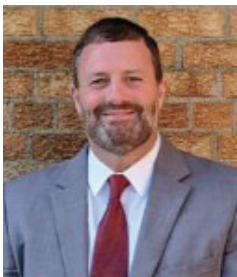


THE Newark CITY SCHOOLS

PAWPRINT

Winter 2026

A Message from the Superintendent



Hello, Newark community. It's hard to believe that we are well into the second semester of the school year. I have always enjoyed the end of the first semester, as it provides me with the opportunity to attend a variety of holiday concerts and programs. I love seeing the pride on the faces of our students as they perform for their family and friends.

During the first half of the school year, I also had the privilege of visiting several kindergarten classrooms to read a story for our students. I want to thank our staff for welcoming me into their classrooms and the students for making that experience the best part of my day. We have a great staff and students in Newark City Schools.

During the second part of this school year, I am looking forward to a new project that will take place at our Woodside building, located in close proximity to our high school. In partnership with

Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH), we are planning a clinic that will provide medical care for our staff and students. We are in the beginning stages of this partnership, with the goal of ensuring that children have accessible medical care for every step of their educational journey.

Better yet, LMH is investing directly into our community by covering the cost of renovating the space and staffing the clinic during school hours.

This is the kind of partnership that can have a tremendous impact for our students and families. We will keep you updated on the progress of this exciting partnership moving forward.

David Lewis
Superintendent



Recognition and Awards

Multiple Schools Named PBIS Winners

Ben Franklin Elementary was named a Gold award winner, while Carson Elementary received a Bronze award from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Recognition Program.

The program recognizes schools that have a strong, school-wide system of behavioral support.



Counselor Receives Award for Support of Student Mental Health

Congratulations to Newark High School counselor **Scott Koebel** for receiving the Paddy Kutz Community Mental Health Award in Education!



Student Named to Advisory Council



Newark High School senior and Sources of Strength (SOS) Peer Leader **Adriana Ash** has been selected to serve on the 2025-2026 Sources of Strength Peer Leader Advisory Council, a national group of students who help shape mental wellness efforts across the country.

A Note from the Treasurer



Newark City Schools continues to be recognized for strong, transparent financial management. For many years, the district has earned the Ohio Auditor of State's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Financial Reporting. Most recently, Newark received the Award with Distinction for fiscal years 2022, 2023 and 2024 — the highest level of recognition given by the Auditor of State. Only about 4% of the more than

6,000 governmental entities audited each year across Ohio receive this honor.

I believe our core beliefs around fiscal management led to this additional award. Every decision we make is guided by three principles:

1. Every dollar must add value to teaching and learning.
2. All fiscal decisions are made with our five-year forecast in mind.
3. We actively manage resources to avoid deficit spending while reducing costs in ways that least impact students.

This disciplined approach has allowed Newark Schools to operate without asking voters for additional operating dollars since 2009. That history reflects the trust our community places in the district and our responsibility to be thoughtful stewards of taxpayer investment. As the state funding landscape continues to change, we remain focused on careful planning, transparency and protecting opportunities for students while remaining financially responsible to our community.

Julio Valladares
Treasurer

Academics

Alternative Academy Celebrates First Graduate of the Year

Laylah Kirk became the first student at the Alternative Academy to complete her graduation requirements in October. Her reward: ringing the gong. She plans to continue her studies to become a phlebotomist.

Learning About Money and College Starts Early



Our fourth graders recently completed seven weeks of A Call to College's College and Money Savvy Wildcats programming. Students learned how long it takes to earn an associate's degree vs. a high skills certificate, along with four key money management skills — save, spend, donate and invest. They put their newfound skills to use by investing in Apple, Nike or Disney.

And sixth grade students advanced their knowledge of college through the Kids2College program, where they visited nine central Ohio colleges.



Sophomores Explore Career Tech Options

Sophomores spent the day at the Career and Technology Education Centers of Licking County (C-TEC) recently, exploring a variety of programs and career pathways available to them. From healthcare and engineering to digital media, automotive technology, and more!



Preschool Learning Extends Beyond the Classroom

Our youngest learners have had several memorable experiences to date this school year. First, numberblocks stopped by for some hands-on learning in October, and to round out 2025, they hosted a food drive benefiting the Licking County Food Pantry. They knocked their original goal of collecting 1,000 items out of the park!

1,762
items collected

1,937
pounds of food donated



K-Culture Club Kickin' it at OSU

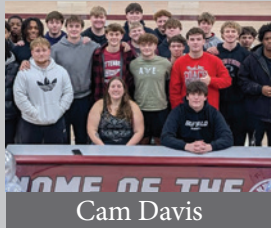
Newark High School K-Culture Club students visited Ohio State's campus, where they observed and participated in a Korean 1101 class, took part in a Q&A with the professors, including Joseph Butso, who was the winner of a Korean singing competition, and learned more about studying East Asian languages and cultures.



Athletics

Athletes Sign With Colleges, Universities

Congratulations to Cam Davis, who signed with the University of Buffalo to continue his education and play football. Fellow Wildcat Preston Lunsford is also headed to Buffalo! Jacob Snow will also continue his athletic and academic journey when he arrives at Mount Vernon Nazarene University next fall, and last but not least, Laine Erlenbach signed with The Ohio State University on Feb. 1 to continue her bowling and academic careers.



Cam Davis



Preston Lunsford



Laine Erlenbach

Athletes Receive Local and OCC Honors

Several of our football players were recognized by the Newark Advocate for their outstanding season:

Defensive Honors

Preston Lunsford
Defensive Player of the Year

Jack Kopachy
First Team

Brody Driskel and Roy Price Jr.
Second Team

Offensive Honors

Cam Davis, Bodie Smith and Alex Irvin-Royster
First Team

Sean Brechbill
Second Team

Kolton Peterson
Honorable Mention

Boy's Soccer

Ohio Capital Conference (OCC) Honors

Deiondre Shackelford
First Team

Hal Gillespie
Second Team

Isaac Firth
Special Mention

Tanner Morgan
Honorable Mention

Gage Fenton
Scholar Athlete

Wildcats Introduce New Sport

Did you know? Girls' wrestling is the fastest growing sport in the nation! That's why we're excited to have launched our very own Wildcat team this winter — at both the junior high and high school levels.

We had a large outpouring of interest at the Try It Out Day in November, and our female wrestlers have had some early successes, including Newark High School student-athlete Brooklyn Dowell. She captured the program's first individual championship, winning the 115-pound title at Whitehall's Lady Rams Tournament on Jan. 4.



Arts

Standout Singers Representing Newark

Our choir students are on a roll lately!



Congratulations to Carly, Charlotte, Caleb and Grayson, who represented Newark City Schools at the Ohio Capital Conference honor event at Otterbein University.

Several of our singers participated in the District 10 Honors Choir.

Our choir joined forces with Granville for the Newark-Granville Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops concert at Midland Theatre.



You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown

Our talented actors and actresses gave a riveting performance of "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" in November.



High School Artwork Adorns Local Attraction

Under the guidance of teacher Jessica Pilya, Newark High School students from Ceramics I and Beginning Painting recently designed and painted a mural of the Licking County Courthouse inside the Newark Arcade.




Thanks to Kevin Connell at Ball Hill and a Random Acts of Kindness grant from the Licking County Foundation, students were able to bring this vision to life using donated supplies. The community celebrated alongside the Licking County Chamber of Commerce with an official ribbon cutting on Jan. 7.





Newark City Schools
621 Mt. Vernon Road
Newark, OH 43055

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-  NewarkWildcats (Athletics)

Newark City Schools

A Community of Opportunity and Learning

**Newark City Schools
Board of Education**



Cindy Neely
Tom Bline

Daniel Hunt
Joe Quackenbush

Mark Christenberry

**Newark Schools Partner
With Local Law Enforcement
to Give Back**

Wilson Middle School students partnered with the Newark Division of Police and C-TEC Criminal Justice students on our sixth annual Cops and Kids event. Together, we served 100 students and their families this year.

Thank you to the following organizations, which donated more than \$22,000 to the initiative:

- Walmart
- Englefield Oil
- AlphaLink
- Coughlin Automotive
- Licking Memorial Health Systems
- Advocates for Kids
- American Legion Post 85
- Park National Bank
- Licking 387 Memorial Education Charity Fund
- Newark Citizen Police Academy



**District Honors Service
Men and Women With
Veterans Day Activities**

In addition to performances across the district, our Alternative Academy students spent time at Cedar Hill Cemetery replacing flags for our veterans. Thank you to all who have or continue to serve.



Calling All Kindergarteners

Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, students entering kindergarten must be 5 years old by the first day of school, after a change in Ohio law. The first day of school this fall is Aug. 20. Enrollment for next school year will begin in March through our online registration system at newarkcityschools.org.



State of the District

We're excited to share our first State of the District! Hear from district leadership about our recent accomplishments and where we are headed by scanning the QR code!

