

August 24, 2018



**WE are Lakota**



## New Year Starts with Building Community

Lakota Schools welcomed back its 16,500 students in a very unique way this year. Superintendent Matthew Miller encouraged school leaders and staff to focus on building relationships with the students, instead of opening text books, for the first two days of school.

"As educators, we know the importance of building a relationship and trust between teachers and students," said Miller. "We also received feedback from these two groups, along with parents and even community members, about the importance of creating a sense of community in the school and the classroom."

Each building planned its own events and the feedback has been very positive. **Jason Jackson**, the associate principal at the West Freshman campus, said that he and a team of staff members spent time over the summer planning their activities for the first two days of school. "When (the whole staff) got here, they were all in," said Jackson. "We are in a time when students don't connect unless they know you're in it for them. That's the relationship piece," he continued. "There is a sense of unity across the building, between the students and the teachers."

Students at Shawnee Early Childhood School enjoyed exploring the building's Wonder Lab. Second-grader **Kareem Hasan** was all-in when using the lab, declaring, "This is the best class ever!" Wonder Labs are STEAM2 labs specifically designed for Lakota's youngest learners. Students are able to explore and create using concepts that apply to engineering, science and technology.

Fifth-graders in **Laura Brown's** class at Independence Elementary combined strategy, team building and icebreakers as they played the game Jenga. As each team of three removed a piece from the tower, a number written on the game piece corresponded to a "get to know me" question that Brown read aloud.

Down the hall in **Tawnya Hartman's** classroom, third-graders listened to the story *Where Oliver Fits*. "As a class, we brainstormed ways (the students) fit in third grade, (such as) being kind, helping others and being able to cheer others up," explained Hartman. "Then the students created a big face that resembles themselves. They added in writing how they fit in third grade on the lenses of the sunglasses."

The district also welcomed two special guests during the first day of school. Ohio's Superintendent of Public Information, Paolo DeMaria, and State School Board Member Charlotte McGuire, toured several schools while at Lakota, including Endeavor Elementary. "It was evident that Superintendent DeMaria and Mrs. McGuire are passionate about schools, teachers, and most importantly creating and ensuring every student reaches their fullest potential," said Principal **Andrea Blevins**. "Superintendent DeMaria asked thoughtful and purposeful questions and really took time to understand what and why we do what we do at Endeavor," she continued. "As an administrator, I was impressed and proud to have them in our building showing how our Rockets, and the larger Lakota community, are leading the way."





*Opening Day  
for  
Lakota Staff*

## A New Year: Lakota Staff Say 'Here WE Go'

You know it's a special occasion when all 1,700 Lakota staff members come together under one roof.

Lakota staff opened the new school year together at Lakota West High School on Tuesday, Aug. 14. Banners and T-shirts with the words "Here WE Go" weren't the only things setting the tone for the upcoming year.

"Last year, we saw a lot of innovation and I challenge you to keep that momentum going," said Lakota Superintendent Matthew Miller. "If you have a new idea to try this year...great, do it. If you have a way to present a lesson in a different way, let's figure out a way to say yes and get that done. If you're interested in collaborating with teachers in another building, we'll figure out a way to make that happen."

"I encourage you to challenge yourself, the administrative team and our board to look for ways we can do things even better for all of our kids," Miller continued.

Evidence of the impact of student voice on the educational experience was put on display by the students themselves. To begin, the Lakota West Marching Band kicked off the morning's festivities in fanfare fashion. Eight students also took the mic to share some personal highlights from their educational career at Lakota, including:

- Adena Elementary School's **Javier Cox** talked about a teacher who encouraged him to put his love of plants into action by creating his own community garden.
- **Will Tenoever, Ilyas Malik & Ryan Hartinger** represented Liberty Junior School, talking about how experience in robotics classes led to a national championship title through the Technology Student Association.
- First-grader **Carson Ratliff** shared the story of how he and his classmates created a school bookstore at Wyandot Early Childhood School last year.
- **Beakal Amsalu** gave examples of the experiences that come out of empowering her and her peers at Lakota East High School to have a voice.
- **Charlie Ullrich** shared some revelations he had at Ridge Junior School last year after participating in the 1:1 technology pilot.
- **Valeria Venegas**, a 2018 graduate of Lakota West High School, shared a personal account of her experience as an English language learner in Lakota and the beauty of attending a district that is rich in diversity.

A student band named "The Fritz" featured Ridge Junior seventh-graders **Quinn Cooper, Max Lenhoff, Lilly Plummer** and **Tyler Simon**. The group performed "Oh Lakota," an upbeat song they'd written the music and lyrics for in preparation for last year's ["State of the Schools" address](#).



"Being new to Lakota, there was such a positive vibe at Opening Day. It made me feel like family immediately," said Cherokee teacher **Jason Kennison**. "Seeing the students present their accomplishments gave me such joy because it shows that Lakota is willing to nourish and encourage our students' strengths and differences."

"Opening Day is an eye-opening experience to simultaneously see how large our network of colleagues is and how many personal connections we have across 23 buildings," said Liberty Junior teacher **Kristina Linberg**. "As always, this year's spotlight on the students and their achievements was such an endearing reminder of why we come to work each day. The excitement in the air for this school year to begin was palpable. It's a great time to be a Lakota teacher."

Miller reiterated his message with a [special video presentation](#) that put on display the innovation already present in so many Lakota classrooms. He sent his team off with these words: "Dare to be great. Dare to innovate. I missed you. I'm glad you're back. Have an awesome school year. Here WE go!"

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



American Legion Awards Dinner

## Three Lakota Students Earn Perfect ACT Score



West Senior  
Lauren Hasselbeck



East Senior  
Idris Malik



East Sophomore  
Courtney Lyden

## Three Lakota Students Earn Top ACT Score

Just one-tenth of 1 percent of students who take the the ACT test earn the top composite score of 36, and you can add Lakota West's **Lauren Hasselbeck** and Lakota East's **Courtney Lyden** and **Idris Malik** to that group!

"Lauren is a wonderful young lady who works hard to achieve at the highest level," said West principal Elgin Card. "She is currently enrolled in five AP classes and takes a college level class at Miami. She is not only intelligent, but well-rounded in her experiences, as she is in AP Art and a member of our swimming team. The Lakota West family is excited about this great accomplishment and proud she is a Firebird!"

Principal Suzanna Davis is equally excited for Idris and Courtney. "Congratulations to Idris and Courtney on their outstanding accomplishment," said Davis. "Having two students score a perfect 36 on the ACT speaks to our hard working students, dedicated parents and outstanding teachers at Lakota East that have prepared our students to achieve at this level. We wish them continued success in their academic pursuits."

The ACT consists of tests in English, mathematics, reading and science. Each test is scored on a scale of 1-36, and a student's composite score is the average of the four test scores. All major U.S. colleges accept ACT test scores and scores provide colleges with evidence of student readiness for the academic rigors of college coursework.

## Lakota Students Honored at American Legion Awards Dinner

On Aug. 20, the American Legion Post 681 hosted its award dinner, recognizing several Lakota students for their achievement in Ohio's Constitutional Oratorical Contest, as well as scholarship winners for the 2017-18 school year.

Honorary students included: Amitoj Kaur, Shannon Pullyblank, Simar Kalkat, Grace Keith, Chloe Heard, Alexandra Gruesser, Tony Amsbaugh, Aubert Li, Bradley Samberg, Alex Strack and Asia Werner. Joining them were Americanism Chair Jerry Nelson and Commander Mark Riesenbergh.



# *Family & Parent* **CommUnity** **University**

Begin  
Sept. 2

*Lakota's new Family & Parent CommUnity University is a monthly learning series open to the public.*

## Lakota Launches Family & Parent CommUnity University

Lakota Local Schools announces its first-ever Family & Parent CommUnity University hosted by Lakota's Outreach, Diversity & Inclusion (LODI) department, in partnership with Miami University Voice of America. The new monthly learning series, led by expert Lakota staff and community partners, is designed to provide training and resources to parents, relatives, staff, community members and others who play a role in helping educate our youth.

"While one of our goals is certainly to share information and expert guidance on different issues affecting our youth, it's also about building stronger relationships and encouraging open dialogue," said Angie Brown, Lakota's parent and family engagement coordinator and one of the leaders behind LODI's work.

The new initiative builds upon Lakota's long-standing efforts to increase parent involvement in our school communities and empower parents to be active in their child's growth and development. Last year's parent learning sessions - both face-to-face and via Facebook Live - paved the way for this year's model.

"When it comes to giving our students the best possible education, there are no boundaries. Educators are not limited to the teachers in our buildings," said Lakota Superintendent Matthew Miller. "Lakota's CommUnity University is about bringing all those people together to learn from one another and do what's best for our kids."

Sessions will range from mental health and digital competency to diversity training, state testing and health and wellness. The curriculum has been shaped by a review committee represented by parents, staff, local employers and agencies, as well as other community partners. Interviews with other similar efforts nationally and a survey offered to the Lakota community also helped develop the learning series.

The classes will kick off Saturday, Sept. 22 from 8 a.m. to noon at Miami VOA with an engaging first session, "The Land of Lakota." Assistant Superintendent Robb Vogelmann and Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction Keith Koehne will help acclimate families to the range of opportunities available to Lakota students. This will include special attention to Lakota's district-wide focus on the E+R=O model, which encourages students and staff to press pause and consider the consequences before reacting to a situation.

The general session will be followed by two smaller breakouts led by the elementary and secondary curriculum directors, where attendees will learn more about Lakota's curriculum, including how to most effectively use tools like Home Access Center and Canvas.

Each monthly session will be live streamed and includes breakfast, compliments of Overhead Doors, and free childcare provided by student volunteers. The sessions are free and open to the public, but registration is encouraged. [Click here to register for the Sept. 22 session.](#) Visit the [CommUnity University page on Lakota's website](#) for more information and future session information.





BACK TO SCHOOL

# Photo Contest

WINNERS





## **The Back-to-School Photo Contest Winners are...**

Hundreds answered the call for photos during Lakota's first week back in session - and three came out on top as our contest winners!

Popular vote – or total likes on the original social media post – determined the three winning photo submissions on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Each winner received this year's new #HereWEgo t-shirt.

On Facebook, our friends at **West Chester Township** posted the most popular #WEareLakota photo, garnering 474 likes. The post featured Lakota's school resource officers from the West Chester Police Department and the Butler County Sheriff's Office with their back-to-school gear.

On Twitter, a Creekside first-grader, shared by **Marlon Styles**, caught the most attention for his first day photo holding a paper that read, "I have big dreams."

On Instagram, Plains Junior teacher **Jacob Shaw** joined a couple of his colleagues for a creative first day shot displaying their current year in education: nearly 70 years in all together!

Thank you to everyone who participated in our back-to-school social media contest. The new "Here WE go" photo frame introduced during the contest on Facebook is still available, so continue sharing your #WEareLakota moments all year long!

**WE are Lakota**  
NEW TO OUR DISTRICT?  
JOIN US FOR  
**LAKOTA'S 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
ICE CREAM SOCIAL**

**SATURDAY, SEPT. 15  
1 – 3 P.M.**  
Heritage ECS  
5052 Hamilton-Mason Road  
Games, Face Painting, Music & More

*Join us on Sept. 15 for Lakota's Ice Cream Social to welcome new families to the district.*

## **Lakota Ice Cream Social for New Families Sept. 15**

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, along with the West Chester Liberty Chamber Alliance's Leadership 21 class of 2018, invites all new families to its annual ice cream social on Saturday, Sept. 15 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. [Click here to view the event flyer.](#)

## FEATURED PHOTOS





*The first day of school at Lakota East included a special celebration to honor School Resource Officer Doug Hale, this year's Butler County Sheriff's Office Deputy of the Year. Congratulations and thank you for all of your years of service to Lakota!*







*Superintendent Matthew Miller, shown here trying out the new pop-a-shot in Ridge Junior School's cafeteria, and other administrators visited all 23 school buildings -- plus the Central Office and the Service Center on the first day of school.*



*Students at Hopewell Junior School were greeted by parents, staff and community members to start the first day of school. This Student Fanfare tradition will take place at every Lakota school at some point during the school year.*

## NEW BUSINESS

### *Announcements & Opportunities*

#### **East, West Bands Tag Day is Aug. 25**

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. 25, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (East) and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (West). 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).

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#### **Destination Imagination Teams Now Forming**

Lakota Destination Imagination (DI) teams are now forming. Please plan to attend one of the upcoming parent information meetings to learn more about this project-based learning program that blends STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education with the arts and social entrepreneurship.

- Monday, Aug. 27 at 6 p.m. in the Union Elementary cafeteria

## ON THE RADAR

### *Announcements & Opportunities*

#### **First Coffee Chat with the Superintendent Set for Sept. 5**

Come join us on Wednesday, Sept. 5 for our first Coffee Chat of the year. Superintendent Matt 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.](#)

We hope to see you there!

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#### **Lakota Lifts Online Payment Convenience Fee, Student Fee Balances Coming Soon**

Effective this year, Lakota has lifted the \$2 convenience fee previously required of any online payments for student fees or lunch accounts. The fee was always intended to defray the processing cost incurred by the credit card payment system, but will now be covered by the district. This makes the three-month student fee holiday, typically initiated at the beginning of each school year to encourage early payment, no longer necessary.

[Student fees for the 2018-19 school year](#) are now available. Parents or guardians have the option to pay student fees at the school office or via their [EZ Pay](#) account. Balances are typically available for early childhood and



- Tuesday, Aug. 28 at 7 p.m. at the Midpoint West Chester Library in Community Room C

Destination Imagination (DI) is an international education program that gives kids an outlet for their creativity while teaching them leadership, teamwork, positive thinking, project management and more. For more information about DI, visit the national website at [www.DestinationImagination.org](http://www.DestinationImagination.org).

More information about Lakota's involvement is available via the [Lakota LEADS website](#) or the [DI flyer](#).

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## **LEADS Hosts Family Picnic & Book Club Sept. 9 & 11**

LEADS (Lakota Enrichment & Academic Development of Students), a parent support group for students who have been identified as gifted, will host its first two events of the year at Freedom Elementary School's LifeLAB butterfly garden.

The annual family picnic will take place on Sept. 9 at 5 p.m. Families are encouraged to come with questions about gifted services, along with a blanket and food to enjoy a meal with other Lakota families. LEADS will provide dessert. At 5:45, a special guest will lead a discussion and activities centered around Freedom's butterfly garden.

Member-only door prizes will be given out. [Click here to register for the picnic](#).

The group's September book club for students in grades 2-6 is scheduled for Sept. 11 from 6:30-8 p.m. Book club selections include:

- Rockin' Readers (grades 2-4) - Marty McGuire Digs Worms! by Kate Messner
- Novel Bunch (grades 4-6) - The Secret Garden written by Frances Hodgson Burnett

This month's book club will be outside, so dress for the weather and bring a towel or blanket to sit on during book discussion. In the event of rain, the event will be moved inside Freedom. [View the book club flyer](#) for more information and [click here to register](#).

elementary students in mid-August and for junior high and high school students at the beginning of September.

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## **Still Have Back-to-School Questions?**

Be sure to check our [back-to-school FAQ](#) for answers to these questions and many others.

[What is Home Access Center and how do I access it?](#)

[How can I update my preferences for receiving mass communications from Lakota?](#)

[How do I check my school's calendar?](#)

[What's for breakfast and lunch?](#)

[How do I pay my student fees?](#)

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Events hosted by LEADS are open to all Lakota students. For more information, visit the [Lakota LEADS website](#) or contact [president@lakotaleads.org](mailto:president@lakotaleads.org). [Click here to become a LEADS member](#).

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## **Spark Student News Magazine Subscriptions Now Available**

In the spirit of “WE are Lakota,” *Spark* is shedding it’s “Lakota East” moniker this year to serve as a district-wide publication.

*Spark* has been the award-winning student newsmagazine at Lakota High School and then at Lakota East for 27 years. The staff’s focus is on informing the students, faculty and community members about local news, district activities and national issues that may influence or affect our community.

The publication’s production costs is paid entirely through advertising and subscriptions and is completely student-generated cover-to-cover by the efforts of the Journalism 1, Journalism 2 and Honors Journalism 3 classes.

Subscriptions this year for Lakota teachers and staff will be offered at a new, low rate of \$10 for 6 issues if you pay via cash or check. Spark is also offering subscriptions through payroll deduction (24 deductions of \$0.65). [Complete this subscription form to take advantage of the staff payroll deduction option.](#)

Annual subscriptions are \$15 for students and \$20 for community members. [Purchase your Spark subscription today.](#)

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## **'Listen Up Lakota' Podcast Features MindPeace Mental Health Partnership**

The August edition of “Listen Up Lakota,” a monthly radio program powered by WMKV 89.3FM, featured an interview with Lauren Brown, Lakota’s manager of health services.

Brown discusses [Lakota’s new partnership with MindPeace](#) to increase student access to mental health services. She discusses how MindPeace fits into the district’s overall safety plans, as well as the process each school will follow to identify the best local partner to serve its students. For more information about MindPeace’s partnership model, please visit the [MindPeace website](#).

The interview originally aired on Aug. 17, but is available as a podcast on the [WMKV website](#). WLHS/WMKV is a member-supported public radio with its studios located at Maple Knoll Village in Springdale.

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## Liberty ECS 90th

Join the Lakota community in celebrating the 90 birthday of Liberty Early Childhood School. The event will take place on Sunday, Sept. 16, from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Held in conjunction with the Liberty Township Historical Society, guests will enjoy visiting the ECS, as well as the Hughes School next door. A time capsule that was buried in 1976 by the Liberty Township Historical Society will be opened at approximately 1:30 p.m.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### *Event Spotlights*

- Monday, August 27  
**Board of Education Meeting**  
at Plains Junior School, Media Center  
6:30 p.m.

## LATEST E-FLYERS



### *What's New This Week?*

As a reminder, E-Flyers is Lakota’s way of distributing information about programs, classes, events and opportunities happening in our schools and around the community. Rather than sending flyers home with students, we are now posting all approved information on the E-Flyer



- Monday, September 3  
**Labor Day: [District is Closed](#)**
- Tuesday, September 4  
**No School for Students/ Teacher Professional Development Day**
- Wednesday, September 5  
**Coffee Chat with the Superintendent**  
at Coffee Beans & Brew  
1 - 2 p.m.
- Monday, September 10  
**Board of Education Meeting**  
at Plains Junior School, Media Center  
6:30 p.m.
- Sunday, September 9  
**LEADS Family Picnic**  
at Freedom Elementary  
5 p.m.
- Thursday, September 13  
**Volley for the Cure**  
at Lakota West Main Campus  
4:30 - 8:30 p.m.
- Saturday, September 15  
**District-Wide Ice Cream Social for New Families**  
at Heritage ECS  
1 - 3 p.m.
- Saturday, September 22  
**Parent CommUnity University: "Lakota 101"**  
at Miami VOA Campus  
8 a.m.- noon

page, making it easy for families to access all current opportunities. Here is a listing of all of the new district and community-sponsored flyers for this week.

#### **District-Sponsored:**

[Lakota West Bands Tag Day: Aug. 25](#)

[Lakota East Bands Tag Day: Aug. 25](#)

[District-Wide Ice Cream Social for New Lakota Families: Sept.15](#)

[Lakota West Band Mattress Sale: Sept. 15](#)

[LEADS Family Picnic: Sept. 9](#)

[LEADS September Book Club: Sept. 11 \(Grades 2-6\)](#)

#### **Community-Sponsored Flyers:**

[Girl Scout Troop Formation Meetings: Aug./Sept. \(Grades K-6\)](#)

[Rock the Radio Gala at the VOA Museum: Sept. 22](#)

[Youth Musicals & Drama Auditions at EDGE Teen Center: Aug. 26 \(Ages 2-18\)](#)

[New Church of Montgomery Toy Swap: September 8](#)

[Learn to Swim & Dive - Miami University \(All ages\)](#)

[Grace Chapel Archery Fall Classes: Begin Sept.10 \(All ages\)](#)

[Thunderbird Basketball Select Team Sign-Ups and Tryouts \(Grades 1-12\)](#)

**All Current  
E-Flyers**

[See Full  
Calendar](#)



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