

Hannah's first day
of senior year



Hannah's first day
of kindergarten



Building Tomorrow's Leaders K-12

A Back-to-School Resource Guide for Parents & Residents



A New Year, A New You! Last year, these photo submissions helped us celebrate together the start of a new school year. Check out Lakota's Facebook page for details about our annual first day of school photo contest. You can use Lakota's mobile app to submit your favorite first day photo and then share it with your friends to rack up the most votes, or "likes," to win! [Facebook.com/LakotaSchools](https://www.facebook.com/LakotaSchools)

On the cover Senior year, Lakota East 2015 graduate Hannah Porter poses with a photo from her first day of kindergarten.

From the Desk of the Superintendent

Stable, Secure and Moving Forward

It's overwhelming to think about what the world will look like for this year's kindergartners - the Class of 2028. But as educators, that's how we have to think and it's a challenge we're facing head-on here at Lakota.

We've spent all summer and much of last year, even, gearing up for this next school year. We've worked hard to establish a strong sense of security and stability in our daily operations, our finances, and our strong educational programs. That way we can focus on what's most important - a solid foundation of teaching and skill-building that will prepare our kids for the world they'll live and work in.

All the district's levy commitments are now complete or underway. Especially with the uncertainty of state funding, we will continue with cost containment practices that closely evaluate programming and every staffing decision. The recently signed teacher contract is one example of our efforts to secure long-term cost savings for the district, while remaining competitive enough to recruit and retain talented staff.

I hope this piece provides you with just a glimpse of what's going on at Lakota. Please visit our website, sign up for Lakota email or attend a community conversation to stay in touch with us throughout the school year. I can't wait to see where this next year takes us.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Mantia".

Dr. Karen Mantia

Lakota Board of Education



Lynda O'Connor
President



Todd Parnell
Vice President



Ben Dibble
Member



Ray Murray
Member



Julie Shaffer
Member

Did you know?

29¢

The per-unit cost to produce and mail this piece to Lakota households and businesses.

Lakota Levy Check-Up

Instructional Technology Infrastructure Upgrade

- ✓ Wireless capacity increased district-wide
- ✓ New copper and fiber optic cabling
- ✓ New network routers
- ✓ New filters and security solutions
- ✓ Upgraded Internet capacity
- ✓ New teacher and classroom computers
- ✓ New Digital Learning Team
- ✓ Additional system support technicians
- ✓ New version of Home Access Center
- ✓ Online testing capability



Student Learning and Opportunities

- ✓ Seventh class period for grade 9
- ✓ Additional rotation of art/music/PE for grades 4-6
- ✓ Expanded career exploration options, including internships and field experiences
- ✓ Added six academic coaches
- ✓ New STEAM² courses
- ✓ New technology special for grades 1-6
- ✓ Modernized courses like AP Environmental Science and Medical Interventions
- ✓ Zero period pilot at high schools
- ✓ Preservation of current educational programs
- ✓ Expanded bus service for grades 2-6
- ✓ Family cap and fee reductions to increase extracurricular participation

Safety and Security

- ✓ Secure entrance project underway at 11 schools
- ✓ Tripled number of uniformed law enforcement officers in schools
- ✓ S.A.F.E. (Self-Defense Awareness Fundamentals Education) 10-hour course offered to senior girls

Facility Upkeep and Maintenance

- ✓ New HVAC systems at Hopewell Elementary and Hopewell Jr.

Your Back-to-School Checklist

- ✓ Sign up for **Lakota email** or update your settings before each new year - lakotaonline.com/email
- ✓ Download the new **Home Access Center mobile app** to view attendance, grades and assignments from any device - Search for "eSchoolPLUS Family" in your app store. Home Access Center is still available at lakotaonline.com/HomeAccessCenter
- ✓ Download your **school supply list** - lakotaonline.com/SchoolSupplies
- ✓ Find **bus route assignments** - lakotaonline.com/bus
- ✓ Download **breakfast and lunch menus** - lakotaonline.com/ChildNutrition
- ✓ Like Lakota's **Facebook page** - facebook.com/LakotaSchools
- ✓ Pay **student fees** - lakotaonline.com/EZPay
- ✓ Download Lakota's **mobile app** - Search for "Lakota Schools" in your app store



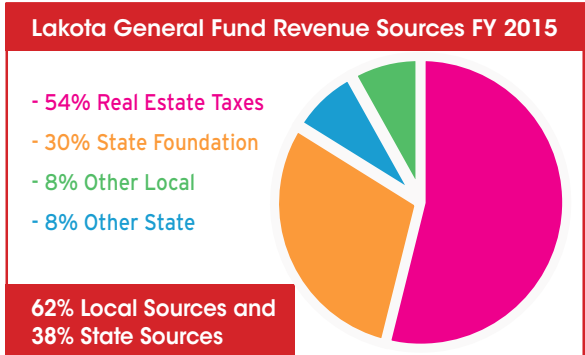
For more back-to-school questions and answers, visit lakotaonline.com

State Funding Update

How Lakota Fared in Ohio Budget

We wanted to provide an update on state funding as it affects Lakota. Unfortunately, we don't have good news.

Governor John Kasich, in signing the state biennium budget, used a line-item veto to eliminate a component of state education funding. He eliminated the Tangible Personal Property tax reimbursement provided to many school districts, including Lakota. The change will take effect in the 2016-17 school year. It means a reduction of \$3.1 million annually in our state funding beginning that year.



The governor's action came after both the Ohio House and Ohio Senate revised the governor's initial budget proposal, which called for large cuts to many school districts. The legislature instead passed a budget that ensured no school district would receive a funding cut during the two-year biennium. The legislators had responded to an outpouring of public concern about cutting funds to schools and children while the state continues to build up a "rainy day fund," now at \$1.5 billion, and is also cutting income taxes.

We are extremely disappointed in the governor's actions, in ignoring the clear wishes both of Ohio's citizens as well as the Ohio House and Ohio Senate.

We do appreciate the efforts from both the House and the Senate, which held our district harmless from the initial cuts proposed by the governor. But we are disappointed that there isn't sufficient support in the legislature to override the veto.

All of us at Lakota greatly appreciate the phone calls and emails so many of you made to advocate for our children's schools during this budget process.

We will analyze the impact this has to our budget in 2017 and beyond, and plan accordingly. And, we will continue with stringent cost-control measures that are already in place. So while there should be no significant impact on the coming school year, we must begin working immediately on how to best absorb a \$3.1 million reduction in yearly funding that will take effect one year from now.

Meanwhile, we've been working hard to prepare for the beginning of school! We look forward to welcoming our students back this month.

Sincerely,

Dr. Karen Mantia, Superintendent

Jenni L. Logan, Treasurer

A Busy Summer Makes Way for an Exciting New Year

Around Lakota, the last school bus pulling away is the signal for a long list of summer work. Here's a quick look at what this summer's "to do" list means for the new school year.



Maintenance & Construction

Summer doubles as construction and maintenance season in the school world.

To make good on another levy promise, Lakota embarked on 11 major safe and secure entrance projects. New entrances at the following schools will have visitors entering directly through the main offices.

- Creekside
- Shawnee
- Adena
- Cherokee
- Freedom
- Heritage
- Independence
- Woodland
- Ridge Junior
- Liberty Junior
- Hopewell Junior



Note: The other 11 schools are already equipped with this entrance type.

Summer is the only time of year Lakota's custodial staff can give all 22 schools' combined 2.4 million square feet a deep clean. Training on proper cleaning techniques help extend the lifespan of flooring, furniture, windows and more.



Staff Learning

Twice this summer, Lakota hosted a professional development series for staff and by staff. Each offered more than 50 course options to help staff in all 22 schools come together and share ideas for the next school year.

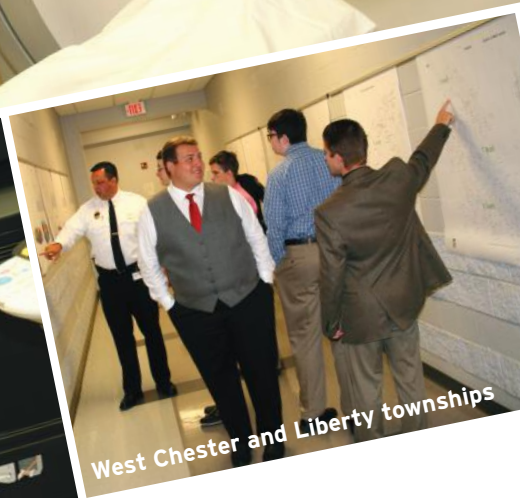
Throughout the year, hundreds of professional development opportunities were made available to staff, both in person and online. Staff participated in several pilot programs to test the effectiveness of new instructional technology tools made possible by the levy.



UC Health West Chester Hospital



ProSource



West Chester and Liberty townships

Student Learning

Just in time for summer, Lakota added new business partners to its growing list of high school internship programs. This gave students the chance to explore a whole new range of career interests over the summer - all while earning elective credit. The program will continue next year and spans such industries as engineering, medical, business operations, communications and finance.

Modernization is the driving force behind Lakota's work to make course offerings match the demands of today's workforce.



WMKV-FM radio



Emery Federal Credit Union

A Busy Hiring Season

One of the largest classes of retiring teaching professionals in Lakota's history made this summer an exceptionally busy hiring season. The increase in retirements is attributed to changes in the state retirement system. The district maintained strict evaluative staffing strategies to review each position against student support needs.

A new teacher contract transformed the approach to teacher salaries, saving the district significantly over the long-term and boosting the starting salary to help Lakota attract top talent in an increasingly competitive market. Part of Lakota's recruitment efforts centers on increased diversity, to reflect the diversity among Lakota students. Some full-time and part-time positions for both teaching and support staff are still open. Visit lakotaonline.com/employment.



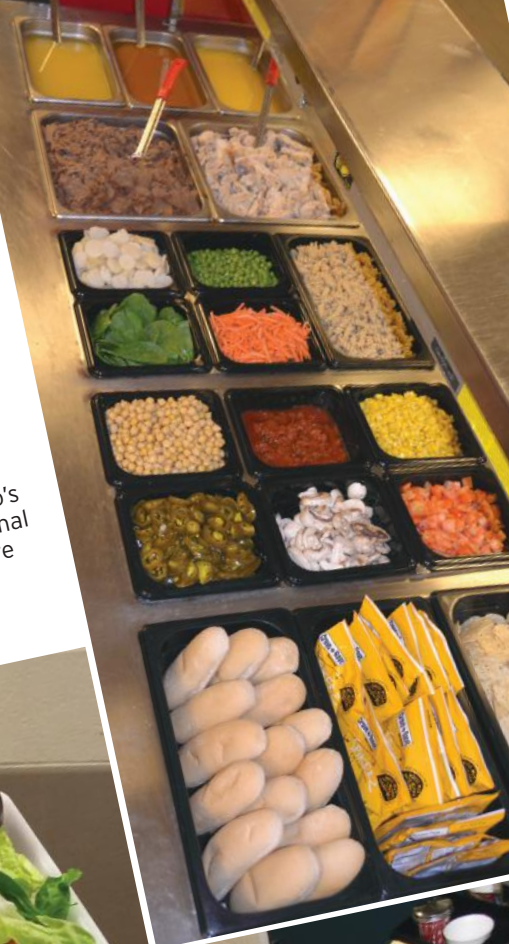
Technology & Digital Learning

- A new learning management system is being piloted this fall through a digitally enhanced high school government course. It will grow to support other blended and online student learning opportunities.
- Modernized document cameras in the K-6 schools, interactive whiteboards for grades 7-12 and modern computing devices at all schools are replacing failing, 10-year-old technology. The updated tools will support Lakota's move to more modern instruction and digital learning.
- Expanded capacity and capability for Internet resources is being achieved with continued upgrades to network infrastructure.
- In addition to art, music and PE, first- through sixth-graders will enjoy a technology special, for development of state and nationally recommended technology skills.
- A new mobile app through Home Access Center will allow parents and students to quickly and easily access grades and assignments from their mobile devices (see Lakota's website).
- For a second year, Lakota is making available to all grades 2-12 students the full Microsoft Office suite for their personal devices at no cost (see Lakota's website).
- The Lakota school board just adopted BoardDocs, a paperless solution for more open communication with the public. Visit Lakota's website to see old and new board business.

New Menu Items

Lakota continues to add innovative and still cost-conscious and healthy items to its menu. In fact, Child Nutrition Director Chris Burkhardt was recognized over the summer as a top 10 national foodservice influencer by Foodservice Director magazine.

New made-to-order lunch options like the noodle bar at the high schools will allow students to mix and match their favorite ingredients. Other food stations, like the SLURP bar for custom soup orders and the panini bar for grades 7-12, use the same serving model and follow the same healthy food guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Burkhardt also worked with Domino's Pizza to develop a healthier version of its personal pan pizza, an item that will be expanding to more K-12 cafeterias next year.



Get Involved

ATTEND an event

Everyone is welcome at every Lakota event. And with 22 schools, there's always something on the calendar. Come and see the incredible talent of our students at any athletic competition, theater performance, concert, or school-hosted program.

The "Golden Lakota" card makes it especially affordable for senior citizens to enjoy Lakota events. Lakota residents over 60 are eligible for free admission to most concerts, plays, and regular season home games. Pick up a card at either high school or request one by calling 874-5505 or emailing webmaster@lakotaonline.com.



VOICE your ideas

Lakota's Community Conversations program is entering its fourth year, a clear sign of the Lakota Board of Education's commitment to ongoing dialogue with the community. Decisions about the future of our schools need to be made as a community and with the consideration of many different voices.

With more than 100 meetings behind us, there will be many more this school year. Come share your ideas, thoughts and opinions and maybe even host a meeting!

Lakotaonline.com/LakotaListens

VOLUNTEER your time or expertise

Volunteers serve many important roles in Lakota schools. They read to younger children, assist teachers in the classroom, lead after-school programs, and help at athletic events, concerts, and plays. They tutor students in areas ranging from beginning reading and arithmetic to advanced mathematics and chemistry, and everything in between. Local businesses can even participate in Lakota's growing high school internship program.

Call the school nearest your home to find out how you can help fill a specific need, or call the Community Relations department at 874-5505. *Pictured right: "Be the Difference" is a high school character-building program that requires lots of community volunteers.*



SUPPORT the surrounding community



All year long, Lakota schools find local causes to support through service learning activities. Contact any school to let them know of a need in our community. Community outreach and school spirit are at the center of the district-wide REACH IN for REACH OUT LAKOTA food drive, returning to Lakota schools this fall for a seventh year in a row. The week-long food drive kicks off in late October, pitting Lakota's East side schools against the West side schools. The collection of canned goods and other non-perishable items concludes at this year's East vs. West football game on Oct. 30, where the community can contribute to the pile of donations, too.

CONNECT with Lakota

If you're on the go and just want to stay in tune with the Lakota community, there are lots of ways to do so.

- **Email or call:** Contact us anytime at lakota@lakotaonline.com or 513-874-5505 (Central Office).
- **Subscribe to our e-news:** Sign up for our district e-newsletter, "This Week at Lakota," at lakotaonline.com/email.
- **Like us on Facebook:** Join Lakota's nearly 6,000 followers for daily updates on your news feed.
- **Download our mobile app:** Search for "Lakota Schools" in your app store to receive weather-related notices, check headlines and events, find contact information and submit photos.
- **Submit a news tip:** Share a story about a Lakota student, teacher, event or program at lakotaonline.com/LakotaNewsTips.
- **Become a business partner:** Get notified of new bid opportunities at lakotaonline.com/email.

Use any mobile device to scan this QR code and download Lakota's mobile app.



The 2015-16 School Year At a Glance



Lakota School District
5572 Princeton Road
Liberty Twp., OH 45011-9726

- Aug. 12:** Open House for Grades 1-6*
- Aug. 13:** First Day of School for Grades 1-12
- Aug. 14/17:** Kindergarten Phase-in Days
- Sept. 7:** No School (Labor Day)
- Oct. 12-13:** No School (Fall Break)
Staff PD Day - Oct. 13
- Oct. 30:** East vs. West football game / Reach
In for Reach Out Lakota food drive
- Nov. 25-27:** No School (Thanksgiving Break)
- Dec. 21-Jan. 4:** No School (Holiday Break)
Staff PD Day - Jan. 4
- Jan. 18:** No School (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)
- Feb. 12/15:** No School (President's Day)
- March 25 - April 1:** No School (Spring Break)
- May 20:** Last Day of School for Students
- May 19:** Lakota West Graduation
- May 20:** Lakota East Graduation

*Junior high and high school
open houses vary by school.



Visit lakotaonline.com/calendar to customize
Lakota's online calendar and view events by school.