

December 6, 2019





Personalized Learning: Station Rotations

Personalized Learning in Action: Station Rotation

Walking into **Heather Blaylock**'s seventh grade science class at Plains Junior School, you might see a group of students wiggling a piece of string. Or stretching out a Slinky. Or watching a video on their Chromebooks. Why? They're expanding their knowledge and putting what they've learned about wavelengths into action as part of a personalized learning technique called station rotations.

Just as the name suggests, students rotate in small groups among several stations, completing different activities at each one. "The students have different goals or objectives they have to meet at each station," Blaylock explained. One of the benefits of station rotation is that it gives the teacher more time to work one-on-one with individuals or small groups of students. "I'm either helping at a particular station or I'm walking from station to station, jumping in where I know they'll have questions," she said.

Jordan Otabil sees the benefit of more time with her teacher. "When we're just regular sitting in class, (Mrs. Blaylock) has to go one-by-one-by-one. But when we're in station rotations, she can work with small groups of us." That's definitely an added benefit that Blaylock sees as well.

[READ MORE](#)[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



Lakota Board Votes to Reinstate Freshman Transportation

Busing for Freshman Students Will Go Into Effect During 2020-2021 School Year

At its Nov. 18 meeting, the Lakota Board of Education voted unanimously to reinstate transportation services for freshman students, effective for the 2020-21 school year for students living outside of neighborhoods with walking paths or sidewalks that lead to schools.

"This topic has been a major point of discussion in our community for several years," said Board President Julie Shaffer. "Since high school busing was eliminated in 2011, the board has had to weigh the financial implications of fully reinstating transportation with the requests of our community. Through the district's diligent fiscal responsibility over the years, we are now in a better position to offer busing to our freshman students beginning in the fall."

The decision comes after several weeks of deliberation by the board. In addition to the updated five-year forecast that was presented at the meeting, the board's analysis has included everything from enrollment projections to forecasted costs from Lakota's contracted transportation provider to a recent community survey initiated by the board. Those results reinforced an overwhelming message the board has heard for several years from parents.

"The subject of high school busing has been brought up time and time again through Community Conversations, coffee chats, board meetings and other stakeholder interactions," Shaffer said. "The majority of the decisions the school board makes stem from these types of discussions and what we believe is in the best interest of our students while balancing our financial objectives."

[READ MORE](#)

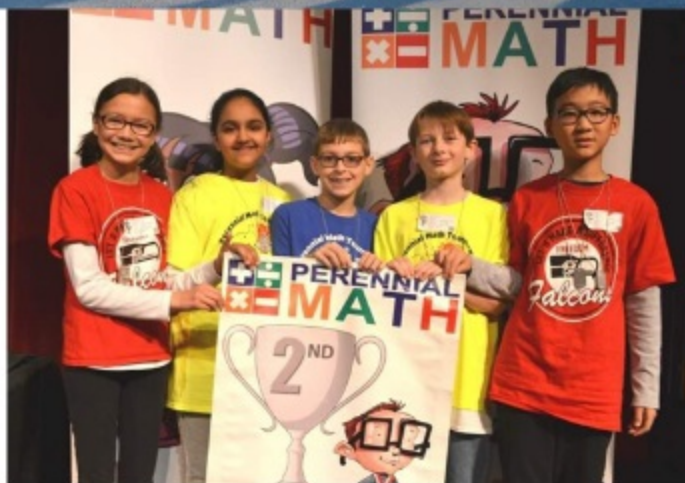




SHOUT OUTS



**Lakota West Marching Band
Makes History**



Perennial Math Competition Top Finishers

West Marching Band Makes History at National Bands of America

For the first time in its history, the Lakota West Marching Band advanced to Semi-Finals at the Bands of America National Championship in Indianapolis, where they competed against more than 90 bands representing 20 states.

The historic advancement placed the Firebirds among the top 30 marching bands in the nation. Congratulations to the Lakota West Marching Band on an incredible season. Click here to view [photos from the year's events and competitions](#).

Lakota Students Take Home Top Prizes in Math Competition

Lakota East hosted a national tournament through Perennial Math on Nov. 16; over 55 schools participated with over 250 mathletes competing. Lakota students took home many of the top prizes. Congratulations to these mathletes!

Freedom Elementary

Third Grade

3rd Place: Garnet Magnuson

Fourth Grade

1st Place: Carson Criswell

Fifth Grade

2nd Place: Abby Kipp (tie)

3rd Place: Owen Schindler

2nd Place Team: Tima Kholodov, Samira Zaynitdinova, Abby Kipp, Owen Schindler, Trevor Kaszubski (tie)

Sixth Grade

1st Place: Youngwoo Choi (tie)

2nd Place Team: Banjot Kaur, Youngwoo Choi, Ben Ward, Lilly Duhaime, Ivan Ashford (tie)

Independence Elementary

Third Grade

1st Place: Marielle Rose (tie)

2nd Place Team: Pierce Bikoko, Jackson Springmyer, Marielle Rose, Jackson Snyder

Fourth Grade

1st Place: Daniel Coons (tie)

3rd Place: Nathan Lee (tie)

3rd Place Team: Nile Knutson, Nathan Lee, Daniel Coons, Dale Damon

Sixth Grade

1st Place: Isaac Baumgarte (tie)

3rd Place: Aaron McClain and Christian Coons (tie)

1st Place Team: Christian Coons, Carter Ott, Isaac Baumgarte, Sam Greer, Aaron McClain

3rd Place Team: Keir Nyamsi, Varun Das, Jason Wissel, Michael Warburton

Woodland Elementary

Third Grade

2nd Place: Jasper Kiessling

3rd Place: Leo Panyko

1st Place Team: Eli Brandis, Adam Mansfield, Bradley Dusina, Leo Panyko, Alex Puddu

Fifth Grade

3rd Place Team: Sydney Allen, Leah Blackburn, Graham Kidd, Reina Ryan, Audrey Steinke

Sixth Grade

2nd Place: Jack Doyle

Lakota Staff Give \$25K through Casual for a Cause

Lakota's annual staff giving campaign, "Casual for a Cause," amounted to nearly \$25,000 in donations this year. The contributions will be divided evenly among five community partners, including the Boys & Girls Club of West Chester/Liberty, the Community Foundation of West Chester Liberty, Edge Teen Center, Reach Out Lakota and Caring Community Collaborative.

"Casual for a Cause" is Lakota's approach to turning the tradition of casual Fridays into an overwhelming display – at every one of our buildings – of our staff's commitment to giving back to our community. Since its inception three years ago, Lakota staff have donated more than \$68,000 to local causes.

AROUND LAKOTA

WORDS OF WISDOM

What are you thankful for?

#WEareLakota

Click the photo above to see what our Lakota students are thankful for this year.

Words of Wisdom: What are you thankful for?

What are you thankful for? 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 November. [Click here to hear what they had to say.](#)



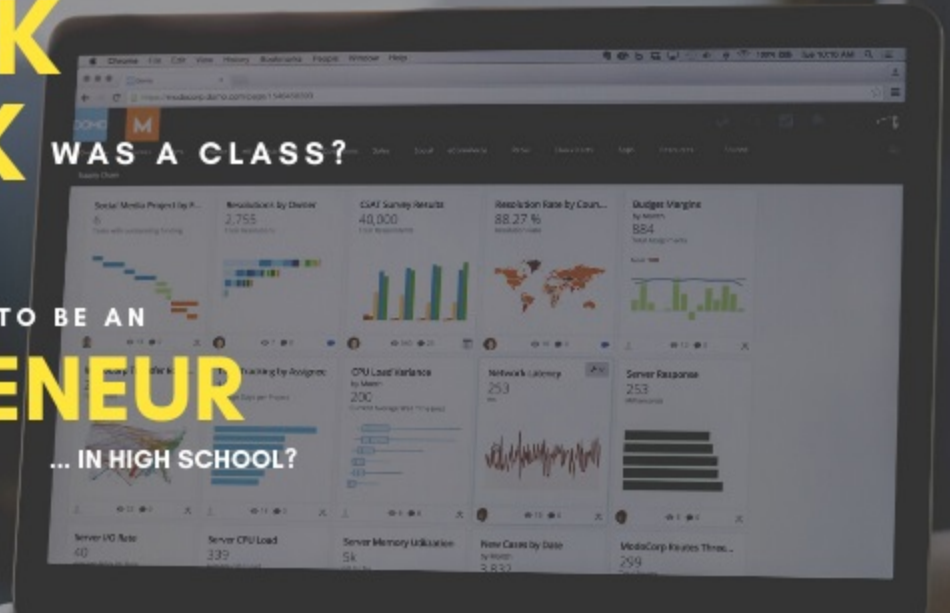
WHAT IF **SHARK
TANK**

WAS A CLASS?

WHAT IF YOU COULD LEARN TO BE AN

ENTREPRENEUR

... IN HIGH SCHOOL?



WELCOME TO

incubatoredu@lakota

PARENT & STUDENT INFORMATION NIGHT



**THURSDAY, DEC. 12
7 P.M. | MIAMI UNIVERSITY VOA**

**WE are
Lakota**

Lakota is launching a unique program that will give students a true taste of what it is like to be an entrepreneur.

Introducing INCubatoredu@Lakota: High School 'Shark Tank'

Lakota is the second school district in Ohio - and one of just 120 nationwide - to make “Shark Tank” a class for its high-schoolers next school year. Families are invited to get a sneak peek at an upcoming information session on Dec. 12.

Officially called INCubatoredu@Lakota, the entrepreneurial experience is designed for upperclassmen who will work alongside professional mentors to ideate and develop their own product or service. In the end, they will compete against their classmates, pitching their ideas to local investors who will award seed money to help make the top ideas a reality. The program is sponsored by Miami University’s Farmer School of Business John W. Altman Institute for Entrepreneurship.

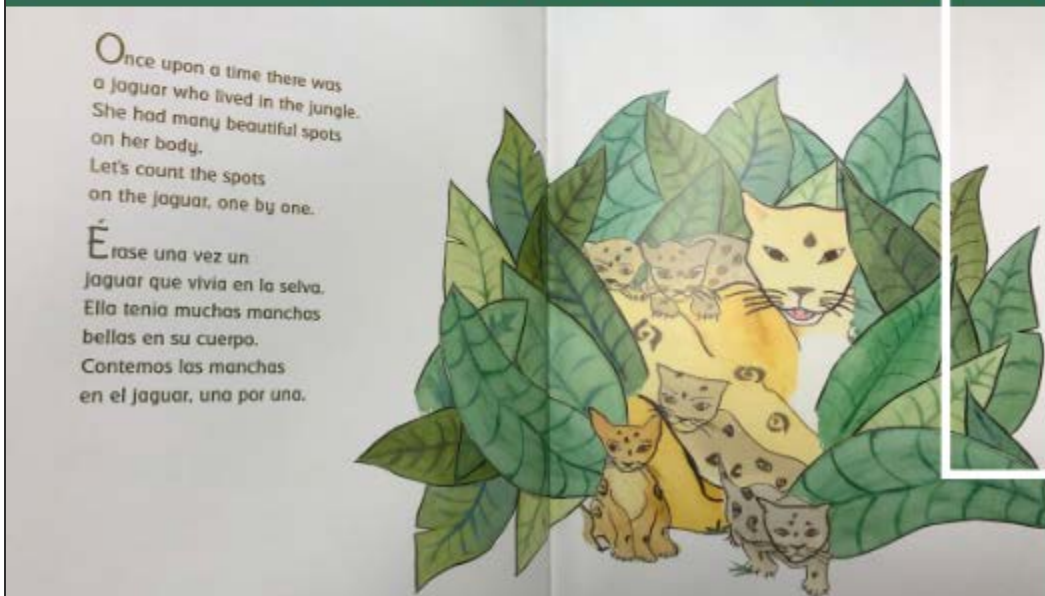
“The 4Es - Enrollment, Employment, Enlistment and Entrepreneurship - are more than just a mantra for what we promote to our students as options after graduation. We are always striving to make sure our programming supports it,” said Lakota Superintendent **Matthew Miller**. “We are excited to bring INCubatoredu to our students because it is designed to give them a true taste of what it takes to be an entrepreneur in today’s world.”

[READ MORE](#)

[Register Here](#)



Latino Family Literacy Project



Over the last 10 weeks, the Latino Family Literacy program has taken off at Creekside. Organizers are gearing up for another round at Heritage Early Childhood School after the start of the new year.

Latino Family Literacy Project Takes Off at Creekside

As the saying goes, “Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.” Such was the inspiration behind a new family literacy program designed specifically for Spanish-speaking families at Creekside Early Childhood School this year.

“Knowing how important the home connection is to reading development, I was looking for something to help support my English Learner families with reading to their children at home,” said Creekside Principal **Linda Pavlinac**, noting how much more difficult that can be in households where the dominant language is not English.

What she landed on was the Latino Family Literacy Project, a national research-based program that facilitates side-by-side reading in bilingual households. It was funded at Creekside this year mostly through federal funds designated for parent engagement among English Learners.

Every Wednesday night since early October, Creekside parents and their children have been gathering in the school's media center to read together. They are joined by an interpreter, **Cesar Vanegas**, who also serves as an instructional aide at Lakota West High School, as well as his co-leader for the new program, Creekside ESL teacher **Sara Kennedy**.

[READ MORE](#)

TURKEYS + DECIMALS



= REAL
WORLD
LEARNING

In the interest of real world learning, Woodland teachers invited 20-year local business owner Steve Overberg into their class to offer up a challenge to their students: Create a visual display for his store to help customers calculate how much turkey they need to buy, based on the size and makeup of their Thanksgiving guest list.

Woodland Team Transforms Thanksgiving Turkeys into Real World Math

Some fifth-graders at Woodland Elementary made it easier for local shoppers to calculate just how much turkey they needed to buy for Thanksgiving this year. And they did it all by adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing decimals.

It's a little bit of project-based learning, real world learning and personalized learning all rolled into one lesson that Woodland teachers **Christina Butler** and **Jakeb Knight** dreamt up this year for the 130-plus math students they share. The final products live on in the storefront of a longtime local favorite, Steve's Meats & Deli off Cincinnati-Dayton Road.

"The extra time it took to get everything up and running was worth it in the end," Butler said. "The kids absolutely loved it and even realized the importance of math in the real world. That's what you want."

"For real world learning to work, you have to make that connection that what they are doing is going to help their community," Knight added. "You really have to have that buy-in and authenticity for it to work."

[READ MORE](#)



29 students, including fourth-graders Madelyn Youkilis (left) and Aubrey Lewis (right), are learning French as part of an after school club at Independence Elementary School.

French Club a Big Hit at Independence Elementary

“Répétez, s’il vous plait” greets you when you walk into the Innovation Hub at Independence Elementary School on Mondays. Why? Twenty-nine students are participating in a new after-school club led by Lakota East French teacher **Tiffany Ashley**.

Wanting to expose younger students to a new language, Ashley reached out to the Independence PTA to see if they would be interested - and they whole-heartedly agreed.

The hour-long sessions will run for eight weeks this semester. It’s been so popular that Ashley, with the help of some of her Lakota East advanced placement (AP) students, will start a second session next semester. Principal **Greg Finke** is looking forward to extending the opportunity. The club “provides an enrichment opportunity that we have not been able to offer previously,” he explained. “Anytime we can offer a club or activity to engage students in learning something new, I feel it is a tremendous benefit to them academically, socially and emotionally.”

After mentioning the club to her AP students, senior **Elena Cittadino** asked Ashley if she could help. Now the club has three “high school buddies” who run small group activities each week. “It has been beneficial in so many ways,” said Ashley. “I think the younger students enjoy working with the high school kids, and the little ones really respond to them. I have even heard that one of the AP girls has achieved ‘princess status’ with one of the third-graders,” she joked.

[READ MORE](#)



West Freshman "Real World 101"



"Real World 101" was an overwhelming success at the Lakota West Freshman School. Organizers hope it will become an annual event.

"Real World 101" Offered 27 Sessions to West Freshmen

Last week, West Freshman students took part in the school's first ever "Real World 101". It was a day of learning, self-discovery and preparation for the future. Students were able to choose from 27 different sessions, everything from finance basics to mock interviews to college applications/scholarships.

Teachers **Jen Parrett** and **Jason French** began organizing the massive undertaking back in July, enlisting the help of many others.

"Real World 101 is a combination of several activities we have offered in the past, like the I.D. (inclusion and diversity) Conference, Life Skills, Future Ready Learning, and the Holiday Party -- all in one big day," explained Parrett. "We wanted to cover self-care, job readiness, community involvement, values, all kinds of things."

Students attended eight self-selected sessions, plus one session with the counselor and one with the principal.

[READ MORE](#)



Watch last month's "A Look Around Lakota" video update for some of the latest highlights around Lakota.

A Look Around Lakota: November Video Update

In this month's video edition of A Look Around Lakota, join Superintendent Matthew Miller as he shares just a few of the highlights at Lakota Local Schools during November, including:

- Using Skype for a real world learning experience in the classroom;
- A look inside our elementary schools' innovation hubs;

- Building relationships with "Talk to me Tuesdays"; and
- A closer look at how flexible playlists are helping our teachers personalize learning for our students.

[Click here to watch this month's video update.](#)

**View All
District News**

FEATURED PHOTOS



The Lakota East Choir's 10th annual holiday concert in partnership with the West Chester Symphony Orchestra drew more than 1,800 attendees on Tuesday night. First staged at Lakota East in 2009, the popular community event quickly outgrew the space and is now held at Princeton Pike Church of God.

This year's performance featured 280 singers, 65 instrumentals, seven dancers from Mary St. Romain Dance Studio and six costumed characters. The Singing Thunderhawks presented a program of approximately 20 songs, including holiday favorites and medleys from "Home Alone", "Frozen" and "A Charlie Brown Christmas".



The Lakota West Choir shared the sounds of the season at this week's holiday luncheon for seniors at St. John's Church. After performing for the crowd, the students and seniors sang holiday songs together. It's an annual tradition that featured a creative new twist this year: student groups each took on a different holiday song and made it their own.



The Endeavor Elementary community came together on Nov. 26 to celebrate the school's vibrant cultural diversity. The school's 683 students represent 46 different countries and 28 languages. The Celebration of Nations event included a school-wide assembly, a parade of nations, musical and dance demonstrations, classroom-based activities, guest readings, henna art and door decorating.

NEW BUSINESS

Social Emotional Learning the Focus of November 'Listen Up Lakota'

This month's edition of "Listen Up Lakota," a monthly radio program powered by 89.3FM WMKV, will focus on Lakota's efforts around social emotional learning, as shared by these special guests: Lakota's Director of Student Services **Lori Brown**, Intervention Specialist at Lakota East Freshman **Po Reffitt** and Hopewell ECS Psychologist **Lora Lemay**.

Three Lakota teachers, including Reffitt, helped write Ohio's new Social Emotional Learning standards, which have helped provide a framework for staff across all grade levels and subject areas to support the whole child. At Lakota, the implementation of those standards have been complemented by a whole host of programs and partnerships that support social and emotional learning.

Tune in at 5 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 20 or 1 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 26 on 89.9FM WLHS or 89.3FM WMKV. You can also stream it live at WMKVFM.org or download the WMKV app. The interview will be available as a podcast on the station's website after the first air date. WLHS/WMKV is a member-supported public radio with its studios located at Maple Knoll Village in Springdale.

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 Exhibitors: Summer Fun Fair Set for March 2 & 4

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 Local Schools 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.

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. Exhibitors are encouraged to participate both evenings and will be provided with a table and chairs.

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.

Dec. 9: Lakota LEADS Parent Connect Series on Executive Functioning

Join Lakota LEADS for an informative program featuring expert advice to help your child with their executive function skills. Renee Mattson M.Ed. is a licensed intervention specialist for children with specific learning and behavior needs, as well as a licensed educator for elementary and gifted children, parent coach, and adjunct faculty member at Xavier University.

All parents are welcome at Lakota West Freshman on Dec. 9 at 7 p.m. to hear this program titled "Getting Things Done...Sharpening and Supporting Your Gifted Child's Executive Function Skills." [View the event flyer](#) for more information.

Lakota LEADS, or Lakota's Enrichment and Academic Development of Students, is the district's parent affiliate of the Ohio Association for Gifted Children. Visit the [Lakota LEADS website](#) for more information.

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

- Friday, Dec. 6
Theatre Production: It's a Wonderful Life
at Lakota West Theater
7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Dec. 7
Theatre Production: It's a Wonderful Life
at Lakota West Theater
7:30 p.m.
- Monday, Dec. 9
Board of Education Meeting

ON THE RADAR

Announcements & Opportunities

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

at Plains Junior School
6:30 p.m.

- Monday, Dec. 9
Executive Functioning Skills (hosted by Lakota LEADS)
at West Freshman Theater
7 p.m.
- Tuesday, Dec. 10
Fellas & Fiction
at X-Quisite Cutz
6 p.m.
- Thursday, Dec. 12
INCubatoredu Entrepreneurship Class: Parent & Student Info Night
at Miami VOA
7 p.m.
- Friday, Dec. 13
Lakota West Swing Dance
at Lakota West
7:30 - 10:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, Dec. 18
Lakota East Freshman Student Fanfare
at Lakota East Freshman School
6:55 a.m.
- Monday, Dec. 23 - Thursday, Jan. 2
Winter Break (No School)
- Friday, Jan. 3
Professional Development Day for Staff/No School for Students

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.](#)

Dec. 6 & 7: West Theater's "It's a Wonderful Life"

Get ready to start celebrating the holiday season with Lakota West's upcoming theater production 'It's a Wonderful Life, The Radio Play.' Performances will be held on Dec. 6 and 7 at 7:30 p.m.

[Click here for \\$12 presale tickets](#); at the door, tickets will be \$15.

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.

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.](#)

Real-World Learning: Internships, Apprenticeships and Volunteering

High school students should keep their eye on Lakota's Internship, Apprenticeship and Volunteering Opportunities web page. New listings include a paid administrative internship in the financial industry.

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.](#)



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