



Blackcat News

Mission Statement:
“Educating Today for a Better Tomorrow”

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SCHOOL YEAR 2021-2022

May 19, 2022



Let The Games Begin



Pictured:
Esports tournament players
Jack Shadowens, Matt King,
Payne Hawkins, Lucas Bach,
and Steven Stenzhorn.

Herculaneum High School is all in on esports. The Dunklin R-5 School Board approved the purchase of computers, and they budgeted money for a sponsor next year. Activities Director Jason Gillman says adding electronic sports will increase the number of engaged students and make our students eligible for additional scholarships.

Some high school students have already started competing as a team and entering tournaments. They play from their home computers, using headsets to communicate in multiplayer games. Our Valorant and Rocket League teams finished in the top 15 out of over 40 teams in the High School Esports League (HESL) Spring Major Tournament. Those results suggest we have some talented players that could lead a strong team next year.

Traditionalists may never accept electronic gaming as a “real sport” because it lacks the physical exertion seen on a court, track, or field. However, freshman Steven Stenzhorn says, “There is a lot of teamwork involved. Communication is very important, or you’ll end up losing the match.” Junior Jack Shadowens says, “It’s just like any other sport. There are the competitive aspects and spectators.” The dominant social platform to watch gaming is Twitch, owned by Amazon.

The gaming industry would welcome greater acceptance among sports fans, but they aren’t waiting for it. More than 250-million people watch esports. One of the superstars, Tyler “Ninja” Blevins, made the cover of ESPN The Magazine. He averages 72,000 viewers during competitions and nets about \$300,000 a month in streaming revenue. Last year, an international competition called Dota 2 had a prize pool worth \$40-million. It draws over 60-million viewers annually, and the numbers keep growing.

The idea of adding esports at Herculaneum High School came from a group of students in Mrs. Stenzhorn’s class who brought it to the student advisory board. They continued to advocate for the team and eventually presented to the board of education. Our administrators visited Hancock High School to see their program and learn more about scholarships offered by colleges like Lindenwood and Mizzou. In March, the Dunklin R-5 School Board approved the purchase of 20 computers and the creation of an esports club at the high school for the start of the 2022-2023 school year. Dunklin will join Windsor and Fox as the only school districts in Jefferson County with a team.

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK ON THE BLACKCAT NEWS

The Blackcat News is a quarterly communication tool that we use as one way to keep you informed about Dunklin R-5 School District. We want this publication to be useful to you as a patron of our schools - “Must-Read Material”!

Is there...

Something you’ve read that you don’t understand? Information that you would like to see included that is not? Something you want to see more often or less frequently?

We value your input!

Please email your feedback to our Communications Director, **Matt Lichtenstein**, at mlichtenstein@dunklin.k12.mo.us

Don’t use email? **Call Mr. Lichtenstein at 636-479-5200 ext. 1010**

Message From Board President

Hello R5 Community—

My name is Susan Hartmann, and I was elected by my peers in April to become the leader of the school board—a really great board! This board makes student-centered decisions, looks at the overall impact of their choices, and is a group that works as a team. A big thank you to Mrs. Dawn Warner for being our leader for the last eight years. Her leadership brought the board up to a new level and put many processes and procedures in place to make us a better board.

Community and youth have been an important part of my life, serving with various youth and civic organizations. I am in my 13th year as a Special Education Paraprofessional in a neighboring district. This will be my 30th year as a parent/grandparent of Blackcats attending the district. As I start my 18th year on the board, I am excited to be in the leadership role again.

May is an extremely busy time for the board but a happy time of celebration within the district. We started with a successful Community Pancake Breakfast. It was wonderful to have families back in the building, and we were finally able to show off the new addition. Attendees had the opportunity to view projects from all grade levels, enjoy fun bounce

houses, and eat pancakes—lots of pancakes serving over 900 people! Next spring, watch for the date for the community breakfast.

Our celebrations continued by recognizing 13 retirees. While we are losing over 302 years of institutional knowledge, we are excited about the future and what it holds for our students and the district. It was a fun night filled with smiles, laughter, and recognition for a deserving and dedicated group of individuals. Taylor Early Childhood was the next celebration to promote their students to kindergarten. The fifth graders at Pevely will celebrate their final elementary accomplishments with a walk-thru in the hall with their peers cheering them on. Senn Thomas will have their eighth-graders walk through a hallway of cheering well-wishers, including parents, and conclude with a fun celebration day.

And finally, we will celebrate seniors at their awards ceremony, followed by graduation ceremonies later in the month. It's always great to be a Blackcat, but the May celebrations allow so many to complete chapters in their lives and start new ones. A special wish to our retired staff and our graduating seniors for their future chapters in life.

With Blackcat Pride — Susan

Retirement Tribute

The Dunklin R-5 School District honored 13 employees retiring at the end of this school year. Almost half were classroom teachers, and the rest were either building secretaries or support staff in other departments. The tributes started with a catered dinner in the high school cafeteria with tablecloths, fresh flowers, and live music from the Herculaneum Jazz Band. It progressed to the theater,

where it was open to everyone. Each honoree was brought up on stage, handed a gift, and listened to a coworker share stories. The audience laughed at the highlights and funny situations. The good-natured roasting of the honorees all ended with coworkers trying to express how deeply they will be missed. There were hugs and tears as the realization of their departure hit home. Dr. Freeman told the audience that we'll cover the duties performed by these talented individuals, but they will never be replaced.

Pictured: Connie Zimpfer, Dawn Vaughn, Michelle Shadowens, Paula Monarch, Rose Crowe, Trisha Partney, Melissa Schultz, Sherry Pope, Judy Sobol, Barb Chandler, Kim Donnelly, and Laura Bauer. Not pictured: Donald Vogt.



Dr. Freeman



Blackcat Community:

The 2021-2022 school year was more difficult than the prior two years for many of us. However, our teachers, faculty, and staff persevere, and we have been able to begin engaging our community in your student's education. As we begin opening back up, we have learned that our teachers are incredible, and our parents are extremely supportive.

During this month of May, we have started to applaud our students with assemblies, banquets, graduation, etc., all to celebrate the accomplishments of our amazing kids. I am reminded that we need to avoid the temptation of just being done. We need to reflect on the amazing things we have accomplished as a District. We all need to be present and engaged because the group that leaves here in May will not be the same group that returns in August. Take some time to share that extra story, smile, and know that we, as the Dunklin R-5 Community, are doing great things and will continue to do great things for our kids. I could not be more excited to serve as your superintendent of schools. So Thank You for a great second year.

We can't wait to see our students at our Summer School Program as well as in August to start our 2022-2023 school year. Please visit our website at www.dunklin.k12.mo.us for the latest updated information. Also, check us out on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Dr. Clint Freeman, Superintendent of Schools



FREE PRESCHOOL

The Dunklin R-5 school district is currently enrolling qualifying students living in the Dunklin R-5 school district for **FREE** full-day preschool for the 2022-2023 school year.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Must be a Dunklin R-5 resident.
- 2) Children must be 4 years old on or before July 31, 2022.
- 3) To be eligible for the program, students/families must qualify for **ONE** of the following: 1) Free & Reduced Lunches, 2) Food Stamps, 3) TANF, 4) SNAP, 5) Homelessness **or** 6) Foster Care System.

SPACE IS LIMITED

If interested, contact our office at 636-479-5200 option 5.



We're making our Senior Awards Ceremony a nighttime event to allow families to join us on May 19th in the Dunklin R-5 Theatre.

The spring play was delightful. Senior Emily Gruhala shined as The Little Mermaid, and the supporting cast brought the diverse characters to life.

The Herculaneum High School Senior Parade will be Sunday, May 22nd.

Summer School is June 1st through June 28th for incoming kindergarten students through next year's seniors. Bus routes will be posted a couple of days before the session begins.

Congratulations to HHS Teacher Mark Holman for overcoming a severe case of COVID-19. He was released from the hospital on May 12th, the 152nd day since he went into the ICU at Missouri Baptist.

We've updated the sign on the football field facing Joachim Avenue, and we will be installing a new electronic sign in front of the high school.

On May 11th, we held a retirement dinner and tribute for 13 employees representing 302 years of experience. They included bus drivers, custodians, secretaries, and teachers. They will be missed.

Congratulations to Assistant Superintendent Willis for earning his doctorate from St. Louis University. At this time, he's not used to being called Dr. Willis. He keeps saying, "Just call me Joe."

Matt Lichtenstein,
Communications Director

DUNKLIN R-5 SCHOOL DISTRICT

497 Joachim Avenue ▪ Herculaneum, MO 63048 ▪ (636) 479-5200

Dr. Clint Freeman, Superintendent

Mr. Joe Willis, Assistant Superintendent

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Susan Hartmann, President Tammy Heidland, Vice President
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Marissa Newman, Dawn Warner

HERCULANEUM HIGH SCHOOL ext. 3

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Renee Richardson, Guidance Counselor,
grades 11-12
Chelsey Dickerman, Guidance Counselor,
grades 9-10 and A+
Connie Ward, Nurse

SENN-THOMAS MIDDLE SCHOOL ext. 2

Tracy Lewis, Principal
Trent Sauer, Assistant Principal
Stephanie Strohm, Guidance Counselor
Heather Shadowens, Nurse
Joycie Gonzalez-Meyer,
School-Family Liaison

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Katie Dunlap, Principal
Adam Dixon, Asst. Principal
Michelle Liles, Dean of Students
Madeline Huelskamp, Guidance Counselor
Jessica Rekate, Guidance Counselor
Heather Engelbach, Nurse

TAYLOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ext. 5

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Tom Jordan, Director of Technology
Matt Lichtenstein, Communications Director
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Board Meetings are Open to the Public

The Dunklin R-5 Board of Education meets on a regular basis on the third Tuesday of each month. The meetings are held at 7:00 pm. Check the website for the location. The meetings are open to the public. Patrons may view agendas and items from the meetings by going to our website www.dunklin.k12.mo.us, clicking on the District tab and clicking on "Paperless Board Meetings."

Dunklin R-5 School District is an equal opportunity



Dunklin Promotes Math Teacher

Senn-Thomas Middle School's Kyle Borrer will become the building's new assistant principal. Borrer says, "It was kind of the perfect situation. I would have been upset if I didn't apply for it." He wanted to remain a Blackcat and fulfill his long-term goal of becoming an administrator.

Kyle will be replacing Mr. Sauer, who has taken a position in the Fox C-6 School District. Borrer says, "I think he did a phenomenal job, and I learned a lot just watching him create this position because we never had a true assistant principal."

Borrer has been teaching math to Blackcats since 2013 and has been a girls basketball coach at the middle school and high school. You can see his enthusiasm when the Blackcats are in a competitive game. Borrer will leap to his feet and finds ways to communicate during play. Today, he's looking forward to supporting the team of teachers at Senn-Thomas Middle School. The Dunklin R-5 School Board approved the promotion of Borrer the night before his wife Lisa gave birth to their second child, a little girl named Isabelle. Lisa Borrer is a physical education teacher at Crystal City.



Kyle Borrer promoted to Assistant Principal

Leader In Me

Pevley Elementary participates in an educational leadership program called Leader in Me. This evidence-based model lays the foundation for successful students that mature into responsible leaders. A handful of students from each grade level are recommended to become members of the Lighthouse Team. It's similar to a student council. Dean Enloe couldn't wait to tell his parents about the recognition. He plans to encourage kindness and help other students make the right choices.



Pictured is Dean Enloe

As a parent, having conversations with your child is like planting seeds. The conditions may be right, but you have no idea if anything will come from it. Michele Enloe, Dean's mom, has talked to her son about being

positive and that it's never too late to turn around a bad day. She says, "It is a very proud parent moment to see these lessons and talks have not only set in but have become part of his actions and character."

There are 26 Lighthouse Team Members with similar stories throughout the Dunklin R-5 School District. The new members include first-graders Foster Holley, Lux Eder, Hana Hamzic, Olivia Henning, and Sam Carolla. Dean Enloe and Evan Schmitt represent the second grade. The newest 3rd-grade members are Laci Snyder, Alaina Baer, Charlie Harvey, Abbi Zipprich, Isaiah Harper, and Aurora Hankins.

Taylor's Big Truck Day

An observant public works employee started an annual event that delights pre-k students at Taylor Early Childhood Center. Every time Mike Welch drove a piece of equipment past the playground, he noticed the kids would stop playing. He says, "They would all run to the fence and holler at me." Soon Welch met with Director Charissa Kappler about bringing equipment to school, and it was a huge hit. Welch and his coworkers in the Herculaneum Public Works Department genuinely enjoy the event. Throughout



Pictured: Mike Welsch and Austin Haas

the day, students rotate into the upper parking lot with trucks, tractors, and a skid steer loader. You'll see workers lifting kids into the cabs, covering anything sharp, and putting rags into a truck horn that's a bit too loud. Austin Haas with McCain's Towing added to the variety of large vehicles. As a kid, he wasn't allowed to touch his dad's first tow truck, so he enjoys seeing children explore the big rig. This was the 5th year for Big Truck Day, and Welsh says, "It's my favorite day of the year."



Senn-Thomas Talker

It was an uncomfortable moment for Superintendent Freeman. He was asked to deliver a few remarks at the beginning of our first Blackcats Give Back day. He was prepared to discuss charity and giving back to the community. Dr. Freeman didn't know that he would be following Olivia Drinen. The student's impassioned remarks thoroughly explored the theme of the day. Freeman wisely cut his remarks to thanking organizers and participants.

Last year, Drinen took second place in the Optimist Club's local contest and the zone contest. This year, the 8th-grade student's winning streak hasn't been completed. She recently took first place in the Optimist International East Missouri District Oratorical Contest, which includes high school students. The theme is "Staying optimistic through challenging times." Many speakers are telling stories of their personal hardships. Drinen decided to talk about three different people throughout history that stayed optimistic through troubling times.

The approach has been well received, but a well-written speech still needs to be delivered. Drinen has a specific approach to her performance. She says, "Being prepared is something that really combats nerves." Drinen controls negative thoughts, takes time to pray, and before entering the room, she does push-ups. No known authority recommends calisthenics to enhance your delivery, but the results are impressive. Drinen will be competing



Olivia Drinen took First Place in the Optimist International East Missouri District Oratorical Contest

in the World Oratorical Contest at St. Louis University in July. If she survives the first day of regional competition, she will move on to the Optimist International's World Championships at SLU.

Student Personal Development Day

Before spring break, a day was set aside for high school students to learn essential life skills. The topics included budgeting, first aid, baking, job applications, taxes, and roadside emergencies. Each student chooses five sessions and three alternate sessions. The upperclassmen get priority on the 45-minute sessions, so freshman and sophomores were more likely to have an alternate on their schedules. The most popular courses were self-defense, small appliance cooking, and pet care. The first Personal Development Day took place in 2019, with the intention of having it every other year. Unfortunately, last year's event was canceled due to COVID restrictions.


The process starts with a student survey to judge their interest in various topics. The high school counseling department is then tasked with finding presenters to volunteer their day. Several came from public agencies, like Jefferson College, Joachim-Plattin Ambulance District, and the Herculaneum Fire Department. A couple of our teachers led sessions, but many presenters are self-employed or work for a local branch of a larger company. When the day finally arrived, it was informative, engaging, and fun.

Presenters were enthusiastic about the event, and they all volunteered to return in 2024. High School Counselor Renee Richardson says, "Over 93-percent of students found the sessions beneficial." In the final student survey, four of them




Pictured: Counselor Chelsey Dickerman, Family-School Liaison Joycie Gonzalez-Meyer, Secretary Kim Black, Counselor Renee Richardson, presenters Chief Kevin Baker, and Sydney Donaldson.

wrote in the comment section that Herculaneum High School should do this every year.



Dr. Freeman
Mr. Willis
Matt Lichtenstein
High School Activities
STMS Activities


@DrClintFreeman
@JoeFWillis
@BlackcatMatt
@BlackcatUpdates
@STMSActivities



High School Principal Dix
Middle School Principal Lewis
Elementary Principal Dunlap

@dix_stephanie
@SennThomasMS
@MissKatieDunlap

Dunklin R5 School District
Herculaneum High School
Senn-Thomas Middle School
Pevely Elementary School
Taylor Early Childhood Center





Learning To Ride



Pictured: Emilio Chimento and Sunny Johnson try the new bikes.



Our youngest elementary students are learning to ride bicycles after a generous donation from a network of organizations. The bikes are set up for kindergarten and first-grade students and will be part of their regular physical education classes.

Since bicycles for children went into mass production in the 1950s, they have been part of our collective experience. Before smartphones, kids could always find other kids by looking for a group of bikes. Today, there are more distractions than ever, but the idea of two-wheeled independence is still important. Chris Creed has been at the center of 18 bicycle donations at elementary schools in Jefferson and St. Louis Counties. He says, "Even if a kid has never been on a bike before, they get super excited because they want to ride a bike." That was proven true during the reveal at Pevely Elementary School.

On April 27th, young students sat in a row at one end of Pevely's big gym as Creed explained he would help teach them an important life skill. He said, "It's time to learn how to clean your rooms." Their expressions soured before seeing Creed's joking smile. They became more vocal with their displeasure and gave the speaker a thumbs-down. Creed quietly walked behind the black divider in the center of the gym and came out riding a bicycle. After a few remarks, Coach Goodwin turned the key to lift the divider. Kids squealed when they saw a line of 24 bikes. It was a high-pitched expression of pure joy. A row at a time, students grabbed helmets and started gliding across the flat gym floor.

Creed has been running a nonprofit called Living Life on Two Wheels. As they grew, it made sense to open a retail location, so the Creeds opened Pedal'n Pie on Bailey Road. Yes, it's a

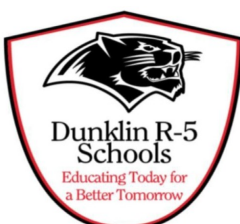
bicycle shop that serves pizza. They carry Strider Bikes, among others. Strider has an educational foundation called All Kids Bike.

Creed's and Strider's nonprofits are instrumental in getting bikes in schools, but they still need to be funded. Jeremy Mullis of 1st Phorm has a charity called 30 for the Kids. People in their fitness program pay a cash fine when they miss a workout. Those slackers donated \$20,000, which is enough to put bikes in four elementary schools. Express Mart and Home Service Oil raised \$80,000 last year for the cause. Other contributors are Enterprise Bank and Trust, Walmart, and Home Depot. Creed says, "Our goal is to get every single school funded."

The new bikes don't have pedals. There's a small footrest where the pedals connect to the frame. Pevely Physical Education Teacher Dawn Cappozzo says students will start by learning how to push off with their feet, then gliding and balancing. Eventually, pedals will be added, and the activity will be incorporated into gym classes. Cappozzo says, "It's just another unit that we've added into our curriculum. We'll hit it hard for a couple of weeks and then a couple of times a month."

Board Meetings are Open to the Public

The Dunklin R-5 Board of Education meets on the third Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m., and the meetings are open to the public. You can view agenda by going to our website www.dunklin.k12.mo.us, and clicking on the District tab and then "Paperless Board Meetings". The location will be listed on the agenda.





Prom Queen Emily Gruhala and King Dallin Fuller.

Knock Differences Out of the Park

On May 9th, Knock Differences Out of the Park and Teacher Appreciation Night took place on Andy Runzi Field. The announcer introduced Mrs. Sardo's class, and they were each given a signed baseball to throw out for the ceremonial first pitch.

Then baseball players lined the infield with sixteen of their favorite teachers. Ricky Johnson chose Mrs. Danya LaPlante, a social studies teacher at Senn-Thomas Middle School. He said, "Thank you for inspiring me to be my best and guiding me in the right direction."

See pictures below.



Tucker's Talent



A Senn-Thomas Middle School student has developed a talent for art far beyond his years. Sailor Tucker got serious about art three or four years ago and loves drawing portraits.

Art Teacher Christine Tipton entered his Captain America into the Mastodon Art and Science Fair, and Tucker received a first-place trophy for his efforts. He says, "I was pretty excited." He also attended an all-day art workshop at Jefferson College and got to work with oils. Tucker says, "My favorite medium to use has got to be just graphite pencils. I don't love working with charcoal, but if I have to, I will."

Herculaneum High School Art Teacher Jon Purvis says, "His approach to composition and value is impeccable." Tucker doesn't know if art will be part of his future career or just a hobby, but the 13-year-old has time to figure it out.



Pictured: Dr. Willis, Dr. Freeman, Emily Gruhala, Baby Ada, Food Service Director Nicole Arnold, Benefits Coordinator Sherry Jarnagin, and Administrative Assistant Angie Baiter.

All District Pancake Breakfast

Hosting a pancake breakfast isn't a new idea, but all the tumblers aligned to make it an obvious solution this year. Due to the pandemic, parents hadn't been in our schools for years. Some were able to attend sporting events at the high school or middle school, but nothing at the elementary school. Inviting the community to stop by on a Saturday morning would give us several opportunities to reconnect with our families.

We started with pancakes, sausage, and a choice of beverages. Then we offered tours of the new classrooms at Pevely that can double as a storm shelter. Both teachers and students are excited about the new courses being offered through Project Lead The Way. The event allowed students to display some of their hands-on projects to visitors. When Dr. Freeman picked a date, it worked perfectly with the book fair at Pevely. The breakfast was also a week before the spring play, and the lead character agreed to pose for pictures with our young visitors. In full costume, Ariel from The Little Mermaid created a memorable moment for several little ones. A complimentary breakfast ticket was given to each student, and adults were charged five dollars for the meal. We didn't make any money, but welcoming 900 people inside our hallways was priceless.



Last Day of School is May 24th. It is an Early Release Day