Dear East Knox Students, Families, Staff, and Community Members,

It is my pleasure to share an important update regarding the future of the East Knox Local School District. We are thrilled to introduce our newly developed Strategic Plan, a roadmap designed to guide our schools toward sustained excellence while staying true to the traditions that make our community strong.

Over several months, a diverse group known as the Core Team, comprising community members, staff, students, and administrators, convened to discuss the future direction of our district. This collaborative effort speaks volumes about the commitment our community has to our students' success.

The work of the Core Team has resulted in a clear, cohesive plan that includes newly defined vision and mission statements, core values, and five overarching district goals. These guiding principles will now serve as the foundation for all future district initiatives, and their progress will be regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure accountability and success.

Our new vision statement captures our forward-thinking approach:

Vision: Blending Traditions with Visions of our Future

Our mission emphasizes our vital role within the community:

Mission: East Knox Local School District is the heart and foundation of the community. Teachers, staff, and families partner to prepare our students for lifelong excellence.

At East Knox Local Schools, we are united by shared values that define who we are and how we operate. As Bulldogs, we value:

- Our safe and supportive community
- Preparation leading to new opportunities
- Relevant, clear, and consistent communication
- Learning and growing throughout life

Going forward, district initiatives will be driven by these goals.

Student Experience

East Knox Local School District offers relevant and abundant enrichment opportunities for our students

- Informs our students of educational and career opportunities through strong and intentional partnerships
- Develops strong social and interpersonal skills in our students

Staff Development

East Knox Local School District prepares staff that embrace a culture of excellence through a variety of incentives and innovative solutions.

Health and Wellness

East Knox Local School District assures our staff and students access to ongoing trusted resources and early identification of issues impacting barriers to equitable education.

Community Engagement

East Knox Local School District promotes community engagement through welcoming volunteers and seeking out service opportunities in our community for our students, allowing generations to come together.

Finance

East Knox Local School District demonstrates fiscal responsibility by prioritizing our resources and assets to provide an enriching experience for our students.

We believe if we are accountable to these goals, we will continue to improve, achievement will increase, our staff will prosper, and decisions about doing what is best for students will be clear.

Moving forward, staff members and administrators throughout the district will share in the planning and implementation of initiatives and strategies within each goal area. As they are completed, new projects will be added to the plan.

You can already see these goals in action throughout our district. Our ongoing projects are a direct reflection of our new strategic direction:

- Updated safety measures across our buildings, including **safety training with crisis prevention interventions and threat assessment**, align directly with our core value of a safe and supportive community and the Health and Wellness goal.
- The **implementation of the new Wonders curriculum at the elementary school** promotes high-quality learning, enhancing the Student Experience.
- The new elementary school playground promotes student well-being and engagement, enhancing the Student Experience.
- **Mental Health First Aid Training for all staff** helps assure access to ongoing trusted resources and early identification of issues impacting barriers to equitable education, in alignment with the Health and Wellness goal.
- The new junior high courses in robotics, careers, and computer safety and application are specifically designed to offer relevant enrichment opportunities, preparing our students for future opportunities in alignment with the Student Experience goal.

- Secured an architect for the elementary playground that will collaboratively take us through the design and build on an extensive elementary school playground addition.

A Note of Thanks and Congratulations

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to our supportive community for their unwavering commitment to our schools, and to our hard-working staff and students for their dedication and enthusiasm. This plan is a testament to what we can achieve when we work together with a shared purpose.

I also want to take this opportunity to share some outstanding news from our FFA program!

The **East Knox FFA state-winning Forestry team** competed in the national career development event and learned that they placed an incredible **14th in the Nation**.

Furthermore, our **state-winning Nursery/Landscape team** also represented Ohio in their national career development event and found out they finished an impressive **18th nationally.**

Please join me in congratulating these students and their advisors for their exceptional hard work, dedication, and for representing the East Knox Local School District with such distinction on a national stage!

Finally, best of luck to all our other students and staff participating in winter activities, including basketball, drama, bowling, band, choir, FFA, FFCLA, student council, and leadership!

I am excited to embark on this new chapter with all of you. Together, we will ensure that the East Knox Local School District continues to be a place of opportunity, excellence, and strong community partnership.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Baird

Richard J. Baird, Superintendent