



Lak@ta
Local Schools

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Quality Profile

for the 2023-24 School Year





A MESSAGE FROM THE Superintendent

A "quality" is defined as a "unique and essential character, a nature." Each year, we use the Lakota Local Schools Quality Profile to capture the essential characters that define our District.

This document complements our state report card by providing a comprehensive overview of the educational experiences and achievements that exemplify our district. Our goal is to offer a deeper insight into the qualities of the high caliber education our students receive, beyond the data-driven assessments of our Ohio Department of Education and Workforce report card. The publication also reflects the previous school year's performance.

The last school year focused on personalized learning, a pillar of our strategic plan that ensures each student receives the support they need to succeed. Our teachers and staff have worked tirelessly to create an environment where students can thrive because we are committed to providing tailored educational experiences that meet the individual needs of each student.

One of the qualities that lends to our success is our commitment to educate the whole child. Our students have excelled not only in the classroom, but also in extracurricular activities, arts, athletics and community service.

These opportunities have allowed them to develop critical life skills, build character and cultivate a sense of responsibility and empathy.

Our dedicated teachers and staff have been instrumental in creating a supportive and nurturing learning environment. Their innovative teaching methods, coupled with a focus on individualized instruction, empower our students to reach their full potential. We are also proud of our robust support systems that ensure every student receives the guidance and resources they need to succeed.

In this new school year, we remain steadfast in our vision to provide a future-ready, student-centered learning experience for every single child. Our commitment to excellence will guide our efforts as we continue to improve on our existing qualities and innovate new possibilities. Thank you for your continued support of Lakota Local Schools.

Dr. Ashley Whitley

Dr. Ashley Whitley
Superintendent

LAKOTA *snapshot*

8th

largest public school district in Ohio

63 square miles

servicing West Chester & Liberty townships



1,337 Graduates - Class of 2024 -



Graduation Rate 99% (East/West) 91% (Central)



17,540 Students



2,061 Employees



23 Schools (grades pre-K to 12)

meet THE BOARD



Lakota Board of Education

Pictured:
Standing (left to right): Douglas Horton, Christina French, Isaac Adi

Sitting (left to right):
Vice President Kelley Casper, President Julie Shaffer



Scan to visit the Board's website.

DISTRICT HONORS



Auditor of State Award

Fewer than five percent of all entities that are audited annually earn the Auditor of State Award with Distinction – and Lakota has earned this honor a remarkable 10 years in a row. The award recognizes the district’s unwavering commitment to fiscal responsibility and transparency.



Step Up to Quality

Lakota’s preschool program continued to be awarded the highest five stars by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) rating program.



OHSPRA Achievement Awards

Lakota received a Mark of Distinction award from the Ohio School Public Relations Association for exemplary work on its e-newsletter, A Look Around Lakota. The District also earned two Mark of Excellence awards for writing and its communication plan.

Lakota East’s freshman and main campus Hope Squads won the “Best of the Best” award in the student video category for their powerful video that sheds a light on teen mental health and suicide prevention.

STUDENT & STAFF HONORS



The “Squadra” team from Endeavor Elementary School placed first in the Destination Imagination (DI) state competition and qualified for the DI Global competition.



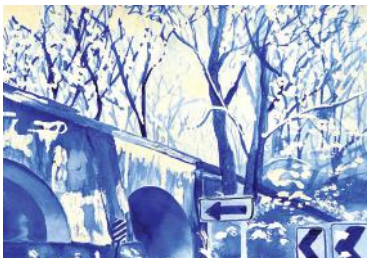
Fifteen musicians from Lakota East and Lakota West high schools were selected to perform in an Ohio Music Education Association (OMEA) state band ensemble.



Lakota West’s Kenyon Norman, Amare Minor, Rece Mason and Joel Nimoh were named OHSAA state champions in the 4x100 Relay.



Lakota East’s Landyn Bomar won the OHSAA state championship in the seated shot put event.



A record number of Lakota East and West artists won Gold and Silver Key Awards in the regional Scholastic Art Awards Competition.



Lakota West artist Emma Schriml was selected as a winner out of over 8,200 entries in the Governor’s Youth Art Exhibition.



Lakota’s Director of 7-12 Curriculum and Instruction, Andrew Wheatley, is a member of Lt. Governor’s AI Toolkit working group, providing feedback and ideas to the State about artificial intelligence technology in education.

MAXIMIZING *potential*

We work hard to meet students wherever they are in their learning. Specialized support helps students chart their own path forward.



WE are Personalized

ABOUT MTSS

MTSS, or Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, is Lakota's main driver behind personalized learning, tracking students' academic, social and behavioral trends to inform decisions.

Lakota's K-8 staff lean on a tool called Branching Minds. First introduced in 2022, the resource helps track everything from attendance and discipline records to academic and mental health support for every single student. Educators can more methodically make programming and resource decisions based on what the data says is and isn't working for any given student.

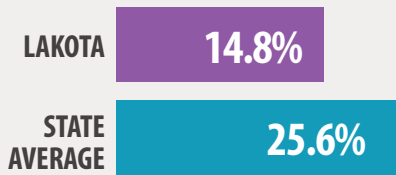
Last year, Lakota teachers created 4,585 intervention plans for students in response to data findings from Branching Minds.

SIGNS OF SUCCESS

ATTENDANCE

Lakota's rate of chronic absenteeism (students absent 10% or more) dropped from 16% to 14.8% in just one year, still well below the state average. This drop was most evident at Heritage and Hopewell early childhood schools and Adena and Cherokee elementary schools, where the rate decreased by five percent or more from December 2023 to May 2024.

2023-2024 CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM



MATH GROWTH

In grades K-8, the number of students who met or exceeded their growth projection for math grew by six percent, compared to the year prior.

This progress was shown on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment, which compared achievement levels in fall 2023 to spring 2024.



SIGNS OF SUCCESS



EARLY LITERACY

Through continuous data review, Lakota's approach to early literacy is truly personalized. All of Lakota's K-4 reading teachers continued professional development last year to deepen their understanding of the Science of Reading, the evidence-based research the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce requires schools to follow for literacy instruction. Phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency are delivered through whole group and targeted small group instruction.

1,000+ students received targeted reading supports.



FUTURE PLANNING

Last year, Lakota transitioned from Naviance to a new and improved online solution for college and career readiness called SchoolLinks. The new platform assists students in grades 7-12 with planning and registering for future Lakota classes, as well as exploring career interests and post-graduate options.

SCHOOLINKS STATS

94,161 total student logins in the first year.

7,000 students completed the "Find Your Path" activity with health science, arts and science/technology leading the way in career paths.

75% of Lakota seniors submitted at least one college application.

3,218 students set post-secondary goals within the platform.



EXPLAINING THE

Report Card Components

✓ ACHIEVEMENT

Measures overall student performance on state tests against established thresholds for core content areas. It is based on the district's Performance Index, which is calculated by categorizing students into one of seven weighted categories.

Of Note: Students who do not take state tests because they opt out or are absent automatically score a zero and impact the final achievement score.

✓ PROGRESS

Measures overall student growth from one year to the next, compared to the State's threshold for expected growth. It is based on scores in English language arts (ELA), math and science for grades 4-8 and ELA II, algebra I, geometry, biology, American history and government for high-schoolers.



WE are Personalized

embracing DIVERSITY



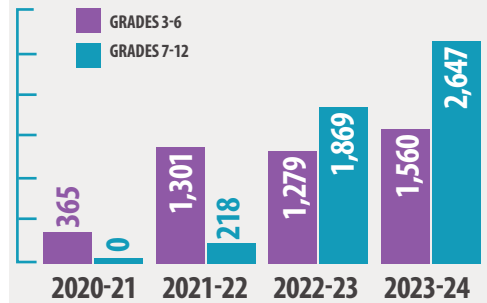
Our goal is to create an inclusive learning environment for every single child. We are committed to not only recognizing, but also embracing the diverse needs tied to different cultures and backgrounds, races and ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, cognitive abilities and more.

GIFTED SERVICES

A second year spent certifying more teachers as gifted service providers continues to challenge more students and stretch them to their fullest potential.

At the secondary level, advanced course educators continued participating in the gifted training that qualifies their courses as gifted services on the state report card. Lakota also continued to expand and diversify its advanced level course options in a way that covers a range of interests and future workforce skills. This included courses like Quantitative Reasoning and American Sign Language IV.

STUDENTS RECEIVING GIFTED SERVICES

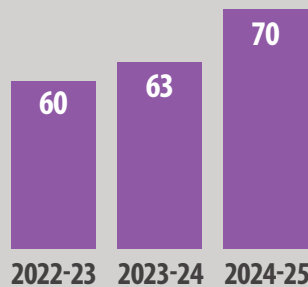


The State's performance indicator for gifted services measures the overall growth of gifted students in a district. Over the last three years, that target has increased from 95% to 97.5%. Despite an increase all three years, Lakota fell just half a percentage short of meeting the state benchmark last year. With the increasing gifted support in the coming year, Lakota aims to exceed that goal.

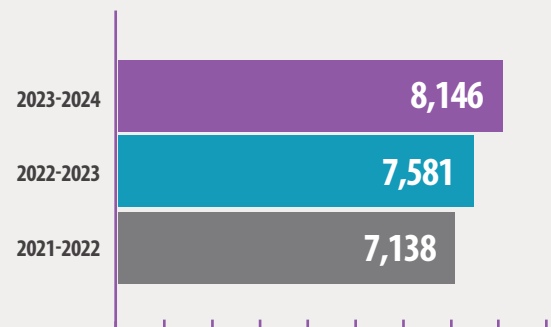
WE are Personalized



HS ADVANCED COURSE OPTIONS



HS ADVANCED COURSE ENROLLMENT



COMING UP...

A change in the criteria to qualify for advanced-level coursework in grades 6-8 is expected to yield a significant increase in the number and diversity of students automatically enrolled in advanced English language arts (ELA), math, science and social studies for the 2024-2025 school year and beyond. The change introduces more rigorous content to more students who demand the extra challenge.

Because of the demand and academic benefits, the high schools are also adding six new CCP courses: communications and literature, statistics, government, psychology, sociology and financial literature.

In response to last year's Community Conversation about gifted services, Lakota also added five positions to expand gifted education support in grades 2-12. This means that there is a dedicated gifted intervention specialist at every elementary school who also supports second-graders in their feeder early childhood school. Two gifted support advisors now serve grades 7-12, providing opportunities beyond advanced coursework for students to develop their leadership and executive functioning skills, involvement in extracurricular opportunities and post-graduate planning.



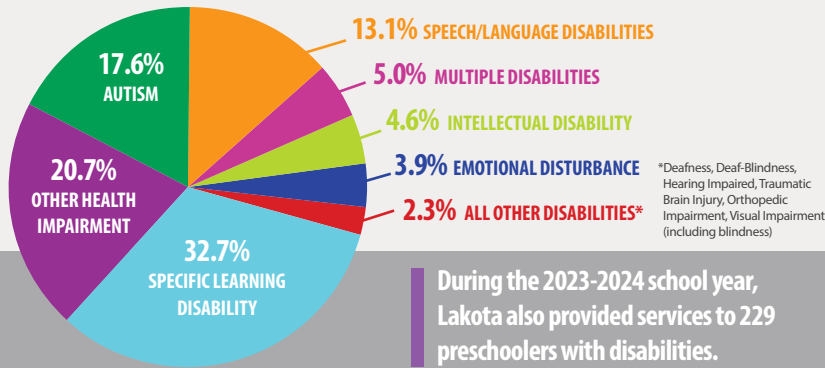
SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Lakota is committed to meeting the unique needs of students with disabilities.

Within each of the disability categories, the continuum of services – or the different delivery models to provide specially designed instruction – is personalized to each student via an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Over the past several years, Lakota has responded to a significant increase in the identification of students with autism. In fact, Lakota has seen an increase of 76 students in this category over two years, placing Lakota six percent higher than the state average. Many students with autism require highly specialized services and support. This has implications for additional teaching staff, related services, classroom space and specialized training.

K-12 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES BY CATEGORY



During the 2023-2024 school year, Lakota also provided services to 229 preschoolers with disabilities.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

For a second consecutive year, Lakota's "ESL Connect" program offered consistent support to parents of English learners (EL). Over 40 sessions engaged 600-plus EL parents, helping families navigate technology, build new relationships and learn points of entry for partnering with their schools.

ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

Eight community liaisons actively work in Lakota's schools daily to help fulfill basic needs for Lakota's economically disadvantaged students. This work involves partnering with numerous local agencies and even big efforts like the daily summer lunch program hosted by Lakota Child Nutrition, which delivered over 2,000 meals to Lakota students in need.

EXPLAINING THE Report Card Components

✓ GAP CLOSING

Measures how well sub-groups of students are meeting performance expectations through their state tests, as compared to all students. Sub-groups include those detailed in the "Past to Present" chart at right.

Of Note: Beyond their performance and growth on ELA and math tests, also weighing into the final state grade are factors like graduation rates and chronic absenteeism improvement.

WE celebrate OUR DIFFERENCES

42% of students are non-Caucasian or of a multicultural background.

27% of students in grades 2-12 are identified as gifted.

32% of students are economically disadvantaged.

10% of students receive services for their disabilities.

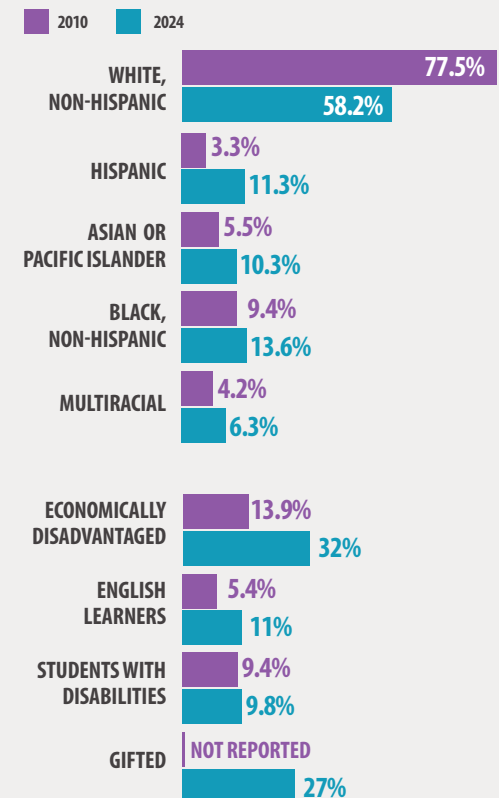
11% of students identify English as a second language.

14% of families identify a language other than English as their home language.

53 home languages spoken by Lakota families.



PAST TO PRESENT STUDENT SUB-GROUPS (2010 vs. 2024)



Data as of May 2024

supporting OUR STUDENTS

Personalization extends beyond academics. It includes ensuring the safety and security of our buildings while also prioritizing the health and well-being of every student.



SAFETY GRANTS

Lakota continued to take advantage of Ohio's K-12 School Safety Grant Program last year.

Lakota received \$2.1 million from the grant to support physical safety and security upgrades to school buildings.

As part of its regular safety and security assessment, Lakota worked in partnership with its school resource officers from the West Chester Police Department and Butler County Sheriff's Office to identify upgrades to Lakota's access control system, as well as security cameras.



SCHOOL NURSES & CLINICS

Lakota is fortunate that every school clinic is staffed by a full-time registered nurse. These individuals are vital to meeting the daily health needs of our students, serving not only as medical professionals but also as advocates for the well-being and safety of all students and staff.

In 2023-2024, school nurses managed:

- 83,300** clinic visits
- 27,200** treatments
- 58,700** medication administrations
- 25,000** health screenings, plus nearly 1,000 referrals

New Last Year:

For emergency preparedness, Lakota nurses offered 13 classes for CPR certification to Lakota staff.

COMING UP...

For the 2024-2025 school year, Lakota is replacing the high school campuses' Hope Squads, a training-based peer-to-peer suicide prevention program, with "Hope and Strength." The new program shares the same evidence-based curriculum as the junior schools' "Sources of Strength," making it a more natural progression for students. It doubles as an elective and an after-school program focused on student-led mental health awareness and positive school culture.



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

Strong mental health plays a vital role in a student's growth and success. Programs supporting this mission include:

- A partnership with MindPeace to place a licensed therapist in every school (27 total), providing students with on-site access to high quality and affordable mental health services at no cost to Lakota.
- Ten therapy dogs that provide cognitive, social, emotional and physical support to both students and staff.
- Peer-to-peer programs in the junior and high schools that promote positive school culture and healthy decision making.

2023-2024 Impact

- 1,067** students referred for school-based therapy.
- 772** students received school-based individual or group prevention.
- 79** successful student transitions to local treatment centers resulting from an increased focus on collaborating with other area mental health providers.
- 141** reports of student suicide ideation or self-harm, which is 12% lower than the previous year.
- 230** students assisted with grief support by our partners at Companions on a Journey.

WE are Personalized

ENCOURAGING *exploration*

At Lakota, learning doesn't stop at the classroom door. Students are able to dive into a wide range of extracurricular activities, sparking new interests and refining essential skills like teamwork, communication and creativity.



ACTIVITIES AND CLUBS

Students can participate in nearly 80 after-school clubs and activities at Lakota's three high schools, including the "Big Paws Little Paws" mentoring program between Lakota East and Liberty Early Childhood School (pictured). The four junior schools offer more than 30 options for students to explore.



ATHLETICS

Students have the opportunity to participate in over 120 athletic teams at Lakota's high schools and more than 40 at the district's junior schools. Last year, 49 scholar-athletes committed to play their sport at the collegiate level.



BAND

With nearly 500 students participating in high school band, Lakota provides numerous opportunities for young musicians, starting as early as seventh grade. At the high school level, the East and West marching bands have collectively secured over 80 grand champion titles and consistently achieve superior ratings at the Ohio Music Educator Association State Marching Band Finals. In November, both bands had the exciting opportunity to travel to Hawaii and perform in the 2023 Waikiki Holiday Parade together (pictured).



CHORAL MUSIC

Lakota's choral programs are a vibrant part of the community, with over 400 students participating across the high schools. Both East and West choirs consistently achieve superior ratings at the Ohio Music Educator Association's state competitions. In November, the Lakota East Eastside Voices and Eastside Music Company had the honor of being one of only three high schools nationwide to perform in the Veteran's Day Parade of Heroes in Washington, D.C. (pictured).



THEATER PROGRAMS

Lakota's junior and high school theater programs provide students with exciting opportunities to delve into acting, music, design and technology. Last year, over 200 high school students took part in these dynamic programs. The community enjoyed top-notch performances of "Mamma Mia!" at Lakota East and "Footloose" at Lakota West (pictured).



VISUAL ARTS

Lakota's visual arts program invites students to explore the world of art, experimenting with various mediums. Starting with "specials" classes in the early grades and expanding to elective courses in junior and high school, students have numerous opportunities to express their creativity. At the high school level, students can also showcase their talents by competing for scholarships and awards at both the regional and national levels.

PREPARING FOR THE *future*

The Portrait of a Lakota Graduate defines the skills and attributes that every Lakota graduate should possess. Preparing our students for future success as they pursue one of the 4Es - Employment, Enrollment, Enlistment or Entrepreneurship – is the foundation of a Lakota education.

With about 33% of college students dropping out*, it is critical that Lakota students are exposed to a variety of post-high school options.

*Source: Education Data Initiative Oct. 2023

EMPLOYMENT



3,600+

Lakota students attended a Butler Tech campus or took a satellite course offered at a Lakota school.

70

students with disabilities received on-the-job training thanks to 14 local business partners and 11 Lakota schools participating in the District's work study program.

ENROLLMENT



2,400+

total College Credit Plus courses were taken by Lakota students, earning a collective 8,200 college credits and saving over \$300,000 in tuition for Lakota families.

86%

of Lakota East and West 2024 graduates, and 33% of Lakota Central's, are pursuing higher education and were offered nearly \$7.5 million in scholarships.

ENLISTMENT



19

Lakota seniors were celebrated in a Military Commitment Ceremony for committing to serve our country after graduation by joining a branch of the military or attending a military academy.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP



150

hours of mentorship were provided by business partners for Lakota high school students enrolled in the District's INCubator@Lakota entrepreneurship classes. The students have the opportunity to create and fully develop their own product or service, participating in "Pitch Night" to present their idea to judges and possibly win funding to turn their concept into reality.

WE are Future Ready



LAKOTA CYBER ACADEMY

The 2023-2024 school year marked a significant milestone, as the third cohort of students successfully completed all three levels of cyber coursework at both Lakota East and West high schools. Over 250 students were enrolled, the most in the program's five-year history.

- Lakota East junior Braden Scribner was the top ranking high school junior in the country by the National Cyber League.
- Jeff Zhu, 2024 Lakota East graduate, was one of six high school seniors invited to participate in the National Cyber Signing Day at the NICE K12 Cybersecurity Education conference.
- More than 100 industry partners provided their expertise.
- Female participation increased by 100% over the prior school year.



RISE UP

The class of 2024 was the second graduating class that had to meet new graduation requirements from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. This includes earning at least two diploma seals to demonstrate their preparedness for their post-graduation path.

Lakota continues to partner with the National Retail Federation's RISE Up program as an alternative graduation pathway for seniors. Taught by a collaboration between Lakota and Butler Tech teachers, students learn customer service, math and interviewing skills, as well as an understanding about retail industry fundamentals.

Once again, Lakota students enrolled in RISE UP had a 100% success rate.

EXPLAINING THE

Report Card Components



GRADUATION

The state report card measures both the four- and five-year graduation rates, which are calculated by the number of students who graduate within four or five years of starting ninth grade.



COLLEGE, CAREER, WORKFORCE AND MILITARY READINESS

In the future, the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce will use College, Career, Workforce and Military Readiness as a component on the state report card. To prepare, Lakota continues to expand College Credit Plus and Advanced Placement class offerings to maximize student credits and opportunities to earn industry certifications.



1:1 Expansion Provides Digital Tools for Younger Learners

New in 2023-2024, each early childhood school classroom gained a dedicated set of Chromebooks for students. In line with the District's commitment to fiscal responsibility, these Chromebooks were collected from eighth grade students at the end of the school year and assigned to classroom carts for our younger learners in grades K-2 to use.



Solving Real-World Problems through Project-Based Learning

Through problem-based learning (PBL) in grades 3-6, students collaborate to solve real-world issues.

Sixth graders at Cherokee Elementary were challenged to develop their own food truck concept, as well as a business plan including a model truck, menus, pricing, equipment, food costs and marketing concepts. Their written proposals were tied to persuasive writing standards. Math standards about proportions, fractions and equations were used to calculate costs, pricing and profits. Even supply and demand lessons were tied to social studies standards.

Fifth graders at Woodland Elementary learned all about sustainability through their "red wiggler" composting project. Students learned what scraps can be used for composting and observed the red wiggler worms at work. The students expanded their knowledge through guest speakers from the Cincinnati Zoo, Waste Management and a solar company. Ultimately, students created their own businesses and a gallery walk where they showcased their companies to visitors and one another.

COMING UP...

College Credit Plus opportunities will expand in the 2024-2025 school year. New courses also include introduction to artificial intelligence at the high school level and next generation statistics for junior school students. Additionally, a career aptitude program (YouScience) will expand to sophomores.



Building a Foundation in Careers

Eighth graders had the chance to explore career opportunities that match their natural aptitudes through a partnership with YouScience. The career-exploration program helps students identify career paths that align with their natural talents and aptitude.



Helping Students Choose a Career Path

Career exploration continues in ninth grade, with the industry insight program at both East and West freshman schools. A panel of industry partners were on hand to answer questions and share about career opportunities in their fields.

Workforce Wednesdays brought guest speakers to Lakota Central High School to speak to students about life skills and job opportunities, including real estate, firefighting, forensics and welding.



Lakota Local Schools will release a video series highlighting the 4Es—enrollment in higher education, employment, enlistment and entrepreneurship—and showcasing how students are exposed to these pathways during their time at school.

master FACILITIES PLAN

At its January 2024 organizational meeting, the Lakota Board of Education communicated that moving forward with the Master Facilities Plan (MFP) is a priority. As the long-range MFP work continues, the Board is committed to making necessary repairs to existing buildings to ensure that all schools remain safe learning environments for Lakota students and staff. While the grade bands and tentative buildings associated with the plan have been approved, the committee continues working on the many details surrounding how Lakota's facilities can best meet the future educational needs of Lakota's more than 17,500 students.

Creating a new MFP is part of Lakota's strategic plan and serves as a guide for assessing the long-term need for facility improvements and the capital requirements to implement them. The last comprehensive plan was completed in the 2000s, with a modified plan done in 2008.

LAKOTA JOINS ELPP

The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) approved the Lakota Board of Education's application to enroll in the Expedited Local Partnership Program (ELPP). As a result, the State will now pay for an updated enrollment study and building assessment that the District will use to build out its facilities plan. Partnering with the State through ELPP also makes Lakota eligible to receive partial reimbursement for facilities projects that the OFCC approves through the final plan.

Currently, Lakota is eligible for a 31% reimbursement rate through ELPP.

THE CURRENT PLAN

The current MFP includes concessions the Board made during the 2023-2024 school year to be more fiscally responsible. While the building configuration changed from the originally approved plan, the grade-band divisions remain the same.

Preschool: 1 school

Liberty ECS

Grades K-5: 11 schools

Cherokee, Endeavor, Independence, Union, VanGorden, Wyandot, Ridge Junior, 4 NEW K-5 buildings

Grades 6-8: 2 schools

East Freshman and Plains Junior
























Grades 9-12: 2 schools

Additions on Lakota East and West

SCAN TO VISIT THE MFP WEBSITE



AGES OF LAKOTA SCHOOLS

	1928 Liberty Early Childhood School (ECS)	
	1962 Hopewell ECS	
	1973 Hopewell Junior	
	1978 Adena Elementary	
	1990 Shawnee ECS Woodland Elementary	
	1994 Cherokee Elementary Independence Elementary	
	2003 Central Office Plains Junior VanGorden Elementary	
	2008 East Freshman	
		
		
		
		
		
		
		
		

COMING UP...

As part of the partnership through ELPP, the State will conduct a new enrollment study, as well as new assessments of Lakota's buildings.

A MESSAGE FROM THE *Treasurer*

Lakota's dedication to fiscal responsibility is not just something we say; it's a promise to our taxpayers and one of our core principles. With 57% of our revenue sourced from taxpayer contributions, we recognize the weight of this responsibility. Every decision we make is guided by the singular purpose to deliver a personalized, future-ready learning experience for every student, while honoring the trust placed in us by our community.

Our May 2024 five-year forecast does not include an operating levy. In fact, it has been over 10 years since Lakota has asked our community for financial support on the ballot. This is a testament to the dedication of Lakota Local Schools to our taxpayers.

We are proud to have been honored with our 24th consecutive Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada, our 24th consecutive Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO), and our 10th consecutive Auditor of State Award with Distinction. Additionally, Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) marked our 12th consecutive year with a balanced budget.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Although a spending deficit is projected for FY25, Lakota's financial health remains strong, with a healthy cash balance amounting to just over six months' worth of funds readily available at the end of the fiscal year. In addition, the District's "rainy day" fund is \$4.7 million, a testament to Lakota's resilience and ability to weather most unforeseen events.

Please visit our website to learn more about Lakota's finances, including Ohio Checkbook, which we introduced during the 2023-2024 school year. This is just another example of how WE are committed to transparency with our community.



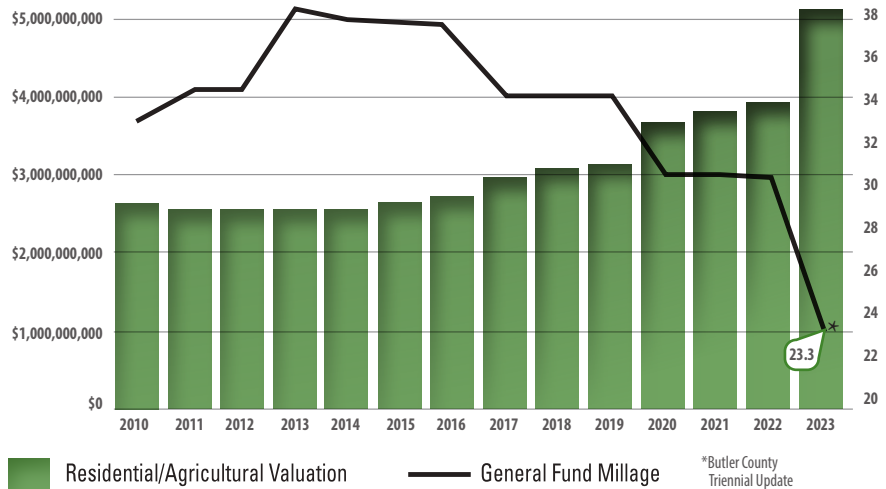
Scan to visit the finance website.

Adam Zink
Treasurer/CFO

EFFECT OF HOUSE BILL 920

House Bill 920 ensures that Ohio school districts collect the same amount in local tax revenue as the year prior by increasing or decreasing effective millage.

TAX YEAR RESIDENTIAL/AGRICULTURAL VALUATION VS. GENERAL FUND EFFECTIVE TAX MILLAGE



DID YOU KNOW...



Did you know that the general fund effective mills collected by Lakota have dropped below pre-levy numbers?

Scan the QR code to learn more about the impact millage and valuation have on Lakota's general operating fund.



What is a Mill?

A Mill is the annual tax rate applied to an assessed value of property.

1 Mill = \$1 for every \$1,000 of assessed value*

*Assessed value is calculated at 35% of appraised property value. These values are on file at the Butler County Auditor's Office.

\$100,000 | ASSESSED VALUE OF HOME

TAKE 35% OF PROPERTY VALUE

\$35,000 | TAXABLE VALUE

DIVIDE BY 1000 FOR TAX PER MILL

\$35 | TAX PER MILL



COMING UP...

Lakota Local Schools launches PaySchools Central district-wide for the 2024-2025 school year. This new electronic payment system replaces EZpay, which the company acquired. Additionally, after ESSER funds expired, school fees return for the 2024-2025 school year.

WE are **Fiscally Responsible**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN 2023-2024



93%

rate district communications average to excellent (fall 2023 community survey)



181

news articles posted to the district website



432

unique Peachjar e-flyers delivered



1.8 million

website visits



32,013

social media followers



2,556

participants in district surveys



4.4 million

email messages delivered



51%

average open rate for district e-news



472,000

total reach on Facebook & Instagram (unique users on each platform)



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

For the 12th consecutive year, Community Conversations gave the Lakota School Board and district leaders an opportunity to get feedback and lead discussions about important topics like Lakota's special education and gifted services.

THOUGHT EXCHANGE

ThoughtExchange continued to be a valuable online platform for regularly gathering input on different topics and helping inform district decisions. The unique tool, used five times last year in addition to two more traditional surveys, encourages participants to respond to a single question and then rate others' thoughts according to how strongly they agree.

LIGHT UP LAKOTA

Lakota's second annual "Light Up Lakota" event in the spring allowed parents, students, staff and the community to share in the great things happening around Lakota.

All 23 Lakota schools, plus the preschool program, participated in the showcase to spotlight a special program at each building. Plus, live student performances and presentations added to the interactive experience.

PHILANTHROPY

Lakota partners with countless local and national causes all year long.

Last fall's district-wide food drive matched the previous year's record-breaking total, bringing in approximately 27,500 items for our partners at Reach Out Lakota (pictured left).

Several Lakota schools also participated in Reach Out Lakota's Can Creations competition, building creative sculptures out of nearly 6,000 items they collected (pictured right).

Lakota's annual staff giving campaign, "Casual for a Cause," amounted to just over \$11,500 in donations, awarded to six organizations.



WE are In This Together

encouraging PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Lakota is committed to the professional growth of staff beyond the eight district professional development days.

Lakota's Team Inspire consists of 22 teacher leaders who are dedicated to the ongoing growth and professional development of Lakota's 1000+ staff members. The team provides training and instructional coaching within the classrooms and schools in addition to designing and facilitating district-wide professional development days.

Learning opportunities occur within the schools or in small professional networks – and by learning via on-demand tutorials or in real time alongside a teacher leader. This training allows teachers to quickly respond to student needs.



A 2024 professional development (PD) staff survey showed that Lakota teachers applied their learning in the classroom 10% more in 2023-2024 than the previous year. This is attributed to the emphasis on providing professional learning opportunities between PD days.



Watch videos of employees sharing their Lakota experiences.

DISTRICT-LEVEL PD:

- Mandatory safety and security trainings;
- Training to support the District's strategic goals and initiatives;
- Opportunities for staff to collaborate and learn from other educators in the District; and
- Vendor-specific training to support new curriculum and resources.

BUILDING-LEVEL PD:

- Optional PD sessions supporting district and building goals;
- Job-embedded classroom support in the form of coaching cycles;
- Thought partners for planning and problem-solving; and
- Book studies and optional badges earned through Challenge Accepted (see below).



WE are In This Together

ABOUT OUR STAFF

2,061 total employees

70% of staff have worked at Lakota at least five years

76% of teachers have earned advanced degrees

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED PLATFORM INTRODUCED

A new spin on Lakota PD called Challenge Accepted was introduced in the 2023-2024 school year. This credentialing platform allows teachers to earn digital badges and credentials for the work they do throughout the year. Badges and pathways were designed to align with district PD needs.



SUMMER LEARNING

Now in its 10th year, Lakota offers weekly summer support for staff.

During these sessions, teachers work with teacher leaders and other colleagues to plan, design, learn and collaborate for the upcoming year.

Lakota also provided support to building administrators through regular summer sessions as well as a week-long bootcamp. Topics included collaboration, book studies, spotlight sessions, out-of-district opportunities and vendor credentials.

108 total badges spanning grades K-12

8,716 badges awarded last year



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NATIONAL AND GLOBAL HONORS



Both Lakota East and Lakota West Cyber Academy programs were ranked fourth and 12th, respectively, in the pool of 400-plus high school cyber programs ranked by the **National Cyber League Fall 2023 Power Rankings**. Both schools' best performing teams also placed in the top two percent when up against the larger field of nearly 4,700 teams of college- and professional-level competitors.



The Lakota East Dance Team won **state championships** in both the Large Gameday and Hip Hop dance categories. They also earned first runner-up in Medium Division 1 Gameday and 10th in Small Varsity Hip Hop at the **national competition**.



After landing five state titles, Lakota had a strong showing at the **HOSA International Leadership Conference**. First place awards went to Lakota West Team 1 (Sunitvir Tanunque, Keya Nevagi, Zahra Wasanwala and Prithika Padmanabhan, pictured above) in the Anatomage Team competition, West's Ishanvi Karthikeyan in the National Geographic Test and East's Mira Seppi in Epidemiology. Several others landed top 10 honors.



Lakota West's Evelyn Prodoehl won the **Girls Ohio High School State Cross Country title** and was named **Gatorade's Ohio Cross Country Runner of the Year**. She also won the **RunningLane National Cross Country Championships**.



Lakota East's Singing Thunderhawks brought home top honors from their competition at Festival Disney. Lakota Eastside Voices won the **Concert Choir Gold Award** for best overall choir and the **Best in Class** award for high school choirs. The Women's Black and Silver ensemble won the **Concert Choir Silver Award**. Chloe Fischer earned the award for **Outstanding Student Accomplishment** for her clarinet accompaniment.

Based on a combination of writing, reporting, design, business practice and editing excellence, Lakota East High School's Spark news magazine earned its 17th **National Scholastic Press Association (NSPA) Pacemaker Award**.

VanGorden Elementary third grader Lorelai Kennard finished first in Ohio and tied for third place nationally in the **Noetic National Math Competition**.

Four Lakota Central High School students had works selected for **StoryCorps' "The Great Listen"** project; the students' works have a permanent place among the Library of Congress's