

‘State of the School’ Features School Showcase and Student Presenters

On March 13, our community was invited to our second annual State of the Schools event. It is an opportunity for our stakeholders to hear from the people who experience the Lakota education every day: our students and our teachers.

Hundreds of people attended our School Showcase prior to the presentation. We asked our principals to think of a program that is happening at their schools that they would like to share with attendees. The result was outstanding and I hope you had a chance to attend. All 23 of our buildings shared something unique as parents, grandparents, staff and community members packed Lakota East’s Main Street. From celebrating Culture Day at Endeavor to Virtual Reality at Ridge, our students and staff demonstrated their innovative programming, sharing information and answering questions - all while being entertained by the Liberty Junior jazz band and Lakota West vocal ensemble.

Following the showcase, once again, our students and staff stole the show. The State of the Schools is a time to highlight the exceptional education students in Lakota receive. While I could stand up front and tell everyone what great things are happening (and I do every chance I get), who better to tell our story than our students and staff? The audience learned about how learning spaces are changing because student voice has been empowered, how students and staff are collaborating to change the high school experience and how a new elective for our junior school students is giving students the ability to bring passion projects to life. They also heard from student leaders in our Hope Squads, the peer-to-peer suicide prevention program, and from students in the Above the Line group at Plains Junior who spend their daily advisory period helping students. They also heard first hand from a fifth grader how having daily specials is improving his day.

The evening ended with the debut of a new video series we’re calling “WE are Here for Them.” In January, we challenged our staff to think of a student who inspires them to come to work every day and be better. If you haven’t seen our first video yet, I encourage you to visit our YouTube channel or district Facebook page. We’ll be releasing grade band videos in this series throughout the spring, building to our high school teachers and students in May, near graduation. While on our YouTube channel, you can also see the State of the Schools video if you were unable to attend the event.

We’re looking forward to the students returning to school after spring break. With only one quarter remaining during the school year, there is still much teaching and learning to do. We continue to add events to our calendar, which I encourage you to look at periodically on our website, www.lakotaonline.com. Coffee chats, community conversations and CommUnity University are all included. I’d also like to mention our second annual Military Commitment Ceremony, which will take place at 7 p.m. on April 30 at the Lakota East Freshman School. During this event, we recognize our seniors who are choosing to put service before self after graduation by enlisting in the United States military or will be attending a military academy.

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