

Mehlville Messenger

A Mehlville School District Publication

Cultural connections: A student from Ukraine finds a mentor in the cafe

Dilara Usmanova, a sophomore at Mehlville High School, arrived on campus this year as a refugee of the war in Ukraine. She doesn't speak English yet, but she's found a friend in school food technician Maya Murtazayeva.

Usmanova's family initially fled to Turkey before her aunt helped to organize travel arrangements to the United States. Usmanova, who speaks Ukrainian, Turkish and Russian, is the first refugee from the war in Ukraine to arrive at Mehlville High School. Without the ability to communicate, the transition was difficult at first.

"The teachers are super nice and friendly," said Usmanova through a translator. "I used to cry and the teachers would tell me that everything would be OK and that they were here to help."

On her first day of school, Usmanova went to the cafeteria for lunch. The School Food and Nutrition Services staff asked where she is from, and they realized that she and Murtazayeva would be able to communicate.

"I asked what nationality she was, and she said Turkish," said Murtazayeva, who is also Turkish. "I said welcome in Turkish, and we hugged each other. It was so emotional."

Murtazayeva wanted to help Usmanova because she remembers what it's like to be a newcomer to the United States.



Usmanova and Murtazayeva continue to chat each day in the cafeteria during lunchtime.

"I was in the same situation 17 years ago," said Murtazayeva. "It's so hard when you don't know the language or anyone around you."

Staff at Mehlville High School – and throughout the Mehlville School District – strive to create an environment that is welcoming and safe, so that all students feel like they belong.

"We want our students to know that when you walk through the door here, you have people who care about you and want you to be successful," said Sara King, Mehlville High English learner teacher. "That begins with that first piece of establishing a relationship."

Since her first day, Usmanova continues to build on her English language skills, and she's found students in school that she is able to communicate with. Each day at lunch, however, Usmanova connects with her first friend, a woman who knows just what it's like to be a new student at a new school in a new country.



Usmanova and her classmates do an activity to learn to communicate emotions and feelings in English.

Welcoming back our 60plus members

For the first time since February 2020, we welcomed our 60plus members back to one of our campuses for lunch at Point Elementary! The Point Leadership Club handed each attendee artwork created by students, and fourth-grade students performed several uplifting songs. After receiving an update on Prop S safety upgrades happening across the district, 60plus members enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared and served by Mehlville High School ProStart students. About 180 60plus members attended.

In addition to our luncheons, 60plus Gold Card members also receive free attendance to Mehlville School District sporting events, band and string concerts, choral performances and school plays. Plus, members receive discounts on pool memberships, recreational swim and Swimnastics. Contact our Communications Department at 314-467-5153 if you'd like to join.

Students created artwork for 60plus members that were handed out as they arrived for the luncheon at Point Elementary.



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The *Mehlville Messenger* is published by the Communications Department four times a year for Mehlville School District residents, businesses and families. Its purpose is to inform the public of district news, student achievements and community involvement activities. Please submit questions, letters and comments to:

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3120 Lemay Ferry Road
St. Louis, MO 63125
314-467-5000
messenger@msdr9.org

The Mehlville School District mission is to build a high performing school system rooted in the community's desire to build a culture of improvement for staff and students.

Mehlville School District believes that all of our graduates should be creative and critical thinkers, self-aware, persistent, communicators, and ethical and global. We call this our Portrait of a Graduate.



Mehlville School District is proud to be a National District of Character.



Mehlville School District

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Peggy Hassler



A community comes back together

This school year has been full of celebrations and a comeback of all things that are good! The most exciting thing about this year is seeing our schools, staff and students coming *back together*. Events are returning without restrictions. It has been wonderful to see our entire community come together for things like the Mehlville High School vs. Oakville High School football game and Alumni Hall of Fame celebration, homecoming events, PTO events, 60+ luncheons, trunk or treats, fall parties, and celebrating 100 years of the St. John's building.

Mehlville School District is a leader in innovative teaching and learning, and we are proud to be a model district that other school districts look to for best practices. Recently, the district was commended by the State of Missouri for our excellent use of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. These funds are provided by the federal government for COVID-19 relief. The district is using more than 85% of its ESSER funds for recovery from learning loss and mental health support. We have added

interventionist teachers at every school to address learning loss. These teachers specialize in math, reading or social-emotional learning. We see countless examples throughout Mehlville School District where our administrators and teachers stretch themselves to improve student learning. I'm proud of our teachers for challenging the status quo while sharing best practices with other educators both within and beyond Mehlville School District.

Each month at our school board meetings, we are honored to hear from two different schools about their individualized school programs, student achievements and strategies they have in place for continuous improvement. If you have not been to a school board meeting, or watched one online (youtube.com/mehlvilleschools), I recommend doing so, especially when your child's principal is presenting. The presentations include valuable data and information, and it is a great way to continue to learn about your school's academics, progress and supports that are in place for students.

As we approach the holiday season, on behalf of the Board of Education, I would like to thank all our families, our community, and our staff for all they do to make Mehlville great. We wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season!

Candidate filing for Board of Education opens Dec. 6

Any person wishing to file for the Mehlville School District Board of Education may do so in the Mehlville School District Administration Building, 3120 Lemay Ferry Road, St. Louis, MO 63125. Filing will be held Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2022, through Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2022.

From Tuesday, Dec. 6, through Wednesday, Dec. 21, filing hours will be between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. The district office will be closed and no filings will be accepted Thursday, Dec. 22, 2022, through Monday, Dec. 26, 2022, for winter break. The final day for filing will be Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2022, from 3 to 5 p.m.

Except for the first and last day of filing, filings will be taken by appointment only. No filings will be accepted when the office is closed due to inclement weather.

An election for three seats on the board will be held Tuesday, April 4, 2023. The seats carry a three-year term.

Under the provisions of Missouri Statute Section 115.124, if the number of candidates who file is equal to the number of positions to be filled by the election (three), no election will be held. However, if the number of candidates filing exceeds the number of positions, the annual school board election will be held on April 4, 2023. Per Mehlville School District Policy BBB-1, the names of qualified candidates shall be placed on the ballot in order of filing.

For more information, visit bit.ly/boecandidatefiling, or to make an appointment call 314-467-5000.

A voice in decisions



Recognizing the importance of student voice and perspective on issues impacting the district, the Mehlville Board of Education appoints two students to serve as student advisors to the board.

Jenna Jabr (pictured at left), sophomore at Oakville High School, and Eric Pflasterer (right), sophomore at Mehlville High School, started their terms as student advisors at the October meeting of the Board of Education.

This is the sixth year the board has had student advisors.



Understanding how the state funding formula impacts Mehlville School District

This edition of the Messenger has a lot of financial information about the district. Much of it pertains to how we compare to other districts in St. Louis County.

On Sept. 27 we held a board listening session. I walked attendees through our finances, including where our revenue comes from and how we spend that revenue. I want to use this space to walk you through how our state Basic Formula (formula) revenue has stagnated. In the 2021-2022 school year, state revenue was 16 percent of the district's total funding.

The Basic Formula is literally a math formula that is used by Missouri to determine the amount of state funding Mehlville School District receives. Our formula funding is a calculation of our **weighted average daily attendance** multiplied by the **state adequacy target** multiplied by the **dollar value modifier** and then a fixed **local effort amount** is subtracted. Let's break that down.

The weighted average daily attendance (WADA) is a complicated formula in itself. The simplest way to think about it is that it is our daily student attendance plus a weighting for certain populations (like those who receive free and reduced meals, special education and English language proficiency services) plus summer school. Our regular attendance number has been going down because our overall enrollment has been falling since our high point in 1995. It is expected to continue to fall as we graduate more seniors each year than kindergarteners enter. We have been able to increase our summer school attendance numbers in recent years to offset part of the loss. However we seem to have reached our maximum attendance for summer school.

The dollar value modifier (DVM) is a measure of the cost of living across the micropolitan and metropolitan areas in Missouri. As a metropolitan county, our area has the highest DVM possible for Missouri schools.

Our local effort amount is fixed from 2005, so that part of the calculation is stable. It is a measure of how much money districts receive from local taxes and other sources.

Board approves 2022 tax rates

The Mehlville Board of Education unanimously approved the 2022 blended tax rate of \$3.6784 at its annual tax rate hearing on Tuesday, Sept. 27, 2022. This rate is similar to the prior year rate of \$3.6598.

The blended rate is an average rate of the residential, commercial, agricultural and personal property tax rates. The rate includes \$0.035 for Prop A, a temporary tax for roofing and HVAC projects through 2025. Additionally, the rate includes a 12-cent tax levy for Prop S general obligation bonds. The Prop S tax rate is offset by a 12-cent voluntary tax rate reduction, resulting in a net zero tax increase for Prop S. Prop S is funding projects that improve safety and accessibility and deferred maintenance.

Specific tax rates are as follows:

- Residential tax rate: \$3.2628
- Commercial tax rate: \$3.7495
- Agricultural tax rate: \$4.2500
- Personal property tax rate: \$4.3461

These levies meet all state statutes and requirements for setting levies. The levies are determined per the standard calculation set by the Missouri State Auditor.

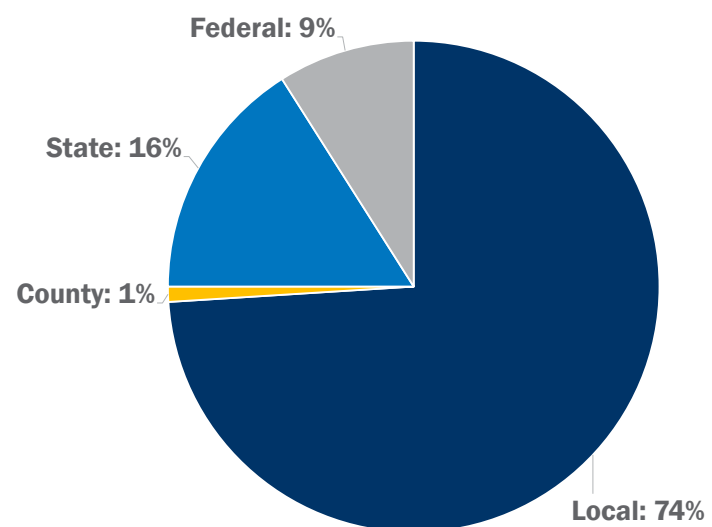
In 2021, Mehlville School District had the lowest blended tax rate of all 22 St. Louis County school districts.

The state adequacy target (SAT) is the piece that has been stagnant. The SAT was \$6,117 in 2009. In the 2019-2020 school year it was \$6,375. It will remain at \$6,375 through at least the 2023-2024 school year. That marks five years with no growth. If the SAT had grown at 1 percent since 2009 it would be at \$7,031 this year, yet we are at \$6,375 this year. This target does not take into account inflation.

As our major source of state revenue, the Basic Formula has become a stagnant to declining source of revenue. Based on the formula, state funding was \$15,906,975 in the last school year. This year, it is estimated to drop to \$15,007,735. This is troubling given our increasing costs of operating.

Please take some time to read about our finances on pages 6 and 7 in this issue of the Messenger.

Sources of Mehlville School District funding, 2021-2022



We want your input!

Our 2022 Mehlville School District resident survey will be hitting randomly selected mailboxes over the next few days. The survey, prepared by Opinion Research Specialists, asks for your opinions and perceptions about the operations and management of Mehlville School District and gathers feedback regarding a possible tax increase in 2023.

Data from the survey will assist the district with long-range planning and to identify ways in which we can better serve residents. All survey responses are confidential and anonymous. Completed questionnaires go directly to Opinion Research Specialists, who will collect and analyze the results. Overall findings of the survey are expected to be released to the public in December.

To ensure that everyone has the chance to participate in the 2022 Mehlville School District survey, we will post a link to the survey on Facebook and our website later this month. This survey link will allow households that were not randomly selected to have the opportunity to have their voices heard.



Congratulations to the 2022 Alumni Hall of Fame inductees

Five graduates were inducted into the Mehlville School District Alumni Hall of Fame on Friday, Sept. 2. These graduates of Mehlville High School or Oakville High School have made a lasting impact on their community or the nation. Inductees serve as role models for current and future generations of students who aspire to be productive citizens and demonstrate traits that align to the Mehlville School District Portrait of a Graduate Traits: creative and critical thinker; self-aware; persistent; communicator; and ethical and global.

Mehlville School District has inducted 29 alumni to date into the Hall of Fame. This group of graduates represent the best of our best and include physicians, attorneys, athletes, teachers and coaches, entertainers, advocates, public servants and so many others. They frequently volunteer their time, mentor students and visit classrooms. Thank you for serving our community proudly.



From left to right: Sue Marler, mother of Cpl. Donald Marler; Tony Brown; Dr. Vedrana Sedic; John Vuch; and David Loos receive their plaques at the induction ceremony.

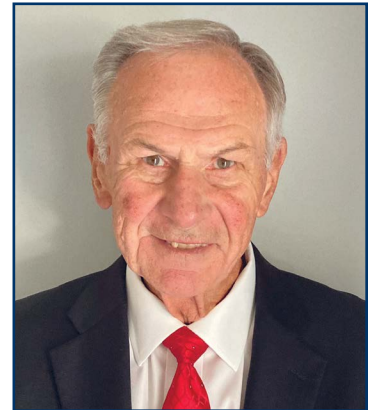
Tony Brown, Mehlville High School '87, Mehlville High School Band Director

An accomplished musician, Tony Brown has dedicated his career to the Mehlville High School Band program. As the director of bands, he has supported and encouraged thousands of young musicians by exposing them to great musicians, traveling the country and establishing college scholarships.



David Loos, Mehlville High School '65, Austin Peay State University Basketball Coach

The most successful coach in the history of Austin Peay State University and the Ohio Valley Conference, David Loos is an icon in collegiate basketball. The award-winning coach is known for his class and dignity as he's worked to elevate the sport and the athletes he coaches.



Cpl. Donald Marler, Oakville High School '06, United States Marine Corps

Quickly rising in rank, Cpl. Donald Marler served his country as a U.S. Marine. He guarded two presidents as a member of the Presidential Security Detail and requested to be deployed to Afghanistan. Cpl. Marler died during combat operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan in 2010.



Dr. Vedrana Sedic, Mehlville High School '96, Dentist

Dr. Vedrana Sedic enrolled in Mehlville High School after her family fled war-torn Bosnia. She learned English, received her diploma and persisted to become the first Bosnian-American dentist in the St. Louis area. She provides exceptional dental care in her multilingual practice and community clinics.



John Vuch, Oakville High School '80, St. Louis Cardinals Director of Baseball Administration

John Vuch has worked for his hometown St. Louis Cardinals since 1979, including 29 years in Baseball Operations. He serves as the team's Director of Baseball Administration. During his time as Director of Minor League Operations, he helped the Cardinals create the top minor league system in baseball.



Nominations are open for 2023

Nominations are being accepted for the 2023 class of the Mehlville School District Alumni Hall of Fame.

To be considered, nominees must have graduated more than 10 years in the past from either Mehlville High School or Oakville High School. Nominations must be received by the Mehlville School District Alumni Hall of Fame Committee by July 1 of each year. Late nominations will be considered for the following year. Questions can be directed to Dr. John DeWalle at 314-467-7834.



To be considered for inclusion in the Hall of Fame, an application must be submitted along with:

- A letter from the nominator explaining the nominee's professional, cultural, military or athletic accomplishments, and community impact.
- The names and contact information for 3-5 references who can speak to the nominees accomplishments, character and community impact.
- Supporting documentation about nominee. This may include nominee's detailed resume or vita, news clippings, military records, letters of recommendation, etc.

Application materials and instructions are available on the district website at bit.ly/msdr9hof.

Celebrating 100 years of the St. John's building

St. John's School students first entered the halls of the new St. John's building at the intersection of Lemay Ferry Road and Will Avenue in January 1923. In addition to St. John's School, the building has also been home to St. Louis Community College, SCOPE School and MOSAIC Elementary School during the past 100 years.

St. John's School

The log cabin that housed the original St. John's School was completed in 1842 on Green Park Road. Students learned there for more than 50 years before the community looked at relocating the school to the Will Avenue location.

"They decided that location was too far north," said Larry Franke, whose family owned the land where the St. John's building is located. "More of the population was down this way, so they wanted the school here."

St. John's School moved to a small brick two-room schoolhouse on Will Avenue in 1895. A growing population created the need for a larger building, and the front section of the current St. John's building was opened in 1923.

People continued to move to the area from the city, and the population growth created the need for additional space. In 1957, a new wing was added. This included eight classrooms, a multipurpose room, a cafeteria and a gym. The newer part of the building is the back section closest to the playground.

St. Louis Community College

Mehlville School District operated the building as St. John's School until 1981 when the school was closed. The following year, the district leased the building to St. Louis Community College to use as its South County education center.

"The building was pretty bare back then," said Rich Vagen, who took STLCC courses at the St. John's building. "They had removed the cafeteria equipment from the kitchen, and you would get your textbooks from the kitchen window. Even back then, the building was set up for younger kids."

STLCC operated the St. John's building for nearly two decades before moving to their current location on Meramec Bottom Road.



SCOPE School

The building sat vacant for several years following STLCC's departure. There were even talks of tearing it down. Then in 2006, the district relocated SCOPE School, the alternative school, from a storefront to the St. John's building.

"We were very happy to occupy this building because we had space and classrooms that allowed our students to feel like they were in an actual school building," said Pollie Richardson, the former director of SCOPE School. "We were able to have events like graduation and prom in the St. John's building that we weren't able to do in the storefront."



St. John's School students in front of the building shortly after it opened in 1923.

After a decade in the St. John's building, SCOPE School moved to the Witzel building to make room for MOSAIC Elementary School.

MOSAIC Elementary School

In 2017, Mehlville School District opened MOSAIC Elementary, a new school focused on innovative practices, including personalized learning and allowing student voice in their learning.

"The St. John's building is an interesting location

for MOSAIC because it's the oldest building in the district with the newest teaching practices," said Dr. Scott Clark, MOSAIC Elementary principal.

In May 2023, MOSAIC Elementary will celebrate its first graduating class of students that attended the school from kindergarten through fifth grade.

"I know this building has served our community and tens of thousand of students during its time," said Dr. Clark. "It's an honor to be able to continue the heritage of St. John's. I imagine the goal today in 2022 is the same as it was in 1923: to serve our community, to support our students and families, and to help them be the best they can be."

Dr. Clark and MOSAIC students welcomed back many St. John's School, St. Louis Community College and SCOPE School alumni at an Open House in early November. Attendees were able to walk the halls, learn about the history of the building, reunite with friends and reminisce about the times they had there.

[Click to view video.](#)

Left: Former SCOPE teacher Dr. John DeWalle, who now serves as the district's director of college and career readiness, works with a SCOPE student in the St. John's building. Right: Current MOSAIC Elementary students collaborate on an activity led by the school counselor focused on student wellbeing.



Facts about finances in Mehlville School District

Where Mehlville School District stands among the 22 St. Louis County Districts

The following financial data is provided by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and covers the 2020-2021 school year (the latest data available through the state).

Blended tax rate

We have the lowest tax rate in St. Louis County. The fall 2022 blended tax rate is anticipated to continue to rank last. Local revenue is typically more than 70% of total district revenue and is crucial to the financial health of the district. Tax rate does not correlate to the 11th place ranking of assessed values.

Ranking	District	Blended rate 2021
1	Riverview Gardens	7.5922
2	Jennings	6.1226
3	Hazelwood	6.0527
4	Normandy	5.6554
5	Maplewood	5.4990
6	Aftton	5.1103
7	Hancock Place	5.0928
8	Ferguson-Florissant	5.0415
9	Ritenour	4.9923
10	Pattonville	4.9224
11	Valley Park	4.8892
12	Brentwood	4.6265
13	University City	4.5093
14	Webster Groves	4.4930
15	Bayless	4.3628
16	Clayton	4.3534
17	Rockwood	4.1252
18	Kirkwood	4.0146
19	Parkway	4.0032
20	Lindbergh	3.8276
21	Ladue	3.6936
22	Mehlville	3.6598

Assessed value per student

Assessed value is an indicator of the district's economic strength. Mehlville ranks 11th in assessed value per student based on 2020-2021. Assessed values are determined by the St. Louis County Assessor.

Ranking	District	Assessed value per student (FY21)
1	Clayton	\$559,428
2	Brentwood	\$517,364
3	Ladue	\$502,713
4	University City	\$361,469
5	Maplewood	\$347,929
6	Parkway	\$346,935
7	Valley Park	\$316,063
8	Kirkwood	\$310,938
9	Pattonville	\$279,854
10	Lindbergh	\$242,792
11	Mehlville	\$239,145
12	Webster Groves	\$238,536
13	Rockwood	\$225,551
14	Aftton	\$200,854
15	Hancock Place	\$174,647
16	Ferguson-Florissant	\$158,895
17	Ritenour	\$129,139
18	Hazelwood	\$120,586
19	Normandy	\$120,422
20	Bayless	\$118,200
21	Riverview Gardens	\$55,629
22	Jennings	\$45,774

Expense per student

Expense per student represents normal daily operating expenses. Mehlville ranks 21st in spending per student, second lowest only to Riverview Gardens School District. All other districts in St. Louis County spend more on their students. The amount we can spend per student is tied to our blended tax rate.

Ranking	District	Expense per student (FY21)
1	Brentwood	20,723
2	Clayton	19,650
3	University City	16,316
4	Maplewood	14,641
5	Ladue	14,432
6	Pattonville	14,347
7	Normandy	14,063
8	Valley Park	13,775
9	Ferguson-Florissant	13,608
10	Hancock Place	13,275
11	Webster Groves	12,856
12	Parkway	12,837
13	Kirkwood	12,298
14	Hazelwood	11,822
15	Rockwood	11,510
16	Aftton	10,897
17	Bayless	10,565
18	Ritenour	10,382
19	Lindbergh	10,309
20	Jennings	10,288
21	Mehlville	10,082
22	Riverview Gardens	9,232

Outstanding debt per student

Outstanding debt per student represents the investment in infrastructure for facilities such as buildings, HVAC and roofing. Mehlville ranks 22nd, or last, in this category. Even after selling bonds to pay for Prop S work, Mehlville is still last. This correlates to the tax rate ranking.

Ranking	District	Outstanding debt per student (FY21)
1	Brentwood	\$71,176
2	Ladue	\$64,336
3	Maplewood	\$51,000
4	Lindbergh	\$30,472
5	University City	\$28,256
6	Valley Park	\$27,048
7	Clayton	\$25,534
8	Normandy	\$23,662
9	Hancock Place	\$22,419
10	Parkway	\$16,203
11	Webster Groves	\$15,775
12	Pattonville	\$14,324
13	Kirkwood	\$13,997
14	Hazelwood	\$12,245
15	Bayless	\$11,240
16	Ritenour	\$10,611
17	Rockwood	\$9,729
18	Aftton	\$8,458
19	Ferguson-Florissant	\$6,687
20	Riverview Gardens	\$5,440
21	Jennings	\$5,135
22	Mehlville	\$4,069

The impact of our low tax rate on district resources and students

85% of our operations budget is for staff salaries.

- We are experiencing an incredible amount of competition for teachers and other employees.
- Mehlville School District currently offers new teachers a salary that is about \$2,000 below average.
- We routinely lose clerical, custodial, food service and other staff to jobs with higher pay, often at hospitals and in the private sector.
- Recent ballot measures (Prop R in 2016 and Prop S in 2021) did not provide for an increase in staff salaries to counter the cost of living or additional demands placed on our employees.
- Support staff positions, especially facilities and custodial staff and bus drivers, have gone unfilled. To meet the essential needs of students, employees are working overtime and shuffling duties. Some nonessential, but still critical, tasks are not getting done.

Focusing resources on students instead of facilities.

- Facilities have faced decades of neglect due to the district's lean budget and focus on learning.
- The passage of Prop S, a zero tax rate increase bond issue in the amount of more than \$35 million, has marked a significant investment in facilities, but a facilities steering committee recommended more than \$237 million of critical infrastructure work and facilities upgrades in 2020. Inflation has driven the cost of doing this work higher.

COVID relief funds are helping, but they expire in 2024.

- COVID relief funds, or Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, have provided an infusion of funds into our budget. Those funds end in 2024.
- Mehlville School District has hired 34 teaching interventionists using ESSER funds. These teachers are spread throughout district schools to provide help for students who need support and to challenge students who have mastered a skill. Interventionists focus on math, reading or social-emotional skills.
- The district has also used ESSER funds to expand student clubs, activities and tutoring, and provide afterschool transportation. Additionally, the funds have been used for mental health counseling at the high school levels and for curriculum materials.
- Without a tax rate increase, we will lose these 34 teaching positions at the end of the 2023-2024 school year.

Inflation, inflation, inflation.

- District health insurance rates increased 22% for the 2023 calendar year.
- We use about 170,000 gallons of gasoline per year. For every \$1 per gallon gas cost increase, the total expense increases \$170,000. FY22 gasoline averaged \$3.05 per gallon. FY23 will be well above that.
- Salaries will have to be increased with inflation considerations. So far this year, 2022 inflation is 8.4% through September. The salary budget for this year is \$79.3 million. Just to keep pace with inflation, salaries would have to be increased \$6.66 million, or 8.4%, plus another \$1 million for salary-related retirement benefits.

How transportation is coping with understaffing

The district's transportation department made some changes this year due to a bus driver shortage. Currently, the department is down 15 drivers. The department has combined bus routes where it can. Currently, there are enough drivers to cover all of the routes, unless someone is on leave due to illness, family emergency or other reason. When that happens, transportation office staff get behind the wheel.

From left, Justin Keller, special needs coordinator, Mark Keiser, training and safety coordinator, and Tracy Herbert, router/dispatcher, routinely fill in for drivers to get kids to and from school. Herbert and Keller are the primary dispatchers for district buses. When they are driving, the transportation manager and the trip and activity specialist manage dispatch.

"That's a high volume of dispatch communication for one or two people to manage on top of their usual duties," Herbert said.

The transportation department has had instances where they need more than three substitute drivers. In that case, they tap the district's mail delivery driver. They've even requested the assistance of school secretaries who are licensed and have bus driving experience.

"It is only by the commitment and creativity of the leaders in the Transportation Department that we have been able to stave off route cuts, and while their efforts are recognized and appreciated, the notion of operating without a fully staffed workforce is not sustainable," said Dr. Chad Dickemper, executive director of planning and operations.



Interventionists provide needed support for students

Before having a social-emotional learning interventionist at Oakville Elementary School, kindergarten teacher Peggy Evers sometimes felt overwhelmed with the task of meeting the emotional needs of her 20-plus students.

For many kindergarten students, being away from their family is a huge adjustment, Evers explained. The first few weeks of kindergarten is devoted to helping children learn how to calm themselves, regulate their emotions and learn the routine of school. "In the beginning of the year, some students need a lot of individual support to learn the academic concepts. They are not able to work independently until November or December," she said.

The past few years have been different, Evers said. With the support of Sara Hecht, the school's social-emotional learning interventionist, the 5- and 6-year-olds learn to talk about their feelings and cope with them. As a result, the students are able to spend more time learning to read, write, count, add and subtract.

Hecht supports all classrooms at Oakville Elementary. She prepares lessons for teachers to use each day, co-teaches with classroom teachers and supports students with one-on-one and small group teaching as needed.

Hecht's position and 33 other teaching positions, are paid for using federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. This funding will be discontinued after 2024. To keep these positions, Mehlville School District would need a tax increase.



Sara Hecht, social-emotional learning interventionist, shows a student how to ask for help.

Photos from around our schools



Sharing cultures

Ken John, head custodian at Wohlwend Elementary School, is a member of the Oneida Nation and the Santa Clara Pueblo tribe. On Indigenous Peoples' Day, John shared family artifacts and spoke about misconceptions about Native Americans in movies and television shows.



Student detectives

Buerkle Middle Academy students used a mock crime scene to learn math, science, language arts and social studies. They mapped and recorded the scene, performed experiments on the evidence, and used reasoning to explain who committed the crime during a mock trial.



High school connections

Oakville High Leadership students visited Point Elementary School in October to lead team-building exercises with fifth-grade students. Students enjoyed making new friends and learning about high school.



Hello, zdravo, hola!

Once a month, Forder Elementary hosts Start with Hello Day! On these days, students are greeted by signs welcoming them to school in their native language. In September, the Mehlville High School drumline was part of the welcoming crew.



Hard hats required

Construction crews put the finishing touches on a bigger, safer parking lot at Oakville Elementary. Some of the workers visited with kindergarten students to explain all of the work that was completed as part of the expansion.



Please remain seated

Mehlville High robotics students built remote-controlled buses with crossing arms and doors to demonstrate the importance of remaining seated while the bus is in motion. Transportation staff will use the robots for safety demonstrations at elementary schools.

How to register a student in Mehlville School District

Current school year enrollment is always open for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. If you are a new Mehlville School District resident or are transferring a student, please contact the school where your child will attend. For help determining your child's school, call Mehlville School District at 314-467-5000.

Enrolling for school in the 2023-2024 school year

Mehlville School District begins enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year on Monday, Jan. 23, 2023. At this time, families of children who turn 5 before Aug. 1, 2023, may register for kindergarten.

To start the enrollment process, visit bit.ly/MSDR9boundaries to determine your child's home school. Then contact the school or call 314-467-5000 on or after Jan. 23 to begin enrollment.

MOSAIC Elementary School lottery

MOSAIC Elementary School provides personalized learning to empower students for life beyond the classroom. Instruction and authentic learning opportunities are based on each student's academic and social needs. Teachers use a variety of tools and strategies, including learning menus, technology and blended learning opportunities to explore the curriculum. Students are encouraged to learn the curriculum at their own pace and within the context of their unique interests.

MOSAIC Elementary will hold an information night for prospective kindergarten families on Thursday, Dec. 1, from 6 to 7 p.m. MOSAIC will hold an information night for prospective first-through fifth-grade families on Monday, Jan. 9, from 6 to 7 p.m. Both information nights will be held at MOSAIC Elementary School, 3701 Will Ave.

To enroll in MOSAIC, parents must apply for the lottery. The kindergarten application for MOSAIC Elementary will be available on the MOSAIC Elementary website at bit.ly/mosaicelementary beginning Feb. 6. **Only online applications will be accepted.** The online application closes Feb. 24.

Any parent who applied for the kindergarten lottery for the 2022-2023 school year and did not get in will need to re-apply for the 2023-2024 lottery.

Following the lottery, parents will be notified of acceptance in March. Even if parents are applying for the MOSAIC Elementary lottery, they must complete enrollment for their child at their home elementary school.



Rogers Elementary School reading interventionist Julie McNamara watches as a kindergarten student uses Play-Doh to shape letters.



At Home teacher Stephanie Coleman hugs a student at a Community Day focused on social-emotional learning. Families practiced yoga, created calming sensory bottles and learned about positive coping skills.

Registering for At Home (virtual learning)

At Home is a comprehensive virtual school for Missouri students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Mehlville School District's expert teachers use a mix of Google Meets for instruction and discussion and independent learning activities students can complete on their own time. The program is perfect for students who thrived in remote learning, families who travel frequently and students who otherwise can't attend in-person school. The program is free through the Missouri Course Access Program.



At Home accepts enrollment as space allows and at semester transitions. At Home is open to any Missouri student. Applications are now being accepted for the second semester of the 2022-2023 school year.

For more information or to enroll, call At Home at 314-467-7850 or visit bit.ly/athomemsdr9.

Mehlville Early Childhood Programs

Mehlville School District's Early Childhood Program provides a variety of services to families with children from birth to age 5.

Parents as Teachers offers parents support and access to special events families love. A certified parent educator visits with parents and children to play together while sharing age-appropriate child development and parenting information, helping parents learn to observe their child, and addressing any concerns parents have. Parents as Teachers is free to Mehlville School District residents. For more information, call 314-467-5304 or visit bit.ly/parentsasteachersmsdr9.

Early childhood education is offered to children ages 3-5 at the John Cary Early Childhood Center and at several elementary schools in Mehlville School District. Additionally, the Mehlville Early Childhood Program provides therapies and evaluations for children with developmental and other disabilities that reside within Mehlville School District. Registration for Early Childhood Education for new families begins on March 3. Learn more on the Mehlville Early Childhood website, bit.ly/mehlvillegc.

School safety projects completed through Prop S

Mehlville School District continues to fulfill promises made to our community following the approval of Prop S. Some projects were completed during the summer, but several large projects continued into the start of the school year, and crews recently put the finishing touches on work to make our schools more safe.



✓ Security entrance - Oakville High School

The security entrance was completed at Oakville High near the start of the school year. Security vestibules include an exterior and interior door. Visitors are admitted through the exterior door and must check in with a staff member immediately upon entry before gaining access to the rest of the school.

“Most of our schools were designed at a time when we weren’t as concerned about who was entering our schools,” said Dr. Chad Dickemper, executive director of planning and operations. “These security entrances will help us make sure we know who is coming into our buildings at all times.”

Every school in Mehlville School District is scheduled to receive a security entrance. Work is ongoing on security entrances at Bierbaum Elementary, Blades Elementary, Oakville Elementary, Rogers Elementary and Bernard Middle.

✓ Parking lot and playground safety upgrades at Oakville Elementary and Rogers Elementary

Work was also recently completed on safety upgrades to the parking lots at Oakville Elementary and Rogers Elementary.

At Oakville Elementary, crews expanded the parking lot. The additional space will alleviate dangerous conditions during arrival and dismissal on both the parking lot and at the intersection of Milburn Road and Yaeger Road.

“The configuration of the parking lot previously required our buses to go behind our campus, which made it difficult to see the students as they got onto and off of the bus,” said Meagan Ochoa, principal of Oakville Elementary School. “Anytime you impede the vision of drivers, that’s a safety issue for our students.”

At Rogers Elementary, a barrier was added to separate the playground and parking lot. In the previous configuration, students at recess played in the same space where staff and visitors parked. A concrete barrier, security fence and gates were added, so those two areas are now divided.

Up next ...

Work will begin on safety upgrades to the Mehlville High School ballfields in November. Next summer, Forder Elementary, Hagemann Elementary, MOSAIC Elementary, Point Elementary, Trautwein Elementary, Wohlwend Elementary, Buerkle Middle and Washington Middle are scheduled to receive security entrances. John Cary Early Childhood, Beasley Elementary, Wohlwend Elementary, Oakville Middle and Mehlville High are slated to have the work completed in summer 2024.

Visit bit.ly/mehlvilleprops to learn more.



Oakville High School has a new security entrance.



Oakville Elementary School's expanded parking lot was completed last month.



A concrete barrier now separates the Rogers Elementary School parking lot and playground.

DISTINCTIONS

National Merit Scholars

Three Mehlville School District seniors were recognized by the National Merit Scholarship program. **Lisa Hang**, Mehlville High School, and **Thomas Kallaos**, Oakville High School, were named National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists. This honor was received by only 16,000 high school seniors from across the country and qualifies them to advance to the next round of the competition. **Luke Roth**, Oakville High School, was named a National Merit Commended Scholar. These awards were based on their performance on the PSAT during their junior year.



Lisa Hang



Thomas Kallaos



Luke Roth

National Hispanic Recognition Award

Oakville High School senior **Ronaldo Farelas** received the National Hispanic Recognition Award (NHRA) from the College Board. To be eligible for the College Board's National Recognition Programs, students must have a 3.5 GPA or higher, score in the top 10% of their state on the PSAT, and earn a score of 3 or higher on two or more Advanced Placement exams.



Ronaldo Farelas

Book trailer creators

Oakville Middle School eighth-grade students **Addie Hebden**, **Paige Heitz**, **Payton Miller**, and **Jack Navin** competed in the Truman Book Trailers contest and had their entries selected for display on the Missouri Association of School Librarians website. The competition involved reading a book and creating a one-minute video trailer to promote it.



Jack Navin, Payton Miller, Paige Heitz, Addie Hebden

St. Louis Artists in Training

Oakville High School junior **Ava Chancellor** was selected for the 2022-23 Opera Theater St. Louis Artists in Training program. Chancellor will have the opportunity to study voice with college professors and perform in recitals and master classes with world-renowned opera performers. She is one of just 20 students from across the region accepted to the program.



Ava Chancellor

Primary election judges

Oakville High School seniors **Nathan Alano**, **Alex Corp** and **Thomas Kallaos** worked as student election judges for the primary election on Aug. 2, and were recognized for their excellent service by the St. Louis County Election Board.



Nathan Alano, Alex Corp, Thomas Kallaos

District champion golfer

Mehlville High School freshman **Eva Brown** shot an even-par 71 at the Class 3 District 1 girls golf tournament to finish as the individual district champion. Brown was five shots ahead of the second-place finisher. She finished as the runner-up at the Class 3 state championship.



Eva Brown



Lily King

Peace poster contest

Bernard Middle School eighth-grade student **Lily King** earned first place in the Lions Club Peace Poster Contest. She received \$100, and her work advanced to the international level of competition where she has the opportunity to win \$5,000.

Students of the Month

Mehlville High School senior **Ella Burns** and Oakville High School senior **Tommy Hennessy** were named the Southwest Area Chamber of Commerce's students of the month for September.



Ella Burns, Tommy Hennessy

Perfect inspection

The Mehlville School District Transportation Department received a 100% on their inspection from the Missouri Highway Patrol. This involves a surprise visit from an inspector who reviews around 30 buses in the district's fleet.

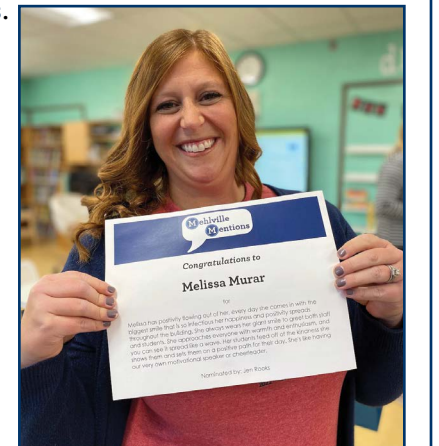


Director of Transportation Dan Gilman and fleet maintenance supervisor Joe Huster and mechanic Brian West

Make an employee's day with a Mehlville Mention

The Mehlville Mentions program is a way for community members to salute any Mehlville School District employee, volunteer or community partner who goes above and beyond what is expected. You can submit a mention online at bit.ly/mehlvillementions.

Each Thursday, Mehlville surprises staff who have received Mentions, and read to them what their nominator says. Recently we surprised **Melissa Murar**, MOSAIC Elementary School interventionist. Her nominator said: "She approaches everyone with warmth and enthusiasm, and you can see it spread like a wave. Her students feed off of the kindness she shows them and sets them on a positive path for their day. She's like having our very own motivational speaker or cheerleader."



VIEW MORE DISTINCTIONS: We're now sharing all student and staff distinctions on our website at bit.ly/msdr9distinctions. Visit now to view more award recipients, including All Suburban Honor Choir, Mercy Sports Medicine Athlete of the Month, St. Louis Post-Dispatch Athlete of the Week and band teachers playing with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra!

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IMPORTANT DATES

Find district event information at mehlvilleschooldistrict.com.

Nov. 17	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School
Nov. 23-25	No school - Thanksgiving break
Dec. 7	Half day for students
Dec. 8	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., web conference
Dec. 15	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School
Dec. 22-Jan. 2	No school - winter break
Jan. 3	No school for students
Jan. 4	Students return from winter break
Jan. 13	No school for students, end of second quarter
Jan. 16	No school - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Jan. 19	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School
Jan. 23	Kindergarten enrollment opens
Jan. 25	Half day for students
Feb. 2	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School
Feb. 20	No school - Presidents Day
Feb. 22	Half day for students
Feb. 23	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School
Mar. 13-17	Parent/teacher conferences
Mar. 16	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School
Mar. 20-24	No school - Spring break

Make a difference!

We are hiring cafeteria recess monitors, custodians, bus drivers and school food technicians.

Learn more:
bit.ly/employmentMSDR9

314-467-5102



A Mehlville School District Publication
Mehlville Messenger



1925



2022

100 years of St. John's building

St. John's Building, currently home to MOSAIC Elementary School, has a rich history rooted in education. Learn more about its history on page 5.

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