

Instilling Pride. Igniting Passion. Infinite Possibilities.

December 1, 2017

Leading the Way

Featured Presentation



Share your past & present pictures from 2017 on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Be sure to tag the district & add #LakotaGivesBack to help us tell the complete story of how Lakota gives back all year long.

#LakotaGivesBack



'TIS THE SEASON OF GIVING!
What Lakota acts of service have defined 2017?



#LakotaGivesThanks Gives Way to December's #LakotaGivesBack

Throughout November, the Lakota community answered the call to help us count all the ways we are blessed as a school community. Individual photo posts tagged with #LakotaGivesThanks on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram helped paint a picture of what people, places or programs make Lakota a better place.

Contributors gave thanks to everything from Thanksgiving lunches, classroom activities and community partnerships to colleagues, principals, teachers and others. The image (at right) captures just some of those messages of thanks. [Click here to see a Facebook album of all of the photos we received.](#)



This December, as we celebrate the season of giving as the ultimate example of what is encouraged in our schools all year long, help us highlight all the ways Lakota staff, students, parents and residents care for one another and give back to the community. Look back on the last year and help us recap the many acts of service that have happened all year long.

One current example is the giving trees that adorn most Lakota buildings. This has become a tradition around Lakota, giving the schools and even Central Office an outlet for helping give Lakota students a brighter holiday. Lakota's community liaisons facilitate the service activity, helping pull together wish lists for students in need.

Wonder Teaches Sixth-Graders More than Language Arts Standards

Over 6 million people have read the #1 New York Times bestseller *Wonder* by R.J. Palaccio – including every Lakota sixth-grader. And many of those students recently took a field trip to see the story come to the big screen.

Wonder is the story of Auggie Pullman, who was born with facial abnormalities, and dreams of being ordinary, fitting in, and making friends at his new school.

"Starting the year off by reading this book allows endless opportunities," said Independence sixth grade teacher Shari Jones. "While there are learning opportunities for students to grow as readers and writers, the lessons embedded throughout are so powerful. Reflecting on the book, no matter the students' background, economic status, reading ability, or appearance, this book speaks to everyone." *Wonder* links to curricular standards like 'What is a community?' and 'How does diversity enrich a community?', but it also connects to character education.

Hopewell sixth grade teacher Donna Bright agrees. "Since *Wonder* is realistic fiction, and takes place in a present day school, students can relate closely to the characters and their situations." The novel is written from six different characters' points of view, providing a perfect opportunity to look at how different characters experience the same events.

"In *Wonder*, Auggie feels like he is just an ordinary kid, but he is aware that others do not see him that way," said Michelle Brown, who teaches at Endeavor Elementary. "His classmates must learn that it is what is on the inside that matters, and these are lessons that my students must learn, too."

Wonder helps to reinforce character education and anti-bullying programs that take place throughout the district. The story sends a message to students of the importance of doing what is right, and treating everyone with kindness.

Throughout December, we invite you to share your Lakota stories of service 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 #LakotaGivesBack in your posts.

Join and follow the conversations at #LakotaGivesBack.

"Wonder was probably the best book I've ever read," said Independence student **Brendan O.** "It taught me one of the most important things in life, 'When given the choice between being right and being kind, choose kind.' "

When Wonder premiered at theaters this fall, teachers seized the chance to bring those lessons to life in a new way. "The students were absolutely thrilled to get to see the movie," said Brown. "When I made the announcement, they all let out a collective squeal."

The movie and book have had a huge impact on the students. "Seeing Wonder and reading the book was such a big privilege," said Independence student **Emily F.** "It was a pure example of how to be kind and I will apply it in my everyday life."

Around Lakota

School Spotlights

Hopewell's 'Thunderhawk Studios' Lets Students Run the Show



A new after-school club at Hopewell Junior School called “Thunderhawk Studios” is empowering students to shape every aspect of their newfound group.

The obvious requirement is that they produce videos for the Hopewell community, but everything from the editing software and equipment to the content development and division of roles and responsibilities is up for student debate. According to Hopewell teacher and program advisor Mark Bauer, he intervenes very little on these types of decisions.

“It would definitely be much easier to just hand them the equipment and tell them what we’re going to cover each week, but I want it to be an experiment - something where they learn the technological aspects of filmmaking and just how difficult the process can be,” Bauer said. “It’s critically important that they take ownership. This is the inaugural group and I want them to be able to say ‘I built that’.”

Even with so many early decisions to get the effort off the ground, the group has already produced a handful of videos, all of which have debuted to the student body during their advisory period. And with each debut, the group has grown in size. Starting with just four students at the beginning of the year, about a dozen are now involved in the weekly meetings.

Eighth-grader **Wendy Reffner**, whose involvement in Drama Club has prepared her well for roles in front of the camera, says she was surprised to learn that she likes the production process, too. With the help of her peers, she recently debuted the first segment in a series she’s titled “Reffner Reports.”

“I’ve learned a lot about working together,” Wendy said. “Everyone gets to influence the project and even though we might all be working on different things, we check in on each other. I think it’s amazing how all of us are getting to build it from the ground up.”

Hopewell Principal Jeff Rouff feels so strongly about the club’s purpose and potential to appeal to a wide range of students that he’s helping transform a section of the media center into the group’s studio. “They’re

putting their stamp on that space too,” Rouff said. “It’s all about letting the students take the wheel and be part of the creation process.”

East, West Students Learn to 'Be The Difference'



For sophomores at Lakota East, the recent “Be the Difference Day” will be markedly different than any other day in their high school career.

For seven years, the school has partnered with ChangePoint Learning, a Tri-state provider of experiential learning programs that promote self-reflection and peer understanding in area schools. At the high school level, they call it “Be the Difference.”

With the help of more than 120 adult volunteers, the day-long program is sponsored by the school’s PTSO. Over the years, the school has been able to expand its reach to include entire grade levels. All 720 sophomores, divided over three days, participated this November.

Throughout the day, students participate in small and large group activities, each designed to give students new perspectives about their peers and the oftentimes unseen challenges they’re facing in their lives. The activities aren’t lessons in right or wrong, good or bad, normal or abnormal. In fact, according to Lakota East counselor and program coordinator Michelle Kohler, they provide lessons in empathy.

“The whole idea is to get them to see that you don’t know just by looking at someone what really goes on in their life,” Kohler said of the program, which she says has been a major contributor to the positive culture students and staff have built at East. “It opens up their eyes to different experiences and preconceived notions and in some cases, helps them realize that they’re not alone.”

A product of that collaborative culture, this year’s program was stamped with student input. Members of the Student Advisory Council worked with the facilitator to infuse the “E + R = O” theme that’s guiding the school community this year.

“That idea was entirely student-driven,” said East Principal Suzanna Davis. “That kind of action is a wonderful testament to our students taking ownership in making our school the best it can be.”

Lakota West will bring the same program to its students in early 2018. The school is seeking volunteers to assist on any of the three days: Jan. 5, Jan. 8 and Feb. 5. Contact [Diane Grimes](#) or [Michael Anderson](#) for more information.

East's Spark Wins 17th National Pacemaker Award



The Spark, Lakota East High School's student publication, has once again added to its award shelf. The news magazine, under the editorial leadership of **Erinn Aulfinger**, **Michelle Chu**, **Emma Stiefel** and **Lauren Wilson**, has been named a 2017 Pacemaker Award winner from the National Scholastic Press Association for the 14th time. The Spark has been named a national print finalist 17 times since 1997.

Five issues from the 2016-2017 school year were submitted to be considered for the award. Several areas were judged, including reporting, design and editorial leadership. The 48 print finalists were announced in August, with the winners named at the national convention in November. In addition to the Pacemaker Award, **Julia Sanders'** cover design depicting the feature "Fake News" was the third place winner in the Design of the Year award for news magazines. Receiving an honorable mention for Story of the Year is the article "Defining Fake News," written by **Michelle Chu** and **Emma Stiefel**, infographics by **Taylor Anderson** and art by **Sarah Aftab**.

Advisor Dean Hume is very proud of the students, saying, "The reporting (the students) do is routinely beyond many professional publications. They pride themselves on telling the entire story - not just the easy part."

Lakota East principal Suzanna Davis applauds the group for their commitment to integrity and ethics in journalism. "Spark continues to be the gold standard for student publications across the nation. The staff continues to set the bar high, subscribing to the highest standards in journalism."

Ridge Student Uses STEM Skills to Improve Flexible Classroom

A Lakota Ridge team of math and science teachers led by Fritz Prior is seizing the opportunity to pilot a classroom with more user-friendly, ergonomically-designed furniture. Most of the furniture is on wheels, giving students the flexibility to move freely throughout the room for better collaboration on group projects.

When the new furniture arrived and was set up, a few problems became evident. The most glaring one was with the tables on wheels: they moved too easily and there was no way to attach the tables to each other.

Franklin Willis, the school's Design and Modeling teacher, hatched a plan to design, create, and 3D-print a clip for the tables. Ridge Principal Ben Brown said, "Our team felt like this would be a great student-led project, and we selected one of our Design and Modeling students with a strong interest in STEM and design to take on the task." Seventh-grader **Ashley Reed** was up for the challenge and the very next day she arrived to class with calipers, rulers and other measurement devices to begin implementing her plan. She worked on the project during class as well as after school.

Ashley used the design process and a computer-aided design program to create a solution. "She learned firsthand that engineering is an iterative process, and that the first attempt rarely works to perfection," Willis said. "It is an ongoing process of design, test, and redesign. After several prototype designs and modifications, Ashley perfected her table clip."

Ashley used the classroom's 3D printer to create the clips. After they proved functional, she decided to print them in Ridge colors, even personalizing them with the Ridge Firebird logo.

"Everyone is thrilled with Ashley's design and implementation of the clip," said Prior. "The clips have saved countless amounts of time keeping the new tables in place!"



East Senior Hosts First Student-Led Lakota Ed Chat

Joe Mislansky, a senior at Lakota East, hosted the first student-led Lakota Ed Chat on Nov. 29. Staff members have signed up to lead the weekly conversations on Twitter, covering a variety of topics, since August. Over 68 staff members participated in Mislansky's Ed Chat about students, surpassing the average number of participants so far, which has been approximately 42.

Angie Brown Honored as Woman of Excellence

Lakota's community engagement coordinator, Angie Brown, was one of 10 women honored at the 16th annual Women of Excellence Awards on Nov. 17. Sponsored by the West Chester/Liberty Chamber Alliance, the awards recognize outstanding women, who through their careers or volunteerism, have enhanced business, education, culture, philanthropy, and provided outstanding service to the region.

In her work with Lakota, Brown has increased parental engagement in the schools by 40 percent. Before working for Lakota, she hosted Phenomenal Women of Focus, a monthly meeting highlighting women's work and life.

[View All District News](#)

New Business

Announcements & Opportunities

Lakota Goes Live on Facebook with Parent Learning Series

A new learning series open to all Lakota parents makes starting to engage in your child's education as easy as logging into Facebook.

One night a month, beginning in January 2018, Lakota teachers and staff will be available to provide parents with tips and strategies in a live conversation format on Facebook. Sessions will cover a range of topics, including strategies for reading together, interacting with teachers and other school staff, creating a positive learning environment at home, and more.

During each 30-minute session, the panel of local teaching experts will answer a series of questions before opening it up to questions from their live audience. The entire video will also be available for playback after the live session has concluded.

Visit [Lakota's Facebook page](#) to tune in for any of the upcoming sessions:

On The Radar

Quick Links & Reminders

Next Coffee Chat Dec. 6

Join Lakota Superintendent Matt Miller at his next monthly Community Coffee Chat Wednesday, Dec. 6 from 1 to 2 p.m. at Einstein Brothers Bagels, located at 9216 Allen Road in West Chester.

One of the top priorities for Lakota's new superintendent is to get out in the community and listen to as many students, staff members, parents, residents and community and business leaders as possible. For an hour on the first Wednesday every month, Superintendent Miller will be available for drop-in conversation with parents and residents at local coffee shops (rotating between West Chester and Liberty Township locations).

Jan. 8 - 7 p.m.
Reading with your Child

Feb. 6 - 7 p.m.
Engaging with your Child's Teacher

March 5 - 7 p.m.
Creating a Home Learning Environment & Helping with Homework

April 11 - 7 p.m.
Fostering a Growth Mindset at Home

May 7 - 7 p.m.
Summer Learning: Keeping Up the Momentum

Lakota believes in the research that links active parent engagement to student success. Recognizing that parents engage in all different ways, Lakota is committed to providing parents with a range of opportunities, in all different formats, to get involved in their child's learning.

Save the Date, Exhibit at Summer Fun Fair March 5 & 7

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 sixth annual Summer Fun Fair this March 5 and 7. 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:

The times will also vary to accommodate different schedules.

Mark your calendar for Dec. 6 to meet the new superintendent, ask questions, and share your thoughts and ideas about the future of Lakota Schools. Look for more Coffee Chat times and locations on the [Superintendent page of Lakota Online](#).

Upcoming Community Fanfare

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.

Every Lakota school will host a fanfare at some point throughout the school year. Please join us at the last fanfare for 2017:

December 15

Lakota East Freshman School
6:45 a.m.

[Click here for more details and for a list of upcoming fanfares in 2018.](#)

Monday, March 5 – Lakota East High School – 6-8 p.m.

Wednesday, March 7 – 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. 26.

Lakota West Swing Dance on Dec. 8

Come to Lakota West on Friday, Dec. 8 for a great night of music, dancing, food and friends.

The annual Swing Dance runs from 7:30 - 10 p.m. and is open to all ages. The evening will include a variety of selections from Lakota West jazz musicians. There will also be dance instructors on hand to teach swing dancing, along with a dance-off at the end of the night. Raffle tickets for door prizes will be given out to those that bring items to donate to Reach Out Lakota.

Tickets are available at the door: \$10.00 (adults), \$5 (ages 3-10) and those under 3 are free.

Dec. 7: Join Lakota West AP Art for First Community Twitter Critique

Lakota West's AP Drawing class is hosting its first-ever community art critique on Twitter.

On Thursday, Dec. 7, from 8 - 9 p.m., follow #LWAPart to view a compilation of student artwork and provide feedback. Artwork will be labeled Art1, Art2, etc., making it easy to follow commentary related to specific pieces.

Lakota Online Spiritwear Shop Open All Year Long

The introductory special promotions for Lakota's new online spiritwear shop have ended, but the online store will remain open all year long.

It offers a wide range of customized Lakota-branded options, including apparel in men's, women's and youth sizes. Other branded items like headwear, bags and blankets can be customized to display the design and color of your choice.

As part of the district's partnership with Rokkitwear, 15 percent of all regular sales will be applied to student programming. [Click here to visit the online shop.](#)

#GivingTuesday Kicks Off Year-End #GiveLakota Campaign

The Community Foundation of West Chester/Liberty, in partnership with Lakota Local Schools, invited the community to help transform this year's #GivingTuesday into #GiveLakota!

#GivingTuesday, recognized annually on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, is a global giving movement. Millions of people have

According to AP art teacher and Twitter critique host Stephanie Gauer (@GauerStephanie), her students are seeking feedback and suggestions for how to improve their work.

Are You Ready for Winter? Check Your Weather Communication Preferences Today

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 homepage, Facebook, Twitter and local television and radio stations, Lakota also issues a phone call, text message and email to anyone who has selected these options for weather-related alerts in their School Messenger account.

Lakota's notification system allows the district to differentiate between general, emergency and weather-related notifications, helping parents, staff and community members receive different types of alerts in the manner they wish to receive them.

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

Others in the Lakota community who are not parents, guardians or employees and wish to subscribe to district communications may do so via [Lakota's self-sign-up portal](#).

[Click here for more information about signing up for or logging into your School Messenger account for Lakota communications.](#)

G Suite Now Available for Students

As part of Lakota's continued effort to provide quality digital tools to support excellent instructional opportunities, and to further prepare our students for life after Lakota, we are

come together to support and champion the causes they believe in and the communities in which they live.

#GiveLakota extends through the end of 2017 and will benefit the brand new **LEAF (Lakota Education and Alumni Fund) Endowment** held at the Community Foundation of West Chester/Liberty. The LEAF Endowment was established just this year to build a sustainable source of funding to support projects and programs at Lakota Schools that aren't provided for in the annual budget. The LEAF Endowment raised \$23,000 at the Foundation's Key Event in September. The Foundation's goal for #GiveLakota on this #GivingTuesday is to match that amount.

[Please visit the Community Foundation of West Chester/Liberty website to donate today or through the remainder of this giving season.](#)

excited to expand Lakota's offerings to include both Microsoft Office 365 and G Suite (formerly Google Apps).

Offering both allows choice so the focus remains on the instructional outcome, not the tools.

- Microsoft Office 365 will continue to provide our students/staff with the most prevalent digital productivity/collaboration suite in Higher Ed, Business and the Military. Office 365 (**OneDrive** with Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Forms and OneNote)
- G Suite is the most widely used productivity/collaboration suite in K-12 schools nationally. G Suite (**Google Drive** with Docs, Sheets, Slides, Forms, Keep and Drawing)
- Like Office 365, G Suite integrates with Canvas, our current Learning Management System, and will be accessible through your student's current OneLogin account at any time.

Boys & Girls Club of West Chester/Liberty Host Grand Opening Dec. 3

The new Boys & Girls Club of West Chester/Liberty will host its grand opening celebration with an open house on Sunday, Dec. 3 from 1 to 5 p.m.

The public is invited and admission is free. Tours of the 30,000 square foot facility at 8749 Cincinnati-Dayton Road will be available. Children are welcome and snacks will be served.

The club features a full-sized indoor gym, an outdoor basketball/volleyball court; an art room; media center; green room; four large class rooms; three flexible classrooms; a café; clinic; open meeting spaces; and offices. The club will be open Monday through Friday after school and full days in the summer. New members will be accepted Jan. 4.

The Boys & Girls Club is located on nine acres on the site of the former Union Elementary School in the heart of Olde West Chester. The Lakota Local School District retains ownership of the site.

Photo of the Week



Thanksgiving Fun

Students in Mrs. Sills' class at Shawnee Early Childhood School had lots of fun getting ready for the Thanksgiving holiday (*pictured above*). Throughout the district, the week leading up to holiday was filled with Thanksgiving-themed activities. From writing projects about what you are thankful for -- to 'dress the turkey' competitions -- to creating a feast with clay in art class.

And, of course, students and guests were able to enjoy a yummy Thanksgiving meal prepared by Child Nutrition and served with the help of many volunteers. The meal had to be served over the course of two days to accommodate everyone!

Upcoming Events

Event Spotlights

- Tuesday, December 5
Barber Shop, Books and Boys
at X-Quisite Cutz, 7324 Kingsgate Way
6 - 7:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, December 5
Lakota East Choir & West Chester Symphony Holiday Concert
at Princeton Pike Church of God
7 - 8:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, December 6
Coffee Chat with the Superintendent
at Einstein Bros. Bagels, 9216 Allen Road
1 - 2 p.m.
- Thursday, December 7
Lakota East Freshman Band Holiday Concert
at Lakota East Freshman Campus
7 - 8:30 p.m.
- Friday, December 8
Lakota West Swing Dance
at Lakota West Main Campus

Lakota In The News

Community Coverage

Hamilton-Journal News

[Lakota West High School gets Scandinavian makeover by Ikea](#)

[West Chester-Liberty chamber recognizes 10 Women of Excellence](#)

[Know thy peers: Lakota sophomores learn from anti-bullying program](#)

Channel 5 - WLWT

[Elementary students help out 5 Cares Coat Drive](#)

Latest E-Flyers

What's News 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 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.

Community-Sponsored Flyers:

[Jingle & Mingle for KylerStrong Foundation at AC Marriott Liberty Center: December 10](#)

**All Current
E-Flyers**

Cafeteria
7 - 10 p.m.

- Monday, December 11
Lakota Board of Education Meeting
at Lakota Central Office
7 p.m.
- Monday, December 11
Lakota West Holiday Band Concert
at Lakota West Main Campus
7 p.m.
- Tuesday, December 12
Lakota West Freshman Bands Holiday Concert
at Lakota West Freshman Campus
7 p.m.
- Tuesday, December 12
Gift of Music Concert
at Lakota East Main Campus
7 p.m.
- Friday, December 15
Student Fanfare at East Freshman School
6:45 a.m. - 7 a.m.
- Wednesday, December 20
Holiday Break Begins
- Wednesday, January 3
Teacher In-Service Day (No school for students)

- Thursday, January 4
[School Resumes](#)

[See Full
Calendar](#)

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