

Instilling Pride. Igniting Passion. Infinite Possibilities.

August 25, 2017

## Leading the Way

*Featured Stories*





## Career Readiness Academy Lands in New Location, Serves More Students

Lakota's Career Readiness Academy opened its doors at a new location this year. The refurbished building on Lakota West's freshman campus replaces its prior home inside Lakota West's main campus. The move more than doubled its capacity to serve students.

"Last year we learned that our model appealed to a lot of our students – so much so that we outgrew it in just a year's time," said Academy Principal **Nicole Isaacs**. "We are excited to have the opportunity to give this alternative option to more students who need it to reach graduation."

The alternative high school program, introduced as an option to ninth- through twelfth-graders at both Lakota East and West last



## #WEareLakota Back-to-School Photo Contest Inspires Social Sharing

Hundreds of photos, shared by students, parents and staff, helped chronicle students' first days back to school this year. The popular back-to-school photo contest celebrated the start of the new year – and the excitement behind Lakota's new hashtag, #WEareLakota.

Popular vote – or total likes on the original social media post – determined the three winning photo submissions on both Facebook and Twitter. Each winner received a #WEareLakota T-shirt.

The winning submissions on Facebook belonged to:

- **Basant Hanna** (Shawnee ECS)

school year, offers students the opportunity to earn their high school diploma in a smaller, more flexible environment. Students facing different circumstances in their lives or struggling with the traditional high school format can work at their own pace with the benefits of a curriculum that combines online instruction with one-on-one support from the Academy's academic staff.

“The model allows students to work entirely at their own pace,” Isaacs said. “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 staff expanded this year, too, adding a guidance counselor and two teachers for more specialized instruction in different subject areas.

“Not physically being in the middle of main campus allows us to give students the smaller, more intimate high school experience they’re needing – but with all the same access to extracurricular opportunities,” Isaacs said.

Of the 19 seniors enrolled last year, the pilot program yielded 17 graduates. More importantly, programming geared at college- and career-readiness helped those graduates map their post-graduation plans.

Any interested student should talk with his or her home school guidance counselor about Lakota’s alternative school option and enrollment options.

- **Tammy Dietz** (Ridge Jr. & Lakota West)
- **Lisa Phair** (Cherokee & Lakota East)

The contest’s Twitter winners included:

- **Syd Jefferson** (Hopewell Jr.)
- **Anne Petersen** (Lakota West)
- **Michelle Fugate** (Wyandot ECS)

The new hashtag, selected by a public poll this summer, has become a source of proud moments happening all over the Lakota district. The capital ‘W’ and ‘E’ is an intentional symbol of the potential wrapped up in the union between the West and East sides of the school district.

“Lakota’s sheer size is a huge strength,” said Lakota Superintendent **Matt Miller**. “There is so much opportunity to do great things when we come together as one Lakota for our students, our staff and our community. The hashtag is just one way of demonstrating our commitment to bringing the W and the E together in as many ways as possible.”

Search for the hashtag on any social media platform to catch a glimpse of what’s happening in and around our schools and to see the variety of photos shared early this school year.

## Around Lakota

*School Spotlights*

## Creekside Wall Mural Puts School Mission on Display

*Creative Growth in More than Just Art Class*



A new wall mural greeting visitors to Creekside Early Childhood School is an eye-catching display of the school's daily mission – to grow creative young minds.

Lakota art teacher **Teri McElroy** designed and painted the mural as a reflection of something happening inside not only her own art classroom, but many others throughout Creekside. She wanted to share in one display evidence of all that goes into "growing young people into individuals who are culturally-aware and are going to positively change the world around them one day."

She explains that art plays a major role in helping students to reflect on what they've learned and apply it creatively. The information and tools students are using across all different subject areas are all equal contributors to a young learner's educational experience and growth, she says. That is why she makes an effort to bring other subjects like science, math, technology and reading into her art lessons.

McElroy may be the mastermind behind the mural. But her real intent was to make it a slate for displaying the product of student creativity. All year long, the space will feature different works of art created by students.

"Student artwork gives people a very tangible way to see the impact their learning is having on them," McElroy said.

## East Freshman School Transforms First Day

*Students, Staff Energized by Non-Traditional First Day*



Freshmen at Lakota East kicked off the school year in a very non-traditional way. They spent a short time going through their schedules and visiting each class, but after that the ninth-graders spent the day doing small and large group activities, being energized by the message of some guest speakers, and coming together as the Class of 2021 during a special pep assembly.

"We made the change because we want the focus of our campus to be on creating a culture where students feel connected to our school, Lakota East High School overall, and to one another," said Lakota East Associate Principal **Robert Burnside**. "We believe that if we provide the type of environment where students want to be at school and believe in themselves, one another, and their teachers, they will surpass our expectations both academically and behaviorally."



The activities began with a welcome assembly featuring guest speakers Nick Jackson and Alyssa Nickols. They spoke to the students about valuing one another and appreciating that everyone brings something that is needed to the school. The speakers talked about overcoming the challenges that we all face every day, and to realize that **we** define who we are -- and to not allow other people to place us in a negative box.

After the welcome assembly students went on a scavenger hunt instead of a typical building tour. Teachers led small group ice-breaker sessions, and large group activities focused on team building. Students learned that in order to be successful, everyone needed to participate and contribute, and that teams need to encourage and value the contributions of each person.

The day concluded with a pep rally that was focused on enjoying school. Varsity cheerleaders and high school marching band members came to the freshman campus to lead the rally. "Our goal was to make our students feel connected to main campus and build school spirit," said Burnside. Each student received a

Lakota East t-shirt and the shirts had one mission – to make sure every student could feel connected.

The departure from the traditional first day seems to be working. Burnside said that the staff feedback was great – the teachers were energized along with the students, and they really enjoyed the focus on getting to know the students. “Ultimately, we wanted the day to be about positive relationships, and I believe that tone was set,” said Burnside. “One week in, we are already seeing the benefits; our students are doing a great job meeting our expectations for them.”

*Top left: The Class of 2021 is gathered for an assembly on the first day of school with every student wearing a Lakota East t-shirt provided by the school's PTSSO. Bottom left: The large group activities at East Freshman were truly team-building in nature. Students shown here are working in groups to move a ball into a bucket using varying pieces of cardboard. A second activity involved stacking cups using four strings attached to a rubber band.*

## High-Fives to Start the New School Year

*Student Fanfare Events are Back, All are Welcome*

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Students at several Lakota schools were greeted with a tunnel of high-fives and cheers from staff, parents and community members as they started off the new school year. Hopewell Junior, Independence, Adena (pictured at left) and Freedom elementary schools have all held a Community Fanfare event to kick off the start of school.

Every Lakota school will hold a fanfare event - whether it is at the beginning of the school year or during times like testing, or the start or end of a semester. The concept, derived from a first day of school tradition at Hopewell Junior School, brings community and school leaders together to send a message of support to Lakota students.

We hope that you will join us at one (or more) student fanfares throughout the school year. Please plan to join us at our next one:

August 30

**VanGorden Elementary**

8:15 a.m.

[Click here for more details and the most up-to-date schedule.](#)

[View All  
District News](#)

## New Business

*Announcements & Opportunities*

## On The Radar

*Quick Links & Reminders*

## Save the Date: Ice Cream Social for New Families Sept. 6

For those 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. Lakota's CommUNITY Ambassadors invites all new families to its annual ice cream social on Wednesday, Sept. 6 from 5-7:30 p.m. The gathering will take place at Union Centre Square, or in case of rain, the MidPointe Library's community room.

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, to help students get off to a good start at Lakota. All family members are welcome to come and enjoy ice cream sundaes, games and activities.

The host group, Lakota's CommUNITY Ambassadors, works within our schools to build stronger communities and increase parents' involvement in their child's education. [Click here to see a flyer](#) about the event.

## First Superintendent Coffee Chat Sept. 6



Join Us for a Coffee Chat  
with Lakota Superintendent Matt Miller

Join Lakota's new Superintendent Matt Miller at his first Community Coffee Chat Wednesday, Sept. 6 from 9 to 10 a.m. at Einstein Brothers, located at 9216 Allen Rd. 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). The times will also vary to accommodate different schedules.

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

Be sure to check out Lakota's [Back-to-School Guide](#) for questions about Home Access Center, communications, breakfast and lunch menus and more.

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## Update Your Lakota Communication Preferences

Lakota Local Schools uses a comprehensive mass notification system, SchoolMessenger, for delivering important school- and district-wide messages via email, phone and text message. SchoolMessenger provides parents, guardians and staff with a convenient way to manage their preferences for receiving weather-related, emergency and general notifications from Lakota and its schools.

The system integrates with current student and staff data, automatically updating your account to receive communications based on your current school(s) and/or grade level.

[Click here for more information](#) on logging into your account to review and modify your preferences for receiving Lakota news.



Mark your calendar for Sept. 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 soon on the [Superintendent page](#) of Lakota Online.

## LEADS Family Picnic to Feature Scientific Mayhem

Mark your calendars for the annual LEADS Family Picnic on Sunday, Sept. 10.

The LEADS (Lakota Enrichment and Academic Development of Students) Parent Group is an affiliate of the Ohio Association for Gifted Children (OAGC). LEADS exists to provide enrichment opportunities for students and families in the district and to support families on their gifted education journey. Click here to learn more about [LEADS](#).

This year's Family Picnic will be held on Sept. 10 at Keehner Park beginning at 5 p.m. Families are asked to pack their dinner and drinks, and LEADS will provide dessert and entertainment. Families will have a fun time with science this year -- [Scientific Mayhem](#) will be on hand at 6 p.m.

Member-only door prizes will be given away to families who have paid their annual \$10 LEADS dues. Dues can be paid on the LEADS website or at the picnic. [Click here to register](#) and [view the event flyer](#).

## Future Hawks Night Sept. 8

Future Hawks Night will take place at the Lakota East Varsity Football game on Sept. 8. The Lakota East Thunderhawks will be taking on the Princeton Vikings at 7 p.m. Community members are invited for a pre-game celebration behind the stadium prior to kick-off.

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## Free Microsoft Office Suite Available to Students

Digital productivity and creation skills are a key component of our students' college and career readiness and a strong focus for our staff and students. Lakota continues to offer the most used digital productivity suite in the world, Microsoft Office, free to our students at no cost to our families or Lakota Schools. This will allow Lakota students in grades 2-12 to use a full version of Microsoft Office on up to five devices.

Software versions include the latest version of Microsoft Office for PC, Mac, iPhone, iPad and Android. This is a great complement to our Bring Your Own Technology initiative. This is a great complement to Lakota's "Bring Your Own Technology" initiative. [Please click here for more information](#) or [click here for instructions](#) on how to install Microsoft Office.

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## Lakota Bands Tag Day is Saturday

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. 26, from

Starting at 5:30 p.m., Eastside early childhood and elementary schools will be providing music, games and giveaways for some pre-game fun. At 6:10 p.m., students will even have the opportunity to gather with their school community for a Future Hawks parade around the Hawks Nest. Students will join the award-winning Marching Thunderhawks and the Lakota East cheerleaders on the field to form a tunnel as the Thunderhawks rush onto the field. Students will then be returned to their families to enjoy the game and amazing half-time show.

Admission is free to pre-game festivities and the football game for all students K-6 attending Eastside early childhood and elementary schools. There is a general admission fee of \$7 for adults and students 7-12.

## Be Part of Lakota West's 'Volley for the Cure' Sept. 12

Lakota West girls volleyball will be hosting Mason High School for the 11th annual "Volley for the Cure" event at Lakota West High School on Tuesday, Sept. 12. To date, Lakota West girls volleyball has raised **over \$100,000** for Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

In addition to exciting volleyball action, there will be games with prizes, split the pot, silent auctions, raffles, mystery boxes, giveaways, and a wonderful sampling of food and drink from local vendors. Matches begin with the freshman team playing at 4:30, J.V. at 5:30, a faculty "fun" match at 6:30, and varsity at 7:30 p.m.

During the event, UC Health will be on hand to answer any questions and provide materials to educate and raise awareness in the fight against breast cancer. The UC Health mammography van will be conveniently located in front of Lakota West from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. on the day of the event. Please call 513-584-PINK (2465) to schedule your mammogram (registration required). It only takes about 15 minutes and could save your life.

The teams will be honoring those affected by breast cancer by placing their names on a "Wall of Honor" on Main Street. Survivors and families of those who have lost loved ones due to breast cancer are invited to attend. If you or someone you know has been affected by breast cancer and would like to attend, please contact Kristin Henley at

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. asking for 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.

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

[kristin.henley@lakotaonline.com](mailto:kristin.henley@lakotaonline.com) for complimentary tickets and a free Volley for the Cure t-shirt.

## Destination Imagination Teams Now Forming

Lakota Destination Imagination (DI) teams are now forming -- 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.

Through DI, students use the creative process to turn their ideas into reality and learn invaluable skills throughout the process including creative & critical thinking, team building, problem solving, risk taking, project management and more.

The parent information meetings will take place on Tuesday, Sept. 5 at 6:30 p.m. at the Midpointe West Chester Library in Room C and on Friday, Sept. 8 at 7:00 p.m. at the Union Elementary cafeteria.

For more information about DI, visit the national website at [www.DestinationImagination.org](http://www.DestinationImagination.org),

If you are familiar with the program, or have previously participated and would like to sign up your student for this year's program, please send an email to [LakotaDI@yahoo.com](mailto:LakotaDI@yahoo.com) no later than Sept. 15.

## Photo of the Week



**Learning Science through the Solar Eclipse**



Pictured above, Freedom Elementary students safely enjoyed an outdoor viewing of the historic solar eclipse on Aug. 21. The school's PTO assisted in the purchase of a pair of protective glasses for every Freedom student permitted to participate.

Similar lessons happened all around Lakota schools, including at Liberty Junior (pictured left), where Butler Tech's Design & Modeling teacher **Doug Noxsel** made it into a class project. His students used math formulas and concepts to precisely design an oversized pinhole camera that displayed the sun's crescent shape at different stages of the eclipse.

[Click here to view the Journal-News coverage at Endeavor Elementary.](#)

## Upcoming Events

### Event Spotlights

- Monday, August 28  
[Board of Education Meeting](#)  
at Lakota Central Office  
7 p.m.
- Wednesday, August 30  
[Student Fanfare Event at VanGorden Elementary \(Community Invited\)](#)  
8:15 - 8:45 a.m.
- Friday, September 1  
[Teacher Professional Development Day - No School for Students](#)

## Lakota In The News

### Community Coverage

#### Hamilton-Journal News

[Lakota students thrill at watching sun disappear](#)

[Prep football 'So far, so good' for inexperienced Thunderhawks](#)

[Eclipse eye dangers: How Butler, Warren schools are preparing](#)

[Lakota East and Lakota West to host annual Tag Day fundraiser](#)

## 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.

#### District-Sponsored:

[Destination Imagination Information Meetings - Sept. 5 & 8 \(Grades K-12\)](#)

- Monday, September 4  
**[District Closed \(Labor Day Holiday\)](#)**
- Wednesday, September 6  
**[Ice Cream Social for New Families](#)**  
The Square at Union Centre  
5 - 7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, September 6  
**[Coffee Chat with the Superintendent](#)**  
Einstein Brothers  
9 - 10 a.m.
- Wednesday, September 8  
**[LEADS Family Picnic](#)**  
Keehner Park  
5 p.m.
- Monday, September 11  
**[Board of Education Meeting](#)**  
Central Office  
7 p.m.

**See Full  
Calendar**

[Lakota Ice Cream Social for New Families \(September 6\)](#)

**Community-Sponsored Flyers:**

[Cub Scout Pack 955 Information Meeting \(August 28\)](#)

[Fitton Center Fall 2017 Class Scholarship Application](#)

[Fitton Center Fall Classes \(All ages\)](#)

[Girls Empowerment Group by Girls Inc. at Edge Teen Center \(Grades 9-12\)](#)

[Girls Scout Information Meetings at Early Childhood Schools](#)

[Girls Scout Information Meetings at Lakota Elementary Schools](#)

[Grace Chapel Archery Fall Sessions - Begin September 11 \(All ages\)](#)

[Thunderbird Recreational Basketball Signup Information \(Grades 1-12\)](#)

[Upward Basketball & Cheer Registration \(Grades K-8\)](#)

**All Current  
E-Flyers**

**Lakota Central Office**

5572 Princeton Road

Liberty Township, OH 45011-9726

Phone: (513) 874-5505

[Lakota@lakotaonline.com](mailto:Lakota@lakotaonline.com)

