

A Look Around Lakota



Here **W** **E** Go

The excitement is building as Lakota Local Schools prepares to welcome back its 16,500 students on Aug. 16.

New initiatives are ready to launch during the 2018-19 school year, building upon the already robust education students receive at Lakota.

All-day kindergarten is now available to all our youngest learners and all students in grades K-6 will participate in six specials that rotate every day. The focus of these new classes will be: art, physical education, music, technology, STEAM² Lab (called Wonderlab in the early childhood schools) and health and wellness.

At the district's four junior schools, all students will receive a Chromebook as part of the 1:1 technology pilot this fall. They will also have access to Innovation Hubs, the redesigned media centers that will be an extension of the classroom and offer a space that encourages creativity and collaboration in conjunction with digital tools for learning.

District administrators have also begun to reimagine the high school experience to better prepare students for life after graduation. More information about new initiatives at the high schools will be announced in the coming months.


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





what's trending @LakotaDistrict

Family & Parent CommUnity University
Beginning this fall, Lakota's Outreach, Diversity & Inclusion department invites parents and community members to its new Family & Parent CommUnity University. The free monthly learning sessions are led by expert Lakota staff and other community partners. Sessions range from mental health and digital competency to diversity training and testing. Join us Saturday, Sept. 22 from 8 a.m. to noon at Miami University Voice of America for an engaging first session about navigating Lakota and all its resources. #WEareLakota



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Welcome Center Relocates
Lakota's Welcome Center, previously known as the Enrollment Center, relocated to the district's Central Office over the summer. New or current families can now visit 5572 Princeton Road to enroll or make address or custody updates. A previous meeting space at Central Office was restructured to accommodate the Welcome Center. "Besides creating some operational efficiencies, the new location is more accessible to our community and creates a much more attractive entry point for our new families," said Lakota Superintendent Matthew Miller. #WEareLakota



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FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Here WE Go!

Welcome back! From the moment our students leave for the summer, we begin counting the days until their return in August. While we would always prefer to have our students in the classroom, we understand the importance of summer break and having the opportunity to relax.

While teachers typically have the summer off to recharge for the next school year, more than 300 Lakota teachers participated in book clubs during break. It was an opportunity to collaborate with their peers and gain insight and ideas to continue improving the student-centered education we offer at Lakota.

At a district level, this

summer was spent preparing for the start of the 2018-19 school year. In addition to painting and reconfiguring Heritage and Hopewell to ensure the buildings are ready for the return of our youngest learners, we were also moving classrooms, paving parking lots and completing many other projects along the way.

Our district administrators were busy putting the final touches on our new initiatives that will begin this fall: all-day kindergarten, six daily specials for grades K-6 and the 1:1 pilot program for our junior schools. We have also begun to focus on the high school experience and how we can continue to build on the strong educational foundation that is already in place.

As educators, we know – and we heard during our

40-plus community conversations last year – how important relationships are between students and teachers. I have encouraged our staff to spend the first two days of school setting the tone for the year instead of jumping right into classwork: to focus on building relationships with the students and developing a culture in the classroom that can be nourished throughout the year.

Enjoy the last few days of summer break. WE are excited to have everyone back in the classrooms for the 2018-19 school year. Get ready, because here WE go!

Matthew J. Miller
MATTHEW J. MILLER
Superintendent



LAKOTA LEARNING BLOG Putting Relationships First

In the words of Aristotle: "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all." It is with this philosophy that Superintendent Matthew Miller encouraged every Lakota teacher to plan for their first two days of class in the same way. His direction: Don't even think about your curriculum. Be intentional about building meaningful relationships with your students and the learning part will come naturally.

In the district's first blog post of the new school year, Lakota West language arts teacher Bethany Dunn reflects on how relationship-building has defined her teaching style and classroom dynamic. Moreover, she shares some strategies to help parents replicate the same approach at home.

Lakota educators are the expert voices behind the "Inside Lakota Learning" blog, which launched last school year. The tool supports Lakota's deep belief that learning doesn't stop at school and that parents are as much partners in the learning experience as trained educators and their students. Our guest bloggers share best practices about their passion for learning, building a bridge to our broader Lakota learning community.

Stay tuned for more posts as the year continues. Visit lakotaonline.com/inside_lakota_learning to catch up on former posts and subscribe to future alerts.

FROM THE TREASURER

Strong Finances Support Safety, Security Measures



Jenni L. Logan
Treasurer/CFO

Lakota Schools continues to be a good financial steward of the tax dollars our community so generously supported with the November 2013 levy. As we have shared, the latest five-year financial forecast predicts no spending deficit in Lakota's five-year future and our cash balance continues to climb. We continue to stretch these tax dollars by re-prioritizing spending to enhance student learning, saving in some areas to give us flexibility in others, all while stretching every penny we can.

One area that will always be our top priority is the safety and security of our students and staff. At its June 28 regular meeting, the

Lakota Local Schools Board of Education voted unanimously to withdraw from the proposed county-wide safety and security levy, initiated by the Butler County Educational Service Center in response to Senate Bill 226. The decision to withdraw from the levy is a direct result of the district's healthy financial position.

The 2013 levy has allowed us to enhance the safety of the infrastructure of our buildings and increase the number of school resource officers provided in partnership with the Butler County Sheriff's Office and the West Chester Township Police Department. As these plans continue to evolve, our strong financial position will

enable us to continue to build our multi-layered approach to the safety and security of our students and staff.

It is always our goal to be transparent and factual about how your tax dollars are being spent and how your return on investment compares to that of our neighboring school districts. Our second annual Financial Prospectus was distributed to our community members in May to provide a deeper review of Lakota's finances. Should you have any questions about the finances of Lakota Local Schools, please feel free to contact me.

JENNI L. LOGAN
Treasurer/CFO

Safety, Security Remain Top Priority

The safety and security of Lakota's students and staff is always the top priority. That's why the District Safety Committee meets regularly to review and update protocols, as needed.

Recently, Lakota announced the implementation of a new visitor management system called Raptor. All visitors will be required to have their driver's license scanned for an instant background check. Volunteers working independently with students will be asked to pay \$15 for a more comprehensive check. This replaces the previously required \$55 background check through the Bureau of Criminal Investigations.

Lakota will also be adding eight school resource officers this school year – enough for full-time coverage on each school campus.

In April, the district announced the SaferOH anonymous 24-hour tip line. Information can be shared with school officials and authorities by calling or texting 844-SaferOH. The tip line is another way for district administrators to learn about potential threats to student safety before they happen.

A second option to alert authorities about immediate threats is through Lakota's Text-a-Tip program. Although not anonymous, students are able to text information directly to 911. Now entering its third year, the program was made possible through a partnership with the Butler County Sheriff's Office,

initiated by Lakota's District Parent Council. Both tip lines help to promote the "see something, say something" message.

Safety and security in Lakota also includes the mental health of our students. Following last year's launch at the high schools, Lakota's four junior schools have already begun planning for their own Hope Squads. Furthermore, building upon last year's pilot at Lakota West, access to mental health services will expand to include more buildings through the district's partnership with MindPeace. Additional efforts, which have not been announced publicly for safety reasons, are being reviewed and implemented as well.



Lakota East High School's Hope Squad

Ice Cream Social for New Families

The annual ice cream social for new families, scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 15 from 1-3 p.m., will take place at Heritage Early Childhood School (5052 Hamilton Mason Road). Make connections with district leaders, families and community organizations to learn about what resources and opportunities exist around Lakota. All family members are welcome to come and enjoy ice cream sundaes, live music, games and activities. #WEareLakota #WEareCommunity



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First Day Photo Contest

Lakota staff, students and parents are invited to help celebrate a new school year with our First Day Photo Contest. Post your first day photos to social media using #WEareLakota and tagging Lakota on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. The three photos with the most votes, or "likes," after a full week of school will be our winners.



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Communication Sign-Up

Lakota delivers important school and district news and announcements via email, phone and text message. Our mass notification system updates automatically to reflect a child's new school or grade level and allows parents, staff and community members to customize their preferences for receiving emergency, weather-related or general news. Visit lakotaonline.com/communication to check your contact information and update your preferences.




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Important Back-to-School Dates

AUG. 14

ECS Open Houses
5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Elementary Open Houses
6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

AUG. 20

Kindergarten Phase-in Day
Varies by location.

SEPT. 5

First Superintendent Coffee Chat
1:00 p.m.
Coffee Beans & Brew

AUG. 16

First Day of School
(grades 1-12)

Hopewell Junior Fanfare
7:10 a.m.

Kindergarten Phase-in Day
Varies by location.

SEPT. 3

No School
Labor Day

SEPT. 15

District-wide Ice Cream Social for New Families
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Heritage ECS

AUG. 17

Kindergarten Phase-in Day
Varies by location.

Adena Elementary Fanfare
8:00 a.m.

SEPT. 4

No School for Students
Teacher Professional Development Day

SEPT. 22

First Community University Session: Navigating Lakota
8:00 a.m. - noon
Miami University
Voice of America



New School Hours for 2018-19

Early Childhood Schools:

All-day KG-2 9:10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Half-Day Kindergarten 9:10 - 11:55 a.m.
Preschool 9:10 - 11:55 a.m. (morning) | 1:15 - 4:00 p.m. (afternoon)

Elementary Schools (3-6): 8:20 a.m. - 3:10 p.m.

Junior Schools (7-8): 7:25 a.m. - 2:10 p.m.

Freshman Campuses (9): 7:15 a.m. - 2:25 p.m. (no change)

High Schools (10-12): 8:05 a.m. - 2:40 p.m. (no change)