

WE are Lakota



A Look Around Lakota

District E-Newsletter

December 15, 2020 Edition

FEATURED In This Issue



New Video Celebrates Diversity & LODI Efforts

[A new video presented by Lakota's Outreach Diversity & Inclusion](#)

[\(LODI\) department](#) features the rich diversity that our students bring to Lakota's classrooms every single day.

"Lakota's diverse makeup has changed over the years. Why that's a good thing is because our students need to understand that the world is a different place," said LODI's Senior Director Elgin Card, who has been at the helm of Lakota's internal and external inclusion efforts since July this year.



Meet the Board: Brad Lovell

Lakota Local Schools is excited to introduce our community to the members of the Board of Education.

Meet Brad Lovell, a lifelong community member and former school administrator in Lakota who is serving his first term on the Lakota Board of Education. A member of the first graduating class at



Board Approves In-Person Academic Calendar Changes

At the Dec. 14, 2020 Lakota Board of Education meeting, the members of the Board voted unanimously 4-0, with Michael Pearl absent, to make changes to the in-person learning academic calendar in January.

[Read more](#)

Full story/video

Lakota East High School, Mr. Lovell serves as president of the school board and is on the Policy, Facilities and Safety Committees.

[Click here to view the entire video series.](#)

Watch video

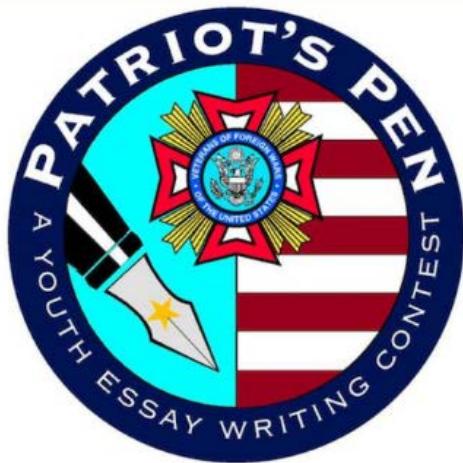
School Features

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SHOUT-OUTS



ANNUAL VFW ESSAY CONTEST

Lakota Student Writers Recognized



Patriot's Pen Winners Announced

Congratulations go out to several Lakota students for being recognized in this year's VFW-sponsored youth essay competition called Patriot's Pen.

This nationwide contest gives students in grades 6-8 an opportunity to write 300-400 word essays expressing their views on an annual patriotic topic; this year's theme was "What is Patriotism to Me?." Each year more than 165,000 students participate in the contest for a chance to win part of the \$1.4 million in state and national awards.

The following is a list of the West Chester VFW Post 7696 top finishers for this year.

First Place: **Zaudia Black-Page** (Plains Jr.) / Advances to the district

Second Place: **Drew Zehring** (Plains Jr.)

Third Place: **Stella Matthews** (Independence)

Fourth Place: **Oreoluwa Omilakin** (Cherokee)

AROUND LAKOTA



Lakota Refinancing Saves Taxpayers

Jenni Logan, treasurer/CFO for Lakota Local Schools, announced that the district will save more than \$6 million in interest expense due to recent refinancing of debt.

"Just like our community members, we look to take advantage of a low-interest rate market in order to refinance our debt and save our taxpayers money," said Logan. "We asked ourselves if we could restructure our debt and pay some off early. Our goal is to lower the interest expense we have as a district," she explained.

[Read more](#)

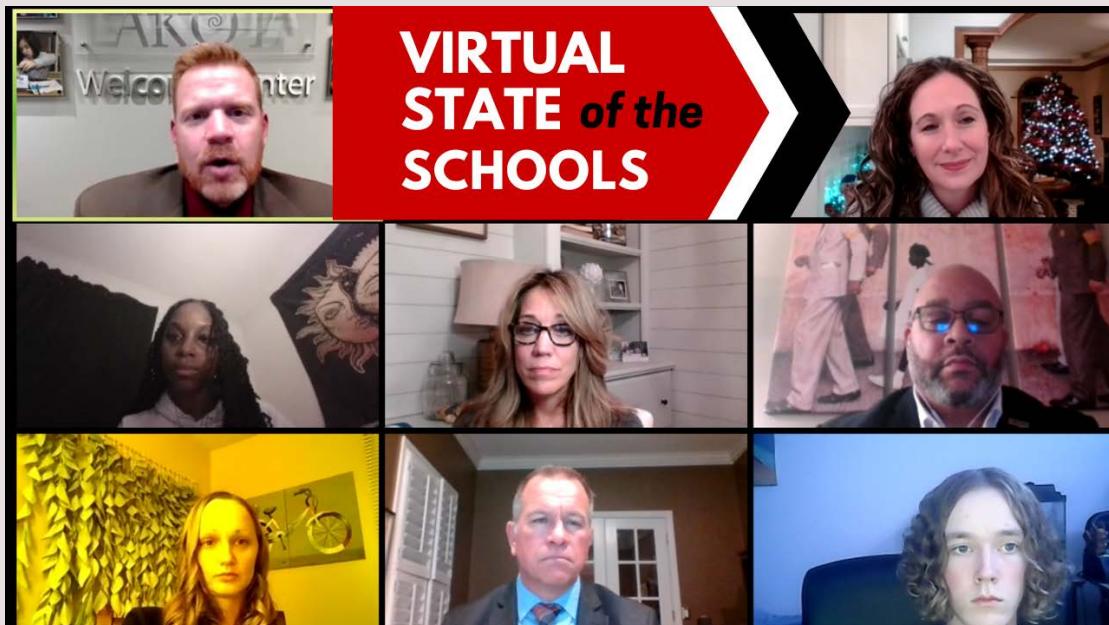


COVID-19: Reporting Cases over Winter Break, Upcoming Dashboard Updates

Beginning Dec. 19 and through the end of winter break, parents, guardians and staff are asked to report any positive tests for the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in their household to the Butler County Health Department (BCHD). Without students in class, the BCHD will need to complete the appropriate contact tracing. The health department can be reached by calling (513) 863-1770.

Parents should report positive cases, along with absences, to the schools beginning Tuesday, Jan. 5. Although the district will be in remote learning through Jan. 11, if students are too sick to participate in class, parents should notify their child's school by calling the attendance line. [Click here to access the phone numbers for each school.](#)

[Read more](#)



2020 State of the Schools Marked by Real Reflections from Students, Staff

"The biggest challenge I've had is budgeting my own time because I'm all on my own the entire day and it's very easy to get sidetracked," said Lakota East Virtual Learning Option (VLO) student Theodore Engel.

This was just one of the reflections on display during this year's unique "State of the Schools" format, where a panel of both in-person and virtual students and staff helped share a lens into the current school year. The Jan. 8 event drew approximately 200 people for the hour-long presentation.

[Watch the full recording of State of the Schools](#) to hear what panelists had to say and to see the district's responses to questions posted during the live chat.

[Read more](#)



WE are Lakota

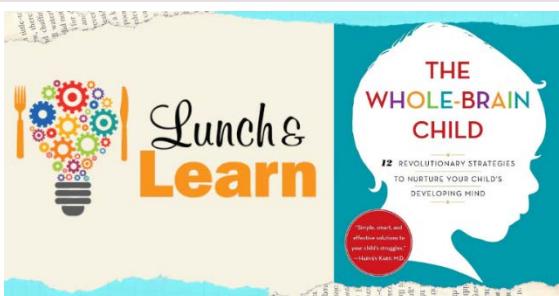
Superintendent's Contract Extended

Board Approves Contract Extension for Superintendent Miller

Members of the Lakota Board of Education voted unanimously to extend Superintendent **Matthew Miller**'s contract for an additional five years, beginning Jan. 2021. The 4-0 vote, with member Michael Pearl absent, took place at the Dec. 14, 2020 meeting.

"In our community, WE are incredibly blessed to have one of the best superintendents in the state, if not the country, leading Lakota Local Schools," said Board President **Brad Lovell**.

[Read more](#)



Lunch and Learn Series Connects ECS Parents, Offers Support

How can parents stay connected and receive support in these difficult times?

"It is definitely difficult not having adults in the school building this year to help build community and connectedness," said **Jen Gillum**, counselor at Wyandot Early Childhood School. "The Lunch and Learn Series is helping to bridge that gap."

Gillum and Creekside counselor **Jen Russell** originally joined forces to come up with an idea

that would help their virtual learning families, but came up with a solution that can benefit all of their parents.

[Read more](#)



West Senior Dedicates Eagle Scout Project to Former Elementary School

"I just wanted to give back to the school that gave me so much," said Lakota West senior **Josh Strong**, when asked about why he chose Heritage Early Childhood School as the beneficiary of his recent Eagle Scout project.

The project gave a major facelift to one of the school's outdoor learning spaces where students are able to grow their own plants. The overgrown space had become unsuitable to outdoor learning, so Strong committed to making it usable again. About seven months and 127 hours later (280 including volunteers assisting him), the space was cleared of debris and mulched to add a clear walking path between plant boxes. He also gave nearby benches a fresh coat of stain.

[Read more](#)



Bringing 100-Year-Old History to Life

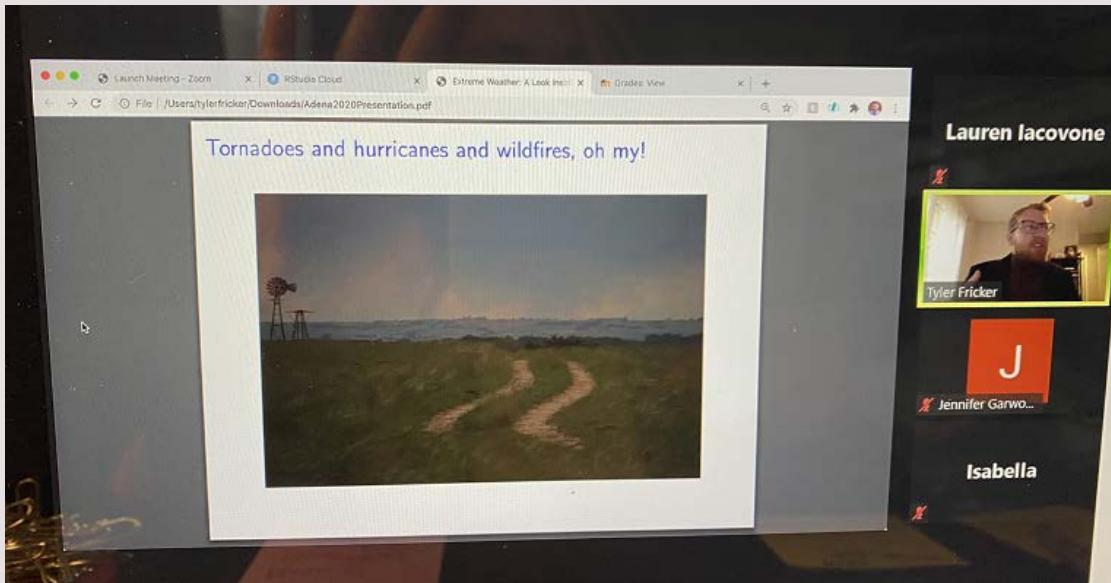
Lakota East teacher **Hannah Martin** learned the causes of World War I in high school by memorizing a bulleted list. But she wanted something different for her students.

"I truly believe history is so powerful and interesting and engaging all on its own if you actually dig into it, connect it to today, and make it experiential and immersive," said Martin. She was an innovation specialist at West Freshman before moving to the classroom this year to teach World History (in-person) and Honors American History (VLO).

One of Martin's favorite activities in her World History class is called the Game of Alliances, which focuses on the causes of World War I.

[Read more](#)

FEATURED PHOTOS



Lakota Grad and Extreme Weather Expert Chats with VLO Students

Virtual learning students were recently treated to a cool experience as part of their weather unit. Lakota grad, extreme weather expert and tornado chaser Dr. Tyler Fricker joined 114 VLO students on Zoom. Dr. Fricker shared an interactive presentation where the students got to answer his questions, and then they had a chance to ask him some of their questions too.



Schools Hold Spirit Weeks Before Holiday Break

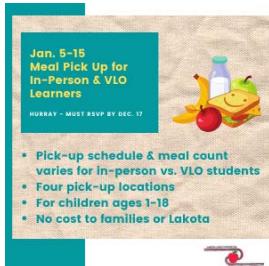
Students -- and staff -- across the district donned festive attire to celebrate the upcoming holidays. Spirit weeks included ugly sweater day, scarf and holiday socks day, red day, green day, holiday hat day and comfy pajama day. Pictured: Lakota East Freshman staff competed in a ugly sweater contest: congratulations to winners **Mrs. Pietch** and **Mrs. Morrow!**



Matching Masks for the Holidays

If you have to wear a mask, why not have some fun with it? Wyandot student **Evelyn** is pictured here with Principal **Liz Gruber**, both sporting candy cane masks.

NEW BUSINESS



All Students Eligible for Meal Pick-Up During Altered Second Semester Start

With the altered schedule for the return to second semester Jan. 5-15, all in-person learners will be eligible to pre-order breakfast and lunch meals to cover the remote learning days. While the schedule change does not impact VLO families, students are still invited to register for meal pick-ups following the normal VLO meal program schedule.

An extension of the USDA meal waiver program, all meals will be free and at no cost to the district. Families are invited to place an order for children ages 1-18.

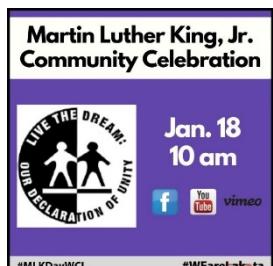
[Learn more](#)



January Coffee Chat: Treasurer Takeover

Join Lakota's Treasurer/CFO Jenni Logan when she takes over January's virtual Coffee Chat. Tune into Superintendent Miller's Facebook Live ([@LakotaSuper](#)) on Wednesday, Jan. 6 at 1 p.m.

Mrs. Logan will give a financial update for the district and answer questions from our community. To help efficiently prioritize questions and concerns, consider sending in your thoughts via [ThoughtExchange](#). 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.



Jan. 18: Community Celebrates Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Student Winners

The entire West Chester Liberty community is invited to attend a virtual edition of the 22nd annual celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. on Monday, Jan. 18 at 10 a.m.

This year's student contest, themed "Reinventing Reforms," challenged students to reflect on what they can do personally, using the resources of this era, to carry on the work started by MLK. All winning essays, skits, songs, artwork or video will be shared during the virtual program, also complete with a keynote address, music and other elements from the traditional in-person celebration.

[Learn more](#)

ON THE RADAR

USDA Waiver: Free Meals for All Lakota Students 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) announced an opportunity to provide free meals to all students. This opportunity has been extended through the remainder of the school year and applies to students learning both in-person and through the district's Virtual Learning Option (VLO).

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 to read more about the new USDA waiver providing free meals to all students.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

[No School: Winter Break](#)
Dec. 21 - Jan. 4

[Professional Development Day for Staff](#)
Jan. 4

[VLO & Remote Learning for In-Person Students Begin](#)
Jan. 5

[Coffee Chat: Treasurer Takeover](#)
Jan. 6
1 p.m.
Facebook Live

Staggered Start for In-Person Students Begins
Jan. 12

No School: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Jan. 18

All In-Person Students Return to School
Jan. 19

Kinship Connections: Love & Logic Part 2
Jan. 27
7 p.m.
Zoom

Lakota Science & Engineering Fair
Jan. 29
6:30 - 9 p.m.
TBD

District Calendar

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