

Board President Remarks

Nora Katzenberger

January 6, 2025

First, let me say what an honor it is to serve as President of the Lakewood Board of Education. I've learned so much from my fellow Board Members, our excellent District Leaders, innovative teachers, energetic coaches, dedicated staff, engaged parents, and wonderful students. I hope to bring every bit of this inspiration to this important role in the coming year.

Thank you, Mike, for your extended service during your two terms as Board President. As a Lakewood native and fellow parent of Lakewood students, you have brought so much heart to your presidency, and our District is better for it. I've learned a lot from your leadership, which I hope to carry into my new role.

I'm also grateful to Board Members Betsy Shaughnessy, Colleen Clark-Sutton, and Lisa Dopman. Your combination of wisdom built over the years and fresh ideas and perspectives has contributed greatly to the success of our schools and students. We are fortunate to have a Board with such strong ties to our schools, including several Lakewood alumni and every Board member a parent of past or current Lakewood students. It has been a pleasure to serve with you, and I look forward to continuing to do so this year.

Our District is especially fortunate to have the quality of leadership we have in Superintendent Maggie Niedzwiecki and Treasurer Kent Zeman. Superintendent Niedzwiecki, your strong leadership, bold vision, and great sense of humor, all focused on putting our students first, have helped move our District forward and have raised the reputation of Lakewood City Schools throughout the region and the state. Treasurer Zeman, your expertise with school finance and state laws, and your talent for communicating them to others, have ensured the strong financial health of our District.

We're so grateful to you both, as well our other talented and experienced District Leaders, for all you do.

This is a time of great focus on public education at the local, state, and national level. Public schools are often a reflection of the issues that we struggle with in other areas of our lives as a community. We may have to grapple with the effects of state and federal actions that seek to influence our local approach to education. We as a Board will do all we can to manage the impact of these actions on our policies and procedures. Because we want to protect what we have here in Lakewood. We have excellent schools, supported by a tight-knit community. We have engaged students who strive for success. We have educators who constantly innovate to help students achieve. We have parents whose participation helps shape the future of our schools.

Additionally, as Mike mentioned, we are safeguarding the future success of our District and students by working with our community to evaluate our elementary facilities. Our Facilities Task Force will incorporate the valuable feedback gathered from hundreds of attendees at our Community Conversations, as well as input from our upcoming survey, into their recommendation for the best future scenario for elementary buildings. The Board looks forward to receiving the Task Force's recommendation from the Superintendent later this Spring.

At this midpoint of the school year, we can look back over the past year with pride at the accomplishments of our schools and students. The Harding Math Symposium and the MILES Friendship Cafe. Seven students honored by the National Merit Organization, and five students who won awards at the regional Model UN Conference. Hundreds of students volunteered their time through H2O and other organizations. Countess band, choir, and orchestra performances at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. Several Fall sports teams engaged in postseason competition. We can also look ahead to exciting events in the new year. Several construction projects will be completed at Lakewood High School, including our "school within a school" for Franklin School of Opportunity, our Micro Electro Mechanical Systems Labs, and our Welding

Education Building. Students will take educational trips to Washington DC, Italy, and the Canary Islands. Many athletes who broke school records and competed at the district and state level last year will return to represent Lakewood. Our Barnstormers theater department will stage the musical, "Les Miserables." We will send 325 graduates of the Class of 2025 to colleges, the military, and the workforce. And we will welcome a new group of kindergartners — the Class of 2038! — into the Lakewood City Schools family.

Thank you for trusting me with the responsibility of the leadership of this Board. I look forward to working with my esteemed colleagues and our District leaders to serve this District in the coming year.