

WE are Lakota



March 9, 2021 Edition

FEATURED In This Issue



Master Facilities Plan ThoughtExchange Summary

“When thinking about the future of education, what lessons have you learned through the COVID-19 pandemic that we should consider in our master facilities planning (MFP)?”

This question was asked of our parents, students, staff and community members in



Registration Open for 2021-2022 Virtual Learning Option

The Lakota Virtual Learning Option (VLO) will continue to be available to all enrolled K-12 students during the 2021-2022 school year. [Click here to complete the enrollment form by the April 9 deadline.](#)

The fully-online curriculum is designed, taught and led by Lakota teachers and



Still Looking for Summer Fun Activities?

In case you missed last week's virtual Summer Fun Fair, there are still several ways you can learn about youth programming this summer.

First, you can [click here to download the contact information for our Summer Fun Fair exhibitors.](#)

the district's recent ThoughtExchange survey.

While the facilities planning process was underway last year, the work was paused in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The MFP committee, made up of district leaders, school board members and VSWC Architects, began meeting in November and [has begun to re-engage the community in the process.](#)

[Full story](#)

administrators. Through the program flexibilities, students are able to learn within their home environment while remaining connected to Lakota.

Information regarding the next iteration of the program, including enrollment, informational videos and links for the Q&A sessions, are available at www.lakotaonline.com/vlo.

[Full story](#)

Also be sure to watch for our weekly Peachjar email or [check our website for electronic flyers](#) about youth and family opportunities in the area.

Thank you again to all of the exhibitors and attendees that took part in this year's virtual Summer Fun Fair, and we hope to return to the normal in-person format next year.

[Full story](#)

Around Lakota

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SHOUT-OUTS



West's 4x800 Relay Team Wins Indoor State Title, Posts Best Time in the Nation

A huge congratulations goes out to Lakota West's **Zach Beneteau**, **Sergio Negroe**, **Cole Cronk** and **Zachary Plotkin**.

The 4x800 meter relay squad posted a time of 7:50:06 in the Ohio Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches Indoor State Finale. That time not only earned the team the title of Ohio Indoor State Champs, but it was also the nation's best time for the 2021 indoor campaign.



Lakota Students Move on in Art Competition

Lakota students accounted for nearly one-third of the regional works of art chosen to move on to the final round of competition for the Ohio Governor's Juried Youth Art Exhibition.

Lakota East had ten artists and 15 works of art moving on in the competition, and Lakota West had 13 students and 22 artworks entering the final round of competition this Saturday, March 13. Over 900 pieces were entered for the region; Lakota West students received the most awards for our region.

The Ohio Governor's Youth Art Exhibition, now in its fifty-first year, is dedicated to the educational and artistic advancement of talented young people in the state of Ohio. You can find more information at www.govart.org. Congratulations to our Lakota artists and good luck this weekend!



The image features a logo for Digital Learning Day 2021 on the left, with the text "DIGITAL LEARNING DAY FEBRUARY 25" and the slogan "TOGETHER WE'RE BETTER TOGETHER WE'RE FUTURE READY." To the right is a word cloud where the word "Student" is the largest and most prominent, surrounded by other terms like "Learn", "Use", "Tech", "More", "Class", "Help", "Go", "Provide", "Access", "Resources", "Tool", "Feel", "Thing", "Up", "See", "Made", "Paper", "Click", "Level", "Classroom", "Absent", "Want", "Videos", "Time", "Tell", "Person", "Phone", "Share", "Long", "Topic", "Each", "Try", "Experience", "School", "Well", "Skill", "Available", "Remake", "Share", "Long", "Topic", "Each", "Try", "Experience", "School", "Well", "Skill", "Available", "Remake", "Share", "Long", "Topic", "Each", "Try", "Experience", "School", "Well", "Skill", "Available", "Remake".

Reflecting on how technology has improved the student experience

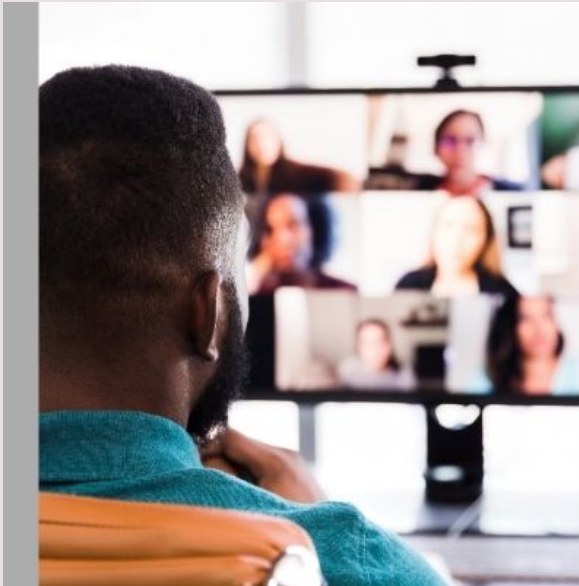
Technology Promotes Innovative Teaching, Personalized Learning

"It's not just about filling our teachers' toolboxes with lots of technology tools. Just because we have this new tech tool or that new tech resource, doesn't mean we have to use it. Instead, the focus is on learning over digital. We look at what we need to teach, and then look for any tools that can help each student learn," said **Heidi Adams**, one of Lakota's Innovation Specialists.

The 10th Digital Learning Day on Feb. 25 celebrated just that: innovative teachers and the power of instructional technology to personalize the learning experience for every student.

"I can't believe [#DLDay](#) has been happening for 10 years! I feel like I've had 10 years' worth of digital learning just in the past year with VLO," joked teacher **Lauren Seal**. "But it is so empowering to be able to bring learning to kids in a new way."

[Read more](#)



Community Conversations: Connecting Virtually

What lessons have you learned about education during the pandemic?

Parents | Students | Staff

Community Conversations Reveal Lessons Learned

Nearly 100 people participated in last week's series of [community conversations](#) focused on lessons learned about education during a pandemic. School board members and district leaders listened in on both small and large group discussions over three days that included parents, secondary students and staff.

"It was very important to us that we include a community conversation around education during a pandemic," said Board President **Kelley Casper**. Now in its eighth year, the community engagement program has shifted to a virtual setting in order for the board and district leaders to continue listening to the community amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Read more](#)



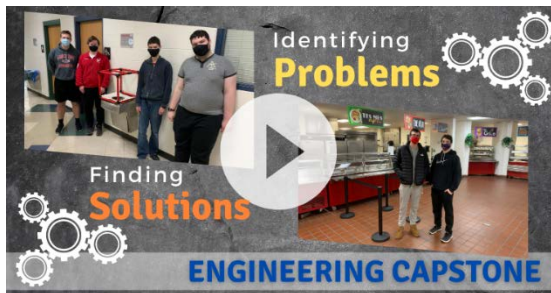
Bridge Challenge Builds Teamwork, Puts Learning to the Test

Alfredo. Bolognese. Carbonara. When you think of fettuccine, a bridge might not be one of your first thoughts, but it is for students taking physical science at East Freshman.

"Our goals are engineering based," explained teacher Larry Honigford. "The difference between engineering and science is that science addresses the fundamental concepts and ideas. (They) can then be applied in engineering, which is trying to address a problem."

The problem-solving project, which has been challenging freshmen for seven years, is an opportunity for students to put what they have learned about forces to the test. "This requires that the students brainstorm, plan, apply, adjust and test their ideas," said Honigford. Each team must design and build a bridge that can hold a physical science lab book...and they only have 30 pieces of dry fettuccine and 1.5 meters of masking tape to do it.

[Read more](#)



WATCH: Student Spotlight on Future Engineers

In the last edition of "A Look Around Lakota", we featured two groups of Lakota West students and aspiring engineers who used their recent capstone projects to tackle two different COVID-19 challenges in their school. Besides making an impact on their school communities, they took some important steps toward their post-graduate plans.

The students will be in the spotlight at next month's Lakota Board of Education meeting. Watch this video to learn more about how this group actually put into practice the Butler Tech curriculum they were learning.

[Watch the video](#)

FEATURED PHOTOS



Lakota's 'Most Loved' Receive Special Valentine Delivery

We were excited to recognize some of our "most loved" people around Lakota. These special people received shout-outs in last month's #WELoveLakota social media contest and received a surprise valentine delivery for their posts receiving the most votes, or "likes".

Congratulations to Adena Elementary Principal **John Mattingly** (pictured top right), described in a post from **Jenni Askins Kershaw** as "the epitome of a family man, which extends beyond the walls of his home to include school family and district family."

Lakota East special education teacher **Ellen Bowmann** (pictured bottom left) was applauded by instructional aide **Kathie Guckenberger** for being "an amazing teacher who goes above and beyond for her students."

Cherokee Elementary Principal **Valerie Montgomery** shared several examples of the many reasons she loves her job and the people she works with. "It only takes one staff member to make a difference with our kids. They all matter and are just important," she wrote. Recognized in her post were (pictured bottom right, left to right): attendant **Janette Metzger**, nurse **Valerie Hobbs**, instructional aide **Mary Neil**, school resource officer **Lt. Carl Sigmon** and systems support technician **Eric Wurzbacher** (not pictured).

Thank you for all that you do...Lakota loves you!



Celebrating Read Across America Week

Everyone from staff members to students to therapy dogs found fun ways to celebrate Read Across America Week (March 1-5).

Union Elementary Assistant Principal **Kara Yates** became Pinkalicious on Book Character Day, while Cherokee Elementary held a spirit week that included a day where students (like fifth grader **Allie Englund** pictured above) got to dress up like someone they admire. Several schools held Read-a-Thons including Liberty ECS that plans to use funds raised for outdoor classroom projects. Even Lakota's therapy dogs joined in the fun!



Tambo: Lakota's Newest Therapy Dog

Meet the newest addition to Lakota's growing team of therapy dogs. Tambo made her big debut last month at Liberty Junior School, where she provides a daily dose of comfort, love and support to Liberty students and staff. Follow Tambo's daily adventures on Twitter @TAMBOtheThawk. Tambo is one of five therapy dogs serving the Lakota Local Schools community.

NEW BUSINESS



March Social Media Challenge: #Lucky2BNLakota

Why do you feel lucky to be in Lakota? Take this month's social media challenge and you could win a pot of gold in the form of Lakota spirit gear.

Share what makes you #Lucky2BNLakota on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or all three, to let the Lakota community in on the best part of being a Lakota student, parent or staff member. Be sure to include #Lucky2BNLakota and tag Lakota for a chance to win. The post with the most votes (or "likes") will be named this month's lucky winner.

[Learn more](#)



Due March 24: Nominations for District Barb Bossu Volunteer Spirit Award

Nominations are being accepted now through March 24 for the 2021 district Barb Bossu Volunteer Spirit award.

Everyone is encouraged to take a moment to consider nominating a volunteer who is making positive things happen in the district. It is your opportunity to demonstrate your appreciation for the volunteers that truly make Lakota a special place to educate children.

Barb Bossu was an enthusiastic parent volunteer and the Union Elementary PTA president at the time of her death. The Volunteer Spirit Award was established in 1990 to commemorate her very special dedication to public education by honoring a volunteer each year from every school as well as a district volunteer in the Lakota district. The recipient should represent a positive spirit of dedication toward the betterment of our children.

[Click here for this year's district nomination form.](#) Use this nomination form to recognize a volunteer who is making a positive impact in our district where students are impacted, and who gives their time unselfishly to the Lakota district. Nominations for school volunteer awards will be announced by each school so check school newsletters for those deadlines and submission details. The district and school volunteer award winners will be honored at a district-wide ceremony.

Please email completed nominations to LakotaDPC@gmail.com.



2021-2022 Preschool Registration Open through March 29

The 2021-2022 lottery application for Lakota's tuition-based preschool program in partnership with the Butler County Educational Service Center is now available. Registration for the program, hosted at both VanGorden Elementary and Liberty ECS, will be open through March 29.

An informational meeting for parents will be held virtually via Zoom on Monday, March 15 at 6:30 p.m. [Parents can click here to join the informational meeting.](#)

All applications must be received by Monday, March 29 to be considered for the lottery.

[Click here to complete and submit the 2021-2022 Lakota preschool application.](#) [Visit the Lakota Preschool website to learn more about the program.](#) Please direct any questions to the preschool office at (513) 870-5378.

[Learn more](#)



Summer School Registration Open through April 9

Lakota's Secondary Summer School program provides an opportunity for students who will be in grades 7-12 for the 2021-2022 school-year to earn original and recovery credit. Students may also participate in summer sessions for select math courses to qualify for advanced math placement the following school year (upcoming seventh- and eighth-graders).

All summer classes will be held remotely May 24 through July 2. Registration for Lakota students is completed on [EZPay](#), and the registration deadline is April 9. More information can be found at www.lakotaonline.com/summerschool.

Please contact summerschool@lakotaonline.com with specific questions.

[Learn more](#)

ON THE RADAR

Calling All Writers!

It's time for the annual Write Challenge contest for K-12 students within the Lakota Local School District. The contest is hosted by [Lakota LEADS](#), and this year's theme is CHALLENGE.

The word CHALLENGE has many meanings. Whether it's a difficult question that needs to be answered, or a new sport that you want to try, everyone faces many challenges. What do you think of when you hear the word CHALLENGE?

Entries can be a poem, narrative or essay and are due by March 21. Winners will receive an award, their writing will be published in an anthology, and they will be honored at a virtual reception in the spring. Click for more information: [Write Challenge Entry Form/Instructions](#).

East Theater: In Person & On Demand Viewing Options

Lakota East will be presenting a funny and inventive play called PUFFS in March.

What's it about? Through books and movies, the world followed a certain wizard through seven years of heroics at a certain wizard school. This is not his story. It is the story of the underdog who wants to be a hero. This is the story of PUFFS or Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain School of Magic and Magic.

UPCOMING EVENTS

[VLO 2021-22 Q & A Session for K-6](#)

March 9
7 p.m.
Zoom

[VLO 2021-22 Q & A Session for 7-12](#)

March 10
7 p.m.
Zoom

[Kindergarten Info Night: Creekside, Heritage & Wyandot](#)

March 10
7 p.m.
Zoom

[Kindergarten Info Night: Hopewell & Shawnee](#)

March 11
7 p.m.
Zoom

[Preschool Info Session](#)

March 15
6:30 p.m.
Zoom

[Master Facilities Community Meeting](#)

March 16

There are several ways to enjoy watching East's talented theater students perform PUFFS.

First, live performance tickets are available for March 12 & 13 at 7:30 p.m. These tickets are very limited due to COVID restrictions; [click here to purchase these live tickets](#).

You can also purchase On Demand presale codes for the show and watch PUFFS between March 10-13 in the comfort of your own home. [Click here to preorder](#).

2021-22 Online Registration Now Open

Registration for grades K-12, including Lakota's all-day kindergarten program, is now open for the 2021-2022 school year.

Early kindergarten registration extends through April 1. Parents of incoming kindergartners are encouraged to attend one of the upcoming virtual Kindergarten Information Nights. [Click here for details](#); you can also [visit the Welcome Center website for more information and to register online](#). All questions can be directed to the Welcome Center at enroll@lakotaonline.com, or (513) 682-4120.

USDA Free Meals Program Extended through End of School Year

In response to the financial hardship felt nationwide as a result of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced an extension to its free meals program for all students announced this fall. Originally ending Dec. 31, 2020, all students learning both in-person and virtually are now eligible through the end of the 2020-2021 school year. The program is being offered at no cost to the district.

Since Sept. 16, student accounts have not been charged for any breakfast or lunch meals that meet the regular meal criteria set forth by the USDA. All students can receive one breakfast and one lunch daily at no cost. A-la-carte purchases will still be charged as usual. VLO students are able to participate in a [twice-weekly meal distribution program](#) where they can receive up to 10 meals. [Click here for complete criteria surrounding the USDA's free meals program](#).

6:30 p.m.
Zoom

[Kindergarten Info Night: Liberty ECS](#)

March 16
7 p.m.
Zoom

[NEW DATE: Board of Education Work Session](#)

March 25
6:30 p.m.
Zoom/Plains Jr.

[VLO 2021-22 Q & A Session for K-6](#)

March 23
7 p.m.
Zoom

[VLO 2021-22 Q & A Session for 7-12](#)

March 24
7 p.m.
Zoom

[Spring Break](#)

March 29-April 5

[District Calendar](#)

WE are Lakota

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