

WE are Lakota



May 25, 2021 Edition

FEATURED In This Issue



Celebrating the Class of 2021

As the school year came to a close, the Class of 2021 enjoyed time-honored celebrations like the [Military Commitment Ceremony](#), [Parade of Graduates](#), senior picnics, and of course, commencement exercises.



Student Entrepreneurs Get Seed Money to Kick-Start Business Ideas

"Students, you have one proud teacher tonight." These were the parting words from INCubator@Lakota teacher **Kevin Keen** that closed out the program's inaugural "Pitch

Graduation had a more traditional look and feel, returning to Xavier University's Cintas Center this year.

Photo albums of the graduation ceremonies for [Lakota East](#) and [Lakota West](#) can be viewed on Lakota's Facebook page.

[Full story](#)

Around Lakota

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- [Super in 60: Final Edition](#)

Night" at Miami University's Voice of America Learning Center on May 11.

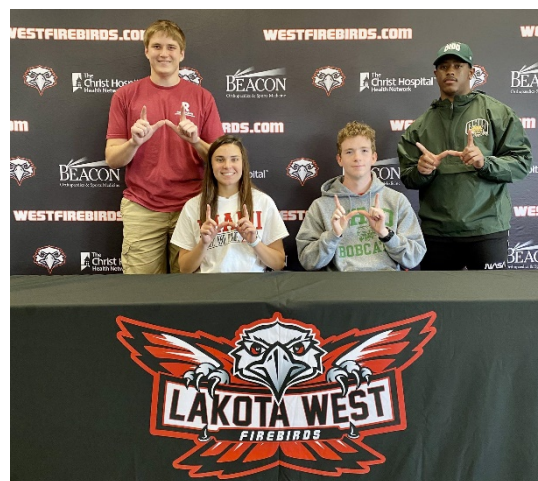
Nine months in the making, the evening spotlighted the top five of 20 new business ideas developed by budding student entrepreneurs at both Lakota East and Lakota West.

[Full story](#)

New Business

- [District Seeks Input on 2022-2023 Calendar](#)
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SHOUT-OUTS



West Holds Final Signing Ceremony

East's Bryant Named One of Region's Athletic Directors of the Year

Lakota East Athletic Director **Richard Bryant** is one of five regional recipients of the "Athletic Director of the Year Award," presented by the Southwest Ohio Athletic Directors Association (SWOADA) and the Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (OIAAA).

The award is presented to individuals who exemplify the highest standards of their profession and who, through their influence on the lives of young people under their direction, has made significant contributions to their school and community. Awards will be presented Wednesday, June 2 at the SWOADA meeting. Congratulations and thank you for all that you do, Rich!

The Lakota West Athletic Department recently hosted a final end-of-school-year athletic signing event. Four more senior Firebirds signed their commitment letters to continue their academic and athletic careers at their respective schools. This brings the total number of signed athletes to 29 for the West Class of 2021. Congratulations to these student-athletes:

Leah Abribat: Basketball (Miami University-Hamilton)

Josh Brogden: Football (Ohio University)

Michael Lane: Track/XC (Ohio University)

Daniel Laritz: Football (Rose Hulman Institute of Technology)

AROUND LAKOTA



Lakota Celebrates this Year's Retirees

Lakota Local Schools is celebrating 33 employees who will be retiring in 2021. The district has been recognizing each of the individuals on social media throughout the month of May. Congratulations to the following teachers, staff members and administrators.

[Click for list of retirees](#)

Lakota Gifted Services

2021–2022 Changes



Changes to Elementary Gifted Services Next Year Equals More Services for More Students

Beginning next school year, changes to the structure of Lakota's gifted services at the elementary grade levels will result in more students being served as well as more services. A professional development plan implemented by a modified team of gifted intervention specialists (GISs) will shift gifted education for math to the traditional classroom, while adding a new opportunity for gifted instruction in English Language Arts plus and increased support for social-emotional learning for all students.

Beginning in the fall, the GIS team will no longer pull students in order to teach a separate class, but will instead join the classroom teacher where there are clusters of gifted students. This will allow the GIS team to support the gifted students while working alongside the classroom teacher. Targeted professional development will be given to classroom teachers so that they will be able to instruct gifted students as well.

[Click here to read the complete update on Lakota's website](#) or watch the video for a thorough explanation of these changes.

Watch the video



Super in 60: Final Edition

In this year's final edition of "Super in 60", Lakota Superintendent Matthew Miller provides some year-end highlights in just 60 seconds.

This month, we celebrate the return of many end-of-year traditions like field days, the Parade of Graduates and graduation for the Class of 2021. Hear about an inaugural event for Lakota's new entrepreneurship program and how to stay connected throughout the summer.

[Watch the video](#)



Garden Project Builds Community at Heritage ECS

What do **Jenny Hutzelman**'s second graders say is the best part of a recent project?

"Making a positive impact on the community." – **Kinsley**

"Finding worms!" – **Isabella**

"Getting to work with other people to get things done." - **Kole**

"Being with Mother Nature." - **Braden**

Perhaps the best part of the garden project is that it was the students' idea.

Early in the school year, the Heritage ECS class learned about communities in their social

studies unit. "For our final project in the unit, we decided to work together to make an impact in our school community to better meet our needs," said Hutzelman. Her class came up with the lack of an outdoor learning area and a desire to do something about the garden that was overrun with weeds.

[Read more](#)

FEATURED PHOTOS



Parade of Graduates Tradition Lives on for Class of 2021

Lakota continued its Parade of Graduates tradition, welcoming the Class of 2021 back to where it all started. On May 18, buses of East and West graduates unloaded at Lakota's eight elementary schools, plus Heritage and Hopewell ECS (previously the elementary school for some of this year's graduates). With signs to share their future plans, seniors paraded between rows of students and staff with their own congratulatory signs cheering them on.

Click here to view the complete [Parade of Graduates photo gallery](#) on Lakota's Facebook page. Plus, [watch this video](#) of graduates sharing their fondest memories from their elementary school years.

[Watch the video](#)



Cherokee Student Gets Unique Ride to School

Before COVID-19 forced the district to shift to remote learning in the spring of 2020, Cherokee then fifth-grader **Adelynn Lackey** won a ride to school on a fire truck at the school's Cheetah-fest. Fast forward one year and Liberty Township's Fire Department made good on the prize, delivering Adelynn to school in style.



End of Year VLO Send-Off

Jenny Garwood's VLO students from Independence and VanGorden elementary schools had fun hanging out in person for an end of the year send-off.

NEW BUSINESS

District Seeking Input on 2022-2023 Calendar



District Seeks Input on 2022-2023 Calendar

The Lakota District is soliciting community input on the 2022-2023 district calendar. Lakota staff, students, parents and community members are invited to review the current draft before any final recommendation is presented to the school board.

Lakota considers many different factors when drafting the district calendar, including everything from scheduled state assessments and other state mandates to observed holidays and staff training days.

We value any input you have regarding possible changes to the calendar. Please provide your feedback by Friday, June 18. Feedback will be reviewed and adjustments made, as appropriate.

[Please click to review the calendar and submit your feedback.](#)



2021-2022 Academic Calendar Update

A recent update to the 2021-2022 academic calendar, which changed the line-up for some staff professional development days, forced some changes to scheduled school days for students. The total number of student school days and staff professional development days remain the same. Among the changes:

Oct. 4, originally scheduled as a professional development day, is now a school day for students; the staff work day and day off for students was rescheduled for Oct. 18.

Jan. 3, originally scheduled as a professional development day, has been moved to Dec. 22; students will now attend school on Jan. 3.

April 18, originally scheduled as a professional development day, is now a school day for students; the staff work day and day off for students was rescheduled for March 21.

[Please click here to view the updated 2021-2022 academic calendar.](#)

[Learn more](#)



Community Foundation Accepting Nominations for 2021 Lakota Educator of Excellence Awards

The Community Foundation of West Chester/Liberty, in partnership with Lakota Local Schools, is currently accepting nominations for the 2021 Lakota Educator of Excellence Awards. The nomination deadline is Friday, Sept. 3 and all honorees will be honored in the fall.

"Following a year that required an exceptional level of commitment and perseverance, we expect that it will be more challenging than ever to zero in on honorees for this year's awards," said Erin Clemons, Community Foundation president & CEO. "We are so proud of the Lakota community and encourage staff and families to help us shine the spotlight on those individuals who made this school year possible."

[Learn more](#)



Summer Break & Back-to-School Information

Thursday, May 20 marked the last day of the school year for all Lakota students. Area residents are reminded that many more children will now be outside playing during the day and to use caution, especially in residential neighborhoods.

The first day of school for the 2021-2022 school year is Wednesday, Aug. 18. Check the district and school websites, along with social media accounts, throughout the summer for additional information and general Lakota news.

A back-to-school FAQ will be posted in July. Lakota will again provide students in grades K-8 with a supply kit that includes pencils, notebooks, etc. Any additional supplies needed will be included in the July FAQ. Students in grades 9-12 will receive supply lists from their teachers at the start of the school year. Preschool will provide all needed school supplies.

Lakota Welcome Center Summer Operations

The Lakota Welcome Center will continue to operate virtually throughout the summer to welcome families new to the district for the 2021-22 school year.

Please access the [Welcome Center webpage](#) for instructions on how to register for school, update your address, withdraw and more. We encourage you to direct all questions to enroll@lakotaonline.com. You may also call the Welcome Center at 513-682-4120 and we will return your call within 24-48 hours.

School Offices Closed June 28-July 9

School building offices will be closed to the public for two weeks this summer, from June 28 through July 9. The Central Office will remain open during normal operating hours throughout the summer.

[Learn more](#)



Coffee Chat Continue During the Summer Months

Coffee Chats with the Superintendent will continue during the summer months this year to keep the community informed about all things Lakota. Join Superintendent Miller on Facebook Live (@LakotaSuper) for his next monthly coffee chat on June 2 at 7 p.m. Get an update on the end of this school year as well as a look ahead to the fall. You'll also have the opportunity to share your questions and concerns.

To help Mr. Miller efficiently prioritize questions and concerns, consider sending in your thoughts [via Thought Exchange](#). Other participants will have an opportunity to rate your thoughts (and share their own), helping us address the most pressing concerns in the allotted time frame.

[Learn more](#)

ON THE RADAR

Mental Health Support Over Summer Months

We all know that mental health needs don't take a summer break and that our students continue to need support even when they are not at school. That is why our [MindPeace](#) partners and therapists are still available to support Lakota students via telehealth or in person (typically at the school).

If your child isn't currently seeing one of our therapists, but you have concerns, please feel free to reach out to your school's therapist to discuss appropriate next steps for your child. You can also find resources, look for community

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Coffee Chat with the Superintendent](#)

June 2
7 p.m.
Facebook Live

[Lakota Board of Education Meeting](#)

June 14
6:30 p.m.
Plains Jr. & Zoom

providers or other school partners by visiting
www.MindPeaceCincinnati.com.

[Click here to see the available therapists working over the summer break.](#)

Staff and Returning Families: Open Enrollment Applications Due May 28

Each school year, the Lakota Board of Education re-evaluates the district's open enrollment policy and votes on whether or not to approve its renewal. If renewed, students residing in other Ohio school districts can apply to attend Lakota.

Due to the high volume of returning open enrolled students, at this time we are not accepting first-time applicants for the 2021-2022 school year. Per Board Policy 5113 and Administrative Guidelines, we will only be accepting applications from current Lakota staff, returning open enrolled students and siblings of returning open enrolled students.

All completed applications must be submitted to enroll@lakotaonline.com by the close of business on Friday, May 28, 2021.

Summer Food Service Program Begins May 27, USDA Extends Free Meals through Next School Year

Lakota, in partnership with the Faith Alliance, is participating in the USDA's Summer Food Service Program. Meals will be provided to all children (ages 1-18 and individuals with disabilities through age 21) - free of charge and regardless of income - beginning May 27 through August 5. The final pick-up day will be Aug. 2.

The summer program's qualifications fall in line with the USDA's free meals waiver for all students, recently extended through the 2021-2022 school year. This program is implemented at no cost to the district.

Summer meals will be distributed at nine different locations every Monday and Thursday. Each pick-up date will include a package that consists of one breakfast and one lunch per child for each day leading up to the next distribution. There is no criteria to participate and pre-registration is not required.
[Click here to view the pick-up locations and schedule.](#)

Be Part of Neighborhood Bridges Lakota

Lakota Board of Education Work Session

June 28
6:30 p.m.
Plains Jr. & Zoom

Coffee Chat with the Superintendent

July 7
1 p.m.
Facebook Live

Lakota Board of Education Meeting

July 19
6:30 p.m.
Plains Jr. & Zoom

Coffee Chat with the Superintendent

August 4
8 a.m.
Facebook Live

Lakota Board of Education Meeting

August 9
6:30 p.m.
Plains Jr. & Zoom

Teacher Professional Development Days

August 13-17

First Day of School (Grades 1-12)

August 18

Kindergarten Phase-In Days

August 18-20

District Calendar

Lakota Local Schools is proud to announce the launch of neighborhood bridges' "Gateway for Kindness" program - a resource to facilitate community support of students and families in need within the Lakota school system.

As a tool for teachers, counselors and social workers, neighborhood bridges Lakota will involve the surrounding community to aid in meeting the essential needs of at-risk and underprivileged students as a way of removing barriers to learning.

Families, community members and businesses can follow needs in the community by subscribing to email updates on the [neighborhood bridges Lakota webpage](#) and following on social media channels that include: Facebook ([@neighborhood bridges - Lakota](#)), Twitter ([@BridgesLakota](#)) and Instagram ([@lakotanb](#)). [Click here for more information.](#)

Submit Transportation Requests for Next School Year by July 20

To ease the transition to a new school year and honor families' requests for alternative pick-up and drop-off locations for transportation, Lakota is asking that families submit transportation forms by July 20. This deadline will guarantee transportation from an alternative address on the first day of the 2021-2022 school year.

There are now separate forms for early childhood and elementary schools. Early childhood schools ask that all families complete the [K-2 Transportation Form](#), even if transportation is not needed. Elementary school students may complete the [3-6 Transportation Form](#) if they require transportation to or from a location different than their home address.

By default, transportation for all eligible students is based on the home address listed in our student database. All alternative transportation plans are automatically cleared at the end of each school year, so please complete the form before each school year if you'll require transportation to or from an alternative location.

[Please click here to view the complete schedule of submission deadlines.](#)

Registration for Grades K-12

[Visit the Welcome Center website](#) for more information on registering for grades K-12 for the 2021-22 school year. All questions can be directed to the Welcome Center at enroll@lakotaonline.com, or (513) 682-4120.

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