



# North Olmsted City Schools School Zone

Newsletter for the North Olmsted Community

Fall/Winter 2023

## Superintendent Message

North Olmsted Residents and Community,

I am excited to share a new edition of School Zone, our print newsletter for the North Olmsted community. It's been over 10 years since the last issue of School Zone hit mailboxes. Bringing back the print newsletter is part of our district's larger, ongoing plan to communicate and engage with our community. Our goal is to share updates about our district, highlight the successes of our students and staff, and regularly communicate with our residents. School Zone will go out to residents three times throughout the 23-24 school year.

I am proud of the growth we have made as a district over the last couple of years. We recently updated our strategic plan to focus on four key elements: Student Experience, Resources, Connections, and Culture. You can find more information about the district's strategic plan below.

North Olmsted has also continued to grow academically. Our state report card results showed that we are either meeting or exceeding state standards. New this year was an overall rating for school districts. North Olmsted received an overall rating of four (on a scale of one to five) which means that we are exceeding state standards. We also received a rating of four in both Graduation and Gap Closing. For Achievement, Early Literacy, and Progress, we received a rating of three, meaning we are meeting state standards. This speaks volumes about our staff, students, and community.

I encourage you to stay engaged in our journey. Together, we will continue to make North Olmsted City Schools an amazing place where all students develop a passion for learning!

David Brand  
Superintendent  
North Olmsted City Schools

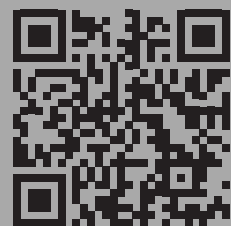
## Staff Spotlight: Leeza McCormick, Bus Driver

Leeza McCormick has been an employee for North Olmsted City Schools since 2004. She also worked as a noon assistant at Forest Elementary from 2015 to 2020. During the course of being a bus driver



Leeza has completed over 500 educational field trips and athletic events. This is on top of her regular morning and afternoon routes.

## Meet Leeza!



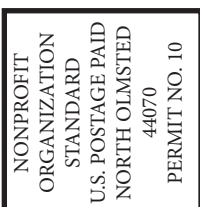
Scan the QR code with the camera on your phone for a full feature video about Leeza McCormick and her role as a bus driver!



### North Olmsted City Schools

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## Strategic plan provides road map for district

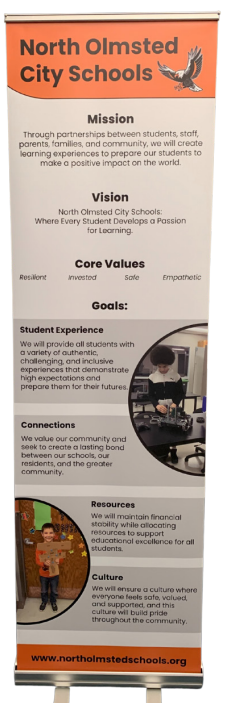
In late 2021, the district received feedback from parents, community members and staff members. This feedback stated that we all needed to have a shared vision for our school district's future. As a result of the feedback the district began the process of creating a new 3-5 year strategic plan. A strategic plan serves as a road map for the district by setting goals and outlining how to achieve those goals. The plan covers a wide variety of topics important to our school district and our community including academics, finances, programming, facilities, technology, culture and communication.

The district engaged in a comprehensive process that included a committee composed of community members, business representatives, parents, students, and staff members. All of these voices were important in the process and ensured that the final plan represents the wants and needs of the community.

The process resulted in a new mission and vision statement as well as four main goals centered around Student Experience, Resources, Connections, and Culture. The finished plan is an ongoing collaboration between our community and our district.

*Mission - Through partnerships between students, staff, parents, families, and community, we will create learning experiences to prepare our students to make a positive impact on the world.*

*Vision - North Olmsted City Schools: where every student develops a passion for learning.*



Scan the QR code with your phone to see the specific student goals of the strategic plan!



# Outstanding staff achievements!



**North Olmsted Athletic Department receives Bruce Brown Award of Excellence**  
Athletic Director, Brett Koch (pictured left) and our athletic department were presented with the Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association's (OIAAA) Bruce Brown Award of Excellence at the annual OIAAA Conference in Columbus. This award is presented to districts that have implemented Best Practices and Nationally Accepted Standards in the administration of interscholastic athletics. Currently, there are only 27 high schools in the state that have achieved this prestigious award!

**District nurse nominated for Top Nurses Award**  
District Nurse, Danielle Zemek BSN, RN, ENT-P (pictured right) was nominated for the Cleveland Plain Dealer's Top Nurses

Awards. Just over 100 people in Northeast Ohio were nominated for this award. The nominees represented various healthcare related industries but Danielle was the only nominee representing a school district! Danielle was listed in the September 24th edition of the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Danielle is a Registered Nurse and holds a Bachelor of Science in nursing. She has worked for North Olmsted for 11 years. As the district nurse Danielle oversees all of our school clinics, organizes vaccine clinics, provides various medical and CPR trainings for staff and serves as the district liaison for all medical and health related services and needs.



**Teachers recognized by Martha Holden Jennings Foundation** North Olmsted Middle School Science Teacher Ms. Lindsay Sereika (pictured above left with the North Olmsted Board of Education) received the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation Arthur S. Holden Ohio Science Teacher Award of Excellence. North Olmsted High School World Language Teacher Dr. Widad Mousa (pictured above right) was recognized for being selected as the 2023 Jennings Ohio Master Teacher of the year. Both of these awards recognize and honor the work of PK-12 classroom teachers. As award recipients, both Dr. Mousa and Ms. Sereika received money that they can use towards projects that directly benefit students.

**Healthy High School Challenge earns district \$1,000**  
The Food Service Department (pictured below) recently received \$1,000 for successfully competing in the Healthy High School Challenge organized by Sodexo, our food service provider. The Healthy High School Challenge is designed to reinforce the importance of making healthy food choices. Districts earn points for serving balanced meals and offering healthy a la carte snacks and beverages. This is a national competition that took place over a period of five weeks. A total of 136 districts and 184 high schools participated this year and North Olmsted finished in the top 28!



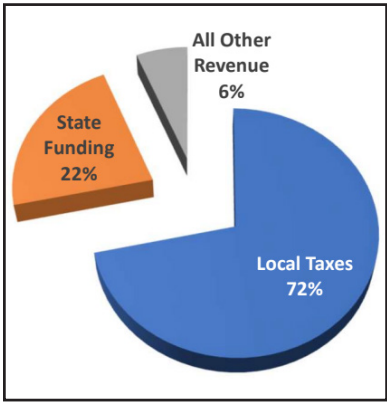
## Five year forecast projects positive financial outlook

The five-year forecast was presented during the November 27th North Olmsted Board of Education Meeting. The five-year forecast uses current financial data and historical trends to look at the district's finances over a period of five years. The district uses the five-year forecast as a long term planning tool. It is updated and presented twice a year in November and May. The forecast is submitted to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce and can also be found on their website.

During the presentation, Treasurer Katie Henes reported that the forecast showed a positive cash balance through all five years. The district's expenditures start to exceed revenues in 2025. Other key takeaways from the forecast include:

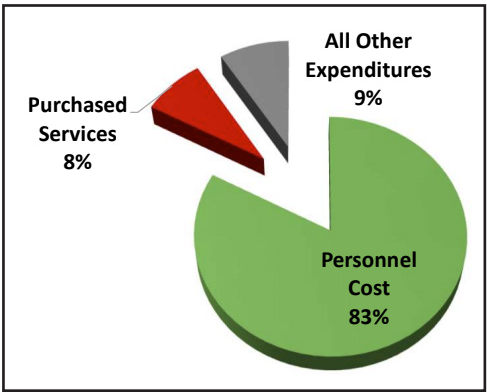
**Fair School Funding:** The new school funding formula was accounted for in the forecast. The forecast shows North Olmsted on the funding formula for fiscal year 2024 but starting in 2025 the district moves to the guarantee due to a slight decrease in student enrollment. This means the base state aid funding is predicted to decline from \$1,900 per student to \$1,200 per student over the next five years. Student enrollment, property evaluations and the income of our residents all factor into the funding formula.

**Replacement Plan for Buses:** The forecast takes into account a regular replacement plan for our transportation fleet. The district will purchase two new buses in 2024 and 2025 and then four buses in 2026 and beyond.



**Expenditures:** Over the last three years the district's average expenditures have decreased by .84%. This is a result of budget reductions, using alternative funding sources and a slight increase in insurance benefits.

**Revenues:** Local taxes/real estate continues to be the largest revenue source for the district accounting for 72 percent of the district's income. Cuyahoga County will go through property appraisals in 2024. "That is really important because our largest source of revenue is based on real estate," said Treasurer Henes. Over 72 percent of the district's revenue comes from local taxes while 22 percent is state funding," she added.



Scan the QR code with your phone to see the five year forecast presentation.



# SITES Program Takes High School Students Beyond Volunteering and Community Service

In 1990, North Olmsted High School temporarily held classes at the IX Center as a result of a fire that destroyed a significant part of the building. It was at the IX Center where the idea of the SITES program was created.

“Two high school teachers, Bob Pierce and Christine Kilbane-Pierce, started talking about the energy that students had and thought it would be great to do something that helped the community but also tie it into the educational curriculum,” said Jeff Zullo, North Olmsted High School Social Studies and SITES Teacher.

The two teachers put together a proposal that was presented to the North Olmsted Board of Education in the spring of 1991. By the fall of 1992 the first SITES class was offered at North Olmsted High School. SITES - Social Involvement Through Education and Service - is only offered to seniors. Students have to complete an application during their junior year and explain why they want to be part of the SITES program. Teacher references are then checked to evaluate the student’s attendance, reliability, and leadership skills. Students earn three credits for completing this class - two social studies credits and one English credit. Students also receive the silver level of the President’s Volunteer Service Award upon graduation.



The SITES program is focused on service-learning, which is different from community service or volunteering. Students in the program split their time between the classroom and their service-learning assignment. Tuesdays and Thursdays students spend their class period off site at their service-learning assignment. The rest of the week students are in class reflecting and connecting their service-learning experiences to challenging English and social science topics such as the nature of man, poverty, global conflicts, minorities, and urban economics.

“Our students are servicing other people in the community and connecting it to the educational context,” Zullo said. “The students have a great work ethic and have a willingness to serve other people. They are meeting an authentic need,” he added.

Service-learning assignments are a semester long and can take place in another school building or at an off site location. Students are required to complete weekly time sheets to keep track of their service-learning hours. The partner organizations complete quarterly evaluations of the students. A few of the organizations SITES has partnered with include OxCart Food Pantry, Westlake Meals on Wheels, St. John Medical Center, Arden Courts, and The Inn at Joshua Tree.



Senior Wifik Jaber (pictured left) is one of the 26 SITES students (pictured top right) this year and his service-learning placement is at Pine Elementary this semester. Jaber spends time in a 5th grade classroom where he works with the teacher and helps students with classroom activities.

“I’ve learned that I most definitely don’t want to be a teacher in the future,” said Wifik. “The kids are funny and nice, but being a teacher is a hard job that requires patience and fortitude,” he added.

Jenie Naik, (pictured bottom left) a senior at North Olmsted High School is completing her service-learning at the Oxcart Pantry right here in North Olmsted. On Tuesdays and Thursdays Jenie sorts and organizes the delivery of donated food items, stocks shelves, and packs food bags for distribution.

“Being part of the SITES program has taught me so much,” Jenie said. “I’ve learned about the importance of community service, the impact of food insecurity, and how food pantries can help those in need. It has been such an eye-opening and rewarding experience to be able to contribute to such a meaningful cause and have the opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives,” she added.

In addition to their service-learning placements, students also have to complete a personal leadership project.

“They have to determine a community need and develop a proposal to meet that need,” said Cheryl Huffer, North Olmsted High School English and SITES Teacher. A few of the projects this year include a personal care items drive, fitness walk at Pine Elementary School, and a team building clinic with the Unified Sports Program.

Both Zullo and Huffer have led the SITES program for over 16 years, and while the program has been in place for more than 30 years, many of the projects and activities the students have evolved over time.



“We used to take part in Project Appalachia where we partnered with government agencies in southern Ohio,” said Huffer. “Over the years we found that there was a bigger need here in our own backyard. It was more meaningful and relevant because we are helping people right here in northeast Ohio and our North Olmsted Community,” she added.

SITES students also organize the annual North Olmsted High School Salute to Veterans event, work the International Food Cook Off at Springvale Ballroom, and participate in the annual chair volleyball game at the North Olmsted Senior Center.

“Everything is genuine. The students aren’t just providing service, they are learning about the background and meaning of the service that they are providing,” said Zullo. “Our relationship with our partners is a beautiful thing. They create an extension of our classroom and serve as teachers for our kids in so many ways,” he added.

Students in the SITES program plan and organize the annual Salute to Veterans event that recognizes and honors local Veterans. Scan the QR



code to view behind the scenes photos from the 2023 Salute to Veterans event!





# Classroom lessons come to life for eighth graders during visit to the Rocky River Reservation

Eighth graders at North Olmsted Middle School stepped out of the classroom and into nature during a field trip to the Rocky River Reservation here in North Olmsted. The field trip to nature relates to the 8th grade science curriculum where students learn about the surface of the earth, erosion, fossils, biodiversity and genetics.



“As a science department we are trying to make connections beyond just knowing the content and applying it to the world,” said Lindsay Sereika, 8th grade Science Teacher. “It’s been several years since these kids have gone on a field trip. Many of them have not been down to the Metro Parks and it’s right in our backyard,” she added.

During the field trip students took part in three different stations that provided opportunities for students to explore in nature:

**Fossil Record** - Led by a naturalist, students spent time inside the Nature Center learning about the fossils and ancient history of Ohio and how species either evolved or went extinct.

**What’s New in Nature?** - With a naturalist, students took a hike outside to learn about the species of plants and creatures as well as the biodiversity of the area.

**Group Exploration** - Students were able to view the exhibits around the Nature Center and also climb the 155 Fort Hill Stairs that ascend 90 feet above the Rocky River!

Eighth grade teachers want to bring more elements of the 8th grade curriculum to life for students through experiences right here in our community. Future ideas include a field trip to Frostville in the spring and connecting that experience to language arts and social studies where students learn about local history as it relates to North Olmsted.

“The more experiences you have with content the more you are going to learn it,” said Jill Cammenga, 8th grade Science Teacher. “They now have this experience that they can pull from and reference. It becomes less of an abstract idea and more real life,” she added.

“The kids were excited to be in nature and show pictures of what they observed during the field trip and even after the field trip when they were exploring at home,” said Sereika.

## Hope Squad has positive impact on student culture

Oftentimes students hear and learn about potential safety threats or self harm situations before adults. That is why both North Olmsted Middle School and High School have launched a new student club called Hope Squad which aims to reduce suicide through education, training, and peer intervention. The program also educates students so they can properly respond when information comes their way.

“The kids are already seeing and hearing things from classmates or on social media before adults do. They don’t always know what to do with that information,” said Jason Gerrick, School Counselor at North Olmsted Middle School. “The purpose of Hope Squad is to equip our kids with the tools they need to take that information and get it to adults,” he added.

Middle school and high school students in Hope Squad were selected by their peers. The student body was asked to nominate classmates that they thought were trustworthy and helpful. Students interested in being part of Hope Squad then participated in a training that focused on three elements: question, persuade, and refer. These three elements have been researched and proven to help prevent suicide. Bryan Busold, Principal at North Olmsted Middle School said they have a wide range of students that represent all aspects of the middle school. “The kids are glowing because they were nominated by their peers,” he said. “Hope Squad has 22 students in 6th through 8th grade,” he added.

At the high school, students in Hope Squad had the chance to take part in a training that involved several other high schools from Medina County. “Our kids that went through the training were truly in awe,” said Dan Flood, Principal at North Olmsted High School. “There were times where the students were sharing stories and experiences from their own districts and really connecting with one another,” he added.

The implementation of Hope Squad has had positive reactions from staff. Elaine Gradisher, School Counselor at the middle school said they had a lot of response from staff members who wanted to be part of Hope Squad. “Some of our advisors are bringing experience to the group and they have a passion for this,” said Gradisher. “Middle school years can be challenging and our staff knows this can help,” she added.

Liz Mentler, Special Education Teacher is one of the advisors of Hope Squad at the high school. She said Hope Squad is already having a positive impact on students and how they interact. “The fact that we are bringing awareness to mental health and allowing kids to talk about it is working. “This is opening the door of communication with students,” Mentler added.

English Teacher Kiera Dodd and School Counselor Wendy Walland also co-advise Hope Squad at the high school and echoed Mentler’s comments. “We have a great group of kids,” said Dodd. “We have a wide range of kids and a good amount of diversity and interests that represents our entire student body,” she added.

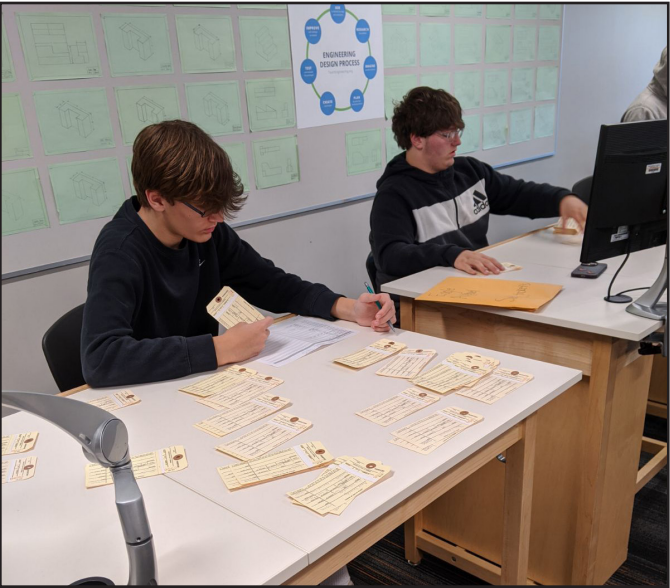
“The students involved are very excited and they have come up with a lot of ideas for this school year and this just started. We did a Honk for Hope (pictured above) as students arrived to school one day and it was great seeing so many people walk into school smiling, ” said Walland.





# Students learn all aspects of business while creating their own business

Creating a business, establishing a bank account, selling a product and making a profit. That is what North Olmsted High School Students taking Entrepreneurship are doing on a daily basis. The class, which is open to students in grades 10th through 12th goes beyond the basics of business operations and actually puts students in the position to create a business from the ground up.



“The students go through the process of filing for an LLC, so they are operating just like a regular business would,” said Charlie Sexstella, North Olmsted High School Entrepreneurship Teacher. “I help guide the students and serve as a resource for them, but they are doing 100% of the work to establish a business, decide on a product and market/sell that product to an audience,” he added.

The semester-long class starts with students organizing their business and determining jobs and duties. The first task is selecting a chief executive officer. Students apply to be the CEO, and the class votes on who they believe will be a good leader for their business. After a CEO is selected the rest of the class then submits job applications to apply for four different departments: marketing, production, finance, and sales. The CEO, along with Mr. Sexstella conduct interviews with each student to determine which department would be the best fit.

“We operate this as realistic as possible,” said Sexstella. “The students have to answer questions just like a typical interview and tell us why they would be a good fit for a specific department,” he added.

Junior Mason Foley (pictured right) is serving as the CEO for Eagle Apparel, the business created by the third period entrepreneurship class. Eagle Apparel is selling two different styles of sweatpants, a decision that came based on research.

“We did polls on social media to determine what product we would sell as well as the color and design for the product. That is how we landed on sweatpants in black and gray,” Foley said. “We are planning to push our product out using social media, fliers, and by attending athletic events,” he added.

Throughout the semester long class students build on a number of skills such as communication, teamwork, and even finance. Each class has to open a bank account at one of the local banks to manage money that comes in from product sales. The students make regular deposits, keep track of sales, and even distribute commissions based on the number of sales each classmate brings in.

“The financial aspect of this class is invaluable,” said Sexstella. “The students are using spreadsheets to track the financial elements of their business. They are creating budgets and analyzing costs and expenditures. The students need to know these concepts and have these financial skills no matter what their plan is after graduation,” he added.



The student-run businesses are not without challenges, and the students have to work through those as they occur. Meram Kordab, (pictured left) a senior, is a member of the marketing department for The Flock Shop, the business created by the fifth period entrepreneurship class. Their class is selling two products, flannel pajama pants and Pura Vida bracelets made with North Olmsted colors.

“We found two styles of pajama pants we liked from different vendors,” Kordab said. “One was better quality, but also too expensive for our budget. Our sales department had to negotiate with the vendor that had the style of pants that we like to get the price down so we could make a profit. That wasn’t easy to do,” she added.

Students take pre-orders, and use those numbers to determine the quantity of items they are going to order. After the order arrives, the students are in charge of packaging the products and delivering them to the customer. Students also take their products to the lunch room to sell any remaining stock.

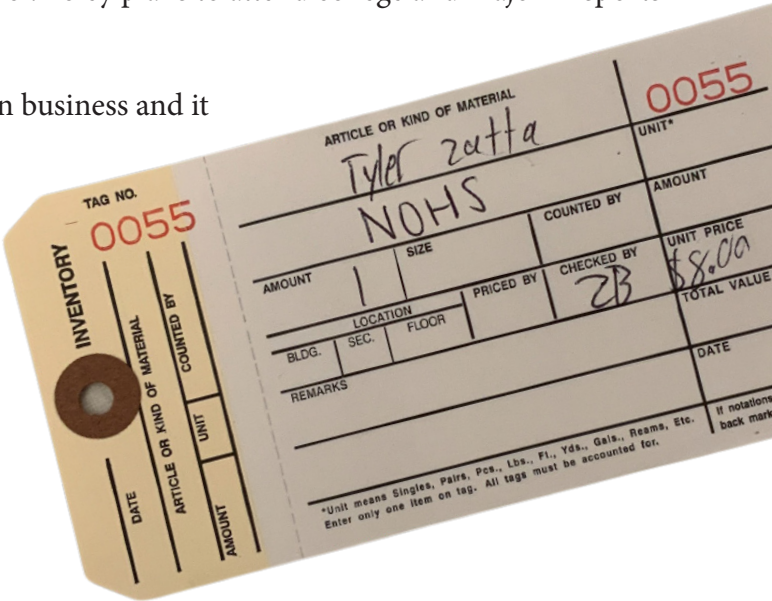
Both Kordab, and Foley said the skills they learned in Entrepreneurship class will be useful long after they graduate from North Olmsted High School. Foley plans to attend college and major in sports management.

“I’ve always really liked being a leader and leading a team of people,” said Foley. This is a student-run business and it gives us a step forward to those who don’t have a class like this offered,” he added.

Kordab is planning to attend Akron University to major in mechanical engineering and minor in business.

Sexstella said the kids really lean into the process and come together as a class to have a successful business. “It’s really neat to see these kids work through some of the challenges and work together as a unit. The students have a lot of fun with this,” he said.

“Our team is working great together,” said Kordab. “The first day we didn’t know everyone and through this business we have all become a family and are working towards the same goal. This business is our own and we are all so proud of that,” she added.







# Around the District



Barbers from West Park Barbershop located in North Olmsted came to Pine Elementary and gave free haircuts to approximately 20 boys before Thanksgiving! They are planning a second visit to Pine and will bring a hairstylist for the girls!



Senior Mia Donald signed her letter of intent to play basketball at Wheeling University! Mia was an All-Great Lakes Conference 1st team. She averaged over one and half blocks and steals, six rebounds and over six points a game. On the year she made over 40 percent of her field goals!



Approximately 10 high school students have started working with the IT Department to help repair damaged Chromebooks. Led by one of the Computer Techs, Jake Merhar, the IT department teaches the students the different parts of a Chromebook and how to take the devices apart. Once a week, during their study hall, these students help repair broken Chromebooks, while learning life skills like troubleshooting, diagnosing, repair, and customer service that are necessary in the IT field.



The Kindness Club and Student Council at Pine had their annual food drive before Thanksgiving. The students collected hundreds of non perishable food items. All of the items were taken to the Oxcart Pantry here in North Olmsted for the holiday season!



On September 21<sup>st</sup>, Chestnut, Maple, and Pine Elementary Schools held a Fathers/Male Mentor Walk to School event. Hundreds of fathers/male mentors participated across all three schools! This event is promoted across Cuyahoga County and the State of Ohio by the Healthy Fathering Collaborative as a way to encourage fathers and male mentors to become involved in their student's education.







Scan the QR code with your phone to see more photos of the cast and crew of Matilda Jr!



North Olmsted Middle School students performed Matilda Jr. the musical December 1st through December 3rd. Over 45 students participated in this production. Students are involved in all aspects of the play including the set painting, lighting, sound, and behind the scenes crew during the performances.



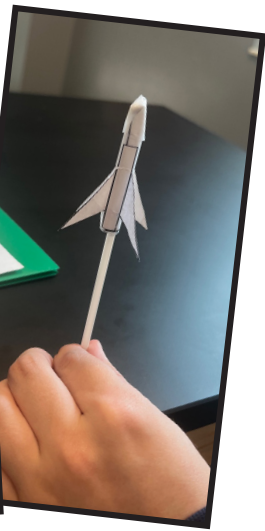
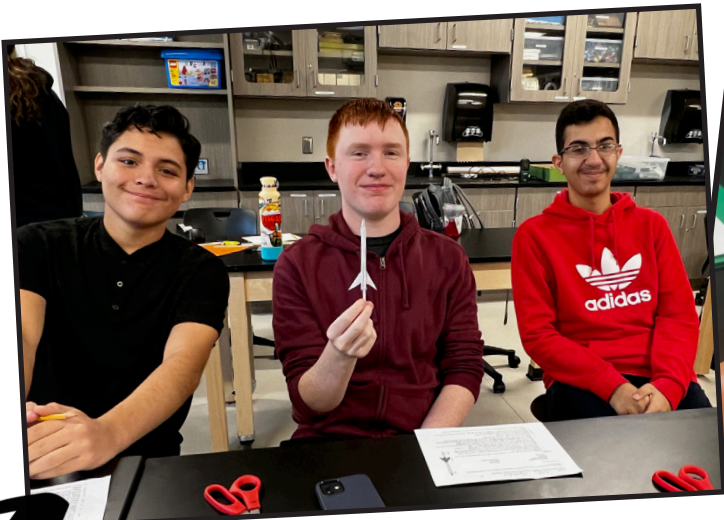
Maple Elementary students in Mr. Murphy's class have a new addition to their class: a Leopard Gecko! The students have been researching reptiles and their habitat. The Gecko is part of the class jobs and students take turns feeding and taking care of the Gecko. They brainstormed and did a poll on social media to help pick a name. The winning name was French Toast!

Students at Birch had a great time during their annual "Let's Pretend Day" to celebrate Halloween. Pictured below and to the right are several of our preschool students taking part in their classroom parties. The students played games, did crafts, sang, danced, and had a special treat! Prior to the classroom parties the students had a costume parade through the school and outside!



## Ohio Tech Day 2023

Ohio Tech Day is a statewide celebration of technology in Ohio held annually in September. Ohio Tech Day 2023 took place on September 29<sup>th</sup>.



Students in Honors Physics completed the first of three different rockets that they will collect data on this school year. The students used their cell phones to record their rocket launch in order to get positions and times to analyze the rocket's motion.



Third grade students in Mrs. Horning's class used Indi Sphero during a lesson about map skills. Students were learning about the cardinal directions of north, south, east, and west and set the robot up to move in those four directions.



# Maple students feel like rock stars with Modern Band club

“I feel like a rock star” said Holden Halsey, third grader at Maple Elementary. “When first graders see us playing I hope they are thinking the music is good,” he added.

Halsey’s excitement is tied to Modern Band, a club that students at Maple Elementary can participate in before school starts and during recess. Modern Band focuses on music genres like rock and pop while teaching students how to play instruments such as the drums, electric guitar, keyboard and ukulele. Sometimes the students incorporate vocals into the songs.

Modern Band started in 2017 when Megan Stilla, who has been a music teacher in North Olmsted for 12 years was given a unique opportunity. “I was invited to take part in a training and the Little Kids Rock Foundation (now known as Music Will) offered to pay for \$5,000 of instruments and send me to the Modern Band Summit in Colorado,” Stilla explained.

In first grade the students start out by learning how to play a song on the keyboard. After learning the keyboard they begin to add in the ukulele, electric guitar, and drums. The students then put all the parts together to form a song. Some students have previous experience playing an instrument while other students are trying an instrument for the first time.

Camden Holtwick, a third grader at Maple has been playing the drums since he was two years old. “I love that I get to play the drums multiple times a day,” said Camden. “I have a drum set at home and I used to take lessons. It’s a special instrument,” he added.



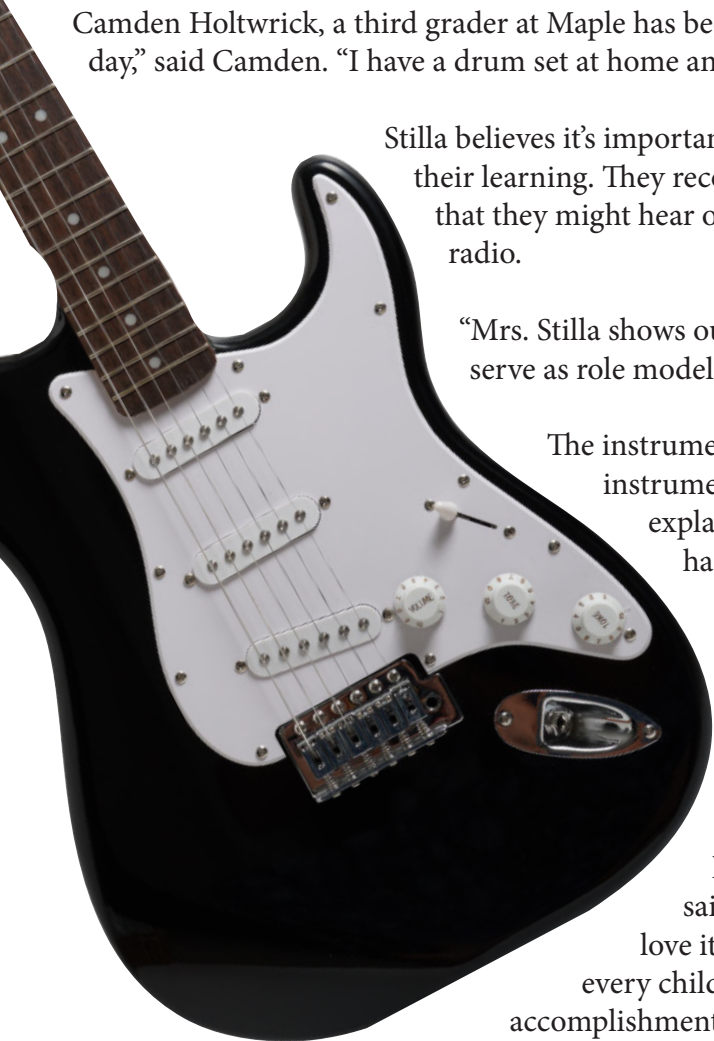
Stilla believes it’s important for each student to play an instrument and have choice in their learning. “The students choose their learning. They recommend songs and I approve them and work to get the music for them,” said Stilla. “Playing songs that they might hear on the radio creates more of a connection because they know the words and have heard the music on the radio.

“Mrs. Stilla shows our music to other students and our parents,” said Aubrey Williams, a third grader at Maple. “We get to serve as role models for the younger students,” she added.

The instruments the students use have been collected over the years through donations and grants. “Many of the instruments were purchased through a grant provided by the North Olmsted Education Foundation,” Stilla explained. I’ve also had some families donate instruments that they are no longer using or that their student has grown out of,” said Stilla.

Third grader, Andrew Gross has grown musically through Modern Band. “It’s educational. I learned how to play the bass guitar,” he said. “I have my own YouTube Channel with another classmate and we play the guitar and sing together,” he added.

Stilla, who has shared her professional experience with other music educators by presenting at the Ohio Music Educators Conference, and the Modern Band Summit, loves pushing her students to learn something new. “I try to push them out of their comfort zone so they challenge themselves,” she said. The pride they have when they accomplish something is amazing to see. The students love it. Parents love it. I love it because I get to do what I enjoy every day! My classroom is a community where each and every child at Maple feels successful in their own way. I want the bonds they have created, the positive feelings of accomplishment, and the skills they have learned to last a lifetime!”



## New PK-5 Elementary School: Early site work and demolition to begin in 2024

In November 2022, the community of North Olmsted passed a combined operating levy and bond issue. The bond issue part of the levy is funding the construction of a new elementary school that will serve all of the students in preschool through grade five. The new PK-5 facility will replace the four remaining elementary schools - Birch, Chestnut, Maple, and Pine.

In the spring of 2022, prior to going on the ballot, the district put together a Site Selection Task Force. The task force consisted of 45 community members representing the community of North Olmsted. The goal of the task force was to recommend a site for the new PK-5 grade facility. The Site Selection Task Force met over the course of two months and looked at the district’s current sites of Birch, Chestnut, and Pine. The task force reviewed detailed information about these sites and ultimately voted on which site they thought would be best for a new elementary school. The Site Selection Task Force presented at the April 7, 2022 Board of Education Meeting and recommended that the new PK-5 facility be built on the current Birch Elementary property.

The district needed to purchase additional properties that backed up to the current site of Birch Elementary. These properties included the Victory Plaza and the Economy Inn motel located across from Walter Road. These two properties

back up to the current property of Birch Elementary and would expand the property available for the new school. The district officially purchased Victory Plaza on June 12, 2023 and the Economy Inn on August 28, 2023. The site plan pictured right shows the outline of the property now owned by the district where the new PK-5 school will be built.

Early site work will begin in January/February 2024 if weather permits. Early site work will include the demolition of the plaza and motel as well as minor utility and ground work such as grading, excavating and site clearing.

