

Local Schools



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Southwest Elementary Students Earn Positive Office Referral Awards

DECEMBER 13TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

Southwest Elementary Students Earn Positive Office Referral Awards

Dexter, Missouri - Southwest Elementary honored Kindergarten students with Positive Office Referral certificates.

This award was presented to students who consistently showed the 3R's RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, and READY TO LEARN.

Each student received a certificate and a FREE Taco from Taco Bell.

Front row from left to right Paisley Stinson, Emery Rice, Sariah Robinett, Makenzie Howard, and Makenly Garner.

Back row from left to right Laurel Miller, Liam Brotz, Carter Powell, Levi Juden, Harrison Scism, and Vivian Fowler.

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Middle School Teacher Honored Regionally by McDonald's

DECEMBER 13TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

Middle School Teacher Honored Regionally by McDonald's

A Poplar Bluff Middle School teacher was among a shortlist of area educators out of 724 total nominations to be selected in the second annual McDonald's Outstanding Educator program.

Aleanna Moore, who presently teaches fourth grade math, was reportedly one of nine regional honorees including a single grand prize winner.

"We're excited to recognize those who go above and beyond for our students through the Outstanding Educator awards," stated local McDonald's owner/operator Shannon Davis in a press release. "Our teachers are constantly adapting to whatever is thrown at them, while making sure the youth in our communities succeed!"

Moore has served at the Middle School for the past five years, before which she was employed at Oak Grove and Lake Road Elementary, respectively. Her tenure in public education began in 2008 in the North St. Francois County School District, teaching grade four the entire time

Her colleague, Kendra McLevain, nominated her last month when submissions were being solicited via Facebook. "She is the most dedicated teacher I know," McLevain wrote in part. "She is kind, compassionate, and caring and always puts her students' needs

first. She goes the extra mile for each and every student.”

McLevain elaborated that Moore is a “helpful and inspiring soul” and it is universally recognized among her co-workers. In fact, Moore was named the Middle School Teacher of the Year by her peers in 2018.

At the end of the month, Moore will receive a \$100 Visa gift card, which she said she plans to use toward classroom headphone sets, a ‘best teacher ever’ coffee mug, and 25 free McDonald’s coupons to give out to students at her discretion.

According to Amanda Campbell, who handles the public relations for McDonald’s locally, Davis “loves recognizing educators” and plans to continue the contest for years to come. In addition to a Poplar Bluff location, Davis owns a total of 18 McDonald’s restaurants throughout the region.

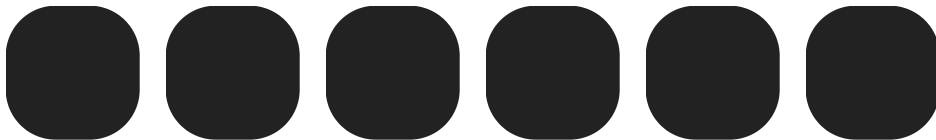
Pictured: Middle School teacher Aleanna Moore (right), a 2021 McDonald’s Outstanding Educator, poses with her pod-mate, Kendra McLevain, in the fourth grade wing.

Photo and article by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Chess Club Takes Off Among Poplar Bluff Middle Schoolers

DECEMBER 13TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

Chess Club Takes Off Among Poplar Bluff Middle Schoolers

About 100 students signed up for the opening day of Chess Club at the Poplar Bluff Middle School, immediately placing the after-school group next to Junior Beta as the upper elementary's most active.

"I didn't know chess is this popular," fifth grader Elan Hocke commented. Elan previously was a member of a small community club, but since he no longer has the time after riding the bus home, he said he usually just plays chess alone

When Principal Dr. Josh Teeter took over at the Middle School last year, he had plans to launch a club, but COVID-19 protocols prevented it. He also attempted to start one in his former post at Junior High, but said he was never able to put in the time necessary to promote it, plus he was contending with other interests like gaming.

"My goal for this whole thing, you know, if I ruled the world, would be to turn this into an elective class," Teeter said. "Like sports, it gives kids another outlet.

"I struggled in math in Middle School, but no one could beat me at chess," continued Teeter, "so I knew I had brainpower."

The Middle School purchased 30 chessboard sets with instructions included from Wholesale Chess, and borrowed 10 more from another campus. Several students brought their own boards as well.

For the inaugural meeting this month, students who already knew how to play were paired with those who did not. Going forward, Teeter said the format would operate much like class in that there will be whole group as well as individual instruction. Tournament teams may emerge if enough students become serious.

The activity was so well-attended that it already has been divided into two weekly sessions instead of one, with multiple teacher chaperones. Fourth grade meets in the cafeteria from 3-4:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, and grades five and six gather on Thursdays.

“Chess is what smart people do,” Teeter stated. “The kids don’t know this yet. They just think it’s fun.”

According to the principal, there are more possible variations in the first 20 moves of chess than atoms in the observable universe. Students who play for just one hour per week can improve their academic outcomes by 10 percent, he went on, and even higher when they compete at the tournament level.

Teeter noted on the permission slips to parents and guardians that chess could improve a child’s social-emotional development, cognitive abilities, communication skills and strategic planning.

Having played since he was 12 and competitively by age 14, Teeter was one of the founding members of the community chess club earlier this spring alongside Junior High math teacher Brett Russell, and an educator from Westwood Baptist Academy.

With a stroke of luck, Dane Mattson, a grandmaster from Minnesota now residing with his wife in the Doniphan area, began participating with the group. Teeter hopes to invite Mattson, who is employed by Chess.com, to serve as a guest speaker for the students in the future.

Pictured: Fourth graders Baylee Ward and Elijah Mohr of Madison Copeland’s class contemplate the ending sequence of a chess game.

Photo and article by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Bryson Hill Earns Positive Office Referral

DECEMBER 09TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

Bryson Hill Earns Positive Office Referral

Dexter, Missouri - Southwest Elementary honored Bryson Hill with a Positive Office Referral certificate. He is in the first grade at Dexter.

This award was presented to students who consistently showed the 3R's RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, and READY TO LEARN.

Each student received a certificate and a FREE Taco from Taco Bell.

Pictured is Bryson Hill.

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PBHS Students to Sing with All-State Choir, Compete in Sight-Singing Bee

DECEMBER 07TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

PBHS Students to Sing with All-State Choir, Compete in Sight-Singing Bee

Poplar Bluff, MO - Four Poplar Bluff High School choral students have been selected for the All-State Choir, one of whom has further qualified to compete statewide in the Sight-Singing Bee.

Bralin Duckett, a tenor, and soprano Emma Harris will perform with the choir in January during the Missouri Music Educators Association conference at Osage Beach, while Christian Redding, a tenor, and alto Emma Tinsley will serve as alternates.

In addition, Emma Harris achieved one of the highest sight-singing scores in the state, allowing her to vie in the Missouri Choral Directors Association-sponsored Sight-Singing Bee at the same event.

Out of nine PBHS juniors and seniors who tried out for All-State, nearly half advanced during the All-District Choir rehearsal in November in Cape Girardeau. Emma Harris went on to display her “high level of musicianship” and “well-developed ear” in a subsequent sight-singing audition, according to Joshua Allen, director of vocal music.

"Sight-singing is reading and singing a musical passage at first sight," Allen explained. "Students have 20 seconds to prepare from the time they first see the piece."

Pictured: PBHS Choir students (left to right) Bralin Duckett, Emma Harris, Emma Tinsley and Christian Redding were selected for the All-State Choir during a recent audition at Cape Central High School.

Article and photo by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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