

# Wolverine Tracks

*A publication designed to build community pride and awareness in the West Geauga Local Schools*

## A Message from Dr. Rich Markwardt, Superintendent



Dear West Geauga Resident:

The 2021-2022 school year is off to an exciting start. Our students and staff returned to school on August 26, 2021 with a sense of anticipation and optimism despite the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to the guidance of the West Geauga Board of Education and the collective efforts of district

staff and students, the last school year was one in which West Geauga offered and delivered in-person onsite instruction for nearly the entire year. Hopefully, we will have similar success this year.

This newsletter cites some of last year's district successes in the classroom, athletics, and the arts. We are understandably proud of our students' many accomplishments, and you should be too. This year, with support from our families, our teachers, and our coaches/advisors, the Board expects even greater results.

Last year was the first year in which our colleagues and students from Newbury Township joined the West Geauga family. They bring a new set of talents and skills. It was also a year in which West G. said good-bye to some long-term staff members who retired or resigned to pursue other career paths. We wish them well in their future endeavors. As a result, many new faces joined the

West Geauga faculty. You will be introduced to some of them in this newsletter.

West Geauga will continue its pursuit of academic achievement this year as we strive to build a school community where all feel valued, welcome, and safe. Please join us in our efforts to help West G. realize its potential. Your children are our greatest resource. Thank you for trusting them to our care.

Sincerely,

Richard Markwardt, Ph. D.  
Superintendent of Schools



*West Geauga Schools kicked off the '21-'22 School Year in Successful, Pride-Filled Fashion*



**Serving the Community. Restoring Normalcy. Engaging our Students and Staff in Quality Education!**

West Geauga High School students will be pursuing a vigorous quest during the 2021-2022 School Year, one that has the students successfully and safely serving the community... restoring normalcy to our everyday student life... and engaging all young adults in grades 9th – 12th in a first-rate, quality educational environment. Under the incoming leadership of new High School principal Ryan Patti, and Assistant Principal Victor Puskas, the Wolverines of West Geauga High will unify in pursuit of this mission as they walk the halls during the '21-'22 school year. In this sense, our new principals are looking forward to helping the students give back to the community and reset high school building standards for the staff. Doing so will take the energy and drive Mr. Patti knows exists at West Geauga High School. He should know, since he is a 2002 alumnus of West Geauga High School and walked the halls himself nearly 20 years ago, in addition to doing his student teaching here in 2006. Mr. Patti combines a high level of familiarity with not only West Geauga High, but the communities served by the district, creating a great potential for success and accomplishment this year.



intending to establish a building-wide culture of pride, excellence and hard work in education. Mr. Patti highly recommends pursuing involvement in Student Council, and to establish a resume that could propel students toward induction into the National Honor Society. These groups, along with involvement in the many athletics programs that the building has to offer rounds out an intensive, and fun, student experience at West Geauga High School.

**“We want High School students serving our community,” according to Mr. Patti. “This, along with a variety of ways to experience an enhanced educational environment through a rigorous curriculum and co and extra-curricular activities will continue elevating standards for West Geauga students.”**

**Rich Tradition of Community Service**

The West Geauga Schools have a rich tradition of giving back to the community, and the high school will have that as a primary focus this coming school year. Whether it's helping community-based organizations in public service or lending-a-hand for senior citizens' needs and cares, West Geauga High School will be embedding the values of service and giving back into its own student organizations. The National Honor Society is a group that will lead such aspects of public service, and as a matter of fact, has service engrained as one of its four pillars, along with leadership, character and scholarship. Student Council will be looked upon as a mentoring corps for the student body,

**Championing Emotional Well Being and Positivity**

Emotional safety will be a major focus of the staff at West Geauga High School as well. The past 18 months have given our students a great deal of potential distraction, but fortunately, the West Geauga students have remained diligent and focused. To ensure the continued emphasis on educational success, Mr. Patti and the high school staff will be paying special attention to the issues that enhance social and emotional well-being. *Encouragement. Positivity. Reinforcement of shared values.* These traits the high school will promote in order to continue restoring normalcy. Online learning enables such a fast transition of information, and potential influences, students must know that West Geauga High School can be a place of refuge and reliability for interpersonal growth. Our expectations to master a rigorous curriculum are high, but with an added focus on emotional safety and the staff paying attention to our student body's well-being, Mr. Patti believes we can remain safe... successful... and service-oriented. Here's to a great 2021-2022 School Year.





### Re-Introducing Mr. Ryan Patti to the West Geauga Schools...and Welcoming Mr. Puskas

Mr. Puskas joins the West Geauga family as Assistant Principal after having taught Science in the Chagrin Falls Exempted Village Schools for the last 7 years. He brings a very high standard of educational leadership and is excited to be part of the Wolverine team!

The West Geauga Local Schools “Welcomes Home” Mr. Ryan Patti to our beloved school district and he returns with an impressive resume to help guide our young adults on their respective educational journeys. A Wolverine alumnus of the Class of 2002, Mr. Patti received his education degree from Ohio University. After returning in 2006 to perform his

student-teaching requirements, Mr. Patti left Northeast Ohio to teach in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District, one of the largest in the entire country. While there, however, Mr. Patti had the unique experience of being involved with several significant test-pilot initiatives from the federal government. Some of these pilot programs included end-of-course exams, once just a pilot and now part of common practice. He was evaluated as a math teacher under a pilot program to assess teacher growth, which is part of Ohio’s teacher-evaluation system. After spending this time out-of-state, he and his wife (from Canton), made the decision to return to Northeast Ohio where he next served as an assistant principal in the Beachwood Schools.

Mr. Patti is excited to return to his alma mater and walk the halls of West Geauga High School as the leader of the building. He is also excited to walk professionally alongside Dr. Richard Markwardt, whom he cites as an excellent educational leader and wonderful mentor after having shared a work experience together in the Beachwood City Schools. Impressively, he was named assistant principal of the year for the state of Ohio in the 2018-2019 school year. He holds a Master’s degree in education administration and he is working toward a Ph. D. in Educational Leadership. This, along with 15 years of experience in the classroom and administration makes for an effective combination of talent, strength and leadership that the West Geauga Local Schools is excited to have in the high school. Look for continued communications from Mr. Patti and enhanced public service in the community. Welcome Mr. Patti and Mr. Puskas!



### West Geauga Athletics and Co-Curriculars

#### Wolverine Athletics and Co-Curriculars Celebrate Successes from Last Year, Previews Excitement Ahead!

West Geauga Wolverine athletics is enthusiastically looking forward to a school year of interscholastic competition that is successful and safe. Already, our teams are off to a terrific start. In the ever-changing environment around us all, incoming Director of Athletics, Brandon Stewart, has championed the skills of being flexible and patient and the ability to adapt to new circumstances at any moment. “Ultimately, everyone in the West Geauga Local Schools wants our young student-athletes competing and demonstrating their capabilities and talents,” said Stewart. “We’re taking every practical measure to ensure a safe environment for our student-athletes, coaches and spectators. Such precautionary measures include the implementation of an online ticketing system, where all tickets can be downloaded through the Hometown ticketing app in advance of a competition. This will reduce the use of cash, the exchange of tickets and enhance the safety and security for everyone attending an event. Coaches will be masked for the present time, and so too will student-athletes not directly participating in the

contest. Those interested should go to the West Geauga Wolverines athletics website to download the app, and learn more information. Mr. Stewart contends that such changes to athletics is a positive nuance, so that our West Geauga students can continue showcasing their talents.





### Building on Last Year's Competitive Success!

The Wolverines begin the 2021-2022 school year building on a great deal of success from the spring season last year, where our student-athletes excelled and triumphed in their endeavors. Last spring, the girls softball team won the Chagrin Valley Conference "Chagrin Division" championship, combining hard work, determination, great coaching and execution on the field. In girls track-and-field, Shannon Swinerton had a record-breaking season, winning the regional track meet's 300-meter individual hurdle race. She advanced to the State Tournament in Columbus as well. Way to go, Shannon! By many standards, to complete a sports season of competition was an accomplishment in and of itself, and to have success while competing is an impressive milestone as well.

### Looking Ahead with Excitement and Anticipation!

Looking ahead to the coming school year, the football team intends to build upon their successful campaign last year, where they finished with 6 wins and 2 losses, capitalizing on the momentum that emerged from making the playoffs as well. Our girls soccer team won their conference last year as well as the district, and should be very strong for the fall campaign. The boys soccer team is returning a large group of senior competitors as well. Wolverine cross country is bringing back a strong, experienced group of runners this fall. The Wolverine athletic community wishes all the best to golf and tennis teams this fall. We also look to root on our incredible volleyball team, who finished last year with 11 wins and 2 losses, holding an impressive 7-1 record in the conference as well.



*A very special shout-out goes to our Marching Band, Cheerleaders and our very spirited and supportive student groups!!*

### Incoming Director of Athletics Brandon Stewart Brings Passion!

Sizing up the 2021-2022 athletics season for success is incoming Director of Athletics, Brandon Stewart, who is new to West Geauga, but no stranger to athletic administration. Mr. Stewart joins us most recently after spending 8 years at Ursuline College as a Sports Information Director. He coached high school girls basketball for 15 years at Hathaway Brown High School and Midpark High School, with a short period of time as a coach at Ursuline. He graduated from Mount Union College in 2005 and is tremendously excited about joining the tradition of excellence in the West Geauga School family. He's excited for what he has seen thus far, and all that will come during the 2021-2022 School Year.

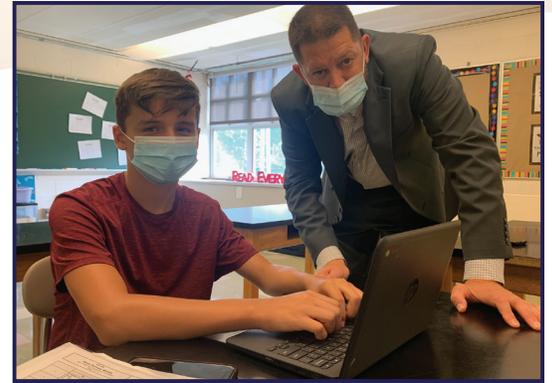
Be sure to follow our hard working, highly competitive and determined Wolverine student-athletes, as they embark on a school year with success, excitement, energy and high achievement. GO WOLVERINES!





**West Geauga Middle School... High Expectations and High Achievement!**

West Geauga Middle School enters the 2021-2022 School year on a grand pursuit to fulfill its building motto of **High Expectations, High Achievement**. Building on the successes that we have experienced over the years, the Middle School is excited to be launching some new initiatives as a way to help add supplemental learning opportunities and engagement activities for the students in the building in this post-pandemic environment. One new program our entire staff is eager to kick-off is our **Help Classes** initiative, an idea designed to meet students where they are in their respective academic progress and provide short-term, or long-term mentoring. Designed specifically for extra support in English/Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, the Help Classes will take place four days each week during first period. Instructors in these valuable core subjects will be available to help students work through some of the challenging areas or topics on an as-needed basis. Need help on one topic? Students will be able to visit the Help Classes until they better comprehend. Students seeking year-long guidance can spend time in Help Classes every day, if they so choose. Since the Help Classes take place during first period four days each week, those students not needing the extra help provided will simply attend an independent study class to perform work on their own. Either way, the Help Classes give students and families the opportunity to self-regulate where extra guidance is needed, and then seek the amount of help needed one way or the other. Make sure your student visits the Help Classes if needed.



In other Middle School news, Clubs and Student Organizations will be looking for participants this coming fall. According to Principal Dahlhofer, who begins his 22nd year in the West Geauga School District and 3rd year as building principal, the push for involvement in clubs and organizations supplements the academic emphasis during the school day by giving Middle School students fun and meaningful learning opportunities throughout the year. Some of the clubs and activities open to our Middle School students are listed below:

**Clubs and organizations maximize the educational experience by providing opportunities for leadership, teamwork, communications and to have fun," according to Mr. Dahlhofer. "Please get involved!"**



- Coding Club
- Book Club
- Art Mural Club
- Athletics Teams
- Math Stock Market Club
- Student Council
- Acceptance Committee
- Science Olympiad



Best of all, these clubs and activities are spaced throughout the school year, so that students can be involved in more than one organization. In fact, belonging to multiple clubs and student groups is even strongly encouraged. Some of the groups align with certain times of the calendar year, such as the Stock Market club and Science Olympiad. We encourage students to get involved in a club or organization.. The skills one develops in these environments will help them later in life.

Finally, we encourage our school community to know that in addition to the academic focus, clubs and organizational encouragement our building expectations are **to be Responsible...Respectful...and Ready to Learn...** sound advice, we believe, in preparing our Middle School students for their high school years, and their college and career lives as well.





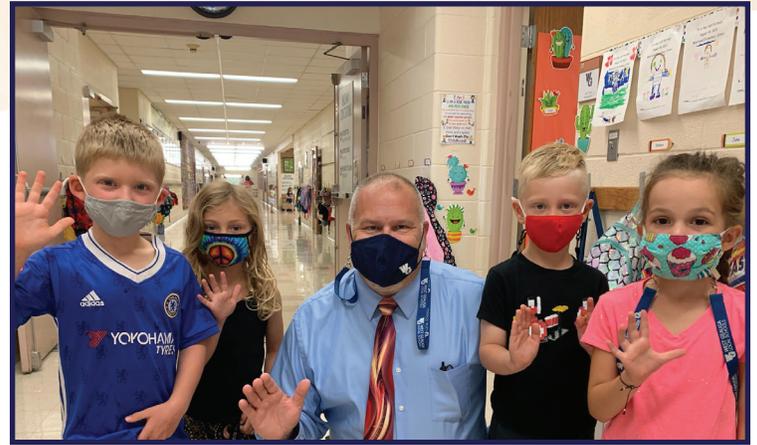
## Putting Kids First, Promoting Classroom Literacy and Being Respectful...Responsible and Ready to Learn... with Westwood's Dedicated Staff

With the onset of the 2021-2022 School Year, Westwood Elementary School has enjoyed a great first several weeks of education, and during each and every day, Principal Jim Kish is instilling a theme that centers around three core aspects of student life: Being Positive...Being Energetic... and Developing Teamwork skills and competencies. These are characteristics, that when blended with a serious attitude toward education, combine for a well-rounded educational experience. That's the aim at Westwood Elementary School this year.

Specifically, students at Westwood are spending a great deal of time and energy honing their skills in Reading and English/Language Arts (ELA). Learning basic literacy skills are a foundation for all other core learning subjects. Parents are always encouraged to bolster the emphasis on reading and ELA by setting aside extra reading time, or reading to their students daily. In addition, staff has been studying the science of reading, implementing our district-adopted Foundations curriculum and the Hagerty program. While the Westwood family places an added focus on Reading/ELA, among other subjects in the classroom, promoting positive behavior and kindness will also be a core emphasis this year.

Entitled Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, or P.B.I.S. for short, students are encouraged to promote and honor the "Westwood Pledge," a creed to Be Respectful, Be Responsible and Be Ready to Learn. These fundamental principles are intended to be values that can be developed during these valuable elementary school years and taken with them on their educational journeys. As an added incentive, stickers are provided to students so that they proudly display their commitment to being respectful, being responsible and being ready to learn, so that this philosophy can be affirmed to all.

**Mr. Kish and the entire Westwood Elementary family would like to thank our highly organized and well-established PTO group for their dedication, especially on the first day of school!**



During the first several days of school, a number of PTO volunteers helped with assisting our students as they learned about their forthcoming school experience at Westwood. Many thanks to these individuals for their help and support. Throughout the year, the PTO will remain highly engaged and focused on promotional events, activities and more. If you are interested in joining the PTO, please visit our building website and learn more. Once again, our gratitude is extended to our PTO partners. Thank you!

So that parents can remain connected with valuable and important information from the building, Mr. Kish sends a newsletter twice each month entitled "Smore," as a communicative measure. This is done via email, and if you are not on the list, please be sure to visit our building page to opt-in. Some of the important updates that have been shared in Smore include Drop Off and Pick Up procedures, as well as information regarding upcoming events and school procedures. These tidbits serve as reminders to our students and our parents. Please be sure to read!

Finally, the staff at Westwood Elementary School cares deeply about our children. Our building is composed of staff members who subscribe to the motto that we ought to "Put the Kids First."

It's our deep desire for Westwood Elementary School to be the best place for kids to learn... and with your help, we are confident in making this a reality!

Here's to a great 2021-2022 School Year!





### Lindsey Elementary School: Back to Class with Excitement and Energy!

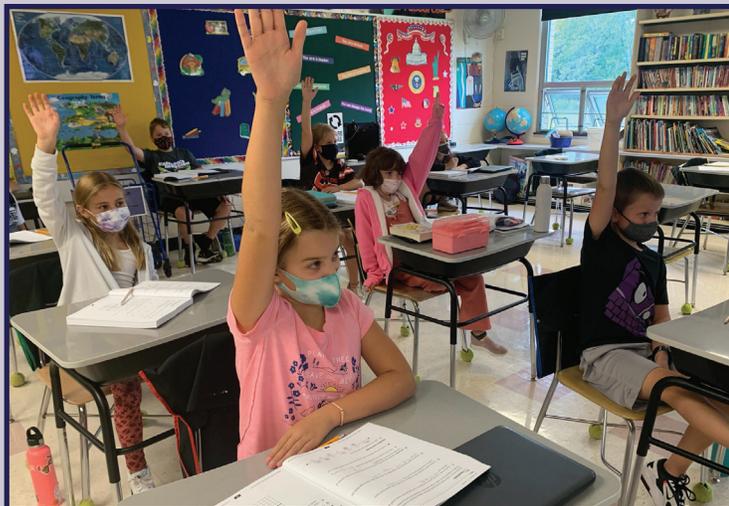
Excitement and energy have characterized the first several weeks of the 2021-2022 School Year at Lindsey Elementary School, and returning to in-person learning has prompted a great deal of enthusiasm. "The feeling of being back together for in-person instruction is quite palpable, and everyone is energetic to see one another once again," according to building principal Meagan Bellan. Without a doubt, there is happiness and joy with the start of a new school year. At Lindsey Elementary School this year, students will be reminded to Be Respectful... Be Responsible and Be Ready to Learn. Building staff members truly believe that if these components of student life are followed, then success from all academic and social-emotional domains will be achieved.

For the last several years, a comprehensive literacy plan has been underway at Lindsey Elementary School and will continue into this year as well. Our building's belief is that literacy is a primary building block for other academic competencies, and strong literacy skills will strengthen all other educational pursuits. Our students have learned the value of their voice using their writing skills. Last year, students leveraged their persuasive writing to seek change. Some examples of this include a student writing to Heinen's management to free the lobsters, a parent who was convinced by their child's 5-paragraph essay to buy a family pet and asking Mrs. Bellan to purchase new books to read. In fact, persuasive writing has even been used to ask Superintendent Dr. Markwardt to re-open the playground last year...which worked! These writing skills will continue to be emphasized.



A number of student leadership opportunities are underway right now as well, including the initiation of a Girls on the Run chapter. This group promotes healthy lifestyles that ultimately lead to participating girls running a 5K race, while developing valuable leadership skills. In addition to this, the Geauga County Parks District is working with our students through the Nature Scopes program to promote awareness of the environment. At the end of program completion, student participants even receive a pair of binoculars. Very rewarding! From a Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (P.B.I.S.) standpoint, Lindsey Elementary, along with all of the buildings in the District, is looking to build upon the Bronze Award from last year.

Parents are always encouraged to contact the building with any questions about information, or to join our very hard working and dedicated Parent Teacher Organization. At Lindsey, we aspire for each and every student to become proficient and master the content standards on the state assessments. With your continued help and partnership, we are confident we can achieve this goal!





*Look at this great picture taken by band director Jason Branch! A hopeful forecast for the 2021-2022 school year for certain!*

### **WEST GEAUGA HIGH SCHOOL**

13401 Chillicothe Road  
Chesterland, OH 44026

School Hours: 7:25 a.m. -1:25 p.m.

Principal: Ryan Patti  
ryan.patti@westg.org

Assistant Principal: Victor Puskas  
victor.puskas@westg.org

Important Numbers:  
Attendance (440) 729-5951  
Fax (440) 729-5959  
Main Office (440) 729-5950

### **ROBERT C. LINDSEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

11844 Caves Road  
Chesterland, OH 44026

School Hours: 8:40 a.m. -3:20 p.m.

Principal: Meagan Bellan  
meagan.bellan@westg.org

Important Numbers:  
Attendance (440) 729-5981  
Fax (440) 729-5989  
Main Office (440) 729-5980

### **WEST GEAUGA MIDDLE SCHOOL**

8611 Cedar Road  
Chesterland, OH 44026

School Hours: 7:25 a.m. -1:25 p.m.

Principal: Ron Dahlhofer  
ron.dahlhofer@westg.org

Important Numbers:  
Attendance (440) 729-5906  
Fax (440) 729-5909  
Main Office (440) 729-5940

### **WESTWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

13738 Caves Road  
Novelty, OH 44072

School Hours: 9:00 a.m. -3:40 p.m.

Principal: Jim Kish  
jim.kish@westg.org

Important Numbers:  
Attendance (440) 729-5991  
Fax (440) 729-5924  
Main Office (440) 729-5990