



This Week at Lakota

Instilling Pride. Igniting Passion. Infinite Possibilities.

January 23, 2017 EDITION

Leading the Way *Featured Presentation*

New Career Readiness Academy Offers Personalized Alternative High School Experience, Expands Next Year



*Lakota West sophomore **Sierra Durante** (left) works side-by-side with Career Readiness Academy instructor Amanda Garibay. The Academy's structure allows for more one-on-one assistance as students are working through their classes at their own pace.*

Lakota's new Career Readiness Academy is the definition of personalized education.

"The model allows students to work entirely at their own pace," said Nicole Isaacs, the leader of the district's new high school alternative program open to both Lakota East and West ninth- through twelfth-graders. "Every student who walks through our doors has the same goal – to graduate on time and formulate a plan for what happens

after that. But how they get there can look very different."

The program's first cohort to start the program this school year includes 57 students who report daily for either the morning or afternoon session. For the three hours they are on site, they

work mostly on their own and with the one-on-one support of the program's academic team: an assistant principal, two teachers, an intervention specialist and a career advisor. They spend another 15 hours each week logged in from home, working through their lessons and assignments, usually one class at a time.

During those hours, students are following an individualized plan that takes into account where they are in their path toward graduation. It considers credit requirements, post-graduation plans and even the personal circumstances directing a student's schedule. It's what each student maps out at the very start of their Academy experience.

"Even before their first official day, we talk about their interests and then come up with a plan for what it's going to take to support their long-term goals," Isaacs said. "They are held to exactly the same standards and credit requirements as any other Lakota high school student. It's one of the most important facets of the program that every diploma carries the same weight."

The Student Profile

Such an individualized approach explains why the Academy's so-called student profile is far from "cookie cutter." For some, like Lakota East junior **Shelby Longworth**, the smaller environment conquers the social challenges that come with attending a large high school.

"School used to give me bad anxiety, to the point that I'd leave early or not go at all when I was on main campus," Shelby said. "But being here has grounded me and helped me focus on my own priorities."

For others, the flexible work schedule allows students to fulfill personal obligations that tend to compete with the traditional school day, like work or medical care, for example. And still, for many others, the access to one-on-one teacher support and a pace that matches their own allows them to catch up on credits and sometimes even graduate early.

Lakota East senior **Cameron Anderson** came to the Academy needing an overwhelming 17 credits to graduate. Halfway through the year, he's already chipped away at more than half of them, putting him back on track to graduate with his class. Just as important is the sense of direction he's gained through the program's focus on career readiness.

"I always just assumed I'd go right into an entry-level job, get my own apartment and just do the minimum," Anderson said. That was before he realized his potential to succeed in college. His plans now include a major in marketing and business at Cincinnati State.

[Continue reading about the pilot program's success after just one semester and plans to expand it in time for next school year.](#)

Streamlining District Purchasing Practices Results in Savings, Standardization

The statistics are impressive: \$130,000 saved in just one year through efficiencies in ordering copy paper and another \$30,000 saved annually just by centralizing postage.

What may be even more remarkable is the paradigm shift that's had to happen across Lakota's 25 buildings to make such change possible.



(Left to right) Lakota's Chief Operating Officer Chris Passarge and Purchasing Manager Veronica Gayotin have led the implementation of numerous cost-reducing strategies in Lakota's purchasing procedures, resulting in about \$1.5 million in savings since 2014.

Since 2013, Lakota's Business Operations team has implemented numerous changes to its purchasing procedures, all designed to reduce expenses, decrease waste, leverage the district's size and purchasing power, and streamline processes – all part of the district's commitment to fiscal responsibility and sustainability.

And it's paid off, with an estimated \$1.5 million in savings since 2014. "Such substantial savings have helped us maintain a balanced budget for four consecutive years," says Lakota Treasurer Jenni Logan. "By reducing our spending to \$13.7 million less than it was six years ago, we are stretching taxpayer dollars and even redirecting some of our savings to meaningful student programs and services."

A major contributor to these savings and the long-term financial stability it supports, was the establishment of a centralized purchasing department.

"Before, each school was responsible for ordering their own supplies independently," said Chief Operating Officer Chris Passarge. "We knew we had to find ways to be more efficient in our use of resources and, working with the Treasurer's Department, we basically overhauled the entire purchasing structure. Before we made this a priority, the purchasing manager position didn't even exist."

"Fortunately for Lakota, we didn't have to look very far to find our expert to start the program," he stated, noting that prior to joining Lakota, Veronica Gayotin worked for Procter & Gamble for 16 years managing supply chain for some of their top customers.

"Having someone with that strong customer service background and expertise was truly an asset to establish the purchasing department," Passarge said. Gayotin, who has been part of Lakota's Business Operations department since 2006 supporting various aspects of the business such as construction, telecommunications and the copier fleet, was promoted to purchasing

manager and began the task of identifying areas where centralized purchasing and streamlining work processes could bring reduced costs to the district.

The changes were widespread – and continue to evolve.

[Continue reading about the various changes that added up to sustainable savings for Lakota.](#)

Around Lakota

Community, Lakota Students Celebrate MLK Day



*MLK Day writing contest winners (from front left) Hopewell Junior students **Gabrielle Mathis**, **Cailey Duckworth** and **Raissa Ndaya**, Creekside Early Childhood student **Isheni Peiris** and Endeavor Elementary student **Bonny Kirkmeyer** pose with Lakota Board of Education members Julie Shaffer and Ray Murray and Acting Superintendent Robb Vogelmann (back, left to right).*

January 16 marked the 18th year that West Chester and Liberty townships, in conjunction with the Lakota Local School District, hosted opportunities for the entire community to join together in the *Live the Dream: Our Declaration of Unity* commemoration of Martin Luther King Day.

The day's activities started with a "March for Unity," followed by a free lunch donated by local restaurants held at the Lakota West High School cafeteria and featuring performance by the Lakota West jazz combo. After the lunch, a community program was held, with Aisha Moore as discussion facilitator and Dr. Monique Johnson serving as

keynote speaker. Moore is a Lakota teacher on special assignment and Johnson, a recruitment, retention & diversity consultant, leading Lakota's "Champions for Change" initiative.

Congratulations to the following Lakota students who won different categories of the writing contest, sharing their ideas on how to incorporate the ideals of the Martin Luther King's "Beloved Community" into their own lives and community.

Gabrielle Mathis, Hopewell Junior seventh-grader, earned the grand prize for her essay titled "Talk, Build, Change, Thrive!"

Isheni Peiris, Creekside Early Childhood Center first-grader, earned the early childhood prize for her piece, titled "We Love Our Community!"

Bonny Kirkmeyer, Endeavor Elementary third-grader, won the elementary category for her essay titled, "Making A Cultural Community Through Books"

Raissa Ndaya, Hopewell Junior eighth-grader, claimed the junior high ESL prize for her essay titled, "Interview Someone With A Different Background, Culture, Heritage, Language, or Other Demographic From Your Own"

Cailey Duckworth, Hopewell Junior eighth-grader, earned the junior high school category prize for her piece titled, "Change: It Starts With You"

Desiree Long, Lakota East freshman, claimed the high school prize for her piece titled, "Implementing the Beloved Community"

According to community coordinator Gail Webster, "The theme centered on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s often-referred-to global vision, in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth. In the 'Beloved Community,' poverty, hunger, and homelessness will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency will not tolerate it. Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood. The writing assignment included the students' thoughts and suggestions about what the community can do to become a 'Beloved Community' for all."

[Click here](#) to view the West Chester Township video of the day's events.

Lakota Students Finish Strong in Scholastic Art Awards



Lakota West junior Sierra Jones with the photograph that earned her an "American Visions" award.

Lakota East and Lakota West high school students made quite a showing in this year's Scholastic Art Awards, a regional competition that included students from 68 area junior high and high schools.

More than 80 Lakota art students entered their original work into the competition, which totaled almost 4,300 entries. Nearly 40 students earned a collective 68 awards in the competition.

"I think this says a lot about the quality of our program, especially when you compare our numbers to other schools that had more teachers and students enter the competition," said Lakota West art teacher Stephanie Gauer.

Lakota West junior **Sierra Jones** brought home an "American Visions" award for her photograph titled "Skull and Bones." The distinction places her piece among the top five in the entire competition.

The following students earned the top "Gold Key" award, which means they will move on to the upcoming national competition in New York City. National medal winners will be announced this March.

From Lakota East High School:

- **Brianna Castner** for Medieval Ornamentation
- **Ronan Cole** for three entries - Toenad, Rhonda and Loud Pipes
- **Laura Daniels** for Moose Tracks
- **Spencer Kenney** for Freedom
- **Ryan Kmieske** for Dieting
- **Lily Lamping** for Chateau Laroche
- **Carly Landers** for Red Hot Candy
- **Madison Lentz** for This is Just the Veganning
- **Megan Peteronjes** for Nocturnal Migration
- **Jordan Prewitt** for Passage Way to Nowhere
- **Jenna Renfro** for Circle of Suckers
- **Mackenzie Robinette** for Oh Deer!
- **Jennave Traore** for The Shadows
- **Lauren Wilson** for Cut From the Same Cloth

From Lakota West High School:

- **Harris Fields** for Dancing Skeletons
- **Meredith Elstun** for H2O
- **Mary Garand** for Open Season
- **Sierra Jones** for Skull and Bones
- **Shelby Lambright** for four entries - Child's Play, Afternoon Nap, Quack! and Ride
- **Megan Lee** for two entries – Cryptic and Oblivion
- **Aleah Oxley** for Violist at Rest
- **Olivia Popp** for Memory Bear
- **Alyson Power** for More Than Just a Fingerprint
- **Trey Small** for Out Of The Shadows
- **Selena Vallejo** for Collateral Damage
- **David Walcott** for Closer Than You Think

Many of the winning pieces will be on display at the Art Academy of Cincinnati through Feb. 3. The exhibit is open to the public weekdays from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Hopewell, Liberty Junior Schools' 'White Out Toilet Bowl' Event Benefits Local Senior Citizens



Liberty Junior Counselor Mary Jones (from left), Lakota board member Ray Murray and Hopewell Junior Counselor Andria Lapthorn, pose with just a fraction of the nearly 1,800 toilet paper rolls collected.

The scene at a recent girls basketball game at Liberty Junior School was a bit out of the ordinary as stacks of toilet paper rolls surrounded the gym floor. "It really was overwhelming to see, thanks to the generosity of our students, their families and local businesses," said Liberty Junior Principal Eric Bauman.

The event, deemed the "2017 Toilet Bowl," was a joint community service project between Liberty Junior and Hopewell Junior schools. In a friendly competition, the two schools competed to see which could bring in the most toilet paper rolls. Throughout the week, lunchtime games were held, culminating in a "white out" rivalry at the Jan. 12 seventh and eighth grade girls basketball game.

All donations were given to Partners in Prime of West Chester, a local non-profit organization dedicated to meeting the needs of senior citizens. The week-long project was the idea of Hopewell Junior Guidance Counselor Andria Lapthorn.

"It was a great event and wonderful success," said Hopewell Junior Principal Jeff Rouff. "We had more than 1,740 rolls of toilet paper donated and we're pleased to be able to support Partners in Prime and the good work they do. Plus, the students had so much fun with the competition and the challenge to bring in more donations than the other school."

Even local businesses joined in, with donations from SanMar Corporations, the West Chester Liberty Chamber Alliance and other local businesses. Habitat for Humanity loaned toilets for the final competition, which featured free throw shots while seated on a toilet and other activities during the game.

Superintendent Vogelmann Participates in Local Education Panel Hosted by Chamber



Lakota Acting Superintendent Robb Vogelmann was one of four panelists discussing educational trends during the West Chester Liberty Chamber Alliance's Jan. 10 meeting. In addition to Vogelmann, representatives from Butler Tech, Cincinnati State Technical & Community College and Miami University's regional campuses participated in the Alliance's annual "State of the Schools" panel.

Although the organizations serve students of all different ages, the panelists shared their insights about the challenges and opportunities facing educational institutions.

*Acting Superintendent Robb Vogelmann.
Photo courtesy of Cox Media Group
Ohio/Journal-News, photographer Nick
Graham.*

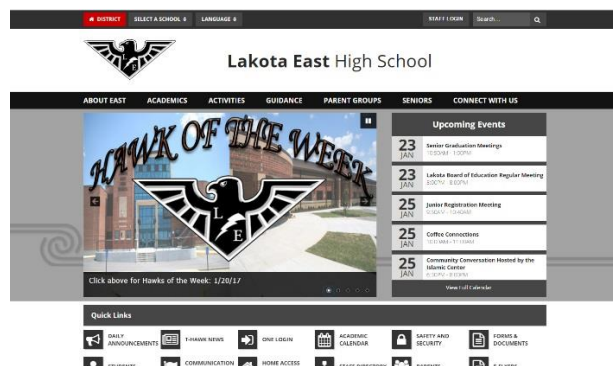
"It's a privilege to share the good work happening at Lakota with regional business leaders and to reinforce that connection that our students are employees of the future," Vogelmann said. "Part of our responsibility is to

offer the best possible start for our students, while supporting a global economy that relies on the talents of a bright future workforce. To provide such instructional excellence means maximizing student opportunity through long-term, sustainable financial planning which allows us to offer a high standard of teaching balanced with responsible spending of taxpayer dollars."

[Click here](#) for Michael Clark's coverage of the panel discussion in the Journal-News.

Both High Schools Launch New Websites

All School Sites Now Match District Site's New Look



With the launch of Lakota West's new website last week, and East's new site last month, Lakota has completed the redesign of all of its schools' websites.

Both high schools' sites now include features like a new navigation for quicker and easier access to top-visited content, a Twitter feed, helpful quick links, school and district news, more photos, and even a translation tool. Click here to visit and bookmark the new [Lakota West](#) or [Lakota East](#) homepages.

All school sites are now closely integrated with the district site, and the buttons at the top of each homepage allow you to easily jump to any school's site or to the district site. The goal of the redesign was to improve the user experience, with the goal of getting you the information you are seeking in two clicks or less.

The launch of Lakota's new website also marks the availability of all online content in a mobile-friendly format. A new mobile app will soon replace the current one, making it easier than ever for parents to personalize the content they wish to view on their mobile device, according to the schools their children attend. Watch for details about the new app in the coming months.

Fifth Annual Summer Fun Fair Features Local Summer Programs for Students in Grades K-12



Save the dates for Lakota's fifth annual Summer Fun Fair. The fair is a great way for parents to learn about the many local businesses and non-profit organizations that provide summer programming for students in grades K-12.

Vendors range from summer camps, learning centers and childcare facilities to athletic leagues, art programs and local parks and recreation.

They will be available all at one time and in one

location to share information and answer questions about their summer offerings.

Live entertainment by some of our performing arts vendors will be provided and door prizes will be drawn each evening. For added convenience, families are invited to attend either of two events:

Monday, February 27

Lakota East High School
6-8 p.m.

Wednesday, March 1

Lakota West High School
6-8 p.m.

[View All District News](#)

New Business

Announcements & Opportunities

Lakota School Board Elects New 2017 President



Ben Dibble was named president of the Lakota Board of Education at the board's organizational meeting January 9. Todd Parnell retained his position as vice president. Lynda O'Connor, Ray Murray, and Julie Shaffer hold the other board seats.

"I'm humbled by the opportunity to serve our community and our schools during a time when there's so much positive energy around Lakota," Mr. Dibble said. "We are in the midst of an intense search for the district's next long-term leader and I'm looking forward to helping lead the board toward that important decision. We continue to find ways to enhance the experience of all students while exercising careful stewardship of our taxpayer dollars. That's a mindset I fully intend to carry through my term as president."

The school board also approved a number of committee assignments:

Policy Committee: Ray Murray, Julie Shaffer

Community Engagement Committee: Lynda O'Connor, Julie Shaffer

District Parent Council: Lynda O'Connor, Julie Shaffer

Finance Committee: Todd Parnell, Julie Shaffer

Legislative Committee: Lynda O'Connor, Todd Parnell

Diversity Committee: Ray Murray, Todd Parnell, Julie Shaffer

Representative to Butler Technology and Career Development Schools: Ray Murray

Ohio School Boards Association Legislative Liaison: Lynda O'Connor

[Click here to see the complete 2017 schedule of board meetings.](#)

Superintendent Search Extended to Jan. 25

Lakota's Board of Education has extended the application deadline for the superintendent position until Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2017.

According to Board President Ben Dibble, "Selecting the leader who will have the vision and skills to continue moving this district in a positive direction is a task we take very seriously. It requires a tremendous amount of community engagement, forward thinking and at times, flexibility in our timeline."

In a recent message to staff and parents, he added. "The decision was made at the advice of our partner search firm, which is working diligently to help us attract the best possible pool of candidates, with consideration toward the weight this decision carries for several qualified people considering such a big career move."

As originally planned, the first round of interviews is scheduled for Jan. 31 and Feb. 1.

District Seeks Community Input on 2018-19 School Calendar

While the 2018-2019 academic year may seem far into the future, the Lakota Calendar Committee is asking for input as they prepare the district calendar for the Board of Education. The committee typically works about 20 months in advance so Lakota families have adequate time to prepare and plan accordingly.

The committee considers many different factors when drafting the district calendar, including state mandates, scheduled state assessment dates, observed holidays and staff professional development days.

Lakota staff, students, parents and community members are invited to review the current draft before the final recommendation is presented to the school board in February. We value your feedback and all comments will be reviewed and, as appropriate, adjustments made.

[Please click here to provide your feedback by completing and submitting the online survey form by Friday, Feb. 24.](#)

Parents, Community Welcome at All Student Fanfare Events Now through May



Shawnee kindergartner Brendyn Carter receives a fanfare welcome from staff and community members as he arrives at school Jan. 17.

Lakota's new series of community fanfare events is proving so popular with students and community members that more events continue to be added. The concept is a simple one: Line the school's entrance and give students high-fives and words of encouragement as they're filing into school. The new tradition aims to provide students with a visual display of all their supporters during times like testing and the start of a new semester, for example.

All are welcome! [Click here for the complete schedule through May and commit to one or more fanfare events](#) or [click here to view a video from Lakota East to see students' reaction to the welcome.](#)

Join us for any of these upcoming fanfares this month and next:

Monday, Jan. 30, 2017 @ 9 a.m. - Liberty Early Childhood School

Feb. 13, 2017 @ 8:15 a.m. - Endeavor Elementary

Feb. 21, 2017 @ 9 a.m. - Union Elementary

Feb. 24, 2017 @ 9 a.m. – Creekside Early Childhood School

Feb. 27, 2017 @ 8:15 a.m. – Hopewell Elementary

On the Radar

Quick Links & Reminders

Lakota Listens Through Community Conversations

Since 2012, Lakota's Board of Education and administration have been hosting Community Conversations as an ongoing way to hear from our local residents. They are a way for community members to share their concerns and comments on general education themes, as well as specific issues and topics that have arisen over the years that merit community input.

[A video](#) summarizes a busy October of Community Conversations, which focused on themes such as the new superintendent search, the district's evolving partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of West Chester/Liberty, and the role sports should play in 21st century education.

While all of the sessions are open to the public, some have a specific theme or audience. Mark your calendar for two upcoming Community Conversations:

- **Wednesday, January 25** from 6:30 - 8 p.m.
Hosted by the Islamic Center of Greater Cincinnati (8092 Plantation Drive, West Chester)
- **Monday, February 13** from 7 – 8:30 p.m.
Hosted by the Lakota East Boosters (Lakota East Main Campus)

[Click here](#) for more details about Community Conversations.

Tickets on Sale for Lakota West's Theatre Production



There's still time to purchase tickets for Lakota West's "The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon" premiering Jan. 26-28. The show brings charming and sassy characters like Snow White, Cinderella, Little Red Cap, The Talking Fish, Crab People, The Frog Prince, Rapunzel, and Rumpelstiltskin, all together into one captivating performance.

"The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon" cleverly interweaves a large portion of the Grimm Brothers' 209 stories into a fast-paced, complex, and quite hilarious production. The audience is kept laughing from the very start as the hectic stories intertwine to create an amusing, organized chaos.

Shows will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 26 through Saturday, Jan. 28. General admission and patron tickets are currently available at <http://www.lakotawesttheatre.net/ticket-information.html>.

Feb. 10 Deadline for Athletic Participation Grants

The Community Foundation of West Chester/Liberty is offering Lakota families assistance with their children's athletic participation fees. The grant is funded by private donations and available to students in grades 7-12.

The deadline for consideration of the Community Foundation grant for Spring sports is Friday, Feb. 10. Click [here](#) for more information and to download the application.

Upcoming Coffee Connections

Whether you have a specific question or idea, or simply want to hear more about the district's biggest priorities, challenges and successes, please consider joining Acting Superintendent Robb Vogelmann and Treasurer Jenni Logan at one of the monthly "Coffee Connections".

These informal coffee chats out in the community are typically held on the last Wednesday of each month. For an hour, both are available for drop-in conversation with parents and residents at local coffee houses (rotating between West Chester and Liberty Township locations) as part of an initiative called Coffee Connections. Click [here](#) for more information.

Mark the following dates on your calendars, enjoy a coffee and make connections as you learn about your school district:

Wednesday, Jan. 25

10-11 a.m.

Coffee Beans and Brew, 7051 Yankee Road, Liberty Township

Wednesday, Feb. 22

2-3 p.m.

Cavu Coffee, 7755 Cox Lane, West Chester

Applications for Lakota's 2017-18 Preschool Enrollment Due Jan. 31

Preschool applications for the 2017-2018 school year are available online and at Shawnee Early Childhood School, Creekside Early Childhood School and Liberty Early Childhood School.

All applications must be received or postmarked by Jan. 31 to be considered for the lottery. The lottery will take place in February and all applicants will be notified by mail regarding their admission in the program by the end of February. Applications received after the Jan. 31 deadline will be placed on a waiting list.

Parents can visit the Lakota website for detailed information about enrollment.

Photo of the Week

Wyandot ECS's 'Reading Warm-Up' Event



In hopes of reaching families who are unable to attend evening school events, Wyandot Early Childhood School has added several morning events to connect with families. The first "Reading Warm-Up" event was held Jan. 13 and several more are scheduled.

The first event was quite a success! Approximately 150 families attended the event - totaling 300 participants. Here, first-grader **Ben Minnich** and his mother (on left) and first-grader **LG Williams** and his grandfather enjoy a few minutes of reading winter-themed picture books and eating donuts together prior to the start of the school day.

Upcoming Events

- Monday, Jan. 23
[Lakota Board of Education Meeting](#), Central Office
7 p.m.
- Wednesday, Jan. 25
[Community Conversation Hosted by the Islamic Center](#)
6:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, Jan. 25
[Coffee Connections](#) at Coffee Beans and Brew
10-11 a.m.
- Monday, Jan. 30
Student Fanfare Event at Liberty Early Childhood School
9 a.m.
- Monday, Feb. 6
[Lakota Board of Education Meeting](#), Central Office
7 p.m.

[View Full Calendar](#)

Lakota In The News

Journal-News

[Lakota board votes in new leadership](#)

[Lakota again delays deadline for superintendent applicants](#)

[Leaders: The business of education is to meet needs of business](#)

[Lakota inks \\$3.5M deal with healthcare providers to improve sports](#)

[A year of new schools, new leaders in Butler County](#)

WKRC Local 12

[Local students watch the presidential inauguration](#)

Latest E-Flyers

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.

District-Sponsored:

[Girl Scout Spring Break Day Camp at Sharon Woods \(April 10-12\)](#)

[Lakota East Swing Dance \(Jan. 28\)](#)

[Try Band for Future Ridge, Plains and West Students \(Jan. 28\)](#)

Community-Sponsored Flyers:

No new flyers this week

[View All E-Flyers](#)