

A Look Around Lakota

BACK-TO-SCHOOL 2022-2023



For the thousands of parents, students and staff making up the Lakota family, there are thousands of reasons why they choose Lakota. Here's some of what we're hearing so far and the top-rated thoughts in our latest ThoughtExchange.

"For the quality of education and resources available for children with disabilities."

"Because of their focus on the whole child."

"For its supportive environment, backed by teachers and leadership. They stand by their students."

"Because of the diversity and acceptance of all!"



CHOOSE LAKOTA

"Because the teachers care about kids."

"For its academic performance and capacity to challenge our children, while being affordable to live in the district."

"Opportunities for kids academically. Diversity of thought in the classroom."

"For the quality educators, limitless opportunities and diverse learning styles."



Welcome back!

As soon as our students leave for summer break, we begin counting down the days until they return in August.

Although our hallways may be a bit quieter during June and July, our work hasn't stopped: we've held several community meetings about our Master Facilities Plan; we launched a brand new website and mobile app in June; our maintenance department has been busy with summer projects to get our

schools ready for August; and our Welcome Center has been busy enrolling new students.

As we look forward to the first day of school in just a few short weeks, we continue to hold true to our mission: Everything WE do is designed to provide a future-ready, student-centered learning experience for every single child. While we will begin to update our strategic plan this fall, our core mission and vision will not change.

WE will continue to be personalized, future ready, fiscally responsible and in this together to provide the best education possible to our students.

Why? Because WE choose Lakota.

Matthew J. Miller

MATTHEW J. MILLER
Superintendent/CEO

We'd love to hear why YOU choose Lakota!



Scan to participate in our latest ThoughtExchange.

what's trending @LakotaDistrict

New Website & Mobile App
The Lakota district and school websites - in addition to the downloadable mobile app - have taken on a dramatic new look with lots of new features like customizable calendars, searchable news feeds & more. Check it out at www.lakotaonline.com. #WEareLakota



1 2 3

Introducing FinalForms
News Alert: We've expanded FinalForms for parents to more efficiently complete most back-to-school forms and waivers. Sign into FinalForms via OneLogin to review and update contact information, emergency contacts, medical information and more. #WEareLakota

FINALFORMS

1 9 36

Transportation Reminder
Is your bus pick-up or drop-off location different from your home address? Aug. 4 was the deadline to submit this information and receive transportation to/from an alternative address on the first day of school. Missed the deadline? Complete the form now to get your stop moved beginning Sept. 6. All K-2 students are asked to complete a form, regardless of the need for busing. #WEareLakota



1 2 3

FROM THE TREASURER

WE are Building Our Future



Adam Zink
Treasurer/CFO

Like many of our students, I am excited for the start of the new school year – my first one as Lakota's new treasurer and chief financial officer. While I may not be new to the district, after serving as the assistant treasurer since 2016, I am excited to shift into this new position, following Jenni Logan's retirement in July.

Being fiscally responsible isn't just something that we say...it's what we do. While every decision made in Lakota relates back to our mission statement, we also

ensure that each one is fiscally responsible and sustainable. This will not change.

Lakota's finances are strong. We have just ended our tenth consecutive year with a balanced budget and received our eighth Auditor of State Award with Distinction.

As you may have seen in our 2022 financial prospectus, our bond ratings through Standard and Poor's and Moody's Investors Services continue to be one of the highest possible. With our cash reserves at an all-time high, Lakota is not forecasting an operating levy in the near future. In fact, Lakota has not been on the ballot since 2013.

We hope that you will make time to attend one of our community meetings about our Master Facilities Plan. Our school board members are gathering feedback from our stakeholders before they vote on the final plan. Knowing that finances will play an important role once the final plan is selected, we have been laying the groundwork to ease the burden on our taxpayers as much as possible.

If you have any questions about Lakota's finances, I encourage you to reach out to me. I am always happy to have a conversation and look forward to serving the district in my new role.

ADAM ZINK
Treasurer/CFO

MASTER FACILITIES PLAN (MFP)

After pressing pause twice on master facilities work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district committee is moving full steam ahead to choose a final, long-term building plan that will meet the educational needs of Lakota's students far into the future.

Lakota's strategic plan calls for an in-depth assessment of the district's aging facilities. A long-term Master Facilities Plan (MFP) serves as a guide for assessing the need for facility improvements and the capital investments required to implement them. The last time the district completed a modified MFP was in 2008. The last comprehensive plan was completed in the early 2000s.

The committee's end goal is to build a plan that protects the district's most important assets – Lakota's 25 buildings, valued at \$632 million – and supports the type of learning that will carry our schools into the future.

Since January, the committee, which includes all five school board members, has reviewed 11 different plan options. At its April meeting, the Board narrowed the plans to four configurations, including a baseline plan that keeps all current buildings and the same grade band configuration.

The facilities committee has been gathering feedback from the community in anticipation of the Board making a final decision later this fall. It is important to the Board that the community is able to view a variety of options, including renovating or putting additions on existing schools versus building new ones, as well as different grade band configurations.

This summer, the district started a series of in-person community meetings to share why a facilities plan is essential and the potential financial impact, as well as gather feedback on each plan. Those meetings will continue into the fall.

As enrollment continues to climb, it is essential that an MFP be developed and approved. With current enrollment over 17,000, the district has been forced to make use of modular, or portable, classrooms to accommodate the growth.

MASTER FACILITIES PLAN OPTIONS

SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT EACH OPTION AND PROVIDE YOUR FEEDBACK.

OPTION 1

(EXISTING CONFIGURATION)

- Covers necessary renovations or additions to current buildings
- Limited reimbursement through state funding options
- Preschool continues to be combined with two existing schools
- Continues current grade band structure: K-2, 3-6, 7-8, 9, 10-12
- 23 total schools, including Lakota Central (formerly The Academy)



OPTION 2

- Maximizes reimbursement through state funding options
- Independent preschool building
- Grade band structure: Preschool, K-3, 4-6, 7-8 and 9-12
- Closing 10 schools
- Building seven new schools
- Building additions to both high schools
- 20 total schools



OPTION 3

- Maximizes reimbursement through state funding options
- Independent preschool building
- Grade band structure: Preschool, K-5, 6-8, 9-12
- Closing 10 schools
- Building six new schools plus a new building to be used for specialty high school classes
- 18 total schools



OPTION 4

- Maximizes reimbursement through state funding options
- Independent preschool building
- Grade band structure: Preschool, K-5, 6-8 and 9-12
- Closing 10 schools
- Building three new schools, including two new high schools
- Using the current high schools as middle schools
- 15 total schools



HOW WILL LAKOTA FUND THE PLAN?

Knowing a Master Facilities Plan (MFP) would be adopted by the Board in the near future, Lakota's finance leadership has been laying the groundwork to ease the burden on taxpayers as much as possible.

STATE ASSISTANCE

The Board of Education may choose to enroll in Ohio's Expedited Local Partnership Program (ELPP). Once accepted, the district would be eligible to begin receiving partial funding from the State for all projects that are completed in the final MFP from that point forward. Right now, it is estimated that this could amount to 29%, or up to \$147 million, of financial assistance for the district, so long as the MFP meets state requirements.

DISTRICT PLANNING

By taking advantage of lower interest rates and restructuring its debt, Lakota's finance team has saved taxpayers several million dollars. The district has restructured its debt with the goal to pay it off sooner versus decreasing the millage rate. This means Lakota can maintain a consistent millage, lowering the impact to taxpayers when we ask for their financial support of a final plan.

The district purposefully restructured its debt to minimize the impact of a new bond issue, which would be required to finance the MFP. Lakota has not been on the ballot since 2013.



USDA Free Meals Waiver Expires

The USDA's free meals waiver, which provided free daily breakfast and lunch to all students for the last two years, has expired. Families who may qualify for free and reduced meals based on income or other qualifying factors need to complete the meal benefits application at www.LunchApplication.com. #WEareLakota



Off to a Staggered Start

Similar to recent years, students will begin the new school year with a staggered start. This model helps put teachers and students in a smaller group setting and accelerate relationship building. Check the district's academic calendar on Lakota's website for more details. #WEareLakota



School Supplies

The district will provide each student in grades K-8 with a supply kit at the start of the school year. Scan the QR code to find your building's list of additional school supplies required for grades K-8.



SCAN TO VIEW SUPPLY LISTS



First Day Photo Contest

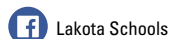
Get in on this year's back-to-school photo contest! Share your best first day moments using #WEareLakota and #WEchooseLakota. The post with the most votes, or "likes" on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, will win some Lakota swag!





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Lakota Schools



@LakotaDistrict



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Lakota Local Schools



Lakota Local Schools



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IMPORTANT BACK-TO-SCHOOL DATES

PRESCHOOL

Open House | Aug. 15

AM Students Only | Aug. 24

PM Students Only | Aug. 25

First Day with all Preschool Students | Aug. 29

KINDERGARTEN

Open House | Aug. 15

Last names A-L Only | Aug. 16

Last names M-Z Only | Aug. 17

Half of kindergarten classes (details provided by school) | Aug. 18

Half of kindergarten classes (details provided by school) | Aug. 19

No school for kindergartners | Aug. 22

First Day with all Kindergarten Students | Aug. 23

GRADES 1-12

ECS Open House (Grades 1-2) | Aug. 11

Elementary Open House (Grades 3-6) | Aug. 11

Junior & High School Orientation/Schedule Pick-up

Varies by school

Last Names A-L Only | Aug. 16

Last Names M-Z Only | Aug. 17

First Day with all 1-12 Students | Aug. 18

UPCOMING DISTRICT-WIDE DATES

Staff PD Days | Aug. 11, 12 & 15

No School (Labor Day) | Sept. 5

Facilities Community Meetings | Fall dates coming soon

In the Loop with the Supe | Sept. 7

Ice Cream Social for New Families | Sept. 10

BACK-TO-SCHOOL CHECKLIST

- ☐ **Buy school supplies.**
- ☐ **Attend open house or orientation.**
- ☐ **Submit any updated immunization records** to your school nurse.
- ☐ **Complete your annual free/reduced meals application** if you think you may qualify.
- ☐ **Complete new school year forms** in FinalForms via OneLogin.
- ☐ **Check teacher assignments** and student schedules on Home Access Center (HAC) in early August.
- ☐ **Complete a transportation form** to communicate alternative pick-up & drop-off locations.
- ☐ **Look up your bus route** in HAC in early August.
- ☐ **Bookmark your school's website** and subscribe to the calendars of your choice.
- ☐ **Download Lakota's new mobile app** (search "Lakota Schools" from your app store) and select your schools to customize your calendar, news feed and push notifications.
- ☐ **Follow district and school social media accounts** cataloged on our website.
- ☐ **Participate in the first day photo contest on social media!** Include #WEareLakota and #WEchooseLakota on your post to participate.

All your back-to-school questions answered:
lakotaonline.com/BackToSchool



Lakota Board of Education

Bottom row, left to right: Vice President Isaac Adi & President Lynda O'Connor

Top row, left to right: Members Darbi Boddy, Julie Shaffer & Kelley Casper