A Look Around Lakota: E-News Edition

January 31, 2020



Welcome to School, Zooey!



Meet Zooey: Lakota's Newest Four-Legged Staff Member

Are schools going to the dogs? At least one in Lakota is. Hopewell Junior School has welcomed Golden Retriever **Zooey** with welcome paws...or arms.

Members of Lakota's special services department have been researching different methods to best assist the growing number of students with social and emotional needs. This led to a conversation about bringing a therapy dog into the school. "It was about thinking outside the box and trying something new," Executive Director of Special Services **Andrea Longworth** said. While therapy dogs have visited Lakota's schools for several years, the district has not had one as a dedicated staff member...until now.

After extensive research, Longworth stumbled upon Circle Tail, a non-profit organization that provides service and hearing dogs for people with disabilities. Circle Tail is also the only Assistance Dogs International (ADI) accredited organization in the tri-state area. Once Longworth found out about Zooey, a partnership for a pilot program between Circle Tail and Lakota developed quickly.

Zooey joined the Hopewell staff in January and has been a welcomed addition. "Parents have been very positive," said **LeAnna Webber**, assistant principal and one of Zooey's handlers at school. "We've received several emails and comments thanking us."



Master Facilities Planning Process Loops in Community, Introduces First ThoughtExchange

On Tuesday night, the community had its first opportunity to hear the results of an intensive review of Lakota's school buildings presented alongside the district's student enrollment projections. The analysis lays the groundwork for a multi-year Master Facilities Plan (MFP) that hasn't been updated since the early 2000s.

"When we created our new strategic plan last year, it was written with the intent to be a living document - one that we use every day to guide the decisions of not only district administrators, but everyone at Lakota," said Lakota Superintendent Matthew Miller. "Part of that strategic plan requires that we develop a Master Facilities Plan for the district."

With 25 buildings valued at more than \$400 million, the planning process is designed to protect some of the community's most valuable physical assets. The MFP looks at enrollment projections and the age and condition of our facilities, as well as how well our spaces align with our vision for future learning at Lakota. Among the data shared:

• Lakota has seen an increase of more than 600 students since 2018, with most of it occurring in Liberty Township. That overall growth trend is expected to continue in the district's already overcrowded northern schools.

- The average age of Lakota's schools is 32 years, with four of those buildings currently over 50 years old. By 2045, all 23 schools will be at least 30 years old, 13 of which will be over 50.
- As assessed by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC), 11 schools are considered to be "deficient" or "borderline." This reflects an assessment of the entire facilities that includes overall structure, systems, technology and other metrics. This data is a snapshot in time and the OFCC will continue to modify each school's rating throughout the MFP process.

"Think of your own home and the routine maintenance and repair that it requires as it ages - some minor and some major, and then multiply that by 25 large buildings," reminded Lakota's Chief Operating Officer Chris Passarge. "It's imperative that we have a firm grasp on what is required in upcoming years to keep our buildings in working order *and* in a manner that is both efficient and fiscally responsible."

The meeting marked the first of many opportunities for community engagement in the process, including the <u>first MFP ThoughtExchange</u>, a new online tool Lakota is using to regularly gather community feedback on different topics. Parents, students, staff and community members are encouraged to participate in the exchange, which will remain open until Feb. 11.

<u>Visit the "WE are Building Our Future" website</u> for FAQs, video updates, data, upcoming meetings and more.

READ MORE

SHOUT-OUTS



130-Plus East, West Students Qualify for District 13 Honor Bands

More than 130 Lakota East and Lakota West band students qualified for one of the District 13 Ohio Music Education Association (OMEA) honor bands. Students memorized scales, practiced music and prepared to sightread music before the live audition before a judge. They had the opportunity to learn alongside other area band students in preparation for a live performance with a guest conductor at William Mason High School on Jan. 19. Congratulations to all the students selected for this special honor!

East's Washburn Wins Trip to Washington D.C./Gettysburg

Each fall, Lakota high school students can opt to take an Americanism Test sponsored by the American Legion. Over 40,000 students statewide took the challenge, and Lakota East's **Jasmine Washburn** got a 100% and won an all-expenses paid trip to Washington D.C./Gettysburg. Congratulations, Jasmine!

Two West Student Artists Named Overture Semi-Finalists

Lakota West's **Dalal Alami** and **Taylor Thompson** have been named Visual Arts semi-finalists in the Cincinnati Art Association's Overture Awards Competition. The next round of competition takes place Saturday, Feb. 8 at the Aronoff Center.

The Overture Awards is a program that recognizes, encourages and rewards excellence in the arts among Greater Cincinnati students in grades 9-12. The competition is the area's largest solo arts competition and offers awards in six artistic disciplines: creative writing, dance, instrumental music, theater, visual art, and vocal music. Students in the visual arts category had to submit between six and eight pieces in their portfolio.

One piece from each of the winners' portfolios is shown above: "Recognise" by Dalal Alami and "Bonded" by Taylor Thompson.

West Senior Featured in Butler County Insider's Guide

Lakota West senior **Quentin Walker** was featured in the "Butler County Insider's Guide," a publication with national circulation that is developed by the Butler County Visitor's Bureau. Quentin is recognized for his entrepreneurial spirit, having created an app called Sprout to help high school students find internships that match their interests. <u>Click here to find Quentin's feature on page 11 of the Butler County</u> guide.

West Chester & Liberty Lifestyle Cover Features East Artist

Lakota art students are making a splash in the February issue of *West Chester & Liberty Lifestyle*. This is the first time that a student photographer's work has been on the front cover of this community magazine.

Lakota East senior **Tanner Gagliardo** took the cover photo of **Anna French**, another Lakota East senior, painting her masterpiece. Both students are profiled in a student artist story inside the issue, along with Lakota West seniors **Dalal Alami** and **Katherine Newcombe**. <u>Check out the online version of this month's *West Chester & Liberty Lifestyle*.</u>

AROUND LAKOTA



Alexis Rhodenbaugh's first-graders at Hopewell ECS answered the call to better their community with a school-wide drive to replenish the shelves in their school clinic. They worked closely with school nurse Lisa Brady (pictured above).

'Nurse's Needs' Service Project Empowers Hopewell Students

While the inspiration for a recent service project was just steps outside of a Hopewell ECS first grade classroom, the lasting impact of their work reaches much further.

"At the beginning of all of this, they had no idea what it meant to be a community, but by keeping our cause super local, they could actually see the impact they were making," said Hopewell teacher **Alexis Rhodenbaugh** of her students, who took it upon themselves to fill a big need in their school community. That is socks, underwear, pants, disinfectant wipes, paper towels and other essentials that their school clinic was running low on with still more than half of the year remaining.

"It was so great to have their support in restocking our shelves with items that their classmates will benefit from," said Hopewell's nurse, **Lisa Brady**, who met with the students throughout the process to answer their questions and help direct their project.



Math Concepts Come Alive in 'Candytown Village'

"I like to do things differently," said Union Elementary Gifted Intervention Specialist **Amy Alexander**. "I like to have my students start with the dessert and have their veggies at the end."

Instead of projects being the 'dessert' where students demonstrate mastery at the end of a unit, she often starts math lessons with a project. Alexander finds that students can learn a lot just by playing around with new concepts. Then, after 'dessert', students do exercises and worksheets (aka veggies) using the knowledge they gained from the project.

Alexander's most recent example involved her fourth grade Math Plus class during a unit on perimeter, area and surface area. An introductory worksheet kept mentioning that "the dimensions are not to scale," and students asked what it means to be in scale or not in scale.

Alexander started to explain why many things can't be shown to scale within the four walls of their classroom. Conversations continued and an idea evolved in which students could build a scaled town: Candytown Village.



Eighth grade students at Liberty Junior School are applying their forensics lessons to solve a simulated crime scene in their science class. Paired with a murder mystery unit in their language arts class, the units are driving student engagement and career connections.

CSI-Inspired Unit Drives Student Engagement at Liberty Junior

Four weeks after their return from winter break, eighth-graders at Liberty Junior School are still talking about the scene they found on their first day back in science class.

"It was crazy. The whole room was sectioned off with caution tape," recalled Liberty student **Emily Fuller**, who remembers the "body" she and her classmates discovered next to a pool of "blood" surrounded by more bloody footprints and handprints. She described the other

evidence they found that day, like pliers, scissors and a screwdriver and even "dead" insects surrounding the body. "I can't say I've ever had a science teacher go as far as putting a five-foot streak of 'blood' across her classroom," she laughed.

That "crime" scene served as a springboard for the entire eighth grade science team's forensics unit. Liberty science teacher **Corbin Smith** created the foundation for the course, which has been adapted by both his colleagues, **Rachel Howard** and **Kimberlee Hensley**. From DNA and bones and impressions to hair samples and fingerprints, their classes are applying what they learn about each subject to "collect all the pieces of the puzzle and build their case for a primary suspect," Howard said. One lab day even involved practicing the mechanics of collecting DNA - from a strawberry.

"Our main goal was to demonstrate how what we're teaching in science really is applicable in the real world," said Howard, noting the career connections they've added during the unit's second year. On their Friday discussion days, they are exploring related and lesser known careers like forensic anthropology.





LAKOTA EAST HIGH SCHOOL NATIONAL HONOR SOCIE

presents



EAST SOLAR ARRA

Get involved! @Lakota_EastNHS lehsnhs@gmail.com

Lakota Goes Green: Student-Led Solar Array Project Will Leave Lasting Environmental Impact

Lakota East's National Honor Society is taking on a different type of service project this year – one they hope will leave a lasting impact at the school and in the community.

The group tackled the question: In a school of our size and a district of our size, how can we make a sizable environmental impact?

"We came up with the idea of a solar array [solar panels arranged in a group to capture sunlight and convert it to usable energy]," said NHS president **Ashley Swisshelm**. "The solar array would offset energy costs and reduce emissions from the power sources currently used. Not only could it have a positive environmental impact, but it would also be a great learning opportunity for us in STEM-related fields."

NHS members began reaching out to solar companies as well as the district to determine the viability of the project. "It was a cool process to know that students can reach out to Lakota staff and board members to work together on a project," said Swisshelm. "We are seeing that young people can really cause change and influence the community."



Lakota's new engagement tool was put to work in gauging the community's preferences for getting their Lakota news. See some of the top themes that emerged, then participate in the next one for Lakota's Master Facilities Planning.

Communication ThoughtExchange: What We Heard

Members of the community recently completed Lakota's first ThoughtExchange, a new online tool used to gather feedback from stakeholders on specific topics. The district asked, "What are some specific things you appreciate about how Lakota communicates with you and in what areas can we improve?"

"ThoughtExchange is a new platform that encourages our community members to not only share their thoughts, but also show how they agree or disagree with others," said Director of School/Community Relations **Betsy Fuller**. By answering open-ended questions, participants are able to share detailed thoughts with district leaders. The platform will be used to gather feedback on a variety of topics,

from both staff and community members, including the creation of a new Master Facilities Plan (MFP). Community members are encouraged to share their thoughts in the current MFP exchange that is open until Feb. 11. <u>Go to bit.ly/LakotaMFP1 to participate</u>.

"Feedback from our community is vital to our key decision making process," Superintendent **Matthew Miller** said. "ThoughtExchange gives us a unique way to reach more members of our community." The district plans to use ThoughtExchange for feedback on a variety of topics, both internally and externally. From major decisions, such as the Master Facilities Plan, to agenda planning for meetings, district leaders see many opportunities to take advantage of the tool.

READ MORE



Lakota Superintendent Matthew Miller's appointment to the Governor's Ohio School Safety Working Group brought representatives of Ohio's Department of Homeland Security to Lakota last Friday to talk with district administrators and students about school safety.

Ohio's Department of Homeland Security Visits Lakota

Representatives from Ohio's Department of Homeland Security were at Lakota on Jan. 24 to speak with district administrators and students about school safety.

In August, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed an executive order establishing the Ohio School Safety Center (OSSC) within the Homeland Security division of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. The purpose of the OSSC is to assist schools and local first responders in preventing, preparing for and responding to threats and acts of violence.

"The safety of our students and staff is always our number one priority," said Superintendent **Matthew Miller**. "We are proud that Lakota has been chosen to be a part of the State's regional listening sessions." Miller serves on the <u>Governor's Ohio School Safety Working Group</u>, which is part of the OSSC. The group has been created to advise the OSSC on current issues and trends regarding school safety.



Words of Wisdom: Looking Ahead in 2020

January is a great time to look forward to the year ahead and Lakota students do just that in this <u>next video installment of "Words of</u> <u>Wisdom."</u> Hear what excites students most as they head into 2020 and stay tuned to hear more from our students in this continuing video series.

WATCH THE VIDEO

View All District News

FEATURED PHOTOS



Jan. 20 marked the West Chester Liberty community's 21st annual celebration of "Live the Dream: Our Declaration of Unity" tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. The march, program and community lunch was marked by the winners of this year's student contest, which challenged participants to use their hindsight vision to identify Dr. King's most significant accomplishment.

Congratulations to this year's student honorees: Genna Pisano (Hopewell Junior), Nicci Back (Wyandot), Caleb Abbs (Creekside), Elise Brown (Independence), Allison Mai (Independence), Addy Lance (Independence), Carrie G. Hill (Woodland), Mira Seppi (Hopewell Junior), Dahreya Kreal (Hopewell Junior), Kaylin Baumer (Hopewell Junior) and Mehek Bakali (East Freshman).



Lakota's kindergartners celebrated 100 days of learning this week. Pictured above, Christa MacFarlane's class at Liberty Early Childhood School practiced counting by 10s, placing 100 total dots on the crowns they created.



VanGorden Elementary art teacher Cathy Dorff organized this project, giving students and visitors a fun way to show their pride in being a VanGorden Eagle.

NEW BUSINESS

K-12 Online Registration for 2020-2021 School Year Opens Feb. 1

Online registration for grades K-12, including Lakota's all-day kindergarten program, opens Feb. 1 for the 2020-2021 school year. Kindergarten registration extends through April 14.

Parents of incoming kindergartners are encouraged to attend the Kindergarten Information Night at the early childhood school in their <u>attendance zone</u>.

Kindergarten Information Night March 24

6 p.m. *All six early childhood schools*

All students are eligible for all-day kindergarten, with the option to enroll in the half-day program, if desired. Lakota's 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. Families can register for kindergarten online before visiting the Welcome Center at 5572 Princeton Road to provide required documentation. <u>Visit the kindergarten registration site for more details</u>.

Families can register online before scheduling an appointment to visit the Welcome Center at 5572 Princeton Road to provide required documentation. <u>Visit the Welcome Center website for more information and to register online.</u> All questions can be directed to the Welcome Center at (513) 682-4120.

Feb. 20: Community Conversation on Student Anxiety

The Community Conversation program, now in its eighth year, allows school board members, the superintendent and other school district leaders to get input about Lakota schools and their operation from all our stakeholder groups.

Lakota's next Community Conversation will discuss the topic of student anxiety.

Community Conversation on Student Anxiety

Thursday, Feb. 20 @ 6:30 p.m.

Lakota East Community Room

We hear regularly from students, and their parents, that kids really struggle to handle after-school activities, homework, friends, and trying to get enough sleep. It adds up to a lot of pressure. We want to talk about how schools, parents and students can work together to make it better.

Lakota's Community Conversations use a unique format. They're led by a professional facilitator, so that our school leaders can focus on listening and not on running the meeting. Most of the talking will be done by you, the residents who are there. We also spend time in small groups, where many people are more comfortable sharing their ideas.

The sessions are engaging and energizing and have led to new and innovative ways Lakota can best meet the needs of our students and larger community. All are welcome, including students. Please make every effort to attend this important program.

Share Your #WEloveLakota Photos: February Social Media Contest

In celebration of Valentine's Day in February, we're asking you to tell us what makes you love Lakota – with a photo! Is it a specific teacher, your principal, a favorite class, your entire school, your high school sweetheart, an extra-curricular program or maybe even the cafeteria's chicken nuggets?

Whatever it might be, GET CREATIVE and share a photo that illustrates that one thing or person that gives you a reason to love Lakota.

Participate all month long on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram by tagging Lakota's account and #WEloveLakota. At the end of the month, the top photo on each site with the most "likes" will be declared our "most loved" Lakota people, places or programs.

In return, Lakota's Media & Community Relations department will deliver a special valentine surprise to those three most loved people, places or programs on your behalf. Others around Lakota will learn more about the top winner through a story about them to be featured on Lakota's website, on Lakota's social media accounts and in the district's "A Look Around Lakota E-News."

January 2020 Video Update: A Look Around Lakota

In our first video update of 2020, Superintendent Matthew Miller shares just a few of the happenings around Lakota Local Schools during the month of January, including: New Innovation Hubs in our early childhood schools; a visit from the Ohio School Safety Center to speak to Lakota students and staff; an opportunity for our community to give feedback during the Master Facilities Planning process; and a special "Starbooks" themed reading week. <u>Click here to watch this month's edition of "A Look Around Lakota."</u>

What Colleges Want: The Latest Trends in College Admissions

High school students and parents: mark your calendars for Wednesday, Feb. 26 for a special session all about the latest trends in college admissions.

LEAP will be hosting the evening that will discuss these topics:

- Top Factors for "Getting In"
- Strategies to be College Ready
- Understand how Colleges View Applicants and Award Merit Scholarships
- Plan for College Major Selection & Internships helpful to you

Lakota Gifted Services and the LEADS Parent Group are sponsoring the event that will be held from 7-8 p.m. at Lakota East High School. <u>Click here for a flyer with more details.</u>

LATEST E-FLYERS

E-Flyers is Lakota's convenient and eco-friendly way to distribute information about programs, classes, events and opportunities happening in our schools and around the community.

Lakota is proud to partner with Peachjar to share these opportunities in a digital format. Look for district-approved flyers in your email inbox every Wednesday or click the button below to view all current flyers by district or school.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Event Spotlights

 Wednesday, Feb. 5
 Coffee Chat with the Superintendent at Einstein Bros. Bagels
 1 p.m.

ON THE RADAR

Announcements & Opportunities

Preschool Enrollment Ends Today

The lottery application for Lakota's tuition-based preschool program at VanGorden Elementary is now available and registration will run Jan. 6 through Jan. 31.

- Thursday, Feb. 6
 <u>Theater Production: Noises Off</u> at Lakota East Theater 7:30 p.m.
- Friday, Feb. 7
 Hopewell ECS Student Fanfare at Hopewell ECS 8:50 a.m.
- Friday, Feb. 7
 <u>Theater Production: Noises Off</u> at Lakota East Theater 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Feb. 8
 Theater Production: Noises Off at Lakota East Theater 7:30 p.m.
- Monday, Feb. 10
 Board of Education Meeting at Plains Junior School 6:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, Feb. 11
 Fellas & Fiction at X-Quisite Cutz 6 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 13
 Liberty ECS Student Fanfare at Liberty ECS 8:50 a.m.
- Friday, Feb. 14
 No School (in lieu of conferences)

All applications must be received or postmarked by Jan. 31 to be considered for the lottery. The lottery will take place at the beginning of February and notices of admission will be mailed mid-February to all applicants. Applications received after the Jan. 31 deadline will be placed on a waiting list.

Parents can visit the <u>preschool registration webpage</u> to download the application and access more detailed information about the enrollment process and preschool program. Please direct any questions to the preschool office at (513) 870-5378.

Last Call for Science Fair Entries

The first-ever Lakota Local Science Fair will take place on March 6, 2020 at Lakota East High School in conjunction with Lakota's annual Pi Day Celebration.

A wide variety of science projects will be considered as per the guidelines of the Ohio Academy of Sciences. Students in grades 5-12 are invited to register for the fair; projects will be judged only if the student or their team provides consent.

Basic participation requirements include:

- 1. Choose a topic related to the science of your interest.
- 2. Parent / teacher / coach must <u>register online by Jan. 31,</u> 2020.
- 3. Follow the recommended framework, as per the Lakota Local Science Fair <u>information guidelines</u>.
- 4. Present your project at the Science Fair with a poster display, project notebook, and oral presentation on Pi Day.
- 5. Relax and enjoy yourself. You will do a GREAT job!

For more detailed information, please email <u>lakotasciencefair@gmail.com</u>.

- Monday, Feb. 17
 No School: Presidents' Day
- Thursday, Feb. 20
 Storytime with a Lakota Principal at Midpointe Library, Liberty Center 6 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 20
 Community Conversation: Student Anxiety at Lakota East Community Room
 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

See Full Calendar

Apply Now for Spring/Summer Internships

Looking for a spring internship? A summer internship? Maybe a paid internship for right now?

Then keep your eye on Lakota's Internship, Apprenticeship and Volunteering Opportunities web page.

New listings include spring internships at West Chester Hospital, Beacon Orthopaedics or Children's Hospital. We've also begun posting summer internships -- there are some great opportunities at the Butler County Visitors Bureau.

Other real-world learning experiences range from HVAC apprenticeships to a marketing internship to volunteering in a hospital environment.

Please visit Lakota's Internship, Apprenticeship and Volunteering webpage to see a list of all of the opportunities and how to apply.

Next Coffee Chat on Feb. 5

Lakota's next Coffee Chat is set for Wednesday, Feb. 5 from 1 - 2 p.m. at Einstein Bros. Bagels.

Superintendent Matthew Miller will be on hand for drop-in conversation with parents and residents. 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. <u>Click here to view the</u> <u>Coffee Chats scheduled for this school year</u>.

Every month, all Lakota boys in grades 1-6 are invited to "Fellas & Fiction," a special community-sponsored early literacy program hosted by Lakota's Outreach, Diversity & Inclusion (LODI) department. The next Fellas & Fiction is on Tuesday, Feb. 11 at 6 p.m. at X-Quisite Cutz (located at 7324 Kingsgate Way, Unit F in West Chester).

On the second Tuesday of every month, young readers are encouraged to bring with them a male role model with whom they can read. Each reader receives a free haircut and book, made possible by the Community Foundation of West Chester Liberty. <u>View</u> <u>the Fellas & Fiction event flyer</u>.

Calling All Summer Fun Fair Exhibitors!

Does your business or organization offer a summer program or activity that's perfect for kids? Are you looking for ways to keep your kids active this summer?

Lakota will partner with more than 100 local businesses and organizations to host its eighth annual Summer Fun Fair this March 2 and 4.

The event features local organizations with programs and services to keep students in grades K-12 active this summer. Vendors range from summer camps, learning centers and childcare facilities to athletic leagues, art programs and local parks and recreation.

For convenience, families and exhibitors are invited to attend either of two events:

Monday, March 2 Lakota East High School 6-8 p.m.

Wednesday, March 4 Lakota West High School 6-8 p.m.

There is no cost to exhibit or attend. Learn more at <u>www.lakotaonline.com/summerfair</u>. To register your organization as an exhibitor at the fair, please contact Cindy Zahneis at Cindy.Zahneis@lakotaonline.com or at 513-644-1203 before Feb. 24.

Save the Date: Pi Day on March 6

Tower building, city planning, a human brain, live animals, Star Wars characters, and so much more! Save the date for Lakota Pi Day on Friday, March 6 from 6:30 - 9 p.m. for a chance to get your hands on some fabulously-fun math and science activities at over 40 stations.

Pi Day will be held at Lakota East High School, and is a free event geared toward students in grades K-8. Please visit <u>www.lakotaleads.org</u> for more information on this year's event.

Get Your Tickets for 'Noises Off'

On Feb. 6-8, the Thunderhawk Theater will present Michael Frayn's hilarious farce, *Noises Off.* First performed on the West End, and then moving to Broadway in 1983, this comedy about a community theater performing the disastrous show *Nothing On* will have you rolling in the aisles. So many mishaps as they prepare to open, so many doors, romantic intrigue, mistaken identity, sardines -- this play has it all.

Get your tickets now for Lakota East's performance of this Tony award-winning play. Tickets are \$10 night of the show or may be purchased online at: <u>http://bit.ly/NOTICKETS20</u> (plus \$0.50 fee).



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