



DECEMBER 2025

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www.ekschools.org and Facebook

PURPLE PRIDE

Published to bring school news to the residents of East Knox Local School District

From the Superintendent

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.

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Elementary (K-6 grades)

23081 Coshocton Road
Howard OH 43028
Phone: 740-599-7000

Mrs. Melissa Moreland, Principal
Mr. David Coleman, Assistant Principal
Mrs. Amanda Wilson, Building Secretary, X3002
Mrs. Krista Reese, Secretary X3003

Jr./Sr. High School (7-12 grades)

23227 Coshocton Road
Howard OH 43028
Phone: 740-599-7000

Mrs. Shannon Sprang, Principal
Mr. Tyler Guilliams, Assistant Principal
Mr. Bailey Sprague, Athletic Director
Mrs. Fawnda Stahl, Building Secretary, x2002
Mrs. Brianna Hickman, Attendance/A.D./
Communications Secretary, x2003
Ms. Julia Kelly, Guidance Counselor, x2008
Mrs. Alicia Simmons, Guidance Secretary, x2004

Dr. Ben Snedeker, Director of Student Services/
Spec. Ed. Coord., x1008
Ms. Kathleen Herrmann, Student Services/Spec.
Ed. Secretary x1088

School District Nurses x2006 or x3006

Transportation Supervisor
Ms. Angela Wells, x1016

East Knox Board Office

23201 Coshocton Road
Howard, Ohio 43028
740-599-7000

Mr. Richard Baird, Superintendent
Mrs. Kim Grindle Superintendent's Secretary,
x1002
Mrs. Jessica Busenburg, CPA, Treasurer
Mrs. Tracy Beckett, Assist. Treasurer

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Lindsay Bush-President
Randy Reese-Vice President
Larry Campbell
Alan Huffman
Kathy Tate



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844.723.3764

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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.

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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!

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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 advisor for their exceptional hard work, dedication, and for representing the East Knox Local School District with such distinction on a national stage! For more information, please visit our website at: <https://www.ekschools.org/jrsr-high-school/ffa>

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 members.

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

Superintendent, East Knox Local School District



Ohio School Board Association (OSBA) presented Larry Campbell, at the OSBA Capital Conference, with the **2025 All-Ohio School Board Award**. Larry has 36 years as a school board member with East Knox Board of Education. His final term ends December 31, 2025. **THANK YOU** Larry for supporting East Knox students, staff, and community.

**2025 National FFA Convention
Lucas Oil Stadium, Indianapolis Convention Center**



Members of the 1960 football team who played in the First Devil-Dog game!



Future Fridays Career Exploration

To help students start thinking about life after high school, East Knox has introduced a new program called "Future Fridays." The goal of this initiative is to motivate students by exposing them to a variety of career fields and opportunities. Guest speakers will visit our school to share their experiences, explain different career paths, and answer student questions.

Our first Future Friday, was held on September 19th, featured the Knox County Foundation, which spoke about working in the field of non-profit as a career. The next session was on October 3rd. It introduced students to the world of manufacturing, giving them a chance to learn about opportunities in a growing field. We look forward to continuing this program throughout the year to help students explore and prepare for their futures.



Spanish Classes Celebrate El Día de los Muertos

At the end of October, Mrs. Prince's Spanish classes learned about the Mexican holiday, El Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead). Students explored the history and cultural traditions of this holiday, while also trying out some authentic recipes. As part of the project, each student was responsible for preparing a dish at home and sharing it with their class. This hands-on experience will allow students to better understand and appreciate the rich traditions surrounding this celebration.

Time to File Your FAFSA

Parents and seniors planning to attend college after graduation should begin filling out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) when the filing window opens on October 1st. The FAFSA is the first step in securing financial aid for college, including grants, scholarships, work-study opportunities, and loans. Families can complete the application online at studentaid.gov. For additional guidance, visit the East Knox High School website (<https://www.ekschools.org/jrsr-high-school/guidance-department/scholarships-financial-aid>) and search for "Scholarships & Financial Aid" to find step-by-step instructions, helpful tips, and answers to commonly asked questions.

Please call Ms. Kelly, Jr./Sr. High Guidance Counselor, (740-599-7000 ext. 2008) she would be happy to help you process your FAFSA or if you have any questions.





7th & 8th Grade Spelling Bee

7th grade Winner—Jace Daugherty
7th grade Runner Up—Audrey Williams

8th grade Winner—Callie May
8th grade Runner Up—Aidyn Phom

The above winning top spellers from each class will advance to the Knox County Spelling Bee and compete for the chance to represent East Knox, showcasing their hard work, focus, and impressive vocabulary skills. Parents and family members of the participating students are welcome to attend and cheer on their spellers as they tackle challenging words in this exciting academic competition.

January 2026, the student winners in grades 5–8 from across the county will compete for the title of Knox County Spelling Bee Champion. The county champion will then move on to the Ohio Region Two Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee in March 2026 for a chance to qualify for the national stage. We wish all of our spellers the best of luck as they participate in this year's bee!



5th & 6th Grade Spelling Bee Winners

5th grade-Winner—Jackson Daugherty
5th grade-Runner Up—Hollis Banks

6th grade-Winner—Marley Moore
6th grade-Runner Up—Maddie Dale

A huge congratulations to all of our fifth and sixth grade spelling bee participants! They all did a fantastic job!! Marley Moore, our sixth grade winner, and Jackson Daugherty, our fifth grade winner, will be advancing to the county spelling bee that will be taking place on January 14, 2026 at the Mount Vernon High School.



Should Jackson or Marley not be able to attend the county bee, Hollis Banks, fifth grade runner up, and Maddie Dale, sixth grade runner up will represent their respective grade levels. Good Luck Bulldogs!!



Veterans Day Breakfast & Assembly

East Knox Jr./Sr. High School invited all veterans in our community and relatives of our students who have served our country to join us for our annual Veterans Day Breakfast and Assembly on Monday, November 10 2025, beginning at 8:15 a.m. The breakfast will be hosted by our FCCLA students as a way to show appreciation for the brave men and women who have served our country. Following breakfast, guests are invited to attend our Veterans Day Assembly in the gymnasium, where our entire student body and staff will come together to honor all branches of the Armed Forces through music, presentations, and special tributes. We are grateful for the opportunity to recognize our heroes. We Thank You.

If you didn't get a chance to join us this year, please call Mrs. Stahl at 740-599-7000 x2002. We hope to see you next year for celebrating your service and sacrifice.

Student Leadership Council Summit

We're proud to share that 9 East Knox High School students from our Student Leadership Council will be attending the Student Leadership Summit at John Glenn High School on November 7–8, 2025. The overnight event brought together student leadership councils from schools all across Ohio, offering participants a unique opportunity to collaborate, share ideas, and learn new strategies for making a positive impact in their schools and communities.

Throughout the summit, students engaged in team-building activities, leadership workshops, and group discussions that encourage communication, creativity, and school spirit. The experience was designed to help students strengthen their leadership skills, build confidence, and connect with peers who are equally passionate about creating a welcoming and successful school culture.



Our group departed from East Knox High School on Friday morning and returned Saturday afternoon. We were excited our students represented East Knox with pride and returned inspired to bring fresh ideas and renewed energy to our school community.

K-2 and 3-4 Students Presents

Winter Christmas Music Concert

**December 9, 2025
High School Gym**

Event performance times for grade levels vary. Please check our website, with the building secretary, or the music teacher.



East Knox Jr./Sr. High School Drama Club Presents

Wednesday Night Live

December 17, 2025 @ 6 pm

Tickets: \$5 Donation



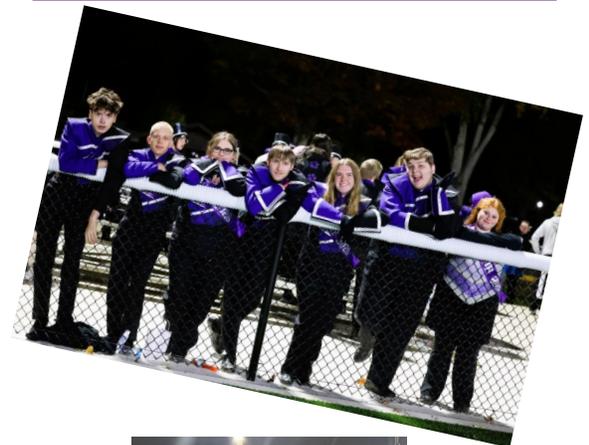
Jr./Sr. High School Music Department

December 6th—Selected Students performing in the Ohio Music Education District 10 MS and HS Honor Bands at Mount Vernon Nazarene University, 3:30 Concert.

December 14th—BULLDOG BAND OF PRIDE at the Bladensburg Christmas Parade at 2 pm.

December 16th—7 p.m.-BANDS OF PRIDE Seasonal Concert Grades 7-12 in the High School Gymnasium.

December 18th—7 p.m. EAST KNOX CHOIR OF PRIDE Seasonal Concert Grades 9-12 in the High School Music Room.



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Howard OH 43028
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East Knox Local School District

*“Good teachers know how to bring out
the best in students.”*

-Charles Kluralt

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