

# The Anchor

The Clayton School District Newsletter



Fall/Winter 2023

Herma Simmons Elementary School

Clayton Middle School

Clayton High School

*Preparing Students for Present and Future Opportunities*

# CLAYTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of the Board of Education

Mr. Koutsogiannis, Superintendent



Dear Clayton Community:

Anyone who knows me knows that I'm a huge football fan. I love everything about the game. As I write this message, we are a week out from the Superbowl, an event that I, like many, are eagerly awaiting. The Superbowl is the culmination of months of planning, of preparing, of shifting strategies. It's the reward for coaches and teams who did whatever it took to win. Making it to the Superbowl

is not an easy feat, but it's a challenge that every coach and player willingly accepts and what brings them back to the field day after day.

So why am I talking football? In some ways, it seems that we are facing our own Superbowl challenge. Almost every week a new report surfaces detailing the impact of the pandemic on our schools. Most offer statistics measuring the "before and after" scores, accompanied by graphs that show significant declines in reading and math. Across the country, educational leaders are taking stock of the pandemic's impact on their classrooms, as we are at Clayton. I speak to other Superintendents weekly, and this is a constant topic. We all agree that we have a significant hurdle ahead of us and that our educational game plan will determine how successful we are in moving beyond the pandemic. (Continued on next page.)



**Herma Simmons Elementary**



**Clayton Middle School**



**Clayton High School**

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# DISTRICT NEWS AND EVENTS

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## Superintendent's Letter to the Community (continued)

(Continued from previous page) You may have heard newscasters call today's students the "pandemic kids." I'm bothered by that term. It implies that somehow our students are forever changed by the last three years, that they are destined to stand apart from other students who have passed through our halls. I'm confident that will not be the reality in our district. We began the recovery process the moment our schools reopened; closing the pandemic gap and making significant strides forward is our main priority.

Our path to success requires that we examine our practices and shift strategies if needed. With that in mind, we are designing new programs and reconfiguring existing ones. We are offering after school tutoring at all three schools as well as free, after school learning programs at Herma Simmons and Clayton Middle School. Across our district, our counselors are leading classes that address student anxiety and stress. We are investing in technology and print resources to ensure that we have the best available in our classrooms.

It goes without saying that our recovery will not be instantaneous. It will take time and hard work. As we undertake this challenge, I ask that you see yourself as a vital member of our team by supporting our efforts at home. I ask that your students attend school daily, arrive on time, and have their homework completed. I encourage you to enroll your students in our afterschool programs that are staffed by certified teachers. We are facing significant challenges in education and there is no time to waste, no time for excuses. We have a Superbowl to win.

Follow this link to view our  
2022-2023 district calendars.

[https://claytonps.org/  
calendar-events/](https://claytonps.org/calendar-events/)

# DISTRICT NEWS AND EVENTS

## *Haupt Field Stadium Renovation Project*

The Clayton School District is excited to announce that the Haupt Field Stadium Renovation project is underway. Renovations will include ADA accessible bleachers, an all-purpose turf field, a new stadium parking lot, and a secondary fan entrance off of New Street. Estimated completion time for the project is June 2, 2023. We are proud to be able to provide our teams and community with a field and stadium that is representative of our outstanding athletic programs.



# CLAYTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Herma Simmons Elementary School**

**Mr. Scott Uribe, Principal**

## Message from Mr. Uribe:

After a fun and restful summer break, our students and staff returned on Tuesday, September 6, 2022, for another year of learning and growing at Herma S. Simmons Elementary School. Fall is a wonderful time for us as educators because it allows us to develop new goals, build new relationships, and embark on new challenges. The goals this year will indeed highlight academic, social and emotional learning. While improving student achievement is of tremendous importance to our mission, we know it is essential to focus on the social and emotional needs of our students as well. We are so fortunate to have such a supportive community and school team who truly value all students and encourage them as they reach their dreams and goals.

Whether it is the Week of Respect, the Scholastic Book Fair, our harvest and winter celebrations, our winter concerts or any day at Simmons Elementary School, it is our wonderful students that shine through and make each day a remarkable experience. And it is our students who will be prepared to face the world armed with knowledge, skills and courage they will need. Working together this year, we will continue to make Herma S. Simmons Elementary School a place where all our students strive for *Nothing Short of Excellence!*



Mr. Uribe  
Principal



Simmons Teacher of the Year  
Mrs. Amanda Datz



Preschool Family Engagement Night

## ADMINISTRATION

**Mr. Scott Uribe, Principal**

**Ms. Taryn Simmons, Assistant Principal**

**Ms. Tanya Clark, District Supervisor, Curriculum and Instruction**

**Mr. Greg Esposito, CST Supervisor**

**Ms. Alicia Fragoso, Early Childhood Supervisor**

**Mr. Joe Valentino, District Supervisor of Guidance**

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# SIMMONS NEWS AND EVENTS

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Preschool Community Engagement Project Invites Families into the Classroom.

**M**s. Alicia Fragoso, Early Childhood Supervisor, coordinated and facilitated a Family Engagement Event in November. For this first event, Preschool families were invited in to construct fall crafts



and decorate cookies with their teachers. Families were able to spend time in their child's classroom making leaf mosaics, fall sensory bottles, and salt leaf paintings. The night was a huge success and the preschool staff is looking forward to our next event.



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# SIMMONS NEWS AND EVENTS

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## Fall Celebrations at Simmons



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# SIMMONS NEWS AND EVENTS

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## Winter Concert



# CLAYTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Clayton Middle School**

**Mr. Marvin Tucker, Principal**

**Message from Mr. Tucker:**

Students and teachers seemed to have picked up where we left off last school year with many academic initiatives and exciting events! Our last school year culminated with a middle school field day at the JCC in Medford. A splash park with waterslides, a petting zoo, outdoor games and activities were in abundance at JCC. It was a great time to enjoy food and fun with friends and a great way to end the school year!

This year, we have continued an important academic initiative, which is to improve our test scores. Coming out of the "Covid Years" we need to show progress in Math and Language Arts. Our "Boost Classes" are designed to give students that extra boost they need in either subject. We have also implemented initiatives that focus on enhancing literacy skills by augmenting our resources and increasing reading opportunities for our students.

This school year has moved along quickly. It's like the old saying, "Time flies when you are having fun!" Fun is learning and building relationships here at Clayton Middle School. We had a large turnout for Back to School Night, as usual. Our pep rallies, football games and themed Spirit Week brought a lot of excitement and culminated with the Fall Festival Dance. We also can't forget about Fright Night, during which our community participates in costumes and enjoys tasty treats!

November and December were just as exciting. Many students earned "virtual tickets" for showing acts of respect, responsibility and integrity throughout the school day. Students who used their tickets to "purchase" a movie in the Performing Arts Center were able to bring a friend. Many students like this incentive, which takes place at the end of the school day. Popcorn and other snacks are also provided. The VIP luncheon is another major incentive and an exciting reward for these students who display Clayton Middle School's overarching characteristics of respect, responsibility and integrity. These students are also able to bring a friend and get the "VIP" treatment from several staff members who serve the students a special lunch in another room outside of the cafeteria during their lunch period. Permanent smiles appear to be on the students' faces for the remainder of the school day during these events. To end 2022, Clayton Middle School's Band and Choir delivered a tremendous performance at our Winter Concert. It was refreshing to see our young students displaying their talents after months of practicing for this event! Our students' dedication provided us with great entertainment. We are a very proud "bunch" here at Clayton!

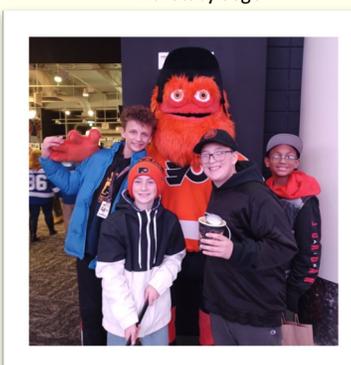


Mr. Tucker



CMS Teacher of the Year

Ms. Stacy Seger



Flyers Game with the Student Connection Center

## ADMINISTRATION

**Mr. Marvin Tucker, Principal**

**Mr. Wayne Copeland, 21st Century**

**Mr. Matthew Slater, Assistant Principal**

**Program Director**

**Ms. Tanya Clark, District Supervisor, Curriculum and Instruction**

**Ms. Susan Verrico, Literacy Specialist**

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# CLAYTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

## NEWS AND EVENTS

Clayton Middle School's National Junior Honor Society inducted new members in January. Congratulations to all members for their outstanding work.



Our MS ELA teachers shared their love of reading by surprising their students with a holiday gift bag that included a book chosen especially for them. Along with the book, students received pencils, erasers, bookmarks, and candy.



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# CLAYTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

## 21ST CENTURY LEADER'S PROGRAM

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### 21st Century LEADERS Program Offers New STEAM Classes and Homework Help

The 21ST Century LEADERS program is a free after-school STEAM program open to all middle school students. It runs from 2:15 to 5:30 Monday through Friday. Free bussing home is provided. This year's classes are *Arts and Sculpture, Legos, Robotics, Aquaponic Gardening, Cooking, Games and Leadership, Photography, Script Writing, Mind and Body, Debate, Etiquette, Literacy Skills, and Fitness*. Field trips are also part of the program. In December, students travelled to the planetarium at Rowan University where they learned about our solar system. In addition, students hear presentations from guest speakers in the STEAM field. Students also receive daily homework help from certified teachers. Applications are accepted year round, as long as space is available, and can be picked up at the middle school office.



*Art and Sculpture, Aquaponic Gardening, and Focus on Fitness* are just some of the fun STEAM classes.

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# CLAYTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

## AROUND OUR SCHOOL

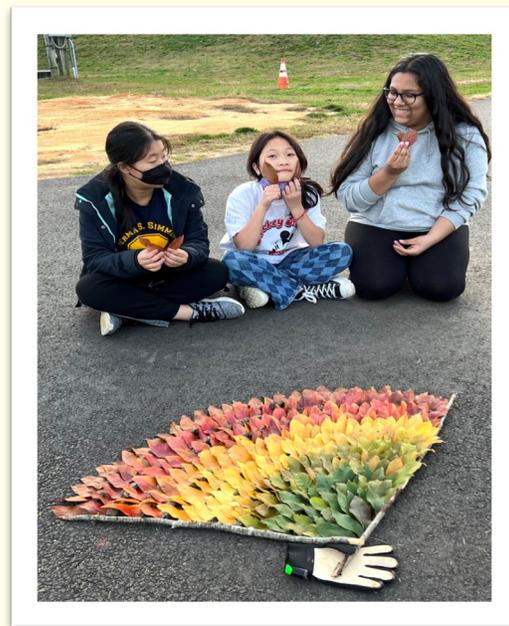
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**2 Baby Boys + 1 Baby Girl = Our 3 newest Middle School Clippers!**

**Congratulations to Math Teachers Ms. Caltabiano, Ms. Harrington, and Ms. Vierling!**

**The Student Connection Center sponsored a trip to see the Flyers.**



**21st Century Leader's Program**

**Arts and Sculpture Project**



# CLAYTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Clayton High School**

**Mr. Joe Visalli, Principal**

Message from Mr. Visalli:

As we began the 2022-23 school, returning to normalcy for all our students and staff was highly anticipated. One of the first events we held was Back to School Night, where we welcomed parents back into our building.

We were able to continue the tradition of the National Honor Society Induction ceremony. This year's event was held in our Performing Arts Center in the evening with parents and inductees.

Student Council sponsored many fall activities with one of the highlights being Homecoming week.

Mr. Scott Garvin, our 5th year choir teacher is this year's High School Teacher of the Year. Mr. Garvin has demonstrated his leadership by serving as our musical director for the HS musicals and this year's fall drama. We are very proud to have him represent the high school as Teacher of the Year.

Looking to the future, plans are underway for our elective showcase, Freshmen Orientation night and our Junior College planning nights. These events are important parts of the future for students and parents.

As the weather turns warmer, we are looking forward to wrapping up a successful 2022-23 school year.



Mr. Visalli  
Principal



High School Teacher of the Year  
Mr. Scott Garvin



Unified PE

## ADMINISTRATION

**Mr. Joe Visalli, Principal**

**Mr. Dan Antonelli, Assistant Principal  
and Athletic Director**

**Ms. Tanya Clark, District Supervisor,  
Curriculum and Instruction**

**Mr. Joe Valentino, District Supervisor of  
Guidance**

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# CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

## NEWS AND EVENTS

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### Unified PE Class and Delsea High School Participate in Unified Club

The Unified PE class joined up with Delsea for a fall Unified Club. Students met at Clayton and Delsea to participate in a variety of activities, including arts and crafts, cookie decorating, and relays. In

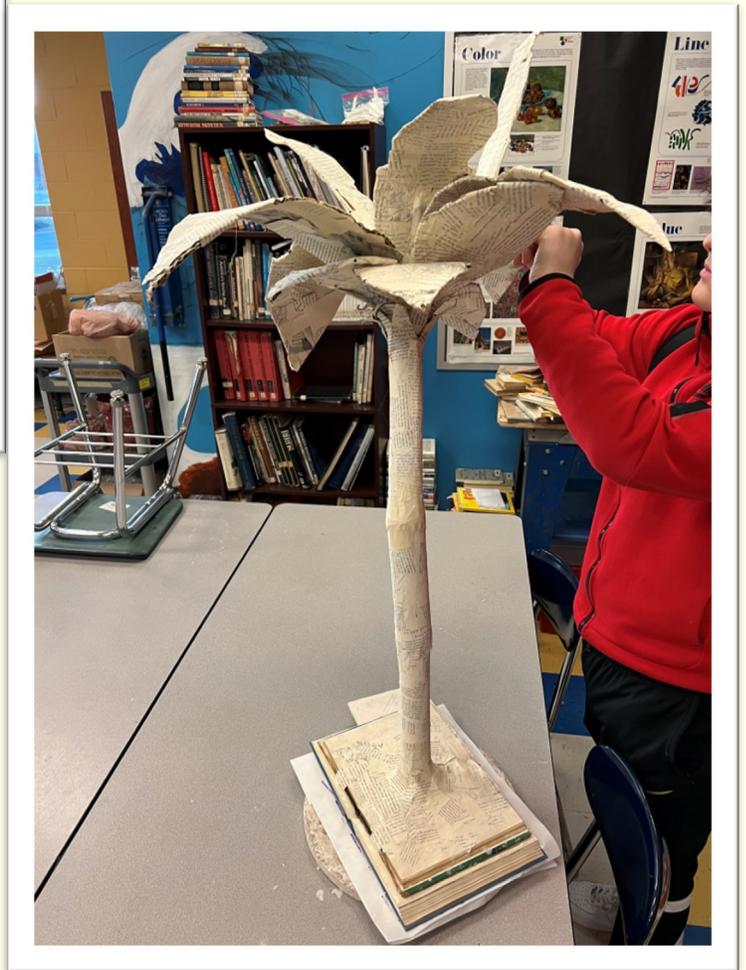
addition, Ms. Moore conducted a bowling lesson. Students had a great time meeting new friends and engaging in new activities.



# CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

## SPOTLIGHT ON ART I THROUGH ART IV

*Mr. Koreck's classes completed projects in clay and paper mâché using recycled materials*



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# CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

## FALL/WINTER ATHLETICS

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**Congratulations to our Seniors who came back to win in overtime over Pitman on Thanksgiving Day .**

**Girls' Soccer  
Tri-County Classic  
Champions**



**Indoor Track**

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# CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

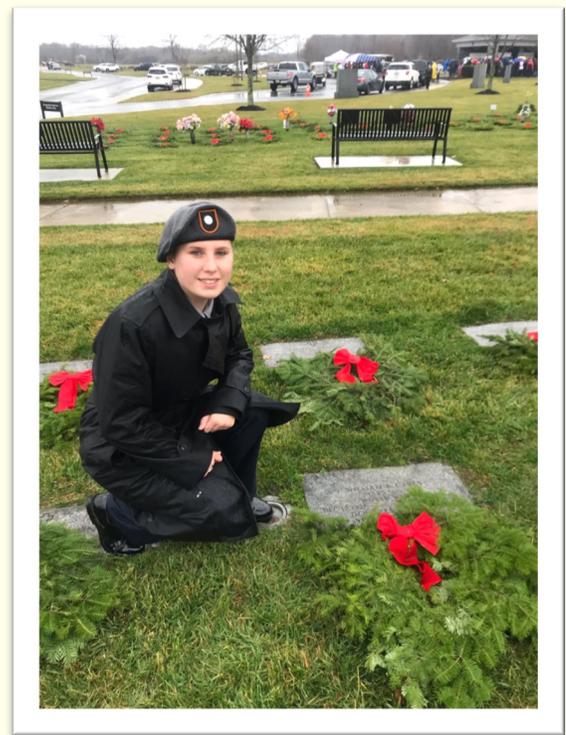
## JROTC

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Our JROTC cadets were involved in multiple activities this fall. The program started off the year with various staff meetings and the selection of new roles. Jenna Bicking was selected to uphold the position of Battalion Commander. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, the cadets conducted a Veteran's Day Ceremony, during which multiple cadets spoke. The guest speaker was Major Smedley. Veterans in attendance were thankful for the ceremony. They gathered later to share stories in the JROTC room, while enjoying donuts and coffee. The cadets also participated in the Vineland Christmas parade on November 26<sup>th</sup>, where they marched behind the color guard singing cadences. They also participated in Clayton's Christmas parade on December 10<sup>th</sup>. This is an eagerly anticipated event, as the cadets always look forward to proudly marching through their hometown. Lastly, the cadets were involved in the annual "Wreath of Remembrance" at Gloucester County Veterans' Cemetery. Though the weather was cold, windy, and rainy, the cadets pushed through and did their best helping out. It turned out to be a successful day.



**Vineland Christmas Parade**



**Wreath of Remembrance**



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# CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

## DRAMA ACTIVITIES

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### *Winter Production of CLUE*



### The Cast

*Wadsworth – William Pedrick*  
*Miss Scarlet – Emilia Karpziel*  
*Mrs. Peacock – Abigail Mathis*  
*Mrs. White – Greta Peters*  
*Colonel Mustard – Lorenzo Valles*  
*Professor Plum – Liz Hampton*  
*Mr. Green – Briel Davis-McCoy*  
*Mr. Boddy – Elijah Ortiz*

*Yvette-Mae Didonato*  
*The Cop – Nathan Bollinger*  
*The Cook – Jaide Brown*  
*The Motorist – Brynne Contravo*

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# CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

## FALL/WINTER ATHLETICS

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### Bowling Team Wins Tri-County Championship

The Bowling Team finished with a 10-1 record, clinching the number one spot in their division and conference. It was an unexpected finish because the Clippers lost 4 of 5 varsity bowlers who graduated last year. In the last match of the regular season, the team dominated Gloucester 4-0. The first game of the match was the most successful. Michael Manera rolled a near perfect game with a 280, his career high and the new school record. Trailing closely was Junior Isaac Taylor with his career high of 234.

Moving on, the Clippers participated in a mainly group 3 school tournament, where they rolled a season high 2900 set. After the first game, they were in 5th place out of 6th. They made a huge jump to second place over the next two games. They overtook Brick Township and progressed to the finals, where they were lined up against Camden Tech. The Clippers earned a 2nd place trophy facing Camden Tech, ranked 7th in the state and Brick Township, ranked 8th.

They continued their hot streak by winning the Tri-County Championship on January 31, during which Michael Manera scored a perfect 300 game. Congratulations to all the team members and their coach, Mrs. Maxwell.

Best wishes to the Girl's team as they move on to the sectionals.



**Congratulations to Michael Manera for bowling a perfect 300 game!**



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# CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

## NEWS AND EVENTS

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### **National Honor Society 2022-2023**

Congratulations to all National Honor Society members and inductees.



**Jordyn Jones, Arianna DeVilme, Mae DiDonato, and Aiden Gillies participated in the University of Pennsylvania Honor Band Extravaganza.**

### **CHS Marching Band**



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# CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

## AROUND OUR SCHOOL

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**Mr. Koreck and Mr. Garvin on the set of Clue. (Set design by Mr. Shugarts)**



**High School teachers celebrate Spirit Week.**



**Working together to create a masterpiece in Art class**