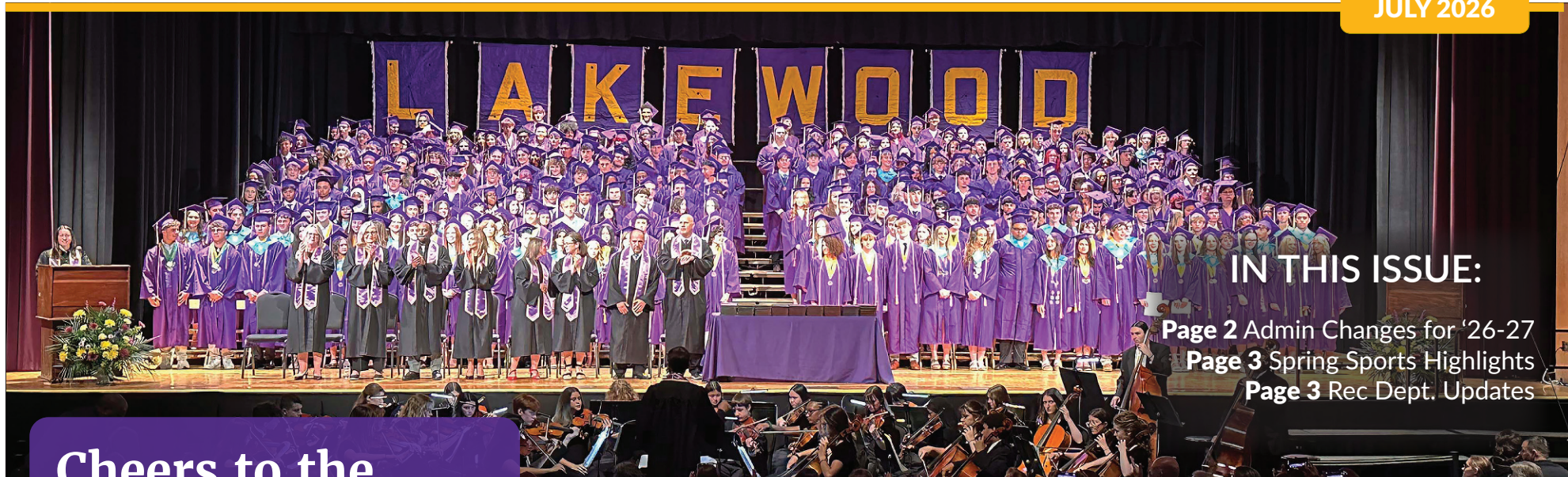


REPORT CARD

A Lakewood City Schools Community Newsletter



JULY 2026



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Cheers to the Lakewood High Class of 2026!

Congratulations to the Lakewood High School Class of 2026! The class of 329 graduates received their diplomas at the school's 178th Commencement Ceremony on May 31 in front of a full house of family, friends, and staff in the Civic Auditorium.

The ceremony included speeches by students Paisley Norris and Delaney Starr. The graduates and audience also heard words of support, wisdom and congratulations from Principal Joy Morgan, Superintendent Maggie Niedzwiecki, and Board of Education President Betsy Shaughnessy. The ceremony included several special recognitions of student groups including 68 Academic Excellence medal recipients who earned a 4.0 or better GPA, the two graduates entering the military, various honor societies, and music and athletic groups. Best wishes to our graduates!

Culinary students earn national honors

Congratulations to West Shore Culinary Arts students Carys Crone, Finn Getts, and Htoo Lweh Wah for earning silver and bronze awards in the national Family, Career and Community Leaders of America national culinary competition in Washington, D.C.

Carys and Htoo Wah earned silver in the culinary arts category and Finn earned bronze in the bakery and pastry arts category. The trio earned the right to compete in nationals through their accomplishments in the state competition:

Finn placed first, Carys placed second, and Htoo Wah placed third. We are so proud of these three young chefs and for the professional guidance of Chefs Devan Corti and Rob McGorray.



OUR ELEMENTARY PLAN

Work continues on Shaping Tomorrow, Together

As we continue to work on our Shaping Tomorrow, Together Elementary Plan, we want to share our gratitude for the partnership of our families, staff, and community members. Your thoughtful input, collaboration, and shared commitment to our students is helping us shape a transition plan focused on making this process as smooth and support-

ive as possible for every child. As we move toward the new school year and the release of new elementary school boundaries, we want to remind everyone of the Shaping Tomorrow, Together Elementary Plan timeline. The committee of elementary parents and community members has met twice and

See ELEMENTARY Page 4

District administrator team reshaped with new faces and new roles

The transition to a new school year always brings with it new faces and new roles for existing staff members as educators retire or move on. So far this summer, the Lakewood Board of Education approved several key leadership appointments and new administrative hires for the 2026-27 school year. Our new leadership roles:

Teaching and Learning Director Steven Ast will move into the assistant superintendent role vacated by Christine Palumbo when she retired in July.

Roosevelt Principal Allison Aber will become the next director of

Human Resources following the retirement of current director, Jeff Schlade.

Lakewood High teacher Rachel Bonsky will move into the role of LHS house principal, replacing Meredith Wotjkun, who has retired. Bonsky has been an intervention specialist at Lakewood High since 2017.

Holly Botos, formerly a middle school assistant principal at Kenston Schools, will become the new assistant principal at Garfield Middle School. She will replace Ouimet Smith, who has retired. Botos was a high school social studies teacher before

moving into administration.

Teaching and Learning Coordinator Kristin Clark will take over the department's director reins from Steve Ast.

Harding Middle School Assistant Principal Hadeel Nimeh will become the new principal at Roosevelt Elementary, replacing Allison Aber. Aber was named head of the District's Human Resources Department in May.

Lauren Priestley, formerly a PreK-12 technology integration coach with Shaker City Schools, will become the elementary

teaching and learning coordinator for the District. She will replace Kristin Clark.

Amanda Sears, formerly a K-12 instructional coach with Amherst Exempted Village School District, will become the next assistant principal at Harding Middle School, replacing Hadeel Nimeh.

Amanda Zapotechne, formerly a coordinator of curriculum and instruction with Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District, will become the next principal of Emerson Elementary. She will replace Denice Leddy, who has retired.

ELEMENTARY From Page 1

is scheduled to meet again in September and November. Below is the timeline moving forward:

- **Sept. 14, 2026:** Board of Education Meeting and sharing of boundary and walking maps
- **Sept. 23, 2026:** Shaping Tomorrow, Together Committee meeting #3
- **Oct. 21, 2026:** Student committee meeting
- **Nov. 18, 2026:** Shaping Tomorrow, Together Committee meeting #4
- **Feb. 2027:** Kindergarten registration starts; open enrollment announcement
- **March 2027:** Open enrollment requests open for the 2027-2028 school year.

Planning is underway for spring 2027 activities, including building visits, open houses, and playground meet-ups to help students and families become familiar with their new elementary school communities, as well as opportunities to celebrate and honor Lincoln Elementary's legacy.



For the third year, Lakewood City Schools will be participating in the Cleveland Browns' Stay in the Game! Attendance Network. The program aims to help districts improve student attendance by providing administration with an online "playbook" to create an attendance game plan that is data driven and includes recognitions and incentives for students, such as Browns swag and game tickets.

Attendance is critically important for students to be successful in school. Missing just two days per month can add up to nearly a month of missed learning over the course of the school year. Establishing strong attendance habits right from the start of the school year sets your student up for the best chance of success.

When Does School Start?

Aug. 21: Grade 9 (Fresh Start) Aug. 25: Preschool
Aug. 24: Grades 1-8, 10-12 Aug. 27: Kindergarten

Did You Know...

So far in 2026, Lakewood City Schools' composting efforts have rescued 7.49 tons of organic material from the landfill to be turned into beautiful, nutrient-rich compost!

Baseball's stellar title season highlights successful spring

Our Ranger athletes and teams shined this spring with many outstanding team and individual performances as well as all-conference honors. Leading the way was the varsity baseball team, which went undefeated in the regular season and captured the Cleveland West Conference and District championships! Several of our players and Coach Grant Graves also won special conference awards. Rangers named to All-Conference teams:

1ST TEAM:

Baseball: Nick Hart, Drew Jones, Riley Verderber

Softball: Ella Bower

Track & Field: Olivia Andregg (4x100), Gio Carroscia (4x100, 4x200), Charleigh Doxley (4x400), Sophia Eccher (4x100, 4x400), Tyrese Gatling (4x100, 4x200), Porter Gililand (3200m), Anthony Hargrove (4x100, 4x200), Lucy Jablonski (4x400, 4x100), Samantha Moran (4x400), Teagan Sefchick (4x100), Boston Truitt (4x100, 4x200)

2ND TEAM:

Baseball: Cooper Russell, Finn Schroeder



The back-to-back 2026 Division II District champions!

By JAMES BABSON

Softball: Gaby Carroll-Greeves, Emily Gillick
Track & Field: Olivia Andregg (high jump), Charleigh Doxley (100m & 300m hurdles), Samantha Moran (400m), Boston Truitt (400m)

HONORABLE MENTION:

Baseball: Jackson Comer, Luke Legato

Softball: Illyana Dagiasis, Addison Gaal

Tennis: Reiley Macmoy, Jay-Mal Massengale

Track & Field: Maeve Andrews (long jump), Tyrese Gatling (100m), Ivry Gunka Woten (discus)

BASEBALL SPECIAL AWARDS:

Player of the Year: Drew Jones
Pitcher of the Year: Riley Verderber
Coach of the Year: Grant Graves

Recreation Department Update: Our community pools and baseball fields are filled with sounds of summer

BECKS & FOSTER POOL SUMMER SEASON: The outdoor municipal pools are in full swing to help cool people off during the hot spells we have had. Becks Pool (located in Madison Park) is open seven days a week through Sunday, Aug. 23, 2026. Foster Pool (located in Lakewood Park) is also open seven days a week and will close on Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 7, 2026. Pool passes (individual and family), swimming lessons, and pool

hours are all available on our website.
IN HOUSE BASEBALL/SOFTBALL SEASON: Opening Day for our youth in-house baseball and softball leagues started with the crack of a bat on May 26. We have over 1,000 participants this year, comprising 73 teams! You have through Saturday, July 25 to check out all the games that will be played at fields around Lakewood: Cove, Edwards, Emerson, Foxx, Hard-

ing, Lakefront, Stone House, and Usher.
PURPLE & GOLD CLASSIC - GRANT RECLAIMS THE CUP: The annual Lakewood Ranger Purple & Gold Classic 5th grade basketball tournament that was played on April 18 crowned Grant Elementary as its first repeat champion. The future of Lakewood basketball is bright. This one day districtwide tournament embodies the spirit and energy of what it means to play

for Lakewood and be a Ranger! See you next year on April 10, 2027 in the LHS Gym.
OFFICE SUMMER HOURS: During the summer, our first floor office at LHS will close at 3:00 pm. The Fitness Facility & Indoor Track will maintain the usual hours. Special holiday hours will be posted on the Recreation Department website. We look forward to seeing everyone throughout the summer.

The Lakewood Board of Education

Betsy Bergen Shaughnessy, President
Lisa Dopman, Vice President
Michael J. Callahan, Member
Colleen Clark-Sutton, Member
Nora Katzenberger, Member

Administration

Maggie Niedzwiecki, Superintendent
Meghan Rohde, Treasurer

All courses and programs offered by the Lakewood City Schools and the West Shore Career-Technical District are without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, creed, gender, marital status, disability or age in its educational programs, activities, employment policies or admission policies as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The district provides equal access to Boy Scouts and other designated groups. Jeffrey Schlade serves as Title IX Coordinator and Stephanie Morgan as 504 Officer.

Board of Education
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Vision of a Lakewood Ranger: Growing Garfield's rain garden

Garfield Middle School has a new native rain garden and pollinator habitat, thanks to a full school year of planning, researching, and some generous grant funding. The school secured \$2,000 in grants from the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD) and the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) program, alongside 32 donated milkweed plants from Monarch Watch. These resources enabled the project to become a reality.

This project was a true schoolwide effort, starting in the fall with the Explo-Rangers Club members assessing biodiversity and researching native Ohio species. To get the garden started, students across multiple grade levels collected hundreds of milk containers to use as "mini greenhouses" for

winter cold stratification. While sixth-graders led container collection and artwork for future signage, seventh- and eighth-graders took a deep dive into watershed stewardship during a "Journey to the River" field trip to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, preparing them to lead their peers during the planting phase of the project in May.

By combining hands-on labor with rigorous research, the students have created a lasting legacy of the school's commitment to being good global citizens and protecting the local watershed.

Global
Awareness

Collaboration



Garfield students spread mulch and plant seedlings for the school's new rain garden.



Students work at transforming the retaining gulch into a soon-to-be blooming rain garden.

Grants will help bolster mental health and student support services

Lakewood City Schools has been awarded several key grants to further strengthen mental health support and wellness initiatives for our students.

We have been awarded \$20,200 from the Healthy Lakewood Foundation to bolster two vital programs:

- Coordinated Care (\$7,500): These funds

will streamline our support systems, ensuring that students and families are connected to the right resources.

- ROX Groups (\$12,700): We are expanding ROX (Ruling Our eXperiences), an evidence-based program designed to help girls navigate the challenges of adolescence, build confidence, and develop healthy relationships.

The District also receive \$2,500 from What Works in School Surveillance and Case Western Reserve. These grants will go toward:

- Training Lakewood High students in teen mental health first aid. (\$1,000)
- Supporting student-led data analysis that will allow our youth leaders to use school wellness data to drive positive changes in the building. (\$1,500)