

# News from Franklin City Schools

## Wildcat Olympics: A day of joy and fun

On a gorgeous May day, the fourth annual Wildcat Olympics brought together the district's special education students for a parade, field events, and lunch at the stadium.

Cheering families and friends lined the track while community members and FHS students assisted with events and the PA system.

Students paraded around the track with class banners, then competed in a 100-yard dash, obstacle course, and long jump. The event's atmosphere was especially joyous given cancellation of the 2020 event due to COVID.

Wildcat Olympics was the brainchild of teacher Abby Smallwood, designed to celebrate students, families, and staff.



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# Wildcat Community News

## New high school's design taking shape!



Two words. No matter who they met with this spring to gather input for the design of the new Franklin High School, district architect SHP heard two words over and over: windows and light. FHS staff, alumni, board members, and other stakeholders were unanimous that the current high school lacks enough of both.

In response, SHP's proposed design for the new high school ensures that all classrooms will have windows and that the building will have abundant natural light. The plan, shown in the pictures above, is not yet official, but is a solid step toward the final blueprint.

The left side of picture shows the first floor. Vocal and instrumental music rooms are shown at the top, the north end of the building situated closest to 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Moving south are the gymnasiums, locker rooms, weight room, administration, kitchen, student dining, media center, and some building services.

First floor of the academic wing will house special ed, science, art, math, technology education, Project Lead the Way, and credit recovery. The building will have an event entry with access to the more public areas of the building, and a separate, main entry by administration for the academic areas.

The second floor, on the right side in the picture above, will house social studies, foreign languages, and English classes.

All classrooms will have an outside wall, allowing for

windows, and the interior walls of the academic wing surround a courtyard which will have a variety of uses including greenspace and outdoor classroom space.

Groundbreaking for the new building will be Sunday, Sept. 12, at 2 p.m. The public is welcome to attend and invited to bring a lawn chair or blanket for seating. The ceremony will be on the rear lawn of the current FJHS, and guests are asked to park at Hampton Bennett.



In May, 1200+ community members took the opportunity to tour FJHS prior to its demolition later this year. A virtual tour was created for those unable to attend; it can be accessed on the district website.

## NJHS inducts 37 new members

Franklin Junior High School recently inducted 37 students into the National Junior Honor Society, the seventh group tapped since the chapter's 2014 founding.

Inductees were from both the seventh and eighth grade classes. They included: Isabella Baker, Luke Ball, Kailynne Banks, Jack Berry, Beckett Burlile, Taytem Burton, Gracie Clifford, Alexia Crouch, Tyler Denison-Drake, Aiden Emerick, Peyton Everitt, Pixie Fields, Ethan Fleming, Emma Francis, Peyton Hall, Zachary Hamilton, Tristen Hatfield, Sophie Hester, Annabell Hunter, Katie Keidel, Audrey Lairson O'Hara, Suni Lin, Ainslee Lloyd, Landon Middleton, Ci'erra Miller, Connor Monk, Levi Moyer, Madelyn Mullins, Evelyn Ponder, Liam Rebholz, Andrew Sanders, Aubrey Stephens, Isabella Taylor, Erin Von Holle, Daymion Weber, Brayton Williams, and Olivia Wright.

The inductees join 25 students who were inducted in 2020 as 7th graders and are still chapter members.

The National Junior Honor Society was established in 1929. According to its website, NJHS is "one of the nation's premier organizations established to recognize outstanding middle level students."

NJHS is built on five pillars: scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship.

## FHS inducts 27 into NHS

Franklin High School recently inducted 27 students into the National Honor Society in a virtual ceremony. NHS membership is one of the highest honors that high school students can achieve. Five seniors and 22 juniors were tapped for the honor. NHS recognizes students for outstanding character, scholarship, leadership, and service. Students must have a minimum grade point average and are nominated by teachers.

Seniors inducted were Harleigh Budzak, Hayley Canter, Skylar Cox, Jackie Green, and Braden Little.

Juniors inducted were Reagan Anderson, Ashley Back, Jayden Bennett, Hudson Black, Victoria Brown, Kate Clevenger, Kaity Dalton, Hayla Gadd, Kierra Harris, Tess Johnson, Brooke Jordan, Isabella Knipper, Kyle Lawson, Nina Lin, Emma Madden, Kadin Miller, Nathaniel Paarlberg, Ashtin Parker, Sam Phillips, Erin Phillips, Braden Rogers, and Mallory Wulff.

The group's advisors are Kelly Brock and Emily Rudy.

## Board honors students for achievement

The Board of Ed has recognized students for achievement at board meetings this year. FCS established the Student Achievement Award in 2001 and has honored hundreds of students. Students honored in May will appear in the August newsletter.



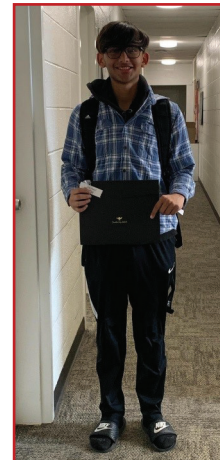
Students honored for 10 quarters of Straight As were from left, Lanee Imfeld (Schenck), Bryley Wulff (Schenck), Cooper Cronk (Gerke), Morgan Brown (FJHS), Karys Kurdziel (FJHS), and Madison Carmack (Gerke).



Above Daniel Osborne (Schenck) and Sarah Wallace (Hunter) were honored for earning Straight As for 10 quarters.

Above picture, front row from left: Fiona Baker, Loma Metzger, Alexa Repp, Robert Lipps Jr., Holly Thornton, Tori Hamilton, Mary Kendrick, Kennedy Jones. Back row: Colton Wolf, Andy Kuntzman, Anish Patel, Garvin Adams, Ashley Hall, Wyatt Fryer-Borntrager, Dominic Emmett, Elijah Wells. These students were honored for being members of the FHS Principal's 30+ Club (high ACT scores).

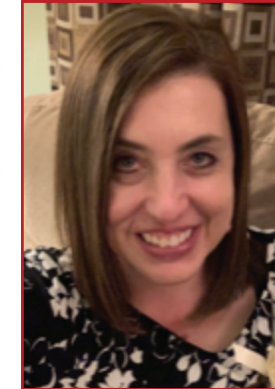
Immediate right, Jay Patel (FHS) was honored for testing out of the TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) Program based on his 2020 OELPA exams. He is trilingual. Far right, Jazmyn Angel (Schenck) was honored for exemplary service to others. She made hand sanitizer to donate to her neighbors and to the Franklin Police Department to keep the officers safe. Jared Erwin (FHS) was honored for recently earning the rank of Eagle Scout, which is achieved by less than 10 % of Boy Scouts.



## Ellzey, Katris 2021 Project Excellence Winners

Carrie Ellzey and Zach Katris have been named Franklin City Schools' 2021 Project Excellence winners.

Project Excellence, which operates under the Area Progress Council of Warren County, annually recognizes two teachers from each of Warren County's eight school districts, plus the Warren County Career Center, the Greater Ohio Virtual School, and the Warren County Educational Service Center. Teachers are nominated by peers, parents, and students. Project Excellence was established in 1988 to honor excellence in teaching throughout Warren County; since its inception, it's honored nearly 700 educators.



Ellzey has a B.A. in Special Education and an M. Ed. in Educational Administration and Supervision from Arizona State University. She's taken additional courses at schools including UD to complete her Master's plus 30 credits.

She's been teaching special education for 15 years overall, seven in Franklin. Her Wildcat career includes four years at Anthony Wayne, and now three years at Gerke, where the Tier 3 classes have been consolidated. Ellzey said, "It is so wonderful to have the support of my amazing team close by and to see the benefits of having all of our students in one building sharing resources and forming relationships with classmates and staff across their elementary years. I am currently teaching grades 3 through 5."

Ellzey said the most rewarding part of teaching "comes in the subtle day to day happenings. . . the impromptu hugs, laughs and smiles from the kids. It's the quiet times when they are vulnerable and willing to share their hearts with me, the times we play and are goofy together, and the excited smiles when they finally realize they can do something that has been so hard for them to understand or do before. I feel good knowing that I am working towards a worthwhile goal and that with the support of my amazing team of colleagues, we will be able to help at least one of these children make a breakthrough. We carry these breakthroughs in all of our hearts. I am fortunate to have many of my students for multiple years and the relationships I form with not only them but their families are often lasting and truly meaningful."

She added, "I am truly appreciative of the recognition and the feeling of being seen, particularly at a time when all teachers have been going above and beyond to meet the needs of our students during this unprecedented year."

Zach Katris has a B.A. in Sociology/Philosophy from John Carroll University and an M.A. in Curriculum & Instruction from U. Cincinnati; he also has certificates in Gifted Intervention and Educational Leadership. Katris' future educational goal is a Ph.D. in Education & Policy.



He's been with the district for seven years, all at Franklin High School where he's taught 11th & 12th graders AP US Government & Politics, US Government, and Sociology.

Katris noted that the best parts of being a teacher are, "The handshakes and 'thank yous' students give [me] at the end of each school year. Nothing in education is worth as much as your students acknowledging your hard work, appreciating the effort you have put forth for them, thanking you for being a positive influence in their lives, and using the knowledge and skill sets learned to be successful in their lives."

He noted that memorable moments from his teaching career were being named the NHS Teacher of the Year in both 2017 and 2019, an award decided on by students.

Katris admits that he became an educator for a lofty reason. He had concluded that "all the major issues facing our country and those around the world could be resolved by improving and expanding public education systems. Pageant dreams aside, I thought if I were a teacher, I could be one small part of that goal... at least in my classroom. So, I became one. As each year begins and ends, I review my 'why' and contemplate how best to impact those students I have the pleasure of working with. I realize that beyond improving on my mistakes or managing my relationships, I enjoy giving my community's children the opportunity to learn. I enjoy interacting with students, picking their brains, making them solve problems, and asking them to do it again the next day, and the day after that, and so on. I enjoy the lifelong pursuit of learning [where the] only goal is that of making each of us a little better and the world a little kinder. I am both proud and humbled to be named a Project Excellence winner and join the ranks of local teachers who strive to improve public education."

Follow our district on its social media pages for news, pictures, and updates. Twitter handles are:

- |                  |                         |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| @HunterElemNews  | @GerkeElementary        |
| @PennyroyalElem  | @AdminsFHS              |
| @AnthonyWayneEle | @FJHSOH                 |
| @Schenck_Elem    | @FCSWildcats (District) |

Instagram: fcswildcatpride (District)  
Facebook: facebook.com/FranklinCitySchools/  
Website: franklincityschools.com

## Kindergarten Roundup helps orient new families, students

Kindergarten will look a bit different next year, as students attend class at their neighborhood buildings rather than at the **Early Childhood Center**.

The Early Childhood Center (Hampton Bennett) will close and is scheduled for demolition (date yet to be scheduled) as part of the reconfiguration of the Hampton Bennett and Franklin Junior High campuses into the new Franklin High School.

ECC principal Julie Ratliff and her staff developed a fun way for incoming students and families to learn a bit more about the buildings they'd be attending and the principals and teachers they may have this fall.

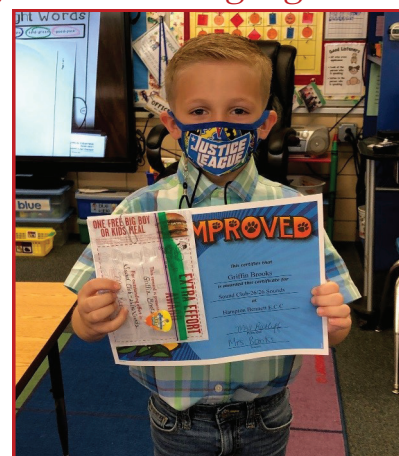
Kindergarten Roundup is a series of Google slides that have important info for parents with check-points to help determine kindergarten readiness, lists of activities to do with their child, resources, and info about what kindergarteners will be learning.

Mrs. Ratliff added, "Since we can't do our normal in-person evening [to meet students and families] we decided to do something different. Each principal and teacher can be clicked on and the child can see them reading a book. We thought this would help families get a little familiar with the new teacher and buildings. Moving forward we hope to update this yearly to new changes and reshare to the new kindergarten groups."



## Students mark progress with "brag tags"

ECC students mark their progress by earning membership in clubs such as the ABC Club and ABC Sound Club. When students know all of the letters and sounds, they're recognized with a certificate, a coupon for a free meal from Frisch's, and a Brag Tag to add to their lanyards. By year end, students had to learn 72 sight words to earn membership in the Sight Word Club.



## Community team looks at district branding

Just ask anyone: Franklin City Schools' colors are red and black; our mascot is the Wildcats. Those are long, proud traditions for our district.

As our new high school gets underway, the Board of Ed wanted to ensure that our district's "brand" is as fresh and up-to-date as our new buildings will be. This would mean that our Wildcat mascot picture/s are uniquely our own and the red and black colors are standard across all buildings and school properties, all uses, and all platforms, both print and digitally.

A rebranding team (comprised of parents, staff, alums, community members, admins, and a Board rep) has been working for several weeks and will finish this summer. One of their first assignments was to gather as many examples of Wildcat logos (and related images such as paws) they could find being used around the district. The results of that eye-opening exercise are below and represent only a fraction of the logo variations that are in use. Logos on spirit wear were just as varied.

Watch for new branding info to roll out this summer.



## MCF grant to support new theater lighting

A generous \$9,000 grant from Middletown Community Foundation is a big step toward funding new lighting in the FHS Auditorium. The \$12,024 project will fund LED cyc lights for background lighting behind performers on the stage.

The 1989 auditorium has older, repurposed strip lights with inefficient incandescent bulbs that require frequent replacement. While the lighting control console is new, the lights are old; FHS theater students don't learn newer theater lighting systems.

Audiences will notice clean, professional, richer, more vibrant color on the cyc behind students in band and choir concerts.

The entire district will benefit from the lighting upgrade, as the auditorium is heavily used for events by every district building, plus community groups and local dance studios.

Additional funds must be raised to complete the project, which has been challenging as COVID has limited fundraising activities and reduced audience sizes.



Schenck's annual Spring Literacy Event was held this year as a "drive through" on April 20. Title I funds provided a free book for all Schenck students, and free boxes of food were available for anyone in the community in partnership with Journey Community Church.

Several Schenck staff, Title teachers from the elementary buildings, Boy Scout volunteers, Teresa Henderson-Weaver, and Robyn Donisi helped with the event.

Schenck students not attending received their book the following day at school.

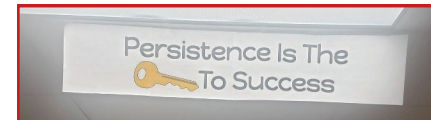


In line with basketball's March Madness theme, the start of State Testing was celebrated in style at Schenck Elementary. Being the first grade to test, 6th grade teachers decorated the halls and their classrooms with inspirational banners and balloons, and played music to motivate the students upon arrival for the first day of testing.

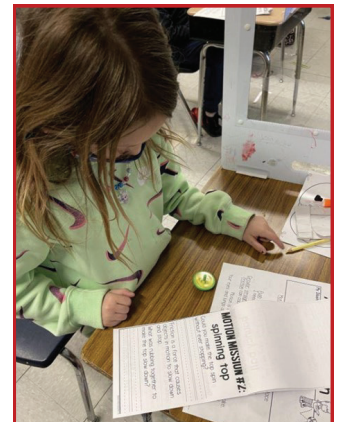
Students in grades 1-5 lined both sides of the parking lot, waving signs of encouragement and cheering as the 6th graders' names were called and ran through the line-up. Just before testing, students and teachers practiced relaxation mindfulness routines, including deep breathing, gentle stretching, rolling of neck muscles, and repeating a positive mantra. Sixth grade teachers and students see the tests as an opportunity to celebrate their learning and to show what they know!

April was extremely busy, however, a great deal of the month revolved around state testing for grades 3 - 8 and Fountas & Pinnell testing for grades 1 - 4.

Schenck approached testing with a positive attitude and looked at tests as an opportunity for students to show what they have learned this year. Students were motivated by music and relaxation prior to starting their state tests, as well as incentives and banners of encouragement throughout the building.



Hunter Elementary 5th grade students capped off a unit on Biomes and displayed their projects for the primary students. For safety during group work, group work time was limited, and students observed COVID protocols.



Above, 2nd grade students did experiments about Force and Motion.

Other activities at Hunter this spring included Read Across America, where primary students celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday with spirit wear days throughout the first week of March. They also read books throughout the week and learned about different genres of literature throughout the month. The building also raised \$1025 for the Hero Squad Leukemia and Lymphoma Foundation fundraiser; the building capped off the week with a Superhero-themed dress-up day to celebrate.

At the end of the 3rd quarter, the building celebrated reaching PBIS behavior goals with a schoolwide movie day; classes chose their movie.

In tech class, Hunter 6th grade students were given the responsibility of creating video morning announcements. Google classroom was used to share the video with the building at the start of the day.

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**Pennyroyal** 5th and 6th graders recently studied energy and enjoyed a delicious experiment. As they studied different kinds of energy, they thought, "The sun is most prevalent, so why not soak up some sun?"

The 6th grade classes used pizza boxes to construct solar ovens to cook some S'mores. The goal was to capture the thermal energy using the self-made ovens with a target of reaching 125 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Fifth graders used shoe boxes, and hoped that they'd learn design improvements from the 6th grade's experiences.

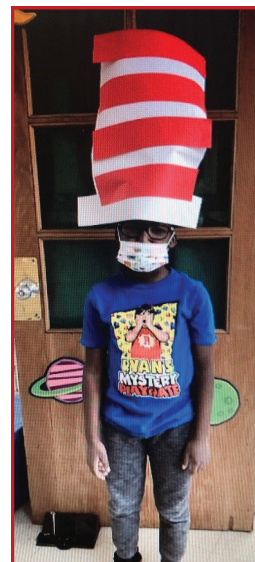
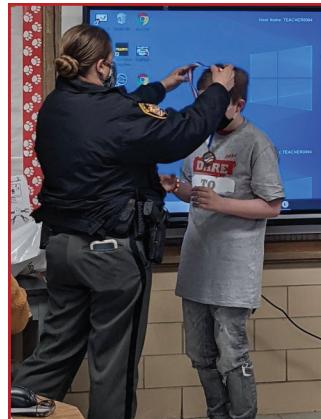
In mid-May, **Pennyroyal** held Hero Squad week to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society to fight blood cancers. Each day had a dress-up theme: Wear Red in support of support of fighting blood cancers; Twins (find a friend and dress alike); Tie-Dye or something colorful; Superhero Day; and Favorite Hat Day (below).



At **Anthony Wayne**, 1st graders observed the life cycles of butterflies and ladybugs firsthand!

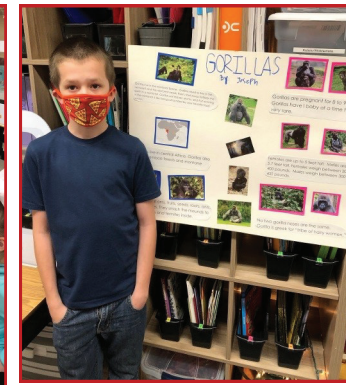
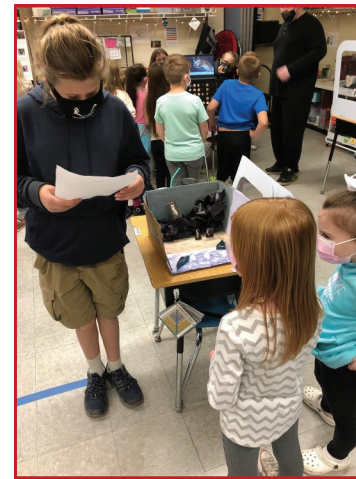
AW 6th graders graduated from DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education). The 10-week program is with Deputy McKay from the Warren County Sheriff's Office. She met with students to explore the importance of communicating effectively, resistance strategies, and the DARE decision-making model.

At DARE graduation, students read their DARE essays, received their awards, and celebrated with a special treat. In addition, the K9 unit visited and students met Vader the police dog; students learned about these special dogs and how they assist police officers in their jobs.



During Read Across America Week, first graders had Cat in the Hat Day (above left) and 2nd graders celebrated with *Horton Hears a Who*. Above right, 4th graders made artbots: robots that move and draw!

# News from Franklin City Schools



**Gerke** students in Miss Bell's class did projects on animals and presented their information to first graders.

**Gerke's** 3rd quarter behavior reward was focused around baseball and opening day.



**Gerke** students raised \$1052.09 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society by dressing as their favorite service workers. See picture in the right-hand column.

Read Across America week (formerly Right to Read Week) was launched in 1998 by the National Education Association as a way to encourage children to read. It later evolved into a year-round program with special emphasis in March. **Gerke's** celebration included Crazy Day (see pic at right) and Career Day dress-up days.



## What does it mean to be a Wildcat?

When **Franklin Junior High School** students were dismissed at the end of the school day on May 28, they made history as the last ones to attend class in the building. The current FJHS has been Wildcat Country since it opened as a 6-12 school in 1921; many Franklin residents note that not only they themselves, but their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents were students there. To honor the building, FJHS students explored "What it Means to Be a Wildcat" by painting mini-mural blocks in the cafeteria.

