



YOU AND YOUR SCHOOLS 2024



2024 Popular Annual Financial Report
For the Fiscal Year Ended
June 30, 2024 | Beachwood, Ohio



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MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

Matthew Brown
Treasurer/CFO, Beachwood Schools



Dear Beachwood Community,

As I begin my second school year as Treasurer, I have had the privilege of getting to know the Beachwood community. We are fortunate to have an outstanding staff dedicated to maintaining the high standards of Beachwood Schools. Our strong relationship with city officials is vital to the success of our school district and the many programs we offer to students and families.

The district's elementary construction projects have significantly progressed this past year. We have collaborated closely with our construction team, including our construction manager, owner's representative, and architect, to complete the designs and begin construction on the new Bryden and Hilltop schools. As of July 2024, the district has obligated approximately 91% of the total construction budget. We are closely monitoring the construction budgets to ensure the projects remain within the defined parameters and are completed on time, with the goal of opening the doors to students in January 2026. You can follow the budget progress of these projects on the Elementary Facilities Updates page of the district's website.

Fiscal Year 2023-24 was the first year since Fiscal Year 2018-19 in which the annual receipts collected did not cover the annual disbursements. Simply put, the school district spent more than it received. Though this statement can be concerning, it is important to note that the school district has a very healthy fund balance, which has been strategically planned to help mitigate future funding shortfalls. This fund balance can be viewed as a savings account which can be used to weather these inevitable situations. However, it is important to note that this savings account cannot continue to be reduced year over year as it will quickly run out.

The school district is starting to evaluate different measures that can be taken to make sure this savings account does not get to an uncomfortable level while minimizing the impact on our students and educational programs. We will be reviewing expenditures and programs in the coming year as well as staffing levels. This evaluation will also include the timing of when to ask for new operational revenues from the community through the form of a tax levy. The impact of the recent property value reappraisal will provide some additional revenue in the short term. However, we anticipate that this alone will not cover our expected increases in operational disbursements. Thank you for your continued support of the Beachwood City School District.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Brown".

Matthew Brown
Treasurer/CFO



Auditor of State Award With Distinction

In March 2024, the Auditor of State, Keith Faber, provided the School District with the highest audit award available for school districts and local governments for its Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Audit Report. The prestigious award places the district among the top 4% of 6,000 public schools and government entities recognized for a "clean audit" in fiscal year 2023.

Comparative Analysis: Receipts & Disbursements

The Financial Activity Statement below is shown on a cash basis for the District's General Fund. This type of schedule, known in accounting terms as the income statement, provides a summary of the receipts received by the District compared to the disbursements paid by the District. Four years of financial activity is provided so that you can see the changes over time in the District's receipts and disbursements.

Receipts	FY 2023-24	FY 2022-23	FY 2021-22	FY 2020-21
Property Taxes	\$31,470,811	\$31,827,167	\$30,918,715	\$30,123,645
State Aid - Unrestricted Foundation	1,470,317	999,037	1,035,803	1,039,896
State Aid - Restricted Foundation	745,910	826,008	870,264	444,961
State Aid - Homestead & Rollback Reimb,	1,767,918	1,762,037	1,752,152	1,738,425
Revenue in Lieu of Taxes	1,073,342	1,934,284	469,039	1,324,651
Interest Income	1,316,035	824,947	226,156	305,109
Other Receipts	333,001	500,268	94,818	769,139
Advances & Transfers	100,000	0	36,647	0
Total Receipts	\$38,277,334	\$38,673,748	\$35,403,594	\$35,745,826
Disbursements	FY 2023-24	FY 2022-23	FY 2021-22	FY 2020-21
Salaries & Wages	\$23,958,871	\$22,298,374	\$21,141,002	\$21,092,959
Fringe Benefits	7,811,561	7,212,117	6,770,328	6,825,994
Purchased Services	5,903,446	5,168,971	4,335,183	4,529,498
Supplies & Materials	1,196,006	1,183,984	1,032,364	789,541
Capital Outlay	644,610	929,428	309,391	305,641
Other Disbursements	888,682	834,863	867,953	388,136
Advances & Transfers	762,127	718,378	420,536	650,780
Total Disbursements	\$41,165,303	\$38,346,115	\$34,876,657	\$34,582,549
Receipts Over (Or Under) Disbursements	-\$2,887,969	\$327,633	\$526,937	\$1,163,277

Comparative Analysis: Outstanding Debt at Year End - All Funds

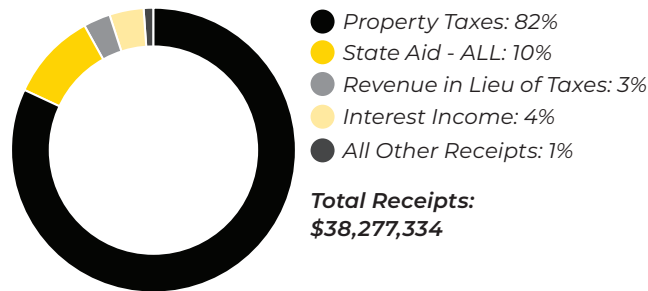
The chart below captures all of the District's long-term debt obligations and reflects the final pay-off dates. The chart is broken down between Bonded Debt and All Other Debt. Bonded Debt is paid for from dedicated tax levies that have been approved by the voters in prior years. All Other Debt is paid for by other resources of the District's General Fund.

Outstanding Debt	Maturity Date	FY 2023-24	FY 2022-23	FY 2021-22	FY 2020-21
Bonded Debt					
2010 - Qualified School Construction Bonds	December 1, 2026	\$3,720,000	\$4,960,000	\$6,200,000	\$7,435,000
2013 - Refunding Bonds	December 1, 2021	0	0	0	1,205,000
2014 - Refunding Bonds	December 1, 2022	0	0	89,966	89,966
2021 - Refunding	December 1, 2034	7,205,000	8,115,000	8,620,000	8,620,000
2023 - School Improvements Bonds	December, 2060	65,000,000	0	0	0
Total Bonded Debt Outstanding		\$75,925,000	\$13,075,000	\$14,909,966	\$17,349,966
All Other Debt					
2016 - Certificates of Participation (COPs)	December 1, 2027	\$1,820,000	\$2,240,000	\$2,650,000	\$3,050,000
2020 - Tax Anticipation Notes (TANs)	December 1, 2029	3,441,000	3,991,000	4,535,000	5,073,000
Lease - Copiers & Mailing Machine	2026	77,575	26,171	46,047	66,467
Total All Other Debt Outstanding		\$5,338,575	\$6,257,171	\$7,231,047	\$8,189,467
Total All Debt Outstanding		\$81,263,575	\$19,332,171	\$22,141,013	\$25,539,433

FINANCIALS

General Fund Receipts

The graph below displays the General Fund's cash basis receipts for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.



Our Receipts are cash received from various sources. Below is a brief overview of the different types of receipts:

Property tax receipts are composed of residential payers, commercial and business payers, and public utility payers. This is by far the District's largest receipt category.

State Aid receipts are composed of funds provided from the state's biennial budget, casino taxes, and homestead and rollback reimbursements. This is our second largest receipt category.

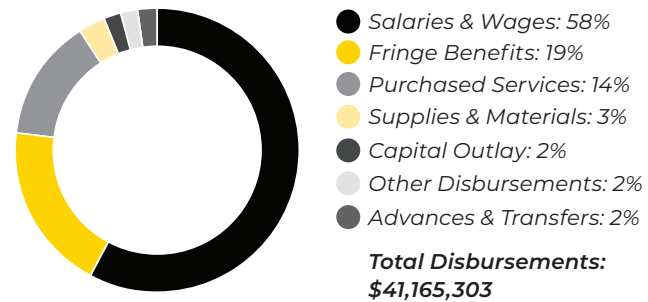
Interest Income is our third largest receipt category and only represents 4% of total receipts. This category fluctuates annually and is mainly dependent on current interest rates and cash balances.

Revenue in Lieu of Taxes is currently our fourth largest receipt category and this is provided through tax arrangements the District enters into with property taxpayers and also specific agreements with other local governments such as cities, villages and townships.

All Other Receipts is typically insignificant compared to the other receipt categories. This category represents facility rentals, services provided to other entities and contributions/donations.

General Fund Disbursements

The graph below displays the General Fund's cash basis disbursements for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.



Our Disbursements are cash paid out to different persons, businesses and other governmental entities. Below is a brief overview of the different types of disbursements:

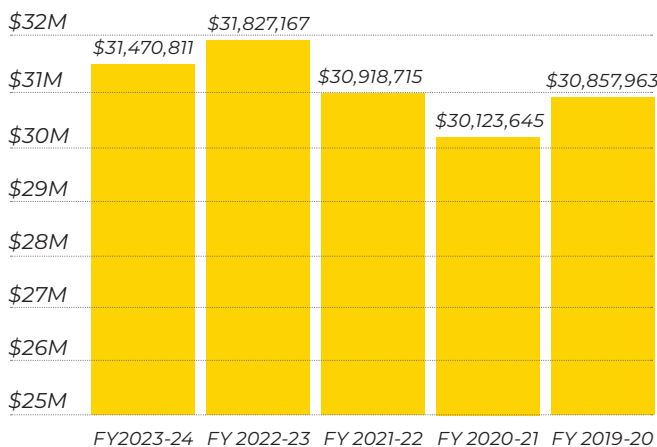
Salaries & Wages are payments made to our staff, coaches and other advisors. This is by far the largest disbursement category of the District.

Fringe Benefits is the second largest disbursement category of the District. This category pays the employee's healthcare insurance, required pension contributions, Medicare contributions and workers compensation. All employees that receive insurance are required to contribute a percentage of their pay to help cover the cost of healthcare insurance.

Purchased Services is the third largest disbursement category of the District. This category covers disbursements for a number of contractual services. Most notably, student busing for regular and special education, nursing, counseling, special education pre-K, and contracts for the upkeep and maintenance of the District's facilities. Utilities are also paid from this category.

Supplies & Materials is our fourth largest disbursement category but only represents 3% of total disbursements. This category is where classroom items, such as software materials, are purchased from. Additionally, bus/fleet gasoline and diesel, office supplies and maintenance supplies are included here.

The other disbursement categories are significantly minor to the overall disbursement total and do not fluctuate significantly.



Comparative Analysis: Property Taxes

To the left is a graph depicting the amount of cash collections received by the District from residential, commercial/business, and public utilities property taxpayers. Property taxes provide a majority of the local revenue needed to operate and maintain our schools. Property tax rates are calculated in mills. One mill is 1/1000th of assessed property value determined by the Cuyahoga County Fiscal Officer. Simply put, one mill is \$1.00 for every \$1,000 of assessed value.

Understanding Property Taxes

Digging into how your property taxes are calculated can be a confusing and frustrating task. An overwhelming amount of your property taxes have been established through a vote of the citizens. This vote establishes two things: 1) the length of the tax levy and 2) the tax amount or rate. On the surface, this is simple. However the tax amount or rate is calculated off of your property's value. This is where things get messy. If all things stayed the same, when your property value increases so would your taxes. The opposite would be true if your property value decreases. Understandably, your tax burden could become burdensome if your property's value increases significantly. Alternatively, your tax burden would be relieved if your property values decreased significantly. This decrease could cause financial stress and uncertainty on the District that was expecting a certain amount of revenue to provide for its educational programs.

To remedy this challenge, the State passed H.B. 920 back in the 1970s. This law controls the amount of taxes from a property taxpayer independent of what happens to that taxpayer's property value. During reappraisals, the County will appraise the value of your property. The voted tax rate will need to be adjusted up or down dependent on what happens to the value of your property. This rate adjustment is commonly referred to as the Effective Rate. Therefore, if your property value increases the Effective Rate will decrease to the level at which you will pay no more in taxes than you did when the tax levy was originally passed by the voters.

There are a few instances in which H.B. 920 does not apply. So, if you see your property taxes increase year

over year then that could be one reason for those increases. Inside unvoted millage is a contributor to this and that is governed by State law.

Gross Rate vs. Effective Rate

The chart below reflects the difference between the original voted tax rate and the current effective tax rate for the most recent tax year (2023).

	Gross Rate	Effective Rate	Length Approved
Unvoted (Inside) - Operating	6.80	6.80	Continuous
Voted (Outside) - Operating	78.40	27.62	Continuous
Voted - Bond Retirement	5.68	5.68	Adjusted Annually
Voted - Permanent Improvement	2.70	1.67	Continuous
Total Rate	93.58	41.77	

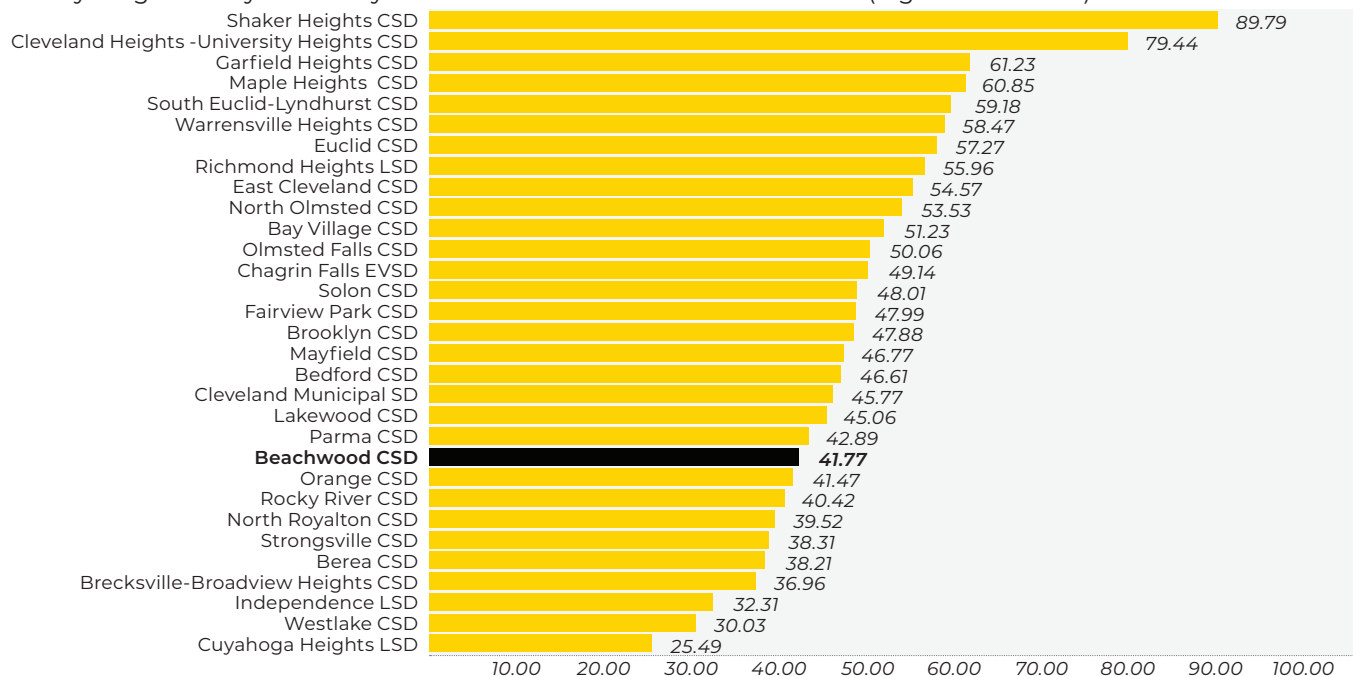
Assessed Values of Property

The chart below reflects the actual value of all the property within the District. Assessed value is established by State law at 35% of the respective property's appraised fair value.

Tax Year	General Real Estate	Public Utility Tangible	Total
2023	\$869,867,400	\$17,032,660	\$886,900,060
2022	870,578,080	16,694,700	887,272,780
2021	859,812,960	15,654,970	875,467,930
2020	800,468,520	14,457,660	814,926,180

Value for the Local Taxpayer: Low Effective Tax Rate & High Student Achievement

Despite funding challenges, including continued limitations on state funding levels, Beachwood City School District's tax rate remains among the lowest in Cuyahoga County. The chart below reflects all the school districts in Cuyahoga County ranked by their effective tax rate for Tax Year 2023 (highest to lowest).



A photograph of two young girls sitting at a table in a classroom, smiling at the camera. The girl on the left is wearing a grey hoodie with a colorful graphic. The girl on the right is wearing a pink hijab and a floral patterned dress, holding a blue marker. They are surrounded by art supplies like markers and paper. In the background, other students are blurred.

ACHIEVEMENT

**BEACHWOOD SCHOOLS IS
"SMALL, BUT MIGHTY."**



Megan Walsh
President,
Beachwood Board of Education



Dr. Robert Hardis
Superintendent,
Beachwood Schools

Dear Beachwood Community,

Beachwood City Schools is often described as “small, but mighty.” One way our dedicated students and staff demonstrate this is in the progress they make every year around our district’s three focus areas: student achievement, intercultural awareness, and mental wellness. The pages that follow offer a glimpse of those successes during the past year, while the information below offers a preview of the specific efforts that will support our three focus areas in the 2024-2025 school year.

Experiential Learning

Beachwood’s teachers embrace the opportunity to bridge the gap between theory and practice through experiential learning. We want our students engaged in direct, often hands-on, dynamic real-world experiences that foster deeper understanding and retention of knowledge. This kind of learning can take place in and outside the classroom and school building. It encourages learners to analyze and reflect upon their experiences. Experiential opportunities make learning more meaningful and impactful for our students.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Another focus will be on increasing the effective academic and behavioral supports utilized by teachers in their classrooms. These supports assist our students in developing the problem-solving, resilience, and coping skills crucial to their growth. They are considered universal because they are available to all students and are part of a multi-tiered system of support offered by our schools to meet the wide range of our students’ learning needs. Our staff’s knowledge of their students is often exceptional and provides the insight needed for a multi-tiered system of support to work effectively.

Trauma-Informed Practices

Next year, all Beachwood Schools staff will be trained in trauma-informed practices that help us better support the mental wellness of students. Research shows that trauma can actually change the brain and cause involuntary reactions, such as fight, flight, or freeze. Training will help our staff know how to respond to students with a trauma-aware approach, creating a more responsive learning environment. We can better support the mental wellness of students through a trauma-informed approach to communicating with one another and through improved identification and servicing of students who need additional mental health intervention.

Family Engagement

Lastly, we will enhance our efforts to engage families in authentic ways that benefit our students. Authentic engagement encourages and supports parents to participate in school activities, communicate regularly with staff, and reinforce learning at home. This creates a cohesive support system for students based on trust and strong relationships between families and educators. By working in concert with Beachwood families, we can best support our students’ learning, foster inclusivity and cultural understanding, and address challenges more effectively when they arise.

Thank you for supporting our efforts. The commitment you demonstrate to your children’s education and to our public school system are the reasons we feel so fortunate to live in and serve this community. As you read through these pages, we hope you share our Bison pride in what the district has accomplished. We look forward to continued success for our staff and students. Best wishes for an exciting and rewarding school year for you and your children!

Sincerely,

Megan Walsh
President,
Beachwood Board of Education

Dr. Robert P. Hardis
Superintendent,
Beachwood Schools

ACHIEVEMENT

Beachwood Schools Elevates Literacy Instruction Through the Science of Reading

Beachwood Schools is taking a comprehensive approach to literacy by ensuring every teacher from preschool through 12th grade is equipped with the latest science of reading-aligned instructional strategies. All teachers in the district, from math to physical education, are completing the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's science of reading professional development course this year. The initiative underscores the district's belief that every teacher is a reading teacher, regardless of their subject area.

"This training will equip teachers, even those in seemingly non-reading subjects, with strategies to help students comprehend complex texts and develop academic literacies across all areas of study," says Dr. Linda LoGalbo, director of curriculum and instruction.

Additional steps for improving literacy instruction include evaluating core literacy programs to support phonics, fluency, and comprehension for elementary students and expanding academic vocabulary for grades six through 12. "Our goal is to empower teachers to more effectively support students in reading to learn and mastering academic content," says Dr. LoGalbo.



**CONNECTING STUDENTS
WITH REAL-WORLD,
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IS AT
THE HEART OF A BEACHWOOD
SCHOOLS EDUCATION.**

Math Curriculum Review Leads to Key Updates for K-12

A comprehensive review of the K-12 math curriculum highlighted many strengths, including robust accelerated math pathways and a strong focus on problem-solving skills. It also identified the need to enhance K-5 classroom interventions and expand practical math applications for high school students pursuing non-calculus-based fields. Starting in 2024-2025, the district will implement the Houghton Mifflin *Into Math* series for students in kindergarten through fifth grade, enhance middle school math interventions, and introduce a new mathematical modeling and reasoning course as an alternative to Algebra II at the high school. "We have a very rigorous math program," says Dr. LoGalbo. "Our teachers focus on teaching students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers."



DISTRICT

AWARD-WINNING

- ★ **Rated Five Stars** on 2023 Ohio School Report Card
- ★ **Ranked 6th in Ohio** for Achievement in 2023
- ★ **National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence** awards for Hilltop Elementary and Beachwood Middle School
- ★ **Five Star Step Up to Quality** rating for Fairmount Early Childhood Center
- ★ **Best Community for Music Education** award winner for 19 consecutive years



Beachwood High School Unveils New Cell Phone Policy for Enhanced Learning

Beachwood High School is implementing a new cell phone policy for the 2024-2025 school year to enhance student focus and engagement. In keeping with House Bill 250, the policy limits cell phone and smartwatch use during instructional periods, though students can access their devices between classes and during lunch. Under the new rules, students will store their devices in designated pockets during class. A pilot program conducted last year showed promising results with strong staff support, according to Principal Paul Chase. The high school staff will closely monitor the policy's effectiveness through data on disciplinary referrals, grades, and test scores. "We believe this change will positively impact student engagement and learning outcomes," Mr. Chase says. "However, its success will really come down to the support and collaboration of parents, staff, and students."

Community-Based Learning Offers Real-World Work Experience for Students with Special Needs

Launched in January 2024, Beachwood Schools' community-based learning program prepares students with special needs for a successful transition into the workforce and independent living after graduation. Supported by grants from the State of Ohio and the Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio, the program offers real-world work experience and skill development in education, healthcare, and other industries. In partnership with University Hospitals Ahuja Medical Center, students with special needs interested in healthcare careers work side-by-side with hospital staff in diverse roles such as reception and nutrition services. Students interested in education are acquiring practical experience by assisting in classrooms at Bryden Elementary and Fairmount Early Childhood Center. "The opportunity to keep our students engaged within our community is fantastic," says Jennifer Polak, director of pupil services. "It opens up wonderful prospects for their future, particularly in terms of securing competitive employment after graduation."

Student Entrepreneurs Launch "Hope Heals" Campaign to Support Hospitalized Children

High school students in teacher Greg Perry's Excel TECC Marketing/Junior Achievement program launched the Hope Heals campaign to support hospitalized children. They raised over \$185,000 and donated 2,000 Medi Teddy IV bag covers to pediatric hospitals, including Akron Children's, Cleveland Clinic, MetroHealth, University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital, Children's National in D.C., and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. The campaign featured a traveling exhibition of giant inflatable teddy bears that popped up in parks, city centers, and shopping areas across Northeast Ohio. "Hope Heals is about making a difference in the lives of ill children, while bringing joy and unity to all those in the community," says project CEO Ozan Sasmaz (class of '24).



CLASS OF 2024

Class size: 100

Graduation rate: 98%

**Pursuing post-secondary
education: 78%**

Enrolling in four-year college: 67%

National Merit Scholars Program: 6



INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

AT BEACHWOOD SCHOOLS, WE ARE “MANY CULTURES, ONE BISON.”

Our greatest asset is the incredible diversity of the Beachwood community. We believe in creating an environment of inclusion and belonging for all. That's why fostering intercultural awareness is a key focus woven into all aspects of our district – from staff training to academic programs and family engagement.

Staff Convocation

Each academic year begins with Beachwood Schools' 300 staff members coming together to welcome new colleagues and support each other in preparing for another successful year. For the third consecutive year, our staff participated in a professional development designed to increase understanding and connections among individuals from different backgrounds.

Staff traveled in small groups to various sites throughout Greater Cleveland, connecting and learning about the experiences of people who are differently abled at Dancing Wheels, Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center, and the Cleveland Sight Center. They explored various cultural and ethnic groups at Karamu House, AsiaTown, and the Shiva

Vishnu Temple. In addition, they visited the Rid-All Green Partnership and Edwin's Leadership Restaurant & Institute to understand how these organizations are strengthening communities. “The purpose of these excursions is for our staff to become more aware of different cultures and people,” says Kevin Houchins, director of equity and community engagement. “The more we understand others, the greater our ability to cultivate an inclusive school culture.”



Affinity Groups

Ensuring every voice is heard is key to our goal of increasing intercultural awareness in Beachwood Schools. The district supports the formation of affinity groups, where families with common interests, backgrounds, or goals unite to support one another, create community awareness about their culture, and provide insight to our district leaders and staff on improving their experience in our schools. Our growing list of affinity groups includes the Chinese Family Affinity Group, African American Affinity Group, Hispanic & Latino Affinity Group, Indian American Affinity Group, Muslim Affinity Group, and Neurodiversity Family Network. "The affinity groups have had a tremendous impact on our district," says Mr. Houchins. "They provide valuable insights into the educational experiences of families and students from underrepresented groups."

This past year, the affinity groups facilitated several impactful community-wide events. The Neurodiversity Family Network hosted renowned child psychologist Dr. Ross Greene, who provided expertise on supporting children with challenging behaviors (see: Mental Wellness, pp. 14-15). Cultural celebrations included a Diwali festival organized by the Indian American Family Affinity Group, a Lunar New Year event by the Chinese Family Affinity Group, and a Black History Month celebration led by the African American Affinity Group.

"What's remarkable is how the affinity groups celebrate one another and embrace learning about others' cultures and traditions," says Mr. Houchins. "These interactions have significantly contributed to a more inclusive school community." In addition to hosting events, the affinity groups engage with school staff at "A Seat at the Table" gatherings. These discussions allow our district staff to learn about the experiences of underrepresented students and enhance their educational journey. "Staff feedback indicates that they are incorporating the insights gained from the affinity groups to adapt classroom practices and provide resources that help students see themselves reflected in the curriculum," says Mr. Houchins.

In the 2024-2025 school year, "A Seat at the Table" will have a new format. Previously, the affinity groups engaged in a Q&A session with staff about school programs and services. "We're reversing roles," says



**The more we understand others,
the greater our ability to cultivate
an inclusive school culture.**

– Kevin Houchins, Director of Equity
& Community Engagement

Mr. Houchins. "Families will now educate our staff and administration on what we need to know about their cultures to improve the educational experience of their children and our entire school community."

Mr. Houchins believes this new format "has the potential to significantly impact our staff as we continue to build our understanding of students' experiences in our schools."



Parent Advisory Collaboration Team

This past year, we evolved the district-led Equity and Engagement teams into the Parent Advisory Collaboration Team (PACT) to directly address the unique needs of each school building. Each PACT is composed of 10 parents representing diverse populations from the Beachwood Schools community. Principals host monthly meetings with their building team to address topics presented by the PACT or seek recommendations for current challenges and opportunities. "It's exciting for our principals to engage with a small group of diverse parents to address issues unique to each of our buildings," says Mr. Houchins.

Recently, PACT teams have helped principals make important decisions on a new cell phone policy (see: Achievement, pp. 10-11), inclusive cultural celebrations, conferences, and new standards for respectful and professional communications within our school community. Parents serve a one-year term on the team, starting in January. Principals will begin assembling the 2025-2026 PACT team in the fall.



**If you're interested in serving
on a PACT, please snap the
QR code to complete the
PACT interest form.**



Positive mental wellness and a sense of belonging are essential for students to fully engage in learning. At Beachwood Schools, we actively promote mental wellness through a range of classroom programs spanning from preschool to 12th grade. Our comprehensive approach includes staff training, targeted support from our team of seven counselors and three psychologists, and partnerships with organizations such as Bellefaire JCB, Signature Health, the Cleveland Music Therapy Company, and Therapy Dogs International.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Beachwood Schools uses positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) to create a safe, welcoming, and purposeful learning environment. This evidence-based approach helps children understand the behavior expectations throughout their school day. Staff teach and reinforce desired behaviors through lessons, modeling, videos, role-play, and hands-on activities to support students' social-emotional and academic success.



The district relaunched its PBIS program during the 2023-2024 school year as Be H.E.A.R.D., which promotes five essential character traits: Be Honorable, Be Encouraging, Be Accountable, Be Respectful, and Be Determined. The program establishes predictable routines, providing students with a sense of safety and tools to navigate their learning environment. According to Jennifer Polak, director of pupil services, the program has significantly reduced disciplinary incidents.

"By focusing on these five character traits, we've seen a noticeable increase in positive behaviors and a significant reduction in disciplinary incidents," Ms. Polak says. "Our students feel more supported and empowered, which creates a more inclusive and productive learning environment for everyone."

Classroom-Based Lessons

Regular classroom-based lessons support students in developing a positive sense of self, healthy relationships, and emotional regulation skills. In the 2023-2024 school year, the district implemented Erika's Lighthouse for grades four through 12. The developmentally appropriate program raises awareness about depression and mental health. Elementary students learned about mental health awareness and coping strategies, while middle and high school students focused on depression, suicide prevention, and finding support.

In the 2024-2025 school year, Beachwood Schools will implement the Start with Hello program by Sandy Hook Promise. This program fosters social connectedness by educating students about the mental health impact of loneliness and isolation. The program includes a "Start with Hello" week, where students participate in social inclusion activities such as sitting with different peers during lunch to foster new friendships. The goal of these programs, says Ms. Polak, is to "create a culture where everybody feels seen, safe, and ready to learn."

Understanding Trauma

Supporting students using trauma-informed practices will be a districtwide goal in the 2024-2025 school year. All staff will undergo trauma-informed care training, focusing on communication across the various classifications to better identify students needing mental health intervention. Staff also will learn to apply brain science to support students experiencing challenges.

"What we're going to focus on this year is making sure the staff understands what happens in the brain when someone is in fight, flight, or freeze mode," says Ms. Polak. "When someone is in a fight, flight, or freeze state, the hindbrain takes over – what we call an 'amygdala takeover.' They are not going to be receptive to language, and they are not going to be able to make rational decisions."

During these moments, students' ability to think and speak clearly, learn a new skill, and understand the consequences of their behavior is greatly diminished. "We want staff to understand that when we start to see signs of trauma or escalation, the best approach is to bring kids back to homeostasis – to calm the amygdala," says Ms. Polak.

Staff also will learn that trauma is a very individual experience. "Each person's trauma is unique. It doesn't necessarily mean that something terrible has happened," says Ms. Polak. "We teach staff that nobody gets to dictate what other people's trauma looks like or what constitutes a fearful situation."

This makes looking for the signs all the more important for educators and staff working with children. "The most important thing is that kids need to feel safe, both physically and emotionally, before they can learn," says Ms. Polak.

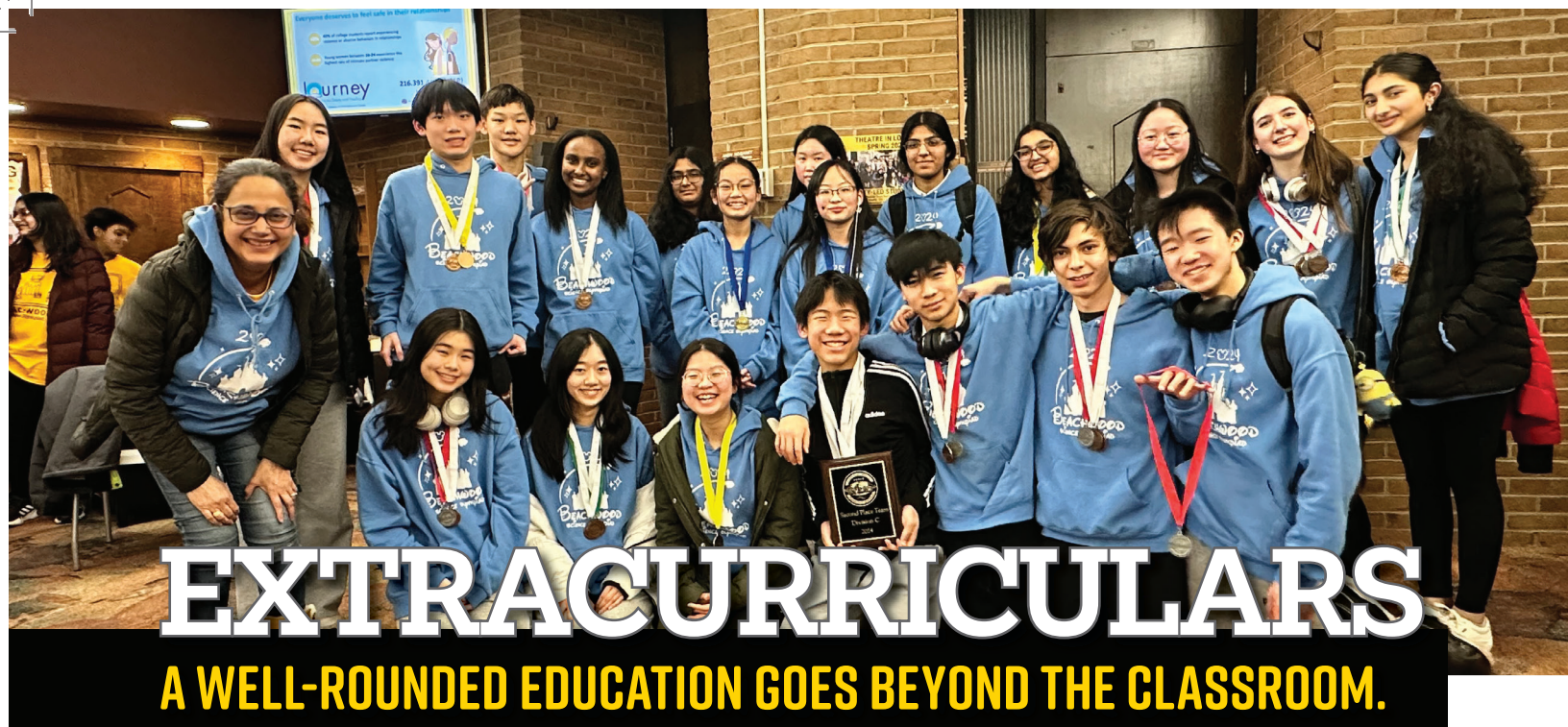


Comprehensive Staff Training

In the 2023-2024 school year, Beachwood Schools prioritized staff development in social-emotional learning and student well-being. Staff participated in workshops and a book study about Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS), an approach for addressing challenging behaviors in students developed by child psychologist Dr. Ross Greene. The training focused on proactive alternatives to punishment and fostering skills in students such as flexibility, frustration tolerance, and problem-solving. In collaboration with Beachwood's Neurodiversity Family Network, the district hosted a presentation by Dr. Greene on the CPS model for families, educators, and other professionals who work with children throughout Greater Cleveland.

Staff also received training from the Crisis Prevention Institute, a state-required program aimed at reducing restraint and seclusion in schools. Participants learned to identify signs of distress in students and apply effective strategies to help them stay calm and safe. In the 2024-2025 school year, staff will also be trained in Ukeru, a trauma-informed approach to working with students that avoids restraints and promotes a calmer school environment.





Beachwood Schools offers an extensive range of extracurricular activities that encourage students to step out of their comfort zone, pursue their passions, and build lifelong friendships. Behind each of these activities are advisors dedicated to helping students find their calling.

Bison Drama Club Delivers Magic with Two Family-Friendly Productions

The Bison Drama Club offers students in grades six through 12 the chance to explore both the creative and technical aspects of theater, including acting, directing, stage crew, and makeup. During the 2023-2024 school year, the club staged two major family-friendly productions: “The Addams Family” and “The Little Mermaid.” Directed by Johnathan Luster and produced by Topher Helm, both shows featured a talented cast and crew of 35-40 high school and middle school students. Exploring themes of love, family, and belonging, each show balanced humor with heartfelt moments and created magical experiences for audiences of all ages.



Destination Imagination Spurs Out-of-the-Box Thinking

Beachwood’s Destination Imagination teams brought their wildest ideas to life at the Destination Imagination Global Finals in Kansas City, Missouri. Advised by Shelly Lewis and Tara Warner, this international competition challenges students from kindergarten through high school to tackle creative problems in science, technology, engineering, arts, and community service. This year’s challenges ranged from designing a pinball system and investigating archaeological artifacts to creating kinetic art and competing in Instant Challenges, where teams have five minutes to solve a surprise task. Representing Hilltop were the Hilltop Beanbaggers and DI3, which ranked fifth place in the world for Elementary Level Improv. The two middle school teams, [Delete Pun Here] and OATS, impressed by placing in the top half of their level and challenge. Ms. Lewis credits last year’s success for students’ “out-of-the-box thinking and teamwork.”

Math Team Excels in State and National Competitions

The Beachwood Middle School Math Club, coached by Amy Hazelton, excelled in state and national math competitions during the 2023-2024 school year. In the Ohio Mathematics League, the eighth-grade team won first place in the state for the third consecutive year, while the sixth- and seventh-grade teams both secured third place statewide. Four students — Nathan Mu, Antoni Hinczewski, Priyasha Ghosal, and Derek Gong — competed in the Mathcounts State Competition at Columbus State College in March, where they placed third in Ohio. Building on these successes, six students ranked in the top 3% nationally in the MathCON competition. Derek Gong and eighth grader Nathan Mu won silver medals at the MathCON National Finals in Chicago, ranking eighth and fourth, respectively, for their grade levels. Ms. Hazelton affectionately nicknames the students “mathletes” because “their dedication and love for math are akin to what it takes to be a top athlete.”

Students Explore World Affairs through Model United Nations

Model United Nations offers students in grades six through 12 the chance to explore world affairs and debate current issues. Acting as United Nations delegates, they negotiate resolutions on topics such as human rights, global health, economic development, and climate change. Last year, the high school Model UN team, advised by Dominic Velotta, won the Cleveland Council on World Affairs Fall Conference in the big school division with 19 individual awards. They continued their success at the spring conference by placing first in the small school division, earning 13 individual awards.

The middle school Model UN team, advised by J.C. Lenk, also had an impressive year. At the winter Model UN conference at John Carroll University, eighth grader Sarah Zhou won the Gavel Award for representing Japan in the UN Environment Program. Eighth graders Clarence Ouyang and Antoni Hinczewski won the Best Position Paper award for representing Peru in the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs. At the spring conference in Mentor, Zhou, along with eighth grader Chris Jun, won Superior Delegation for representing Canada in the UN Economic and Social Council.

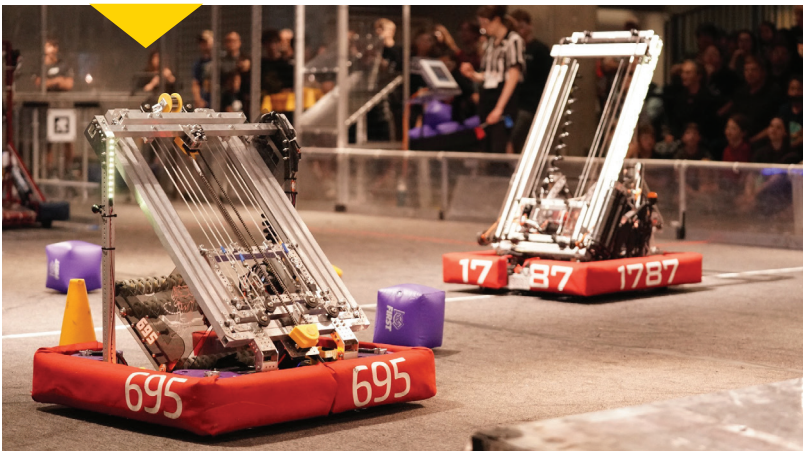
The Beachcomber Earns First Place at the Ohio Scholastic Media Association Convention

Beachwood High School's award-winning student newspaper, *The Beachcomber*, continues to set the bar high in student journalism. Advised by Josh Davis, *The Beachcomber* staff excelled at the Ohio Scholastic Media Association Convention held last April at Kent State University. The newspaper earned first place for both its print and online editions, along with 27 individual awards across multiple categories. In addition to their success at the convention, several staff members participated in the Cleveland Media Academy, a prestigious eight-week program sponsored by Cleveland.com. At the program's conclusion, 10th grader Allie Rindsberg received the distinguished Eric Russell scholarship. These achievements underscore *The Beachcomber's* commitment to upholding the highest standards in ethical journalism and engaging storytelling.



Perseverance Pays Off for Bison Robotics Team in Challenging Season

The Bison Robotics Team 695, led by coach John Keyerleber, faced a challenging yet rewarding season. This 2023-2024 FIRST Robotics game, Crescendo, involved two competing alliances scoring points by collecting and placing “musical notes” in their speakers and amps. After a fourth-place finish at the Pittsburgh Regional in March, Team 695 aimed to replicate their success at the Buckeye Regional in Cleveland. Despite frustrating technical issues, the team ultimately finished third. Coach Keyerleber praised the team's resilience and learning through setbacks as they gear up for a new season. “We’re looking forward to real solid team development,” says Coach Keyerleber. “They’re going to carry forward and grow, expand capabilities and do great things along the way this coming season.”



EXPLORE

BEACHWOOD
SCHOOLS
EXTRACURRICULARS

Beachwood High School



Beachwood Middle School



Hilltop Elementary



Bryden Elementary





Beachwood Schools' dedication to excellence extends to our competitive athletics program. We offer 23 high school varsity and 19 middle school programs, alongside 15 youth sports teams. These programs are a vital part of the comprehensive educational experience at Beachwood Schools, nurturing students' physical, emotional, and intellectual development. More than 80% of high school and middle school students play one or more sports, and 88% of our athletes maintain a B average or better. Here are notable highlights from the 2023-2024 athletics program.

Fall Season
The fall sports teams set new records and achieved impressive milestones. In cross country, sophomore Sasha Kheyfets became the third female in Beachwood history to qualify for the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) state championships, finishing 24th. The boys' cross country team advanced to regionals for the third consecutive year. The boys' soccer team had their best season ever, finishing as Chagrin Valley Conference (CVC) champions, district champions, and regional runners-up with a 17-3-1 record. Junior Grant Keilin was named First-Team All Ohio and the United Soccer Coaches Association's High School All American, a title awarded to only 80 high school boys' soccer players across the United States. Head Coach Brian Greene was named CVC Coach of the Year and Northeast Ohio Coach of the Year. The boys' golf team finished third in the CVC, and the girls' tennis team achieved a winning 16-4 record under head coach David Cole.

INDIVIDUAL HONORS

FALL

- Cross Country**
OHSAA Championships
Sasha Kheyfets, 24th Place, All Ohio
First-Team CVC Honors
Sasha Kheyfets, Max Kuenzler
- Football**
All-District Honors
Jack Felder, Mar'Tez Pinkney
First-Team CVC Honors
Johnathon Owens, Mar'Tez Pinkney
- Golf**
First-Team CVC Honors
Gavi Lappen, Ethan Malek
- Tennis - Girls**
First-Team CVC Honors
Ida Chang, Arianna Preston
- Volleyball**
CVC Honors
Gianna Preston, Tyra Rogers-Moore

- Soccer - Boys**
High School All American
Grant Keilin
All-Ohio Honors
Grant Keilin (First Team), Kyle Bennett (Second Team)
All-District Honors
Kyle Bennett, Leo Blond, Grant Keilin, Jonathan Mo, Josh Rosenblitt, Ozan Sasmaz
First-Team CVC Honors
Kyle Bennett, Leo Blond, Grant Keilin, Jonathan Mo, Josh Rosenblitt
- Soccer - Girls**
All-District Honors
Lilah Droe, Kylie Walters
First-Team CVC Honors
Lilah Droe, Londyn Travis, Kylie Walters, Anna Zhao

WINTER

- Basketball - Boys**
All-District Honorable Mention
Jayden Koonce, Daniel Rub
- Basketball - Girls**
Third-Team All District
Goldi Aschkenasy
All-District Honorable Mention
Marley Readance
- Wrestling**
All Ohio - Eighth Place at OHSAA State Championships
Caleb Greenwood
OHSAA District Runner-Up
Caleb Greenwood
OHSAA Pre-Regional Champion
Lynnina Doss

- Swimming & Diving**
OHSAA All Ohio - Top 16 at OHSAA State Championships
Colin Elwell, Derek Fan, Ben Keyerleber, Kevin Zhang
OHSAA State Qualifiers
Nina Mayers, Evan Wang
All District
Ethan Dong, Colin Elwell, Derek Fan, Kendall Finley, Ben Keyerleber, Karina Krishnan, Nina Mayers, Johnathon Owens, Samuel Park, Alma Saltzman, Evan Wang, Maria Zarjetskiy, Kevin Zhang
First Team CVC
Colin Elwell, Derek Fan, Ben Keyerleber, Nina Mayers, Johnathon Owens, Samuel Park, Evan Wang, Kevin Zhang

Winter Season

The winter sports teams boasted many standout performances. In high school wrestling, sophomore Caleb Greenwood placed eighth in the state in the Division III, 150-pound weight class, while senior Lynnina Doss made history as Beachwood's first female OHSA pre-regional champion and regional qualifier. The middle school wrestling team also excelled, advancing three students to the Ohio Athletic Committee (OAC) Junior High State Wrestling Championships. The swimming and diving team experienced a record-breaking season under head coach Brad Burget, with six members qualifying for the 2024 OHSA State Tournament. The girls' team advanced to Districts, and the undefeated boys' team secured wins in three invitationals and captured the CVC championship. Coach Burget was named CVC Coach of the Year. The high school indoor track team enjoyed a successful season, with every senior qualifying for the Ohio Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches (OATCCC) indoor track and field state championships. Meanwhile, the middle school girls' indoor track and field team achieved their best-ever finish by placing second at the OATCCC championships.



Spring Season

The spring sports teams set new benchmarks for success. The Bison track and field team advanced six athletes to the OHSA state championships. Senior Dakota Houston capped her historic career as state runner-up in the 200-meter dash, eighth in the 100-meter dash, ninth in the long jump, and anchored the 4 x 100 relay, which finished 10th. Both the girls' and boys' teams claimed the CVC division championship titles. In middle school track, the girls' 4 x 200-meter relay team placed third in the state. The varsity softball team also enjoyed a fantastic season, ending with a 10-4 record and securing second place in the CVC. In varsity baseball, junior Joshua Rosenblitt tied the 2008 record set by Guardians bullpen coach Bradley Goldberg (class of '08) with 246 career strikeouts. The boys' tennis team finished with an 8-3 record. Senior Landis Teren and junior Ethan Harmer advanced to the district championships.

SPRING

Indoor Track

OATCCC State Indoor Track & Field State Qualifiers

Kayla Allamby, Sydney Anderson, Peter Adobamen, Alex Eisengart, Strahinja Dimitrijevic, Chris Houston, Dakota Houston, Siena James, Alexandra Kheyfets, Max Kuenzler, A.J. Myers, Osita Ogor, Ambyr Paul, Johnathan Perry, Marley Readance, Josh Rosenberg, Mattix Revells, Madison Torbert, Kylie Walters, Junbo Wang

OATCCC State Indoor Track & Field Place Winners

Dakota Houston, 60-Meter Dash, Seventh Place
Dakota Houston, 200-Meter Dash, Seventh Place
Alexandra Kheyfets, 3,200-Meter Run, Eighth Place
Madison Torbert, Shot Put, Fourth Place
Kylie Walters, Long Jump, Seventh Place
Boys 4 x 200 Relay, Third Place
Girls 4 x 200 Relay, Seventh Place

Softball

CVC First-Team Honors

Arianna Preston

Second-Team CVC Honors

Sawyer Borland, Lily Grover, Allison Rindsberg, Ela Sasmaz, Mattie Spaller

Baseball

Second-Team All Ohio

Joshua Rosenblitt

First-Team CVC Honors

Cole Schreiber, Joshua Rosenblitt

Second-Team CVC Honors

Ethan Malek, Jaycob Zabell

Tennis - Boys

All-District Honors

Ethan Harmer, Landis Teren

Track & Field

OHSA State Place Winners

Dakota Houston, 200-Meter Dash, Second Place
Dakota Houston, 100-Meter Dash, Eighth Place
Dakota Houston, Long Jump, Ninth Place
Sasha Kheyfets, 3,200-Meter Run, Eighth Place
Madison Torbert, Shot Put, 14th Place
4 x 100 Girls Relay, 10th Place

First-Team CVC Honors

Dakota Houston

CVC Most Valuable Performers

Dakota Houston, Joshua Rosenberg, Osita Ogor



Excitement filled the air last May as Beachwood celebrated the groundbreaking of the new Bryden and Hilltop schools. The ceremonial turning of the soil brought together students, staff, and community members to celebrate the future of education in Beachwood.

“We have been truly fortunate to work with a design team that listens to us and listens to our community members,” said Dr. Robert Hardis, superintendent. “They are dedicated to delivering wonderful new buildings for all of us.”

The new Bryden and Hilltop schools are under construction next to the original structures, which have served the community for 68 years. The design incorporates input from community members, families, students, and staff. The new Bryden School will integrate the Fairmount Early Childhood Center, serving preschool through grade two, while the new Hilltop School will continue to serve grades three to five.

Advanced safety measures were developed with recommendations from Beachwood’s police, fire, and building departments. These include secure vestibules for visitor identification, external doors in every classroom for rapid evacuation, and the ability to section off buildings during emergencies to aid first responders. Improved traffic flow with dedicated bus loops and separate parent drop-off zones will reduce congestion and enhance safety during arrivals and departures.

School staff played a key role in designing the new classrooms. Students will have convenient access to lockers, cubbies, bathrooms, and both indoor and outdoor collaborative spaces. The buildings will feature dedicated areas for expanded elementary programming, including choir, band, orchestra, art, technology, and world language instruction. The libraries will offer bright, inviting spaces for quiet reading and collaborative learning. The new gymnasiums, designed with physical and mental well-being in mind, will provide ample space and equipment for a wide range of activities, with easy access to outdoor fields and playgrounds.

The new facilities also will feature site amenities suggested by the community. Large gathering spaces for public meetings and events will be easily accessible from the front entrances. The grounds will include green spaces, shade structures, walking paths, upgraded playground structures, and basketball hoops to enhance the community’s recreational opportunities. As Beachwood prepares to welcome these state-of-the-art facilities, a new chapter in educational excellence and community connection begins.



Get updates on the elementary facilities project and community input sessions.

CONSTRUCTION TIMELINE

May - August 2024

Extensive site work, including installation of fencing, construction roads, grading, and utilities

August 2024 - December 2025

Construction of the new schools

January 2026

Students move into new school buildings

January - August 2026

Demolition and removal of original buildings, accompanied by the construction of permanent drives, parking lots, blacktops, playgrounds, and fields (Note: Fields require two growing seasons before opening in Spring 2027.)





Our community volunteers, staff, and alumni make a positive difference in the lives of students and remain the heartbeat of our school district.

Beachwood Parent-Teacher Organization

The Beachwood Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) connects families to our schools and recognizes the incredible work of our staff to educate and inspire students on a daily basis. With events as varied as the PTO Read-a-Thon, the October Trunk-or-Treat event, class parties and field days to career days and After-Prom coordination for older students, there are plenty of opportunities for families to volunteer. These events foster a sense of community in our schools and support scholarships, educational materials, and staff appreciation initiatives. During the 2023-2024 school year, the PTO awarded five scholarships to deserving members of the Class of 2025.

Beachwood Athletic Boosters

The Beachwood Athletic Boosters promotes the growth and success of all student-athlete participants in middle school and high school programs, as well as the school-based youth sports teams. The Boosters encourages community spirit and aids in the support of special projects for athletic teams and facilities. The organization generously assists with funding team trips, clinics, and camps. The Boosters also sponsors spirit T-shirts for new kindergarten students, spiritwear and giveaways, and championship team gear.

Beachwood Schools Foundation

The Beachwood Schools Foundation has been instrumental in fostering educational excellence through a variety of impactful projects this past school year.

Those include:

- The Music, Understanding, Success and Informed Choices Program (M.U.S.I.C.) at Hilltop to help students build social-emotional and musical skills
- A trip for 25 Beachwood students and five faculty to visit several Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), made possible by the generosity of the Rosen Family Fund for Minority Achievement
- Books to keep The Bison Book Machine at Bryden full to continue to delight and inspire a life-long love of reading
- Sponsored Beachwood High School in hosting its inaugural Science Olympiad Invitational

Beyond enhancing educational programs across the District, the Foundation's core mission is to secure funds from individuals, families, and corporations to provide annual scholarships and manage more than two dozen funds. This year alone, the Foundation awarded \$34,000 to graduating seniors. The Beachwood Schools Foundation is a 501(c)3 philanthropic organization administered by a volunteer board of directors from the Beachwood community. Interested in creating a scholarship for a loved one or favorite faculty member? Contact beachwoodschooolsfoundation@gmail.com.

GET INVOLVED

**Beachwood
Athletic
Boosters**



**Beachwood
Band and Drill
Team Boosters**



**Beachwood
PTO**



**Beachwood
Schools
Foundation**



**Friends of the
Beachwood
Orchestra**



Band and Drill Team Boosters and Friends of the Beachwood Orchestra

Our nationally recognized music program would not be what it is without the support of the Beachwood Band and Drill Team Boosters and Friends of the Beachwood Orchestra. The Beachwood Band and Drill Team Boosters assists and supports the activities of the band program in grades three through 12. Working closely with the program's directors, the organization provides volunteer assistance for band events and funding for scholarships, awards, and other items and services that benefit students participating in band. Friends of the Beachwood Orchestra (FOBO) collaborates with the Beachwood School District orchestra staff to help support orchestra members in grades three through 12. FOBO raises funds through annual memberships and fundraisers to purchase concert and event necessities, sponsor orchestra trips, bring in guest clinicians, and award a yearly senior scholarship.

Hometown Heroes

In May, four members of our school community were honored as Hometown Heroes by the City of Beachwood and the Beachwood Historical Society:

- Dalya Berezovsky, student (class of 2024)
- Chunny Hahn, visual arts teacher
- Daniel MacVeigh, head custodian
- Debra Rubenstein, kindergarten teacher

Beachwood Schools congratulates these inspiring individuals on their well-deserved recognition!

Grow Your Own Program

Through our partnership with Ursuline College, the Grow Your Own program helps Beachwood Schools staff achieve their professional goals. We are delighted to congratulate Beachwood alumnus Jasmine Stevens, our most recent graduate from the program. Formerly a special education assistant and former head varsity cheerleading coach, Ms. Stevens earned a Master of Arts in Education in December 2023 and is now working as a kindergarten teacher in Las Vegas, Nevada. "Participating in the program really changed the trajectory of my career and opened so many doors for me," says Ms. Stevens.



GALLERY OF SUCCESS



Since 1985, the Gallery of Success has recognized Beachwood alumni who exemplify our mission to "develop intellectual entrepreneurs with a social conscience." Join us in congratulating the 2024 inductees:

David A. Arnold ('86)

Stand-Up Comedian, Sitcom Writer, Producer, Actor (posthumous)

Marshall E. Barron ('74)

President, Barron Pharmacy

Monique Davis Gordon ('96)

Vice President, Global Local & Cultural Innovation, The Estée Lauder Companies

Gayle I. Horwitz ('98)

Civil Rights Attorney at U.S. Department of Education

Rebecca Boroff Suhy ('95)

Founder, Allison Rose Foundation

Dr. Brian Weiss ('76)

Podiatrist and Past President of the Beachwood Board of Education

Alex Wyse ('05)

Actor, Writer, Director, Producer



Go online for video interviews with the inductees and highlights of the April 19 induction ceremony.



**DEVELOPING INTELLECTUAL ENTREPRENEURS
WITH A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE**