

August 2020

# Mehlville Messenger

A Mehlville School District Publication

## New program guarantees full semester of learning at home

The district is launching a new virtual school called Mehlville@Home that is an option for families beginning in August 2020. Any students enrolled in grades K-12 can choose Mehlville@Home as an alternative to on-campus instruction on a semester-by-semester basis.

“Mehlville@Home was created to meet the diverse needs of our students and families and to continue to expand opportunities for personalized learning,” said Dr. Brian Smith, Assistant Superintendent, Teaching and Learning. “We were in the process of creating a virtual school prior to the pandemic, and COVID-19 accelerated our timeline.”

Mehlville@Home, similar to on-campus learning, is designed to offer an engaging student experience with embedded technology usage. The same Mehlville School District curriculum taught during on-campus instruction will be taught by Mehlville@Home teachers. Students will receive instruction in all required courses and will have choices for electives. Classes will be taught by a Mehlville School District teacher or through a partner organization like Launch or Edgenuity. Mehlville@Home students will be assessed and graded in the same manner as their on-campus peers.

Mehlville@Home will provide a more robust learning experience than what students experienced when learning virtually during our extended closure during March-May. Students will experience a mix of live instruction and



### *Mehlville@Home*

classroom discussion. They will also have independent activities to complete.

John DeWalle, Director of College and Career Readiness, is the program coordinator for Mehlville@Home. “I’m excited to launch this virtual program that provides choices to families from kindergarten through twelfth grade,” DeWalle said.

About 2000 students have registered for Mehlville@Home.

“There is a strong desire for this program due to COVID-19,” DeWalle said. “While we are rolling out this program sooner than originally planned, I’m looking forward to meeting the immediate needs of our students while also improving and refining the program for future students.”

Learn more about Mehlville@Home at [mehlvilleathome.mehlvilleschooldistrict.com](http://mehlvilleathome.mehlvilleschooldistrict.com).



Mehlville@Home leverages technology, like Google Meet seen here during our Virtual Summer Session, to connect students and teachers in a fully virtual setting.

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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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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

# Welcome back to our new reality

The phrase “welcome back to school” is taking on different circumstances as we start this school year with a connected instruction model. Rather than catching a bus to school, students will start their day by turning on their school computer and connecting with their teacher and class. While this is not the start we hoped for, our teachers and administrative teams are working hard to deliver the best level of instruction and student support possible. All of us will be learning and growing as we navigate this new reality.

The decision to start in the connected model was primarily driven by safety concerns due to the recent and steep rise in local COVID-19 cases. While studies are showing lower spread and sickness rates among young children, we are also seeing multiple schools start up in-person, only to shut down almost immediately. The rate of confirmed cases within our own school district borders increased by nearly four times from the first half of July to the last half of July,

and local case increases led both St. Louis County government and the St. Louis County Department of Public Health to recommend all local schools start up in a connected model.

If 2020 has taught us anything, it is that conditions can change quickly. Our district has three plans, so we can quickly pivot to our Plan B: Blended or to our Plan A: At School models as conditions improve. Plan B allows students to return to campus two days a week, and Plan A allows kids to return five days a week. We know the majority of children learn best with in-person instruction, and we all want to get back to our buildings as soon as we can safely make the transition.

In closing, to all of our students, teachers, staff and administrators: Welcome back and be safe.

Kevin Schartner



## Despite uncertain revenue, board passes 2020-2021 budget without cutting programs or services

The Mehlville Board of Education approved the budget for the 2020-2021 school year (FY21) at its June 25 meeting. The FY21 budget of \$124.8 million includes a projected operating loss of \$4.5 million in FY21.

“While we anticipate spending more than our revenue sources next year, our cash reserves will provide the cushion we need to weather this pandemic year without cutting any programs or services,” said Dr. Chris Gaines, Superintendent of Mehlville School District.

The district has 34.5 percent of operating expenses in cash reserves as of June 30. Those reserves will decrease throughout the fall until the district receives local property tax revenues. The cash reserves are estimated to drop to 28.9 percent at the end of FY21.

“The district does not typically present a budget with a \$4.5 million operating loss,” said Marshall Crutcher, Chief Finance Officer for Mehlville School District. “However, this budgeted operating loss is an educated guess, since there is no state guidance on the school funding formula, state sales tax or other revenue withholdings. This budgeted loss could vary significantly either favorably or unfavorably.”

The budget includes increased salaries for Mehlville School District employees by \$2.2 million, or 3.2 percent, and continues to fulfill the promises the district made to the community during the passage of Prop R in 2015 and Prop A in 2016.

Those propositions pay for much-needed capital maintenance and improvements, including new roofs, and improved heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. Additionally, Prop R provides for ongoing staff development initiatives and curriculum revisions to improve student engagement and achievement.

“Additionally, in FY21, we will finish paying the Certificate of Participation debt,” Crutcher said. “By paying off this capital loan, about \$8.8 million in revenue becomes available in FY22, which could be used to offset future operating losses and/or make facility improvements.”

The Facilities Steering Committee comprised of parents, staff and community members toured schools before the COVID-19 extended closure and has prioritized needed facility improvements across the district. The committee will make a recommendation this summer on needed facilities work.





## The hardest recommendation of my career

As a superintendent charged with the safety of 10,000 students and 1,750 staff members, the recommendation to start school virtually in August has weighed heavy. It's not a decision that our Board of Education took lightly, and we are doing everything we can to bring students back to school as soon as we safely can.

We know without a doubt that kids learn best when they are in school with their teachers and peers. Any deviation from in-school learning is a burden to our students, community and our staff. I wanted to provide you with some context around how I came to the recommendation that we start the school year virtually. Here are some of the key facts and guiding principles that I used when making my recommendation.

- County data indicates that COVID-19 cases were declining from mid-May through early June. In mid-June, cases hit a floor. In late June, cases started to rise again. By mid-July, cases were rising rapidly. Indications are that the level of transmission will remain high for several more weeks.
- Lots of entities have put out guidance; some of that guidance conflicts. Our primary influencer on school-based decisions is the St. Louis County Department of Public Health. On July 30, they recommended districts start in as virtual of an environment as possible.
- When looking at the ZIP codes of Mehlville School District, 63125, 63128, and 63129, the rolling 14-day sum of new cases rose steadily throughout July. The first 15 days of July saw 139 new cases in these three ZIP codes. The last 15 days of July saw 408 new cases.
- The most recent transmission rate for the region was at 1.58. Anything above a 1 is deemed troublesome. Positivity rates for the county have remained above 8 percent in recent days.
- We felt that rise in cases on our own campuses. We completed contact tracing on 18 individuals in July who were exposed to COVID-19 or tested positive for COVID-19. In the first week of August, we've conducted contact tracing on 9 individuals. These exposures resulted in buildings being closed, and staff and student athletes being asked to remain off campus. As we send Messenger to the printer, we have one elementary school closed to staff due to COVID-19.
- Once school starts in August, positive cases within a classroom or school have the potential to cause a school-wide shutdown.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention supports students in school full time. Yet, the recommendations they put forth are not in line

with the decisions communities have made about their schools over time. Schools were built for efficiency; we do not have space to allow for social distancing.

- In community engagement throughout last fall, we repeatedly heard that safety is important to our community.

Since late April, we have had a team working on what a return to school could look like. They have spent countless hours in research, conversations and planning. The result is the multi-scenario plan we shared on July 20 and that's summarized on page 6. The plan includes an At-School model (Plan A) that allows 100 percent of our students to be on campus daily with enhanced precautions and safety measures. Much like an experience at the grocery store, dentist, or restaurant is different, school would look different in our at-school model.

Next is our Blended model (Plan B) that would have 50 percent of students here on alternating days and all students connecting virtually on Monday mornings.

Finally, our Connected model (Plan C) has 100 percent of students connecting virtually from home. It includes daily video conferences with students and is much more robust than the emergency remote learning we provided this spring.

Our plan calls for us to be in a Connected model when there is high community spread of COVID-19. That is where we are today.

When we don't have kids in school full-time, we know our families struggle with childcare. We know kids can struggle with screen fatigue and miss out on social-emotional learning opportunities. We know some of our families struggle to put food on the table and meet the mental health needs of their kids. This is why we are doing everything we can to pivot to Plan B and eventually Plan A. **We need the support of the entire community to reduce COVID-19 transmission.** I hope you will join me in wearing a face covering, practicing social distancing and washing your hands frequently.

Thank you for your support and grace during these challenging times. Thank you to our staff and especially the members of our Return to School Committee for their tireless work this summer preparing to teach children no matter what. Whether we are screen-to-screen or face-to-face, our teachers are committed to our community's kids.

## 60plus activities put on hold for first semester of 2020-2021 school year

Due to the pandemic, all 60plus events have been canceled at least through first semester. The 60plus program was created to keep senior citizens connected with Mehlville School District.

Residents age 60 and up can obtain a 60plus Gold Card by emailing [ellrichs@msdr9.org](mailto:ellrichs@msdr9.org) or calling the Communications Department at 314-467-5153. A 60plus Gold Card is your ticket to Mehlville School District home sporting events, band and strings concerts, choral performances and school plays at the Nottelmann Auditorium.

**60plus**

Plus, you can receive discounts on pool memberships, recreational swim

and Swimnastics. The district also hosts four events just for 60plus members each year. At these events, members are invited into a school where they are entertained by talented students, participate in fun, educational activities and meet district staff and volunteers.

"For the safety of our 60plus members and our students and staff, we are limiting visitors to our schools this semester," said Jessica Pupillo, Director of Communications. "We're disappointed that we won't be offering 60plus perks this fall, but we still encourage Mehlville School District residents ages 60 and up to join the club. We will reach out to our members just as soon as we can host another event."



A 60plus luncheon at MOSAIC Elementary School.

# Summer projects fulfill promises of Prop A, Prop R

Maintenance crews have been working hard this summer to upgrade and make repairs at our schools. Several of the improvements were budgeted for as part of promises the district made to the community during the passage of Prop R in 2015 and Prop A in 2016. While minor projects were done at schools across the district, several schools underwent major facility upgrades this summer.

## Bernard Middle School

Bernard Middle School is one of two schools to have a large portion of its roof replaced.

“When it would rain, we would often have leaks in the gym and some of the hallways,” said Lauren Cumming, Bernard Middle School principal. “The custodians have been doing a great job of replacing tiles where water leaks occurred while we waited for the work this summer.”

The roofing repairs at Bernard Middle were funded through Prop A.

The tennis courts at Bernard were also the focus of work this summer.

“Crews are repairing the cracks in the court, smoothing them out and putting in some mesh material to make it a level surface again,” said Mike Gegg, Director of Facilities. “We will also repaint the courts and have new nettings put on as well.”

In addition to being a fixture in physical education courses, the courts are often used by the community.

“There’s not a single nice day that goes by that we don’t have community members out there using the tennis courts,” Cumming said.



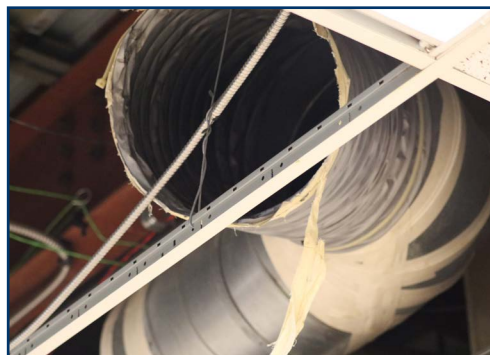
Crews repaired cracks in the tennis courts at Bernard Middle School this summer. The courts were also repainted and new nets were added.

## Hagemann Elementary School

The largest project this summer was HVAC work at Hagemann Elementary School. Crews began working on the project during the district’s extended closure in the spring, and work has continued throughout the summer.

“It includes new equipment on the rooftop, new VAV (variable air volume) equipment in all of the classrooms, electric heat through the entryway and stairwell and new controls and wiring throughout the building,” Gegg said.

The previous HVAC system was original to Hagemann Elementary, which was constructed in 1994. The new system will make a difference in the learning conditions.



The HVAC system at Hagemann Elementary School was replaced this summer including new controls and wiring throughout the building.

“Having a new HVAC system will help our students and staff feel comfortable throughout the day while we’re learning,” said Julie Durham, Hagemann Elementary School principal. “Last year we had some situations where things weren’t working correctly, so this year we’ll be able to comfortably learn each and every day.”

The HVAC work at Hagemann Elementary was paid for using Prop R and Prop A funding.

## Mehlville High School



Crews replaced large portions of the roof at both Bernard Middle School and Mehlville High School, pictured above, this summer.

Like Bernard Middle School, a large portion of the roof at Mehlville High School was also replaced this summer.

“It’s helping areas where we had some leakage that occurred in the past,” said Jason Landherr, Mehlville High School principal. “It’s also helping us to be more energy efficient and helping us stay cool in the warmer times of year.”

The roofing replacements mostly occurred on the south side of the building where newer additions, like the library, are connected to the original school building.

The roofing project at MHS was funded through Prop A.

## Oakville High School

Oakville High School had work done to repair a retaining wall in the football stadium.

“The retaining wall near the south bleachers failed, so it will be removed and replaced,” Gegg said. “The project also includes taking down and replacing fencing near the wall.”

Replacing the wall will help ensure the safety of students throughout the school day and spectators at future sporting events.

“It’s really important from both a safety and aesthetic standpoint,” said Tamara Sunkett, Oakville High School principal. “We host quite a bit of our families and community for our athletic events, so we want to make sure they’re safe.”



A portion of a retaining wall near the Oakville High School football stadium collapsed during the spring. Crews replaced and reinforced that wall over the summer.

## Class of 2020 celebrated at a socially distanced graduation

The Mehlville High School and Oakville High School Class of 2020 graduated at Family Arena in St. Charles on Sunday, July 19. Safeguards put into place to keep graduates and attendees safe included temperature checks before entering the facility, social distancing and face covering requirements. Congratulations to the Class of 2020! Visit [bit.ly/mehlvillegrad2020](http://bit.ly/mehlvillegrad2020) and [bit.ly/oakvillegrad2020](http://bit.ly/oakvillegrad2020) for more photos.





Mehlville School District

## Learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

<https://bit.ly/returntoschoolmsdr9>



### Mehlville On-Campus

- In-person instruction on campus at all 19 schools
- Procedures in place to reduce risk of transmission of COVID-19, including social distancing where possible
- Depending on community spread of COVID-19, instruction may pivot to virtual instruction or a staggered schedule to allow greater social distancing.



#### Plan A: At School

- In-person instruction will occur on campus at all 19 schools.
- Procedures are in place to reduce risk of transmission of COVID-19, including social distancing where possible.

#### Plan B: Blended

- All students receive virtual instruction on Monday mornings.
- Students either attend on Tuesdays and Thursdays OR Wednesdays and Fridays depending on last name.

#### Plan C: Connected

- Students will connect online with their teachers on a defined schedule.
- New curriculum will be taught.
- Students will be assessed as if they are in-person.

## Mehlville On-Campus will start Aug. 25 in Plan C: Connected



### Mehlville@Home

- Mehlville@Home is a fully virtual school option for students in grades K-12.
- Students receive personalized learning opportunities from the safety of their homes.
- Families who register a child are committing to an entire semester of Mehlville@Home.

## Plan A: At School

Plan A of our return to school plan involves students attending at school five days a week following normal schedules. Our Return to School Committee in partnership with principals and district administrators have established universal procedures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading in our schools. These protocols will be in place during Plan A and any time students and staff are inside our schools.

Here are a few of our on-campus safety procedures.

- Mehlville School District is following county orders on face coverings. Face coverings are required for anyone over age 9 and are strongly encouraged for younger students.
- Students and staff should not come to school if they have a fever of 100.4 or higher; a cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches, sore throat, headache, congestion or running nose that cannot be attributed to another health condition; a loss of the sense of smell or taste; nausea, vomiting or diarrhea; or close contact in the past two weeks with someone suspected of having COVID-19 or confirmed to have COVID-19. Students who develop these symptoms during the school day will be isolated until they can be picked up by a parent. Staff are required to self-screen before entering their school. Families must screen their children before sending them to school.
- Students will be assigned seats in classrooms and on buses to assist with contact tracing when necessary. Students and staff will social distance in hallways, classrooms and cafeterias as space allows.
- Students and staff will have easy access to hand sanitizer and opportunities for hand washing throughout the day and always before and after lunch and recess.
- HVAC systems will be set for increased outside air intake to improve air circulation.
- Throughout the day, custodians will clean the following items multiple times with CDC-recommended disinfecting products: door handles and push bars, drinking fountains, cafeteria surfaces, restroom surfaces and stairwell handrails. Teachers and students will also wipe down desktops and tabletops throughout the day with disinfectants. Recess aides will spray outside equipment with disinfectant before and after each recess. Additionally, night custodians will clean the following items each night: tabletops and other classroom surfaces, floors, high-touch items like pencil sharpeners, door handles, stairwell handrails, bathroom surfaces, urinals and toilets, bathroom floors and stall dividers.

Additionally, Mehlville School District leaders have completed COVID-19 contact tracing training from Johns Hopkins University. If a member of the school community tests positive, our staff are prepared to identify anyone who needs to self-isolate. Primary contacts, those who spent at least 15 minutes in close contact with the person who tested positive or those who came within six feet of the person who tested positive, will be notified of their exposure and sent home. Secondary contacts, those who were in close contact with primary contacts, will also be notified about a potential exposure. Once these notifications are complete, we will provide a general exposure notification via email to all staff and parents at the school.

Following an exposure, part of a school or the entire school may close for 2-3 days for deep cleaning. If the school closes, impacted classrooms or grades could pivot to Plan C: Connected.

## Plan B: Blended

Plan B is a blended learning model with staggered attendance for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. All of the same safety precautions from Plan A would be in place during blended learning. Plan B, however, allows for enhanced social distancing by cutting student attendance on campus roughly in half.

Students are divided into two groups based on their last name. Households whose oldest student's last name starts with A through K would attend on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Households whose oldest student's last name starts with L through Z would attend on Wednesdays and Fridays.

On Monday mornings, all students will receive virtual instruction. On Monday afternoons, teachers will have professional development and time for collaboration.

During Plan B, Mehlville School District would follow a modified calendar. Because teachers would have work time on Monday afternoons, there would not be any early release days.

During a blended schedule, early childhood students would not be divided by last name. All students would attend at their regularly scheduled times on their regularly scheduled days, Monday through Thursday.



Carpenter Scott Lancaster installed plexiglass barriers in high traffic areas, like school offices and cafeterias, to help keep staff safe when students and visitors return to school.



Face coverings are required for all staff working on campus and all visitors.

## How we are starting the year...

### Plan C: Connected, Temporary Virtual Learning

Under the guidance of St. Louis County Department of Public Health, Mehlville School District will start the school year on Aug. 25 with Plan C: Connected, or temporary virtual learning. While in Plan C, students will connect with their teachers and attend live instruction through Google Meet or other platform. Students will also complete independent learning activities. Attendance will be taken, and students will be assessed on their learning.

Elementary students will have around three hours of live instruction a day with additional activities to complete on their own time. Students in grades 6-12 would have about four hours of class time each day plus additional activities to complete independently. Teachers and counselors will be available to meet individually with students during regular office hours. Some limited in-person meetings will also be available.

Each student will have a district-provided Chromebook computer. Families without internet access can request a district-provided hot spot by contacting their principal or counselor.

#### When will we pivot to Plan B or Plan A?

The St. Louis County Department of Public Health publishes a summary of COVID-19 trends on their website. We are paying close attention to daily new cases, positivity rates and transmission rates. These trends, along with recommendations from county health officials are being used in the decision-making process to determine when it will be safe for students to return to campus.

As we determine that it is safe to return to campus following either Plan A or Plan B, we will give families at least five calendar days of notice.

#### What support will be available for incoming kindergarten students?

Mehlville School District elementary schools will be hosting Kindergarten Family Meetings Aug. 25-28. During these days, all kindergarten families will have 45 minutes of dedicated time to meet with their child's teacher. They will pick-up supplies, learn how to log into and navigate the Chromebook and be introduced to electronic learning platforms like SeeSaw and iReady. More information about Kindergarten Family Meetings will come from your child's school.



A Rogers Elementary kindergarten student uses a Chromebook in class.

# Food distribution continues

Families living within Mehlville School District can pick up free meal kits and produce boxes from Operation Food Search on Thursdays through Aug. 20. Food supplies can be picked up from 11 a.m. to noon (while supplies last) from Mehlville High School, 3200 Lemay Ferry Road.

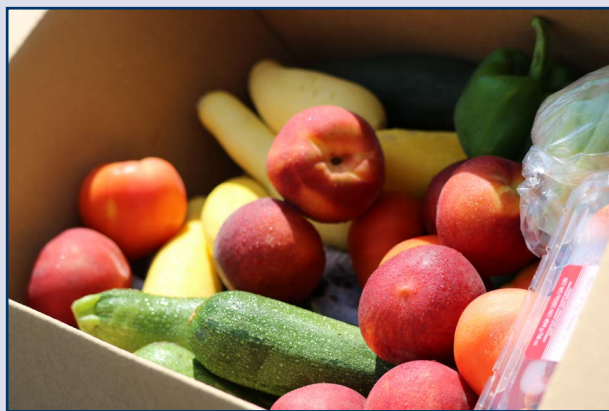
Meal distribution will continue for students throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

- If we are following Plan A: At School, students will be offered breakfast and lunch at school.
- If we are following Plan B: Blended, families can pick up meals on their attendance days.
- If we are following Plan C: Connected, families can pick up meals from their school.
- Students enrolled in Mehlville@Home will be able to pick up meals from their neighborhood school.

More details on food distribution will be sent directly to Mehlville School District families in late August.

Since our school buildings closed in March, Mehlville School District has served 110,120 breakfasts and lunches through our grab and go meal program.

Get the latest information on meal distribution on our website at [bit.ly/mealsmsdr9](http://bit.ly/mealsmsdr9).



## PUBLIC RELEASE

**Mehlville School District** announced its revised free and reduced price policy for school children unable to pay the full price of meals served in schools under the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program.

Local education officials have adopted the following family-size income criteria for determining eligibility:

Household Size	Maximum Household Income Eligible for Free Meals			Maximum Household Income Eligible for Reduced Price Meals		
	Annually	Monthly	Weekly	Annually	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$16,588	\$1,383	\$319	\$23,606	\$1,968	\$454
2	22,412	1,868	431	31,894	2,658	614
3	28,236	2,353	543	40,182	3,349	773
4	34,060	2,839	655	48,470	4,040	933
5	39,884	3,324	767	56,758	4,730	1,092
6	45,708	3,809	879	65,046	5,421	1,251
7	51,532	4,295	991	73,334	6,112	1,411
8	57,356	4,780	1,103	81,622	6,802	1,570
Each add'l member	+ 5,824	+ 486	+ 112	+ 8,288	+ 691	+ 160

Children from families whose current income is at or below those shown are eligible for free or reduced price meals. Applications are available at the school office. To apply, fill out a Free and Reduced Price School Meals Family Application and return it to the school. The information provided on the application is confidential and will be used only for the purpose of determining eligibility. Applications may be submitted any time during the school year. A complete application is required as a condition of eligibility. A complete application includes: (1) household income from all sources or Food Stamp/TANF case number, (2) names of all household members, and (3) the signature and last four digits of social security number or indication of no social security number of adult household member signing the application. School officials may verify current income at any time during the school year.

Foster children may be eligible regardless of the income of the household with whom they reside.

If a family member becomes unemployed or if family size changes, the family should contact the school to file a new application. Such changes may make the children of the family eligible for these benefits.

Households will be notified of their children's eligibility status for free or reduced price meals. If any children were not listed on the eligibility notice for families receiving SNAP, TANF or FDPIR, the household should contact the school to have free meal benefits extended to those children.

If any child(ren) was not listed on the eligibility notice, the household should contact the school to have free meal benefits extended to that child(ren).

Under the provisions of the policy, the Director of School Food and Nutrition Services, Katie Gegg R.D. SNS, will review the applications and determine eligibility. If a parent is dissatisfied with the ruling of the determining official, they may wish to discuss the decision with the hearing official on an informal basis or he/she may make a request either orally or in writing to the Superintendent, Dr. Chris Gaines.

Hearing procedures are outlined in the policy. A complete copy of the policy is on file in each school and in the central office where any interested party may review it.

Apply for free and reduced price meals online at [bit.ly/FRLmsdr9](http://bit.ly/FRLmsdr9).

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*To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

# Wohlwend GROWS project encourages learning outside

Wohlwend Elementary School students will have a one-of-a-kind outdoor learning experience thanks to campus renovations funded by a \$15,000 grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation.

There is a 3-5 year plan to turn the school grounds into an outdoor learning space. Work began this summer as volunteers planted wildflowers, installed birdhouses built by the school's Conservation Club and refurbished the outdoor classroom. There are also plans for students to plant more native wildflower seeds this fall.

"The goal is for the prairie to become an outdoor laboratory for students from all schools in the district," said Wohlwend Elementary principal Dr. Dave Meschke. "We are already working with kids from the Oakville High School National Science Honor Society and are making plans to partner with Oakville Middle School students next year."

The completed project will include outdoor study nooks, a shade garden, dry creek bed, and benches and coverage to serve as an outdoor classroom. Improvement in the outdoor space should alleviate drainage issues.

Wohlwend Elementary teachers will participate in professional development on experiential education and will be attending training sessions to help staff members learn outdoor activities and strategies that will help maximize student learning in prairie spaces.

"We'll apply for more grants along the way as we look to make this space an exemplar for the St. Louis area," Dr. Meschke said.

When students are able to return to school, outdoor classrooms, like Wohlwend GROWS and others throughout the district, will provide safe learning spaces conducive to social distancing.



After receiving birdhouses and a donation from the Missouri Department of Conservation in the spring, crews went to work this summer to plant wildflowers and other plants and renovate the outdoor classroom at Wohlwend Elementary.



## SCHOOL DISTRICT COMPLIES WITH ASBESTOS REGULATIONS

On Oct. 22, 1986, President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act (AHERA, Public Law 99-519). The law required the EPA to develop regulations which provide a comprehensive framework for addressing asbestos problems in public and private elementary and secondary schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos, develop asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards in school buildings, and implement response actions in a timely fashion.

The Mehlville School District had conducted a complete inspection of its facilities in October 2018, and a three-year re-inspection has been completed since the initial asbestos audit in 1988. In addition to the three-year re-inspection, (2) six month surveillance inspections take place each year and are included in the management plan. This management plan is available in the district's Maintenance Building and in the offices of each school during normal business hours, without cost or restriction, for inspection by representatives of the EPA and the State, and the public, including teachers, other school personnel and their representatives and parents.

Asbestos containing material was removed from the following building(s) performed by licensed contractors using state of the art technology and methodology. An on-site manager, project designer and a third party air monitor were also used.

**Point Elementary - May 2020**  
**Wohlwend Elementary - July 2019**  
**Witzel - November 2019**

The purpose of the federal and state regulations is to protect the health and well-being of all persons entering the buildings of this district for any reason.

The person in this district trained to oversee asbestos activities and ensure compliance is **Mr. Mike Gegg**, Director of Facilities. As required in the rule, Mr. Gegg is the single contact for the public to obtain information about asbestos-related activities in the district and can be reached at 314-467-7800.

## Families should update their contact information online



If they haven't already, Mehlville School District families should log into the Parent Portal to update their phone numbers, email addresses, emergency contacts and other important information. The annual family information update reduces the number of back-to-school forms parents are asked to complete.

The "Family Information Update" can be accessed through the Parent Portal. More information and video instructions are available at [mehlvilleschooldistrict.com/parents/parent\\_portal](http://mehlvilleschooldistrict.com/parents/parent_portal). Please call your child's school if you have any questions.



# Summer Session teachers pave the way for high-quality virtual instruction

In June and July, Mehlville School District's Summer Session teachers had the opportunity to explore how they could make virtual instruction more engaging for students. These teachers were able to use real-time feedback from students to find ways to improve their distance teaching strategies. As we start in on-campus instruction in Plan C: Connected, they are sharing their lessons learned with their colleagues.

"In the spring, we were more focused on the fact that the pandemic was traumatic for the kids, and virtual learning was new for everybody," said Jefferson Stephens, a sixth-grade teacher in Bernard Middle School's Patriot Academy. "For Summer Session, we had a game plan and an understanding and were able to better prepare for the situation."

To provide teachers with tools to be successful in their virtual classrooms, Mehlville School District has invested in distance learning technology and has provided professional development centered on teaching virtually.

"I'm trying to run it just as I would if I was standing there in front of them," said Sabrina Huston, a computer science teacher at Bernard Middle School. "We talked with the kids about what they missed about being in a real classroom and figuring out how we could make this virtual course feel like that."

In most virtual Summer Session classes, students would join a Google Meet with their teachers and classmates at the start of their class session, participate

in a mini-lesson and then leave the Google Meet to complete assignments. At the end of each session, students would return to their Meet to discuss and share their work.

Mehlville School District parent Jenny Bess had two children attend Summer Session. She said her kids felt supported by their teacher, were able to complete their work independently and had the resources they needed to assist in their learning.

"Everything they needed was right there in the Google Meet and the Google Classroom," Bess said. "The teacher was always available for them to log back on to that Google Meet and ask a question."

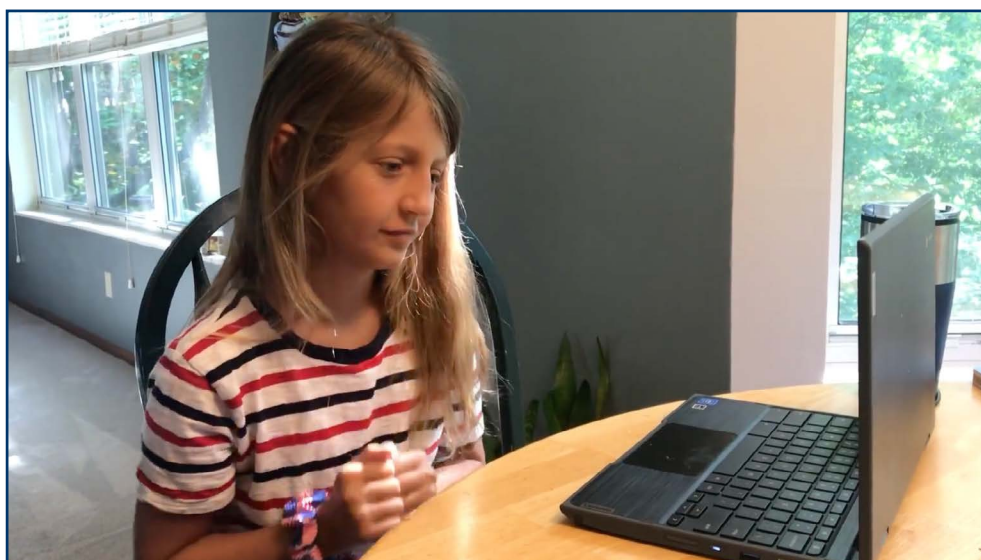
With the technology and tools in place, Summer Session teachers believe they will be able to help students learn successfully in a virtual setting until they are able to return to classrooms.

"Summer Session students have enjoyed connecting with each other in their virtual classrooms," said Lisa Meyer, a fifth-grade teacher at Rogers Elementary School. "Of course we want to be in the classroom. This isn't ideal, but I am 100 percent sure virtual teaching can work well."

You can learn more about Mehlville School District's Return to School plan at [bit.ly/returntoschoolmsdr9](http://bit.ly/returntoschoolmsdr9).



Rogers Elementary School kindergarten teacher Tracy Czapl leads a virtual lesson designed to teach parents how to help their children learn to identify numbers.



Lottie Bess, Oakville Elementary School fourth-grade student, participates in Mehlville School District's virtual Summer Session.

## STAY CONNECTED



Families can text "Yes" to 67587 to opt-in to text alerts for things like snow days and bus delays



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Find your school on social media:  
[bit.ly/msdr9socialmedia](http://bit.ly/msdr9socialmedia)

# Ethical and Global: First students earn Missouri Seal of Biliteracy

Fifteen students from Mehlville High School and Oakville High School are the first Mehlville School District students to earn the Missouri Seal of Biliteracy.

The Missouri Seal of Biliteracy is given by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to students who have demonstrated proficiency in English and at least one other language before high school graduation. Students must build a social-cultural portfolio, attend and participate in cultural events and prove they can speak, read and write fluently in multiple languages.

Umutoni Sebunyenzi, a graduating senior at MHS, earned the seal by demonstrating proficiency in Kinyarwanda, a language spoken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Her parents were born there and moved to the United States just before she was born.

“My parents always spoke a different language at home, and as I got older, I knew that this language kept me connected to my culture, so I wanted to learn it for generations to come,” Sebunyenzi said.

In addition to celebrating students who have multiple proficient languages, some colleges and universities will allow students to have up to six credit hours allotted to them upon entry to college based on their competency and having the seal on their transcript.

“Being multilingual is a definite asset for students as they move forward into college and the workforce,” said Adam Smith, Executive Director of Student Services. “Part of our Portrait of a Graduate is having global and ethical citizens. The Seal of Biliteracy promotes that.”

Nora Ovchian is one of three Mehlville School District students to earn the Distinguished Seal of Biliteracy, an honor given to those who score at the highest levels of proficiency. She received the award for demonstrating proficiency in Russian and English.



Umutoni Sebunyenzi, above, received the Seal of Biliteracy, while Nora Ovchian, below, received the Distinguished Seal of Biliteracy.



“I really want to go into medicine, so I’ll come in contact with a variety of patients with different backgrounds,” Ovchian said. “Being able to communicate with a doctor who also speaks the same language as you is important because not everyone who is an immigrant knows English well.”

## Students earning the Distinguished Seal of Biliteracy

Aysel Akhmedova - Turkish/English (OHS)

Vasilya Kadymova - Turkish (MHS)

Elianora Ovchian - English/Russian (OHS)

Thao Truong - English/Vietnamese (OHS)

## Students earning the Missouri Seal of Biliteracy

Shaelyn Frauenhoffer - Spanish (OHS)

Alexa Garcia - Spanish (MHS)\*

Leslie Gutierrez - Spanish (MHS)

Norah Kovac - Spanish (OHS)

Elena Lucero - Spanish (MHS)\*

Addie Martin - Spanish (MHS)

Abigail Miller - French (MHS)

Jessica Nguyen - Vietnamese (MHS)

Eldina Omerovic - German (MHS)

Umutoni Sebunyenzi - Kinyarwanda (MHS)

Emma Tate - Spanish (OHS)

\*Student will be a senior in the 2020-2021 school year.

## STUDENT DISTINCTIONS

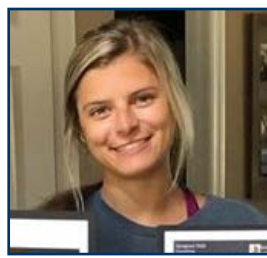
### OHS FCCLA

Oakville High School senior **Megan Blanchard** (fashion design) and 2020 graduate **Courtney Doerr** (interior design) were National Gold recipients for their Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) STAR Event projects.

Both previously earned gold at the regional and state levels to qualify for the national competition.



Megan Blanchard



Courtney Doerr

## STAFF DISTINCTIONS

### Bernard Middle teacher named a Missouri Regional Teacher of the Year

Bernard Middle School teacher **Jefferson Stephens** has been named one of ten honorees for Missouri Regional Teacher of the Year from the St. Louis region. The distinction means he is now eligible to submit an application for Missouri State Teacher of the Year.

Stephens is a sixth-grade Patriot Academy teacher at Bernard where he teaches a blend of English language arts and social studies.



## Tori Behlke obtains Advanced Certification

Mehlville Board of Education Secretary **Tori Behlke** has achieved Advanced Certification in the Missouri School Boards’ Association (MSBA) Certified Board Member program.

All newly elected school board members are required by state law to complete an 18.5-hour training program. The Advanced Certification recognizes those that complete an additional 12 hours of training, read two books related to school board service, attend at least two MSBA regional or statewide events, and write a brief reflection paper relating their study to their board service.

“Serving our community on the Board of Education is important to me and I take this responsibility very seriously,” Behlke said. “I’m always in search of opportunities to learn more and gain experience so I can fulfill my commitment to our students and add value to our school district through continuous improvement.”



Attn: Postal Patron

ECRWSS

**IMPORTANT DATES**

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

<b>Aug. 20</b>	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., location to be determined
<b>Aug. 25</b>	First Day of School
<b>Sept. 7</b>	No School, Labor Day
<b>Sept. 15</b>	State of the District, 7 p.m., Nottelmann Auditorium
<b>Sept. 17</b>	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School
<b>Sept. 28</b>	Board of Education Tax Rate Hearing, 6 p.m., Bernard Middle School
<b>Sept. 28</b>	Mehlville Listens Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Bernard Middle School
<b>Sept. 30</b>	Half day for students (if we are following Plan A)
<b>Oct. 15</b>	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School
<b>Oct. 21</b>	Half day for students (if we are following Plan A)
<b>Oct. 23</b>	End of first quarter
<b>Oct. 26</b>	High school parent/teacher conferences
<b>Oct. 27</b>	Elementary school parent/teacher conferences
<b>Oct. 28</b>	Middle school parent/teacher conferences
<b>Oct. 30</b>	Half day for students (if we are following Plan A), parent/teacher conferences
<b>Nov. 2</b>	No School
<b>Nov. 3</b>	No School for students - Election day
<b>Nov. 12</b>	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School
<b>Nov. 18</b>	Half day for students (if we are following Plan A)
<b>Nov. 25-27</b>	No School - Thanksgiving break
<b>Dec. 8</b>	Mehlville Listens Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Buerkle Middle School
<b>Dec. 16</b>	Half day for students (if we are following Plan A)
<b>Dec. 17</b>	Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Mehlville High School

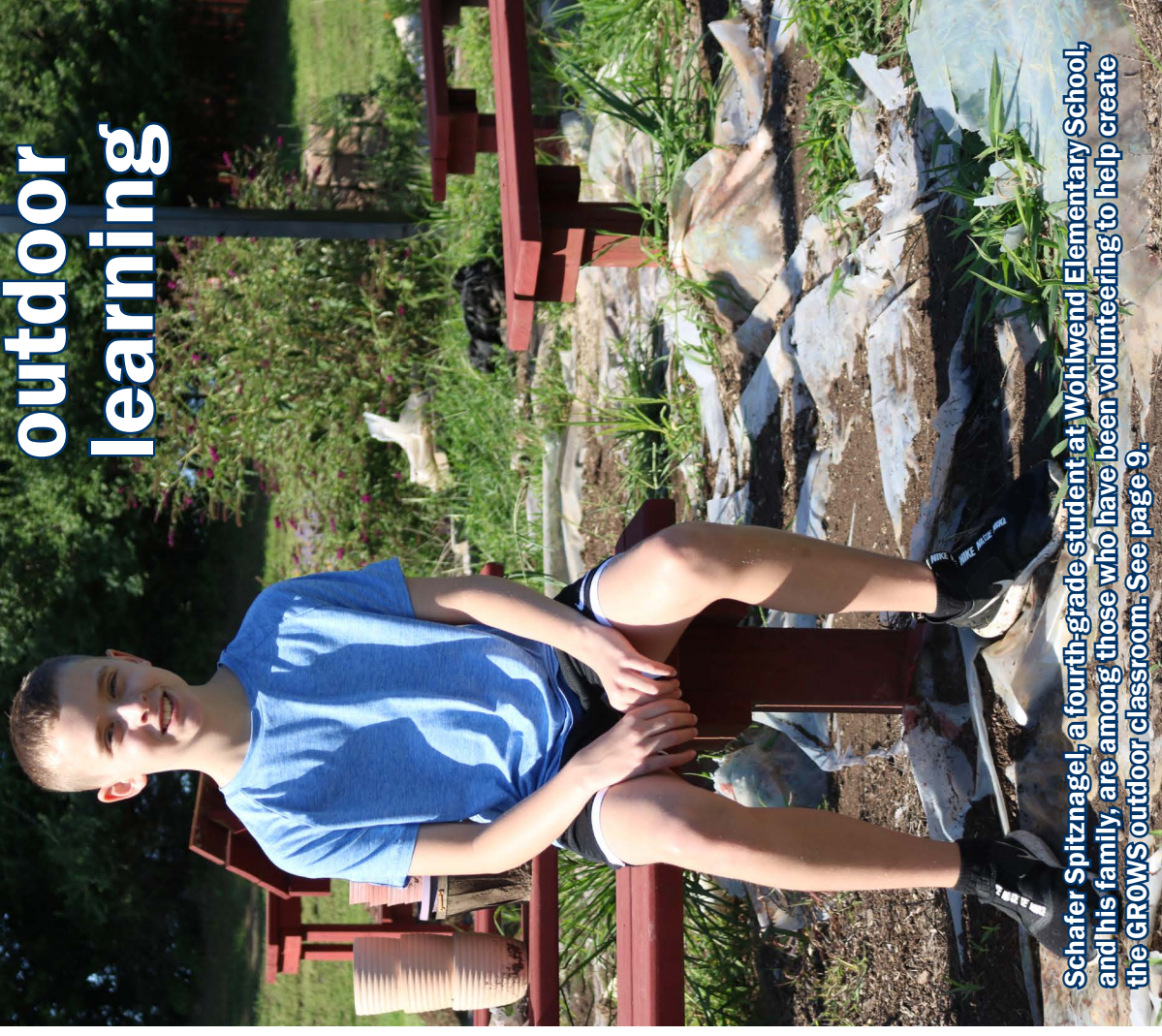
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[mehvilleschooldistrict.com/email](http://mehvilleschooldistrict.com/email)

# Mehlville Messenger

## Growing outdoor learning



Schafer Spitznagel, a fourth-grade student at Wohlwend Elementary School, and his family, are among those who have been volunteering to help create the GROWS outdoor classroom. See page 9.

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