



# THE CHARGER

## Board takes next step to close MHES

AJ Grutsch | editor in chief

The USD 329 school board voted 5-1 in a special meeting last week to hold a public hearing over closing Maple Hill Elementary. It's the next step in a plan to close the Maple Hill building for the next school year.

Listen to full audio of the special board meeting at [whscharger.com](https://whscharger.com).

The board also voted to move students from Maple Hill Elementary to Alma. The consolidation would take place at the end of the 2022-2023 school year.

The board cited a need to consolidate to address issues with the operating budget in the future, although members did express concern that a potential loss of students from some towns could affect finances negatively in the long run.

The board looked at several options for configuration next year, including moving 6-8 to Alma and putting some elementary students in Paxico.

Board member Don Frank also proposed an amendment to close Paxico junior high after next year, moving the junior high to Alma for the 2024-2025 school year and creating a K-12 campus. "I'd like to finally get this done and move down the road," Frank said. Frank also cited that potential savings from closing buildings shouldn't be unnecessarily delayed.

Although the board discussed that a K-12 campus is the likely next step, they were not prepared to take that action during the meeting. "I do believe a K-12 here is what's best for our district. I don't favor any of our towns over students in our district," board member Justin Frank said.

Board member Tony Conrad did express some concern over a K-12 campus as an ultimate goal. "We're turning down growth of any kind in our district and that's just unacceptable."

Closing Maple Hill would save an estimated \$250,000 for the district, which could be used to maintain current facilities. Closing Paxico could also save more than \$200,000.

Maple Hill Elementary teacher Jennifer Mumpower expressed a mix of emotions about the decision. "I am definitely feeling sad because I have loved teaching in this community and being a part of the outstanding family, but I also understand the financial reasons behind the decision," Mumpower said. "I have loved the atmosphere and the culture that has been built here. It is unlike any other setting I have worked in. It has also been an absolute blessing for me to be able to live in this community and work so close to home for all these years. I will for sure miss my short commute."

## END OF THE ROAD



Senior Eli Oliver puts up a shot against St. Marys in the sub-state semifinal Thursday evening. The Chargers led early, but lost 53-65. St. Marys defeated Lyndon Saturday to head to state. Photo by AJ Grutsch.

### Boys basketball ends season in sub-state semifinal

Payton Wurtz | staff writer

The boys basketball team ended its campaign Thursday night against the St. Marys Bears, losing 53-65.

The Chargers ended the season going 15-7. "The guys played really hard, obviously didn't come out the way we wanted it to, but they gave it their all," coach Christian Ulsaker said.

This is Ulsaker's first time graduating seniors he's had since freshman year.

"I'm just really proud of

those boys and how hard they worked. A lot of ups and downs this year, a lot of learning experiences we went through this year. It was good to see them grow and I'm really excited to see this next group of starters," Ulsaker said.

Senior Ryan Schutter spent quite a bit of time in the public eye this season, being featured multiple times on social media accounts like Sports in Kansas for his dunks.

"I was just kind of star struck," Schutter said about ending his high school career. "I didn't realize it was over until we walked off the court and it kind of hit me."

The Chargers will be graduating seniors Eli

Oliver, Ryan Schutter, Logan Clark, Lanson Parry, Maverick Havenstein, Bryton Reves and Jacob Meseke.

"This was my first four year group under myself, and I just want to say thank you for their dedication and time. They put in a lot of it. If I want to go back quite some time it's probably one of the highest winning percentages and highest accolades. A second place state finish, sub state runner up to St. Marys, and 15 wins in this season," Ulsaker said.

The varsity team will only return one starter from this year, junior Zach Frank.

"I think we need to get in the gym and get a lot of shots up so we can replace a lot of key roles," Frank said.

## FFA competes in veterinary science

Baylie Tharman | staff writer

The WHS Vet Science team competed at Prairie View High School last Thursday. They had an A-team and a B-team competing. "The A team did average and the B team got 2nd," FFA adviser Danny Davis said.

Multiple team members placed individually. Mikayla Edds placed 5th overall, Kendra Conrad placed 8th, Karsten Breiner placed 10th, David Webb placed 13th and Karsyn Schoffner placed 26th.

The competitors had to take several tests over different areas of vet science. "You have to take a 50-question general knowledge test, you have to do a math practicum where they ask you several different math problems,



Aubrey Imthurn, Karsyn Schoffner, David Webb, Dalton Debler, Karsten Breiner, Kendra Conrad, Grady Perrin and Mikayla Edds pose after competing at Pretty Prairie.

and conversions that vets have to deal with. There's a lot of identifications of different breeds like cattle, horses, dogs, cats, and parrots. There's also a test over

equipment that vets have to use, syringes, medications and equipment that go into vet practice," Davis said.

## 3 win regional journalism competitions

staff reports

Three students claimed championships in the Kansas Scholastic Press Association regional competition last month.

Senior AJ Grutsch placed first in cutline writing, senior Jacob Meseke placed first in yearbook sports writing and junior Sophia Castillo placed first in feature writing.

The contests, which were conducted online, required students to use information and interviews to write stories on a short deadline.

The Charger staff placed eight other entries as well. Entries that placed in the top six qualified for the state competition in May.

Five Chargers placed at state last year, including two champions. Grutsch will get a chance to defend last year's win in review writing.

Adviser Brendan Praeger said the Charger staff usually has success in the KSPA competitions. "I think our weekly publication schedule prepares them to write on a short deadline, and it also means that each student has published more stories than a lot of their competitors at this point of the year. Eight of our 11 placers are first-year journalism students, so I think they will continue to improve as well."

### 2023 KSPA REGIONAL JOURNALISM RESULTS

- Jacob Meseke: 1st — Yearbook Sports
- Sophia Castillo: 1st — Feature Writing
- AJ Grutsch: 1st — Cutline Writing
- Ava Meinhardt: 2nd — Feature Writing
- Heather Baker: 2nd — News Writing
- AJ Grutsch: 2nd — Review Writing
- Sophia Castillo: 3rd — Copy Editing
- Payton Wurtz: 3rd — Cutline Writing
- Payton Wurtz: 3rd — Editorial Writing
- Heather Baker: 5th — Copy Editing
- Ava Meinhardt: 5th — News Writing

### THE CHARGER

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Heather Baker  
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Ava Meinhardt  
Baylie Tharman  
Payton Wurtz

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"The mission of the Charger newspaper and related media is to inform the students and school community about relevant issues in a fair, accurate and timely manner, to advocate for all students and serve as an open forum for student free speech."

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