

August 23, 2019



## Ribbon Cutting Marks Opening of Lakota Cyber Academy

In a room packed with business leaders, government officials, school administrators and students, the Lakota Cyber Academy was officially opened for the business of learning.

Nearly 50 supporters gathered in the Lakota East Innovation Hub for a ribbon cutting ceremony that included a proclamation from State Representative **George Lang** and special guest speaker, Lt. Governor **Jon Husted**. "Today was a testament to a true team effort to deliver on the promise of an amazing program for our students," said **Keith Koehne**, executive director of curriculum and instruction at Lakota. "To see business and education come together and be recognized by the elected leaders in our state was fantastic."

With over one million jobs currently available in cyber security, and that number expected to grow to over three million by 2021, the Lakota Cyber Academy will prepare students to not only learn about cyber security, but earn industry certifications enabling them to join the workforce upon graduation. **Terry Williams**, Chief Technology Officer of Belcan LLC, told the students that companies will be fighting over them once they finish the program. "It's really a privilege of Belcan to be a part of this," he told the crowd. Belcan has partnered with Lakota to build the curriculum and has played a key role in the launch of the Cyber Academy. When first discussing the idea,

Williams said that Lakota Superintendent Matthew Miller told him to think bigger. "I'll never forget that," said Williams.

The Cyber Academy is open to students in grades 10-12. With 155 students currently enrolled, the courses are held at both Lakota East and West high schools. "Our Lakota student is second to none," said **Joe Hinson**, president and chief executive officer of the West Chester/Liberty Chamber Alliance, and a member of the advisory board to the program.

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## Electric Staff Opening Day Sets Tone for New School Year

Electric. Rocking. Inspiring. These were just some of the words Lakota staff used to describe the district's opening day program, where more than 1,700 administrators, teachers and support staff packed into Lakota East's gymnasium on Aug. 13 to celebrate the start of a new school year.

"We really do believe that we are all in this together," said Lakota Superintendent **Matthew Miller**. "It's not just the theme or some new hashtag we're using. We want to continue to push collaboration among ourselves and our buildings, but also beyond the walls of our district."

Those words set the tone for one part of Lakota's new vision statement and this year's theme - WE are In This Together. The theme was pulled through everything from new staff t-shirts and banners, all signed by a mix of Lakota staff, to a program packed with student and staff speakers and finally, the premiere of Lakota's newest video release: [School Bus Karaoke: WE are All In This Together](#). The sing-along video involves Lakota staff, board members, students, parents and community partners in a comedic interpretation of High School Musical's "We're All in This Together."

"I look forward to convocation every year. Nobody does a welcome back like Lakota!" said Shawnee ECS kindergarten teacher **Rebecca Striet**. "The electricity and excitement in the gym is

contagious. I love hearing from staff, students, teachers, parents, etc about all the amazing things that are going on within Lakota schools and getting inspired for the upcoming year."

[Click here to view the complete photo gallery from Lakota's Opening Day program.](#)

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## East, West Student-Athletes Earn All-American Honors

Seven Lakota West cheerleaders, **Abby Lindley**, **Lacey Jones**, **Ryleigh Jones**, **Brinlee Foreman**, **Lauren Petersen**, **Ella Dooley** and **Haley Troy**, were all selected for the National Cheerleaders Association All-American Team. Some will attend the London New Year's Day Parade and others will participate in the Thanksgiving Tour.

Lakota East senior and OHSAA State Champion **Jacob McDonald** earned 2018-19 All-American status from the National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association for his times in the 500 Freestyle and 100 Backstroke.

## Lakota East Grad Earns Spot on U.S. Women's National Volleyball Team

Lakota East 2013 graduate **Ashley Evans** has earned a spot on the U.S. Women's National Volleyball Team and will compete in the NORCECA Champions Cup Aug. 22-24 at the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Training Center in Colorado

Springs, Colorado. Evans' volleyball career includes a long list of accolades that most recently landed her on a professional team in Spain. She also earned All-Academic Honors at Purdue University and was named to the USA Collegiate National Team.

## Lakota West Grad Nominated for National Emmy Award

Lakota West graduate **Joseph Vella** was nominated for a National Emmy Award in the news and documentary category by the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. The nomination recognizes him as the director of photography for Bayonet Media's "Pressing on: The Letterpress Film."

## AROUND LAKOTA



## Lakota Students Share 'Words of Wisdom' for School Year Ahead

Wondering how to make the most of the 2019-20 school year? In the first of a new video series called "Words of Wisdom," we asked students throughout Lakota that very question.

From how to sit in class to taking advantage of extracurricular activities, learn from the experts by [clicking here to watch this special video featuring student voice.](#)



*First and second graders at Hopewell ECS took part in "Hero Training" to kick off the school year.*

## Hero Training Kicks Off the New Year at Hopewell ECS

You don't have to be a grown up to be a hero. Just ask the students at Hopewell Early Childhood School.

First- and second-graders jumped into "Hero Training" on the first day of school by participating in activities to help build relationships and a sense of community. The concept of a Hopewell Hero recognizes the positive ways students are contributing to their community of learning. "As part of Hero Training, we met with each class and spent time playing get-to-know-you activities," said Principal **Mary Brophy**. One of the activities included creating a vision statement for their classroom.

Students were asked to imagine an amazing school day and then describe it. The activity did not involve listing classroom rules that a teacher created. Instead, the students played an active role in creating expectations about behavior in their classroom, with teachers helping to emphasize above the line behavior, which is part of the  $E + R = O$  (an event plus your response affects the outcome) model taught throughout the district. Common expectations for the school were then shared with each class by school administrators.

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*The traditional Adena fanfare was held on the first Friday of the school year. Students were greeted with cheers and high-fives.*

## **'WE are In This Together' Evident in the Adena Way**

Cheers, high-fives and well wishes. All of these were in abundance at Adena Elementary's fanfare on the second day of school, showing community and school support for the students.

"It's been wonderful continuing our tradition that we began two years ago by having our student fanfare on the first Friday (of the school year)," said Adena Principal John Mattingly. Parents and staff were joined by members of the West Chester police and fire departments. It was "such an exciting way to engage our students, families and the West Chester community, propelling us into an awesome school year," Mattingly continued. "The energy is infectious."

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*The first two days of school at Lakota's junior schools helped students from different elementary schools come together to build their new school culture.*

## **Junior Schools Focus on Bringing Students Together**

Building relationships is key at Lakota's four junior schools. After all, students are coming together for the first time from several different elementary buildings.

Plains Junior packed the first two days of school with culture building activities. Students had a chance to visit their classrooms and meet their teachers and classmates, but most of the day was spent rotating through fun activities. Ice breaker games like "Guess Who?" had students laughing as they asked each other questions, trying to figure out what was on the card taped to their back. Another game called "Where Do You Stand?" had staff members pose questions such as *Do you prefer Math or English?* and students went to different sides of the gym based on their answer. The activity helped students learn more about each other.

"Starting off the first two days likes this helps to release some of the anxiety with starting school, especially for the incoming seventh-graders," said Principal **Kim Wade**. "The activities help

students get connected with their peers and bridge the gap of coming from two different schools to come together as one.”

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*Relationship building was the cornerstone of the first two days back to school at both Lakota East and Lakota West high schools.*

## Relationships Trump Curriculum at East, West on First Days Back

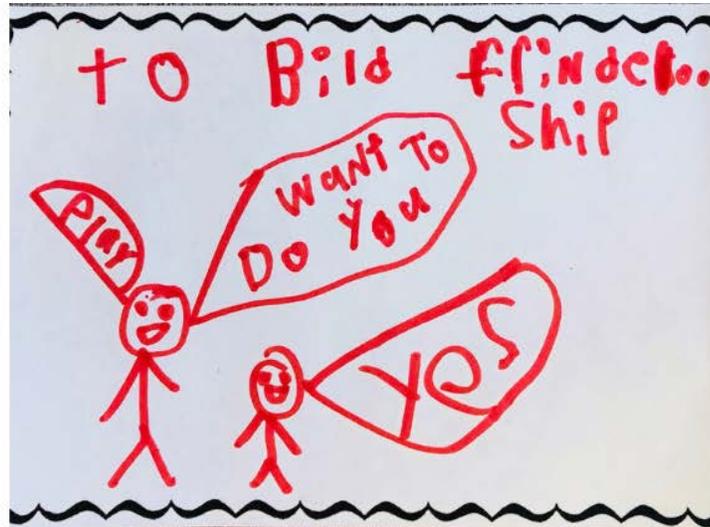
“What can you do on day one that has your kids running back on day two?” posed Lakota East Principal **Suzanna Davis** at Lakota’s all-staff convocation. Both Lakota high schools answered this question with an exciting line-up that kept students and staff on their feet and engaged with one another all day long.

Not one single syllabus was handed out at either school the first two days back from summer break. Instead, they focused on building relationships and setting a strong foundation for the year ahead.

“Relationships are the cornerstone of building culture in a school or anywhere else for that matter,” said Lakota West Principal **Elgin Card**. “If kids know you care about them and are there for them, they will work hard. Our goal is also to not only build a great culture at Lakota West, but to leave them with this understanding as they move on to their next journey in life.”

"Kids don't care how much you know until they know how much you care," Davis said. "At Lakota East, staff members and students together set the stage for a fantastic year by focusing on what truly matters – the strength of our relationships with each other. It was truly magical to see those bonds form right before my eyes, and all as a result of programming planned by our students and for their peers."

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*At left, the new social emotional and learning standards are put into action through Lakota's Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, such as this one at Freedom Elementary, which recognized a sixth-grader for "Making a Difference" and helping a new student feel welcome. A new student last year, he demonstrated mastery of one of the standards when he said, "I know how he feels. I've been there myself." At right, a creative exercise in Ellen Miller's second grade class at Hopewell ECS demonstrates how the new social emotional learning standards can be embedded into other standards-based lessons.*

## New State Standards Strengthen Lakota's Commitment to Social Emotional Learning

Ohio schools are working from a new set of social and emotional learning standards - and three Lakota educators actually helped write them.

Lakota behavior specialist **Tina Pratt**, personal health teacher **Lori Jones** and special education teacher **Po Refitt** applied for the voluntary task. Each was ultimately selected to represent a different grade band level, which for Pratt equated to eight in-person meetings in Columbus and countless other exchanges with the rest of her committee over the last year.

The final product of their labors - about 60 standards per grade band level - made it all worthwhile.

"It really reinforces that we as a state are focused on the whole child," said Jones, noting that there weren't a lot of other such standards to model Ohio's after.

"Any teacher will tell you the huge needs they see for social and emotional learning," said Pratt, who has noticed a stark difference in students' abilities to cope, problem-solve and reason over her 14 years in education. "So much research proves that your EQ (Emotional Quotient) is a bigger indicator for job success than your IQ. Knowing that, teachers have to focus on their students' social and emotional well-being before they can tackle the academic piece."

[Click here to view Ohio's new Social and Emotional Learning Standards.](#)

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**FEATURED PHOTOS**



Smiles and hugs, like those exchanged at Wyandot ECS above, greeted our 16,700 students on their first day of school. [Click here to view our back to school photo gallery on Facebook](#), capturing just some of first day moments across Lakota.



Congratulations to the three winners of our back to school social media photo contest: Marlon Styles on Twitter, Basant Hanna on Facebook and Amanda Meade on Instagram. Their

*#WEareLakota and #WEareInThisTogether posts stole the show this year! Each of them will receive a basket packed with Lakota spirit items.*



*Students at Adena Elementary got to spend their first few days back at school exploring new digital learning tools in their newly remodeled Innovation Hub. Over the summer, the media centers at all eight of Lakota's elementary schools were transformed into Innovation Hubs to better support personalized, future ready learning.*

### **District-Wide Ice Cream Social for New Families Sept. 14**

For families new to Lakota Schools this year, the district is offering an opportunity to meet other new families and get to know the Lakota community a little better. The Lakota Outreach Diversity and Inclusion (LODI) department invites all new families to its annual ice cream social on Saturday, Sept. 14 from 1-3 p.m. The gathering will take place at Heritage Early Childhood School, located at 5052 Hamilton-Mason Road in Liberty Township.

Attendees will be able to make connections with district leaders, families and community organizations to learn about what resources and opportunities exist, at their school and all around the district. All family members are welcome to come and enjoy ice cream sundaes, games and activities. The host group, LODI, works within our schools to build stronger communities and increase parents' involvement in their child's education.

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### **First Coffee Chat with the Superintendent Set for Sept. 4**

Join us on Wednesday, Sept. 4 for our first Coffee Chat of the year. Superintendent Matthew Miller will be on hand from 1 - 2 p.m. at Coffee Beans & Brew (7051 Yankee Road) 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 will also vary to accommodate different schedules. [Click here to view the Coffee Chats scheduled for this school year.](#)

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### **Destination Imagination Information Nights**

Does your student love creating, inventing, building, writing and all things STEAM?

Lakota Destination Imagination (DI) is creating teams for this year's program. The program is open to ALL grades, and is sponsored by the Lakota Leads Parent Group and Lakota Gifted Services.

DI engages participants in STEAM project-based challenges that are designed to build confidence and develop extraordinary creativity, critical thinking, communication and teamwork skills.

To find out more, there will be two information nights held in the cafeteria at Union Elementary:

**Sept. 4 at 6 p.m.**

**Sept. 5 at 6:30 p.m.**

[Click here for a flyer](#) with additional details or [watch this video about Destination Imagination](#). Registration ends on Sept. 15.

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## **Sept. 6: Future Hawk & Future Firebird Nights**

Calling all future Thunderhawks and Firebirds! Lakota East & West high schools have planned some special activities for you at their Sept. 6 home varsity football games.

Activities for Future Hawks will begin at Lakota East 5:30 p.m.; East-Side Early Childhood and Elementary schools will be providing music, games and give-a-ways. At 6:10 p.m., students will gather with their school community for a Future Hawks parade around the Hawks Nest, and then will join the Marching Thunderhawks on the field to form a tunnel as the football players rush onto the field. Students will then be returned to their families to enjoy the 7 p.m. game and amazing half-time show.

The Lakota West Athletic Boosters will be hosting their annual Pig Roast and Future Firebirds events on Sept. 6. The Future Firebirds night will begin at 5 p.m. and last for an hour. Future West students from Heritage, Creekside, Shawnee, Cherokee, Endeavor, Freedom, and Adena may attend the game for free. There will be inflatables and snacks free of charge for the kids. The Boosters are also hosting a Pig Roast in the West Auxiliary Gym starting at 5:30 p.m. through the start of the 7 p.m. football game.

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## **Upcoming Community Conversation: District Finances**

We hope you will join us this year for our Community Conversation program. Now in its eighth year, Community Conversations allow school board members, the superintendent and other school district leaders get input about Lakota schools and their operation from all our stakeholder groups.

District Finances is the topic for the Sept. 30 session at 6:30 p.m. at Lakota East's Innovation Hub.

Lakota's Community Conversations use a unique format. They're led by a professional facilitator, so that school leaders can focus on listening and not on running the meeting. Most of the talking will be done by students, parents and residents who are there. Part of the time is spent talking in small groups, where many people are more comfortable sharing their ideas, as well as in the larger group.

The sessions are engaging and energizing and help guide school leaders in making decisions. All are welcome.

Other upcoming conversations include a Sept. 11 session with Lakota's District Parent Council and President's Council, and an Oct. 1 session with the West Chester-Liberty Chamber Alliance.

**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, August 26  
**Board of Education Work Session**  
at Plains Junior Media Center  
6:30 p.m.
- Monday, September 2  
**No School: Labor Day Holiday**
- Tuesday, September 3  
**No School for Students (Staff Professional Development Day)**
- Wednesday, September 4  
**Coffee Chat with the Superintendent**  
at Coffee Beans & Brew  
1 - 2 p.m.
- Wednesday, September 4  
**Destination Imagination Info Meeting (for all schools)**  
at Union Elementary  
6 p.m.
- Thursday, September 5  
**Destination Imagination Info Meeting (for all schools)**  
at Union Elementary  
6:30 p.m.

## ON THE RADAR

### *Announcements & Opportunities*

### **Lakota Bands Tag Day Aug. 24**

Lakota East and Lakota West High School band members will go door-to-door through West Chester and Liberty Township neighborhoods on Tag Day, Aug. 24, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Students will be asking for community support in the form of tax-deductible donations for their respective band booster programs.

Tag Day is the biggest annual fundraiser for Lakota East and Lakota West High School band booster programs. All proceeds benefit and go directly to all of the high school bands. The collected funds will be used for the purchase of uniforms and instruments, maintenance and other necessary items beyond what the school district supplies.

For further information on contributing a tax-deductible donation to the Lakota East and Lakota West Upbeat Clubs, please visit their websites at [www.lakotaeastbands.org](http://www.lakotaeastbands.org) and [www.lakotawestbands.org](http://www.lakotawestbands.org).

- Monday, September 9  
**Board of Education Meeting**  
at Plains Junior Media Center  
6:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, September 10  
**Fellas & Fiction**  
at X-Quisite Cutz  
6 p.m.
- Saturday, September 14  
**District Ice Cream Social for New Families**  
at Heritage ECS  
1 - 3 p.m.
- Thursday, September 19  
**Storytime with a Lakota Principal  
(Gail Allshouse - VanGorden)**  
at IKEA West Chester  
6:30 - 8 p.m.

[See Full Calendar](#)



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