

FRANCIS HOWELL SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Connection

Fall
2019



This school year, the District welcomed 83 new teachers to the FHSD Family



John Weldon Elementary students in Mrs. Carley's third grade class participating in a reading lesson



Barnwell Middle students showing their Bulldog Pride



FHSD Bus Driver Hannah Scharfenberg won the 2019 Missouri School Bus Safety Competition



It was a great day to be a Viking at this year's Francis Howell High School's First Responders football game



Independence Elementary teacher Rachael Wilcox was named a Missouri Teacher of the Year Finalist



Dear FHSD Community,

We have already finished the first quarter of our school year, and students have just returned from their fall break. We have had several great celebrations already this year, and there are many more details in this edition of *The Connection*.

I want to take this opportunity to share with you an important issue facing our District. Our Board of Education has been reviewing the priority items outlined in our Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan. The Plan calls for updating most of our major systems, which will be costly, and reworking many of our instructional spaces which do not meet today's educational needs. Francis Howell North has multiple issues, and at this point, the best option is to build a new high school. That's why the Board is considering putting a no tax rate increase bond issue on the ballot in April 2020.

From the outside, many of our schools appear fine, but

the truth is that they are a lot older than they look. The infrastructure is beginning to fail, and heating and cooling units are reaching the end of their useful life. We often have difficulty finding parts for our older systems because they are not making them anymore. It's also very important that we continue to update our safety and security systems. Maintaining quality school buildings is an important part of maintaining the quality of life in our community.

This bond issue would NOT raise the current debt service tax rate. We plan to hold a series of informational meetings about the facility needs of the District, as well as our plans for addressing these issues for the benefit of our 17,000 students. If you have any questions about our facilities or the bond issue, please contact our Communications Department at 636-851-4040.

Sincerely,
Dr. Mary Hendricks-Harris
Superintendent

Connect with FHSD

There are many ways to stay connected with the Francis Howell School District. Watch for the next edition of "The Connection" in the spring.



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www.fhdschools.org



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Three FHSD Schools Honored as 2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools



Warren Elementary students showing off the school's new Blue Ribbon status

The U.S. Department of Education has recognized Becky-David, Daniel Boone, and Warren elementary schools as 2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools. The three FHSD elementary schools received the prestigious award based on their exemplary high academic performance.

Only five other elementary schools in Missouri received the award this year.

"It's an incredible honor to receive the National Blue Ribbon," said Becky-David Principal Jill Oetting. "We are dedicated to helping each student reach their full potential by providing excellent instruction and a sense of family for each student. This award is a true recognition of all of the hard work our staff and students do every day."

Daniel Boone Principal Kevin Armour said, "We are very excited to be recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School. We are also extremely proud to be recognized as one of the highest achieving schools in Missouri. This national recognition is a testament to the high expectations that our

staff and school community have set for our students and each other."

"On behalf of the entire Warren community, we are both humbled and honored," said Michele Christopher, Warren Elementary Principal. "At Warren, we pride ourselves on being 'Learners and Leaders for Life.' The Warren Elementary staff have long believed one of the key factors in educating the whole child is engaging students, staff, and families by building a sense of belonging and collaboration."

The coveted National Blue Ribbon Schools award affirms the hard work of educators, families, and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students

master challenging and engaging content.

On Nov. 14 and 15, the Department of Education will celebrate with the honorees at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. ■



Former Becky-David principal Dr. Sherri Brown and current principal Jill Oetting celebrate

FHSD Superintendent Announces Retirement



Dr. Hendricks-Harris helped Independence students off to school on the first day

During the September Board of Education meeting, FHSD Superintendent Dr. Mary Hendricks-Harris asked the Board to accept her retirement effective June 30, 2020.

"During my tenure as superintendent of the Francis Howell School District, I have had the privilege to work with a supportive Board of Education, a knowledgeable, student-centered administrative team, and a dedicated, collaborative group of teachers and staff," said Dr. Hendricks-Harris. "These caring professionals always make our students their top priority. It has been the highlight of my career

to work in this community and with the amazing students and staff of FHSD."

Dr. Hendricks-Harris has been a part of the FHSD family for the past 14 years, and has been in education for over 30 years. Under her direction, FHSD developed and implemented a new strategic plan. "I am very proud of what we have already accomplished under our new strategic plan and what we will continue to accomplish as a result of this work," said Dr. Hendricks-Harris. "I know we believe in our mission, which is 'Empowering students to be lifelong learners prepared for the future.' I know Francis Howell will continue to lead and excel well beyond my time in the District. I appreciate the community's support and the opportunity to lead FHSD for the past four years; it has been my great pleasure and honor."

More information about the search for a new superintendent will be shared with the FHSD community on our website and in eNews in the coming months. ■

Five FHSD Seniors Selected as National Merit Semifinalists



Andrea Lin
FHHS



Isabella Reed
FHHS



Brent Harfmann
FHC



Logan Nachtrab
FHC



Joanna Dohrman
FHN

Semifinalists will find out in the spring if they have been selected as Finalists

The District is proud to announce that five FHSD seniors have been named semifinalists in the 2019 National Merit Scholarship Program. These seniors are among 16,000 semifinalists chosen as part of the annual academic competition. They will compete for 7,600 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$31 million. The FHSD semifinalists are: Andrea Lin and Isabella Reed from Francis Howell High School, Brent Harfmann and Logan Nachtrab from Francis Howell Central, and Joanna Dohrman from Francis Howell North.

"We are very proud of our students who performed well on the PSAT and qualified to be included in this prestigious group," said Deputy

Superintendent Dr. Nathan Hoven. "This is a very rigorous process, and our students still have more work to do in order to be selected as finalists. We appreciate that the scholarships are based on more than just test scores, and in order to qualify as finalists, these students must be very active in school and the community as well."

Semifinalists represent less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors and includes the highest-scoring entrants in each state. To become a finalist, these students must submit a detailed application which includes academic records, participation in school and community activities, leadership abilities, employment, and honors and awards. ■

FHSD Facilities/Bond Issue



The CFMP includes construction of a new Francis Howell North

During 2018, FHSD worked proactively with the architectural firm Hoener Associates, Inc. to develop a Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan (CFMP). This plan identified both the current state of the District's facilities, as well as its future needs.

The District has 29 separate facilities, including three early childhood centers, ten elementary schools, five middle schools, three high schools, an administration building, and seven other sites. These sites include over 2.7 million square feet of building space under roof, with miles of plumbing and wiring and hundreds of mechanical systems. The average building in the District is 30 years old, and the oldest building is now more than 50 years old. Many systems, like HVAC, plumbing, and electrical, are reaching the end of their useful life.

The Facilities Committee, made up of Board members, building administrators, community members, and facilities managers, met over the

spring and summer of 2019 to identify priority areas in the CFMP and to determine the initial phases of a multi-year plan to address facility issues. They presented those priority areas and potential costs to the Board of Education during work sessions in August and September. The FHSD Board of Education is considering placing a no tax rate increase bond issue on the ballot in April to pay for the construction, repair, and renovation costs outlined in the CFMP. The plan also includes the construction of a new Francis Howell North High School.

The District is at a critical juncture in terms of facilities. Older buildings require significant repair and maintenance. The CFMP is intended to help determine how best to address these issues, and the funds from bond sales approved by our voters would allow the District to do the work necessary to adequately meet the learning needs of our students today and in the future. ■



Many FHSD building systems are reaching the end of their useful life and need to be replaced

FHSD Ranked as Top MO District

FHSD is ranked as the best school district in St. Charles County and the #11 best school district in Missouri, according to the 2020 Best Schools in America list released by Niche. That ranking is two spots higher than last year.



With more than 500 public school districts in the state, FHSD is in the top three percent in Missouri. FHSD high schools were all in the top 50 high schools in Missouri. In St. Charles County, FHSD middle schools are all ranked in the top ten, and FHSD also has seven of the top ten ranked elementary schools.

"We know that there are many different measures of a great school district, and we appreciate the fact that Niche rankings take a variety of data into consideration," said FHSD Superintendent Dr. Mary Hendricks-Harris. "We also value the opinions of our stakeholders, and the positive survey feedback from our community is great confirmation that they appreciate the efforts we make on behalf of our students every day."

Niche analyzes data from the U.S. Department of Education and over 60 million K-12 school reviews to produce comprehensive rankings, report cards, and profiles for K-12 schools, colleges, and places to live. School district rankings reflect the entire school experience, including academics, teachers, diversity, student life, and student outcomes. ■

Board of Education Sets Tax Rate

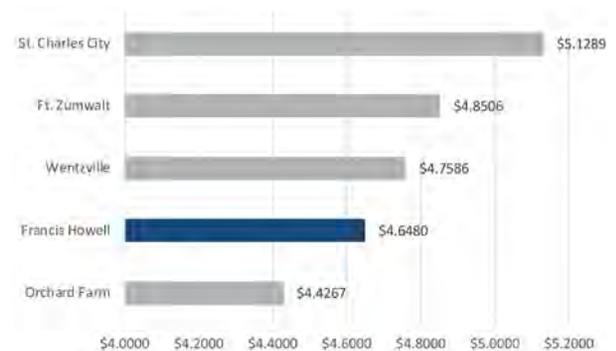
The FHSD Board of Education approved the 2019-20 tax rate of \$4.6480 by a 7-0 vote at the September Board meeting. Although the District's assessed valuation (AV) increased 9% overall, the District is limited to capturing growth on existing property to the lower of 5% or the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The CPI for 2019 is calculated to be 1.9%.

2019 is a reassessment year and growth in AV triggers a tax rollback per the Hancock Amendment. As a result of reassessment, the 2019-20 tax rate was reduced by almost 21 cents compared to the 2018-19 tax rate. FHSD's overall tax rate is the second lowest

among St. Charles County districts. The St. Charles, Wentzville, and Fort Zumwalt school districts have all passed operating levy increases in recent years.

While St. Charles County districts provide their own special education services, funded by their operating levies, districts in St. Louis County have those services provided by Special School District, which assesses its own levy in addition to the levy assessed by the local school district. To provide accurate comparison of tax rates between counties, the tax rates in the St. Louis County districts need to include the amount levied by the Special School District of St. Louis County. ■

2018-19 Tax Rates by School District



FHSD's tax rate is the second-lowest among county school districts.



Missouri Property Tax Credit Claim

The Missouri Department of Revenue administers a real estate tax assistance program, the Missouri Property Tax Credit Claim, which gives credit to certain senior citizens and 100 percent disabled individuals for a portion of the real estate taxes or rent they have paid for the year. Information is available on the Missouri Department of Revenue's website at: <http://dor.mo.gov/personal/ptc/>.

A Vending Machine that Provides Food for the Mind



Central students select a book from the new vending machine

As part of a new initiative this year, Central Elementary used federal Title 1 funds to purchase the Inchy's Bookworm Vending Machine as a "novel" way to provide more opportunities for their students to read. Literacy Specialist Jennifer Plotnitskiy and Library Media Specialist Cara Shouse saw the idea on Facebook and knew it would be a great

addition to the community and another way of getting books into the hands of their students.

Every student has the opportunity to choose three books from the vending machine throughout the year. Each teacher has a reading goal for both the fall and spring semesters. Once a student reaches that goal, they will receive a golden token to "buy" a book. Students will also be able to select a new book on their birthday. The hope for the book vending machine is to build each student's home library and increase the number of minutes they are reading at home.

"With a fun new incentive for reading, students will be encouraged to read every day," said Plotnitskiy. "That golden token might just be the key that helps to create life-long readers." ■

Golden Athletics Pass



Enjoy FHSD athletics events with the Golden Activities Pass

FHSD offers a complimentary athletics pass to District residents age 55 and older. The Golden Athletics Pass provides free admission to home athletic events in FHSD. Passes cannot be used for state playoff competitions or district tournaments.

The pass can be picked up at the front desk of the FHSD Administration Building located at 4545 Central School Road in St. Charles, 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM or you can call 636-851-4602. ■

Upcoming Senior PALS Event



Senior PALS getting an update from Dr. Mary Hendricks-Harris

FHSD is engaging our older residents through the Senior PALS initiative. Senior PALS are invited to spend time in our schools, learn more about FHSD, and share valuable input with administrators and Board members. Senior PALS is open to any FHSD resident age 60 and older.

Mark your calendar for the next Senior PALS event:

Nov. 12, 2019, 4:15 PM (updated time)
Iron Chef Student Contest and Taste Testing
Francis Howell Central High School, Library

To RSVP, please call 636-851-4602.

Brownies with the Board



Join the Board for an informal conversation

Brownies with the Board, a community event, will be held in the Learning Commons at Francis Howell Central. This an opportunity for staff, parents, and community members to interact with Board of Education members in an informal setting to ask questions and provide input. Brownies and refreshments will be provided.

Please join us for Brownies with the Board.

Jan. 23, 2020, 5:30 - 6:15 PM
FHSD Administration Building, Board Room
4545 Central School Road, St. Charles, MO

FHSD Preschool Registration



Preschool students having fun working on fine motor skills

FHSD Preschool helps children develop a strong educational foundation built on good character that promotes independence, appreciation for diversity, a healthy self-concept, and positive socialization skills.

Registration for the 2020-21 will be held on:
■ January 21-27, 2020, from 6:00 - 7:30 PM
Families currently enrolled and FHSD Employees
■ January 28, 2020, from 6:00 - 7:30 PM
New FHSD Families

For more information, visit our website at:
<http://tinyurl.com/FHSDPreschoolReg>.

FHSD Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER	NOVEMBER	NOVEMBER	NOVEMBER	NOVEMBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	DECEMBER
5	5	12	13	21	27-29	11	19
Teacher PD Day - No School	Family Learning Series - College Funding	Senior PALS - Iron Chef	FHSD Mobile Market	Board of Education Meeting	Thanksgiving Break	FHSD Mobile Market	Board of Education Meeting