

THE Newark CITY SCHOOLS

PAWPRINT

Spring 2026

A Message from the Superintendent



Hello, Newark Community,

Newark City Schools continues to be a place where students thrive, thanks to a community committed to their success. This year, we celebrated achievements across the district, from elementary students solving state-level design challenges to high school students raising record-breaking funds for childhood cancer awareness.

We are proud of educators Kimberly Taylor and Garrett Kashner for earning prestigious regional honors and of Ben Franklin Elementary for being recognized as a Governor's Science of Reading Champion Award School. Our students also continued a tradition of excellence, with the Hillview STEM team placing among the top teams in Ohio and our musicians earning superior ratings for the 61st consecutive year.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on supporting student success in and out of the classroom. Newark High School recently launched the student-led Wildcat Cafe to encourage punctuality and provide students with a positive start to the day. We are also preparing to implement a new elementary math curriculum, enVision Math from SAVVAS, designed to strengthen problem-solving and real-world learning.

Student well-being remains a priority. In partnership with Licking Memorial Hospital, we are preparing to open a new health clinic at the Woodside building before the 2026-2027 school year. We also recently celebrated the opening of the Wildcat Cupboard, a needs-based pantry created in partnership with The Licking County Coalition of Care to support students and families.

As we celebrate the Class of 2026 and all they have accomplished, thank you for your continued partnership and support of Newark City Schools.

David Lewis
Superintendent

Celebrating the Class of 2026!

Congratulations to all Newark graduates for their hard work, dedication and incredible accomplishments over the years!



A Note from the Treasurer



School funding in Ohio continues to evolve, and those changes shape how Newark City Schools plans for today and the future. While the state remains an important partner, the state's share continues to decrease year over year, shifting the burden to local communities and placing more responsibility on them to support daily operations. The graph below depicts the shift on share funding.

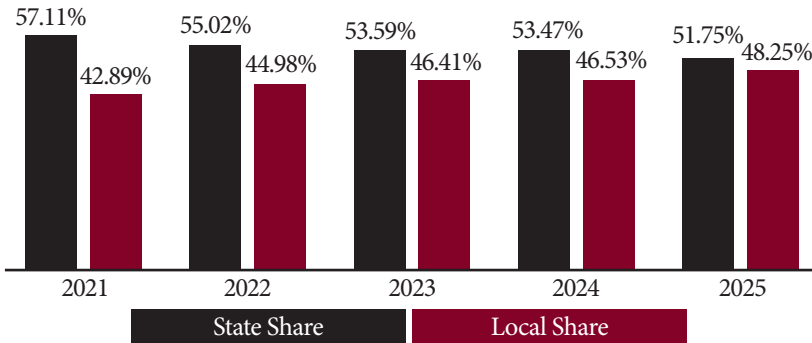
Property taxes play a key role in that local support, but how they work is often misunderstood. Under Ohio law, most voter-approved levies are fixed dollar amounts. When property values increase, the effective tax rate is adjusted so the levy generates the same total revenue originally approved by voters. There are a few exceptions, including new construction and inside millage, but in general, a reappraisal does not automatically lead to a significant increase in school funding.

At the same time, school districts are working to manage rising costs across the board. Expenses related to staffing, utilities, transportation, instructional materials, technology and student services have all increased in recent years. Ongoing changes in state funding formulas, property tax policies and credits also play a role in long-term financial planning.

Newark City Schools remains committed to careful forecasting, responsible budgeting and clear communication. We are focused on making the most of every dollar to support students and maintain strong schools for our community.

Julio Valladares
Treasurer

State Share vs. Local Share Funding



Arts and Athletics

Inaugural Flag Football Season

The Cats are entering new territory — the inaugural season of flag football was fierce and fun to watch. Congratulations on a great first season!



1,000 Volleyball Career Assists

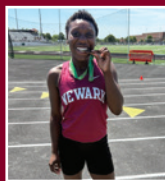
Senior Miles Drake smashed through 1,000 career assists for the Newark Wildcats boys volleyball program, an incredible accomplishment and testament to his hard work and leadership on the court.



Track Athletes Advance to State

Newark's track teams had strong performances all season long, culminating in several athletes advancing to state.

The Wildcats were well represented at the OHSAA Division I State meet. Emma Ray earned All-Ohio honors with a seventh place finish in the pole vault, clearing 11'6" to set a personal record and tie the Newark High School record. Odessa Andrews-Barreau placed 10th in the 100-meter hurdles, after breaking a school record from 1999 at the regional meet, while Mitchell Chavis and Larissa Harper each finished 15th in discus. The boys 4x200-meter relay team of Jacob Buell, Cam Booker, Brayden Dowell and Noah Jackson also competed among Ohio's best, placing 16th at the state meet. They broke a record set in 1968 and were the first boy's sprint relay team to qualify for the state championship since 1958.



Professor Plum in the Library

Mystery unfolded as Newark High School Drama presented "Clue." Based on the classic film and board game, this madcap comedy kept audiences guessing until the final twist.



Melodious Music Mastery

Newark's music students and directors continued a tradition of excellence this spring. At the OMEA District 10 Large Group Adjudicated Event, the Concert Band, Symphonic Band, Treble Ensemble, Concert Choir and Sinfonia all earned Superior ratings, while the Brotherhood of Newark received an Excellent rating. The Concert Choir's recognition marked the 61st consecutive year the choir program has earned a Superior rating.



Student musicians also excelled at the OMEA District 10 Solo & Ensemble Event, earning 40 Superior ratings, nine Excellent ratings and one Good rating. In addition, 16 middle school students were selected to perform in the East Central Region Middle School Honors Orchestra.

Around Campus

Elementary School Highlights



- Elementary students have been learning, creating and building new skills in a variety of ways. Through hands-on STEM activities, students explored concepts in science, technology, engineering and math by building towers, creating inventions and solving problems together.
- Learning also extended beyond the classroom as students visited Roll Away, Carmen's Pizza and the Pinewood Derby for a memorable field trip. Meanwhile, the Autism and Multiple Disabilities units launched a Monday Morning Coffee Cart, giving students opportunities to develop social and job skills while serving staff throughout their schools.
- Students also shared their talents during Music in Our Schools Month, with kindergarteners performing at the Emerson R. Miller branch of the Licking County Library and spreading joy through music.

Middle School Highlights

Middle school students explored new opportunities both inside and outside the classroom this year. Heritage eighth graders traveled to Washington, D.C., where they experienced our nation's history firsthand and created lasting memories with their classmates. ●

Students also demonstrated their problem-solving and teamwork skills through Lego Robotics. The Rockin Robots earned their highest competition score yet with 275 points, while the Turtleologists achieved a personal best score of 180. The teams were the first Newark robotics teams to qualify for the state competition. ●

Meanwhile, Liberty Middle School partnered with COSI and Boeing to launch The HIVE workforce development initiative. As the first stop on a two-year, 20-city tour, Newark students participated in hands-on activities and virtual reality experiences that introduced them to careers in aerospace and manufacturing. ●



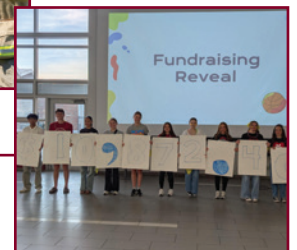
High School Highlights

High school students continued to excel in academics, service and career exploration this spring. ●

Congratulations to this year's students inducted into the C-TEC Chapter of the National Technical Honor Society, recognizing their achievement in career and technical education. ●

Students also explored future career opportunities during the fourth annual Skilled Trades Celebration, where they gained hands-on experience with fields such as construction, electrical work, firefighting, phlebotomy, HVAC and heavy equipment operation. In addition, six College Credit Plus Statistics and Sports Statistics students attended a Detroit Tigers Stats Day, where they explored how data analysis is used in professional sports and connected classroom learning to potential careers. ●

Meanwhile, the Key Club's annual WildcatThon raised a school-record \$10,872.40 for the Hematology, Oncology and Blood Transplant Unit at Nationwide Children's Hospital, demonstrating the compassion and generosity of Newark students. ●





Newark City Schools
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Newark City Schools

A Community of Opportunity and Learning

**Newark City Schools
Board of Education**



Cindy Neely
Tom Bline
Mark Christenberry

Daniel Hunt
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Recognition and Awards

**You Made a
Difference**

Congratulations to Newark High School math teacher Garrett Kashner, who received the Coughlin You Made A Difference Award after being nominated by student Brylee Carles.



**Newark Teachers Shine at
Teach Art! Gallery Exhibit**

Five talented Newark art teachers had their personal artwork on display at The Works Museum: Teach Art! gallery exhibit. Congratulations to Emily Barrett, Melinda Buchholz, Felicia Fuller, Kathy Lorenz and Jessica Pilya for this honor!



**Leaders for
Learning Award**

Kimberly Taylor, a social studies teacher at NCS Digital, was honored by the Licking County Foundation with the Leaders for Learning Award. In recognition of the leadership and dedication she brings to her students every day, she received a beautiful glass apple created at The Works and a \$1,000 grant to support her classroom.



**Newark Top 21 State
STEM Teams**

We are so proud of Emerson Williams, Niko Arironovich, Colton Bobo and Madelyn Wills, along with coaches Tosha Cooperrider and Kelsey Weisent, for representing Hillview Elementary and Newark City Schools in the Ohio STEM Learning Network State Design Challenge.

Out of 60,000 student participants, the Hillview team was named the Central Ohio Hub winner, placed in the Top 21 teams in the state and were invited to Battelle to present their prototype, meet with industry experts and receive feedback on their innovative ideas.



Calendar

- August 20 — First Day for Students (Grades 1-6, 9)
- August 21 — First Day for Students (Grades 7, 8, 10-12)
- August 24 — First Day for Preschool
- *Kindergarten students phase in during first week of school*