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**IMPORTANT DATES**

Find district event information at [mehlvilleschooldistrict.com](http://mehlvilleschooldistrict.com).

<b>Mar. 13-17</b>	Parent/teacher conferences
<b>Mar. 16</b>	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School
<b>Mar. 20-24</b>	No school, Spring break
<b>Mar. 29</b>	Half day for students
<b>Apr. 4</b>	No school, Election Day
<b>Apr. 7</b>	No school
<b>Apr. 13</b>	Board of Education Reorganization Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School
<b>Apr. 21</b>	No school
<b>Apr. 26</b>	Half day for students
<b>Apr. 27</b>	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School
<b>May 18</b>	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School
<b>May 26</b>	Last day of school, half day for students
<b>May 29</b>	No school, Memorial Day
<b>June 5-30</b>	Summer Session
<b>June 8</b>	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School
<b>June 29</b>	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School

**Summer learning is in session in June 2023**

Mehlville School District's popular Summer Session is back in June! Explore, discover and achieve in this FREE program for students entering kindergarten through 12th grade.

Registration opens March 29

[bit.ly/msdr9summersession](http://bit.ly/msdr9summersession)



A Mehlville School District Publication  
**Mehlville Messenger**



**Prop E is on the April 4 ballot**

Proposition E will fund competitive salaries to attract and keep high-quality teachers and support staff at Mehlville School District

Learn about Prop E on page 6.



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March 2023

# Mehlville Messenger

A Mehlville School District Publication

## This student-created club makes sure everyone has a buddy

While attending third grade at Trautwein Elementary, Draigon Schmitt made an observation: He was the only student playing on the playground with classmates with disabilities. He took the initiative to change that through the creation of a Buddy Club.

Draigon, now a fourth-grader, approached School Counselor Fatima Warren with the issue, and together they developed the idea of the Buddy Club to build meaningful friendships between students with and without disabilities.

Draigon created a presentation to pitch the club to Trautwein Elementary School Principal Dr. Shannon Henderson. She loved the idea, and Draigon identified five other students to serve as the founding members of the Buddy Club for the 2021-2022 school year. The Buddy Club has exploded in popularity this year with approximately 30 students participating as buddies.

“Last year I was helping with Chloe, and now she’s my best friend,” said Amina Mesic, fifth-grade student. “We play together during recess. She loves to play tag.”

The buddies meet on Friday mornings before school to develop skills to use when interacting with their new friends. This includes communication strategies to use when working with different students and how to interact throughout the school day.

“The buddies are being inclusive by making sure our students are included outside of their general education setting,” said Isabel Briscoe, special education teacher. “They’re learning about how to interact and play with them across the school.”

The new friendships are beneficial for both members of the buddy pair.

Zayden Jackson, fourth-grade student and member of the Buddy Club loves playing with his buddy. “I like to play tag, play with cars, and play hide and seek,” Jackson said.

The Buddy Club also supports students who may be feeling sad or tired. The buddies make sure these students don’t feel alone and provide support. They are also school ambassadors for new Trautwein Elementary students.

“We talked about how it felt to be a new student,” Warren said. “When we have a new student, we give them a tour of the school and make sure they have a friend and aren’t alone.”

Next school year will be Draigon’s final year at Trautwein Elementary, but he plans to continue making sure all students feel included when he goes to middle and high school.

“I want to continue this until I graduate college,” Draigon said. “I also want to pass on the club to people I trust.” [Click to view video.](#)

*The Buddy Club will be featured on Living St. Louis, currently scheduled to air on Nine PBS on March 20.*



Buddies Draigon (left) and Zayden (right) play a game together at a Buddy Club meeting at Trautwein Elementary School.



“Now she’s my best friend,” said Amina (left) about her buddy Chloe (right). The girls are playing a matching game at a Buddy Club meeting.

## Board of Education

Peggy Hassler, President  
Tori Behlke, Vice President  
Jean Pretto, Secretary  
Scott Huegerich, Director  
Patrick McKelvey, Director  
Jeff Wolman, Director  
Grace Wright, Director

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Superintendent

**Dr. Jeff Bresler**  
Assistant Superintendent  
Supervision of Schools

**Dr. Brian Smith**  
Assistant Superintendent  
Teaching and Learning

**Dr. Shannon Pike**  
Executive Director, Human Resources

**Mr. Adam Smith**  
Executive Director, Student Services

**Dr. Chad Dickemper**  
Executive Director  
Planning and Operations

**Mr. Marshall Crutcher**  
Chief Financial Officer

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:

Communications Department  
3120 Lemay Ferry Road  
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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

# Spring presents opportunities to support students and staff

## Celebrating our students and staff

This has been a busy and exciting time for Mehlville School District and the Board of Education. It is rewarding as we see the many accomplishments and celebrations of our students and staff. It is also wonderful to see all of the acknowledgements being made via Mehlville Mentions, a program that allows our community to salute any Mehlville School District employee.

## Prop E is on the ballot on April 4, 2023

This same optimism is held as we look to a future where we can continue the progress that has been made in our schools. We see education innovation, improved academics, and more student educational choices than ever before. This all happened while practicing fiscal discipline, paying off lease debt early, and improving the safety and security of our facilities.

Over the past year, our district leadership did a salary comparison study that shows that Mehlville lags behind area districts and the region in all areas of our staff's compensation. Subsequently, the district did a community survey that showed overwhelming support for improved salaries for our teachers and support staff.

About 76 percent of the district's budget comes from local taxes, and Mehlville School District has the lowest blended tax rate of all 22 school districts in St. Louis County. Salaries and benefits for district staff comprise more than 80 percent

## Three candidates file for Mehlville Board of Education

Three Mehlville School District residents have filed their candidacy for three positions on the Mehlville Board of Education. Candidates include incumbents Jeff Wolman, Peggy Hassler and Jean Pretto.

Typically, when the number of candidates who file is the same as the number of positions to be filled, then there is no election. However, under the provisions of Missouri Statute Section 115.124, the Board of Education election will appear on the ballot because Prop E will be on the ballot. If passed, Proposition E will fund competitive salaries to attract and keep high-quality teachers and support staff at Mehlville School District.

The three board members will be sworn in during the April 13 Organizational Meeting of the Board of Education. They will each serve three-year terms.



Jeff Wolman



Peggy Hassler



Jean Pretto

of the district's operating expenses. The district does not have the budget to make salaries competitive within the region without a tax rate increase. Because of this, the Board voted unanimously to place a tax levy, Proposition E, on the April 4, 2023, ballot. The increase would fund competitive salaries to recruit and retain high-quality teachers and support staff for the students of Mehlville School District. Passing Prop E will help us to stabilize our workforce by offering competitive wages for all district employees.

An investment in our staff is an investment in the development of our children and the future of our community. It is our hope that our community will invest in our staff the same way that our staff invests in our children. Please make a plan to vote on Tuesday, April 4.

## Our search for the district's next leader

The announcement that our Superintendent, Dr. Chris Gaines, is retiring is bittersweet. We appreciate Dr. Gaines' service to the community and wish him the best in his next position. At the same time, we are working hard to find his successor. The Board is committed and optimistic that we will be able to select a leader that will maintain our high expectations, will be an advocate for children and public education, will be strategic and data driven, and will energetically lead the Mehlville School district in its continuous growth and improvement.

## Mehlville School District finances receive highest opinion from auditors

Upon review of Mehlville School District's finances for the 2022 fiscal year, auditors from Daniel Jones and Associates issued the district's accounting practices its highest marks, an unmodified opinion, or clean audit.

Auditors issue unmodified opinions to express that financial statements are presented fairly in all material respects and to express that the district has complied with all statutory requirements. Daniel Jones and Associates presented the audit report to the Mehlville Board of Education on Dec. 15, 2022.

"We appreciate an independent auditor affirming our accounting practices," said Mehlville School District Chief Financial Officer Marshall Crutcher. "We take pride in earning and maintaining the community's trust when it comes to financial stewardship."

Mehlville School District currently has the lowest blended tax rate out of the 22 St. Louis County school districts. In fiscal year 2021 (2020-2021 school year), the district spent \$10,082 per student, the second lowest amount of St. Louis County school districts.





## Steady progress is being made on Prop S projects

In the November Messenger, we shared with you that several of our Prop S projects have been completed, including the security entrance at Oakville High School, and parking lot safety upgrades at Oakville Elementary School and Rogers Elementary School.

I'm happy to report that since November, we've also completed the following projects:

- Security entrance at Bernard Middle School
- Security entrance at Oakville Elementary School
- Security entrance at Rogers Elementary School

These security entrances are providing safe welcome areas for our school staff to greet and assist visitors, separate from our students and their learning spaces. Construction crews are on schedule and continuing work on the security entrances at Bierbaum Elementary School and Blades Elementary School.



The security entrance at Bernard Middle School was completed in February 2023. [Click to view video.](#)



Construction is on schedule at Bierbaum Elementary School. The new entrance should be complete this summer.



Work continues on the Mehlville High School ballfield. The previous field had grading issues and stormwater covers in the outfield.

This winter construction began on the safety upgrades for the Mehlville High School ballfield. We anticipate the new ballfield will be complete later this calendar year.

This will be another busy summer for construction at our schools. This spring, we will have several projects out for bid. One of those bids will be for classroom additions to accommodate the growing population of students at Bierbaum Elementary School. This bid will also include a larger storm shelter than originally planned due to St. Louis County regulations. Other projects will start during the 2023-2024 school year. The last round of projects are slated to start in summer 2024.

We anticipate starting on the security entrances at Hagemann Elementary School, Point Elementary School, Trautwein Elementary School and Washington Middle School this summer.

## Dr. Gaines will retire from superintendency in August

Mehlville School District Superintendent Dr. Chris Gaines announced plans to retire August 31, 2023. Dr. Gaines will have completed 28 years in education – including 22 years as a superintendent.

Through the vision and leadership of Dr. Gaines, Mehlville School District has expanded opportunities and choices for students. The district is now known on a national level as a model for personalized student learning.

“I have approached my time in Mehlville with a continuous improvement mindset,” Dr. Gaines said. “My desire is, and has been, to leave the district in better condition than it was when I arrived.”

During eight years as superintendent for Mehlville School District, Dr. Gaines has:

- Expanded personalized learning as showcased through MyPath, a high school course that students design around their own interests; participation in the St. Louis Centers for Advanced Professional Studies; the creation of MOSAIC Elementary, a school of innovation; and the launch of Middle School Academies.
- Built trust with the community, as evidenced by the passage of Prop R (a tax increase to restore programs and services), Prop A (a tax transfer to fund roofing projects) and Prop S (the first bond issue supported by the community in almost 30 years).
- Earned the district numerous accolades including being named an AASA Learning 2025 Lighthouse District, selected as a League of Innovative Schools and a National District of Character.

“Dr. Gaines has proven time and again that he is an avid advocate for children and public education,” said Board of Education President Peggy Hassler. “He has taken a strategic, data-driven approach to everything he accomplishes in

the district. Through Dr. Gaines' vision and leadership, the Mehlville School District has seen growth and improvement in many areas including academic achievement, community involvement and capital improvement projects. On behalf of the Board of Education, I would like to thank Dr. Gaines for his dedication and leadership and wish him well in his future endeavors.”

The Mehlville School District Board of Education hopes to announce the next superintendent in March.

“Although my days as your superintendent are now numbered, I am eager to assist in making this as smooth of a transition as possible,” Dr. Gaines said. “Mehlville School District has a bright future and there is still much to achieve.”



Dr. Gaines addresses residents at a February luncheon.

**Summer  
SESSION**

EDUCATIONAL & CREATIVE  
AFTERNOON CLASSES

**JUNE 5-29, 2023**

BEASLEY ELEMENTARY  
BLADES ELEMENTARY  
ROGERS ELEMENTARY  
OAKVILLE MIDDLE

FOUR WEEKS OF FUN FOR KIDS!  
[BIT.LY/MSDR9CEREGISTRATION](https://bit.ly/msdr9ceregistration)

Community Enrichment

## Community Enrichment Summer Session

Community Enrichment invites your student to four weeks of afternoon fun this June!

Rising elementary and middle school students can choose courses with a focus on magic, animal care, chess, science, jewelry, drone racing, creative writing, art and more! Classes will take place once a week throughout the month of June at our Summer Session facilities.

Participants need not attend the Mehlville Summer Session school day to enjoy our programming. Transportation is not provided.

Registration is open now for Community Enrichment's Summer Session classes: [bit.ly/msdr9ceregistration](https://bit.ly/msdr9ceregistration).

## SUMMER CAMP 2023

- Week 1:** July 3, 5-6  
 Abra-Kid-Abra - Comedy, Bricks 4 Kidz - Minecraft, Chess, Jewelry Creations - Summer Vibes, Little Dental School, Mad Science - Secret Agent Lab, Extreme Sports & Games
- Week 2:** July 10-13  
 Abra-Kid-Abra - Balloonatics, Bricks 4 Kidz - Mario Bros., Chess, Creative Writing, Jewelry Creations, Little Pediatrician School
- Week 3:** July 17-20  
 Abra-Kid-Abra - Animal Tricks, Bricks 4 Kidz - Brick Jungle, Chess, Crayola® - Artist's Passport, Creative Writing, Jewelry - Out of this World, Wilderness Medicine, Mad Science - Underground Explorers, Playground Games
- Week 4:** July 24-27  
 Abra-Kid-Abra - Magic Mystery, Bricks 4 Kidz - Super Heroes, Chess, Jewelry - Under the Sea, Little Veterinarian School, MAD Science - Gross Out Science, Drone Racing 101

For more information or to register for Community Enrichment's Summer Camps: [bit.ly/msdr9ceregistration](https://bit.ly/msdr9ceregistration)

Community Enrichment

**SUMMER  
•CAMP•**

**JULY 3-27, 2023**

**OAKVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
MONDAY-THURSDAY**

**HALF-DAY CAMPS FOR KIDS!**

**REGISTER:  
BIT.LY/MSDR9CEREGISTRATION  
OR CALL  
314.467.5280**

**COMMUNITY  
ENRICHMENT** *AT THE  
pool*

- Learn to Swim Lessons
- Swimnastics
- Deep Water Fitness
- Water Dance
- Kayak Lessons

Community Enrichment

## Play, learn and GROW with us!

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Hapkido Karate     | Tennis             |
| Community Band     | Driver's Education |
| Yoga Practice      | Bosnian Language   |
| Percussion Classes | Community Garden   |

[bit.ly/msdr9ceregistration](https://bit.ly/msdr9ceregistration)



# Mehlville Summer Session

Explore, Discover, Achieve with Mehlville School District

Mehlville School District will offer its free Summer Session program for all children entering kindergarten through 12th grade, June 5-30, 2023. Registration opens March 29 at [bit.ly/msdr9summersession](https://bit.ly/msdr9summersession).

Summer Session for grades 1-8 offers enrichment activities and high-quality instruction that allows teachers to revisit and reinforce the curriculum. Kindergarten students will get a jumpstart to elementary school. High school students can recover credits or earn elective or PE credits.

Transportation shuttles will be available from students' home schools.

## Elementary School Summer Session

June 5-30, 2023

Summer Session is 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Locations include Beasley, Blades and Rogers elementary schools. Before and after care is available from the YMCA.

- **Transportation to Beasley** will be provided from Bierbaum Elementary and Forder Elementary.
- **Transportation to Blades** will be provided from Hagemann Elementary and Trautwein Elementary.
- **Transportation to Rogers** will be provided from Point Elementary, Wohlwend Elementary and Oakville Elementary.

## Middle School Summer Session

June 5-30, 2023

Summer Session is 7:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. at Oakville Middle.

Transportation will be provided from Bernard Middle, Buerkle Middle and Washington Middle.

## High School Summer Session

Session 1: June 5-16, 2023, and Session 2: June 20-30, 2023

Students can choose morning and/or afternoon classes during all sessions of High School Summer Session. Summer Session will be held at Oakville High School.

Session 1: 7:30 to 10:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Session 2: 7:30 to 10:50 a.m. and 11:20 a.m. to 2:40 p.m.



# Mehlville School District honored as a Lighthouse School System

AASA, The School Superintendents Association named Mehlville School District a Lighthouse School System. This distinction is given to districts who serve as models of positive change in education.

A panel selected the district based on a list of criteria, including social, emotional and cognitive growth, creating future-ready learners, and recruiting a diverse workforce of educators. Mehlville School District is one of just 21 districts nationwide to receive this honor.

“We are really pleased and proud of the work we’ve been doing and to be named a Lighthouse School System,” said Dr. Chris Gaines, superintendent of Mehlville School District.

Mehlville School District stresses the importance of students as co-authors of their own learning. The district is committed to personalized learning and emphasizes student voice and choice that is facilitated and supported by expert teachers.

Mehlville School District is also a member of AASA’s Learning 2025 Network, a cadre of more than 120 demonstration school systems representing forward-leaning, urban, suburban and rural school districts engaged in learning, networking and working together to help drive education policy and ultimately improve student learning.



Dr. Chris Gaines (right) received the Lighthouse School System award from Ray McNulty (left), president of the Successful Practices Network.

# Nominations open for Mehlville School District Alumni Hall of Fame

Mehlville School District’s Alumni Hall of Fame identifies and celebrates graduates of the Mehlville School District (Mehlville High School and Oakville High School) who have made a lasting impact in the community or in 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, Ethical and Global.



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.

Learn more about making a nomination by visiting [mehlvilleschooldistrict.com/community/hall\\_of\\_fame](https://mehlvilleschooldistrict.com/community/hall_of_fame).

# PROP E

Mehlville School District

## Vote April 4

### Proposition E will fund competitive salaries to attract and keep high-quality teachers and support staff at Mehlville School District

The Mehlville School District Board of Education voted unanimously to place a tax levy increase on the April 4, 2023, ballot. Prop E asks Mehlville School District voters for an operating levy increase of 31 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation.

Prop E would be used to fund competitive salaries to recruit and retain high-quality teachers and support staff (including bus drivers, custodians, cooks, nurses, front office staff and others) for the students of Mehlville School District.

More information on Prop E is available at [bit.ly/msdr9prope](https://bit.ly/msdr9prope).

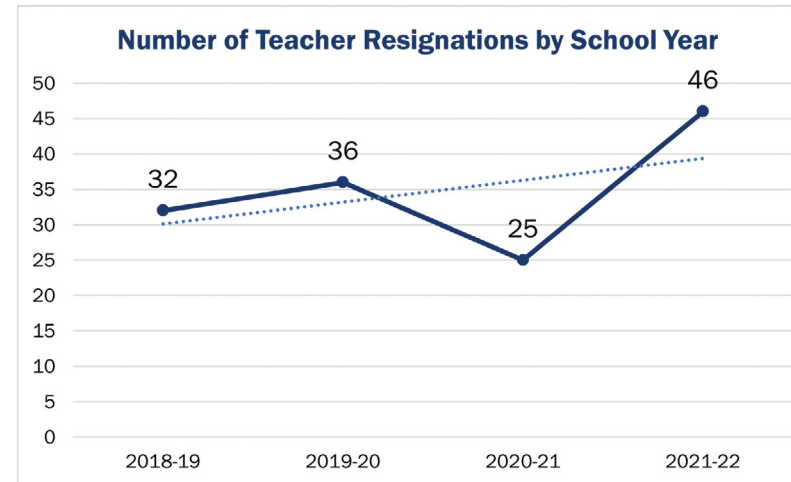
### Why is Prop E needed?

Mehlville School District has the lowest blended tax rate of all 22 school districts in St. Louis County. The district relies on local taxes for more than 75 percent of its budget. Salaries are the district's top expense. Historic levels of inflation along with a low tax rate make it impossible for Mehlville School District to increase salaries to competitive levels without a tax increase.

Ranking	District	Blended rate 2022
1	Riverview Gardens	7.5745
2	Jennings	6.2036
3	Hazelwood	6.1920
4	Normandy	6.1030
5	Maplewood	5.5920
6	Affton	5.2098
7	Hancock Place	5.1343
8	Ferguson-Florissant	5.0853
9	Pattonville	5.0752
10	Ritenour	5.0433
11	Valley Park	5.0432
12	Brentwood	4.7921
13	University City	4.6372
14	Webster Groves	4.5953
15	Bayless	4.5212
16	Clayton	4.3516
17	Rockwood	4.1483
18	Kirkwood	4.1108
19	Parkway	3.9981
20	Lindbergh	3.9260
21	Ladue	3.7160
22	Mehlville	3.6784

The district routinely loses excellent teachers to area districts that offer higher pay. In the 2022-2023 school year, Mehlville

School District is paying its starting teachers \$1,938 less than the average starting teacher salary in other county districts. At higher levels of experience, Mehlville's teacher salaries trail the county average by \$7,585. Teacher resignations (not including retirements) are up over the past four years.



Fewer qualified candidates are applying for open teaching positions at Mehlville School District. It's especially difficult to attract certified math, science, gifted and English language development teachers.

The district faces workforce shortages among support staff positions. The district currently is about 85 percent staffed for custodians and bus drivers. The district is also short-staffed in its cafeterias.

Survey results show strong community support for competitive pay for teachers and support staff. Of those who responded:

- 87 percent favor increasing salaries for bus drivers, custodians, cooks, nurses and other support staff to attract and retain these essential workers.
- 85 percent favor increasing teacher salaries to become competitive in the region and to attract and retain high-quality teachers.

### When is the election?

The election takes place on Tuesday, April 4, 2023.

Early voting begins on March 21, 2023, for any registered voter. Learn about voting in St. Louis County: [stlouiscountymo.gov/st-louis-county-government/board-of-elections/](https://stlouiscountymo.gov/st-louis-county-government/board-of-elections/)

### How will Prop E appear on the ballot?

The ballot language for Proposition E is as follows: Shall the Board of Education of the Mehlville R-9 School District be authorized to increase the operating tax levy of the District for the purposes of increasing employee salaries to become competitive in the region and to attract and retain high-quality teachers and other essential workers; and fund ongoing operating expenses by \$.31 per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation? If this proposition is approved, the adjusted operating levy of the District is estimated to be \$3.9884 per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation.

### How much will Prop E cost homeowners?

Prop E is an operating tax rate increase of 31 cents for each \$100 of assessed home value. Use the chart below to determine how

Prop E would impact your tax bill based on the appraised value of your home. You can also use a calculator on our website, [bit.ly/msdr9prope](https://bit.ly/msdr9prope), to determine an estimated increase. (Note: The figures in the chart are rounded to the nearest whole dollar.)

Home Value	Annual	Monthly
\$150,000	\$88	\$7
\$200,000	\$118	\$10
\$250,000	\$147	\$12
\$300,000	\$177	\$15
\$350,000	\$206	\$17
\$400,000	\$236	\$20

### What happens if Prop E passes?

Voter approval of Prop E would enable Mehlville School District to protect the quality of education and staffing in the district and continue to focus on continuous improvement for its students. A stable teacher workforce positively affects student achievement. Student safety and wellbeing is improved with fully staffed custodial, transportation and other critical support staff positions.

### What happens if Prop E fails?

Without the added revenue generated by Prop E, Mehlville School District would likely face continued workforce shortages that threaten the district's ability to provide essential services. The district would likely see a decline in the quality of education it can provide as competition for quality teachers is expected to increase.

### When was the last time Mehlville asked voters to increase taxes?

The last time Mehlville School District went to the voters to ask for an operating tax rate increase was in 2015. Proposition R (Restore) was put on the ballot to restore cuts the district had made to programs and services for students. Prop R passed with 72.5% of the votes.

Mehlville School District asked voters for Prop A in April 2016 and Prop S in April 2021. Neither measure increased the tax rate, and both measures were passed.

Prop R, Prop A and Prop S addressed facility needs or restoring staff positions or programs. None of these propositions improved pay to attract and retain staff.

Learn more:  
[bit.ly/msdr9prope](https://bit.ly/msdr9prope)

#### A city of effort for our students

"There is a city of effort beyond what students and parents see taking place between school bells. Cooking, transportation and cleaning our buildings is a necessary human infrastructure that Mehlville School District could not operate without." - Dr. Chad Dickemper, executive director of planning and operations



Maintenance Mechanic Elijah Runion fixes a motor in the facilities department.

#### The impact of a great teacher

"Great teachers can make the biggest impact on kids' lives. Parents will talk in the community and say, 'I want my kid to have that teacher.' When you hear those conversations as a teacher, it hits home that what you're doing is making a difference." - Jefferson Stephens, Bernard Middle School Academy teacher



Shannon Kress, kindergarten teacher at Blades Elementary, works with students on writing the alphabet. [Click to view video.](#)

#### A shrinking applicant pool

"Over the years, hiring has become more difficult. I don't see as many people applying for positions. We had a math opening, and only four people applied. Five to seven years ago, we would've had at least 20-30 applicants." - Mike Salsman, Oakville Middle School principal



Washington Middle Science Teacher Dan Haertling prepares students for their lab experiments.

#### Competition from outside industries

"The biggest problem we've had during the past couple of years is just getting applicants. We're not seeing an applicant flow come in, and once they do come in, they don't always accept the position because someone else pays better. We're competing with outside industries as well as with other school districts." - Dan Gilman, director of transportation



Sharron Gatling has worked as a bus driver in Mehlville School District for two years. She enjoys building relationship with kids each day. [Click to view video.](#)

#### Food service with heart

"We have an incredible food services department here at Hagemann Elementary. They are always looking to provide nutritious meals for our students, and they know every student by name." - Dr. Julie Durham, Hagemann Elementary School principal



Alicia Carney helps students make healthy choices in the Hagemann Elementary School cafeteria. [Click to view video.](#)



# Mehlville School District Report Card 2021-2022

Each year the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) publishes a report card on school districts. Mehlville School District is fully accredited. What follows are highlights from Mehlville School District's report. You can find the complete data on the DESE website at [apps.dese.mo.gov/MCDS/Visualizations.aspx?id=29](https://apps.dese.mo.gov/MCDS/Visualizations.aspx?id=29)

Our Students	Our District	State of Missouri
Number of students (K-12)	9,914	863,261
Students qualifying for free or reduced price meals	18.1%	42.3%
Students with limited English proficiency	11.3%	4.0%
Students receiving special education services	14.8%	13.3%
Proportional attendance rate	79.4%	76.2%

*The percentage of students who are in attendance 90% of the time or more.*

Our Teachers and Staff	Our District	State of Missouri
Student-to-teacher ratio	15:1	16:1
Student-to-administrator ratio	268:1	167:1
Average years of experience for teachers	13.8	13.1
Teachers with advanced degrees	73.4%	62%

Achievement	Our District	State of Missouri
Four-year graduation rate	90.1%	89.7%
Percentage of graduates entering post-secondary education	70.4%	60.4%
ACT results (Composite score)	20.4	20.3

Finances	Our District	State of Missouri
Average expenditure per student	\$10,903	\$13,154
Adjusted tax rate	\$3.6598	\$4.1444

*Mehlville School District has the lowest tax rate in St. Louis County.*



## Learning to speak Bosnian

Community Enrichment offers adult and kids Bosnian language classes that are growing in popularity. These adult students are learning Bosnian to speak with their partners. [Click for more information.](#)

**Back: Instructor Azim Mujakic; Front from left to right, Kara Taylor, Amanda Olson, Mark Floyd, Kevin Baigi and Ben Freeman.**

## Mehlville High School named 2023 Missouri School of Character

Mehlville High School has been named a 2023 Missouri School of Character by Character.org.

Criteria for the designation are based on Character.org's 11 Principles of Effective Character Education, which includes providing students with opportunities for moral action, fostering shared leadership, and engaging families and communities as partners in character-building efforts.

"We truly believe that the traits defined in the 11 principles describe who we are at MHS," said Dr. Jason Landherr, Mehlville High School principal.

"Our application focused on the amazing things that occur in our building each day. It is a team effort from our dedicated staff to our amazing student body."





## Photos from around our schools



### A book for your buddy

Bernard Middle School students wrote and illustrated personalized books for their kindergarten reading buddies at Bierbaum Elementary School based on their interests. They visited Bierbaum to give the book as a gift to their buddy!



### Breaking out

Oakville High School students had fun cracking codes to open breakout boxes. Students used communication skills and teamwork to be successful. The lesson was designed by the district's curriculum department and the OHS speech language pathologist.



### The Puffs

Mehlville High School Theatre performed "Puffs, or Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain School of Magic and Magic." The play is a parody of the Harry Potter book series and tells the previously untold story of the House of Hufflepuff.



### Holiday traditions

First-grade students in Marissa Gossett's class at Forder Elementary School shared their holiday traditions with their classmates. They shared photos and stories to explain the different holidays their families celebrate and why those holidays are special to them.



### Coding robots

Middle school students across the district, including these students at Washington Middle School, had the opportunity to learn how to code robots. They worked in pairs to move their robots through an obstacle course, making adjustments until they were successful.



### Reading buddies

Point Elementary School has a tradition that builds connections between younger and older students. Fourth- and fifth-graders are paired with first-graders and kindergartners to serve as reading buddies. They meet to read books and play games together.

## Rogers Elementary is home to a Distinguished Principal

Rogers Elementary School Principal Dr. Patrick Keenoy received the Distinguished Principal award from the St. Louis Suburban Elementary Principals Association (SLSEPA).

This award recognizes elementary and middle level principals who set high standards for instruction, student achievement, character and climate for the students, families and staff in their learning communities.

“Dr. Keenoy exudes integrity and sincerity, which ensures every single one of his stakeholders feels welcomed, valued and an integral part of the Rogers school community,” said Dr. Lorinda Krey, SLSEPA president. “He makes every decision



**Dr. Patrick Keenoy**

[Click to view video.](#)

based on what’s in the best interest of his students. There isn’t a better elementary school principal to represent the St. Louis suburban region as the 2023 Distinguished Principal.”

Dr. Keenoy has served as the principal of Rogers Elementary School since 2013. He began his career in Mehlville School District as a substitute teacher in 2000 before serving as a social studies teacher at Oakville High School from 2002-2008. Dr. Keenoy was also the assistant principal at Washington Middle School from 2008-2013.

“Dr. Keenoy is a principal who leads with his heart, working tirelessly to make sure every student and staff member feels they belong in the Rogers Elementary School community,” said Dr. Jeff Bresler, Assistant Superintendent - Supervision of Schools. “He is a lifelong learner who is continually finding ways to improve in his role as principal. He is an excellent choice to represent our region as a Distinguished Principal.”

Dr. Keenoy will represent the St. Louis Suburban Region at the Missouri Association of Elementary School Principals conference in March. At the conference, one elementary principal will be selected as a National Distinguished Principal and represent Missouri at the National Association of Elementary School Principals conference in Washington, D.C.

## Emerson Excellence in Teaching recipient builds exciting lessons

Jenn Rich, an English language arts teacher at Oakville Middle School, has been named Mehlville School District’s Excellence in Teaching Award recipient for the 2022-2023 school year.

“Jenn has a lot of qualities that you look for in a master teacher,” said Mike Salsman, Oakville Middle School principal. “She is able to build relationships with her students and has a way of bringing her lessons to life so students look forward to coming to her class.”

Rich spent the first year of her career as a teaching assistant in another district before she was hired in Mehlville School District. This is her 18th year in the district. That experience is reflected in the way she’s able to alter lessons to meet the needs of her students.

“She adjusts lessons and the way she teaches us to fit our personalities and our learning abilities,” said Delanie Gabel, Oakville Middle School eighth-grade student.

The Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award is given to educators in the St. Louis area each year who are examples of excellence in their field. Each school in Mehlville School District nominates one teacher for the award, then a district representative is selected.

“I was shocked to be recognized with this award because I observe teachers all of the time, and I see the amazing things that other teachers are doing,” said Rich. “It means a lot to be in the district for this long and to be recognized.”

[Click to view video.](#)



**Jenn Rich**

### Outstanding Beginning Teachers

Mehlville High School English Language Arts Teacher **Kelly Newton** and Bernard Middle School Social Studies Teacher **Robert Summers** were named Outstanding Beginning Teachers by the Missouri Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE). MACTE awards this honor every two years to up to two teachers in their first or second year of teaching from their member colleges. Newton is one of the honorees from Saint Louis University and Summers is an honoree from Maryville University.



**Kelly Newton**



**Robert Summers**

### LifeChanger of the Year Award

Mehlville High School College and Career Counselor **Beth Neighbors** was named a LifeChanger of the Year by National Life Group. This honor is given to K-12 employees nationwide who make a beneficial difference in the lives of students, create a positive school atmosphere and demonstrate leadership in their school or district.



**Beth Neighbors**

### Coach of the Year

Mehlville High School Social Studies Teacher **Tim Ode** was named Conference Coach of the Year following the softball team’s tremendous season.



**Tim Ode**

### Exceptional Educator

Mehlville High School Science and Project Lead the Way Teacher **Kristin Busch** was named an Exceptional Educator by the Affton-Lemay Chamber of Commerce.



**Kristin Busch**

## DISTINCTIONS

### National Scholars

Mehlville High School senior **Lisa Hang** and Oakville High School senior **Thomas Kallaos** are National Merit Scholarship Finalists. They were selected based on their SAT scores, high academic achievement and extracurricular/volunteer activities.



Lisa Hang



Thomas Kallaos

### A helping hand

Oakville High School senior **Will McIver** was named to the Missouri Football Coaches Association Hands Team. This honor is given to student-athletes who embrace volunteerism and civic involvement, in addition to embodying the spirit of teamwork and giving back. Only 11 students from across the state are selected to receive this honor.



Will McIver



Bryce Nicolay

### SKILLED student

Oakville High School senior **Bryce Nicolay** received S.M. Wilson's SKILLED Award for his work with his classmates in the STL CAPS Global Business and Entrepreneurship course. Bryce and his team developed a "Contributing with Composting" program that introduced kids to STEAM (science, technology, engineering, the arts and math) concepts while reducing landfill use, reducing climate change contributors and creating rich soil for gardening.

### Distinguished delegates

Two Oakville High School students were honored after serving as delegates at the YMCA Youth and Government Conference. Junior **Travis Norris** was awarded Best Collaboration on a Bill, while junior **Sawyer Bess** received Most Dedicated Delegate for Media.



Travis Norris



Sawyer Bess

### Published journalists

Mehlville High School seniors **Nela Suljic** and **Emily Worthmore** each had an article selected for publication in the Old Newsboys Day edition of St. Louis Post-Dispatch. This edition of the paper features articles written by high school students in our area.



Nela Suljic and Emily Worthmore

### Top in the nation

Oakville High School senior **Layla Halilbasic** earned a superior rating for Yearbook Copy/Caption: Student Life at the Journalism Education Association National Student Media Contest. This is the highest possible rating, earned by only 75 students across the nation.



Layla Halilbasic



Anna Valleroy

### District champion

Mehlville High School senior **Anna Valleroy** finished as the district champion in her weight class for girls wrestling and advanced to state.

**VIEW MORE DISTINCTIONS:** We're now sharing all student and staff distinctions on our website at [bit.ly/msdr9distinctions](http://bit.ly/msdr9distinctions). Visit now to view more award recipients.

### All-State Singers

Oakville High School seniors **Sarah Brutton**, **Mackenzie Earney** and **Madelyn Winter**, and junior **Ava Chancellor** were selected for the Missouri High School All-State Choir. Bierbaum Elementary School fourth-grade students **Belma Karic**, **Jacquez Le** and **Philip Rolfe**, and Rogers Elementary School fourth-grade student **Brooklyn Newsome** were selected to the Missouri All-State Children's Choir.



Sarah Brutton



Mackenzie Earney



Madelyn Winter



Ava Chancellor



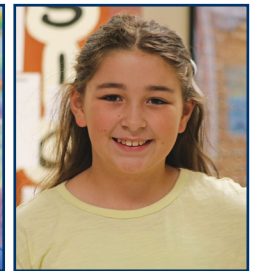
Philip Rolfe



Belma Karic



Jacquez Le



Brooklyn Newsome

### Best in the Band

Oakville High School seniors **Jared Hasty** and **Thomas Kallaos**, and junior **Rachel Kauffman**; and Mehlville High School junior **Sam Herbig** were named to the Missouri All-State Band.



Jared Hasty



Thomas Kallaos



Rachel Kauffman



Sam Herbig

### Great on the gridiron

Oakville High School senior **Jack Bishop** received nationwide and statewide recognition for his play on the football field this season. In addition to being named to the All-State team, he received the Burlsworth Character Award. This award recognizes players across the country for outstanding character and sportsmanship. Junior **Ethan Venable** was also named to the All-State team.



Jack Bishop



Ethan Venable

### Softball superstars

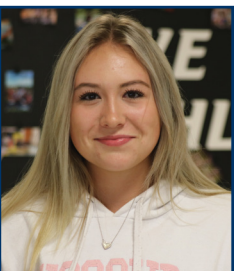
Oakville High School senior **Mary Tutwiler** and freshman **Addie Frank** were selected for the All-State Team for softball. Mehlville High School sophomore **Lily Douglas** was named the Suburban Conference Pitcher of the Year.



Mary Tutwiler



Addie Frank



Lily Douglas