

ACCENT

CENTERVILLE CITY SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

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Centerville Education Foundation honors educators, school supporters

The Centerville Education Foundation (CEF) celebrated a group of exceptional individuals for their dedication to Centerville City Schools, the community, and the advancement of education during their annual Hall of Fame banquet.

Marcie Breese, a social studies teacher at Watts Middle School, was honored as this year's Outstanding Educator for her engagement with the curriculum and commitment to helping others. Members of the CHS Class of 2024 selected **Mary Haley** to receive the Outstanding Student award, and music producer **Rob Hegel**, a 1966 graduate of CHS, was recognized as the Distinguished Alumnus. Rounding out the Hall of Fame inductees was Centerville Police Officer **Tracy Sommers**, who was recognized with a Special Service Award.

Each school in the district selected a recipient for the Excellence in Education awards. The 2024 honorees included:

- ▶ **Molly Dahl**, kindergarten teacher at Primary Village North
- ▶ **Carol Henry**, kindergarten teacher at Primary Village South
- ▶ **Caroline Derr**, fifth grade teacher at Cline Elementary
- ▶ **Beth Ann Ellinger**, intervention specialist at Driscoll Elementary
- ▶ **Lynn Sabol**, third grade teacher at John Hole Elementary
- ▶ **Erika Glavin**, fourth grade teacher at Normandy Elementary
- ▶ **Susie Johnston**, paraprofessional at Stingley Elementary
- ▶ **Nick Seuch**, school counselor at Weller Elementary
- ▶ **Morgan Lehman**, library aide at Magsig Middle School
- ▶ **Denise Birdseye**, English language arts teacher at Tower Heights Middle School
- ▶ **Sheila Reynolds**, band teacher at Watts Middle School
- ▶ **Arch Rodgers**, social studies teacher at Centerville High School



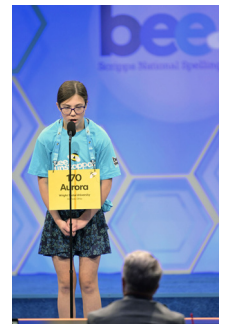
 Learn more about CEF: centervilleeducation.org

Watts student competes in National Spelling Bee

Aurora Spisak, now an eighth grader at Watts Middle School, competed in the Scripps National Spelling Bee in May, making it to the third round of competition.

She also participated in the Rule the Word Challenge and managed to solve all six puzzles in an impressive 51 minutes.

Spisak qualified for the national competition after winning the school and regional spelling bees. The 96th Scripps National Spelling Bee featured 245 spellers from across the country.



IN THIS ISSUE



School board approves levy request
Page 3



Magsig Middle School welcomes new principal
Page 5



Centerville High School celebrates 2024 graduates
Page 7

Cost saving measures implemented as school year begins



Superintendent Jon Wesney shares an update about reductions across the district.

We are making some adjustments as we begin the new school year. Following the rejection of two levies for additional funding, we moved ahead with the implementation of a number of reductions and fee increases. All changes are in effect for the 2024-25 school year. The cuts listed here were based on the reduction plan that was approved by the Centerville Board of Education in January 2024, and are expected to save the district about \$3.5 million in operating expenses.

Staffing

A total of 48 positions were eliminated across the district for the 2024-25 school year. This includes 17 teaching positions and 31 support staff positions.

- ▶ **High school:** 2 math teachers, 1 English language arts teacher, 1 science teacher, 1 special education teacher, and 1 career education teacher (culinary arts)
- ▶ **Middle school:** 2 physical education teachers and 0.5 reading support position
- ▶ **Elementary school:** 4.5 general education teachers and 4 special education teachers
- ▶ **Support staff:** 13 paraprofessionals (special education teacher aides), 15 clerical and administrative support positions, 2 custodians, and 1 bus driver

In addition to the positions listed above, the district also reduced 11 Academic Volunteer Building Coordinator stipends, 13 athletic coaching positions, and several middle and high school club adviser supplemental contracts.

We are doing our best to minimize overtime costs and limit substitutes for support staff who are out. These cost saving measures began last November

and will continue for the foreseeable future.

Finally, the school board and Centerville Classroom Teachers Association agreed to a new 2-year contract that includes a 0% increase to the base salary for all district employees for the next two years. Employees will receive a non-recurring stipend (up to a maximum of \$1,000) that is not added to the base salary.

Transportation

Six bus routes were eliminated across the district. These changes primarily impacted middle school and high school students. Students are still eligible for busing if they live more than one mile from their school, but bus stops may be farther from home.

Field Trips

After the November 2023 levy was rejected by voters, the district cut field trips unless they were required for a course. While we believe field trips help our students make connections between what they're learning and how it's applied in the real world, we need a policy that is equitable across the district, so we are continuing to limit field trips to those that are required for a course.

School Calendar

To help the district provide teacher training opportunities while reducing substitute costs, professional development days were added to next year's calendar. A revised calendar was sent to families in June and is also available on the district website.

Fee Changes

Several fees were increased across the district.

- ▶ Preschool tuition increased by 10% for typically developing students.

▶ School fees for preschool and kindergarten students were raised to \$50, and school fees for students in grades 1-8 were raised to \$75.

▶ Pay-to-participate fees for athletic and extracurricular activities increased by 20%.

▶ Fees for groups that rent district facilities, athletic fields, or gym space increased by 20%.

The loss of 48 staff members creates a heavier load for our remaining teachers, administrators, and support staff, and bus changes and fee increases are an adjustment for families. Please know that we appreciate everyone's support and understanding as we adapt to these changes.

Finally, over the past year, we've held eight community forums and a number of informal gatherings to communicate and collaborate with our community. These have been insightful discussions, and I'd like to continue sharing information and getting feedback through future community meetings. Please plan to join us for one of our informal meetings or at a community forum -- it takes all of us to plan for the future of our local schools.



Learn more about school funding and ask questions at one of these upcoming community forums. All meetings begin at 6 p.m.

- ▶ Sept. 10 at Stingley Elementary
- ▶ Sept. 24 at Weller Elementary
- ▶ Oct. 10 at Driscoll Elementary



Did you know ... Centerville Schools is always looking for high quality substitutes. Visit bit.ly/3VG2dE0 to learn how to become a substitute teacher, paraprofessional, secretary or office aide, bus driver or aide, custodian, or kitchen worker.

School board approves levy request

During a special meeting on Aug. 1, the Centerville Board of Education approved a resolution to proceed with placing a levy on the Nov. 5, 2024 ballot.

The proposed levy is a 3.9-mill operating levy that would generate \$11.2 million each year for the district's ongoing operating expenses. Additional funds would be used by Centerville Schools to maintain current educational programs, continue the implementation of the district's strategic plan, and keep up with rising costs related to the district's day-to-day expenses.

Two earlier requests for additional funding were rejected by voters, and the board and district leadership team have continued to discuss school finances at board meetings and community forums.

Superintendent Jon Wesney explained that because of the way public school districts like Centerville are funded in Ohio, the need for additional funding does not go away, even with the \$3.5 million in reductions the district has made going into the 2024-25 school year.

"Unfortunately, Centerville Schools receives relatively flat funding from the state of Ohio and from voted levies each year," Wesney said. "This means as costs rise, we must ask our community for additional funding or make significant changes to our educational programs."

Cost saving measures going into the new school year are impacting staffing, transportation, field trips, the school calendar, and fees. These cuts were based on a reduction plan approved by the school board in January.

Voted levies, like the one Centerville will have on the November ballot, are the main source of funding for most districts in Ohio. However, state law freezes the amount of money school districts receive from those levies – providing the same dollar amount year after year and making it hard for school districts to keep up with rising costs.

"We have continued to engage with community members to help them understand why our school district is in this position," said Board President Allison Durnbaugh. "Our school board is tasked with ensuring that Centerville Schools has the appropriate resources to effectively educate the children in our community. It is clear from our financial projections that additional funding is necessary to maintain our current educational programs, continue the implementation of the district's strategic plan, and keep up with the rising costs of running our schools."

More information about school finances, details about the levy that will be on the Nov. 5 ballot, and community engagement opportunities will continue to be added to the district website, www.centerville.k12.oh.us/levy.

Levy fast facts



The levy on the Nov. 5 ballot is a 3.9-mill operating levy.



This levy is necessary to maintain current educational programs and keep up with rising costs.



Centerville is consistently rated as one of the top school districts in Ohio.



The district cut \$3.5 million, which included 48 staff positions.



Centerville receives relatively flat funding from voted levies and from the state of Ohio.



This levy would cost \$11.40 a month per \$100,000 of home value as determined by the county auditor.



Levy FAQ: centerville.k12.oh.us/levy



Custodians move furniture back into classrooms after HVAC work was completed in the South Unit at Centerville High School this summer.

Summer maintenance, repairs underway

Here are some recent maintenance projects that are being completed across the district:

- ▶ Lighting upgrades at Centerville High School Stadium to help with pole stability issues and energy efficiency
- ▶ HVAC upgrades in CHS South Unit, including duct work and LED lighting
- ▶ Replacement of two failing underground power cables at CHS after multiple outages
- ▶ Paving and concrete work at selected locations across the district
- ▶ Purchase of seven school buses so fleet is upgraded every 13-14 years rather than all at once
- ▶ New playground pieces at Driscoll Elementary, as part of PreK-5 equipment and accessibility updates
- ▶ Partial roof replacement at Normandy Elementary
- ▶ Completed year-long project to enhance security for exterior doors
- ▶ Additional radios and some night locks purchased with grant funding

Visit www.centerville.k12.oh.us/departments/business/funding for details about how these projects are funded, as well as district-wide building assessment information.

District, local nonprofit to continue safety series

Since 2022, Centerville Schools and the nonprofit Centerville Safe have partnered with other organizations and experts to provide a number of free safety related presentations for the community.

The series will continue during the 2024-25 school year. Mark your calendar for these upcoming events:

- ▶ **Sept. 12** - Run, Hide, Fight at 6:30 p.m. in the Centerville High School Central Theatre
- ▶ **Oct. 9** - *Screenagers: Next Chapter* film screening at 6:30 p.m. in the Cline Elementary Auditorium
- ▶ **Jan. 15** - *Screenagers: Elementary School Edition* film screening at 6:30 p.m. in the CHS Central Theatre
- ▶ **March 11** - Sextortion & Dating Violence at 6:30 p.m. in the CHS Central Theatre

More information will be shared on the district website and social media accounts as each event nears.



Panelists speak after a screening of the movie, *Screenagers: Growing Up in the Digital Age*, in January.

Free gun locks available

Many acts of school violence happen because children access unsecured guns at home. Community members can help keep students safe by securing firearms and being aware of who can access them at all times. Thanks to an ongoing community-wide initiative, gun locks can be picked up, free of charge, at the Centerville Board of Education office during regular business hours.

CURRICULUM UPDATE

State requires all school districts to adopt Science of Reading

Schools across Ohio have been making a shift in their literacy instruction and practices based on a state law passed in 2023 that requires all school districts to adopt the Science of Reading, which focuses on how the brain learns to read, the skills that are essential for reading, and research on the most effective teaching methods.

The Ohio Department of Education & Workforce (ODEW) defines the Science of Reading as a body of research that:

- ▶ Shows how students learn to read and write well
- ▶ Explains why some students struggle with reading and writing
- ▶ Says that all students do better when they get clear and organized lessons in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing
- ▶ Does not use any teaching method that relies on guessing words based on meaning, sentence structure, or visual clues, like the three-cueing approach

Under state law, every PreK-12 teacher and administrator is required to complete a course provided by the ODEW before June 30, 2025. School districts must pay teachers a stipend once they complete the course, and then ODEW is supposed to reimburse the district for that cost. All of Centerville's K-3 teachers and most K-5 intervention specialists already completed IMSE Orton Gillingham or Morphology training in 2020-21 to meet Ohio's dyslexia support rules. This training also counts for ODEW's reading course, but schools are not getting paid back for the IMSE training.

"Our students have historically performed well in literacy assessments, but there is always room for improvement," said Cherie Colopy, Centerville's Director



Centerville teachers are trained to use a multi-sensory approach to literacy instruction. This helps young readers make connections between letters and sounds.

of Elementary Curriculum. "The implementation of Orton Gillingham over the past few years has helped us adjust our instructional practices to a more structured literacy approach."

Districts are also required to adopt state-approved core literacy and intervention curricula before the end of the 2024-25 school year. Centerville is currently piloting two of these curricula in K-5 classrooms. Although the ODEW is reimbursing Centerville Schools for \$410,447 of this cost, the total cost of the new curriculum is expected to be more than twice that, making this one of many underfunded state mandates that public school districts are required to implement.

"Literacy is an essential life skill and is the focus of so much of our work, especially at the elementary level," said Colopy, noting that about 60 teachers are part of the curriculum adoption team. "The expertise of our teachers as we study the pilot programs will help us make the best decision possible to provide quality literacy instruction for our students."



Did you know ... Attendance matters! Missing two days of school per month (about 10% of school) is enough to cause a student to become chronically absent, making it more difficult to succeed in school.

Mobile learning station on the move



A child enjoys solving a puzzle inside the mobile learning station this summer.

When Centerville City Schools unveiled the Elks Express mobile learning station two years ago, the goal was to use it as a tool to connect with families beyond school walls. With nearly 40 stops so far, including nine this summer, the classroom on wheels is doing its job.

“We aim to provide various opportunities for families to be heard and to collaborate with us in their student’s learning,” said Megan LeMaster, the district’s English Learner coach.

The Elks Express is equipped with Chromebook laptops, WiFi hotspots, books, math games, and other educational tools, which were either donated by local organizations or purchased with donated funds. Teachers and support staff volunteer to accompany the mobile learning station to various locations throughout Centerville-Washington Township to interact with students and families and encourage them to keep learning over school breaks.



A number of local organizations and businesses support teaching and learning in Centerville! Here are just a few examples from last spring. (top left) Fourth graders at Normandy Elementary became crime scene investigators with the help of a hands-on activity from the Centerville-Washington Park District. (top right) Third graders at Driscoll Elementary researched, wrote about, and created books, stop motion videos, and dioramas featuring animals and their habitats. Cline (bottom left) and Weller (bottom right) elementary students walked to local restaurants to learn about economics, goods, services, consumers, and producers.

Magsig welcomes new principal



Coleman

Centerville City Schools announced in April that Dawana Coleman will serve as the new principal of Magsig Middle School.

Coleman most recently served as principal at North College Hill Middle School in Cincinnati.

“The close partnership between educators, students, parents, and the broader community is evident in the collaborative efforts to support student success by building holistic relationships with families,” Coleman said. “I am excited about the opportunity to be part of such a vibrant and supportive Magsig school community, where everyone works together towards a common goal of empowering and inspiring students to reach their full potential by holding them accountable throughout their academic journey. Additionally, I am genuinely enthusiastic about joining the Centerville City Schools team. Confidently, my skills, experiences, and energy for education make me a strong fit for this role, and eager to contribute to the continued success and growth of Centerville City Schools.”

The Magsig principal position was posted in March, and a committee interviewed 12 internal and external applicants prior to making its selection. Coleman replaces Stacey Westendorf, who served as Magsig’s principal for the past 19 years and decided to return to the classroom as a Spanish teacher at Centerville High School.

At 100 years old, Magsig Middle School is the district’s oldest school building. Located at 192 W. Franklin St., the school serves about 580 students in grades 6-8 and has approximately 65 staff members.

AROUND THE DISTRICT



Princesses, presidents, inventors, authors, sports icons, and other historical figures mingled at Stingley (photos on left) and John Hole (photos on right) elementary schools last spring as students researched and wrote about their achievements, then practiced their public speaking skills with presentations to family members and friends.



Eighth graders at Tower Heights Middle School went on a powerful learning journey as they took a virtual tour of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp in March. The students read books about the Holocaust in their English language arts classes, and the live-streamed tour, led by a Polish docent, provided them with a unique perspective, using historical photographs, drone footage, and survivor testimonies to help history come alive. The experience was made possible thanks to a generous grant from Six Million Voices and support from the Tower Heights PTO.

CharacterStrong implemented K-12

As Centerville Schools enters the third year of its strategic plan, the district is continuing to find ways to support its vision of preparing students to be responsible, community-minded members of society.

Developing skills like adaptability, communication, critical thinking, empathy, and tech literacy are the focus of the district's Portrait of an Elk.



Now, all three middle schools and Centerville High School are implementing elements of the CharacterStrong curriculum for the upcoming school year.

"Relationships are critical to the academic and personal success of our students," said Adam Ciarlariello, the district's

Director of Secondary

Curriculum. "The great thing about our work with CharacterStrong is that it can be embedded into the teaching and learning that is already taking place in our classrooms."

The Portrait of an Elk, which was developed by a group of teachers, students, parents, administrators, and community leaders, highlights five important core competencies that all students will need as they prepare for college, careers, and life in the 21st century.

 Portrait of an Elk: bit.ly/3WMWIYC

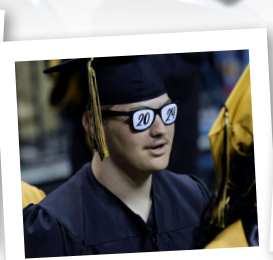


Thanks to 2024 grants from the Centerville Education Foundation (CEF), students at Primary Village North (left) explored the seasons by participating in a variety of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, math) activities. The grant money CEF grant helped young artists use sunlight to show their creativity. The school was able to purchase materials for students to create their own cyanotype prints using objects from nature and other small, loose parts as well as the sun's energy.



Congratulations

Centerville High School Class of 2024



690

members of the
134th graduating class

90

students graduated
summa cum laude (4.5 GPA & above)

158

students graduated
magna cum laude (4.0 - 4.499 GPA)

143

students graduated
cum laude (3.5 - 3.999 GPA)

246

Honors
Diplomas
awarded

186

National
Honor Society
members

10

National
Merit
Semifinalists

17

National Merit
Commended
Scholars

219

President's
Education
Awards

12

United States
Military
enlistments

195

Scholar
Athlete
Awards

*Strive for greatness.
Leave a legacy.*



Watch video: Visit youtu.be/z_UF7bAt0q8
or scan this code to watch the full ceremony.





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A school newsletter for residents of Centerville-Washington Township



Twelve students in the CHS Class of 2024 earned their Certified Production Technician (CPT) Short-Term Certificate in May. They were part of the two-year Advanced Manufacturing program, which CHS offers in partnership with Sinclair College. Based on the Manufacturing Skills Standards Councils (MSSC) curriculum, the program covers topics like manufacturing safety, quality and measurement, manufacturing processes and procedures, and maintenance awareness. To earn the CPT certificate, students must pass certification exams designed to test their understanding and comprehension of industry standards.



Stay up-to-date with your local schools: Get district news delivered to your email each week! Visit bit.ly/3qtaLAO or scan this code to sign up.

Mark your calendar

- Sept. 10** Community forum - 6 p.m.
- Sept. 13** No school - Teacher in-service
- Sept. 23** Board of Education meeting - 7 p.m.
- Sept. 24** Community forum - 6 p.m.
- Oct. 10** Community forum - 6 p.m.
- Oct. 11** End of first quarter
- Oct. 14** No school - Teacher in-service
- Oct. 24-25** No school - Parent-teacher conferences
- Oct. 28** Board of Education meeting - 7 p.m.
- Nov. 5** Election Day
- Nov. 15** No school - Teacher in-service
- Nov. 25** Board of Education meeting - 7 p.m.
- Nov. 27-Dec. 1** No school - Thanksgiving Break
- Dec. 16** Board of Education meeting - 7 p.m.
- Dec. 21-Jan. 5** No school - Winter Break