



WILLOUGHBY-EASTLAKE CITY SCHOOLS • FEBRUARY 2024

# COMMUNITY UPDATE

## Message from the SUPERINTENDENT



Dear Families and Residents:

It is hard to believe that we are almost midway through the second semester! At this time each year, I am reminded about the importance of working to be both present and attentive. We live in fast paced times. Taking the time to slow down a bit, be present and truly listen is important. During the first semester I had the chance to

engage students, parents, community members, civic leaders, business leaders and religious leaders in conversations about the future of Willoughby-Eastlake Schools. We have a proud tradition of excellence and a solid foundation to build upon as we look towards the future. I am excited about the work ahead and remain energized by our caring staff, dedicated families and amazing students.

Our engagement work and conversations will continue during the spring. We have planned two themed Coffee Talks to share information about the fiscal state of the district as well as the vision for academics and school safety. Our commitment remains to finishing our portrait of a Willoughby-Eastlake graduate by summer of 2024. Our portrait will reflect our ongoing commitment to ensuring all students are prepared for college, career, military and life upon graduation.

In addition to this, we remain committed to fostering world class performing arts programming as well as provide our students with the ability to compete, at a high level, through a wide range of athletic opportunities.

Finally, we are a learning organization. This is the most important work we do every day.

Our core commitment remains to assuring all students have the opportunity to learn and grow and become the best versions of themselves. Willoughby-Eastlake is committed to providing our students a more personalized and customized educational experience. This is the urgent work ahead. Together, if we stay focused on students, their learning and their future, anything is possible.

I believe the Willoughby-Eastlake School District is a special place to raise a family and receive an education. We appreciate your continued support and thank you for choosing to be partners in education with us.

Through the remainder of the year as we continue to advance the work, know there is nothing stopping us from leading the way in Lake County and beyond. My choice for a world class, student-centered education, is Willoughby-Eastlake! Thank you for entrusting your students to us and being a part of this important journey.

Best Regards,

*Patrick Ward*

**Patrick Ward, PhD. | Superintendent**

[#MyChoiceWilloughbyEastlake](#)



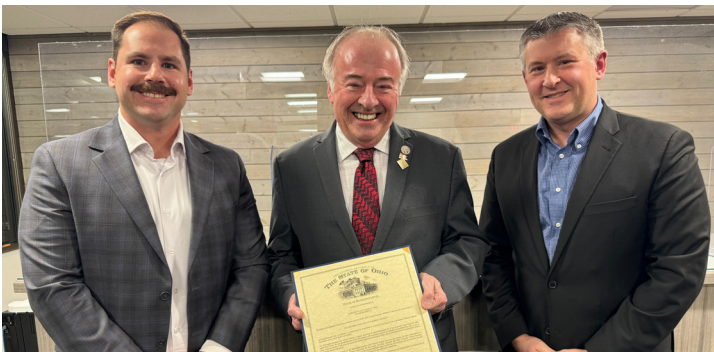
# Message from the TREASURER/CFO



Dear Families and Residents,

School finances are regulated by state and federal agencies, and audits are completed on a regular basis in order to ensure that we are in compliance with spending regulations. The district has been fortunate to be the recipient of many grants that have provided added resources to support programming and to be recognized for outstanding fiscal oversight.

- The district was awarded the Government Finance Officers Association award for the 2022-2023 school year for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The Board was honored to have State Representative Daniel Troy present a proclamation to the district in recognition of the award.



- The 2023-2024 school year is the last year for the district to spend the remaining ESSER funds, which are COVID relief funds, as well as safety grant funds. Last year, the district's federal grants were all monitored by the state consultants and were in full compliance.
- The school district is audited annually by the State of Ohio. The 2022-2023 audit was completed on December 31, 2023.
- The district's liability and property insurance contracts are being reviewed for renewal effective March 1, 2024.
- The bid process is beginning for the food services management contract and copier leases for the 2024-2025 school year.
- We wished the best to longtime Assistant Treasurer Donna Crooks who recently retired and provided great services to the district. The new assistant treasurer, Michelle Peters, began her duties on February 1, 2024.

Looking ahead to the spring, the budgeting process will begin for the upcoming school year and union contract negotiations are being scheduled.

This is an exciting time to be a part of the Willoughby-Eastlake City Schools and I look forward to meeting more community members during our upcoming districtwide community events.

Sincerely,

*Nick Ciarniello*

**Nick Ciarniello | Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer**

## GRADUATION DATES

### South High School

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

6:30 p.m.

Connor Palace  
Cleveland, Ohio

### North High School

Thursday, May 23, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Connor Palace  
Cleveland, Ohio

**Each graduating senior will receive tickets in order to invite family members.**



As part of our ongoing commitment to fostering a warm and inclusive school environment, we are excited to implement our Start with Hello program in all preschool through grade 12 buildings. Start with Hello

is a comprehensive initiative aimed at creating a positive and connected school culture. The program emphasizes the importance of building connections and fostering a sense of belonging among students, staff, and parents. Through Start with Hello, we encourage everyone in our school community to take the first step in reaching out and initiating conversations. Whether it's a simple greeting, a smile, or a friendly gesture, these small actions can have a significant impact on creating a welcoming atmosphere for everyone.

**For more information, visit the Sandy Hook Promise website at [www.sandyhookpromise.org](http://www.sandyhookpromise.org)**



# Portrait of a Graduate

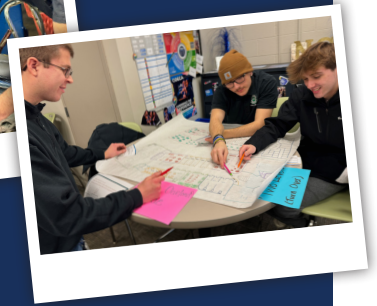
Wednesday, April 24, 2024

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

South High School

Shape the future of our graduates! The school district is seeking your voice in defining the "Portrait of a Graduate," a vision for the skills and competencies that will empower our students to succeed in college, career, the military and life. Join us for an interactive session on April 24 at South High School. Share your insights and engage in meaningful discussions as we craft our portrait. Your participation is crucial in building a shared vision that prepares our students for success beyond the classroom. Let's work together to paint a bright future for our graduates!

Visit [www.weschools.org](http://www.weschools.org), click on **COMMUNITY** beginning March 18 for more information



## Message from the ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT



As we begin planning for the 2024-2025 school year, we are thrilled to share some exciting developments that will shape the learning experience for our high school students. Our focus is on providing a personalized and customized education that equips students with the skills needed for success in college, career, and life.

Get ready for a major shift in the learning experience for our high school students. Next school year, our high school students will have access to Self-Paced courses, placing them firmly in the driver's seat of their educational journey. These courses empower students with the agency to navigate through content at their own pace. The learning experience will be tailored to each student's interests and needs, with personalized intervention, support, and enrichment from our dedicated teaching staff. We're working hard to design dozens of courses that promise to make learning not just educational, but engaging and uniquely suited to each student.

We understand that transitioning from middle school to high school can be a significant step, and we're committed to ensuring it is a more personalized and positive experience for our students. From Advanced Options Nights, where students explore Advanced Placement and College Credit Plus offerings, to our High School Experience Nights, we're dedicated to providing valuable insights and personalized information. We want to prepare our current eighth grade students for their high school journey, making the transition as successful as possible.

Our commitment to customization and personalization reflects our dedication to each student's success. We value the partnership with parents, families and the Willoughby-Eastlake community in fostering an environment where each student can thrive.

Sincerely,

Zach Weagley | Assistant Superintendent, Teaching, Learning and Leadership Development



North High School



South High School

# GOVERNOR'S MERIT SCHOLARSHIP

The State of Ohio recently established the Governor's Merit Scholarship (GMS) program. The GMS provides up to \$5,000 per year in financial assistance to high school seniors who are identified as graduating in the top 5% of their class. The state determines the number of students eligible for each school. Congratulations to the first recipients of the scholarship from North and South high schools.



North High School

Taylor Bard	Cindy Hoang	Alexander Vitello
Katia Blatnik	Cecilia Hunt	Hannah Wayts
Tyler Burgham	Benjamin Messemer	Brian Wilson Jr
Amanda Dobida	Megan Panchula	
Joseph Giordano	Cole Phares	



South High School

Isabella Andow	Nathan Foulkrod	Abby Shazivari
Joris Boeman	Allyson Leskiewicz	Layla Stanek
Calla Booher	Grady Munson	Dylan Wienhold
Andrea Brunecz	Sadie Nawrocki	
Jordyn Cesna	Sarah Schuller	

# STATE OF THE SCHOOLS

Monday, March 18, 2024  
6:00 - 7:30 p.m.  
North High School Performing Arts Center

Mark your calendars for March 18! The State of the Schools address is your chance to dive into the heart of our district's progress and potential. Join Superintendent Dr. Patrick Ward, school board members, dedicated staff, and impressive students as they unveil the exciting work happening across our schools. This isn't just a report, it's a celebration of a shared vision, highlighting achievements and outlining the path forward. It's an opportunity to be informed, inspired, and engaged in shaping a bright future for our students and community. Don't miss this chance to connect and discover the vibrant energy driving our schools forward!

*Your Journey Starts Here*

## 2024-2025 STUDENT REGISTRATION

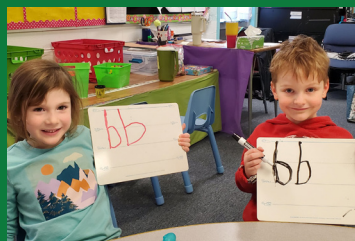
As a member of our community, we are excited to welcome your child to our schools. If you have a new student to register, our registration is now open for the 2024-2025 school year. Please visit the district's website, [www.weschools.org](http://www.weschools.org) and click on the STUDENT REGISTRATION link. The registration process and all required documents are listed. New kindergarten students are eligible if they are 5 years old on or before August 1, 2024. **We look forward to helping you start your educational journey here!**





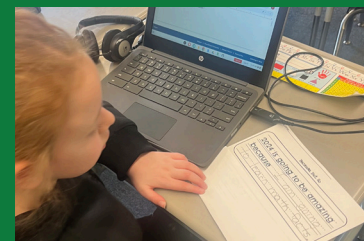
# THE W-E EXPERIENCE

The **W-E Experience** thrives in each of our schools, driving academic excellence. With a focus on well-rounded experiences, students are making advancements in education every day.



## W-E Preschool

"B" is for . . . the bright start students get at preschool! Their journey of learning starts here with early literacy and math skills, and making friends.



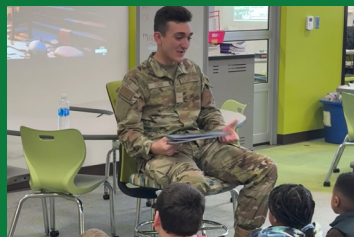
## Edison Elementary

Student writing skills have been soaring using The Writing Revolution strategies in all content areas. They start with single sentences and progress to quality paragraphs.



## Grant Elementary

Music class is always a favorite, especially when preparing for an upcoming concert. The confidence they develop is always impressive.



## Longfellow Elementary

Second grade students were treated to an exciting visit from a distinguished guest reader, United States Air Force Airman Alex Curry. He captivated the students with engaging stories.



## Royalview Elementary

Kindergarten students learn to blend, segment, and manipulate sounds using tiles that include letters. All of these strategies and skills set them up to become successful readers!



## Jefferson Elementary

Students got creative with different "snowy" mediums and integrated reading with art. They read *Snowmen at Night*, cut out their own snowman and painted their scenery.



## School of Innovation

The seventh graders at SOI studied ancient Greece. The student teams competed in STEAM-based versions of the Olympic games.



## Willoughby Middle School

The Warrior Leadership Team is developing a plan to help Edison and Grant fifth grade students transition to middle school. These student leaders will undoubtedly develop an amazing experience for their incoming sixth graders!



## Willowick Middle School

Students in sixth grade are honing their scientific investigation and microscope skills. They are getting exposure to many different types of lab equipment. Hands-on learning together is always a hit!



## Eastlake Middle School

High school athletes develop their skills and sportsmanship through strong feeder programs in the middle schools. The Eastlake and Willowick eighth grade girl's basketball teams impressed people with their skills on the court. Keep an eye on these rising athletes!



## North High School

Learning isn't limited to the traditional classroom. Flexible, collaborative spaces provide students a chance to move about and change their scenery for inspiration.



## South High School

Whether a student's passion is playing an instrument, singing, acting or dancing, personalized coaching helps students reach their potential.



## NCI-Willoughby

Career technical programs provide students with hands-on learning opportunities. Cosmetology students acquire professional and technical skills to be ready for the workforce upon graduation.



## NCI-Eastlake

The nursing students gain a lot of experience during lab practice with procedures and protocols. This ensures that they are ready when it comes time for their practicums in health care facilities.



## Willoughby-Eastlake City Schools

35353 Curtis Blvd.  
Eastlake, OH 44095

## School Board Members

Stacy Menser, President

Jaime Shatsman, Vice President

Krista Bair, Member

Ryan DiFranco, Member

Denise Verdi, Member

### Follow the district on social media!

 willoughbyeastlakecityschools

 Willoughby-Eastlake Schools

 @WESchools

## Upcoming Themed Coffee Talks

Join the superintendent and your fellow community members to hear updates and ask questions about important topics.



### WILLOUGHBY-EASTLAKE CITY SCHOOLS

Save the Dates!

COFFEE Talks

Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 6-7 p.m.

**TOPIC: District Finances**

**Nick Ciarniello, Treasurer**

Board of Education, 6 - 7 p.m.

35353 Curtis Boulevard, Eastlake

### JOIN US!

At our Coffee Talks with  
**Dr. Patrick Ward, Superintendent,**  
you will have the opportunity to:

- ☒ Discuss issues that matter to you
- ☒ Share your ideas and suggestions

**COFFEE AND WATER PROVIDED**

**QUESTIONS?**

pr@weschools.org

Wednesday, April 3, 2024, 6-7 p.m.

**TOPICS: Academics and School Safety**

**Zach Weagley, Assistant Superintendent**

**Steve Johnson, Operations Coordinator**

South High School

4900 Shankland Road, Willoughby

#MyChoiceWilloughbyEastlake