

A Look Around Lakota: E-News Edition

December 20, 2019



Lakota District, Schools Receive



from Ohio Department of Education

Lakota District, Five Schools Receive ODE's Momentum Award

Two Early Childhood Schools Earn Both 'All A' and 'Overall A' Award from State

Lakota Local Schools, including five individual schools within the district, has received the Ohio Department of Education's Momentum Award for 2019. Additionally, two schools received both the All A Award and Overall A Award.

This annual recognition is given to districts or schools for exceeding expectations in student growth for the year. In order to receive the Momentum Award, a school or district must have received A's on all Value-Added measures on the state report card. In addition, winners of the award must also have at least two Value-Added subgroups of students, including gifted, lowest 20% in achievement and students with disabilities. Lakota is one of only 48 districts in the State to receive this distinction.

This is the fourth consecutive year that Lakota has earned this award. Endeavor Elementary, Freedom Elementary, Lakota East High School, and Lakota West High School are receiving the notable recognition for the third time and Independence Elementary for the second.

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MASTER FACILITIES PLANNING



#WEareLak@ta

Lakota Enrolls in State Funding Program to Kick Start Master Facilities Planning Process

At the Dec. 9 school board meeting, the Lakota Board of Education approved a resolution to enroll the district in Ohio's Expedited Local Partnership Program (ELPP). Hosted by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC), enrollment is required to gain the OFCC's support and partnership in ultimately building a master facilities plan that if approved, will be financed in part by the Commission.

"Part of Lakota's strategic plan calls for an in-depth assessment of our facilities, with the end goal being to build a plan that protects our district's most important assets and supports the type of learning that will carry our schools into the future," said Lakota Superintendent **Matthew Miller**.

"In total, Lakota's 25 buildings are valued at more than \$400 million. Furthermore, their average age is 32 years," added Chief Operating Officer **Chris Passarge**. "It is critical that we have a firm grasp on what is required in upcoming years to keep our buildings in working order and updated with learning spaces that are competitive with neighboring districts."

The board's move to approve the resolution simply places Lakota on a waiting list, among other Ohio districts. Lakota will earn financial credit for any completed work from this point forward that is part of the approved master facilities plan. Once it is Lakota's turn to collect, the state will reimburse a portion of the facility dollars spent by the district.

The ELPP resolution locks the district into a reimbursement rate of 26 percent - a rate determined by a state calculation of each district's average three (3) year property valuation per pupil. The reimbursement rate has increased for Lakota by five percent over the last two years.

"In the interest of fiscal responsibility, we cannot look at an update to our facilities master plan and not consider the financial advantages of this program," said Lakota Treasurer/CFO **Jenni Logan**. "To put it in simple terms, we have the opportunity for the state to fund more than a quarter of the cost. I believe our taxpayers would love to have this option on the purchase of a new home or much needed renovations. We are doing our due diligence on behalf of our taxpayers."

[Click here to watch a short video](#) that shares more information about ELPP, the overall master facilities planning process and future opportunities for community members to have their voices heard.

[READ MORE](#)

American Sign Personalized Lea



VIDEO: Student Choice Equals Higher Engagement in East, West ASL

Modeled after the options they are now giving their students, the American Sign Language (ASL) teaching team at both Lakota East and Lakota West high schools have come up with their own “playlist” of lessons to share among their classes.

That’s because the team has discovered the value in collaborating across building lines. It’s a strategy they adopted several years ago, but that has most recently helped elevate their efforts to introduce more personalized learning models into their classrooms.

“As a department, we’re all working together to experiment with all the different pathways of personalized learning,” said Lakota West ASL teacher **Jessica Frye**. The team’s collaborative approach has allowed them to simultaneously dive into three of the four “plays” that Lakota is encouraging all Lakota teachers to experiment with this school year. Strategies like station rotations, flexible playlists and flipped classrooms give students more choice in and ownership of their learning.

“By allowing students to have more choice, it shows in the product that they create because they’re a bit more interested in what they’re doing when I give them the option,” said Lakota East ASL teacher **Jessica Snyder**.

[READ MORE](#)

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



West's Moody Named GMC Chess Coach of the Year

Lakota West Chemistry teacher **Mark Moody** was recently named GMC Coach of the Year for Chess. Moody has been a coach for 19 years, and his team has finished in the top 10 three times during his tenure. He also works to promote chess throughout Lakota by working with

elementary and junior high schools as well.

Dudukovich Named to All-America Team

Kaiylin Dudukovich, a junior at Lakota West, was named to the United Soccer Coaches High School Girls All-America Team. She is one of only 59 girls in the country to receive this honor. Dudukovich will travel to Baltimore to be recognized at the All-America Ceremony & Reception. Dudukovich cinched the state championship for the Lakota West Girls Soccer team with 13 seconds left on the clock. The team defeated Whitehouse Anthony Wayne to earn the title.

Freedom's Criswell Takes Top Honors in Math Competition

Lakota East hosted a national tournament through Perennial Math on Nov. 16; over 55 schools participated with over 250 mathletes competing. Freedom's **Carson Criswell** won first place among all fourth-graders. Congratulations to Carson and all of Lakota's mathletes!

AROUND LAKOTA



In this month's edition of 'Words of Wisdom', students give their ideas on how to have a relaxing winter break.

Video: Students Share How to Have a Great Winter Break

Winter break is finally here! Need some ideas for how to relax, recharge and have fun over the next two weeks? Look no further! For the next installment of our monthly video series “Words of Wisdom,” we asked students from around Lakota that very question during the month of December. [Click here to hear what they had to say.](#)



New Construction Tools in Lakota Wonder Labs

Community Partners Help with Construction Unit at Lakota Wonder Labs

As one Butler Tech high school student looked around Creekside Early Childhood's Wonder Lab, he kept saying, "I wish I had this when I was in first grade."

Early childhood school Wonder Labs are filled with equipment to help Lakota's youngest learners explore and create using concepts that apply to engineering, science and technology.

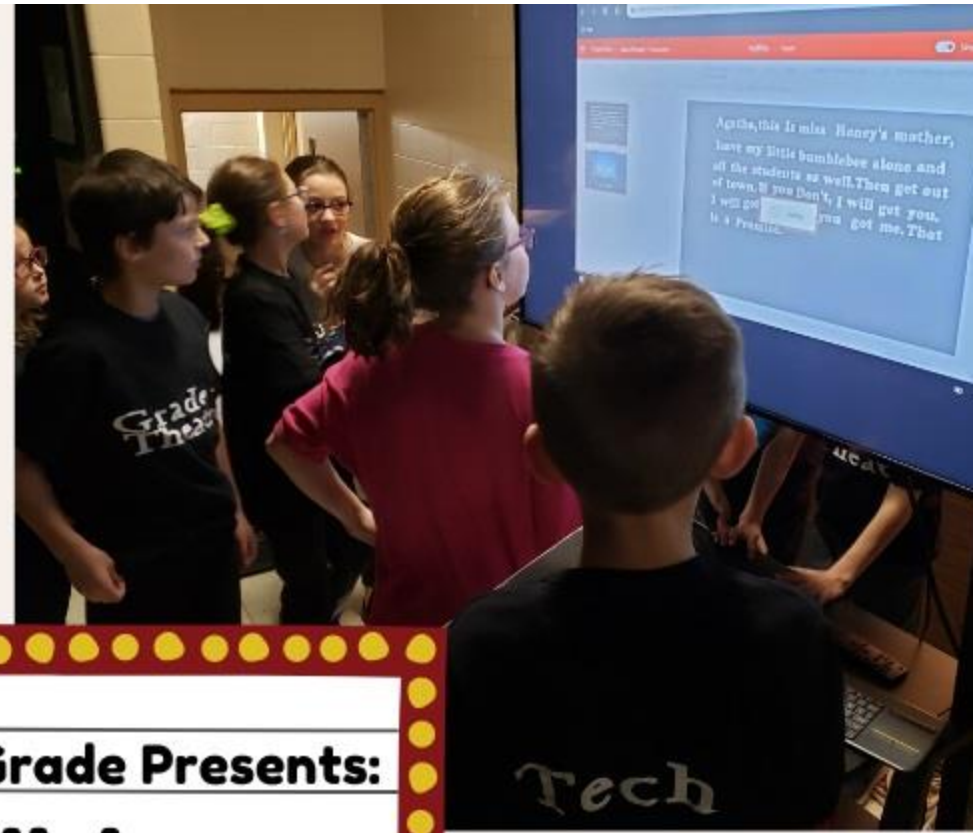
Lakota's Wonder Labs now have a new tool, thanks to that Butler Tech student and his classmates.

At this time every year, **Lauren Seal** and her fellow Wonder Lab teachers embark on a construction unit with their students. They focus on the question, "How do things work?", exploring the world of construction and specifically how tools work. As the kids learn how to use different types of tools, they also use those tools to take old objects apart to see how they were built and how they function.

"Last year the Wonder Lab teachers made boards for the kids to practice with some of the tools, but they weren't very sturdy and barely survived the unit," said Seal. "So this year I reached out to **Katie Bauer** [Lakota's Strategic Partnerships Coordinator] to see if she could connect us with someone who could help."

And that's when the magic began.

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Union Fourth Grade Presents:
Matilda



Union student Courtney Smith said one of the biggest things she learned through *Matilda* was "in order to do a play, you have to step out of your comfort zone."

Union Fourth-Graders: "Kids Can Really Do A Lot When We Work Together"

The process started months ago with the question: "How do we put on the play *Matilda* that is both entertaining and makes sense?"

From there, Union Elementary fourth-graders led the creative process in all aspects of play production: acting/dancing, lighting, sound, special effects, prop-making, scenery-creating and playbill writing.

Putting on the play is an example of project-based learning. Students got to choose which aspect of play production that most appealed to them; they were encouraged to take ownership of their learning and were empowered to make choices from start to finish.

Ellery Wampler, who plays Miss Honey in *Matilda* said "at first things were a bit structured because we hadn't put on a play before and weren't sure what to do. But now it is all just us – with the teachers just watching and making tweaks here and there."

This week the students brought their hard work to the stage, with two performances – including a show for parents that had an audience of over 300.

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Lakota's junior high choirs have been busy performing throughout the community this holiday season -- at local events, nursing homes, and Lakota's early childhood and elementary schools.

Junior High Choirs Share Sounds of the Season

The sounds of the season can be heard throughout our community, thanks, in part, to Lakota's four junior school choirs.

While all four programs perform holiday concerts at their schools, the choir directors all agree that it is important to give back to the community. One way they accomplish this is by performing at community events and nursing homes, as well as caroling at Lakota's early childhood and elementary schools.

Hopewell Junior School choir teacher **Jennifer Akers** knows there are many benefits to community performances. "First, it's a concrete way to build relationships with our residents (who) help support music education and performing arts in our Lakota schools," she said. "I also believe it's valuable for our community members to see the great work our talented student musicians are doing and how their tax dollars are being put to good use furthering our students' music education. And, it's also important for our students to witness how valuable it is to volunteer their time and skills within their community."

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Lakota East Freshman English classes were challenged to use words from 'Tuesdays with Morrie' as inspiration for a community service project.

Service Learning Project Gives East Freshman English Classes Sense of Purpose

Two different English classes at Lakota East Freshman learned as much about their community this past quarter as they did about reading, writing, researching and presenting.

English teacher **Amy Mahaffey**'s "Reading Workshop" class used this excerpt to drive discussion about "Tuesdays with Morrie," a novel they read together as a class. "The way you get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning."

Mahaffey took the discussion a step further, challenging her class to use those words as inspiration for a community service project. While the class filled the board with countless local non-profits they had researched, they ultimately agreed to focus their energy on the residents at Chesterwood Village retirement community. They went to work on collecting games, puzzles, coloring books and other activities to create activity baskets.

"I like knowing that what we did will put a smile on people's faces who don't always have a lot of visitors," said freshman **Chase St. John**, sharing that the class landed on the project because of how the novel opened their eyes to the struggles of the elderly community.

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4E LUNCH & LEARN



Lunch & Learn Series Prepares West Seniors for Life After High School

Life after high school can mean enrollment, employment, military enlistment or venturing into entrepreneurship (the 4Es). Lakota West is helping its seniors prepare for these paths by holding Lunch & Learn events throughout the school year.

“Instead of one large 4E event for students, we wanted to personalize it,” said Assistant Principal **Nicole Isaacs**. Seniors can sign up for many sessions as they like, and they get to enjoy a pizza lunch while gaining invaluable advice from community partners.

“We’ve held one event on entrepreneurship and one on employability so far, with several more planned after winter break,” said Isaacs.

Innovation Specialist **Lindsey Ellis** and Strategic Partnerships Coordinator **Katie Bauer** have helped plan the Lunch & Learn sessions.

Read more to learn about the life and career advice shared with students.

[READ MORE](#)



**A Look
Around Lakota**

**December
2019**



Click above to see some December highlights as Lakota closes out 2019.

A Look Around Lakota: December Video Update

In our last video update for 2019, join Superintendent Matthew Miller and Treasurer/CFO Jenni Logan as they share just a few of the latest happenings around Lakota including:

- The new INCubatoredu@Lakota program at the high schools;
- The latest five-year forecast;
- Collaboration between Creekside Early Childhood School, Butler Tech and Messer Construction; and
- Spreading the sounds of the season through music.

[Click here to view the latest video edition](#) of A Look Around Lakota.



Superintendent Miller is just one of two superintendents on the Governor's School Safety Working Group.

Lakota Superintendent Joins Governor's School Safety Working Group

Lakota Local Schools Superintendent **Matthew Miller** has been named to Governor Mike DeWine's new School Safety Working Group.

Governor DeWine called for the creation of the working group in August when announcing the development of the Ohio School Safety Center, a new statewide office focused on assisting educators and law enforcement in preventing, preparing for, and responding to threats

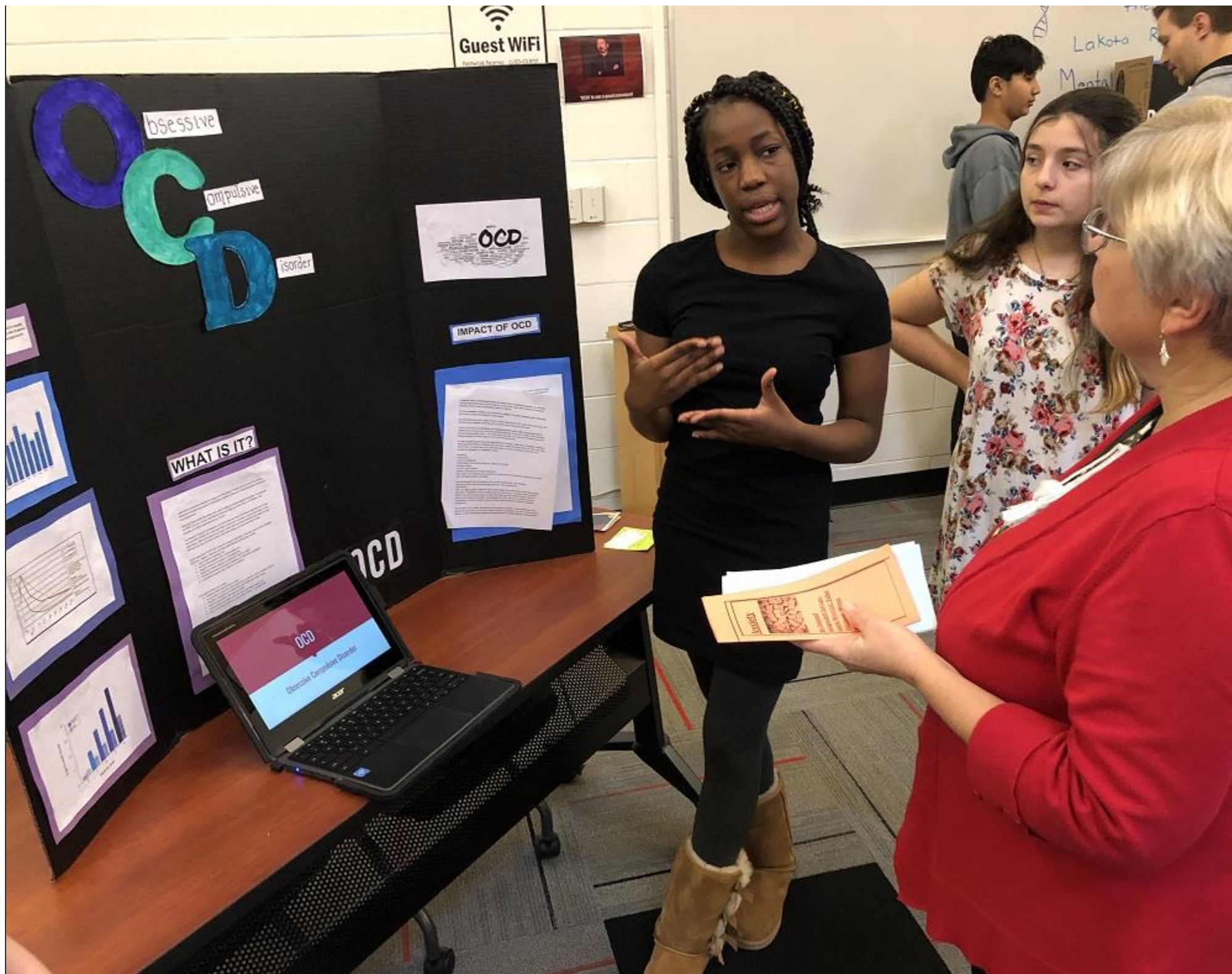
and acts of violence, including self-harm. The working group, which will be led by the Ohio Department of Public Safety, will evaluate current issues regarding school safety and advise the Ohio School Safety Center on its work.

"Members of this working group all have a common goal of making Ohio's schools as safe as they possibly can be," said Governor DeWine. "I'm confident that this group will be a great asset as they work to promote a safe environment for Ohio's school students and school employees."

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FEATURED PHOTOS



Guest WiFi

O
C
D
Obsessive
Compulsive
Disorder

OCD

IMPACT OF OCD

WHAT IS IT?

OCD

OCD
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Lakota
Mental

For the second year in a row, Ridge Junior School eighth-graders dedicated eight health classes to developing a Mental Health Expo for their peers and the larger community. Matthew Abshear's three classes cycled through the Innovation Hub on Dec. 11, presenting their research on mental health disorders like anxiety, depression, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Bipolar Disorder, just to name a few. Students also invited local mental health partners to share their expertise, including NAMI Butler County and Beckett Springs.



Big results can come from some of our youngest learners. While learning about community and helping others, first-graders at Heritage ECS decided to join forces and help a community organization right here in Butler County.

The students worked hard to create items to sell at a Marketplace they hosted earlier this week. The money raised would be donated to Family Promise, a non-profit organization that helps people who are homeless.

And sell they did! While some students thought they raised \$40 or maybe even \$100, they found out yesterday that they actually raised nearly \$2,400!



Students at Liberty Early Childhood School got to experience native African dance and customs last week. The Bi-Okoto Drummers' Dec. 11 visit, made possible by the school's PTO, got students and staff, alike, up on their feet and moving to the live music performed by the group's musicians and dancers.

NEW BUSINESS

2020-2021 Preschool Registration Open through Jan. 31

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.

An informational meeting for parents will be held on Jan. 16 at VanGorden at 5:30 p.m. in the school's cafeteria. Staff members will be available to answer questions and to give an overview of the program. They will share the Creative Curriculum and Acelero Adaptation that preschool teachers follow, as well as what the "life in the day of a preschool child" looks like.

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 [preschool registration webpage](#) 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.

First Lakota Local Science Fair Accepting Entries through Jan. 31

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 [register online by Jan. 31, 2020](#).
3. Follow the recommended framework, as per the Lakota Local Science Fair [information guidelines](#).
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 lakotasciencefair@gmail.com.

Jan. 23 & 30: Alternate Credit Information Nights for Secondary Students

For students entering seventh through twelfth grade in the 2020-2021 school year, information sessions about Lakota's [College Credit Plus \(CCP\)](#), [Credit Flexibility](#), [Summer School](#) and [PE Waiver](#) options are being hosted at both high schools. Representatives from area colleges and universities will be available to answer questions about the CCP program.

Parents and students are invited to attend either session, as the same information will be shared each evening.

Thursday, January 23

Lakota West
5-7 p.m.

Thursday, January 30

Lakota East
5-7 p.m.

[View the Alternative Credit Information Sessions flyer](#) for more information.

Story Time with Cherokee's Principal on Jan. 23

As part of its ongoing efforts to build community support around early literacy, Lakota's early childhood and elementary principals are taking turns hosting "Story Time with a Lakota Principal" this school year.

Lakota students are invited to the Midpointe Library in the Foundry at Liberty Center on Jan. 23 for the next Story Time. From 6 - 7 p.m., students can hear a Lakota principal share one of his or her favorite stories. Students are also encouraged to bring a book to exchange for another book they may take home with them. Principal hosts are scheduled as follows:

- Jan. 23 - Valerie Montgomery (Cherokee Elementary)

- Feb. 20 - Mary Brophy (Hopewell ECS)
 - March 26 - John Mattingly (Adena Elementary)
-

Next Coffee Chat on Jan. 8

Lakota's next Coffee Chat is set for Wednesday, Jan. 8 from 8 - 9 a.m. at Coffee Beans & Brew.

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. [Click here to view the Coffee Chats scheduled for this school year.](#)

Fellas & Fiction Literacy Program for Boys in Grades 1-6

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, Jan. 14 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. [View the Fellas & Fiction event flyer.](#)

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

- Monday, Dec. 23 - Thursday, Jan. 2
Winter Break: No School
- Friday, Jan. 3
No School for Students/ Professional Development Day for Staff
- Wednesday, Jan. 8
Coffee Chat with the Superintendent
at Coffee Beans & Brew
8 - 9 a.m.
- Thursday, Jan. 8
Community Conversation: District Culture
Lakota East Innovation Hub
6:30 p.m.
- Monday, Jan. 13
Board of Education Meeting
Plains Junior School
6:30 p.m.
(Organizational Meeting at 5:30 p.m.)
- Tuesday, Jan. 14
Community Conversation: Custodial Grandparents

ON THE RADAR

Announcements & Opportunities

December Social Media Challenge: #WEareRecharging

As we gear up for the holidays, we want to know just how Lakota students, staff and their families are planning to relax and recharge over the upcoming winter break. What are you doing to enjoy time with friends and family and come back ready to take on second semester?

Throughout December, we invite you to share your winter break plans and highlights on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or all three!

To add your post to the growing list of stories, be sure to tag Lakota Local Schools ("Lakota Schools" on Facebook, @LakotaDistrict on Twitter and Lakota_District on Instagram) and include #WEareRecharging in your posts. Join and follow the conversations at #WEareRecharging.

Call for 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.

at Lakota West Community Room
6:30 p.m.

- Tuesday, Jan. 14
Fellas & Fiction (Boys Grades 1-6)
at X-Quisite Cutz
6 p.m.
- Monday, Jan. 20
Martin Luther King Day (No School)
- Thursday, Jan. 23
Story Time with a Lakota Principal (Cherokee's Valerie Montgomery hosts)
at Midpointe Library, Liberty Center
6 p.m.

[See Full
Calendar](#)

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.

The open house event features representatives from both for-profit businesses and non-profit organizations. They will be available all at one time and in one location to share information and answer questions about their summer offerings.

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 www.lakotaonline.com/summerfair. 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.

Jan. 9: Community Conversation on District Culture

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.

The meetings are informal and use a unique format. They're led by a professional facilitator so that our district's leadership team can focus on listening and not on running the meeting. It's not a presentation but is real conversation. We also spend time in small groups, where many people are more comfortable sharing their ideas. All are welcome to attend.

District Culture Community Conversation

Thursday, Jan. 9 @ 6:30 p.m.

Lakota East Innovation Hub

You're invited to talk with others about building a sense of community and support within a school and across a district. How do we build a culture of respect for others, and for self, and ensure that students feel emotionally and physically safe? How do we ensure that all students are valued and cared for? How do we promote above the line behavior and teach children about $E+R=O$? How can we learn from each other, listen to everyone's voice and challenge stereotypes?

Everyone in Lakota schools should feel safe and supported. Talk with our school district leaders about your ideas for how Lakota can make sure that all its students feel listened to and appreciated.

Check Your Weather Communication Preferences

Let the dropping temperatures serve as a reminder to check your Lakota communication preferences for possible weather-related delays and closures in the coming months.

In addition to posting an alert on the district website, mobile app, social media accounts and local television and radio stations, Lakota also issues a phone call, text message and email to anyone who has selected these options for weather-related alerts in their School Messenger account. Lakota's notification system allows the district to differentiate between general, emergency and weather-related notifications, helping parents, staff and community members receive different types of alerts in the manner they wish to receive them.

If you are the official parent or guardian of a current Lakota student or a current employee with a valid Lakota email address, please [log into School Messenger](#) to make sure the phone numbers and email addresses being automatically pulled from Home Access Center (parents) and active directory (staff) are accurate and up-to-date. To

view and modify your weather-related preferences, select "Preferences," then "Weather-Related Notifications."

Others in the Lakota community who are not parents, guardians or employees and wish to subscribe to district communications may do so via [Lakota's self-sign-up portal](#). [Click here for more information about signing up for or logging into your School Messenger account for Lakota communications.](#)

MLK Celebration of Unity

In the spirit of honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s values and ideals surrounding diversity and inclusivity, our community's annual observance of Martin Luther King Day will include a new component this year.

The "Celebration of Unity Expo" - to be held in conjunction with the regular MLK Day "Live the Dream: Our Declaration of Unity" march, program and lunch on Jan. 20 - invites individuals or families to share information about their culture with their West Chester and Liberty township neighbors.

[Click here for more details about this opportunity to get involved, including the participation form.](#)



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