

# THE **Kirtland** CONNECTION

A Quarterly Newsletter for Kirtland Local Schools

Spring 2023

## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



### Hello Kirtland Local Schools' Community,

I am proud of the effort that our students and staff have been putting in during the cold and dark winter months which have led to a lot of success with academics and extracurricular activities. At the Board of Education meeting in January, we were fortunate to be able to recognize 26 AP Scholars. Our Academic Challenge team earned an invitation to the 2023 OAC regional tournament with their first place win in the Valley Division Inaugural CVC Academic Challenge Competition at Beachwood High School. Our winter athletics teams have been thriving with both of our basketball teams cutting down the nets after claiming conference titles. The swimmers have worked hard in the pool. Our wrestlers have been excelling on the mat and Louka Babic qualified for the state tournament. Our First Tech Challenge Team won the Inspire Award at their last competition which is considered the top award at the event. Our theater group has been working hard on their play, "Pirates, Papers and Plunder." We will be hosting a Senior Citizen Appreciation Night on April 27 at 6 pm. Seniors residing in the Kirtland Local Schools area will be treated to dinner and will be able to watch the play.

I am thankful for the many different fun and wellness activities that our staff has planned to help each other



and our students. There have been wellness challenges that both the students and staff have been participating in. There have been a variety of programs to also support our students that include, but are not limited to: PS I Love You, Red Ribbon Week, Start with Hello, Unity Day, NAMI, Ending the Silence, Sources of Strength. Even our PTA has been a part of the wellness initiative as they planned a yoga night for parents and children.

I am very excited for what will be coming up for our district in the spring. An Alumni Association is being formed. Read more on page 7. Demolition and then construction on the stadium renovation is planned to take place in early April. The new construction will include a turf field, a resurfaced track, new LED lights, new visiting stands with a press box and a new scoreboard. Stadium naming rights and scoreboard sponsorships provided the district with extra revenue to upgrade the type of turf that has a longer warranty and upgrade to a digital scoreboard which will help generate extra revenue. I also will be hosting a State of the Schools presentation on April 25 at 12:30 p.m. at the Kirtland Community Center. You can register on the Kirtland Community Center Website or use the direct link: [bit.ly/KirtlandStateofSchools](https://bit.ly/KirtlandStateofSchools)

Thank you for your continued support and go Hornets!

Chad VanArnhem, Superintendent

Kirtland Local School's Senior Citizen Appreciation Night

## PIZZA/PASTA DINNER & PLAY

**THURSDAY, APRIL 27**  
**DINNER AT 6:00 P.M.**

Kirtland High School Cafeteria

**ALL SENIOR CITIZENS LIVING IN THE KIRTLAND  
LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ARE INVITED!**

**Play:** *Pirates, Papers, and Plunder*  
by Josephine Czarnecki and Darwin Garrett

**Dinner Cost:** \$5 for pizza and pasta dinner. Payment  
can be dropped off at the Kirtland Community Center.

Checks should be made out to Kirtland Local Schools.

**RSVP:** [bit.ly/KirtlandPlayandPasta](https://bit.ly/KirtlandPlayandPasta)

**Free  
admission  
to see the  
play with  
dinner  
purchase!**

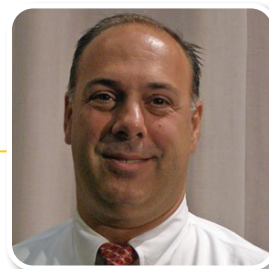


**We are currently looking for sponsors  
interested in advertising opportunities  
with the Kirtland Local Schools that  
include representation on the new  
digital scoreboard. Please scan the  
QR code for more information.**



# WHY KIRTLAND SCHOOLS GETS SO LITTLE STATE FUNDING SUPPORT

By Lew Galante, Treasurer



Kirtland residents often ask why the schools get so little support from the state budget while others around us get so much. The answer from the state perspective is based upon a formula that was and continues to be in place across Ohio; that Kirtland is considered to be a wealthy district and can rely on local taxes to provide for its needs.

The state funding formula uses a few common factors from each district in determining the amount of state aid that they believe is required for a school district.

## Student Enrollment Numbers

First is student enrollment numbers. Kirtland has approximately 1,150 resident students attending the public schools. Each student enrolled has a state value in the formula. The district has students who reside in Kirtland, but attend other schools. These students do not count, in fact count against us in the valuation per pupil calculation; and thus negatively impacting our “state need.”

## Property Wealth

The second factor is property wealth. The state formula references total valuation and average valuation per pupil. These factors calculate the total property valuations within the community and divide that by the number of pupils attending the school district. (Hence showing how the students attending outside of Kirtland Local Schools negatively impacts our valuation per pupil). Through the 2021 state report, Kirtland’s Valuation/pupil ranks 52nd out of the 607 school districts; ranking us in the top 10 percent of the state and highest in Lake County. This factor hurts in the formula of needed state aid.

## Average Income for Taxpayers in the District

The third major factor is average income for taxpayers within the district. Kirtland is a community that is home to many high-income earners, which then contributes to a greater wealth factor, and an opposite need factor from the state. The Kirtland community has an average income of \$137,297 --the top 3 percent of all districts in the state and highest in Lake County.

Along with several other smaller factors which tweak the formula, such as number of students transported, vocational programming, students with disabilities, etc.—these above factors rank Kirtland in the state’s eyes as a district that has a lesser need for state aid; and as a result, Kirtland ranks 601st out of 607 districts in total state revenue per student and lowest in Lake County.

With all of these factors, we understand that the need to be fiscally responsible with those taxpayer dollars, especially knowing that they truly come locally. Kirtland ranked 285th out of the 607 districts in total expenditure per pupil (2021 ODE District Profile). This ranks in the 47th percentile of all districts in the state (5th of 9 districts in Lake County)—or very close to the middle of all schools in the county and state of Ohio. But, when calculated against the performance of our students on state exams and expenditure for students, the Kirtland Local Schools are ranked in the top third of the state.

# KIRTLAND’S FIRST TECH CHALLENGE TEAM EARNS INSPIRE AWARD AT QUALIFIER TOURNAMENT

The Kirtland First Tech Challenge (FTC) Team walked away from the Kent State Qualifier Tournament on February 4 with the highest award possible. The FTC teams focus on thinking like engineers by designing, building, and coding robots to compete against other FTC teams’ robots. The experience also allows the students to strengthen their problem-solving and teamwork skills.

The Electric Hornets were honored with the first place Inspire Award which is given to the team that best embodies the challenge of the FTC program. Teams that win this award are said to have shown success in performing the task of designing and building a robot and are an inspiration to other teams by working together as a unit.



During the tournament, the Electric Hornets participated in a judging session which consisted of both a presentation portion and a question-and-answer segment. The Kirtland FTC team also battled head-to-head in five robot rounds and participated in visits and interviews with the judging panel during the tournament.



# KIRTLAND LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT RECOGNIZES AP SCHOLARS AND NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALIST AT BOARD MEETING

At the January 23 Board of Education meeting, Kirtland High School's recently named AP Scholars were recognized. In 2022, there were 308 AP exams taken by Kirtland High School students. There were 26 AP scholars and the average score was 3.56.

*Congratulations to:*

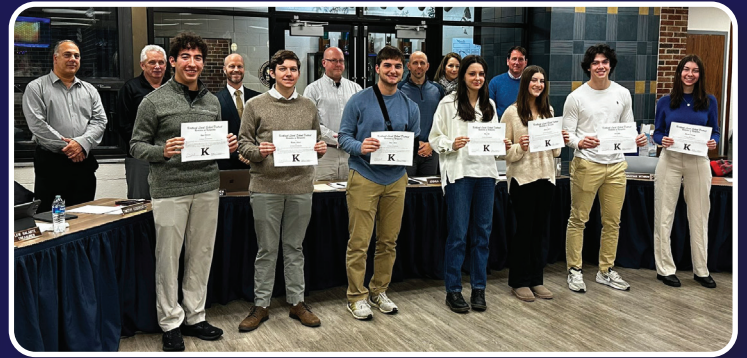
**AP Scholars** (Granted to students who receive scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP Exams): Nickolas Barisic, 11th grade; Sophia LaVerde, 11th grade; Nishaan Meet, 11th grade; Ava Golem, 12th grade; Adam Knaak, 12th grade; Delaney Kuczkowski, 12th grade; Aria Ray, 12th grade; Brigham Weight, 12th grade

**AP Scholars with Honor** (Granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams): Andrew Duncan, 11th grade; Adriana Freitas, 11th grade; Dakota Schaum, 11th grade; Lily Whittaker, 11th grade; Eleanor Withrow, 11th grade; Patrick Bak, 12th grade; Adam Beinhart, 12th grade; Austin Booth, 12th grade; Thomas Gogolin, 12th grade; Nikolena Samac, 12th grade; Samuel Sydenstricker, 12th grade

**AP Scholar with Distinction** (Granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams): Elizabeth Aranavage, 12th grade; Luke Chuko, 12th grade; Corinne Greenlee, 12th grade; Maya Hill, 12th grade; Philip LaVerde, 12th grade; Matthew Shepard, 12th grade; Robert Whittaker, 12th grade

"Kirtland High School students continue to amaze me every year," said Principal Scott Amstutz, Kirtland High School. "I am very proud of all our AP Scholars. It takes dedication, perseverance and commitment to tackle all these AP courses and be successful. For a small district, we have such a strong AP community that values the content and rigor that will certainly help our students prepare for future success. Many thanks to our teachers as well. So much time and effort goes into this academic growth and achievement."

Also recognized at the Board meeting was Bobby Whittaker, who earlier in the school year was named a 2023 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist. Semifinalists are the highest scorers in each of the 50 states and represent less than one percent of each state's high school seniors.



"I am very proud of all our AP Scholars. It takes dedication, perseverance and commitment to tackle all these AP courses and be successful. For a small district, we have such a strong AP community that values the content and rigor that will certainly help our students prepare for future success." *Scott Amstutz, Principal, Kirtland High School*

# A FOCUS ON WELLNESS AT KIRTLAND LOCAL SCHOOLS

Wellness is top priority for both students and staff at the Kirtland Local Schools. The district's wellness program is thriving and all grade levels at each building continue to take part in programs and activities this school year. In a partnership with the district's Wellness Committee, numerous initiatives are taking place in classrooms as well as in homes.

The Wellness Committee, which consists of members of the administration, staff, students, and parents, has met quarterly over the past few years. The committee is always looking for ways to promote wellness for all stakeholders, which aligns with the district's strategic plan of promoting healthy choices for students.

## Kirtland Elementary School

At Kirtland Elementary School (KES), students are being introduced to many different wellness experiences. Teachers and counselors lead daily, weekly and monthly meetings and activities to foster healthy relationships, identify and regulate their students' feelings, and develop positive classroom culture. Collaborating in smaller groups of children, there are discussions center around friendship, grief and loss, anxiety, and behavior. KES teachers are also encouraged to be mindful of their wellness. Each professional development day begins with a menu of choices. They enjoy walking, yoga, morning meditation, and some even choose pickleball. This provides an energizing opportunity before they begin working on the many goals they have set.

### Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Each month, students take part in all-school meetings to support ongoing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a system of teaching and rewarding students for their positive behavior and positive choices. An example is the new ticket/trophy initiative. Students are rewarded with tickets for positive behavior, specifically as they show/portray the HORNET (Hardworking, Open Minded, Respectful, Engaged and Trustworthy) trait of the month. For example in February, if teachers see students being respectful, they give them tickets. The tickets get added to their class bucket and at the end of the week, they draw individual prize winners and a class to house the trophy. All staff members are included in this initiative so that students understand the value of positive behavior not only in the classroom, but in the lunchroom, on the playground and in the hallways.

### Keep Moving

Students also take part weekly in Walking Wednesdays where all kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers are encouraged to take their students out of their classrooms for a brain break. They continue to track their steps and some even keep track as a class. They walk on the track, around the campus and playground. The playground features activity zones with prompts like pushups, Hornet Jacks, or obstacle courses. Students also participate in movement breaks incorporated during the morning announcements. KES does fundraising in a healthy manner by conducting a Walkathon each year in the fall. The culminating event involves students and family members walking together on



the track before a home Friday football game. The funds raised this school year will go toward purchasing fitness equipment for the students.

### Finding Connections Among Peers

Another ongoing program is 'lunch bunches,' which allow the students to continue to build positive relationships and connections among themselves. Students also take part in peer meditations which teaches them healthy communication and conflict resolution skills. Kirtland High School's peer leadership students also visit the elementary students and work on various activities with them throughout the year.



### Reinforcing Kindness

On the walls of the hallways and classrooms, both students and staff are inspired by posters reinforcing kindness. A sensory path has recently been added to the KES hallways. Students can stop along the vinyl path cutouts to do jumping jacks, wall push-ups, or even walk along the dinosaur tracks. Students always enjoy the kindness reminders they hear daily on the morning announcements, too. When a student needs a break, they can spend some time in the "Zen Den" room which provides a calming environment.

### Awareness Campaigns

There are several wellness initiatives throughout the year that KES students participate in like Start with Hello Week, Red Ribbon Week, Socktober, P.S. I Love You Week, Say Something Week (4th and 5th grade), Career Month, and Autism Awareness Month.



## Kirtland Middle and High School

Collaborating with peers is a key component to helping students with their wellness at Kirtland Middle School (KMS) and Kirtland High School (KHS). The sixth and eighth-grade students participate in a peer mentoring program where the eighth graders mentor the sixth graders. Peer Leaders also work with ninth-graders on stress management. These partnerships with peers, in addition to many activities, programs and lessons offered by the schools, are helping teach how to live healthy.

### Keep Moving

For physical wellness at the middle school, all students receive 20 minutes of REC every day to encourage them to get up and move. If the weather is good and the field is dry, then REC happens outside. KMS also focuses on mental health by asking students to complete a survey identifying their stressors. School Counselor, Mr. Greg Bell, meets with those students who are flagged for follow-up, and a check-up meeting occurs to assist in lowering their stress and anxiety. Results from the survey are also used to find ways to make improvements within the school.

### Wellness Class Elective

Throughout the school day, Kirtland students are offered a wellness class elective. This course focuses on weightlifting technique and programming, along with nutrition and stress management. The goal of this course is to create healthy and fit students that use the lessons learned to improve their quality of life after high school.

### Extracurricular Activities

At KHS, there is a high percentage of students who participate in athletics, marching band, and other extracurricular activities that allow them to get moving during the day. Teachers also consistently provide movement breaks during their classes to help students reset and get some steps around the building.



### Sources of Strength

Another initiative at KHS is a focus on Sources of Strength programming. During Sources of Strength Week there are school-wide stretch breaks and breathing exercises, creating a go-to playlist, mindfulness exercise foldables, hot chocolate and tea breaks, thank you notes to our mentors, wall of affirmations, and positive friends activity.

### Awareness Campaigns

KMS celebrated Bullying Awareness Month in October

with lessons that focused on creating an anti-bullying school where students stand up for and advocate for each other. Kindness Week and World Kindness Day celebrations focused on teaching students about the impact that one positive deed can have on others as it

creates a chain reaction of kind acts. Students also were encouraged to develop an “attitude of gratitude” where students reflect on what they are thankful for and take time to acknowledge it. Two other awareness campaigns that students will be involved in include vaping awareness and suicide prevention and awareness.

During Unity Week there is a scavenger hunt of connections with students and staff, sources of strength chain, and all school yoga. Students also participate in a Gratitude/Thankfulness Challenge where the students

write a thirty day thankfulness journal with daily sharing and an all school thanksgiving activity. “Helps Me Week” featured an activity where students made their own aromatherapy bracelets and stress balls, a What Helps Me Wall, and all school yoga event. Another sources of Strength activity is All School “Pal”etines Day and show you care activities. Other school-wide campaigns throughout the year including Start with Hello Week,

Red Ribbon Week, and P.S. I Love You Day.

### Community Partnerships

KMS and KHS also partner with outside organizations like Crossroads Health, Laurelwood Hospital, LifeAct Mental Health Presentation, LifeBanc Organ Donation, and NAMI Ending the Silence presentations.

### Staff Wellness

The District Wellness Club has been on the move in 2023. The staff participated in a walking challenge throughout January. Participants that logged steps for an entire week were entered into weekly raffl/es for Kirtland merchandise paid by Medical Mutual and prepared by the clothing guru, Bob Lasecki. Staff members played wellness BINGO in February. Exercise for 30 minutes? Sleep 8 hours? Drink 8 glasses of water? Read for 20 minutes? Walk with a friend? BINGO! Over 50 BINGO cards have been submitted weekly. The wellness club will turn into a book club in the spring.



# KIRTLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADERS COMPETE IN POWER OF THE PEN TOURNAMENT

Kirtland Middle School's (KMS) Power of the Pen Team participated in the Lake Erie College District Tournament on January 7 against 18 other schools. There were 70 seventh graders and 74 eighth graders competing.

The team includes seventh graders Payton Adkins, Julia Cottrell and Mairin Fini as well as eighth graders Braden Picard, Danika Schaum, Ellie Spencer and Kevin Urbanick.

Advisor Susan Summerhill believes the program is highly beneficial to the students that participate. "Writers have the opportunity to gather and collaborate with peers who share their passion for creative writing," said Summerhill. "Writers also reap the rewards of both coach and peer feedback; this feedback facilitates creative writing growth within a timed-writing competitive setting. Lastly, the creative writing skills participants acquire through Power of the Pen experiences positively impact their written communication in academic settings and future careers."

At the seventh-grade level, Payton Adkins took 4th place while 8th grader Braden Picard earned 8th place. Seventh grader Mairin Fini and eighth grader Ellie Spencer were unable to compete at the district tournament due to scheduling conflicts.

Payton Adkins, Braden Picard and Kevin Urbanick are the three KMS Power of the Pen writers that advanced to the regional tournament at Hudson Middle School on March 11. KMS writers who qualify at the Hudson regional tournament will be invited to compete at the state tournament taking place at Ashland University on May 18-19.



## STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN SPELLING BEES THIS WINTER



Students in grades 3-8 competed in their annual spelling bees for a chance to advance to the Lake County Spelling Bee. Grades 1-2 are not eligible for the county spelling bees so their spelling bees will happen later this spring. These spelling bees are in conjunction with the Scripps National Spelling Bee which was established in 1925 and administered by the E.W. Scripps Company in Cincinnati, Ohio.

"At Kirtland, teachers value the spelling bee for more than the obvious reason of compelling students to be better spellers," said Spelling Bee Coordinator Linn Bowen. "It also develops vocabulary, provides opportunities for public speaking experiences, and helps the participants build confidence and poise. We are lucky to have the support of so many teachers in the district who assist with keeping the spelling bee alive." The students first completed

spelling tests in their classrooms to determine participation in the grade level spelling bee. Typically, Kirtland has 12-24 students competing at each grade level.

*Grade level winners are:*  
Bobby Ruggeri, Grade 3  
Henriette Famularcano, Grade 4  
Liliana Giavara, Grade 5  
Grace Kostelnik, Grade 6  
Tommy Loncar, Grade 7  
Karen Hill, Grade 8



Lili Giavara was the winner from KES, and Grace Kostelnik was the winner from KMS as well as the overall district winner. Kostelnik went on to compete against other district winners in the Lake County Spelling Bee on February 1.

## KIRTLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL CHOIR STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN OMEA DISTRICT 7 HONORS CHOIR EVENT

Eleven choir students from grades 7, 8, and 9 attended the OMEA District 7 Honors Choir Event on January 13 and 14. The event consisted of hours of group rehearsals, voice part sectionals, a dress rehearsal, and a concert. "I am extremely proud of the work our students put into preparing for this event and how well they represented Kirtland," said Choir Director Jesse Bobbitt.





# WINTER SPORTS SHORTS

Kirtland's winter sports season is nearing its end as two of the Hornets' teams have completed their seasons and the postseason is underway for the other two.

In girls' basketball, the Hornets finished the season 15-9 overall and won a share of the Chagrin Valley Conference Valley Division record with a 7-1 mark. Head coach Matt Ridgeway also shared the Valley Division's Coach of the Year honor and six Hornets earned all-conference honors. Senior Corinne Greenlee and sophomore Emily Ridgeway both were first-team selections, seniors Natalie Glowe and Marissa Carmosino both earned second-team honors, and senior Julia Fleming and sophomore Kennedy Boyd received honorable mention honors.



Kirtland's swim teams also concluded their season with five swimmers being named all-conference. Senior Claire Dumstorff won both the 100-yard freestyle and breaststroke races at the CVC conference meet to earn first-team honors in

both events. Sophia Shepard, Giorgi Mei, Elliot Hosteley, and Walter Knoop each earned honorable mention honors.

Kirtland's boys' basketball team won the CVC Valley Division title and the Hornets then knocked off league rival Berkshire in a sectional championship game, 49-46. The

Hornets' season came to an end with a 59-54 loss to Lake Catholic in a district semifinal. They finished the year 13-11 overall.

The Hornets closed out the regular season with a 12-10 record and won the Valley Division by finishing conference play 8-2. Head coach Shawn McGregor was named the Valley Division Coach of the Year and five players were named all-league. Senior Owen Mueller and sophomore Vince Carriero both were named first-team while junior Gino Blasini was a second-team selection. Senior Noah Nead and junior Nick Barisic were honorable mention selections.



Kirtland's wrestling team sent four wrestlers to the district tournament including Eddie Podojil-Schlesinger, Ian Borthwick, Gaetano Savelli, and Louka Babic. Babic finished as the district runner-up at 175 pounds and will compete in the OHSAA state championships from March 10-12. Savelli reached the 165-pound semifinals.



Three Hornets placed among the top six at the

CVC championships in January. Senior Gaetano Savelli won the 165-pound title, senior Ian Borthwick placed third at 132, and sophomore Eddy Podojil-Schlesinger finished fourth at 113 pounds. All three wrestlers were named first-team All-CVC Valley Division.

## KIRTLAND ALUMNI ASSOCIATION TO LAUNCH IN SPRING OF 2023

The Kirtland Alumni Association Steering Committee is excited to launch a Kirtland Alumni Association this spring. Our intent is to help alumni connect and network, create a Hall of Fame, and support the district and our students through scholarships, guest speakers, and donations towards student projects and needs.



Scan the QR code with your phone and it will direct you to a registration form. You also can complete the form at [bit.ly/KirtlandAlumni](https://bit.ly/KirtlandAlumni). If you are interested in joining the steering committee or getting involved, please email us at: [kirtlandalumni@gmail.com](mailto:kirtlandalumni@gmail.com)

### Mission:

To connect, inform, and serve Kirtland Local Schools and its diverse alumni and friends, through strong leadership, dynamic programs and effective communication.

### Vision:

- To promote a lifelong relation and to act as a forum for the exchange of information and networking opportunities
- To organize and establish scholarship funds to help current students.
- To organize and establish funds for District and Schools needs as they arise
- To recognize and celebrate alumni



Kirtland Local School District  
9252 Chillicothe Road, Kirtland, OH 44094  
440.256.3311

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## UPCOMING EVENTS



April 11- PTA Meeting, Hornet Hall - KES  
April 27 - 29 - KHS Drama Performance  
Week of May 1 - Teacher Appreciation Week  
May 3 - Spring Choir Concert (Grades 5-7)  
May 4 - Spring Choir Concert (Grades 8-12)  
May 5 - Prom  
May 9 - PTA Meeting, Hornet Hall - KES  
May 15 - Regular Board of Education Meeting - KHS Cafeteria  
May 16 - KES Spring Concert  
May 21 - Graduation  
May 26 - Last Day of School

\*\*\*\*\*ECRWSSSEDDM\*\*\*\*\*

**RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER**  
**KIRTLAND, OH 44094**

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

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*Athletics*

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