

November 1, 2019



WE are Lakota



SAVING THE BEES



PERSONALIZED LEARNING SERIES

FOCUS ON: PROJECT BASED LEARNING



Student Engagement 'Sky High' During Save the Bees Project

Did you know that bees are attracted to caffeine and can be trained to sniff out bombs? Or that they are confused by noises coming from cell phones?

These are just some of the facts fifth-graders at Independence Elementary School learned during their project based learning (PBL) assignment "Save the Bees." During her unit on ecosystems, teacher **Laura Brown** thought it would a great opportunity to try PBL for the first time. "I did the training that Lakota offered in June," she said. "I created this during that time and went all in!"

Teachers throughout Lakota have been challenged to try one of four personalized learning "plays" this year: [Flipped Classrooms](#), [Flexible Playlists](#), Station Rotation or Project Based Learning. Brown chose PBL because she saw the natural fit for her students with science. While her classes have always been hands-on, incorporating activities and choice into students' learning, "this was much more open-ended and tied to a real world problem," she explained. The problem: How can we, as ecologists, help convince the community to save the bee population?

Students were given free choice as to how they chose to present their information and solution. Working either by themselves or with a partner, students researched why the bee population is declining and possible solutions. "Without honey bees to pollinate our crops, the human race would be wiped out in four years," cautioned **Gabriel Blenman**. "It's really surprising for something so small, that's in our everyday lives, (to) change our lives. It's really fascinating," he continued.

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VIDEO: Words of Wisdom Focuses on Helping Others

From our district-wide "Stuff the Bus" food drive to "Hawks for a Cure" to Stockings for Soldiers, this month has been all about making a difference and helping others in our community.

That's why we dedicated this month's social media challenge to celebrating "National Make a Difference Day" and now, **this month's "Words of Wisdom" video** to the importance of helping others. A few Lakota students share their best insights for why it's important to serve others. Look for more "Words of Wisdom" throughout the year in this new video series!



East Boys
Soccer in
Regional
Elite 8
(left)

East Girls
Cross
Country
Statebound
(right)



East's Leisten Wins
'Inspire Award'
(below)



West Girls Soccer Battles for Regional Title (below)



East Senior Wins Grant Us Hope's 'Inspire Award'

Lakota East senior and Hope Squad member **Ellie Leisten** was one of three area students to receive the “Inspire Award” at last week’s Butterfly Bash hosted by Grant Us Hope, the Cincinnati-based non-profit focused on creating communities of leadership and advocacy in support of teen suicide prevention, mental wellness, trauma support and school safety programs around Ohio. Lakota East Hope Squad Advisor Erin Schneider nominated Ellie for the honor, calling her “the poster child for positivity.” Congratulations to Ellie for being recognized for her leadership at school and around our community!

East Girls Cross Country State Bound

The Lakota East girls cross country team battled brutal conditions last Saturday in Troy, Ohio at the Southwest Regional Championships, where they ran their way to a second consecutive regional runner-up finish as a team.

Lakota East students and staff sent the Lady Thunderhawks off to the state championship in fanfare fashion on Friday. The team will compete for the State Championship on Saturday, Nov. 2 at National Trail Raceway in Hebron, Ohio, beginning at 12:30 p.m.

East Boys Soccer, West Girls Soccer Battle for Regional Titles in Back-to-Back Games Saturday

After beating No. 1 seed Beavercreek Beavers last weekend, the Lakota East boys soccer team captured the program’s sixth overall District Championship and advanced to the Sweet 16 Regional Semifinal, where they claimed a victory against the Elder Panthers Wednesday night.

After winning its first District Championship since 2011 last weekend, the Lakota West girls soccer team took it a step further and advanced to the regional championship on Tuesday night after a 5-3 win over Seton in the Sweet 16 Regional Semifinals.

Both teams move on to the Elite 8 level of competition to battle for a regional title and will compete back-to-back at Princeton High School this Saturday. Best of luck to our Thunderhawks taking the field at 4 p.m., followed by our Firebirds at 7 p.m.

AROUND LAKOTA



Students at Heritage ECS are the first in Ohio to try out a new learning tool called Norilla that teaches STEM skills -- and they even got to video conference with the inventor to learn about the design process.

Heritage ECS Pilots Mixed-Reality Game, Learns Design Process from Inventor

Heritage Early Childhood School students are the first in Ohio to try out a new interactive learning tool called Norilla. The mixed-reality game bridges physical and virtual worlds, encouraging students to experiment with 3D objects as they learn basic Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) skills, along with simple physics principles like base, height, weight and width.

In the corner of the school's Innovation Hub, piloted at the ECS level this year, two Heritage students stand captivated at the Norilla table. They follow the prompts to build two different towers displayed on the screen before being asked to predict which one will fall once the table shakes. After answering "why" to the outcome, they use what they've learned to face off against each other and build a tower that will remain standing.

Innovation Specialist **Jenny Haynes** has witnessed countless interactions like this one and approves wholeheartedly of its relevance to early childhood learning.

"It mimics the exact design process we ask students to use when building critical thinking skills," said Haynes, who is excited to see the concepts come alive in the second graders' annual bridge building project later this year. "It basically asks students to make a prediction, observe the results and then explain why before trying it for themselves."

To take the experience a step further, Haynes organized a video conference between Norilla's creator and a fellow at Carnegie Mellon University, **Nesra Yannier**, and a second grade class who prepared interview questions based on their experiences with the tool. For 45 minutes, the class raised questions about the design process Yannier used to bring Norilla to life.

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Place Value Rap Video Takes Learning to New Levels

About this time every year, Gifted Intervention Specialist **Erin Maddox** shows her fourth-graders a rap video to help them learn about number place value.

Inspired by the “WE are In This Together” back-to-school music video that featured Lakota teachers and administrators, Maddox’s students came up with a new way to learn place value concepts. “We were given a challenge to learn all of the lyrics in the rap video, but then our class came up with this whole crazy idea to actually make our own video,” said fourth grader **Keira Phair**.

Maddox didn’t think the idea was crazy at all. Student voice and choice are all a part of the district’s emphasis on personalized learning. “With all of the new resources we have in our Innovation Hub, this seemed like the perfect opportunity to allow my students to take ownership of their learning,” said Maddox.

So the Math Plus fourth-graders ran with the idea, working in small groups to create sections of the video from start to finish. Each group worked together to tackle tasks that included creating video backdrops, recording lyrics and developing choreography.

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Service
Real-world
Project based
Personalized

Learning



When Woodland sixth-graders were asked a simple question, "How can you help your community?", they responded by collecting over 1500 for the Animal Friends Humane Society.

Woodland Service Learning Project Puts Students in the Driver's Seat

What happens when you give a group of sixth-graders the freedom to lead their own community action project? They fill half their classroom with 1,500-plus donations for the Animal Friends Humane Society and facilitate a special celebrity dog appearance for the winning class.

“It was 100 percent their idea from start to finish. I simply facilitated the process,” said Woodland Elementary School’s gifted intervention specialist, **Stephanie Fulmer**, who took the first step for any project-based learning activity. She posed a question.

“How can you help your community?” she challenged them before setting them loose.

Her students waffled a bit to come up with a collective response before eventually landing on the story of “Trooper the Dog.” The abandoned puppy who became blind and lost his two hind legs in a train accident quickly became their inspiration for a school-wide donation drive.

“We immediately wanted to find a way to help other animals who were homeless, abused or lost - not just anywhere, but right here in our own community,” said Woodland sixth-grader **Emily Steinke**, whose grin was the best indication of a great learning experience and successful outcome.

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RISE time!

Who WE Are



Ridge's Reimagined Advisory Period Focuses on Building Relationships

A new school year is also an opportunity to try new things. And that's exactly what Ridge Junior School Principal **Ben Brown** set out to do.

Brown approached the school's innovation specialist, **Tiffany Rexhausen**, during the district's "Wednesday Workouts" learning sessions this summer. He wanted to reimagine his school's advisory period and enlisted Rexhausen to help. Now known as RISE, Brown envisioned a program embedded in the day to encourage his staff to continue building relationships with their students. RISE stands for:

- **Realize**
- **Innovate**
- **Serve**
- **Empower**

"This was an opportunity to create an acronym that is tied to the [Portrait of a \(Lakota\) Graduate](#)," said Brown. The portrait, which is being introduced in the district this year, is a visual reminder to students of the skills they must master in order to be successful in one of the 4 Es (Enrollment, Employment, Enlistment, Entrepreneurship) after graduation. This skill set includes being:

- Critical Thinkers;
- Persistent Problem Solvers;
- Responsible Collaborators;
- Effective Communicators;
- Engaged Community Members; and
- Adaptable Learners.

Rexhausen has taken Brown's vision and run with it. "Students participate in a different activity every day," explained Rexhausen. Three days a week, teachers choose from a menu of structured activities that Rexhausen built. The activities are centered around team building, relationship building and guiding the students to learn more about themselves.

[READ MORE](#)



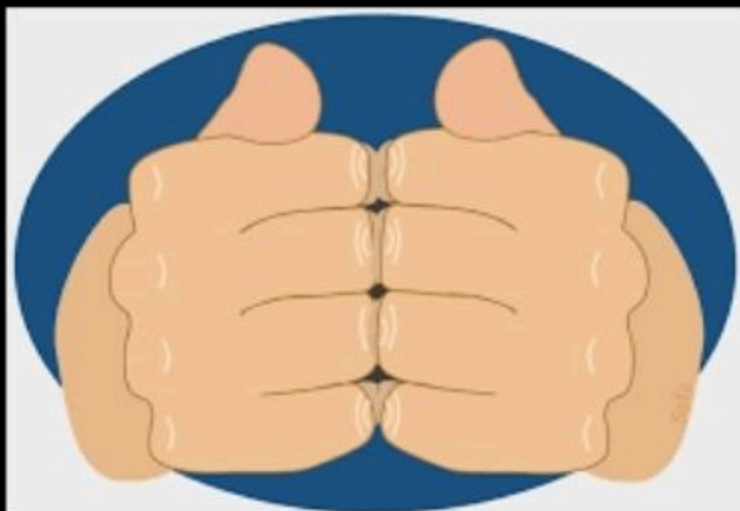
Personalized Learning: **Flipping the Classroom**



VIDEO: Personalized Learning through the Flipped Classroom

What happens when you “flip” a classroom? Lakota West math teacher Jenny Circello can attest to the benefits of this more personalized approach to learning that puts her students in the driver’s seat. [Watch this video to learn how a flipped classroom model is making all the difference for students all around Lakota](#) and stay tuned for more examples of personalized learning at Lakota in this continuing video series.

[Click here to read the full online story about the flipped classroom model.](#)



ASL Students Sign 'Together'



East, West ASL Students Sign Together During Lab Days

“In real life, you aren’t just sitting down practicing sign language. You are doing what we are doing right here, having a conversation,” said West ASL II student **Riley Sutherland**.

In true #WEareLakota and #WEareInThisTogether fashion, Lakota East and West ASL students came together this week for Halloween-themed Lab Days.

“ASL Lab Days are times in which we take the information (vocabulary, grammar, and cultural information), and do our best to create an authentic environment for students to apply the skills they have learned,” said East ASL teacher **Jessica Snyder**. Lab Days are usually held on a monthly basis, but this is the first time East and West students came together in the same learning environment.

Nearly 550 ASL students from East and West participated. The popular world language has grown dramatically at Lakota; there are now 6 teachers (3 at each high school) -- double the number of teachers in 2013. Classes are offered for ASL I, ASL II and ASL III; the curriculum for ASL IV is under development.

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FEATURED PHOTOS



Lakota kicked off the 'Stuff the Bus' Food Drive with a fun East vs. West can stacking challenge. The teams included a student from an early childhood, elementary, junior high and high school. The Lakota East team came out on top, but the real winners are the local food pantries that receive all of the donations.

The district invited neighboring districts to join the cause, this year teaming up with Middletown City Schools and Hamilton City Schools for the friendly crosstown competition. The food drive ends today -- look for the final results in the next district newsletter.



Despite the face-off on the football field last Friday night, students from both Lakota East's and Lakota West's Hope Squads gathered in solidarity before the highly-anticipated rivalry game to raise awareness around teen suicide prevention and mental health. Students and advisors from both peer-to-peer suicide prevention groups gathered for a pre-game tailgate pizza dinner before taking to the stadium gates to distribute positivity and educational messages. [Click here to see Channel 9's coverage of the special event.](#)



Culture building and collaboration are as much a part of the staff experience as it is the student one at Lakota. To kick off their Oct. 21 Professional Development Day, Cherokee and Endeavor elementary schools challenged their teams to "git up and collaborate." To continue the momentum, the two teams extended the "Git Up Challenge" to VanGorden and Union Elementary schools, as well as the Central Office. [Watch Cherokee and Endeavor staff do their version of the "Git Up Challenge."](#)

November Social Media Contest: #LakotaGivesThanks

As we begin to count down the days to Thanksgiving break, Lakota is asking staff, students, parents and residents to look back over the last year and let us know who or what makes you thankful for your Lakota experience.

Post your photos that best capture the people, places, programs or things that make Lakota a better place. We invite you to share your personal words of thanks on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or all three!

To add your note of thanks to the growing list, be sure to tag Lakota Local Schools and include #LakotaGivesThanks in your posts.

Join and follow the conversations at #LakotaGivesThanks.

A Look Around Lakota: October Video Update

Join Superintendent Matthew Miller as he shares just some of the highlights and happenings throughout Lakota Local Schools during the month of October. In this edition, you'll learn more about:

- The annual 'Stuff the Bus' food drive;
- Collaboration between high school and elementary students to learn about recycling;
- A fun way to raise money for our junior schools; and
- A new interactive learning tool for some of our youngest learners.

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

Community Fanfares for Students

The concept is a simple one: Line the school's entrance and give students high-fives and words of encouragement as they are filing into school, providing students with a visual display of all their supporters during times like testing and the start of a new semester.

The student fanfares have proven so popular with students, their families and community members that they are now an annual tradition at all Lakota schools. We hope you'll join us for these upcoming fanfare events:

Endeavor Student Fanfare

Nov. 6 at 8 a.m.

Lakota West Student Fanfare

Dec. 2 at 7:45 a.m.

Nov. 9-10: Lakota East Arts & Craft Show

Mark your calendars to attend Lakota East PTSO's Arts & Craft Show on Nov. 9 & 10. It's one of the premiere shows in the area, with over 220 juried booths filled with holiday gift ideas. Lunch and concessions will be on hand, and a free shuttle from the East Freshman Building is available on Saturday.

Show hours are Saturday, Nov. 9 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Sunday, Nov. 10 from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is \$2 (\$5 early bird entry at 9 a.m. on Saturday); all proceeds fund student programs and scholarships.

MLK Day Program Adds 'Celebration of Unity Expo' to Feature West Chester, Liberty Cultures

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.](#)

Like in past years, all K-12 Lakota students are invited to participate in a contest that promotes self-reflection about diversity and inclusion in our community and nationwide. This year's "20-20 Vision" theme challenges students to use their hindsight vision to identify Dr. King's single most important accomplishment. All entries are due Monday, Dec. 2, 2019 at 4 p.m.

[Day contest and download the contest guidelines and entry form.](#)

Upcoming Community Conversations

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. Lakota has several Community Conversations scheduled over the next month, including:

Boys & Girls Club Community Conversation

Thursday, Nov. 7 @ 5:30 p.m.

at the Boys & Girls Club, West Chester Liberty

District Finances Community Conversation

Monday, Nov. 25 @ 6:30 p.m.

at Lakota West Community Room

With an annual budget of more than \$175 million, there's lots of interest in where the money comes from and how it's used to provide an education for more than 16,000 students. We'll start with a short overview from Lakota Treasurer Jenni Logan, so that everyone has the most up to date information. The rest of the time will be spent in conversation with your neighbors and with school leaders, including school board members and the superintendent. You'll get a chance to share your thoughts about the district's finances and hear what others think as well.

District Culture Community Conversation

Monday, Dec. 2 @ 6:30 p.m.

Lakota East Community 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.

Annual Veterans Tribute Features West Choir

The Lakota West High School Choir will provide the patriotic music at the annual Veterans Tribute, at 11 a.m. on Friday, Nov. 8, at the Miami University Voice of America Learning Center.

The annual event is sponsored by the Miami University Voice of America Learning Center and the Caring Community Collaborative. The program is free and open to the public. Lunch will be provided.

Anyone planning to attend is asked to register, to ensure lunch and seating is available for all guests. Register online at www.caringcommunitycollaborative.com or by phone at 513-939-9255.

Miami's Voice of America Learning Center is at 7847 VOA Park Drive, at the corner of Cox Road and Voice of America Park Drive, in West Chester. For more information, email C3 at contact@C3Ohio.org or call 513-939-9255.

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

- Saturday, Nov. 2
High School Open Houses
at Lakota East & West Main Campuses
10 a.m. - noon
- Tuesday, Nov. 5
Election Day: No School for Students (Staff PD Day)
- Wednesday, Nov. 6
Endeavor Student Fanfare
at Endeavor Elementary
8 a.m.
- Wednesday, Nov. 6
Coffee Chat with the Superintendent
at Coffee Beans & Brew
7 - 8 p.m.
- Thursday, Nov. 7
Community Conversation: Boys & Girls Club
at Boys & Girls Club
5:30 - 7 p.m.

ON THE RADAR

Announcements & Opportunities

Reminder: No School for Students on Election Day

On Tuesday, Nov. 5 (Election Day) there will be no school for students, but staff will take part in a Professional Development Day.

High School Open Houses Tomorrow

Lakota is welcoming future and prospective students to visit its two high schools on Saturday, Nov. 2 for a community open house. The event hours are from 10 a.m. to noon at both Lakota East's and Lakota West's main campuses.

Representatives will include teaching staff and students from both high schools who will be available to answer questions and share more about the student experience. [Click here for details.](#)

Nov. 6: Coffee Chat with the Superintendent

Lakota's next Coffee Chat is set for Wednesday, Nov. 6 from 7-8 p.m. at Coffee Beans & Brew.

- Tuesday, Nov. 12
Fellas & Fiction
at X-Quisite Cutz
6 -7 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 15
Report Cards Posted to HAC (Grades K-2)
3 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 16
Perennial Math Competition
at Lakota East
9 a.m.- noon
- Monday, Nov. 18
Board of Education Meeting
at Plains Junior School
6:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Nov. 21
Storytime with a Lakota Principal (Mary Brophy from Hopewell ECS hosts)
at IKEA West Chester
6:30 - 8 p.m.
- Monday, Nov. 25
Community Conversation: District Finances
at Lakota West Community Room
6:30 - 8 p.m.
- Wednesday, Nov. 27 - Friday, Nov. 29
Thanksgiving Break: No School

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 Continues Nov. 12

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, Nov. 12 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.](#)

Apply Now for Internships & Other Real World Learning Opportunities

Lakota now offers a number of new internships, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities to help students prepare for their future beyond high school.

These 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 for more information.](#)

**See Full
Calendar**

MLK Day Contest Entries Due Dec. 2

In preparation for our community's annual celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, all K-12 Lakota students are invited to participate in a contest that promotes self-reflection about diversity and inclusion in our community and nationwide.

This year's "20-20 Vision" theme challenges students to use their hindsight vision to identify Dr. King's single most important accomplishment. The contest is part of the community-wide observance of MLK Day, known as the "Live the Dream: Our Declaration of Unity" celebration.

All entries are due Monday, Dec. 2, 2019 at 4 p.m. All will be on display at the Jan. 20 community commemoration at Lakota West High School, where winners will share their entries with the public. [Click here to learn more about this year's MLK Day contest and download the contest guidelines and entry form.](#)



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