SPRING 2025-2026 NEWSLETTER

# LAKEWOOD LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Reimagining education, instilling community pride, inspiring future success.*






Lakewood Schools Community,

I hope you are having a great summer! We closed another school year more than a month ago, but I wanted to acknowledge and celebrate some of our students' achievements from the last few weeks of the year.

Let me start by saying congratulations to the 121 graduates of the Class of 2026! Commencement was wonderful, and we are incredibly proud of this class of seniors and their accomplishments (see inside).

For the rest of our District's students, the last nine weeks of school were a time to finish strong and look forward to new opportunities. We had new inductees to National Honor Society at LHS and National Junior Honor Society at LMS. Four LHS students were recognized during the Licking County Regional Education Service Center's Mentorship Breakfast – Molly Jones, Abbey Hupp, Vanessa Crawford, and Jayden Booker. Five students from Teaching Careers competed at the Educator's Rising State Competition at Capital University in March, and Junior Bethany Brooks placed fourth and is a national qualifier. She wrote and illustrated her own book for preschoolers…well done, Bethany!

Both Lakewood Elementary and Jackson Intermediate Schools were designated Purple Star Schools for 2026 by the Ohio School Boards Association for their support of military families. This marks Lakewood Elementary's third Purple Star designation and Jackson Intermediate's second – a true reflection of our schools' ongoing commitment to supporting military-connected students and families. Sixth graders participated in BizTown, and seventh graders participated in Finance Park, both sponsored by Junior Achievement (JA) in Newark. At BizTown, sixth graders learned about running businesses. Everyone had an assigned job for the day and had tasks they had to complete including payroll, deliveries, and even a public speech by the mayor! At Finance Park, our seventh graders received a paycheck and participated in budgeting activities like taking out a mortgage and buying groceries. Our fifth Grade STEM Club had an incredible opportunity to be part of the ribbon cutting for the new wetland project at The Dawes Arboretum – students didn't just attend, they got their hands dirty planting native species that will grow and thrive for years to come…what a meaningful way to connect classroom learning to real-world environmental impact.

On May 15, our Student Experience Strategic Planning Action Team organized another LANCER DAY OF GIVING. We also conducted many activities to honor our administrators, teachers, bus drivers, etc. in this last month of the school year. In addition to their everyday classroom success, our students have achieved great extracurricular success in the arts and athletics. Please see more inside, including an update on our five goal areas.

Lastly, everyone should know by now that I announced my plan to retire at the end of this school year back in January. It has been an absolute honor to lead this district for the last two years. I deeply appreciate all of you for your support and partnership throughout it all. Have a great summer! And as always, let's go, Lancers!



Sincerely,

*Scott Coffey*

Outgoing Superintendent

# Congratulations
# LHS Class of 2026!






During Commencement, I talked to the Class of 2026 about graduation not just being about academic achievement (which they have obviously demonstrated), but also about the values they have gained, which truly matter and will carry them far beyond the halls of Lakewood High School. I challenged them to keep aiming higher, keep being the one who shows up early and takes pride in their work, keep being the leader who helps others along the way, AND... keep being a person of integrity, a person who can be counted on to do what's right, not what's easy. Graduation is a great milestone, but not a finish line. My wish for the Class of 2026 is that graduation day be a reminder of who they are and what they are capable of, and use it as fuel to keep growing, keep striving, keep leading, and being the example others follow. -*Superintendent Scott Coffey*

# Lancer PRIDE & Academics Highlights



LHS students recognized during the Licking Regional Education Service Center (LRESC) Mentorship Breakfast.



(Left) LMS National Junior Honor Society Inductees. (Right) LMS Student Council presented at the BoE Meeting.





Bethany Brooks, LHS junior, placed 4th in the Educator's Rising State Competition and is a national qualifier. She wrote and illustrated her own book for preschoolers.





5th Grade STEM Club at the new wetland project ribbon cutting at Dawes Arboretum!



6th graders at BizTown, & 7th graders at Finance Park, both sponsored by Junior Achievement (JA).

2nd-grade students presented their book, The Amazing Arctic Animals at the BoE meeting in May.

Tara McMillen of LMS was Lakewood's 2026 Coughlin Cars "You Make a Difference" Award. She was nominated by LHS student Gabriella McPeak.



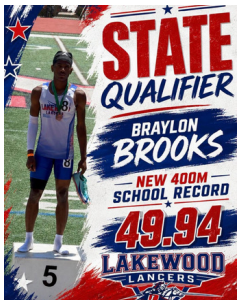


The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce selected Lakewood Elementary and Jackson Intermediate Schools as Purple Star Schools for the Class of 2026. JIS Military students.

# Lancer Athletics & Arts Highlights












Lancer Softball: OHSAA DI District Champions









Welcome our new Athletic Director, Rich Porter










Lakewood Symphonic Band received an EXCELLENT rating on their performance at OMEA State Large Group.



LHS student Haylan Jo Wise was recognized as a regional winner for her artwork by the Ohio Governor's Youth Art Exhibition.





A cappella and Concert Choir Spring Concert.






Spring Drama Productions: *Fiddler on the Roof* from LHS and *Bye Bye Birdie YPE* from LMS.

## Lancer Day of Giving 2026

On May 15, our Student Experience Strategic Planning Action Team organized another LANCER DAY OF GIVING. This day is designed so students across the district can come together to serve, give back, and show their Lancer pride! From writing letters, creating art, and painting rocks to donating items and volunteering across the community, our students made a big impact. This year's highlights include: 377 items collected for the Baby Pantry; care packages for The Salvation Army; community clean-ups & local service projects; student-created art & kind gestures across all grades; and beautifying school spaces. We are so proud of our students for demonstrating what it means to be a Lancer, serving others, building connections, and making a difference in our community.





















# District Goal Areas for 2025-26

## Rigor in Teaching & Learning

Lakewood Local Schools continues to strengthen instructional rigor through the implementation of high-quality curriculum resources, evidence-based instructional practices, and targeted interventions. The district is in the second year of implementing the K-5 English Language Arts curriculum, supported by ongoing collaboration among educators, data analysis, and instructional coaching. The LES Reading Team meets biweekly to review student performance data, monitor progress, and make instructional adjustments, while teachers at Jackson Intermediate collaborate regularly with the Ohio Reads Coach to ensure consistent implementation of research-based strategies such as Get the Gist and RACE. Reading intervention programs, including SPIRE and Sound Sensible, complement existing supports such as REWARDS, IXL, and Orton-Gillingham, providing targeted instruction for students identified as below benchmark. In mathematics, the Math Committee continues to align curriculum and instructional practices with Ohio's Math Plan, while the Technology Committee supports purposeful technology integration to enhance student learning.

These efforts contributed to significant academic gains across the district during the 2025-2026 school year. Students demonstrated growth in literacy, mathematics, science, and End-of-Course assessments, with notable successes including exceptional early literacy growth at Lakewood Elementary, strong mathematics achievement at Jackson Intermediate, and increased levels of proficiency in many areas at the middle and high school levels. Building on this progress, the district will continue to prioritize instructional rigor through consistent curriculum implementation, strengthened intervention systems, data-driven decision-making, and ongoing professional learning. These efforts, combined with continued attention to attendance, student engagement, and positive school culture, will support sustained growth and achievement for all students.

## Student Behavior

Student behavior in our buildings has been a central focus for our administrators and faculty members over the past two years. This was an area that was brought to my attention from the very beginning of my term as superintendent, and I have done my best to model exacting standards for student conduct and to support our administrators in their enforcement of those standards in all our buildings. We have definitely seen progress in each building, but we are not finished yet. We are raising the bar once again for our students and will hold them accountable for behaviors that do not belong in our schools. The way students treat one another and treat adults will remain a big focus in every building. Our students can and will meet elevated expectations of conduct worthy of our community. I am looking forward to returning to the role of Lakewood High School Assistant Principal, which is a position that is heavily involved in student behavior and conduct.

## School Attendance

School attendance, as I have said many times, is one of the most accurate predictors of student success. During the 2024-25 school year, we made progress in this area. During 2025-26, we made even more. I have charged all buildings with relentlessly enforcing attendance standards, and the number of students who are categorized as chronically absent has improved significantly over the past two years. This is not a problem that is solved overnight, but we are committed to continuing our encouragement and celebration of good school attendance and collaborating with our partners in the court system to hold families accountable for attendance rates that violate Ohio Law.

## Athletic Culture

During the past year, the Lakewood Athletic department made tremendous progress in terms of how the department operates, how coaches are supported and encouraged to take ownership of the quality of experience their athletes have in our programs, and how those athletes give back to our community. Under the leadership of Mr. Jamie Justus, we achieved a new level of managerial and fiscal accountability in Lakewood Athletics. Several of our sports experienced a great deal of success this year, while others continue to rebuild. We have made several strategic personnel changes within the department and are encouraged by the wealth of experience and high moral standards of the coaching staff that will lead our athletes next year. We are excited about the addition of our new Athletic Director, Mr. Rich Porter, to take the reins from Mr. Justus and continue working toward program-wide improvements and success. We believe that our athletes deserve the absolute best, and we will continue to emphasize and support academic success, teamwork, improved mental health, and leadership development.

## Restoring Pride

In our strategic plan, our Community Pride & Engagement goal areas statement says that "Lakewood Local Schools creates and fosters a school community whose members are engaged, communicative, supportive, and proud to be Lakewood Lancers." This is another area that I have taken very seriously over the past two years. Personally, I am certainly proud of our students, staff members, and programs, but I also acknowledge we still have room to grow. I think the best way to restore pride in our district is to insist on nothing short of our best work and effort in every interaction we have within our buildings, with our parents, and with our tremendous community. Every student deserves our best every day, as do our staff members, our parents, and our community members. This idea has taken hold in most areas of our district, and I believe it will continue to grow as long as we continue to make it a priority. Little by little, our sense of Lancer Pride is returning, and this work will always remain important to me.

## STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATES

The Community Pride & Engagement Action Team is planning a Back to School Bash for all community members on August 19, the day before school starts. Please watch our social media channels for more information.

We believe that if we are accountable to the Strategic Plan Goal Areas as a district and as a community, we will continue to improve, achievement will increase, and decisions about doing what is best for students will be clear.

# District Finances

To keep our community informed about the District's finances, we wanted to share the following information.

## DISTRICT PROFILE (2025)

1,635
Students

Subgroups
52.23%
Low Income
17.31%
With Disability

283
Employees

160
Non-Teachers
122
Teachers

13.3
Student
Teacher
Ratio

$18,944
Revenue per Student

Local
75%
State
25%

$17,214
Cost per
Student

$96
Daily
Cost

53%
Instructional
47%
Non-Instructional

## AUDITOR'S AWARD WITH DISTINCTION

On May 27, Scott Brown, Central Ohio Liaison from the State Auditor's Office, presented the Lakewood Local School District Treasurer's Office with the Auditor of State Award with Distinction for the June 30, 2025 audit. This award is presented to local governments, school districts, and other entities upon the completion of a financial audit that meets criteria to be considered a "clean" audit report. The entity must file financial reports with the Auditor's office by the statutory due date, without extension, on a GAAP accounting basis and prepare a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, and the audit report does not contain any findings for recovery, material citations, material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, Uniform Guidance findings, or questioned costs.



This award represents the hard work of all of Lakewood Local School District's staff and employees who make every effort each day to attain accounting excellence. The State Auditor's Office would like to recognize the Board, and the Fiscal Office that have done an outstanding job watching over every dollar. What this truly means is that across the entire organization, we have people and processes in place that understand fiscal accountability.

Specifically, the State Auditor's Office recognizes Glenna Plaisted for her leadership, professionalism, and exceptional commitment to fiscal integrity.

The Treasurer's Office Staff include (pictured, left to right) Brenda Keller, Nova Willey, Stephanie Bretzinger and Glenna Plaisted.

## 5-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN

The District has a 5-Year Capital Plan that maps out projected investments in facilities, infrastructure, and capital projects over the next five years. The Capital Plan documents and funds the right things at the right time. It also provides transparency and informed decision-making. The Board of Education approved the updated Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Plan at the May 20 Board meeting. A copy of this plan is available on the District website Treasurer's page.

If you have questions, please reach out to the District's Treasurer, Glenna Plaisted, at (740) 928-1928 or gplaisted@lakewoodlocal.k12.oh.us.

LAKEWOOD LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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# Planning Ahead

## Learning Resources

- **Camp Invention Activities for Families:** https://www.invent.org/programs
- **The Works Event Calendar:** https://attheworks.org/calendar-events/
- **Highlights for Kids:** https://www.highlightskids.com/
- **Preparing for College:** www.lakewoodlocal.k12.oh.us/schools-page/lakewood-high-school/counseling-office
- **IXL (LMS student resource to practice math, social studies, science and ELA):** http://ixl.com/ (and login)

## Key Dates for 2026-27 School Year

- **August 19:** Back to School Bash Community Event
- **August 20:** Students' First Day (PreSchool, 1-12)
- **August 25:** Kindergarten Students' First Day
- **September 7:** Labor Day - No School
- September 24: Homecoming Bonfire
- September 26: Homecoming Dance
- **October 15:** End of 1st Quarter
- **October 16:** No School - COTA Day
- **October 19-20:** No School - Records Day & PD
- **November 3:** Election Day - No School
- **November 20-21:** LHS Fall Play
- **November 25-30:** Thanksgiving Break
- **December 21-31:** Winter Holiday Break
- **January 1:** No School - New Year's Day
- January 11-14: Exams/End of 2nd Quarter
- **Late Start Dates:**
  - September 30, January 27, February 24, April 28

## CONNECT WITH US

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