District 437

6A State Champions – Washburn Rural High School



- 4-Speaker Debate (7th consecutive year) - Kavi Chidambaranathan, Evander Davis, Karissa Kromminga, Aditi Nimishakavi
- Volleyball Team
- Girls Wrestling Team
- Boys Wrestling Individual Champions Easton Broxterman and Landen Kocher-Munoz
- Boys Bowling Team

Player of the Year

Brooklyn DeLeye

Two-Time Gatorade Kansas Volleyball Player of the Year
Washburn Rural High School

Niche Award

Auburn-Washburn ranked Niche #1 in district in Shawnee County and #5 in Kansas



Spelling

Shawnee County Spelling Bee Champion
Preetam Anaparathi
Jay Shideler Elementary School

Staff

Kansas Safe Driver Competition sponsored by Kansas State Pupil Transportation Association (KSPTA)

First Place Team – Anna Cooper, Stephanie Bell, Frank Kent
First Place Mini Rookie – Brian Inloes



Kansas Speech Communication Association Educator of the Year

Tim Ellis
Communications Teacher & Debate Coach
Washburn Rural High School



Kansas Art Education Association Outstanding High School Art Educator of the Year

Theresa Shetler
Art Teacher
Washburn Rural High School



National History Day

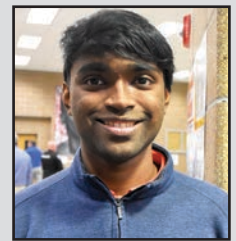
A record nine Washburn Rural Middle School students qualified to compete at National History Day.

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| • Kael Harman | • Jack Savenko |
| • Levi Hoskinson | • Emma Smith |
| • Jadyne Barnett | • Sophia Miller |
| • Lucy Hundley | • Ella Conran |
| • Paxton Poe | |



National Merit Scholars

Finalists (top 1% in nation)



Evander Davis Abhinav Velagandula

Commended Scholars (top 5% in nation)



Makayla Lebruska

Denym Ogunnowo – African American Program Scholar

Art - Washburn Rural High School

National Scholastic Art Show Gold Medal - Kaya Hamilton



Washburn Rural High School Students earned 13 Gold Key Scholastic Art Awards

- Allyson Cummings (2)
- Maddison Easley
- Ash Fields
- Kaya Hamilton
- Syd Laster
- Aytumn Sanchez
- Lee Wolgast (6) ★

Washburn Rural High School

On May 17, work officially began on the new Washburn Rural High School Innovation Center. Principal Ed Raines spoke at the groundbreaking ceremony. “Today marks the beginning of a new era in post-secondary preparation for our high school and community,” Raines said. “An era in which paths to employment that don’t require a college degree are valued every bit as much as those that do.” Construction on the 50,000 square foot center is part of a bond passed by district voters in 2022. The number of WRHS students in career and technical education (CTE) courses has grown from 700 to almost 2,000 over the past decade.



The new facility will allow the school to enhance and expand a number of programs. Biomedical, biochemistry, and forensic science will have a research-grade laboratory. Students in the residential carpentry program will now be able to work indoors year-round. The welding program is adding mechanized welding, a plasma cutter, and water table. A greenhouse is being built to enhance agricultural science courses. Computer Science will have modern collaboration space and information technology settings. Family & Consumer Science will be adding a commercial food preparation area and culinary arts program. Digital Media is adding a fully functioning production studio with recording and editing spaces.

The bond will also result in significant upgrades within the current high school facility. The visual arts program will be

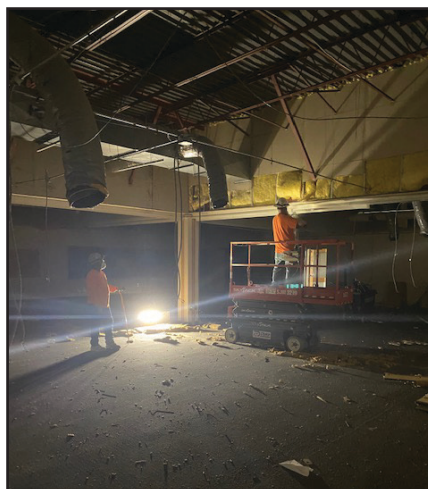
getting new classrooms and a gallery. The Debate program will be getting a new home. The Air Force JROTC program will move into expanded facilities. Finally, improvements will be made to the Special Education areas of the school. It is anticipated that construction will be completed by January 2025.

“The vision of our school is that all students will have a voice, that they will fulfill their potential, and that they will realize their dreams,” Raines said. “We are grateful for the opportunity provided by our community to further pursue these ideals.” ★

Washburn Rural Middle School

Construction is underway at Washburn Rural Middle School. The work being done is part of the district’s 2022 Bond. Renovation is taking place on six of the school’s eight classroom pods. These renovated spaces will be the grade level pods when the middle school transitions to a grade six through eight center. The school currently serves grades seven and eight.

“The renovated pods will be getting brand new movable walls with built-in whiteboards, new paint, LED lights, and interactive video boards,” said WRMS principal



Dr. Charlie Stoltenberg. “We will also be installing skylights in order to get natural light into the classrooms.” The two pods that aren’t being fully renovated are getting new paint and LED lighting.

Stoltenberg said that these improvements mean that students will be returning to newly renovated learning spaces this year, and they will be able to start seeing the benefits of the bond immediately. The work is slated to be completed by the last week of July. ★



Auburn Elementary

Melissa Wells-Martin is joining Auburn Elementary this fall to serve as principal. “Auburn Elementary is a true gem,” Wells-Martin said. “It’s nestled in a small town and yet is part of a larger, thriving district.” Wells-Martin said she was sold the first time she walked through the building. “It is so bright and welcoming, every person I encountered, big or small, had a smile and a hello.” Wells-Martin most recently served as a principal in a neighboring district. She will be filling the position held by Melinda Patterson who has served as Auburn Elementary principal for the past 12 years. “I have the good fortune to be joining a school where there are already amazing things happening,” Wells-Martin said. She is looking forward to the challenges and triumphs ahead. “I believe that Auburn Elementary is a wonderful place to grow and learn, and I am honored to be joining the team.” ★



colors, and the only light that’s used are black lights.” The activity involves a variety of games, each focusing on a different standard or skill. Students reviewed problem solving by bowling; played Jenga while reviewing multiplication, division, and rounding; reviewed geometry by using glow sticks and playing tic-tac-toe; reviewed fractions and decimals with basketball; and played ring toss while reviewing area, perimeter, multiplication, and division. “It was a great opportunity for students to be leaders, work collaboratively, problem solve, and also have fun,” said Alison Schneider, fourth grade teacher. “They were so excited to see the classroom transformed and had a blast playing the games.” ★

Indian Hills Elementary

Students at Indian Hills participated in Battle of the Books this spring. “It is a very popular library program and has become an annual tradition at Indian Hills,” said Elexa Kilgore, librarian and event organizer. The optional reading program is open to any student in grades four through six. This year, there were a total of 97 students working in teams of four to six. Students test their knowledge of the 3-5 books they have read in a competition format similar to the game-show Family Feud.

“I do it to motivate students to read for enjoyment, to read books they may not otherwise read, and to build community around reading,” Kilgore said. “I strive for all students to identify as readers, so I feel very gratified when developing readers not only participate, but win.” Many Auburn-Washburn elementary schools host their own Battle of the Books and plans for a district competition have been explored. ★

Farley Elementary

Farley Elementary fourth graders prepared for state math assessments in a very fun way. “GLOW Day is an all-day math review day,” said Addie Lozenski, fourth grade teacher. “We black out the classroom, decorate with neon



Jay Shideler Elementary

Students at Jay Shideler Elementary now have the opportunity to acquire books through a book vending machine. “Our PTO purchased the vending machine to support reading and positive behaviors,” said Megan Hall, Jay Shideler librarian. “It has been a wonderful addition to our school.” Hall said the vending machine came about when they were looking for a unique way to reward students who exhibit the JS CARE character traits (Collaborate, Act Responsibly, Respect, and Empower).



“During the last quarter, staff decided to recognize individual students who showed the character trait of empower,” Hall said. Students were chosen by staff members and given a token for the vending machine. “The vending machine has been stocked with books for all grades, so students were excited to see some of their favorites as well as new releases that they could get.” The machine has been another encouraging way to motivate students to focus on the school’s character traits. ★

Pauline Central Primary



Pauline Central has begun the first phase of a substantial building project. The work being done is part of the district’s 2022 Bond. “With the addition of six early child-

hood classrooms, our students will be better equipped to enter Kindergarten ready to learn,” said Pauline Central Principal Debbie Williams. “Our focus on student social emotional development will be enhanced by improvements to our social emotional learning spaces, and the addition of a community room will provide our community with a

centralized location to access resources and host Parents as Teachers playgroups.” Williams explained that the building blocks of a successful school career are laid during the early years of school. “The changes happening to our school will help us achieve our goal of establishing a positive start to each child’s school journey,” she said. “We can’t wait to see the faces of our staff and our students when our project is complete and the doors to our new building open.” The anticipated completion date for all work is August 2024. ★

Pauline South Intermediate

In April, Pauline South held its first ever Environmental Day. Previously, the Student Advisory Council held a Saturday cleanup along Morrill Road. “That idea was what sparked an entire day of environmental awareness,” said Jen Mercer, sixth grade teacher. “We decided that involving more students in a cleanup would encourage everyone to take better care of their neighborhoods.”



The day included picking up trash along the roads around Pauline South, a visit from the Topeka Zoo featuring local animals, a beekeeper touting the benefits of pollinators, and an art activity for the whole school using recycled water bottles. The day also included a read-aloud that encouraged environmental stewardship and each grade had a classroom activity that focused on environmental themes like building and painting birdhouses. “It was an entire day of school focused on celebrating nature and environmentalism,” Mercer said. “Believe it or not, the students’ favorite activity of the day was picking up trash.” ★

Wanamaker Elementary

Wanamaker Elementary had some special visitors at the end of school this year. “We invited 2023 high school graduates who attended sixth grade at Wanamaker to come visit with the staff, walk through the halls in their caps and gowns, and then visit with the sixth grade students,” said Stacy Macha, first grade teacher. “They shared what their plans were for

next year, memories of their time at Wanamaker, and gave students advice about middle school and high school.” Most seniors who participated were Washburn Rural High School graduates, but there were also some from other area high schools and even from the Kansas City area. “We



had 19 students come to the walk,” Macha said. “They seemed very excited and really liked reliving memories of their time at Wanamaker.” Macha said she received lots of positive feedback and requests to make this an annual event. “We definitely plan to continue this each year,” she said. ★

Distinguished Staff Awards



Annie Stryker
Pauline Central Grade 1
Elementary Teacher of the Year



Kathryn Louderback
WRMS Science Teacher
Secondary Teacher of the Year



Lindsey Dowell
WRMS Gifted
District Master Teacher



Dana Ellis
Special Education Instructional
Facilitator
Distinguished Certified
Support Staff



Pat Murphy
Pauline South Paraeducator
Distinguished Classified
Support Staff



Michelle Wilson
Pauline Central Custodian
Distinguished Operations
Support Staff

The Teachers of the Year and the Master Teacher go on to represent the district at the state level. ★

2023 Retirees

- **Rae Kychick** – District Secretary – 15 Years
- **Brenda Steenbock** – Auburn Elementary Secretary – 24 Years
- **Jean Kendall** – Auburn Elementary Paraeducator – 25 Years
- **Kevin Sturgeon** – District Warehouse – 12 Years
- **Marvin Lamb** – Bus Driver – 7 Years
- **Debra Winrick** – Wanamaker Elementary Food Service – 10 Years
- **Mary Zaitz** – Wanamaker Elementary Food Service – 36 Years
- **Mary McManus** – Tallgrass Student Learning Center Secretary – 23 Years
- **Bruce Canady** – Tallgrass Student Learning Center Paraeducator – 18 Years
- **Dixie Schierlman** – WRHS Instructional Support Assistant – 5 Years
- **Linda Johnson** – WRHS Custodian – 15 Years
- **Ed Lee** – WRHS Science Teacher – 30 Years
- **Dee Ann Hobelman** – WRMS FACS Teacher – 26 Years
- **Stephanie Vopat** – WRMS SFA Teacher – 20 Years
- **Mary Foster** – Jay Shideler Interventionist – 5 Years
- **Kristine Carson** – Jay Shideler Grade 5 Teacher – 23 Years
- **Deborah Hewitt** – Pauline Central Paraeducator – 22 Years
- **Martin Weishaar** – District Communications Director – 26 Years

Years of Service Recognition

30 Years of Service

- **Kevin Bordewick** – WRHS Science Teacher
- **Jenifer Parman** – District Printer
- **Ed Lee** – WRHS Science Teacher

25 Years of Service

- **Angie Byrd** – Wanamaker Elementary Grade 6 Teacher
- **Teresa Golden** – WRHS Business Teacher
- **Billi Jones** – Pauline Central Grade 1 Teacher
- **Jean Kendall** – Auburn Elementary Paraeducator
- **Marc Sonderegger** – Wanamaker Elementary Principal
- **Sharon Stark** – Wanamaker Elementary Grade 3 Teacher
- **Jamey Thomas-Andrews** – Indian Hills Grade K Teacher ★



2023-2024 Online Registration is Now Open

Online Registration is the first step for returning and new students to sign up to attend an Auburn-Washburn school for the 2023-2024 school year. The registration process will vary slightly, depending on your circumstances. After Online Registration, you will be notified if there are further steps you need to take.

Returning Families - You are a returning family if one or more of your children attended an Auburn-Washburn school during the previous school year. If you are a returning family, you can log into Campus Portal (campus.usd437.net) any time to start or continue your registration.

New Families - You are a new family if none of your children attended grades kindergarten through 11 at an Auburn-Washburn school during the previous school year. Start the process at www.usd437.net. Look for the Registration link.

Washburn Rural High School

All students, including those attending WRHS, will need to register online. There are additional steps that students attending WRHS may need to take prior to the start of school. This includes having their pictures taken, purchasing a parking permit, or ordering a yearbook if desired. High school students may also need to meet with their counselor to make changes to their Fall Semester schedule. (Counselors will be available to make Spring Semester schedule changes and discuss other issues at a later date.)

Washburn Rural High School will communicate directly via email with parents who have registered with details about steps that need to be taken prior to the start of school.

Preschool

Auburn-Washburn offers a limited number of preschool slots for children who meet specific criteria. More information is available at usd437.net. Preschool families, including those who are returning, can complete Online Registration but must call the Early Childhood Center at (785) 408-8378 or email pridemar@usd437.net to finalize registration.

Fees

Once fees are posted, they may be paid online through Campus Portal or at your student's school.

Questions

If you have questions or need assistance with online registration, please call the OLR hotline during business hours at 785-339-4955. After July 21, you can also contact your child's school directly for assistance. ★

Key Dates for 2023-2024

Aug. 15 – First Day of School – Grades 1-7, 9 & new to district 10-12
Aug. 16 – First Day of School – Grades 8 & returning 10-12
Aug. 17 – First Day of School – Grades preschool & Grade K
Sept. 4 & 25 – No School
Oct. 13, 19, & 20 – No School
Nov. 20-24 – No School – Staff Days & Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 21-Jan. 3 – No School – Winter Break & Staff Day
Jan. 15 – No School
Feb. 8-9 – No School
March 8 – No School
March 11-15 – No School – Spring Break
April 1 – No School (Snow Make-Up if Needed)
April 26 – No School
May 23 – Last Day of School ★