



# Why Wait to be Great?

For the parents, students, staff, and community of Clay Middle School

# CLAY NATION NEWS

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Clay Nation,

**“DON'T  
COUNT THE DAYS;  
MAKE THE DAYS  
COUNT.”**

I hope that each of you had an opportunity to rest, relax and recharge with your children and families over spring break. Hopefully you had time to enjoy some March Madness. As you can imagine since arriving back from spring break this month as been very busy with several things going on at school. We have spring sports well underway, spring concerts coming, our 8th grade performing arts trip to Cincinnati, Ohio coming up, we had **Clay's Got Talent** this past Friday after school where we had great participation from our students and

staff and some really incredible talents on display. This talent show has been created, organized and ran by our SRA (Student Representative Assembly) under the leadership of Mrs. Elizabeth Wegner. These students decided to come up with a talent show fundraiser idea that would allow them to take the proceeds and put them into a redesign of our Clay auditorium main entrance area. This project is known as the 8th Grade Legacy Project. Kudos to our awesome student body and for our amazing teachers and administrators that help mentor our young people into future leaders in our society.

This time of year, reminds us that we are close to the finishing yet another school year. With fourth quarter now well in full swing, we are excited to be heading into the final stretch of school in May. With the Indianapolis 500 approaching soon, our motto will be.... **FINISH STRONG!**

...continued on the next page

### ADMINISTRATION

Todd Crosby, Principal

Catherine Gahl, Assistant Principal

Mark Smith, Assistant Principal

John Corcoran, Athletic/Activities Director





**PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE** *continues...*

We have approximately 4 weeks left to go and a great deal of things still left to complete. We have been ILEARN and state standardized testing these last two weeks. As a staff, we will continue to encourage our students to give their very best each and every day until the end of the school year and continue to try to develop a school culture that our students and staff take pride in so they can live out **THE CLAY WAY**.

**HOW DO WE BUILD THE CLAY CULTURE?**

By Highlighting **GREATNESS**

**Spring Sports**

Softball, baseball and track and field are our spring sports offered at Clay and they are now well underway and our teams are competing at a high level. Our student athletes are working hard this season and representing Clay Middle School with great character and sportsmanship. I would like to take a moment to thank all of our coaches and our athletic director, John Corcoran for all of their support in modeling a winning attitude for our student athletes. I would also like to thank you as parents for all of your support and pride for Clay Middle School. For more information, please feel free to contact our Clay Activities / Athletic Director, Mr. John Corcoran at [jcorcoran@ccs.k12.in.us](mailto:jcorcoran@ccs.k12.in.us) OR visit our new website at [www.ccs.k12.in.us/clm/athletics](http://www.ccs.k12.in.us/clm/athletics).

**ISSMA Competitions**

As a performing arts department, we just completed our ISSMA competition season during the month of March and April. I am proud to announce that it was a very successful couple months with our ISSMA solo and ensemble competitions with band, orchestra and choir. Throughout the competition months, our students have been awarded several gold ratings and gold with distinction ratings as they competed and performed their hearts out. We are very fortunate to have an amazing performing arts department with wonderful directors such as Jeff Frizzi, Gretta Pote, Chris Grifa, and Miranda Susie. These teachers and directors give an enormous amount of time to our students at Clay Middle School so that our school can compete at the highest level in order for all of our performing arts students to achieve at the highest level. **We thank them for all they do!**

**Education is a People Business "GREATNESS TAKES ALL OF US WORKING TOGETHER"**

**Together We Are Better!**

Over the last few months, we have celebrated and recognized the following people for their service.

- **School Safety Week** – Thank you to our school resource officer Greg Dewald
- **National School Counseling Week** – Thank you to our Clay Student Services Department
- **Food Service Appreciation Week** – Thank you to Amy Glover and our Food Services Department.
- **National Library Week** – Thank you to Stephanie Swartzendruber and Carole Fitzgerald for all they do for all students and staff in our Clay Media Center to promote the love of reading and writing.

At Clay, we believe that by showing appreciation to others, it allows us to better understand that it truly takes all of us working together to achieve success. There are a lot of people to thank on a daily basis for all the work they do here at Clay to make sure Clay remains a great school and these are just a few of them.

**March – Disabilities Awareness Week**

During the month of March, we took time to recognize National Disabilities Awareness Week. Our Clay Friendship Circles Program (under the direction of staff members Erin Mayer, Mary Walstrom, Leyla Niese, Emily Flores and Nicole Paolicchi). Our students developed a special week dedicated to various disabilities. We had some activities and information regarding those disabilities and the overall objective was to educate and bring more awareness of various disabilities to everyone in our school, both students and staff.

**Successful Transitions**

As we look to this month we will be welcoming our 5th graders and their families back into our building again for our Spring Open House to continue to increase their exposure to middle school life. This event happened on Wednesday April 19th and we had a great turnout of our future Clay Trojans and their families. This time of year in middle school we really have two different transitions going on (5th -6th grade and 8th – 9th grade). Having said that, we will continue to prepare and transition our eighth graders to Carmel High School. Our 8th graders are preparing for high school and all the changes ahead, and one thing that we will do is continue to encourage them to make the most of each day as they close out their middle school over the next two months. Our 8th grader's middle school experience has definitely been altered through these three years, but I feel they have done an exceptional job



of adjusting, adapting and learning in different ways through the pandemic and for that I could not be prouder of them. As principal, I want our eighth-grade class to look back on their middle school experience with special memories of Clay.

Along with these major transitions occurring, we still have a full schedule of activities for you as parents to take full advantage of this spring. These activities include performing arts concerts, club competitions and our sports teams in action. I hope to see you at some of our events and I cannot stress to each and every one of you enough how much we appreciate all of your support for our school, but for your child's educational success. It is a true partnership between the school and families. THANK YOU!

I challenge all Clay Trojans to **Continue Paving Our Path to GREATNESS** and together we will take Clay Middle School to even greater heights. As principal, I believe it is my position to help provide vision, leadership, oversight, safety and the best instruction to every student that attends Clay Middle School. I truly realize that success cannot be accomplished without an active school community to continue to take Clay Middle School in the direction of continuous success and excellence. I am happy to announce that the Clay Nation is alive and well.

## IMPORTANT MAY DATES

Teacher Appreciation Weeks.....	1-12
8th Grade Perf. Arts Cincinnati Trip.....	5
6, 7, 8 Spring Orchestra Concert .....	9
Late Start .....	10
6, 7, 8 Band Concert.....	11
Clay Dance Marathon .....	12
6, 7 Choir Concert.....	16
8 Choir Concert .....	17
PTO Meeting.....	19
8th Grade Celebration (Clay Middle School Gym) .....	23
Last Student Day.....	25
Teacher Work Day.....	26
National School Principal Day .....	1
Teacher Appreciation Weeks .....	1-12
National Police Week (Thank you Officer VanTreese) .....	15-19



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**Monday**  
Contemporary Ballet A, 4-5pm (ages 5-8/9)  
Beginning Tap, 5-5:30pm  
Contemporary Ballet C, 5:30-7:30pm (ages 12-13-14)

**Tuesday**  
Creative Movement, 12pm (ages 3-5)  
Contemporary Ballet A, 4-5pm  
Intermediate Tap, 5-5:30pm  
Contemporary Ballet C, 5:30-7:30pm

**Wednesday**  
Creative Movement, 12pm  
Contemporary Ballet A, 4-5pm  
Beginning Tap, 5-5:30pm  
Contemporary Ballet C, 5:30-7:30pm

**Thursday**  
Creative Movement, 12pm  
Contemporary Ballet B, 4-5pm  
Intermediate Tap, 5-5:30pm  
Contemporary Ballet C, 5:30-7:30pm

**Friday**  
Boys' Combo Class with Tricks, 5-6pm (ages 8-14)

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## IMPORTANT REMINDER

**ILEARN Testing** will take place on the following dates:  
**April 18, April 20, April 24, April 26, April 28 and May 2.**

Please be sure your student attends school and arrives on time on these days.

We ask that you please work around these dates when scheduling appointments for your student.

Thank you.



## FOOD SERVICES IS HIRING!

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## FROM THE CAFETERIA

It's hard to believe the end of the 2022-23 school year is just around the corner! Here are a couple of reminders so we can head into the last few weeks of school strong!

1. PLEASE BE SURE YOUR STUDENT HAS THEIR STUDENT ID WITH THEM EVERY DAY! It is extremely important to get them into the habit of having their ID with them at all times as Student IDs will be required for entry to more and more rooms/buildings/activities as time goes on. Right now, in our cafeteria students with their ID may go through the serving lines first and students without IDs go through the serving lines last. It's amazing how much faster we can get the students through the lines when they can scan their ID card instead of them entering their ID number on our key pads or especially when they have to spell their last name for us. If your student has lost their ID, they can be replaced in our media center for a \$5 charge. Any help you can give will be greatly appreciated!
2. PLEASE USE EZSCHOOLPAY.COM TO ADD FUNDS TO YOUR STUDENTS LUNCH ACCOUNT WHENEVER POSSIBLE! We are trying to avoid handling cash as much as possible. If you don't have an EZSchoolPay account set up, you can access the link on the school website. All you need is your students ID number and it only takes a couple of minutes to complete.
3. ARE YOU INTERESTED IN WORKING FOR CCS FOOD SERVICE? We currently have close to a dozen openings at various sites. Please check the CCS website to find out which schools have open positions (I know Clay has 2). You can apply online!

Thanks so much and as always, please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns!

Amy Glover, Café Manager  
317-844-7251 x6755 | aglover@ccs.k12.in.us



Please join  
me today in  
thanking our  
amazing Clay  
Administrative  
Assistants.

## HAPPY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS APPRECIATION DAY!



We are so lucky to have these wonderful people working with our students and staff each day. Thank you for all you do for Clay!

### Thank You:

Mrs. Jen Pletcher  
Mrs. Holly Baker-Banninga  
Mrs. Michelle Hagemann  
Mrs. Celeste Rodriguez  
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Indiana's 7th and 8th grade students can apply for the 21st Century Scholars Program if their families meet the eligibility guidelines. All students must apply by June 30 of their 8th grade year. Please visit <http://scholars.in.gov/> to learn more and apply!

**If you have any questions please contact Gina Potter, LCSW at [gpotter@ccs.k12.in.us](mailto:gpotter@ccs.k12.in.us).**



**Is your child realizing their potential in math?** Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress show an alarming decline in math scores nationwide<sup>1</sup> – clear evidence of the toll the pandemic has taken on students. But there's plenty of time to turn things around with personalized math instruction at Mathnasium. A customized learning plan will focus on what your child needs to improve their math skills and build their confidence for the rest of the school year! <sup>1</sup>National Assessment of Educational Progress

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## ESSAY CONTEST

Congratulations to the following students for being selected as a Sertoma Essay Contest Classroom winner!

Clay's sixth grade students have been participating in the Sertoma Essay Contest for many years, thanks to Clay's sixth grade Social Studies teachers Mr. Patrick Anderson, Mr. Brian McGuckin, and Mrs. Kristi Myers.

Sertoma International is a service organization, founded in 1912. Sertoma is an acronym for "Service to Mankind". The Sertoma Club of Broad Ripple was chartered in 1958. Current membership is 110 men. The Sertoma Club provides financial support to charitable causes in Central Indiana; conducts programs to promote prevention of hearing loss; and sponsors an annual National Heritage Essay Contest for sixth grade students.

The contest is open to all sixth grade students attending public and private schools in Carmel, Fishers, Zionsville, and northern Indianapolis. Sertoma Club of Broad Ripple has sponsored the National Heritage Essay Contest for over 30 years in the greater Indianapolis area. "What Freedom Means to Me" is the topic students are asked to address in their essay. The hope is that the contest complements teachers' efforts to develop their young students' critical thinking and writing skills. The Sertoma Club believes participation in the National Heritage Essay Contest encourages students to better understand the founding principles of our country and to consider how those principles affect students' lives today.

Teacher	Block 1A	Block 3A	Block 7A	Block 1B	Block 4B
Patrick Anderson Team Justice 6-3	Minh D Christopher C Olivia G	Rachel M Kelly G Ben B	Sofia J Brooke R Cameron C	Angela L Mirjana S Luke Z	Sophia E Lilly C Kate K
Brian McGuckin Team Avengers 6-2	Vihaan I Sara K Helayna W	Reagan E Lauren M Phin R	Charles C Sawyer H Lita P	Fernanda C Wesley D Lila S	Daniel G Cole F Ellie O
Kristi Myers Team Titans 6-1	Adeline K Karis L Oliver W	Charlie E Carolyn N Abby S	Kinsley M Ellie S Madelyn U	Laney A Anite H Grant K	Ada A Ethan M Thea P

## CRU

Meetings: Every Thursday morning at 7:30 in the LGI room.

All are welcome! There will be donuts & drinks. Listen to the announcements and join the remind - text 81010 - @cruclay.

## NEW FAMILIES OF CLAY MIDDLE SCHOOL

If you have not submitted your two proofs of residency (1. A purchase agreement, closing documents, deed, lease, mortgage document, property tax statement, AND 2. A gas or electric utility bill-other utilities are not accepted) please bring in a current copy to the office or scan and email Holly Baker Banninga at [hbakerba@ccs.k12.in.us](mailto:hbakerba@ccs.k12.in.us).

If your student is leaving Carmel Clay Schools at the end of the school year, please email Holly Baker Banninga for an Official Withdrawal Form. Please complete the form, email it back, and we will withdraw your student after the last day of school.



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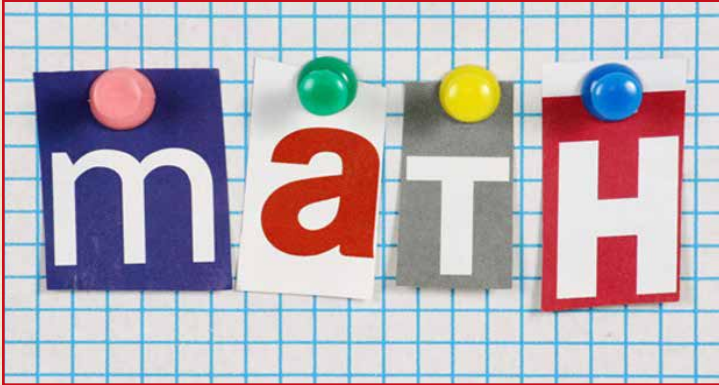
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## MATHLETES

Congratulations to all mathletes who qualified and competed in the State MATHCOUNTS Competition at Purdue University on March 11th. Competitors included 8th graders: Grant Mu, Rebecca Li, Alex Cheng, 7th graders: Rodion Zuban, Jonathan Zhu and 6th graders: Hrishabh Bhowmik and Christoper Cheng. A special congratulations to Hrishabh Bhowmik who placed in the top 16 individuals which qualified him for the countdown round. He placed an amazing 2nd in the countdown round! Great job!



**ERIN CONNELL**  
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## FROM THE PTO

Order deadline for the Clay Spring 2023 Spirt Wear Store is April 24th! We've got Trojans gear, as well as graduation signs for your 8th grader and Carmel High School swag! Orders will be delivered to school the week of May 8th. \*ALL SIGNS MUST BE PICKED UP IN THE FRONT OFFICE BY A PARENT/GUARDIAN. THESE CANNOT GO HOME WITH STUDENTS ON THE BUS. Online store: <https://clayspring23.itemorder.com/>.

## SRA FIELD TRIP

The Clay Student Representative Assembly (SRA) went on a field trip to the Grace Care Center this March. The trip served as the perfect opportunity for students to see how their efforts from their successful canned food drive in the fall are directly impacting families in Hamilton County. While at the center, SRA students took a tour, listened to a presentation about donation and volunteer needs, and participated in a food sorting activity. SRA is comprised of 125 students in grades 6-8. The club is application based and meets monthly throughout the school year. We are proud of our young leaders!



SRA Field Trip to Grace Care Center 2023



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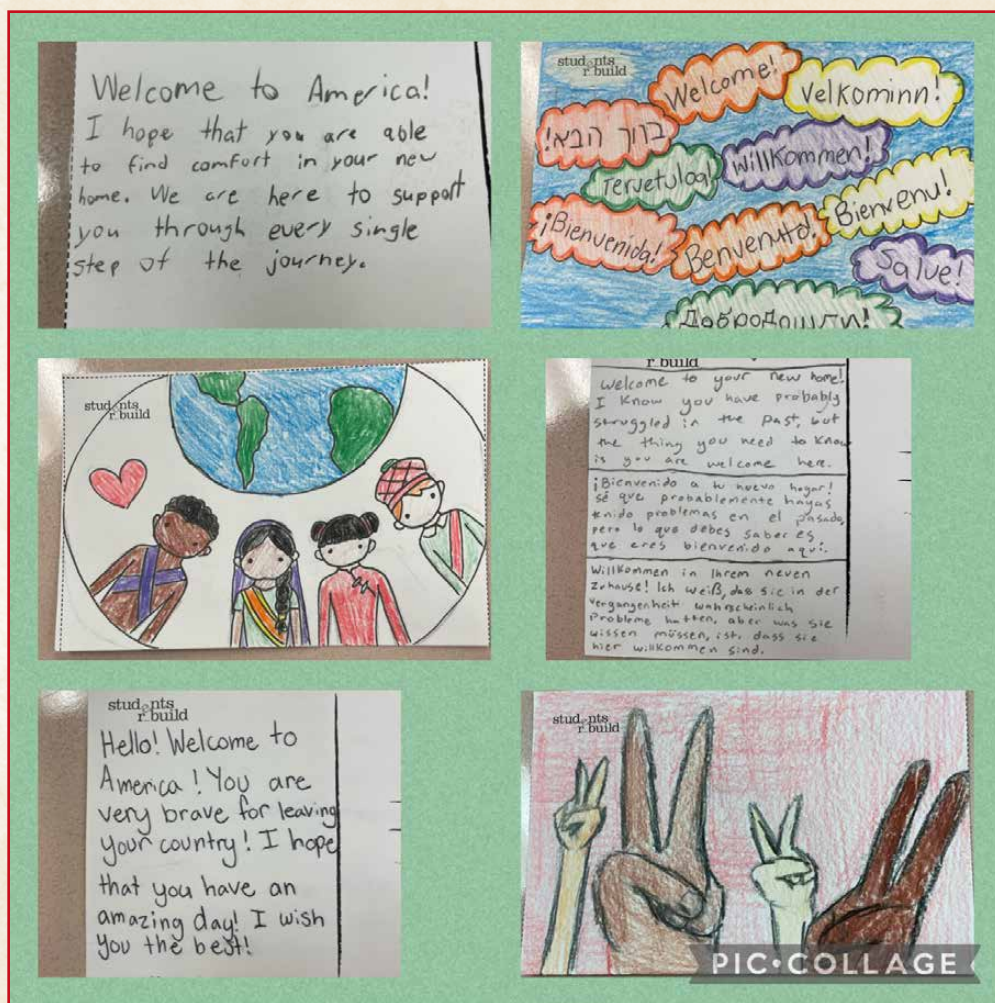


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## STUDENTS REBUILD

Clay AVID and 6th grade Honors Language Arts classes recently partnered up to complete a service project for Students Rebuild, an organization that encourages student participation in hands-on projects with global outcomes. This year's Students Rebuild project focused on the worldwide refugee crisis, and Clay students were challenged to design a postcard for a potential refugee coming to Indiana. Once completed, the postcards were tallied and mailed in-- which generated a \$5 donation for each submission. We are pleased to report that our Clay students were able to raise \$1600 toward refugee aid through their original postcard creations. This activity had curricular ties to community service for AVID and the 6th grade reading of *The Night Diary*, a novel about refugee families during India's 1947 partition. To learn more about the Students Rebuild challenge, go to <https://www.studentsrebuild.org/challenges/refugee>.



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TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

On April 25th Carmel Clay Schools recognized service awards at the school board meeting. Clay Middle School had six staff members recognized for their years of service to Carmel Clay Schools.

Mrs. Leslie Ward.....	Art .....	30 years to CCS
Mrs. Kristi Myers .....	Social Studies .....	30 years to CCS
Mr. Jeff Frizzi .....	Performing Arts (Orchestra) ....	25 years to CCS
Mrs. Liz Wegner .....	Instructional Coach .....	20 years to CCS
Mr. Dan Patane .....	Social Studies .....	20 years to CCS
Mr. Samir Gendy .....	Custodial .....	20 years to CCS
Ms. Gretchen Smiley ....	Science .....	20 years to CCS

## WAYS TO BENEFIT CLAY

**FREE and EASY way to raise money for our school:** By signing up with the following link, Kroger will donate a portion of your shopping trips (when you use your Kroger Rewards card) directly to Clay Middle.

<https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow>

**School code is #RK877 for  
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*Sign up now!*

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SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA**

JANNA HYMES ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Details about our  
**2023-24 SEASON**

available now at

**CarmelSymphony.org**

THE CENTER  
FOR THE  
PERFORMING ARTS





**Only 12 Days Remain  
Every Donation Counts!**

## **2023 RILEY - CLAY DANCE MARATHON**

**FRIDAY – May 12th from 3:25-5:00  
@ Clay Gymnasium**

**DID YOU KNOW?** Clay is trying to break their own national record and state record for a middle school dance marathon across the country.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Last year, Clay raised approximately \$14,182.00 for Riley Children's Hospital and we are looking to break that record this year and help even more Riley children.

**Here is a link that parents can use to register their students:  
(STUDENTS MUST HAVE PERMISSION SLIPS IN BY FRIDAY MAY 12TH ).**

### **HOW DO YOU DONATE?**

Each grade level team has its own link all contributing to the entire school link. This link <https://give.rileykids.org/team/497890> brings you to Clay Middle School's page where you can then click on members and select the grade level team(s) you wish to support.

### **HOW DO YOU REGISTER AS A STUDENT?**

Go to this link to register:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdtAXV3EBvNbzfVv8\\_sFis2CkAiZNYBNT\\_yODS8-tXRIiMhwh/view-form?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdtAXV3EBvNbzfVv8_sFis2CkAiZNYBNT_yODS8-tXRIiMhwh/view-form?usp=sf_link)

Registration form for students to register must be filled out to participate in the event. Students can also pick up a hard copy form in the main office if they choose.



**REMINDER - Donations can also be made to Riley in the Red Riley Box in Clay's main office with cash or checks.**

We hope to see our students at the 2023 Riley - Clay Dance Marathon after school.

**Achieve Your Greatness** through participating in this awesome event helping children and families in need.

Thank you, Clay Nation for your contribution and continued support promoting this great event with our students.



*Follow Us!*



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**CARMEL  
CLAY SCHOOLS**

TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE



## TEACHERS & SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR!

**Congratulations to our 2023 Teachers of the Year and  
our Support Staff of the Year Recipients.**

***We are so proud of you!!***

Congratulations goes out to **Mrs. Erin Naas**, our guidance counselor in our Clay Student Services Department. Erin Naas was selected as our 2023 Clay Middle School Teacher of the Year. Erin, we are so proud of you we thank you for all you do for both our students and staff in regards to academic skills for success and social and emotional well-being.

Congratulations also goes out to **Mr. Dan Hess**. Dan Hess was selected as our 2023 Clay Middle School Teacher of the Year. Dan, thank you for all you do each and every day to foster a love of learning for our students and for also looking out for their well-being.

Both teachers will attend a Carmel Clay Schools Teacher of the Year Banquet held on May 10th, where they are up for Carmel Clay Schools Teacher of the Year to represent our school district at the state level.

And last, but most certainly not least, Congratulations to **Ms. Courtney Cooley**, one of our special education, instructional assistants on being recognized as the 2023 Clay Support Staff of the Year recipient. Courtney, please know how much we appreciate and value all the great work you do with your students to take care of them, and ensure that they come in each and every day finding success and greatness in school.

