



A Look Around Lakota

District E-Newsletter

April 7, 2020 Edition

Featured In This Issue

Breakfast & Lunch Distribution

ALTERED SCHEDULE

APRIL 6-10

MONDAY 4/6	As Scheduled
WEDNESDAY 4/8	Pick up THREE days worth of meals
FRIDAY 4/10	No distribution
MONDAY 4/13	Regular schedule resumes

WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER

Altered Meal Schedule this Week

With the long weekend approaching, we've altered the meal distribution schedule for this week.

[Full story](#)

REMOTE LEARNING UPDATES

WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER

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Lakota Remote Learning Update

This Q & A style story covers all the latest about Lakota's approach to remote learning, including instruction, food service, activities and more.

[Full story](#)

MENTAL HEALTH TIPS

VIDEO: Lakota Experts Share Mental Health Tips

A short video from our own experts with great mental health tips to help our Lakota community keep their minds happy and healthy.

[Watch video](#)

[Around Lakota](#)

[New Business](#)

- [Virtual Fanfares](#)
- [Creative Morning Announcements](#)
- [Zoom Creates Virtual Classrooms](#)
- [Talking to a NASA Scientist](#)
- [March Video Update](#)
- [Words of Wisdom](#)
- [Coffee Chat on Facebook Live](#)
- [Master Facilities Update](#)
- [OHSAA Letter to Students](#)
- [March Madness Update](#)
- [Transportation Form for 2020-21](#)

Shout-Outs

East Basketball, Wrestlers Qualify for State Tournaments



Leading Seasons Cut Short for East Wrestlers, Boys Basketball

On March 26, the Ohio High School Athletics Association (OHSAA) announced the cancellation of Ohio's remaining winter sports tournaments. We offer our sincere congratulations to two Lakota East teams who were on track to complete their best seasons in school history.

Lakota East wrestlers **Aaron Sharp** and **Alex Epstein** were both among the top 16 in the state and were preparing to compete for state titles after taking third and fourth places, respectively, at Districts. The Lakota East boys basketball team and cheerleaders were preparing to fight for a regional title. The team's back-to-back GMC and District titles, along with its trip to the Elite Eight, were firsts in school history, on top of their 25 wins tying for the most in a season in GMC history.



Lakota Students Win Big in Congressional Art Competition

Two Lakota students won big in the annual Congressional Art Competition. Lakota East senior **Tanner Gagliardo** won first place in photography with his piece titled "Mama Bear Stare" and **Abigail McDonnell**, a junior at Lakota West, is the grand prize winner with her piece titled "Happiness"; she also wins a trip to Washington, D.C.

Abigail's artwork (shown above) will hang in the Capitol tunnel along with the other winning pieces from all over the country. "Mama Bear Stare" will hang in Congressman Warren Davidson's office. [Click here to view the virtual art exhibition](#), which includes artwork from other talented Lakota students.



Students Take Top Honors in the National Scholastic Awards Competition

Congratulations to Lakota East and Lakota West visual art students for earning National Awards in the Scholastic Art Competition. More than 11,000 students submitted nearly 320,000 works of art and writing to the 2020 Scholastic Awards. Only 3,000 works received a National Medal, which places these six students within the top 1% of all submissions across the country.

Tanner Gagliardo, East- GOLD MEDAL (the most outstanding works in the nation)- AMERICAN VISIONS AWARD (the top award for our region)

Amy Albert, West- SILVER MEDAL (work demonstrating high honors on the national level)- drawing

Alana Blankenship, East- SILVER MEDAL (work demonstrating high honors on the national level)- photography

Ella Chaffee, West- SILVER MEDAL (work demonstrating high honors on the national level)- photography

Chloe Kornau, East- SILVER MEDAL (work demonstrating high honors on the national level)- ceramics

Martin Philip, West- SILVER MEDAL (work demonstrating high honors on the national level)- photography



Lakota East Spark Staff Wins JEA Awards, Including Journalist of the Year

Lakota East's Spark news magazine recently won the All Ohio Award from the Ohio Scholastic Media Association (OSMA). Anna Mullins was also named Ohio Journalism Education Association's Journalist of the Year, and her digital portfolio will move on to the national competition. [Click here to visit the OSMA website](#) to see Spark's other awards.



Lakota Team Wins Regional DI Competition

The **Foxfire Fun: Guys & Gals** team claimed first place at the Destination Imagination Regional Tournament. The team includes students from Adena and Freedom elementary schools. They were headed to the state tournament on April 4, but it was cancelled due to the coronavirus. They qualify for the global tournament which hopefully will be held in late May.

Perfect ACT Scores



Andrew Himmelstein

Jessica Lane

Anitvir Taunque

Perfect ACT Scores

Lakota West's **Andrew Himmelstein**, **Jessica Lane** and **Anitvir Taunque** all scored a perfect 36 on the ACT tests they took in February. Just one half of 1% of all 1.8 million ACT test takers get a perfect score.

A big congratulations to these three Lakota West Firebirds!



We Are All in This Together

Lakota staff has gone above and beyond to help during the coronavirus crisis; we are highlighting a few of the groups and what they are doing to help.

Nurses: Seven Lakota nurses have volunteered to help the Butler County Health Department. The nurses will be answering phones, taking information and helping the nursing staff during the week as well as on weekends. Those volunteering include: **Cindy Jimenez de Cabrera** (district support), **Shelly Drago**, (Liberty Jr.), **Susan Fay** (Plains Jr.), **Valerie Hobbs** (Cherokee), **Joy Soper** (district support), **Christel Zajbel** (Hopewell Jr.), and **Robin Fridley** (Independence).

Innovation Specialists: Over Spring Break and beyond, the Lakota's Innovation Specialists (Team Inspire) have been working tirelessly to curate online resources, help teachers plan remote learning, working on creative ways for teachers to support social/emotional needs, and helping to connect teachers to share ideas and strategies for remote learning. Remote learning couldn't work without them!

Technology Team: Members of our tech team have been working behind the scenes to make remote learning such a success. Prior to the first day of remote learning, the team helped provide

500 devices to students in grades 3-6. They are working to make sure the systems are in place to support these devices and all student Chromebooks.

Featured Photos



First Day of Remote Learning

On March 25, Lakota held its first day of remote learning. Families across the district took the opportunity to commemorate this second 'first' day of school.



Neighborhood Walks Brightened by Sidewalk Messages

Chalk messages on sidewalks delivered messages of encouragement as students and families took remote learning breaks by walking in their neighborhoods.



Virtual Spirit Week Highlights

Lakota had lots of fun during our district-wide Virtual Spirit Week: showing our team and school spirit, dressing wacky on April Fool's Day, donning our red, white & blue and wearing our comfy PJs all day long. Shown above: #TributeTuesday was a favorite for the Joseph family.

[Click here to see our Facebook album capturing the best of Virtual Spirit Week.](#)

Around Lakota

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Altered Food Service Schedule for Long Weekend

When it comes to remote learning, the district will honor its originally scheduled long weekend coming up April 10-13. But a slightly altered schedule will still make emergency food relief available to students who need it.

At Wednesday's pick-up, students will be able to pick up three days worth of meals - three breakfasts and three lunches - to last them through Friday. There will be no additional distribution on Friday. The regular weekly schedule will resume on Monday, April 13.

Beginning March 23, Lakota's Child Nutrition Department began distributing 10 meals a week to any Lakota student needing assistance. During normal weeks, a bus visits 11 select locations every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

[Regular Meal Distribution Details](#)

REMOTE LEARNING UPDATES

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Remote Learning Update: What You Need to Know

Like all districts in the State of Ohio, Lakota Local Schools will be closed through May 1 per the order of Governor DeWine. Although our buildings will remain closed, our students will continue learning remotely during this time.

The following information was shared with our families via email on March 31. We encourage you to [visit our website](#) to stay up-to-date about remote learning, resources for our families, and ways to help. Information is being updated regularly.

What does this mean for our students?

Although our school buildings are to remain closed, remote learning will continue until we are able to return to the classrooms. We will continue to adjust and administer our remote learning plans and expectations, provide student services and resources to the best of our ability and distribute free meals to our students.

[Read more FAQs](#)



VIDEO: Lakota Experts Share Mental Health Tips

Lakota's emphasis on social, emotional and mental health has become even more pronounced as students and staff start to feel the toll of our recent break in routine. In addition to the resources, tips and guidance Lakota experts are sharing with their families to help guide them through this pandemic, Lakota is sharing brief video messages from our full range of mental health experts.

Lakota counselors, therapists, nurses and others weigh in on what small actions can help keep our minds healthy and happy during these uncertain times. From developing a schedule to spending more time outside, their guidance suggests small daily changes that can make a big difference in one's mental health and well-being.

[Watch the video](#)

Fanfares Go Virtual

Starting your day with cheers and words of encouragement might seem a bit odd in the workplace, but to Lakota students, it's a beloved tradition called fanfares.

Every year, each of the district's 23 schools



schedule the morning event where teachers, district leaders, parents and community members come together to cheer & share words of encouragement to students as they enter the building.

Now that the district has shifted to remote learning, fanfares have gone virtual, too. Staff members submit special messages to students that are compiled into the weekly videos. The district will continue to share the video messages on social media at the start of each week throughout the closure.

[Watch the virtual fanfares](#)



Morning Announcements Go Virtual Too, Add Routine and Normalcy

All across Lakota, students are starting their school days at home no different than they would if they were at school. While morning announcements are taking on a slightly different format than normal, they are still being used to take care of business and most importantly, set the tone for the day ahead.

"My goal was to do something structured and create a sense of normalcy for our kids," said Cherokee Elementary Principal **Valerie Montgomery**, who seamlessly continued the school's regular daily TV announcements on day one of remote learning. She's since tagged other school leaders to host as well. "I have gotten so much positive feedback from parents and students."

[Read more](#)



Lakota Staff 'Zoom' into Remote Learning

During a time when the preferred classroom setting is not an option, Zoom has quickly become Lakota's go-to tool for keeping staff and students connected. In the district's first seven days of remote learning, teachers and staff used the video conferencing tool to collectively host more than 1,600 meetings that were attended by more than 10,000 individuals.

"At Lakota, we place a lot of emphasis on the importance of relationship building to the entire instructional process. To continue that momentum, we realized early on that this kind of tool would be a necessity during this time" said Lakota's Chief Technology Officer **Todd Wesley**. "It's certainly been a game-changer so far and I commend the staff for embracing it and learning something new."

[Read more](#)



Plains Junior Students Meet 'Face-to-Face' with a NASA Scientist

Lakota teachers are bringing unique learning opportunities to students, all possible due to our new remote learning environment.

Case in point: last week Plains Junior eighth graders got to speak 'face-to-face' with a NASA scientist.

"Since video conferencing is now readily available thanks to student Chromebooks and apps like Zoom," said Plains Junior teacher Aaron Nunley, "it seemed like a great opportunity to connect with professionals that would be difficult to have come to Plains and who might also have a little extra free time thanks to current social distancing practices."

[Read more](#)



Video Update: March 2020 Remote Edition

March was certainly a month unlike one our community has seen before. With the launch of remote learning, the district's monthly video update followed suit.

In the first remote edition of A Look Around Lakota, Superintendent Matthew Miller shares a look back at this unforgettable March including:

- The first days of remote learning;
- How Lakota's Child Nutrition department continues to serve; and
- Some incredibly talented artists.

[Watch the video](#)



Words of Wisdom: Students Shed Light on Life at Lakota

We may be adjusting to our "new normal," but one of these days, we'll get back to our "preferred normal." In the meantime, we thought we'd share a reminder of what exactly that normal looks like.

Last month's "Words of Wisdom" video features students' descriptions of what it's like to be a student at Lakota. They answered this question: What do you want our community to know about being a student at Lakota.

[Watch the video](#)

New Business



Master Facilities Update

Due to the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, Lakota Local Schools has pressed pause on the process to create a new Master Facilities Plan (MFP). District leaders will continue working on the plan in the coming months. As a result, the scheduled meetings, including the community open houses, have been postponed.

Just prior to the state-mandated closure of schools, Lakota Local Schools was completing the visioning phase of the district's [Master Facilities Plan](#). On Feb. 26, the district held a [community-wide meeting](#) to share information learned from focus groups.

Following the meeting, a new ThoughtExchange was launched to gather more feedback from parents, students, staff and community members. The district asked, "How can WE adapt Lakota's facilities to best meet the future needs of our students?"

One hundred forty-seven participants shared 136 thoughts on what schools should look like in the future. Smaller class sizes, more scheduling flexibility and bringing freshmen to the main high school campuses topped the list. [Click here to view all of the results.](#)

[Learn more](#)



Superintendent's April 8 Coffee Chat Goes Virtual

Lakota Superintendent Matthew Miller will still host this month's Coffee Chat, but in a virtual format via Facebook Live. Please plan to join Mr. Miller on Wednesday, April 8 from 1-2 p.m. on his [Lakota Superintendent Facebook account](#). He will be sharing a brief update before taking questions from those tuning in to the live event.

Coffee Chats are held on the first Wednesday every month (with some exceptions), rotating between West Chester and Liberty Township locations. The times vary to accommodate different schedules.



OHSAA Letter to Students-Athletes and Ohio Communities

Due to the COVID-19 issue, the Ohio High School Athletic Association had to cancel the remaining winter sport tournaments. This affected many student-athletes throughout the state, including many Lakota students.

Click on the button below to read the OHSAA letter to student-athletes and Ohio communities in its entirety.

[Learn more](#)



March Madness Basketball Tournament Update

The Lakota March Madness Basketball Tournament has been cancelled due to the recommendations and guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Ohio Department of Health and the Butler County Health Department.

[Click here to read a letter from the March Madness Chairman, providing details about t-shirts and funds raised for local charities.](#)

[Learn more](#)



Submit Alternative 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.

By default, transportation for all eligible students is based on the home address listed in our student database. If your child will be needing transportation to or from an address different than their home address, please remember to complete a new Transportation/Child Care Form with current information.

[Learn more](#)

On the Radar

K-12 Online Registration Remains Open

K-12 Online Registration for 2020-2021 School Year Remains Open

Despite Lakota's building closures, online registration for grades K-12, including Lakota's all-day kindergarten program, remains open for the 2020-2021 school year. Lakota's Welcome Center will not be open to the public for in-person appointments, but will still be conducting business by phone and email to obtain all required documentation.

All students are eligible for all-day kindergarten, with the option to enroll in the half-day program, if desired. Lakota's

Upcoming Events

[Coffee Chat with the Superintendent on Facebook Live](#)

April 8
1 - 2 p.m.

[Board of Education Work Session Live via Zoom](#)

April 8
6:30 p.m.

[Easter Break](#)

April 10 & April 13
No School for Students

kindergarten classes will be held at six K-2 early childhood schools, including Creekside, Heritage, Hopewell, Liberty, Shawnee and Wyandot. Please note that students must be five years old on or before Aug. 1 in order to enroll in kindergarten for the 2020-2021 school year. [Visit the kindergarten registration site for more details.](#)

District Calendar

We are currently discussing alternative options for Kindergarten Information Night, originally rescheduled for April 21. This will not take place on this date as communicated. Stay tuned for more details.

Families can register online, after which they will be contacted by phone to provide any further required documentation. [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.

WE are Lakota



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