

This week, Lakota Local Schools released its second annual Quality Profile, highlighting areas not assessed by the State of Ohio's annual report card. This report showcases, and dives deeper into, six areas we believe to be high priorities for our district. It goes beyond the state-mandated testing results, because our students and our schools are more than just a number.

Academics should always be the center of a school district, and that is certainly true at Lakota. We are proud to offer a high-quality, student-centered education. Preparing our students for life after graduation includes providing options in classes, access to technology and support from teachers to explore areas of interest. It also includes real-world learning experiences, including internships with business partners in our community.

The student experience encompasses many different aspects of a student's education. Building a positive culture in our schools through our E+R=O model, character education and embracing diversity help to provide all students with a safe, secure and supportive learning environment. Through our robust extracurricular opportunities, students are able to follow their passions, whether that is through the arts, athletics or special interest clubs.

Giving back to the community through philanthropic efforts and service learning projects is part of the culture at Lakota, both for our students and our staff. We are also committed to engaging with the community through our community conversation and coffee chat programs. Furthermore, the Lakota Outreach, Diversity and Inclusion department (LODI) has created many parent engagement opportunities. This work will continue this year and I encourage you to watch our website for more information.

Safety and security is always our number one priority at Lakota. A variety of regular safety drills, increasing the number of school resource officers from 10 to 18 and the launch of our 24-hour safety tip line, 844-SAFEROH are just a few examples of our safety and security plans in the district.

Another component to the safety and security of our students is mental health. Following a successful pilot at Lakota West last year, we have expanded our partnership with MindPeace to bring a licensed mental health therapist into all of our secondary schools. Increasing access to high quality and affordable mental healthcare for our students is important and the program will continue to expand in Lakota. Additionally, through a partnership with Grant Us Hope of Greater Cincinnati, Hope Squads were formed at both high schools in the spring. This peer-to-peer suicide prevention program has seen great success nationwide and will expand to our junior schools this year.

Being fiscally responsible and transparent with our finances for us at Lakota. We focus on staying within budget and being a good steward of taxpayer dollars while ensuring that our students have the tools and resources necessary to succeed. Our financial outlook continues to be strong. As we continue to expand opportunities for our students, we are committed to maintaining an efficient budget and living within our means.

While the Quality Profile takes a look at the past school year, we continue to move forward and look to the future. The introduction of all-day kindergarten, daily specials and our 1:1 technology initiative are just a few examples of programs implemented this year.

The state report card is just one tool for measuring our progress toward meeting state-directed benchmarks. At Lakota Local Schools, we go beyond the state minimums in many areas that are not captured and shared in the report card. The Quality Profile is designed to fill that gap by showcasing our performance in areas we value most, as well as sharing our goals for future growth.

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