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# THE **Kirtland** CONNECTION

A Quarterly Newsletter for Kirtland Local Schools

Spring 2020

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RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER  
KIRTLAND, OH 44094

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## KIRTLAND TRANSITIONS TO ONLINE LEARNING TO CONTINUE EDUCATING STUDENTS

Back in March, Governor Mike DeWine sent out a series of mandates that included the closure of school buildings due to COVID-19. Social distancing has closed school buildings and silenced the cheers from the athletic fields and laughter from the playground, but our staff, students and families rallied.

Kirtland Local Schools transitioned from face-to-face instruction to providing academics through an online learning platform. As a district, our goal is to provide a meaningful learning experience and consistency of instruction. While this decision caused disruptions in day-to-day routines, our staff, students and families came together to make this unique experience a success. We remain committed to helping our families find a balance while continuing to educate our students.

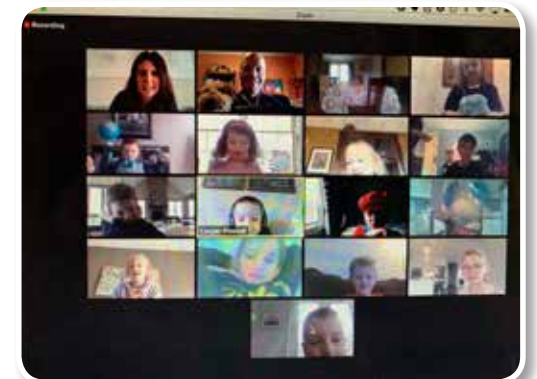
Students are logging online every school day to work on assignments. Teachers are using Google Classroom, See-Saw, Zoom and other technology programs to post assignments, give feedback, post video lessons and even have face-to-face meetings.

The school closure mandate required several difficult decisions, including the cancellation of all school-sponsored events and athletics, the cancellation of our middle school trips to Washington, D.C., and Chicago, and the possible delay of senior events, including prom and graduation. These decisions were not made lightly, but in the best interest of keeping our students, staff and families safe and healthy.

Throughout this time, our staff members have risen to the challenge and taken part in a variety of alternative lessons. Below are some examples:

- Our Kirtland Elementary School students are keeping busy with STEAM at Home, Buzz Bites and Make It challenges from K-5 STEAM teacher Bob Lasecki. Students work on their Code.org course each week, then try some of the challenges on the website. Lasecki also records Buzz Bites episodes and uploads them to YouTube to provide additional optional challenges for students.
- The Board of Education has moved its meetings to a virtual platform. Links to those meetings can be found online prior to each meeting.
- KES kindergarten teacher Emily McBrayer sent her students "Sunshine Mail." She wrote each student a note "in hopes of raising their spirits and keeping them motivated." She was excited to receive some return Sunshine Mail from her students.
- Our students and staff remain dedicated to the arts, even with all of the challenges. The Kirtland High School Choir came together online for a virtual concert.
- KES teachers went above and beyond communicating with parents by hosting a virtual open house in March.
- Our Kirtland Middle School intervention specialists are hosting a YouTube special called "Buzzline," where they provide distance learning tips and tricks, interview parents and students, and offer a humorous break from studying.
- Our teachers are taking advantage of online resources by guiding their students to virtual visits of museums, art galleries and other venues, while designing lessons around those resources.

You can follow all of the exciting lessons and activities of our staff and students on Twitter by searching #hornetsonline.



## LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



In March, the Kirtland Local Schools, along with every other school district in Ohio, was faced with the shutting of our schools and quickly coming up with a plan for the foreseeable future. On March 25, we launched our online distance learning platform with a goal of providing a meaningful learning experience and consistency of instruction.

At every level, our administrative team and classroom teachers created lessons and resources for student learning opportunities at home. This caused disruptions in the day-to-day routines for our families and staff, but they answered the call to work with us. This has been a fluid situation and we will build on and alter our plans as this situation unfolds.

We thank our staff, students and families for coming together to meet this challenge and make our online learning program a success. We thank everyone for their flexibility and problem-solving during this uncertain time.

We look forward to finishing the year strong. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me at [bill.wade@kirtlandschools.org](mailto:bill.wade@kirtlandschools.org) or call 440.256.3311.

Bill Wade  
Superintendent

## KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

With the announcement from the governor that our school buildings will remain closed for the rest of the school year, we will have to restructure the kindergarten registration process. The May 15 registration date has been postponed. A new date will be rescheduled closer to the start of the school year and will be communicated in August.

There are two important steps for parents to do at this time if they have an incoming kindergarten student that has not been registered yet.

1. Register your child at <http://www.kirtlandschools.org/KindergartenOrientation.aspx>
  - Click on the link to provide your contact information
2. Complete the Final Forms paperwork on the same website

Please continue to check our website for updates at <http://www.kirtlandschools.org>. Contact the Kirtland Elementary School principal with any questions at: [chad.vanarnhem@kirtlandschools.org](mailto:chad.vanarnhem@kirtlandschools.org)



Kirtland Local Schools' Bright Beginnings Preschool registration for 2020-2021 is open to children ages 3-5 to learn, play and grow together. Parents may register their child through the website - [www.kirtlandschools.org](http://www.kirtlandschools.org). All paperwork must be completed to register your child.

To secure placement in Bright Beginnings, parents must complete the registration packet in the Final Forms link found under the Parents tab on the website, and pay the \$100 deposit. Checks should be made payable to the Kirtland Local School District and sent to Diana Simpson at the Kirtland Board of Education. Students must be 3 years old by Sept. 1, 2020, and must be potty trained by the first day of school to attend Bright Beginnings. For additional information contact Diana Simpson at [diana.simpson@kirtlandschools.org](mailto:diana.simpson@kirtlandschools.org) or Becky Malinas at [becky.malinas@kirtlandschools.org](mailto:becky.malinas@kirtlandschools.org)

## SPORTS SHORTS



• The Lady Hornets basketball team closed out the year with a 19-5 record, earned

the Chagrin Valley Conference Valley Sectional Champs title and was named one of the Top 5 teams in the state to earn All-Academic honors from the Ohio High School Coaches Association for their work in the classroom. Nine players on the roster carry cumulative GPA over 4.0 while taking AP and Honors courses. Seven of the players also competed in the fall for the girls' soccer team that reached the state Final Four for the fourth time in five years.

- The Kirtland Middle School seventh-grade girl's basketball team earned the Chagrin Valley Conference title.



• Kirtland Hornets Football Coach Tiger LaVerde was named the Paul Brown High School Football Coach of the Year at the 32nd annual Northeastern Ohio National Football Foundation Scholar-Athlete banquet.

• Kirtland High School swimmer Kaley Ream became an All-Ohio athlete after placing in two events at the state swim meet. She placed sixth in the 100-yard butterfly and seventh in the 500-yard freestyle at the 2020 OHSAA State Swimming and Diving Championships. Kaley also finished 2nd in Butterfly and 3rd in the 500 Freestyle at the Division II Cleveland State District contest.



## KIRTLAND SCHOOLS RALLY AROUND FORMER FOOTBALL CHAMPION

Kirtland High School hosted a dodgeball tournament that brought together 10 schools to support a former KHS athlete injured in a tragic accident.

Adam Hess is a First Team All Ohio 2014 football player from KHS who is now paralyzed after hitting his head in a pool accident. The community came together to raise more than \$127,000 for his continued care. Kirtland Hornets Football Coach Tiger LaVerde organized the dodgeball benefit tournament to raise money for Hess' care.



## KES TEACHERS USE OLYMPICS LESSON TO TEACH MEASUREMENT

The Kirtland Elementary School first-grade team held a performance-based assessment in the form of the First Grade Olympics. Students were given the task to work in groups of 2-3 to create an event for the "Measurement Olympics." The task required measuring distance using their choice of a standard or non-standard unit of measurement. Students also had the opportunity to choose materials for their events and create the game.

Students mapped out their setup by drawing a diagram. They created signs to advertise their event and wrote instructions for how to play the game. Each group also created a video demonstrating how to play the game and measure the distance. Each group then created a recording sheet so that each person who played the game could record their best distance.

During the culminating event, students had the chance to play each other's games.



## ONE SCHOOL, ONE BOOK PROJECT ENGAGES STUDENTS WITH COMMUNITY

Kirtland Elementary School (KES) students participated in a service project that encouraged reading while engaging students with community businesses.

This was the third annual One School, One Book program. The entire school community including teachers, students, families, bus drivers, local businesses read the same book, "Toys! Amazing Stories Behind Some Great Inventions" by Don Wulffson. The nonfiction book told the history of certain toys. To piggyback on the project, KES Student Council collected toys and needed items for University Hospitals Rainbow Babies and Children's Family and Child Life Services Department.

KES Student Council collected about 10 boxes of items over the two-week project. Among the items donated were stuffed animals, LEGO's, arts/crafts kits, PlayDoh, action figures, batteries, board books, gift cards, sketchbooks and journals, crayons and other toys.

Kirtland PTA and high school student volunteers decorated doors to kick off the program. Kirtland students and staff thank the Kirtland Education Foundation for purchasing all of the books and bookmarks for the program.



## KMS STUDENTS PLACE AT POWER OF THE PEN DISTRICT COMPETITION

Kirtland Middle School Power of the Pen team members Tabitha Blankenship, Penny McFadden, Anna Grbavac and Marin Haupt will represent Kirtland as they participate in the first ever online regional tournament slated for Saturday, May 16.



The Power of the Pen organization decided to offer this virtual platform in conjunction with Kent State University "... so that [they] may provide young writers with an opportunity to finish the 2019-2020 season, while observing Ohio's efforts to mitigate the spread of coronavirus." Power of the Pen is an Ohio-based creative writing program that allows seventh- and eighth-grade writers to share their passion for creative writing while they compete against their peers.

These four writers will use their own devices to compete in two rounds during a set time on May 16 and judging will take place over several days rather than a few hours.

Good luck to these four creative writers as they go where no Power of the Pen writer has gone before.

## KES STUDENTS GIVE GIFT OF READING TO SPECIAL PEOPLE

Kirtland Elementary School first-grade students recently celebrated their growth in reading by giving the "gift of reading" to a special person who has been reading to them all their life.

They practiced reading books that had strong and fun characters in them so that they could use their fluency and expression to portray the characters' thoughts and feelings as they read.

Guests enjoyed muffins while students read to them. Among the guests were older siblings, parents, grandparents, cousins, neighbors and even babysitters.



## STATE OF THE SCHOOLS



**As we rolled out our Strategic Plan last year, we've been working hard to continue to focus on our four pillars - personalized learning, safe and secure environment, engaged community and well-managed finances - to drive the work we do to ensure we are personalizing learning to empower our students to be productive citizens once they leave Kirtland Local Schools.**

### ■ Personalized Learning

The 2019-2020 school year marked the soft launch of the Kirtland Local Schools' College and Career Pathway initiative Excite, Explore, Engage for our 6-12 students. This was marked by:

- A speaker series giving students an opportunity to learn about various professional options.
- Site visits allowing students to explore various professional settings, from trade jobs to upper level corporate management.
- Time for reflection to help our students better plan for their futures.

The primary goal of the program is to provide information to students to help them be more aware of their strengths and skills, interests and habits, and to support their academic, social/emotional and extra-curricular goals with an emphasis on career exploration.

Our high school students also participated in a new academic and career exploration curriculum designed to help students develop skills necessary for success in the real world, such as resume writing, mock interviews, time management and relationship building.

The new Kirtland High School (KHS) Program of Studies for 2020-2021 was redesigned to be more interactive and aligned with Ohio Department of Education standards. The Program of Studies includes graduation requirements, scheduling protocol, Honors Diploma requirements, cumulative GPA calculation, extracurricular/athletic eligibility, advanced options (Advanced Placement, College Credit Plus), standardized testing, as well as course descriptions.

KHS also will introduce new courses in the coming year, including English, Science, Social Studies, World Language, Advanced Placement Capstone Program, Music, Health and Wellness and Magoosh ACT prep courses.

At the elementary level, we launched a new Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) course to introduce students to coding and computer science. The goal of the course is to increase students' ability for problem solving, persistence, creativity, collaboration and communication, while providing enhanced educational experiences. We are supplementing

students' understanding of coding/computer science with broader STEAM-based activities, particularly through Project Lead The Way.

The Kirtland Local Schools strive to provide a well-rounded education through a variety of opportunities and experiences. We do this through a robust K-12 Fine Art Program and 29 athletic teams at the 7-12 level supported by our Kirtland Athletic Boosters.

We continue to be the premiere school district in Lake County, and one of the top 100 school districts in the state. The State Report Card showed a decline in our Progress grade, leading us to dig deeper into the data to help us identify our areas of strength and improvement.

To help us continuously improve, we identified the areas of math and English Language Arts as focal points for improvement this school year. With the support of content experts in both areas, our teachers and administrators have worked hard to modernize our curriculum, assessment and instructional practices to raise the bar. This was achieved primarily through providing support and resources for our staff to make adjustments to better meet the needs of our students. The district also worked with our 6-12 teachers to update our learning materials in math, leading to the adoption of a new textbook series - Pearson Envision - that provides an online component that will adapt and support our students in real time.

We are beginning the process of reviewing our English Language Arts materials K-12 and will be looking at quality resources that promote personalization through the use of traditional and technology-related features.

This past year, we saw some amazing accomplishments. Kirtland Elementary School was one of seven schools statewide selected as a 2019 Hall of Fame School by the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators. There were 48 current and former Kirtland High School students named AP Scholars by the College Board Advanced Placement Program in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college-level Advanced Placement Exams.

Through collaboration with our staff, community and business leaders, we developed a Profile of a Hornet to ensure all students are proficient communicators, critical thinkers, problem solvers, creative thinkers, producers

## STATE OF THE SCHOOLS (CONTINUED)

and collaborators. Throughout their K-12 experience, students will continuously develop and hone these skills as they are integrated into daily lessons.

### ■ Safe and Secure Environment

We continue to work on creating a safe and secure environment, but also one that is welcoming.

Projects completed last summer helped create a safer and more secure learning environment:

- Updated high school and middle school entrances to create a visitor's vestibule for check in.
- Additional access points throughout the district help secure our buildings in case of an intruder.
- Addition of the Route 306 crosswalk, thanks to the City of Kirtland.
- A new PA system allows for timely and comprehensive mass communication that provides immediate notifications to students, staff and safety officials.
- Cameras were secured for our buses to help drivers maintain a safer ride to and from schools. Funds were awarded through a grant from the Ohio Bureau of Workmans Compensation.

We also want to thank our safety forces for their continued support in our safety planning.

On the social-emotional spectrum, we continue to work with Crossroads to provide additional support to

students in need. Staff also were trained in mindfulness to better meet the social-emotional needs of our students. This is an area we continue to move forward in to ensure we are creating an appropriate learning climate. We also will work with the National School Climate Center to provide a comprehensive school climate survey to identify areas of strength and areas that can be improved upon to provide an environment that supports the learning of all students.

### ■ Engaged Community

Our community is paramount to our success.

Our students are working to engage with our community in a variety of ways, especially through community service projects. This year alone Kirtland students completed more than 3,000 hours of community service.

This level of service was accomplished through partnerships with Kirtland Kiwanis, Kirtland Area Service Council, PTA, Kirtland Educational Council, Kirtland Education Foundation, Music and Athletic Boosters.

Our business partners also have been a great asset in launching our 6-12 College and Career Pathways initiative Excite, Explore, Engage. They have been instrumental in providing our students with unique experiences to learn more about themselves and begin to plan for their futures.

## KHS JUNIOR NAMED 2020 OHIO AFFILIATE RISING STAR RECIPIENT



Kirtland High School junior Leah LaVerde received the 2020 Ohio Affiliate Rising Star recipient of the National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT) Award for Aspirations in Computing (AiC). Leah was selected based on her demonstrated aspirations in computing and technology.

The award recognizes high school women across Ohio for their leadership and involvement in technology, robotics and applied science, along with their academic success and plans for post-secondary education.

Leah has taken advantage of many opportunities to challenge herself in high school. Her courses reflect her motivation to prepare herself for a future in STEM. Her greatest accomplishment is most likely the app she designed with fellow student Reilly Greenlee that allows

students of any age to practice basic math facts. The app came about when a teacher had an issue arise in the building among students not knowing basic math facts. Leah took on the challenge of creating a way for students to improve their math skills.

"Leah is an innovative problem-solver who leverages her content knowledge and skills in the world outside our classroom," said computer science teacher Greg Cosimi.

Leah plans to attend a doctoral or graduate school for a medical degree after earning her undergraduate degree in the STEM field.

Aspirations in Computing is a talent development initiative designed to increase female participation in technology careers by providing encouragement, visibility, community, leadership opportunities, scholarships and internships to aspiring technically inclined young women.

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

The goal of the Board of Education and Kirtland Local Schools administration is to provide fiscal prudence while continuing improvement in the areas of personalized learning, a safe and secure environment, and community engagement. Specifically, the Board and district commit to working to control costs, explore alternative revenue options and educate the community on district finances.

While voters approved a five-year renewal levy last spring, it will not produce additional revenues for the school district. Staff salaries and benefits comprise 83% of all expenses, and 96% of supply expenses are dedicated to instruction, maintenance or transportation.

The five-year forecast shows revenues remaining flat, while expenses continue to grow due to inflation and student need. Local revenues have actually decreased by about \$1.1 million since 2011 due to reductions in state and federal funding. Without a large commercial tax base, the majority of school funding - about 73% - comes from taxpayers. Kirtland receives about 14.75% of its revenue from the state foundation. That is far below the 42.5% state average and equates to about \$670 per student.

In an effort to control rising expenses, the district is focusing on capping expense growth at 2.5%. The district enacted zero-based budgeting -- with buildings and departments operating with no budget increases -- and staffing levels were reduced after the 2017-2018 school year through attrition and a reduction in force. The district also negotiated a high deductible, consumer driven healthcare plan for support staff. The new healthcare plan provides a reduced premium cost to the district and employees, while migrating

employees to a greater contribution rate that is in line with other area school districts.

The district continues to be creative in exploring ways to reduce administrative costs while bringing in additional revenue through shared service agreements - buildings and grounds supervision, transportation supervision, food service, human resource management and in our finance office - specifically with our treasurer and payroll and benefits management. The Board also recently approved a shared service contract with Riverside Schools for IT services.

These actions enabled the district to maintain its effective tax rate at 40.37 mills, which falls in the middle of Lake County, and reduce its per pupil expenditure for the third consecutive year to \$12,058.80 - which is below the state average of \$12,472.40 - without compromising educational programming.

The current five-year forecast predicts deficit spending as soon as the next fiscal year. The district will continue to work hard to limit expense growth while not compromising its vision of providing a personalized educational experience that empowers students to become productive citizens, but the need for additional funds is inevitable.

The Board and administration are committed to maintaining fiscal responsibility with a goal of ensuring every dollar spent benefits students and the community. The Board and the district will remain transparent in financial discussions as they progress.

## KES KINDERGARTEN TEACHER LEAP YEAR LETTERS

Four years ago, Kirtland Elementary School teachers collaborated on a leap year letter-writing project that resurfaced this leap year.

In 2016, Kindergarten teachers Liz Miller and Emily McBrayer, along with art teacher Carol Bradac, had their students write an "All About Me" letter to their future selves. The letters were given to fourth-grade teacher Carole Karikas, who delivered the letters to her students this year to read on leap day.

The Kindergarten team used the leap year letter-writing lesson again this year, and Karikas had her current fourth-grade students participate as well so they could read notes from themselves again when they reach eighth grade.

