

## New high school slated to open January 2024!



Contractors are working on both internal and external phases of the new high school as the exterior brick cladding is going up; roofing material is on site and will be installed soon.

Areas that will house the district's Network Operations Center are nearing completion. This must be migrated from Hampton Bennett before demolition can proceed.

The Franklin Board of Ed toured the site in early May. The picture above shows the front of the building (close to 6th St.); this is the wall with the Wildcat logo shown in the architect's rendering (above right).

With the building slated to open in January 2024, the Board has approved these dates/changes, as Hampton Bennett is demolished this summer, and students start attending classes in new or renovated facilities.

Preschool will move to **Schenck Elementary** for the 2023-24 school year.

One kindergarten classroom will move from **Schenck Elementary** to **Pennyroyal** for the '23-'24 school year.

FHS students will start the second semester of the '23-'24 school year remotely (1/3/24 through 1/12/24), with students attending the new high school in person starting Tuesday, Jan 16, 2024.

FJHS students will attend class remotely for two weeks during the second semester (1/16/24 through 1/26/24), and be in the renovated **Franklin Middle School** (current Franklin High School) starting Monday, Jan. 29, 2024.

The **Pennyroyal Elementary** campus will go offline June 2024; students will be housed in the modular campus (Buildings A and C) behind FJHS in August 2024.

## Thank you for supporting Franklin City Schools!

### Greetings from Franklin City Schools!

On Tuesday, May 2, voters in the Franklin City School district had a chance to say yes or no to renewing a critical operating levy. Not only did you say yes, you said yes by an overwhelming margin!

Passing the issue is a huge victory for our students and community. We can continue to offer our students wonderful educational opportunities and stay on a solid path of continuous improvement.

Speaking for the Board of Education, staff, and students of Franklin City Schools, thank you!

Passing this issue required a partnership among many people and groups. Thank you to:

- ◆ the levy committee, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes.
- ◆ the volunteers who helped pass out literature, make calls, send postcards, and answer questions.

- ◆ the Board of Education, who placed the issue on the ballot.
- ◆ the community, who overwhelmingly said yes to our schools.

We're grateful and happy to have the hard work of passing the levy behind us. An exciting year is ahead as our new high school opens and our middle school is renovated. Your generosity and dedication to the success of our community's youth is gratifying. We pledge to work tirelessly to continue to earn your trust and confidence.

Thank you once again for your support and dedication to Franklin City Schools.

As always, if you have questions or concerns about Franklin City Schools, don't hesitate to contact me at (937) 746-1699 or [msander@franklincityschools.com](mailto:msander@franklincityschools.com).

Sincerely,  
Dr. Michael D. Sander, Superintendent

# News from Franklin City Schools

## FHS inducts fourteen into SNHS

FHS recently inducted 14 students into the Esteman Mateus Williamson Chapter of the Spanish National Honors Society (SNHS). There are currently 42 active members and 5 associate members in the chapter, which was chartered in 2015.

SNHS, an honor society for high school students enrolled in Spanish III-V, recognizes high achievement in Spanish courses to promote growing interest in Hispanic studies.

2023 inductees were Eli Alanis, Kailee Alcorn, Marlena Blunt, Christopher Bond, Morgan Brown, Lillian Cook, Isaac Elam, Hailey Hitte, Caleb Jones, Isadore Karrick, Hailey Miller, Willow Monk, Gage Mullins, and Alyssa O'Hara.

Veronica Kiefaber, FHS Spanish instructor and Chapter organ-

izer said, "By being a member, members embrace the Spanish-speaking cultures and language. They spread their knowledge of cultures to others and raise the level of expectations in education by choosing to take honors classes. This society provides enrichment opportunities and allows students the opportunity to graduate with honors and recognition of their achievements with graduation regalia."

Eligibility for SNHS requires students to be at least a sophomore (per the national by-laws), to be actively enrolled in an upper-level Spanish class, and to have received all A's and B's in their Spanish classes. Students must never have failed a class due to attendance and must have a good behavior record with no recorded incidents of cheating, plagiarism, misconduct, insubordination, or intentional dishonesty.

Maintaining SNHS membership at Franklin High School requires students to engage in one activity from each of the following three categories: Academic Commitment; Franklin High School Community Commitment; and Global Commitment.



## Kindergarten registration for 2023-24

Kindergarten registration for the 2023-2024 school year has begun for all students turning five by August 1, 2023.

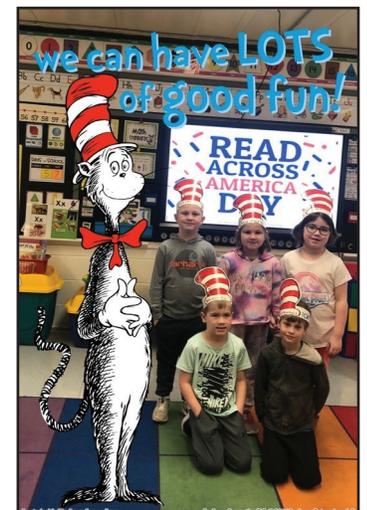
The following documents are required for registration:

- Original Birth Certificate
- Custody Papers/Court Ordered Placement (if applicable). (Divorce Decree, date-stamped and signed by judge/magistrate). Note: If you are in the process of acquiring custody, you must have documentation from court confirming legal proceedings have been initiated. There is a 60-day legal completion process for the student to continue enrollment at Franklin City Schools.
- Shot/Immunization Records
- Parent/Guardian Driver's License
- Proof of Residency (Rental/Lease agreement, Settlement Statement, Land/Purchase Contract, Copy of Deed, Electric, or Water Bill.) Items listed are the only items that will be accepted.

Students will not be admitted until all of the above requirements have been met. If you have any questions, please call Central Registration at 937-743-8602. Kindergarten student must turn 5 by August 1, 2023.

## Hunter observes special days

Hunter Kindergarten students recently observed Read Across America Day and the 100th Day of School Math.



## FCS Administrative offices have moved

The District's administrative offices have moved from Hampton Bennett to a renovated wing of the current high school; the mailing address is 754 E. 4th St., and the entrance is on the west side of the building.

# News from Franklin City Schools

## Enrolling your child in school

You may enroll your child in school at the Franklin City Schools Welcome Center Registration Office, 150 E. Sixth St., in the Hampton Bennett Building. Hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

For your convenience, and to minimize waiting time, a parent/guardian must contact the Welcome Center Office to schedule an appointment to complete the registration process in person.

In addition to your completed registration packet, the following documents must be provided for enrollment in the Franklin City School District:

- Original Birth Certificate
- Custody Papers/Court Ordered Placement (if applicable) (Divorce Decree, date stamped and signed by judge/magistrate). Note: If you are in the process of acquiring custody, you must have documentation from the court confirming legal proceedings have been initiated. There is a 60-day legal completion process for the student to continue enrollment at Franklin City Schools.
- Shot/Immunization Records
- Parent/Guardian Driver's License
- Proof of Residency (Rental/Lease agreement, Settlement Statement, Land/Purchase Contract, Copy of Deed, Electric or Water Bill. Items listed are the only items that will be accepted.)
- IEP/504/MFE (if applicable)
- Transcript from previous school attended (Grades 9-12 only)
- Social Security Card

When all documents have been verified you will be directed to contact your child's assigned school building to complete the enrollment process for orientation, scheduling, and transportation. You may also be required to complete additional building forms.

We want to make your child's first day a positive experience, therefore, we need time to prepare for him/her to join our classes. Due to scheduling and transportation, students enrolled may start the day after registration requirements have been met.

If your child has any medical issues that need to be addressed, please contact the building nurse prior to the start of school.

## Senior Citizen activity passes

Senior citizens (age 62+) living in the Franklin City School district may pick up a pass in the Superintendent's office (754 E. 4th St.) that will allow them to attend school-sponsored activities at no charge.

Residents should take a drivers' license with them to confirm their address. The pass never expires and is good for any home game (excluding tournaments) and high school plays.

## Jelly bean STEM collaboration at Schenck

At **Schenck**, Mrs. Long's first grade class and Mrs. DeHart's fifth grade class worked together on a STEM jelly bean tower project. The students had to plan, draw, build, and analyze the towers'

challenges and successes. The team with the tallest free-standing tower won the challenge.

STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) educa-



tion helps students develop reasoning and critical thinking skills, ultimately helping them become better problem solvers.



## The latest district news

For the most up-to-date information about district news and happenings, follow our district on its social media pages.

Instagram: [fcswildcatpride](#) (District)

Facebook: [facebook.com/FranklinCitySchools/](#)

Website: [franklincityschools.com](#)

LinkedIn:

Twitter handles are:

[@HunterElemNews](#)

[@PennyroyalElem](#)

[@AnthonyWayneEle](#)

[@Schenck\\_Elem](#)

[@GerkeElementary](#)

[@AdminsFHS](#)

[@FJHSOH](#)

[@FCSWildcats](#) (District)

# News from Franklin City Schools

## Outstanding Alum: Frank Vilella, Class of '83



Growing up in our house, there was always music. The radio or stereo was usually on, and it was almost always with vocalists: Frank Sinatra, Connie Francis, Johnny Mathis, Ella Fitzgerald, Mario Lanza, and Mel Tormé, and original cast recordings of Broadway shows and movie musical soundtracks. We would watch Evening at Pops, Sha Na Na, and the endless parade of variety shows that featured singers.

I was always singing: at home, in church, and at school. My first solo performance was in a talent show at Hunter Elementary when I was about seven, singing “Bad, Bad Leroy Brown” (a terribly inappropriate song for that age!). When band was offered in fifth grade, I picked up the saxophone; the next year at Hampton Bennett, played the part of Linus in the musical *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (my best friend Mike Pruett was Charlie Brown). Both Vickie Nau for band and Judith Whitham for choir had infinite patience, and they started building our foundations of music theory. In junior high, Bonnie Beasley led the choir; it seemed we sang at every church and retirement home around. We were so dedicated to her that we all called her “Mom.”

In high school, scheduling issues made it impossible to take both band and choir. Since choir was offered during a noontime period, I skipped lunch sophomore year in order to take choir.

Some of the greatest joys were during junior and senior years, continuing with choir and the musicals, plus performing as drum major with the marching band. Under the guidance of Chris Andrews (who, I now realize, was barely a few years older than we were), our small-but-mighty band played our hearts out under those Friday night lights. What a thrill it was to wear the drum major's all-white uniform. The evening wouldn't be complete until we'd sing the alma mater—“All Hail to Franklin High”—as the bus pulled into the high school parking lot after a game or competition.

Thanks to our vocal music teacher Priscilla Stanze (who had perfect pitch and could play anything on the piano), I caught the theater bug sophomore year as a chorus member in *The Music Man*. I was lucky enough to have roles the next two years as Will Parker in *Oklahoma!* and Charlie Davenport in *Annie Get Your Gun* (again, proudly second fiddle to Mike Pruett who played the leads—Curly and Frank Butler, respectively). That bug extended into the summer as Middletown sponsored their Summer Youth Theatre program. The first year I was a chorus member in *Oklahoma!* In 1983, I played Lieutenant Joe Cable—again, the second lead to Mike's Emile de Becque—in *South Pacific*.

Attending Miami University, I immediately joined the Men's Glee Club and took voice lessons, even though I was a business major. I stumbled through my business classes, and Club rehearsal was always the best part of the day. I performed in a couple of plays and musicals, and sang in coffeehouses with a guitar-playing friend (lots of Simon & Garfunkel and James Taylor). The culmination of my Miami years was a trip to Europe with the Glee Club just after graduation in 1988, performing in cathedrals throughout Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

After the tour, I moved to Chicago to start my business career with Marshall Field's. I lasted six months in their management training program and fled after barely surviving a big-city retail Christmas. It just wasn't for me. I found a job with the Theatre School at DePaul University as a house manager at the Blackstone (now Merle Reskin) Theatre, and felt lucky to finally be working in the arts. A perk of working at DePaul was that I could take classes; I soon started with a couple in music theory and history. And after almost two years, I took the plunge into a full-time vocal performance degree program, here I was singing every day: in private voice studio, opera scene work, choir, and staged opera. I also started my first church job, as a chorister and cantor at Holy Name Cathedral in downtown Chicago.

During my last year at DePaul, I started auditioning, and just before graduation (spring 1992), I was hired by Margaret Hillis into the Chicago Symphony Chorus. My first gig was at the Ravinia Festival in Mahler's monumental *Eighth Symphony* that June (baptism by fire!). At a Chorus rehearsal that fall, I noticed some job postings for work with the CSO's administration. One position was for a part-time cataloger and reference assistant in the archives. I interviewed, but I didn't get it. In the spring, the same job was posted again. At the end of my second interview with the archivist, she asked me if I had any other questions, and I said, “What else do I have to say for you to give me the job?” A few hours later, she called with an offer.

I distinctly remember that week, because we were also in rehearsals for performances and recording sessions for Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*. I remember working one of my first days in the archives and later in the evening being part of a massive ensemble—onstage with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus—creating a huge wall of glorious sound. All I could think was, “How did I get here?”

During my 20 seasons as a member of the CSC, I had the chance to sing and record so many of the great works: Bach's Saint John and Saint Matthew passions, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and *Fidelio*, Brahms's and Mozart's requiems, Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony*, Puccini's *Tosca*, Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* and *Symphony of Psalms*, and Verdi's *Otello*, and with legendary conductors, including Daniel Barenboim, Pierre Boulez, Bernard Haitink, James Levine, and Zubin Mehta. Two recordings won Grammy awards: Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* conducted by Sir Georg Solti, and Verdi's *Requiem*, conducted by Riccardo Muti. My last performance with the ensemble was Orff's *Carmina Burana* in Carnegie Hall in October 2012. I still sing professionally with smaller ensembles, some studio work for a music publisher, weekly at a Catholic church, and occasionally at a Jewish synagogue.

In early May 2023, I celebrated 30 years working in the CSO's Rosenthal Archives, where I'm responsible for the preservation of and access to collections that document the organization's activities. The main collection includes correspondence, contracts, photographs, recordings, and artifacts. The bulk of the music collection is the personal library of our founder Theodore Thomas, which numbers over 3,500 titles of music scores and parts, including hundreds of manuscripts and first editions. It is the largest collection of its kind in this country.

I like to think that I never take any of this for granted, and I feel tremendously lucky to have been given the opportunity to live and work here in this great city. But even after all of this time, I still find myself occasionally wondering, “How did I get here?”

# News from Franklin City Schools

## Exchange student spends year as a Wildcat

While spending a year as an exchange student at FHS, Eliška Prejzková, a native of the Czech Republic, has found some things are quite similar to home (Harry Potter and younger brothers) and some to be quite different (the structure of the school system and our more casual dress code — she admitted that she didn't believe students really wore pajamas to class).

Prejzková, who's in Ohio via ASSE (American Scandinavian Student Exchange), wanted to "gain new perspectives, see the world, and be more independent." This year, which is her first time abroad, has includ-

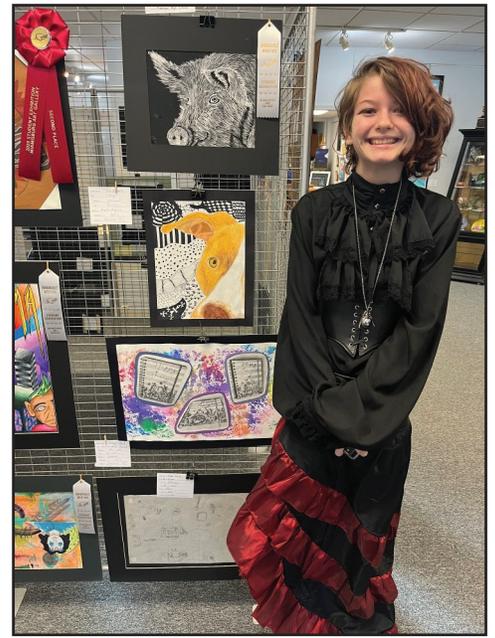


ed coursework, extracurriculars (French Club and Spanish Club), and travel with her host family to Florida, Tennessee, Nevada, Arizona, and California. She also spent a week in DC with other exchange students.

Structural differences in the school system meant her FHS credits wouldn't transfer, so she's carrying a double academic load of both FHS courses and those from her home school. Prejzková noted that her home high school has 12 required courses and no electives except languages. She speaks Czech, English, and French (her Czech elective) and is taking Spanish as part of her FHS coursework. She's enjoyed the FHS government class; her home school has nothing similar.

Her host family Amy Hudson Estep, Michael Estep, and Owen Hudson Bateson, chose her in a process "not unlike online dating." Part of the exchange program's requirements include speaking to outside groups; she recently spoke to the Carlisle-Franklin Rotary Club about her experiences. Prejzková plans to attend law school, and would like to become a judge.

## Fine Arts News: Art, Theater, Music



Thirty-one FHS students had 40 works accepted into the Miamisburg Art Gallery's 2023 High School Student Art Exhibition, where their works competed with those of other area high school art students. Congrats to our students who took Honorable Mentions across six categories: Miranda Lawson, Daylynn Lehman, Tyler Bond, Cierra Miller, Zoe Shockley, and Ricardo Paredes. See pictures above. Erica Eyre is the FHS art instructor.

In March, the FHS Symphonic Choir earned a Superior Rating at the OMEA District Contest, qualified them for a spot in the State Contest, where they brought home an excellent rating. The

choir is under the direction of Lucinda Bires.

The Franklin High School Thespian Troupe 1569 was recently awarded Gold Honor Troupe status at the 2023 Ohio Thespian State Conference. FHS is one of only six schools in the state to receive this award this year. Per the application, the goal of "Honor Troupe recognition is to promote excellence within your troupe and to challenge your troupe to achieve greater things in the future." Jeff Sams is the director of the FHS theater program.

# News from Franklin City Schools

## Mathis and Bush Project Excellence Winners

Michele Mathis and P.J. Bush have been named Franklin City Schools' 2023 Project Excellence (PE) winners.

PE, which operates under the Area Progress Council of Warren County, annually recognizes two teachers from each Warren County school district, the Career Center, the Greater Ohio Virtual School, and the Warren County ESC. Teachers are nominated by peers, parents, and students. PE was established in 1988 to honor excellence in teaching throughout Warren County; since its inception, nearly 700 educators have been recognized.

Michele Mathis has taught kindergarten for 30 years at **Pennyroyal** and the Hampton Bennett Early Childhood Center. Mathis, a Carlisle native, has a B.S. in Education from Miami University and a Master's in Reading and Literacy. She's added courses to improve her technology skills in her teaching role.



Mathis says, "I enjoy the challenge of working with a new group of students each year. Obviously, I want to help my students grow academically; however, as a kindergarten teacher, it is one of my goals to create an environment that encourages a love of learning in my students. I want students to love coming to school, enjoy learning, and desire to

learn more."

"One of the most exciting moments in my career is when a student realizes that he can read independently. The experience becomes even more memorable when a senior graduating from high school remembers those kindergarten experiences as well."

Mathis added, "It is a privilege to be nominated and selected as a PE Award recipient. I am surrounded with amazing colleagues who devote their expertise, time, and energy every day to their students. I am honored to receive this award for a second time. I initially received this award after only teaching for 12 years. At that time in my career the award validated my choice of becoming a teacher. However, to receive this award 20 years later, during my 32nd year of teaching, encourages me to continue teaching students. I love my career and cannot imagine spending my days doing something else."

Paula (PJ) Bush, a 1988 FHS graduate, has taught in Franklin her entire 30-year career. After one year at Laura Farrell teaching a 3-4 split, she's taught first grade at **Anthony Wayne** ever since.



She has a B.S. in education from Miami University, an M.A. in teaching from Marygrove College, and 30 hours beyond her master's degree.

Bush said she loves "Taking students from being non-readers to readers. This is a life-long learning experience for them." She noted, "I have enjoyed teaching so many students, working with wonderful coworkers, and mentoring young teachers. Also, receiving this award will definitely be one of the most memorable." She added, "It is a very humbling experience to think that someone would even nominate you for doing the job that you love. I just love what I do. There are so many great teachers in our district; it takes all of us working together for the betterment of our students. My favorite quote is, 'It takes a village to raise a child.' I am just part of that village here."

## State grant will enhance classroom building safety

Franklin City Schools will install new safety features including upgraded badge readers and security cameras at five district buildings, thanks to a \$396,256 safety grant awarded earlier this year from the State of Ohio. The district was one of 945 schools to receive \$68 million in funding in that grant round.

Business manager Kelli Fromm said, "We're excited to take advantage of this opportunity to upgrade security at our buildings at no cost to our local taxpayers. We'll be upgrading the public address system, badge readers, and security cameras at the junior high (the building that is currently the Franklin High School); we'll also be expanding badge readers and adding or expanding security cameras at the Hunter, Gerke, Anthony Wayne, and Schenck elementary buildings." Since Pennyroyal has relatively new cameras and security doors, which were installed at the district's expense, the building was not included in this grant.

Grant funds come from the State of Ohio's operating budget and the American Rescue Plan Act. Fromm added, "We're pleased that we can further enhance safety on our school properties. Student safety is our top priority, and we are always interested in new equipment and software that will make our safe cam-

puses even safer." Fromm noted, "The grant has a very narrow scope — school safety — and the list of approved items we can purchase is very specific."

District superintendent Dr. Mike Sander noted, "We are thrilled that the State of Ohio has been proactive about school safety and made this grant available. The new high school will have many safety features built in, and this grant will allow us to enhance safety at our older buildings."

Equipment being installed will be transferable to the district's new buildings as they come online. Timing of the installation depends on the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission, who is helping the state administer the grant.

As of Feb., 2023, 2,374 Ohio K-12 schools had received grants totaling \$173 M to help pay for physical security expenses. Eligible schools may receive as much as \$100,000 per building to cover items such as security cameras, PA systems, automatic door locks, exterior lighting, and visitor badge systems.

Through the first four rounds of grant funding, Warren County's public and private schools received \$1,990,138 to upgrade safety at 28 buildings.

# News from Franklin City Schools

## Board honors students for achievement

At the March 27 meeting, the Franklin Board of Education honored seven students for achievement. Six students have tested out of the TESOL Program (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages): Rhyjie Civier Tan (**Anthony Wayne**), Marlon Garcia (**Gerke**), Martin Guinez Alvarez and Amy Tsitey (**Hunter**), Dominic Rodriguez Santos (**FHS**), and Ariel Guinez Martinez (**FHS/Alternative Class**). Eliška Prejzková, an exchange student from the Czech Republic, is excelling both at **FHS** and in the online coursework she is taking at her home high school.



## Gerke happenings

In March, **Gerke** students and staff focused on kindness. Students caught being kind were recognized on the morning announcements and had their name added to a display outside the gym in the main hallway. Teachers taught lessons and read books about the importance of being kind to one another.

Keeping with the March Madness theme, the building held its annual Book Madness. Students read and voted on different books; winning books advanced in the tournament.

**Gerke** has a great partnership with the Freedom Worship Center, who treated students, K-6, to an Easter Egg Hunt. The church also brought a bike for each grade level, which students won via a drawing.



## AW 6th grade class creates museum

**AW** students studied ancient civilizations, using the framework of GRAPES (geography, religion, achievements, politics, economics, social structures) of each civilization.

At the Dayton Art Institute, students experienced many cultures' art and gained firsthand experience on how museums operate.

They used their knowledge to create their own art, artifacts, and Civilization Museum.

The object below is an Egyptian canopic jar (part of the mummification process).



## Connecting with Wildcats Athletics is easy

The Franklin Athletics department has made it simple for Wildcats fans to stay up-to-date about all things sports-related with both a new website and a new app for smartphones.

The website, [www.gowildcatathletics.com](http://www.gowildcatathletics.com), has info about schedules, rosters, news, events, and more.

The website is also linked from [www.franklincityschools.com](http://www.franklincityschools.com), the district's main website.

The free app is available in both the app store and Google play and can be found by searching for Franklin Wildcats.



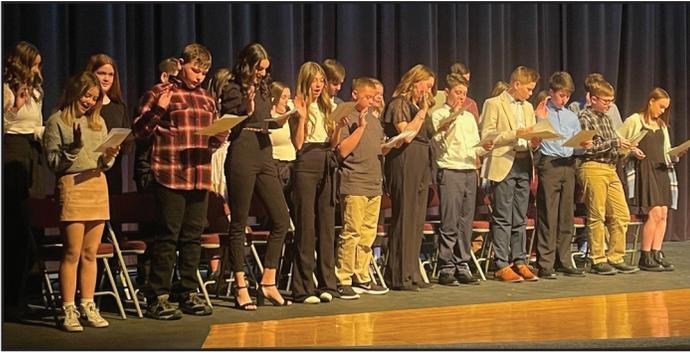
# News from Franklin City Schools

## FJHS inducts 23 into NJHS

Franklin Junior High recently inducted 23 students into its chapter of the National Junior Honor Society. This is the ninth group tapped since the chapter was founded in 2014.

Eighth graders inducted were Oliver Crosthwaite, Aidan Fletcher, Carrson Franklin, Daniel Osborne, Levi Quillen, Hailey Brock, and Andrew Jenkins. Seventh graders inducted were Jazmyn Angel, Adalyn Blevins, Aliya Bowling, Emma Burnett, Paisley Coffman, Easton Currin, Jenna McGuire, Millie Nau, Milo Nau, Elizabeth Newman, Allison Purvis, Shaylee Raby, Audree Shannon, Wil Truesdell, Brayden Wesley, and Jamie Wolfe. Including both inductees and current members, chapter members have accumulated 532 hours of community service.

Chapter advisors are Nicole Lamb and Eileen Ebeling.



150 E. Sixth St.  
Franklin, OH 45005

## Bus Driver Incentive

FCS has openings for bus drivers and is offering incentives: a sign-on bonus and paid training.

**Sign-On Bonus** for new drivers: Anyone newly hired as a bus driver for FCS after July 1, 2022 is eligible for a new-employee bonus of \$1,500, which will be paid in two equal installments: \$750 after six months as a bus driver and \$750 at the one-year anniversary of hiring as a bus driver.

**Paid Training:** Up to 40 hours of paid training, paid at the six-month anniversary of employment as a bus driver.

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply in the FCS Business Manager's Office at Hampton Bennett Administrative Offices 150 East Sixth St., Franklin, OH 45005.

In addition, any current FCS employee is eligible for a staff referral bonus. Any employee who refers an individual who is hired as a bus driver for FCS is eligible for a \$1000 referral bonus, which will be split into two equal installments, \$500 after the new driver completes six months of employment with FCS as a bus driver, and \$500 after the new driver completes one year of employment with FCS as a bus driver.



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