

WE are Graduates



WE are Enlisted



WE are Employed



WE are Enrolled



WE are Entrepreneurs

Lakota's Parade of Graduates tradition is as much an opportunity for the graduating class to look back as it is for their younger counterparts to look ahead.

On May 20, the Class of 2019 paraded through the halls of a Lakota elementary school, many of them returning to the building they attended once upon a time. Each carried a uniquely designed sign displaying their future plans, as if to suggest that everyone's future is uniquely different.

This visual represents the personalized experience Lakota strives to create for every single student from kindergarten through

senior year. It's the very reason behind the district's push to encourage graduates to consider any one of the 4 Es in their future career planning: "Employment" in the workforce; "Enrollment" in continuing education; "Enlistment" in the military services; or a plan for "Entrepreneurism."

"We want our youngest learners to look up and see at least one graduate who embodies what they see in their own future," said

Lakota Superintendent Matthew Miller. "Our ultimate job is to help students discover their talents, passions and goals every step of the way and then lead them in the direction that will help them be successful."

Lakota's portfolio of business partners has grown from 20 to 150 businesses in the last year and is just one example of the district's commitment to painting a picture for students of what their future

might look like. Other initiatives, like the up-and-coming Cyber Academy, equip students with the skills to enter a lucrative industry as soon as after high school. Lakota continued its Military Commitment Ceremony to demonstrate its support of students who choose the military as their next step.

THE CLASS OF
2019
BY THE NUMBERS

1,384
TOTAL GRADUATES

98.8%
GRADUATION RATE

20 million+
TOTAL SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

28%
EARNING HONORS DIPLOMA

78.8%
ENROLLING IN A 2-OR 4-YEAR UNIVERSITY

90
JOINING THE WORKFORCE

64
ENLISTING IN THE MILITARY

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Matthew J. Miller
Superintendent

While it seems like just yesterday we were welcoming our students back into our buildings, we've now sent 1,384 graduates on to their future.

Several changes were implemented this past school year to enhance the exceptional education our community expects from Lakota Local Schools. We put a strong emphasis on building relationships between our staff and students, knowing that this builds trust and a foundation for engaged learning. It also sets the stage for a more personalized learning experience, which we believe in so strongly that it is one of the pillars of our mission statement.

All-day kindergarten without a lottery was introduced, along with daily specials for students in grades K-6, including a new health and wellness class. Our junior school students were the first to receive Chromebooks as part of the "WE are Empowered" initiative. The launch of this 1:1 program went exceptionally well, enabling us to expand the program to our high school students much earlier than anticipated.

Our high school students have also benefited from expanded opportunities for real world learning through internships, guest speakers and project mentors. Our partnerships with the business community have grown from around 20 to 150 this year, thanks to the work of our strategic partnerships coordinator.

I hope that everyone has a safe and relaxing summer. We've already begun counting down the days until our students return in August.

Matthew J. Miller

MATTHEW J. MILLER
Superintendent

WE are Enrolled

Lakota West's Kobe Cartwright has taken advantage of a wide range of academic and extra-curricular opportunities, emerging as a well-rounded graduate who has amassed almost \$1.2 million in college scholarship offers.

Cartwright will attend The Ohio State University in the fall, majoring in chemical engineering to pursue a career in the petroleum or energy industry.

His advice: "Get involved as fast as you can. And don't rule out a club or trying something new just because you think you might not be accepted or that there might not be enough people signing up."

Cartwright has immersed himself in everything from the community's annual MLK celebration and academic quiz team to band and student government. He also works part-time tutoring students.

From the time Cartwright got his first chemistry set in fifth grade, he was hooked. He discovered his love for math and science and was grade accelerated in both subjects. A seventh grade project helped him figure out that he would be good at being a chemist or chemical engineer.

He gives credit to his teachers and mentors who have guided him over the years, especially his counselor who helped him enroll in Calculus 3 at Miami University's Voice of America Learning Center, and navigate applying to 18 colleges.

Cartwright received either a full ride or full tuition from seven of those colleges. While they all have unparalleled academic programs, he selected OSU because it offers the same well-rounded experience he has enjoyed at Lakota.



WE are Employed

Employment is a respected and realistic goal for many of Lakota's graduates. Resources like the new Cyber Academy, expanding internship opportunities, the Career Readiness Academy and a growing

partnership with Butler Tech all help equip graduates with the skills they need to immediately join the workforce.

Butler Tech's offerings include over 25 off-site career programs in areas ranging from automotive technology to cosmetology to welding. This is complemented by a range of other pathways, like sports medicine, engineering and biomedical science, that are offered at both Lakota high schools.

Lakota West's Angel Scheiderer took advantage of the Career Based Intervention Program – a joint venture between Lakota and Butler Tech. The program gives students in grades 7-12 the opportunity to meet academic needs for graduation, while maintaining employment.

Angel's first three periods were spent at Lakota West completing online classes before she headed out to work in the afternoons.

"I learn better hands-on and at my own pace," said Angel. "I really liked the combination of online classes and working."

She excelled in the program: Angel was on the honor roll, completed all of her core credit classes, took six additional elective courses and was named the 2018-19 Butler Tech Student of the Year. She also completed two years of continuous employment between Wendy's and SanMar.

"I've always wanted to go straight into the workforce," said Angel. "I'm so glad that I was recommended for the CBI Program." Angel now enjoys full-time employment with Koch Foods in Fairfield.





WE are Enlisted

Lakota East graduate Joe Qin's decision to attend the United States Naval Academy and dedicate his post-Academy years to the U.S. Marines is rooted in more than a personal endeavor to travel the world. It boils down to defending the freedoms that "so many Americans take for granted."

"I want to defend that freedom because that freedom is so precious," says Qin, who has experienced firsthand the dichotomy between life in the U.S. versus China, where he was born and lived until fourth grade. "You have the freedom to choose your own path. That's not something that's given so easily everywhere else."

Qin's path has been a "roller coaster" of experiences, ranging from football, cross country and rowing to heavy involvement in the school news magazine, Spark. He has a deep appreciation for the lessons all those experiences have taught him in leadership, social skills, perseverance and even time management. In fact, he credits them with his choice to join the military.

"The Naval Academy wants people who can lead, listen and can teach other people," he said.

Academic opportunity has also played a critical role in shaping Qin's future plans, which he hopes will include nuclear engineering as a submarine officer.

Qin acknowledges that the military isn't everyone's thing, just like college. But more than anything, he has a deep appreciation for the freedom to choose that path and be supported in his decision. "Sometimes people who enlist don't get enough credit; I love that Lakota celebrates it," he says.

FROM THE TREASURER

Lakota Local Schools is ending the 2018-19 school year the way it began: fiscally strong.



Jenni L. Logan
Treasurer/CFO

We have been able to implement many new programs this year in a fiscally responsible way because this is a priority.

Students in our primary grades have benefitted from all-day kindergarten and daily specials – both offered in a financially strategic manner. At our secondary level, we have used permanent improvement funds to implement 1:1 technology to provide educational tools and resources to better prepare our students for success after graduation.

By refinancing our debt to take advantage of lower interest rates over the past several years, we have lowered our debt service payments. This, combined with increasing values of the residential and business properties in our community, has allowed the amount collected from our residents to be lowered.

WE are Entrepreneurs

Some students use college as a time to explore career options. Others, like Ethan Thronsen, will follow an entrepreneurial path in a specific field.

Thronsen plans to open his own jewelry store in the not-so-distant future.

His interest in jewelry design began at an early age. Having a close family friend in the business, Thronsen was encouraged to explore the inner-workings of the store. "I was allowed to check out the back of the store and my interest has just always progressed," he explained.

Before he can realize his dream, Thronsen knows he needs more experience. That's why he will attend the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) to earn industry certifications. "There's a degree for every step of jewelry making – even design and 3D

printing," he noted.

Roger Greene, a Butler Tech teacher at Lakota West, has played an instrumental role in Thronsen's pursuit of his passion. Thanks to the Career

Based Intervention Program, Thronsen was able to gain

experience in stone setting at Quality Gold in Fairfield. While most stone setters need at least five years experience, Greene was able to help Thronsen secure a position while still in high school.

"I still have a lot to learn, but what I have learned is really neat," he said.

Once he completes the program at GIA, Thronsen plans to gain experience by working with a local jeweler – always keeping his sight set on owning his own store. He looks forward to the day when he opens his doors.



The bond millage has been decreased by one (1) mill and your property tax bill(s) you received this year reflected this change. This means that our taxpayers will pay less to Lakota Local Schools annually.


Ensuring every student has the opportunity to succeed is why we are here. How we choose to operate on a daily basis is what allows us to provide exceptional opportunities for students while continuing to be good stewards of our residents' tax dollars. As we look toward the 2019-20 school year, we will continue to operate a lean but efficient budget, aligning our resources to Lakota's educational priorities while ensuring long-term financial stability.


JENNI L. LOGAN
Treasurer/CFO


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WE Are In This Together | A student and her aide: side-by-side for 12 years.



"I never would have made it through ninth grade algebra without Mrs. Burdno," recalls Patricia Burley with a laugh.

Burley didn't graduate with Lakota East's Class of 2019, but she might as well have. The instructional aide has shared, in some way shape or form, nearly every challenge, friendship, disappointment and joy that East graduate Amelia Murphy has over the last 12 years as a Lakota student.

The pair first met a couple of months into Murphy's first grade year at Wyandot Early Childhood School. Burley's experience was a "perfect" match for the unique assistance Murphy required. Born

with spina bifida, she says she is one of the "lucky ones" who is not completely wheelchair bound and achieved one of her highest aspirations last month "to get up out of my chair and walk across that stage."

Even so, the 18-year-old has undergone 79 surgeries, one of which severely damaged her short-term memory back in fifth grade. That was when Murphy's "school mom," as she calls her, became more critical than ever.

"There were days when she couldn't recall what eight plus eight was," Burley remembers. "That was really hard for her and me. Honestly, it was heartbreaking."

Not a trained teacher, Burley learned (and even ran in gym class) right alongside Murphy. She

would learn a lesson the night before and strategize how Murphy might best absorb it the next day. She discovered that tapping into Murphy's love of music and making up "corny songs" helped her remember things; years later, Murphy can still recall some of the lyrics.

Just a couple of weeks before graduation, Burley let Murphy in on one of her secrets though. "I would tell your teachers that if I looked like I was ignoring you, I probably was." Assisting other students in the class at times was a ploy. "I wanted her to do it on her own. I wanted her to try to work it out herself."

From twin day, skate parties and a school-wide lip dub to dancing in the hallways on an otherwise "bad day", their stories

and inside jokes are countless - and their friendship unbreakable. Holding hands as they reminisce and as if to hold on to their last few days together, they are still excited about their next adventures.

Murphy is headed to "Project Life," where continued life skills and job training will help her gain more independence and eventually land a part-time job. As for Burley, she awaits her next assignment. "I'll grow wherever I'm planted," she says.