



# SWLCONNECT

SOUTHWEST LICKING LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
OCTOBER 2023



## DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Kasey Perkins, Superintendent  
Mr. Michael Tanchevski, Assistant Superintendent  
Mr. Daniel Davis, Director of Student Services  
Mrs. Melissa Ladowitz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction  
Mrs. Tonya Sherburne, Director of Human Resources  
Mr. Richard Jones, Treasurer



## BOARD OF EDUCATION

Catherine Spindler, President  
Kandee Engle, Vice-President  
Debra Moore, Member  
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# Dr. Kasey Perkins

## *Superintendent*

It's amazing how quickly the first quarter has come to a close, and as we turn the corner, the holiday season is fast approaching. The past few months have been filled with exciting milestones and achievements in our community. The SWL Community came together to contribute over 7,000 canned goods to assist families in need, triumphing over Licking Heights in the food drive—a victory that secured both the Battle of the Broad win on the football field and in our philanthropic efforts. We extend our gratitude to everyone who helped with this cause.

Our elementary students have embarked on numerous field trips to local pumpkin patches, while our fifth-grade students immersed themselves in the annual fifth-grade camp experience. Seventh-grade students had the privilege of visiting COSI on a field trip sponsored by META, and our Wellness Committee successfully hosted its annual 5K event. The musical talents of our choir and band have graced the stage with their fall concerts, and our marching warriors have competed in multiple competitions, displaying their dedication and talents. Not to be forgotten, our fall athletes have shown remarkable success and are gearing up for postseason competition. We recently celebrated the outstanding achievements of our student of the quarter recipients at our District event, and we eagerly anticipate the forthcoming holiday performances and festivities.

While we celebrate our District's many achievements, we must also remain vigilant about our growth and ongoing building projects. On the Friday following each board meeting, I release the Community Compass newsletter, offering insights into District growth, building capacities, and project updates. You can access this informative newsletter on the District website, receive it via Final Forms email notifications, and find it posted on our District's social media pages. Please make it a point to explore this valuable resource, as it provides crucial information about the complexities and challenges facing the District.

Our District is presently engaged in redistricting efforts in preparation for the opening of the new Pataskala South Fork Elementary on Watkins Rd. in the fall of 2025. The current Pataskala Elementary will be repurposed, and boundary lines will be adjusted to accommodate the new school. Notably, Pataskala South Fork Elementary will have a student capacity of 800, as compared to Etna and Kirkersville Elementary, which have a capacity of 600. This expansion will enable the District to accommodate more students in grades K-3 as our community continues to grow.

With the transition into the fall and winter seasons comes the possibility of inclement weather. Please be aware that decisions regarding school closures or delays are made as early as possible. To stay informed, ensure you are signed up to receive District emails, have the District app, or regularly check social media and the website for potential cancellations. Keep in mind that our District covers an area of 62 square miles, and road conditions may vary across different regions. Even if the roads are safe in your neighborhood, they may not be safe for our buses and student drivers in other parts of the District. In the event of cancellations or delays, a robo-call will be sent to all families as well.

We invite you to join us for a coffee talk on October 31st at Depot Street at 9:00 AM to address any questions related to special education. Look for future open office hours in the evening to ask questions of District officials. We encourage you to stay attuned to District communications to remain well-informed about our current and future events and District happenings.

*Kasey Perkins*  
Dr. Kasey Perkins, Superintendent

# Mr. Michael Tanchevski

## *Assistant Superintendent*



Please be mindful of parking in appropriate areas and staying off the grass and curbs. Also, we appreciate your patience regarding student drop-off and pick-up at all the buildings; the long-term benefits will outweigh the short-term inconveniences. In addition, when we travel to different venues for various events please show the same respect for their facilities as you would for ours. We all represent Southwest Licking Local Schools.

In the brief space, I'd like to introduce Kevin Paskins, who has served as Southwest Licking Local Schools maintenance supervisor for almost six years. Kevin oversees the operation and maintenance of all District facilities, inside and out. He and his staff do a tremendous job of caring for our state-of-the-art facilities and preserving some of our more mature landmarks.

### **What did you do before you came here?**

"I was a construction superintendent for about 14 years and a carpenter in the trades for 27 years."

### **How did that job prepare you for what you're doing?**

"I built buildings from the ground up and managed whole projects. As a carpenter, I know how things go together, and I've been trained in various disciplines in the trades as well as hours of OSHA training."

### **What does a typical day look like for you?**

"Usually, I'm in the office about an hour before everybody else, and I go through all of my emails and get all my paperwork done because I have to manage the custodians for each of the buildings. Then I determine what meetings we might have scheduled, and I work around those and the

repairs and replacements that are required in the District. We have a work order system that we go through every morning. We schedule work orders in the order of importance."

### **What is the most challenging part of your job?**

"Dealing with all the different personalities. Every teacher's room is their world, and whatever impacts their world is important to them. So if something is not working or if something is amiss, they want it fixed, and they want it fixed right away. So we have to try to accommodate that the best we can."

### **What's the best part of working in Southwest Licking Local Schools?**

"I like working with all the people here. This, by far is the best job I've ever had, and I enjoy being here."



# Mr. Daniel Davis

## Director of Student Services



### Peer Collaboration

Peer Collaboration is a program that connects peer models with students in need of additional support in both academic and extracurricular settings. Students in grades 6-12 can apply to be Peer Collaborators at the start of the school year. If selected, these students receive training and are paired up with their fellow classmates for one period during the day. Connections made between students through this program support our goal of making all kids feel connected and belonging to their school. Students involved in the program often form friendships that last years across middle school and high school.

Mr. Garrabrant and fellow art teachers at WMHS are very supportive of the Peer Collaboration program. Mr. Garrabrant has created a website dedicated to recruiting and training peer collaborators to support students in the Arts!



#### Consider becoming a peer collaborator in an art class!

It's a fantastic opportunity for motivated students who love helping classmates work to their potential. If you're all about teamwork, creativity, and being a guiding force in our art community, chat with your art teacher and guidance counselor about this opportunity. See below for the course description, and a list of resources and activities that peer collaborators will use in a visual art class.

### PEER COLLABORATOR COURSE DESCRIPTION

### Connection Club

Our K-5 elementary schools host weekly connection clubs. Connection Club is an opportunity for students to connect and learn from one another in a supported environment. Last month our clubs combined for their annual Tailgate Party before the Friday night football game. Over 250 Students, family members, and staff came together to celebrate new friendships and have fun! Students had an opportunity to play games, get their faces painted, design a balloon animal, and enjoy the beautiful evening. Many of our families stayed after the event to root for our football Warriors.





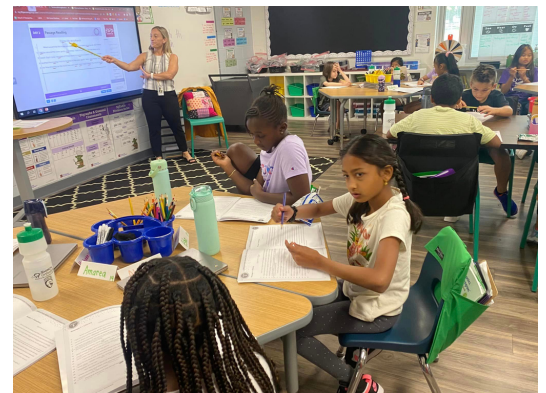
# Mrs. Melissa Ladowitz

## *Director of Curriculum & Instruction*

We are excited by our students' progress so far during our initial implementation of the 95% Phonics Core curriculum. K-3 teachers spent all of last year learning about The Science of Reading and beginning to implement these evidence-based strategies into their classrooms. Students are adapting to and enjoying 95%. They're using the hand signals, patterns, routines, and the language of structured literacy. For students who struggle, the routines are helping build confidence, and students are finding success. In kindergarten through third grade, students are learning to read! What an empowering time!

In math in grades K - 5, lessons are inquiry-based and student-centered. Students explore, apply concepts in game scenarios, share their thinking, and develop problem solving strategies as they build number sense and computational fluency.

A highlight of the quarter has been hosting an event for the Bhutanese-Nepali community at Watkins Middle School. In partnership with Licking Heights, Pataskala LEADS, and the Licking County Board of Developmental Disabilities, we offered a Get Ready for School event for incoming students and families. The Pataskala Public Library, school nurses, local dentists, dietitians, and other community groups were invited to speak with families about school readiness. High school students from C-TEC were on hand to provide childcare, allowing families to attend presentations and meet with community members.



# Mrs. Tonya Sherburne

## *Director of Human Resources*



### **Job Fair**

On October 30, we will host a substitute job fair from 2:00 – 7:00 PM at the District Office. If you are interested in serving in the capacity of a substitute teacher, custodian, cook, bus driver, secretary or educational aide, please stop by the office on the 30th between 2:00 – 7:00 PM. We will walk you through the application process and assist you with your application for licensure through ODE, as needed. We will conduct background checks at this time. If you have questions, please contact Pam Davis, Human Resources Administrative Assistant, at [pdavis@laca.org](mailto:pdavis@laca.org).

### **School Safety**

During the month of October, each school building has (or will) conduct a safety drill. State law requires that schools within Ohio complete emergency drills annually. In order to maintain a safe environment for our students to study and learn, it is necessary that we practice our emergency and crisis response plans.

Our District follows the run, hide, fight protocol which is consistent with the recommendation from the Department of Homeland Security. Students are taught to assess situations and make decisions based on their circumstances. This training is applicable across real world situations. Local law enforcement is involved with our training and drills. Please note that they do not use simulated gun fire and other types of stimulus during the drills.

We know that drills of this type may be concerning for some students, but drills are necessary to teach them how to respond in emergency situations. The student training is developmentally-appropriate for the grade level of your child. We encourage families to have conversations with their students both before and after the drill.

Should you have any questions regarding these drills, please contact the building principal.





## TREASURER UPDATE

*Richard Jones, Treasurer*

Under state law and Department of Taxation rules, real property in all counties is reappraised every six years and property values are updated in the third year following each sexennial reappraisal. Licking County was reappraised in 2023, with updates scheduled for 2026. Real property in the State of Ohio is separated into two classes: Class I is residential and agricultural properties, and Class II is commercial, industrial, and all other real property.

Due to the reappraisal in Licking County this year, property values have increased and the Ohio school districts requirement to levy a minimum of 20 mills of operating millage has been a topic of discussion. [Ohio Revised Code, Section 319.301](#) contains the procedures for determining and certifying tax reduction percentage for carryover property. Paragraph (E) (2) of that section prevents school levies from being reduced below "two percent of taxable value," or 20 mills. The 20-mill floor prevents reduction factors on school district fixed-rate operating levies from going below a "floor" of 20 mills.

The 20 mills are made up of inside mills (unvoted) and outside mills (voted). Article XII, Section 2 of the Ohio Constitution limits property taxes to one percent of value (ten mills) for all state and local purposes (inside mills), but also allows additional taxes to be levied "outside of such limitation" when approved by voters. All other property tax levies beyond those ten mills are "outside mills," and must be approved by voters. For Southwest Licking Local Schools, the inside millage rate is 4.9 mills and in 1976 the voters approved a continuing 19.8 mills operating levy which has since been reduced to an effective millage rate of 15.1 mills to make up the minimum requirement of 20 mills for operating millage.

For voted (outside) property taxes, Ohio law provides for "reduction factors" that apply to the gross voted millage rate of all fixed-rate levies to keep revenue from that levy level and prevent inflationary tax increases. The application of these reduction factors to the voted millage rates results in effective millage rates that decrease as property values increase. Reduction factors are applied separately to Class I and Class II properties, which usually result in different effective millage rates for each property tax levy when applied to Class I and Class II properties. Unvoted (inside) taxes are not subject to reduction factors and experience full inflationary growth.

For all other Southwest Licking Local Schools levies, substitute, permanent improvement and bond, there is no floor; therefore, the effective millage rates are reduced to prevent inflationary tax increases. Ohio's school funding formula is based on a shared responsibility between the State and the local community. Without the community support and the passage of levies, we would not be able to operate at the level that we do.

For further information feel free to visit: <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Finance-and-Funding>.

# **BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE**

## *Robert Jennell, Project Manager*



The District has begun the final phase of the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) Master Plan for the Southwest Licking Schools. This final phase includes the renovation of the Kirkersville Elementary and the construction of a new K-3 elementary (Pataskala South Fork Elementary). The renovation of the 58,500+ square foot Kirkersville building is well underway, and if you have the opportunity to drive past this building on SR 158, you will see that the exterior renovations include an all new expanded asphalt parking area with a turnaround for a safer student loading and unloading area, a new roof, new metal panels on the facade, and a small 1,391 square foot addition near the old front entrance. This new area will house the front office staff, as well as the nurse, and will help in maintaining overall building security. Interior renovation will include work in the classrooms, hallways, and restrooms. These areas are undergoing a complete makeover that will include new flooring, ceilings, LED light fixtures, bathroom fixtures, classroom sound amplification systems, Clevertouch interactive displays, magnetic whiteboards, cabinetry, a sprinkler system throughout the building, and much more. The building is scheduled to reopen in August, 2024.

The excitement doesn't stop in Kirkersville. The District has broken ground on their new 800-student 76,000 square foot elementary building located on Watkins Road. This building will utilize the black, yellow, grey, and red brick colors and metal roof panels similar to those used previously on the Watkins Intermediate and Watkins Memorial High School buildings. It will also have 35 full size classrooms, a media center, gymnasium, multiple small group rooms, a soft surface playground, separated bus and parent drop off areas, and the same updated technology amenities found in our previous buildings, and much more. The building is scheduled to open in 2025.

The District has completed the new athletic fields and tennis courts on the west campus located near the intersection of Warrior Way and SR 40. The softball and tennis courts have already seen student competition, while the baseball field will open in the spring of 2024.

Finally, in order to help with the traffic and parking issues on the east campus, the District will be adding additional parking at the new K-3 elementary and a southbound right turn lane on Watkins Road at the intersection of Watkins Road and Warrior Way. This work will begin in the summer of 2024.

The Southwest Licking Schools appreciates the continued support and patience of the community for the inconvenience and mess during the new construction and renovation phases.

# BUILDING PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Pataskala South Fork  
Elementary



Athletic Complex on Warrior Way and  
SR 40



Renovations at Kirkersville Elementary



## TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

*Ryan Brown, Director of Logistics*

The transportation department has had a great start to the school year. We are very appreciative of everyone's patience as we navigate construction on our campuses and throughout our entire community with various road closures.

The week of October 16th through the 19th was School Bus Safety Week. Students at our elementary schools reviewed what it means to be safe on and around a school bus in their classes. We also took school buses to each elementary school and our drivers went over the basics of school bus safety with the students while the students were on the bus. Those basics are students should be sitting on a seat with their back against the back of the seat and their feet pointed to the floor. They should also keep their hands and feet to themselves and use an inside voice at all times. We encourage you at home to reinforce these simple safety tips for how to ride on a school bus.

We could use your help. We have had a significant increase in the number of motorists driving past our buses when they are stopped to pick-up and/or drop-off students. Obviously, this is very unsafe, and we are turning those motorists into the Ohio State Highway Patrol for those violations. However, we want to remind everyone that as the bus approaches a stop, their yellow

(amber) lights begin to flash. This is to alert drivers to begin slowing down for a stop. Once the bus comes to a stop and opens the door, the red stop lights begin flashing and the stop arm extends. When the red lights are flashing, no one should be moving until they stop flashing. Help us keep our students safe by spreading the word to drive more cautiously around school buses.

**SCHOOL IS IN SESSION**

# **FOLLOW BUS SAFETY LAWS**

**SCHOOL BUS**

**RED LIGHTS mean:**  
**ALL DIRECTIONS MUST STOP!**  
unless the bus is on the other side of a median OR on the other side of a 4-lane highway

**YELLOW LIGHTS mean:**  
Slow down, bus is about to stop!

# FOOD SERVICE UPDATE

## *Cindy Pickering, Food Service Supervisor*

SWL Schools celebrated National School Lunch Week from October 9-13 to recognize the National School Lunch Program serving nearly 30 million children each day. The fun campaign theme, "Level Up with School Lunch", highlighted the importance of a healthy school lunch to a student's success both in and out of the classroom.



Did you know free & reduced meal applications benefit your family and your school? Families may qualify for free or reduced school breakfast and lunch. A NEW application must be completed every school year. If you have not completed a Free and Reduced application for SY23-24, please take this opportunity to complete an application. You may apply for free & reduced meals online at [www.myschoolapps.com](http://www.myschoolapps.com). The online application helps expedite the application approval process but you may also request a paper application from the food service department by emailing Carmen Murphy at [carmurphy@laca.org](mailto:carmurphy@laca.org).

School meals offer a variety of fruits & veggies daily, with an assortment of legumes, dark green, red, & orange veggies served over the week. Pictures shown were taken recently in our school lunch lines. Students are provided several options daily with not only fruit & veggies but also main entrees and milk.

Are you looking for a part-time job with great hours and no weekends? Please join our food service substitute team and work when available and as needed. Hours are typically 3-5 hours between 8:30-1:30. If you are interested please complete the online classified application found on the Human Resources Department page of the Southwest Licking School website. Please contact Cindy Pickering at [cpickering@laca.org](mailto:cpickering@laca.org) with any questions.





## ATHLETICS UPDATE

### *Jake Perkins, Director of Athletics*

Senior Gracie James has had an amazing season and career on the golf course representing Watkins Memorial High School. She played her final round as a

Lady Warrior in the D1 Central District Tournament on Wednesday 10/11. Gracie leaves a legacy by finishing her career holding every individual girls golf school record at WMHS and as 3-time LCL individual champion!



Freshman Nora Grennan qualified for and competed in the D1 Central District Girls Tennis Tournament, advancing to the quarterfinals and finishing her season just one match from the state tournament. Tremendous season for a Freshman!



The Warrior football team defeated the rival Licking Heights Hornets on Friday, October 6th to capture the coveted 'Battle for Broad Street' for the second consecutive year and the fourth time in the last five! The Warriors stand at 7-2 (and 5th place out of 28 teams in their Region) on the season with one more regular season game remaining at home vs. Granville on October 20th - a Senior Night game that promises to have major LCL championship implications.



Boys Soccer earned a share of an LCL Championship and completed an undefeated season within the league by securing a 1-1 Tie at Granville on 10/11 to close the regular season at 10-5-1 overall.



# CLINIC UPDATE

*Tirzah Hammond, School Nurse*

## Is It Allergies, Cold, Flu, COVID-19 or RSV?

Symptoms	 Seasonal Allergies	 Cold	 Flu	 COVID-19	 RSV Bronchiolitis
Stuffy or runny nose	Often	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	Often
Sneezing	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	Rarely	Rarely
Wheezing	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Rarely	Often
Itchy eyes	Often	Rarely, never	Rarely, never	Rarely	
Fever	Never	Sometimes	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes
Aches and pains	Never	Sometimes	Often	Sometimes	
Headache	Rarely	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	
Cough	Sometimes	Often	Often	Often	Often
Vomiting	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Warning time	Symptoms occur after exposure to allergen	Gets worse over several days	Sudden onset	Variable	Gets worse over several days
How long it lasts	Weeks to months	Usually 3-14 days	Usually 10-14 days	Usually 10-14 days	Usually 2-3 weeks
Diarrhea	Never	Rarely	Rarely	Sometimes	Sometimes
Loss of taste or smell	Never*	Never*	Never*	Sometimes	
Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing	Never	Rarely	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Fatigue	Never	Rarely	Often	Sometimes	
Sore throat		Often	Often	Sometimes	

\* Stuffy nose can temporarily alter smell and taste but these senses are not lost completely.

\*\*Occurs most commonly in children younger than 2 years old.



**NATIONWIDE  
CHILDREN'S**

# ATTENDANCE UPDATE

*Jeff Severino, Truancy Consultant*

The SWL Attendance Office has noticed a markedly strong improvement in our attendance from last year. We have more students attending school on a regular basis than last year at this time. We hope that this trend carries over into the next three nine weeks so that we can finish the year strong.

Please remember any time your child is absent, there should be a phone call into the student's school attendance line. Any time you go on vacation, please fill out the online Family Trip Authorization Form, which can be found on our website, by clicking Parents, then selecting Forms, then District Forms. Schools may approve up to 65 hours of vacation during the school year.

We would like to see an improvement in the tardies that are accumulated. Being on time and ready to learn is a job skill that will help students later in life, so there is no time like now to create this positive habit of being on time and ready to work.

## Attendance Matters!



## SWL DIGITAL ACADEMY

It has been a tremendous start to SWL Digital Academy's school year. During the first semester, we have seventy eight full-time 6th through 12th grade students enrolled. These students have had the opportunity to learn at their own pace on their own time. Though online learning is not for every student, the SWL Digital Academy has provided our students another opportunity to access curriculum and be successful.

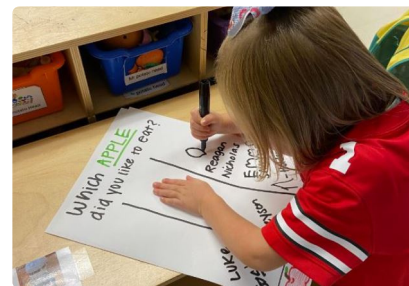
As we look toward November, I encourage all of our current students to keep up with their pacing within their courses and continue to submit their guided notes. Students need to make sure they are keeping their current grades up while also increasing the number of hours they are online each week. Parents/guardians should be encouraging their child to create and stick to a daily schedule. This is the easiest way to make sure they stay on track for the semester.

Finally, it is that time of year to start thinking about next semester. If you need an environment that is flexible and can work around your child's schedule and needs, we hope you will consider enrolling your child in the SWL Digital Academy. Enrollment for next semester will begin November 13th. We would love to support your child's learning through our online platform. Visit the SWL Digital Academy website for additional information.

# EARLY LEARNING CENTER

The Early Learning Center is off to a great start this school year welcoming some returning students as well as many new faces. It is amazing to see the students grow over the years as they prepare to enter kindergarten.

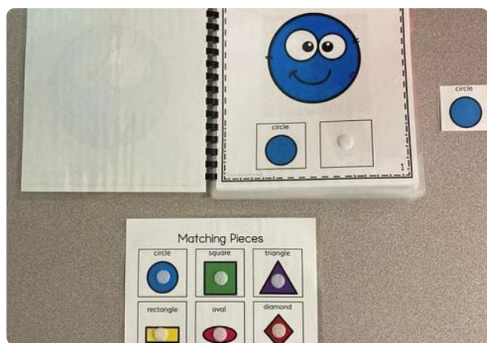
Students worked to prepare their snack for the day. They started with washing apples before they sampled red, green, and yellow to vote on which they liked the best.



Nursery rhymes are vital to early literacy development for preschool age students. Here they are re-enacting Little Miss Muffet. What a great way to learn new vocabulary such tuffet, curds and whey, and frightened. It's even more fun to insert our friends' names for Miss Muffet and frighten each other away.



Our Warrior Mentors have been a wonderful addition to our classrooms. They dedicate time to teaching the littlest learners every day from their busy high school schedules. What a great opportunity for younger students to build connection with the school community while sharpening early learning, adaptive, and communication skills! Thank you Miss Kadence and Miss Addison!



Adaptive books help all students have a chance to participate. As a special needs preschool, we meet children where they are and look to highlight their strengths while building skills.



We're building our fine motor skills through drawing and building those core muscles by drawing on our bellies. Playdoh is a much loved tool for fine motor development in preschool, preparing our small muscles for writing later in development.

# ETNA ELEMENTARY

What a fantastic start to a school year! We want to thank our students, staff, and families for their focus on education and dedication to working together as a team to make Etna Elementary exceptional.

Our school and District participated in Start With Hello Week, a social and emotional learning program that focuses on the power of connecting and uniting through simple acts of kindness. Mrs. Truman, our school counselor, has continued working with students on anti-bullying lessons that support our commitment to our student's social and emotional well-being, supporting our daily SEL lessons, Character Strong.

Kindergarteners were able to experience their very first field trip to elementary with a visit to Van Buren Acers. We have started another year of Watch DOGS, Connection Club has begun, and Reading Buddies are in full force. Additionally, our students are working incredibly hard and making some serious academic gains. It will be exciting to see what they can achieve as the year progresses.

We want to remind everyone that we have an Etna Facebook page and often post about classroom activities and school events.



# KIRKERSVILLE ELEMENTARY



Kirkersville is off to a great start this school year! We welcomed a few new staff members to Kirkersville: Sophie Moller, Lesli Parker, Megan Weber, Brooke Huston, and Jason Nelson. We are excited to have them joining the already terrific Kirkersville staff.



Kirkersville is busy with academics as teachers and students are settling into their normal routines. We have also begun our Golden Ticket incentive to support our PBIS program. Students are “caught doing good things” by staff and given a golden ticket. The student then brings the ticket to the office and places it in their classroom envelope. On Fridays, students are selected from each classroom as Golden Ticket Winners! They come to the office and receive a Cool Cat bracelet, sticker, and pencil. Their picture is taken and posted on our Facebook page. Great job to all of our Cool Cat winners so far!



We are very excited that Meaningful Work has kicked off! Students are selected by their teachers for their leadership qualities and skill sets. We have 9 jobs including: pencil sharpeners, bus chaperones, ticket stampers, cool cat coaches, and botanist to name a few. Kirkersville has over 30 students across all grade levels with jobs to help make our school a better place to learn and play!



The Book Fair is coming to Kirkersville! The book fair will run from October 16-27. The students will preview the fair October 16th-19th during their library special and shop during their library special from October 23rd-26th. The book fair will be open during conference nights and the day conferences on Friday, October 27th. You can also shop the book fair online. Look for more information to come home with your student.

# PATASKALA ELEMENTARY

The first quarter of the school year has been off to a fantastic start! What a better way to kick things off than our first annual Back to School Bash! Families got to enjoy lunch, games, face painting, and access to many free resources thanks to all of the community agencies who attended our event. A big thank you goes to our PTO who supplied the food, student drawstring bags, Kona Ice, and secured volunteers! We are looking forward to making this an annual event.

We introduced several new staff members this year! Allie Bekier, Hannah Gratsch, Jaclyn Kohler, Ashley Staley, and last but not least our therapy dog-in-training, Coco, have joined our amazing Pataskala staff! We are happy to have them as part of our Pataskala family!

In addition to academics, PBIS and SEL are a big focus in our day-to-day activities. Our SEL curriculum, Character Strong, focuses on a different character trait each month. So far this year, we have learned about respect and responsibility. We recognized students in each grade level for reading, math, citizenship, and most improved! We continue to celebrate students with PAX tootle notes and Paws of Pride for going above and beyond expectations!

Some events we've had so far this year include Meet The Teacher, Curriculum Night, Watch DOGS kick off, Start With Hello, and a few field trips for different grade levels. We were also happy to welcome author and illustrator, Mr. Jonathan Miller, for a visit! We are happy to be back in the swing of things and look forward to what the rest of the school year has in store! As always, thank you for your support.



# WATKINS INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL



The first quarter at Watkins Intermediate has been nothing short of exciting and enriching. Our students have enjoyed engaging learning opportunities through our Humanities, Bridges Math, and Science curricula. Our 5th graders embarked on an unforgettable camp outdoor learning adventure, while the 4th graders had the privilege of a virtual author visit in the esteemed Watkins Memorial High School auditorium. We celebrated a Start with Hello Week by encouraging intentional acts of kindness and including everyone. This is the Eli Effect.



In addition to these academic milestones, we introduced our inaugural WIS Club days and proudly launched our first-ever Warrior Leaders team, who recently made an impressive presentation at the Board of Education meeting. We are also thrilled to welcome back Sydney, our beloved therapy dog, led by Mrs. Hamilton. Our students have been consistently recognized for their outstanding efforts through the Warrior Black and Golds, PAX Students of the Month, Students of the Quarter, and weekly PAX clean awards.



To add to the excitement, our very own 4th grade teacher, Joan George, was honored with the prestigious Transcendia Excellence in Education Award. We were delighted to welcome parents and kids for Curriculum Nights and are eagerly looking forward to the upcoming Parent-Teacher Conferences. We celebrated Watch DOGS Pizza Night, and our dedicated Watch DOG volunteers are now actively supporting the school, creating a supportive community within our building. We are looking forward to the many highlights the second quarter will bring. Let's go Warriors!

# WATKINS MIDDLE SCHOOL

What an incredibly momentous start to the 23-24 school year for the Warriors at WMS. The start of this new school year has brought about a handful of small adjustments aimed at fulfilling our building mission and vision. In recent years students have had the opportunity to engage in engineering and agricultural coursework that provides a pathway towards high school courses in that same area of expertise. The 23-24 school year marks the addition of a third elective pathway with the introduction of computer science 7 and 8. Sixth grade specials provide introductory courses into all three pathways creating a full 6-12 vertical path.

We are exceptionally excited for our fall 7th grade trip to OSU Newark for our college campus experience. This coupled with our 8th grade C-TEC trip, which when completed, will provide all middle school students with both a college and career exposure prior to entering high school.

Students have continued to build empathy and community through the introduction of our peer collaboration classes. Over 35 students signed up to pair up with students with special needs to provide support and assistance throughout the school day. Furthermore, we have continued the collaborative spirit by welcoming several high school mentors into the building to further the excitement over the "Warrior Way" of doing things.

WMS students and staff have worked throughout the 1st quarter to provide a number of behavior incentives to encourage students to get 1% better each and every day. Students have earned the right to attend dances, Ultimate Warrior awards, our monthly "On a Roll" improvement awards, attendance incentives, and the coveted 6th grade lunchtime trophies. All of our incentives circle around our core habits of respect, responsibility, and resourcefulness. Just this week students were able to utilize their PBIS tickets to partake in our coffee & food truck day as well as a much ballyhooed kickball competition coming up later this month.



# WATKINS MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL



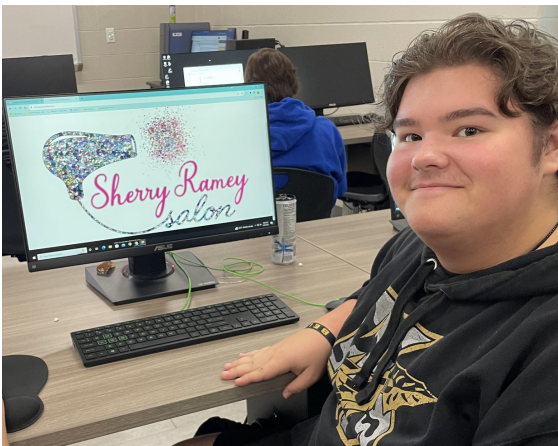
It has been a tremendous first quarter at WMHS! The custodial team did an amazing job getting the building ready for students to return and earned the first Staff Spotlight of the year. These guys take so much pride in our facilities and lead by example every day. Other Staff Spotlights have included Tirzah Hammond, Kelly Schor, Greg Coulter, and Rob Davis. We also welcomed new staff members Alexa Long, Joel Baker, Brooke Weirick, Erin Nelson, Katelyn Whetsel, and Becca Pack.



Soon after students returned they started racking up accolades. Mason Meade, Nick Beres, Katie Wanderslaben, Jason Ocampo, and Aiden Johnston were named National Rural and Small Town Award winners from the College Board. Maryn Hoyt was selected for the All-State Choir among more than 1,200 applicants.



One of the great things about high school is that students can customize their learning to align their interests with career goals. Senior Landon Ramey put his web design skills to use by coding a website for a local hair salon.



We have had all kinds of positive, meaningful experiences offered to our students this quarter, from the mentoring program with special needs students, to concerts and sporting events, to an epic Homecoming Dance. Students have shown up and brought positive energy every single day. It truly has been a great quarter as a Warrior!



## UPCOMING DATES

- October 25 - Conferences K-5
- October 27 - No School (K-5 ONLY), Conferences K-5
- November 22-24 - No School: Thanksgiving Break
- November 30 - Conferences 9 - 12
- December 20 - 29 - No School: Winter Break
- January 1 - 2 - No School: Winter Break
- January 3 - Students Return from Winter Break
- January 11 - End of Second Quarter
- January 12 - No School: Staff Development
- January 15 - No School: Martin Luther King Day

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