

# THE **Kirtland** CONNECTION

A Quarterly Newsletter for Kirtland Local Schools

Spring 2021

## KIRTLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION VOTES TO PLACE PERMANENT IMPROVEMENT LEVY ON MAY BALLOT



### Hello Kirtland Community,

The feeling within the Kirtland Local Schools has been very positive as we have moved more toward “normalcy” with reduced COVID-19 transmission rates and warmer weather. We have remained in the “all in” learning model since mid-February with nearly 80% of our students learning in person.

Observing students engaged in spring athletics, Drama Club and the First Tech Challenge (FTC) has been wonderful. Plans for the end of the school year are being made including our seniors having a prom and traditional graduation ceremony. The students’ and staff’s positive energy and excitement around campus has been contagious!

Our staff is working hard to ensure our students continue to grow academically while also supporting and meeting their social emotional needs. We are working on a summer program that will be offered to all of our students to keep the positive momentum going. I want to thank our students, staff, families and community for their ongoing support as we have navigated through the challenges presented in this pandemic.

I would like to remind our community that the Kirtland Local Schools will be on the ballot on May 4 with a permanent improvement levy.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [chad.vanarnhem@kirtlandschools.org](mailto:chad.vanarnhem@kirtlandschools.org) or 440-256-3311 ext. 2000.

Sincerely,

Chad VanArnhem  
Superintendent



ELECTION DAY  
**MAY 4**

*Key Points of The Permanent  
Improvement Levy*

- **Kirtland Local Schools have been collecting the same amount of money for the past 25 years to maintain our facilities.**
- **Kirtland Local Schools have aging buildings with increased costs to maintain them.**
- **The cost will be \$2.75 a month per \$100,000 house value.**
- **The Kirtland Local Schools have been fiscally responsible. The district was awarded the “Taxpayer Hero” award from the Auditor of State in 2018 in recognition of its successful cost savings through a variety of initiatives.**





# ON THE MAY 4TH BALLOT

# YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

## Q. What is issue 1?

**A.** Issue 1 is a Permanent Improvement (PI) levy that renews an existing 1.1 mill levy and adds 0.95 mills to keep up with the general maintenance of school facilities. Typically, PI levies fund improvements for the following:

- Windows
- Buses
- Technology upgrades
- Flooring
- Roofing
- Maintenance of boilers and electrical systems.

By law, funds generated from a permanent improvement levy CANNOT be used to pay district operating expenses such as employee salaries and benefits.

## Q. How would funds from the PI levy be used?

**A.** Issue 1 funds would be used to update an outdated high school science lab for hands-on instruction, renovate K-3 classrooms to improve the learning environment for our youngest students, upgrade technology so students and teachers have the best opportunities for learning and instruction, and upgrade our stadium to meet ADA guidelines and allow for utilization by more sports teams, for recess and for community use.

## Q. Why is it a continuing levy?

**A.** An initial PI levy was originally passed 25 years ago and has been renewed every 5 years. This issue allows us to stabilize funding by improving our financial standing and allowing us to borrow money at historically low interest rates. This will save taxpayers a significant amount of money as we begin capital projects.

## Q. Why an increase rather than a straight renewal as in previous years?

**A.** The existing PI collects approximately \$250,000 each year to repair and maintain our school buildings, which is the same amount that has been collected for the past 25 years despite the increased costs to maintain our facilities. Maintenance and upgrade needs now total up to about \$350,000 each year, so many important projects have been delayed or deferred.

## Q. Would Issue 1 funds mostly go to rebuilding the stadium?

**A.** No. Most of Issue 1 funds would go into our classrooms including the high school science lab, K-3 classrooms and technology, and safety and security district-wide. However, our stadium has some deficiencies and is in need of updating as well. The stadium is not ADA compliant, the visiting stand concrete bleachers are 70 years old, and the home stands, which were donated by a school that closed, are 50 years old. Due to its size and surface, the field currently provides very limited use. Issue 1 will allow us to make critical upgrades so the field can be used for girls' and boys' soccer, band practice, elementary physical education classes, recess, spring practices for baseball/softball, and potential use by youth teams and other members of our community.

## Q. How can we trust that the funds will be used the way the district says they will be?

**A.** The laws are very strict on how these funds can be used. Legally, all funds generated from a permanent improvement levy CANNOT be used to pay district operating expenses like employee salaries and benefits. Our district has a multi-year capital improvement plan that outlines our immediate and long-term needs.

## Q. When does the District plan to propose the next operating levy?

**A.** If the PI levy passes, there is no anticipated future levy request of any kind until 2024 at the earliest. The last time the Kirtland Local Schools has had an increase in local taxes was over 9 years ago.

## Q. How much will this levy cost?

**A.** Issue 1 is an additional \$2.75 per month per \$100,000 home value.

## Q. How do we know the district has been responsible with funds?

**A.** We are a lean district and have always prided ourselves on our ability to stretch our dollars. In 2018, the Kirtland Local Schools earned the Auditor of State "Taxpayer Hero" Award for using innovative ideas to cut costs and increase efficiency to protect taxpayer dollars.

# KIRTLAND SCHOOLS RECOGNIZES HORNET HEROES FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH

PTA President for Kirtland Local Schools Allison Wuliger came up with the idea for the “Hornet Heroes” program at the start of her term, which puts out a call into the Kirtland Local Schools’ community for people to nominate a teacher or staff member who goes above and beyond for the students.

The PTA asks for nominations every month and after reviewing them, chooses the winners. The award recipient is then invited to the monthly PTA meeting to be recognized and listen to a reading of their nomination. Each winner also receives a certificate and small token of appreciation.



In March, the two selected winners were Dave Sluga of the grounds and maintenance department and latchkey supervisor, Anna Kutscher.

Sluga took on the responsibilities of groundskeeper after the sudden passing of the previous groundsman. His position has expanded to

include maintenance duties and school counselor Linn Bowen said that he is now an all-around handyman along with his grounds duties. “He is a very hard worker and takes pride in doing a good job every time. He comes to work in the wee hours of the morning to ensure that our parking lots and sidewalks are prepared for our arrival,” said Bowen in her nomination.

Sluga clears snow during the winter and maintains the outdoor field for the football team during their season. He works with the building and maintenance staff to ensure a safe and clean environment in every school building. “He is friendly and seems to know everyone on campus. I never hear him complain, even when I know he’s been asked to cover someone else’s shift or duties,” said Bowen.

He puts in hard work and takes on whatever duties are needed, which includes carrying the mail between buildings. As former nighttime custodian for Kirtland Elementary School (KES), Bowen said that the staff and faculty miss him but enjoy seeing him whenever he is in the building. She said, “Dave is just a really great member of our staff, for all the things that he is and does.”

Kutscher has embraced every role, redirection and responsibility that has been given to her since the first day of school. Her nominator, KES Principal Katy Nagaj said that Kutscher has acted with grace, positivity and willingness as she takes on her duties and interacts with the students.



In her role as latchkey supervisor, she performs tasks such as leading yoga and deep breathing activities in Hornet Hall, supporting students’ needs in the classroom, wiping down desks during lunch, monitoring the playground for safety, providing a safe environment in the overflow clinic, and greeting students at the main entrance.

“She has a smile on her face, a warm and welcoming tone in her voice, and has the most helpful demeanor we could ask for,” said Nagaj.

Kutscher puts in effort behind the scenes and is described as having a “can-do” attitude that energizes a room. Students feel cared for when working with Kutscher and Nagaj said that she genuinely enjoys her interactions at KES and has fun every day. “I feel extremely grateful to have her as a member of our team and want her to know how truly valued she is,” said Nagaj.

## PREVIOUS HORNET HEROES

### 2019-2020

<b>October:</b>	Mike Nalepka	Tom Dingeldein
<b>November:</b>	Linn Bowen	Michelle Meleski
<b>January:</b>	Shannon Boggs	Kelly Dunn
<b>February:</b>	Bob Lasecki	Emily McBrayer
<b>March:</b>	Terry Warder	Kari Lambert
<b>April:</b>	Jen Grandini	Michelle Molchen
	Tabitha Swick	Jamie Kamensky
	Matt Ridgeway	Alysha Needham

### 2020-2021

<b>October:</b>	Julie Bonacci	Terri Pennza
<b>November:</b>	Greg Cosimi	
<b>January:</b>	Linn Bowen	Janine Greer
<b>February:</b>	Sheila Dikowicz	Michelle Meleski
<b>March:</b>	Dave Sluga	Anna Kutscher

# “SPRING INTO READING” SPIRIT WEEK AT KIRTLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Students and staff at Kirtland Elementary School enjoyed their “Spring into Reading” Spirit Week from March 22-25. On Monday, the theme was “Hats Off to Being a Great Reader” and students and staff enjoyed wearing many different types of hats. On Tuesday, the theme was “Read My Shirt Day.” There were a lot of crazy socks worn on Wednesday for the theme “Reading Knocks My Socks Off!” A special addition to this day was the school celebrating “Down Syndrome Awareness Day.” On Thursday, the theme was “Books Make our Future Bright” and everyone wore their favorite pair of sunglasses.

“My students loved the combination of Spirit Week along with the reading theme,” said second-grade teacher Brittany Warsinskey. “They came in so excited to show me their books and were asking all day, ‘When is “Drop Everything and Read” (DEAR) time going to happen? Spirit Week is already special, but incorporating the reading aspect, really made it fun.”

One of the days, we were in the middle of math rotations when it was our DEAR time. They were so excited to stop what they were doing, and pick up a book. They could not believe they were stopping math to read! This week really shows how special reading is and gives students a chance to really get into a book that they love.”



**My students loved the combination of Spirit Week along with the reading theme ... They were so excited to stop what they were doing, and pick up a book.**

*- Brittany Warsinskey, Second-Grade Teacher*



## KIRTLAND HIGH SCHOOL INDUCTS NEW MEMBERS INTO NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

On March 11, Kirtland High School inducted the newest members into their National Honor Society (NHS) with an induction ceremony that took place in the Kirtland High School gymnasium.

The ceremony began with a welcome and introduction from NHS President, Hannah Duncan. Secretary for NHS, Leah LaVerde, then gave a brief history of the National Honor Society as an organization. This society has chapters in all 50 states and aims to recognize students for their accomplishments and challenge them to develop further through involvement in school activities and community service.

NHS Vice President Nisha Makkar began the formal induction ceremony by explaining one of the pillars of the society, Scholarship. NHS Treasurer Aimee Baldrey spoke on Service; Leah LaVerde spoke about

Leadership, and Hannah Duncan closed out with the fourth pillar on Character.

Following the explanation of each pillar of the society, Kirtland High School Principal Scott Amstutz spoke to the attendees and Superintendent Chad VanArnhem gave his remarks.

Parliamentarian, Emma Ulrich, then led all of the new inductees in the National Honor Society pledge. The inductees were presented by the society's advisors Meriah Duncan and Sarah Poulson. The ceremony came to a close with remarks from NHS President Hannah Duncan.



### **Congratulations to the newly inducted members of the Kirtland chapter of NHS:**

Malia Becker, Alyssa Bryll, Gianna Cantini, Skye Carpenter, Elin Conner, Sophia DeMarco, Amalie Gettig, Angelina Giacomazza, Reilly Greenlee, Scott Haymer, Penelope Jankowski, Ramon Lescano, Madelyn Null, Meara Polanski, Kaley Ream, Mason Rus, Aaron Schulz, Livia Susevich, Payton VanArnhem, Mason Vermilye, Giuliana Vladic, Jonathan Withrow, and Amber Yurick.



## DISTRICT REVAMPS POSITIVE BEHAVIOR PROGRAM FOR GRADES 6-12

Kirtland Local Schools is revamping their Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) programming in grades 6-12. The redesign will extend the core value of the Kirtland Elementary School "HORNET" PBIS program to something that is more age-appropriate for middle and high school students. PBIS is a framework that guides school teams in the selection, integration and implementation of evidence-based practices for improving academic and social/behavioral outcomes for all students.

Using our redesigned PBIS framework for grades 6-12, the district will be able to better support all students with their social-emotional needs, mental health, and

stress levels while encouraging positive behaviors. The redesigned PBIS initiative will center around the concept of positively impacting self, others and community. This holistic approach to school climate and culture will foster growth in competencies and skills of students as they transition from the middle to the high school and support our Profile of a Hornet upon graduation.

The ultimate goal is for these competencies and skills to create empowered citizens that can affect positive change within the community and beyond.

# THE KIRTLAND MUSIC DEPARTMENT PARTNERS WITH APOLLO'S FIRE AND THE CLEVELAND BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

COVID-19 protocols and precautions have made band and choir at Kirtland Local Schools difficult this year. It has greatly affected the performing arts, from how and where ensembles rehearse to the ability to have an audience. In a year of limitations, it has become even more essential to actively expose students to professional level music making.

The Kirtland music department has partnered with Apollo's Fire and The Cleveland Baroque Orchestra, to expose students to professional musicianship and to

Zoom master classes with Soprano, Amanda Powell and Baroque Flautist, Kathie Stewart who are both professional musicians and members of Apollo's Fire. Then, the students had a culminating event in the form of a socially-distant and masked watch party of Apollo's Fire's concert *Elegance, The Harper's Voice*. If students preferred to watch the concert from home, they were able to do that.

*Special thanks* for the financial support from the Kirtland Music Boosters and from Apollo's Fire for facilitating this project.



keep their music history lessons interesting. Throughout the winter months, teachers Tom Dingeldein and Jessica Sammarone have taught lessons with an emphasis on the Baroque time period. These lessons led up to



## SAY SOMETHING WEEK



Each year, thousands of schools nationwide participate in *Say Something Week*, a national call-to-action.

This March, Kirtland Middle and High School once again participated in *Say Something Week*. The program reminds students to look for the warning signs of someone who is struggling and at risk

of hurting themselves or others and encourages them to tell a trusted adult to get help.

The conversation around the *Say Something* program is an important one to have with students on an ongoing basis and we hope that *Say Something Week*

started or even continued that conversation within our school community to make the middle and high school a safer and friendlier place to be.



# SPORTS SHORTS

**Kirtland's winter sports season concluded with two state-placing winners and success on the courts, mats and in the pool.**

## WRESTLING

Junior Will Davidson became the eighth Kirtland wrestler to place among the top three at the state tournament when he finished third at 120 pounds on March 14.



Davidson, who closed out the season with a 29-4 record, opened the state tournament with an exciting 7-5 sudden victory win and then reached the semifinals with an 11-6 quarterfinals victory. He dropped into the consolation bracket with a 7-4 loss but bounced back with two straight wins to finish third. He used a reversal with just seconds left in the third-place match to win 2-1. Davidson is Kirtland's highest state placer since Royal Brettrager finished third in 2010.

Brennon Braud and Anthony Gencarelli also qualified for the state wrestling tournament.

## SWIMMING

Junior Kaley Ream continued her assault on the Kirtland record books as she made her third straight appearance at the state swim meet. Ream placed fourth in the 100-yard butterfly and eighth in the 500-yard freestyle to earn All-Ohio honors in both events. She also was part of two relay teams that set new school records in each event.

Ream teamed up with Mateja Mrva, Claire Dumstorff, and Payton VanArnhem to set a new school record of 2:03.05 in the 200-yard Medley Relay. That same group also set a new school record in the 200-yard Freestyle Relay this season with a time of 1:49.01.

Ream also earned first-team All-Chagrin Valley Conference in the 200-yard freestyle and the 100-yard butterfly. Dumstorff earned second-team honors in the 100-yard breaststroke and Mrva and Julie Namciu both were named honorable mention all-conference.

## BOYS' BASKETBALL

Kirtland's boys' basketball team finished the short season with a 9-8 record. The Hornets dealt with adversity throughout the season but still finished over the .500 mark. Seniors Joey Grazia, T.J. Green, and Anthony DeMarco all

earned first-team All-CVC honors while juniors Gage Sullivan and Hector Lescano both were named honorable mention.

Grazia led the Hornets with a 17.4 points per game average while Green scored 16.8 per game and DeMarco finished with 8.7. Green posted a team-high 9.3 rebounds per game while DeMarco pulled down 6.4 boards per contest. Grazia also led the team in assists (4.1) and steals (4.4) per game.



## GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Kirtland's girls' basketball team finished 12-4 with a perfect 5-0 mark in league play. The Hornets had won five straight before dropping a sectional semifinal contest to Youngstown Liberty, 70-60, to end their season.

Senior Haley Coso and juniors Reilly Greenlee and Macey McIntosh were named first-team All-CVC. Senior Leah LaVerde was a second-team selection and sophomores Corinne Greenlee and Marissa Carmosino both were named honorable mention.

Reilly Greenlee led the team with an 11.5 points per game average while Coso finished with 10.4 points per contest. Coso posted a team-high 6.8 rebounds per game while McIntosh finished with 6.4. Greenlee also led the team in assists (2.7) and steals (3.7) per game.





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## UPCOMING EVENTS



### APRIL 13 - MAY 6:

AIR Testing

### MAY 7:

Prom

### JUNE 3:

Senior Picnic

### JUNE 6:

Commencement

\*\*\*\*\*ECRWSEDDM\*\*\*\*\*

RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER  
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Kirtland Athletics at [www.kirtlandhornet.org](http://www.kirtlandhornet.org) | Kirtland Local Schools at [www.kirtlandschools.org](http://www.kirtlandschools.org)