

A Look Around Lakota



WE are Personalized

WE recognize that every student learns in different ways. That's exactly why personalized learning is a priority across Lakota, giving our students in grades K-12 more choice and ownership in their learning experience.



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#WEareLakota

WE are Future Ready

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

At Lakota Local Schools, everything WE do is designed to provide a future-ready, student-centered learning experience for every single child.

The steps we use to accomplish this began by asking a question of ourselves, our students, our parents, our staff and our community: what skills, characteristics and attributes should our students graduate with in order to be prepared for success? From that question came Lakota's Portrait of a Graduate.

Beginning with our youngest learners, our students are being taught skills such as how to be persistent and adaptable problem-solvers and critical thinkers, as well as effective collaborators and engaged community members. These skills are embedded in our curriculum and instruction; it's called personalized learning.

This year, our teachers are using four personalized learning techniques that we call "plays." Inside this edition of "A Look Around Lakota," you'll be able to learn more about flipped classrooms, flexible playlists, project based learning and station rotation. This approach allows us to reach different types of learners.



Students are more engaged in their learning because we are giving them more choice.

In looking at the future of Lakota Local Schools, we must envision what our classrooms need to look like in five, 10 or 20 years. Will our current buildings and classrooms meet the educational needs of our students? Do rows of desks promote collaboration and communication? As part of the creation of our master facilities plan, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) requires that we engage an educational visionary to help us

answer questions like these and more. In the coming months, I encourage you to participate in the many community discussions about this important topic so that we can build a master facilities plan that best suits the needs of our students and community.

Matthew J. Miller
MATTHEW J. MILLER
 Superintendent



Matthew J. Miller
 Superintendent

Join Us!
 First Master Facilities Plan
 Community Informational Meeting
 Jan. 28 | 6-8 p.m.
 Hopewell Junior School

what's trending @LakotaDistrict

Registration Season Kicks Off

@LakotaPreschool kicks off the registration season, inviting new #WEareLakota families to submit their lottery application for the district's tuition-based program by Jan. 31. K-12 online registration for the 2020-2021 school year opens Feb. 1. Learn more and get updates at lakotaonline.com/enroll. #WEareWelcoming



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Miller Joins Gov. DeWine's School Safety Group

@LakotaSuper was named to Governor Mike DeWine's new School Safety Working Group. The group is led by the Ohio Department of Public Safety to advise the Ohio School Safety Center, a new statewide office focused on assisting educators and law enforcement in preventing, preparing for, and responding to threats and acts of violence, including self-harm. #WEareLakota #studentsafety

From the Lakota Board of Education | Q: How is personalizing



Kelley Casper

A: "Personalized learning not only benefits our students, but our staff as well. It allows our students to focus on learning styles that work best for them while helping them step out of their comfort zones. It also gives students input into their education plan, making them more engaged in the learning process. I believe that challenging our teachers to try the four 'plays' allows them to also step out of their comfort zones. It renews their passion for teaching and learning."



Brad Lovell

A: "For years, Lakota has embraced the challenge of building deep relationships with our students and families. This foundation has created momentum around developing personalized learning experiences for our students to meet their individual abilities and passions. As we move forward, I see personalized learning as the key ingredient in creating the love for life-long learning in our students, ultimately setting them up for future success beyond high school."



Lynda O'Connor

FROM THE TREASURER

WE are Fiscally Responsible

"WE are fiscally responsible" is not only a pillar of Lakota's mission statement, but something that I exercise daily as the treasurer/CFO of this district.

Lakota Local Schools is in sound financial shape. For five consecutive years, we have received a "clean audit" by the State of Ohio, one of the highest financial honors public entities can receive. We have seen a balanced budget for seven consecutive years and are projected to continue this trend for an additional three. This has allowed our cash balance to grow. In fact, our projected cash balance at the end of this year is over seven months of operating funds.

While a projected spending deficit in our operating budget is forecasted in fiscal year 2023, this does not mean that we will have to ask our taxpayers to approve an operating levy in the near future. A spending deficit simply indicates that we will need to dip into our cash reserves to offset the district's expenses. The fact that the deficit appears in year four of our five-year plan gives us time to determine what we need to do in order to return to a balanced budget.

In addition to operating funds, public school districts also have a budget for their permanent improvement funds (PI). Items included in this budget have a lifespan of at least five years. This includes facilities.

Valued at more than \$400 million, Lakota's 25 buildings are one of our most valuable assets.

The master facilities plan that we are updating in partnership with the OFCC will evaluate our current buildings and clearly outline future needs to not only maintain our buildings, but also provide learning spaces that are necessary to provide the exceptional educational experience our community has come to expect from Lakota.


As a next step in the process, and as required by the OFCC, we have applied to join the Expedited Local Partnership Program (ELPP). Once accepted, Lakota has locked in a reimbursement rate of 26 percent from the

state to help cover any future renovations or construction that are included in the master facilities plan. This is a non-binding agreement for Lakota. If adequate financial resources have not been secured within one year, the district can reapply for ELPP at a later date.

I encourage you to be on the lookout for future dates and times so that your voice can be heard in the planning process. Several community meetings and online feedback opportunities are being planned for the coming months.




Jenni L. Logan
Treasurer/CFO



JENNI L. LOGAN
Treasurer/CFO

Learn more about what it means to join ELPP.



Momentum Award

For the fourth consecutive year, Lakota received the Ohio Department of Education's Momentum Award for 2019. The same honor was extended to five individual Lakota schools, including @LakotaEndeavor, @Freedom_Lakota, @IndyPats94 and both @EAST_HAWKS and @FirebirdTweets. The annual recognition is given to districts or schools for exceeding expectations in student growth for the year. #WEareLakota

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Lakota's Summer Fun Fair March 2 & 4

Mark your calendar for March 2 (@EAST_HAWKS) and March 4 (@FirebirdTweets) from 6 to 8 p.m. Exhibitors include summer camps, learning centers, childcare facilities, athletic leagues and more. Free raffle and live performances. #WEareLakota #WEareInThisTogether

2 3

Freshman Busing Returns

The Lakota Board of Education voted unanimously to reinstate transportation services for freshman students, effective for the 2020-21 school year for students living outside of neighborhoods with walking paths or sidewalks that lead to schools. The expansion anticipates about \$1.9 million in operations funding to transport Lakota students, plus another \$825,000 to transport students within Lakota boundaries attending seven non-Lakota schools, as required by the law. #WEareLakota

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State of the Schools March 11

Lakota Superintendent Matthew Miller will deliver his community State of the Schools address on Main Street at Lakota West High School on Wednesday, March 11. All are welcome to tour a showcase of all 23 schools before Miller's public address at 7 p.m. The event will give staff, parents, students and community members a look at Lakota's current and future plans.



education benefiting our students?

A: "Personalized learning has many meanings, depending on how each district incorporates it into their system. What districts share is an end goal to allow students to 'own' their educational experience structured to highlight personal goals, strengths and interests. In Lakota, I believe this has made learning more engaging and impactful for students, while allowing educators to demonstrate and enhance their own skills. We've witnessed some great examples of classroom innovation as the process unfolds."



Todd Parnell

A: "In today's world, personalization of education is imperative. Every kid is different and has different needs. By tailoring education specifically to each student, we are allowing students to follow an educational and life path best suited for them, that keeps them engaged and excited and, most importantly, allows them to reach their fullest potential and realize their dreams."



Julie Shaffer

A: "Every student learns at a different pace. We are hearing evidence every day of staff being able to meet students where they are and move their learning to another level through various methods, depending on the child. Teachers are reinvigorated again to use their craft to transform their classrooms, targeting instruction and having students want to learn. As our future workplaces transform quickly, our education system must also."

WE are Personalized

Lakota Local Schools believes so strongly in personalized learning that it is one of the pillars in the district's Strategic Plan: WE are Personalized.

This year, teachers throughout Lakota are choosing from four different teaching methods. The "plays," as they're known around the district, give teachers new ways to reach different types of learners. "Every child learns

differently," said Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction Keith Koehne. "The intention of utilizing these four plays this year is to make the learning experience more personalized for our students."

FLIPPING THE CLASSROOM

What happens when you "flip" a classroom? Lakota West math teacher Jenny Circello can attest to the benefits of this more personalized learning approach that puts students in the driver's seat.

For starters, 100 percent of her students have passed the quizzes and tests they've taken so far this year - up from about 60 to 70 percent in previous years. And to think she's getting those results in a class that traditionally struggles with math.

"The great thing about personalized learning is that it works for all learners...because it's personal," Circello says.

But the results go far deeper than just higher test passage rates.

"Our students are actually taking ownership of their learning," said Scott Rooks, an intervention specialist at Lakota West who co-teaches with Circello to assist students with special needs. "They are responsible for staying on track. They know their weekly goals and it's on them to say when they're ready to take a test."

A flipped classroom, Circello explains, stands in stark contrast to the "traditional" lecture style she used to use with her students. Instead, she has transformed her 30-minute lectures into 5-10 minute videos that students can watch and re-watch until they understand the concept.

"It basically provides my math lessons 'on demand' for my students. It's like Netflix for math," she explains.

Lakota East High School's chemistry teachers are experimenting with the flipped classroom model this year across all their honors classes. While their videos handle the conceptual "why does something happen" part of a lesson, they've been able to shift their precious daily 50 minutes together toward actually applying what they've learned.

"Instead of spending our time together shoveling content at them," says East Chemistry teacher Liz Gosky, "I can work my way around the room and address their individual questions and struggles."

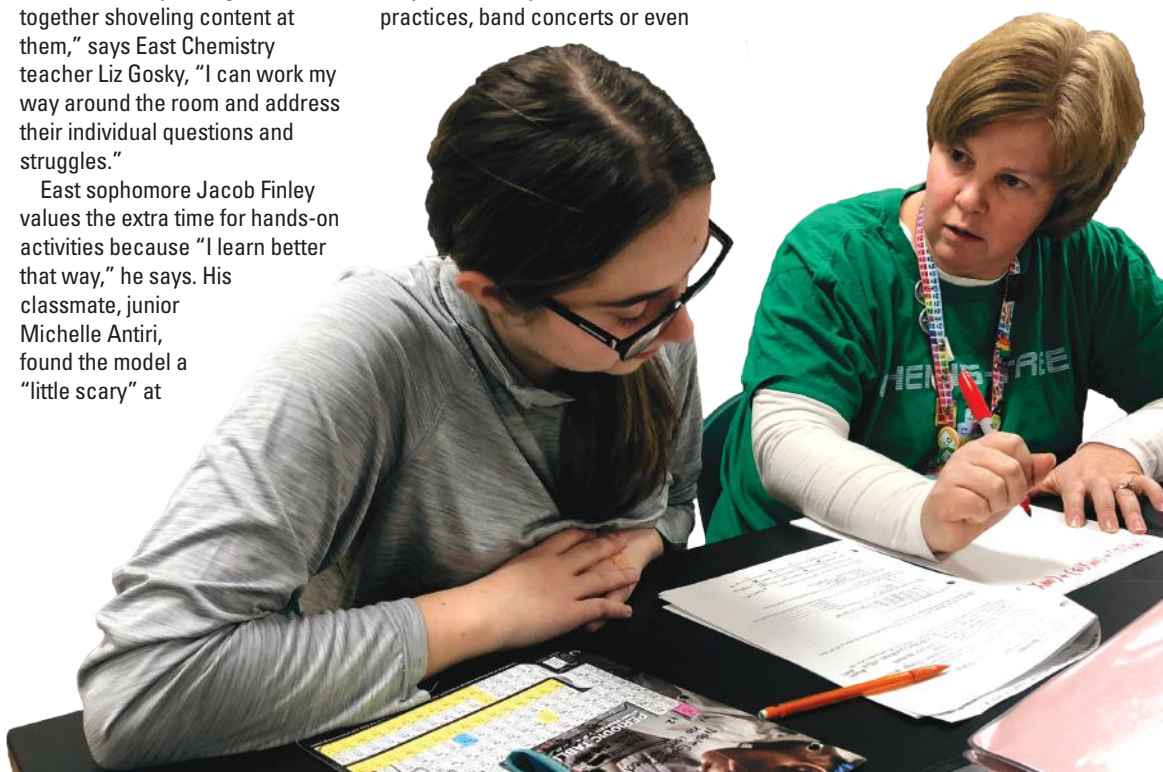
East sophomore Jacob Finley values the extra time for hands-on activities because "I learn better that way," he says. His classmate, junior Michelle Antiri, found the model a "little scary" at

first, but has grown to appreciate the extra interaction and individualized attention she gets from her teacher.

One of Gosky's teaching partners, John Severns, has noticed some of his overstretched students taking advantage of the option to pace their own learning. That might mean watching videos ahead of time when they know they have a busy week of practices, band concerts or even

projects in other classes.

Circello's math students appreciate the opportunity to set their own pace. "It gives you more independence," said Lakota West sophomore Cherish Stephens. "Everybody's not always going to be there to help you. Sometimes, you have to learn it on your own, so it does make sense to start that early."



THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM | HOW IT WORKS



ON-DEMAND LESSONS



1:1 IN-CLASS SUPPORT

HOW IT'S PERSONALIZED

- Self-paced learning ("On Demand" education)
- More individualized teacher support

From flipped classrooms and station rotations, to flexible playlists and project based learning, lessons are being presented in new ways that encourage students to take ownership of their learning.

In this section, you'll get a front row seat to how these four plays are leading to higher engagement, more real world learning and more student choice.

PROJECT BASED LEARNING

"You know students are engaged when they ask to give up extra recess and lunch time," said Independence Elementary teacher Laura Brown.

That's what happened when she introduced project based learning (PBL) into her science classes by posing this open-ended question: "How can we, as ecologists, help convince the community to save the bee population?"

Through this PBL assignment, the fifth-graders were given freedom to dive deeper into a topic and empowered to make choices from start to finish. They chose which research resources to use, which type of project to create and how to present what they learned.

Gabriel Blenman enjoyed learning through PBL and explained it this way: "You try and search up one specific detail and in the end you come out with many more than you expected. You just grow so much."

Brown has seen her students not only master science curricular standards, but also learn independence, time management and even how to use technology.

With PBL, many times the projects don't end when the assignment is over. The learning continues when students implement their ideas within their school – and in the community.

Students and teachers alike are learning so much through PBL.

That's why Brown and so many Lakota teachers – at all grade levels – are using this powerful tool that focuses on student choice and ownership.

Over at Hopewell Early Childhood School, kindergarten teacher Elizabeth Farris posed a simple question to her kindergartners: "What could we add to our learning space to use during play workshop?"

From there, students took the lead on suggesting different options, voting on them, coming up with a list of required materials and problem-solving how they would obtain them. The result: a new ice cream shop, with everything from the money to the menu to the drive-thru window created by the students.

"This project was 100 percent student-led," Farris said. "Projects like these allow children to take ownership over their learning and allow them to learn in an engaging and authentic way."

"This kind of hands-on, student-led learning as early as kindergarten is exactly what it's going to take to help prepare students for life after graduation," said Lakota's Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Keith Koehne. "We can't expect them to think critically and collaborate in a work setting if we don't throw them into those types of situations early on and regularly."



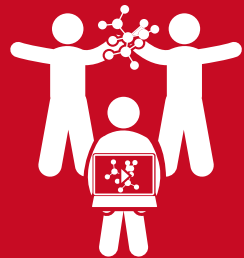
PROJECT BASED LEARNING | HOW IT WORKS



TEACHER DELIVERS CONTENT



INDEPENDENT OR GROUP WORK



SHOW LEARNING IN ANY FORMAT

HOW IT'S PERSONALIZED

- Student-directed learning or choice
- Accommodates different learning styles

THE FLEXIBLE PLAYLIST

Personalized learning does not discriminate on the basis of grade level or subject area. Case in point: Lisa Sizemore's second grade class at Wyandot Early Childhood School.

As part of Lakota's move toward more personalized learning, Sizemore introduced flexible playlists into her Math Workshop this year. Playlists, she explains, give students a list of options from which they can choose, each activity reinforcing a skill or concept they've learned in a different way.

"I started using the flexible playlist because I thought it was a fantastic way for my students to have choice in not only what they're learning, but how they learn it," Sizemore shared.

One of her recent playlists encouraged her students to spend their workshop time where they needed it most: adding and subtracting, number sequence, telling time or counting change.

"I like being able to choose because I can save the best for last," said Wyandot second-grader Calvin Able. "I always like to save the best for last, but some people like to save the best for first."

Besides the element of student choice, the strategy allows students to pace their own learning and also get more individualized attention from their teacher whose time spent delivering content can be shifted to circulating around the room. Sizemore has seen a significant spike in student engagement and growth.

"I've been really surprised at how well the children have taken to it," Sizemore said. "I wasn't really certain that they would do well with all the freedom, but I see a lot of smiles and laughter and I think they really enjoy the choice."

Lakota East High School's guidance department even found an application for flexible playlists earlier this year, completely transforming their senior meetings. Students had the opportunity to explore options for their future, picking and choosing from different playlists that supported one of the 4Es: Enrollment, Employment, Enlistment or Entrepreneurship.

Students planning to enroll in higher education could find more information about the Common Application, financial aid and researching colleges, while a student interested in starting their career or following an entrepreneurial path could take a career interest survey or read a library of articles about in-demand jobs. Each playlist served as a checklist or tool for evaluating each possible pathway.

East counselor Tara Bessler said that students are much more likely to engage when they can see how the content directly impacts their life.

"Allowing personalization and choice can help students explore things that interest them and expose them to things they may have never stumbled upon themselves," Bessler said.

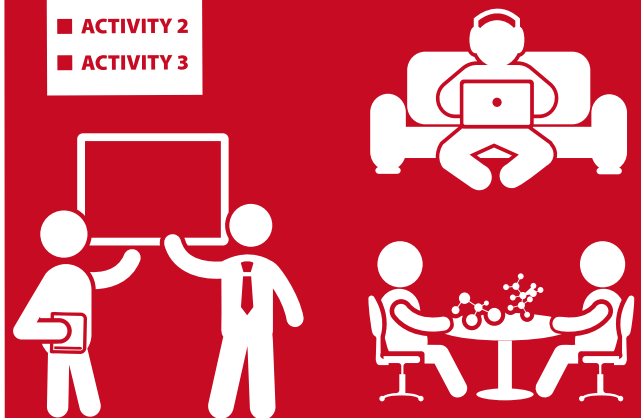


THE FLEXIBLE PLAYLIST | HOW IT WORKS

CHOOSE FROM:

- ACTIVITY 1
- ACTIVITY 2
- ACTIVITY 3

STUDENTS CHOOSE FROM LISTED ACTIVITIES
– OR EXPAND ON THEM – TO HONE THEIR SKILLS



HOW IT'S PERSONALIZED

- Opportunity to individualize based on skill level
- Student-directed learning or choice
- Self-paced learning



STATION ROTATION

Collaboration doesn't just occur while working on projects in Lakota classrooms. It's happening on any given day through station rotation.

Just as the name suggests, students rotate in small groups among several stations, completing different activities at each one. "The students have different goals or objectives they have to meet at each station," explained Heather Blaylock, a science teacher at Plains Junior School.

"I think it's a fun way to engage in learning," remarked Plains seventh-grader Bryce Hammons. "Doing stations is hands-on and uses visuals to learn more." Hammons also noted that station rotation benefits visual learners by using activities to reinforce lessons.

While science may seem like a natural fit, station rotation can be used successfully across subjects.

Case in point: American Sign Language (ASL) class.

Using what they call "lab days," ASL teachers at both Lakota East and West high schools use station rotations to encourage collaboration between their students and even across the district. "We're using lab days to create a real world learning experience," said Lakota West teacher Jessica Frye. "You can't always turn to chapter three in the book. Lab days give students an opportunity to be immersed in the language."

Just how is that happening? Students rotate through various stations to practice finger-spelling, interacting with guest teachers and using Skype to speak to students across Lakota, with the volume muted, of course.

"Skype is my favorite station," said Lakota West junior Kathryn Vonderhaar, who appreciates practicing with East students. She

also likes that students from both ASL I and II collaborate and learn from one another during lab days.

Just like other personalized learning plays, station rotation lends itself to giving teachers more one-on-one time with their students. While Lakota East ASL teacher Jessica Snyder takes advantage of working with small groups to focus on individual students and how they sign, Blaylock is rotating from station to station, answering questions as they arise.

Blaylock and Frye have seen the benefits in their classrooms with more engagement and interaction with one another that wouldn't necessarily happen in a traditional classroom setting.

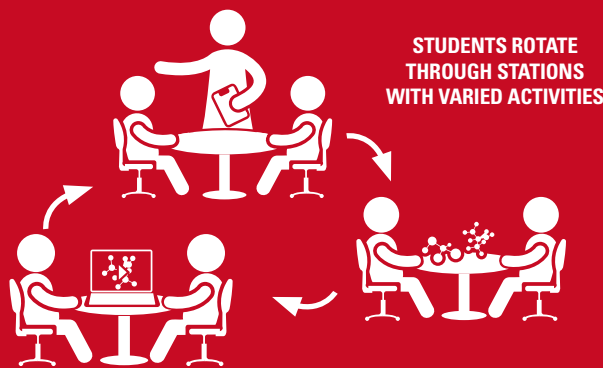
"Instead of asking someone you know 'what is your name,' you're actually speaking to someone you may not know during lab days," Frye said.

"I think it's a fun way to engage in learning," remarked Plains seventh-grader Bryce Hammons.

"Doing stations is hands-on and uses visuals to learn more."



STATION ROTATION | HOW IT WORKS








HOW IT'S PERSONALIZED

- Accommodates different learning styles
- More individualized teacher support

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#WEareLakota



The Flipped Classroom
Video lessons on demand
and application in class



WE are Personalized

Personalized learning is a top priority for Lakota, but what exactly does that mean and how are students benefiting?

See some Lakota teachers' Personalized Learning "plays" in action through this continuing video series.



Flexible Playlist
Meeting students where they
are by giving them options



Station Rotation
Multiple stations accommodate
multiple learning styles



Combining "Plays"
American Sign Language teachers
collaborate across the district to
give their students a personalized
experience.



Project Based Learning
Empowering student-directed
learning through application



How can WE better communicate with you?

Lakota is using a new online platform to regularly engage our community and gather input on different topics. Participate in our first ThoughtExchange to help us better communicate with you. Simply answer our question...then rate other participants' thoughts!



Visit tinyurl.com/LakotaCommunication
or scan this code from any mobile device.
Hurry! Survey closes Jan. 27.