

REPORT CARD

A Lakewood City Schools Community Newsletter



SEPT. 2025



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From left: Ceci Whiteamire, Adele Wentzel, Zach Carnovale, Alessio Matera, Cora Barcelona

Kudos to our National Merit honorees!

Congratulations to Lakewood High School seniors Cora Barcelona, Zach Carnovale, Alessio Matera, Adele Wentzel, and Ceci Whiteamire on being named Semifinalists in the 71st annual National Merit Scholarship Corp. competition! This designation recognizes these five students as among the top students in the nation based on junior year PSAT scores. LHS also has one Commended Student in Abby Peck.

Our five Semifinalists are part of an elite group of 16,000 students across the country whose PSAT scores in the 2024-2025 school year put them in the top tier of the more than 1.3 million students who took the PSAT. Semifinalists represent less than 1% of U. S. high school seniors and are

See MERIT Page 4

District celebrates grand opening of career-tech, FSO learning spaces at LHS

On Sept. 9, we were thrilled to celebrate the Grand Opening of our new learning spaces at Lakewood High with ribbon cuttings and community tours. The event highlighted our new West Shore Career-Tech Welding and MEMS (Micro-Electro Mechanical Systems) labs and classrooms, as well as the new home for the Franklin School of Opportunity (FSO). These state-of-the-art spaces will provide students with hands-on experiences, career pathways, and a supportive environment they need to thrive.

The West Shore labs and classrooms were made possible by a \$5.7 million grant from the State of Ohio. West Shore was the only program in the state to receive grant money to create a MEMS program. The move to LHS for FSO was the logical step once it was determined that the former Franklin building was no longer a suitable home for our students. The move opens up more opportunities for FSO students to take advantage of LHS courses and extracurriculars.

For photos of the exciting Grand Opening event, please see Page 3.

LHS pair earn selection to All-State ensembles

Congratulations to Lakewood High bassist Abby Kovach and bassoonist Alessio Matera, who were selected to play in the Ohio Music Educators Association's All-State Orchestra and All-State Band, respectively. Musicians must qualify for the All-Regional ensemble to qualify for state. Cellist Nora Dunne will join Abby in the All-Regional Orchestra. Congratulations to all three of these talented student-musicians!



District awarded \$50K Safe Routes to School grant

Lakewood City Schools has been awarded a \$50,000 Safe Routes to School grant from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). The grant will allow the District to expand opportunities for students to safely walk and bike to school. The grant aligns with the District's Vision of a Lakewood Ranger competency of global awareness/citizenship and will offer students and families avenues for exercising good environmental stewardship.

Implementation of the grant will include both new initiatives and enhancements to existing efforts that encourage students and families to choose active transportation when going to and from school. Among the highlights:

Events – Two elementary Hike & Bike weeks, a Winter Walk, and a spring Bike Rodeo to promote safe cycling.

Schoolpool Program – An online tool to help

families connect with others to walk or bike together for added safety and convenience.

Safety Resources – Distribution of bike helmets and locks to students in need and installation of additional bike racks across schools.

Community Awareness – Promotion of safe practices, including encouraging homeowners and businesses to shovel sidewalks in the winter to ensure students can walk and bike safely. Community partnerships are central to the project's success. The City of Lakewood, Lakewood Council of PTAs, Bike Lakewood, and the City of Lakewood have all committed to supporting the District's efforts.

A separate but complementary initiative that the District is embarking on is Schoolpool, a free federal program administered by the Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency and GoOhio Commute that provides an online



tool for families to safely and securely connect with other families to form walkpools and bikepools.

The Safe Routes to School project will help empower Lakewood families to feel confident in choosing active transportation while also teaching students the lifelong value of healthy habits, independence, and community.

Vote expected on elementary buildings at Oct. 20 Board of Education meeting

Superintendent Maggie Niedzwiecki is scheduled to make her recommendation to the Board of Education on whether to re-purpose one of our elementary buildings into an early learning center, or to keep the current configuration of K-5 buildings and redraw boundaries for the entire district.



Superintendent Maggie Niedzwiecki

Following the superintendent's recommendation, the Board of Education plans to vote on the issue at its Oct. 20 meeting at Lakewood High School. Stay

tuned for updates by visiting our website at lakewoodcityschools.org.

Upcoming No School Days

Oct. 10: NEOEA DAY (all students)

Oct. 30 & 31: Elementary & Middle School Conferences (K-8 only)

Nov. 4: Professional Day (all students)

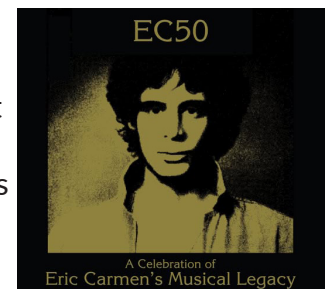
Nov. 26-28: Thanksgiving Break (all students)

District to host AI Parent Info Night

We invite all Lakewood families to attend our AI Parent Information Night on Tuesday, Oct. 14 at 6:30 p.m. in the Lakewood High School cafeteria. In a world where artificial intelligence is becoming more integrated into our daily lives, it's crucial for us to understand its impact on education. This event is a great opportunity to learn about how AI is influencing our work at schools and, most importantly, how we can support our students as they grow up in a world infused with AI. The evening will feature engaging demonstrations on using AI and a speaker from AI Owl.

Lkwd Project part of EC50 tribute concert

We are so thrilled to have our Lakewood High orchestra members of The Lakewood Project join with the Eric Carmen Band for a concert at the Civic Auditorium on Nov. 25 at 7:30 pm to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Eric Carmen's debut album! The concert will benefit the LHS music program. Seating is reserved only and tickets are available at <https://www.payschools.com/events/details/39860>.



Did You Know?

Two Board of Education seats are up for election this year. We encourage you to make your voice heard and vote on Nov. 4!

West Shore & FSO Grand Opening



Clockwise from left: Welding instructor Joe Zrnich and one of his students, Rian Fetting, take a novel approach to ribbon cutting; West Shore superintendents from Lakewood, Bay, Rocky River, and Westlake cut the ribbon on the MEMS lab; The community checks out the new welding facility; Board of Education members join Principal Terri Bornino-Elwell in cutting the ribbon on FSO's new home at Lakewood High School.

PHOTOS BY WHITNEY MILLER

Recreation Department Update: Activities in full fall swing, plus 100-year anniversary giveaways are here

SUMMER SEASON RECAP: The summer season came in with a rain cloud and left with gorgeous weather! We had the most youth baseball/softball registrations in over a decade (900+). Pool visits were up from last year (over 72,000!) and our Fitness Facility visits were up, too (up 3,000 from this time last year)! Thank you to all of our summer participants and users that either played in our athletic leagues, attended one of our summer camps, or just decided

to cannonball into one of the municipal pools. We are grateful to be able to provide, every day, something for everyone. Most importantly, THANK YOU to the hundreds of seasonal staff members who worked for us to make it one of the most successful seasons yet!

FALL BROCHURE: Our fall brochure was posted on our website (www.recreation.lakewoodcityschools.org) and hit your doorsteps in August. Activities and aquatics programs will run

until winter break. If you or someone you know is interested in offering a class, program or activity — or if you know someone looking for seasonal employment or who wants to volunteer to coach one of our teams — contact us today!

100 YEARS OF LAKEWOOD RECREATION: We kicked off our 100th anniversary celebration by having the honor of being the Grand Marshal of the Lakewood 4th of July Parade! Now, we are in the middle of

100 days of giveaways. Each day since Sept. 2, we have named a prize winner. Prizes have ranged from 100th anniversary t-shirts, to yoga mats and blocks, pool passes, water bottles, high school athletic passes, and more! Winners are celebrated on all our social media platforms. If you or a family member have registered or participated in any Rec Department offering within this year, you have already been entered to win!

The Lakewood Board of Education

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Betsy Bergen Shaughnessy, Vice President
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Colleen Clark-Sutton, Member
Lisa Dopman, Member

Administration

Maggie Niedzwiecki, Superintendent
Kent Zeman, Treasurer

All courses and programs offered by the Lakewood City Schools and the West Shore Career-Technical District are without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, creed, gender, marital status, disability or age in its educational programs, activities, employment policies or admission policies as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The district provides equal access to Boy Scouts and other designated groups. Jeffrey Schlade serves as Title IX Coordinator and Stephanie Morgan as 504 Officer.

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Vision Of A Lakewood Ranger at H.Mann: Grant helps create more welcoming library

Horace Mann Elementary library, digital, and information literacy teacher Patricia Birch recently was awarded a \$7,000 grant from the GDP Employees' Foundation. The grant, titled Empowerment Through Inclusion, was designed to purchase materials and resources that directly support the school's special education CHAMPS students and make the library a more accessible, engaging, and inclusive space for them.

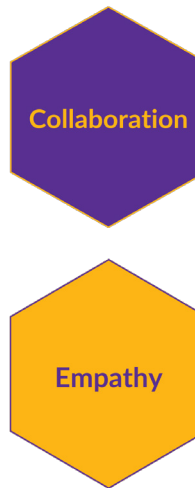
According to Birch, traditional library collections and furnishings, however, often fall short of meeting the needs of students with significant disabilities. "Books can tear too easily, furniture may not support sensory regulation, and materials may not align with individualized learning goals," Birch explained. "By writing this grant, I was able to secure funding to fill those gaps."

With the funding, Birch was able to purchase durable board and indestructible books,

sensory furniture, a listening center, and adapted unit resources. These additions not only empower CHAMPS students to explore reading and learning but also make the library a more welcoming environment for all learners.

"I applied for the grant because I wanted to ensure that every student could feel a sense of belonging in the library," Birch said. "When every child can find joy and success in the library, we all grow stronger together. I named it Empowerment Through Inclusion because it communicates that true empowerment comes when every child, regardless of ability, has equal access to learning, exploration, and a sense of belonging."

The transformation has reached beyond the CHAMPS program. All Horace Mann students are enjoying the new reading space. The sen-



Students in Horace Mann's CHAMPS unit enjoy some of the new sensory furniture purchased for the school's library with a grant from GDP Employees' Foundation.

sory furniture isn't just supporting students with disabilities—it has made the library more engaging, comfortable, and inviting for all.

MERIT From Page 1 the highest scoring entrants in their state. The number of Semifinalists named in each state is proportional to the state's percentage of the national total of

graduating high school seniors. Semifinalists are eligible to continue on in the competition in hopes of being named a Finalist and receiving one of more than 7,100 scholarships worth nearly

\$26 million to be awarded in the spring. Finalists will be notified of this designation in February. National Merit Scholarship Corp. Commended Students are among the top 5% of PSAT scorers.

Although Abby does not advance in the scholarship contest, we recognize her as among the best students in the state.

Congratulations to Cora, Zach, Alessio, Adele, Ceci, and Abby!