

Update

LITTLE MIAMI LOCAL SCHOOLS



The Panther Pride Continues to Grow!

Little Miami Local Schools has continued to experience tremendous growth in enrollment, with 2021-2022 school year beginning with more than 5,300 Panther students! Students enrolled for the 2021-22 school year represent diverse backgrounds- coming from **19 different countries, speaking 13 different languages and originating from 19 different states.** Since registration began for the 2021-22 school year until January 2022, a total of 1,003 **brand new** students were enrolled. What a great testament to this community that increasingly more people are choosing to raise their families here!

To accommodate this growth, LM proudly opened a brand-new 100,000 square foot Early Childhood Center in Fall 2021 that serves our youngest learners. This impressive building boasts spacious, airy classrooms and flex spaces where students can build and explore learning in a more hands-on way. With all major construction projects now complete at each of our buildings, every Panther student will have the opportunity to learn and grow in new and updated spaces as they matriculate through the district!

At LMHS, 31,000 square feet of additions were completed this Fall, allowing the building to accommodate 1,500 students. Included in the addition is a collaborative learning environment that is reminiscent of a collegiate-style space- boasting open, bright areas that foster creativity and student engagement. LMHS students can also enjoy a newly-reopened Media Center, expanded spaces for band, renovated Auditorium, state-of-the-art Strength & Conditioning Center and more!

Big changes also happened at Little Miami Junior High this year, as the building was restructured to become a traditional Middle School housing grades 6-8. To accommodate an additional grade level in the building, a large building addition and new spaces for administrative staff was completed for the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Similar to the new spaces at LMHS, the LMMS addition features collaborative learning spaces, as well as areas of unique seating to encourage discussion and group activities.

Little Miami Intermediate School was reimagined as Little Miami Primary School and is glad to be home to LM Second and Third Graders. This building underwent extensive additions in 2019 and has been recently renovated to accommodate the new grade levels now housed there.



LMECC students used the LMECC Discovery Center to learn more about pumpkins this October!

As more neighborhood developments are built, an increase in enrollment is expected & Little Miami will continue to adapt and grow! We are grateful to be part of a community that so many people are proud to call "home."

Progressing Through a Pandemic

The past few years have undoubtedly been disruptive for traditional learning and educational benchmarks, as the global impact of COVID-19 brought about extended school closures and remote learning. As students were reintroduced to the classroom after extended time learning virtually or entering a school setting for the first time, it was imperative that LM be prepared to address potential gaps in learning that were created due to pandemic interruption. To address these gaps, a Learning Loss Recovery Plan was generated.

The Learning Loss Recovery Plan include lowering student to teacher ratios in grades K-6, credit recovery classes, adding educational specialists, adding flex grouping for all K-6 grade students, and implementing "Project Pass" in grades 6-12 to give additional support to students. In Grades K-6, Little Miami hired one additional teacher at each grade-level to lower student to teacher class ratios. Student to teacher ratios decreased from approximately 25:1 to 22:1 in grades K-4 and 30:1 to 27:1 in grades 5-6. Lowering student to teacher ratios allows more opportunity for individualized student instruction.

During the school day, students in grades K-5 participate in a flex-grouping period four days a week to help address additional academic needs. Education Specialists are utilized to decrease student to teacher ratios for students in flex group settings.

Grades 6-8 benefit from additional assistance during their daily Extra Time Extra Help period with the support of an Educational Specialist and opportunities for individual or small group focus. Students in grades 9-12 have the opportunity to take credit recovery classes via the Graduation Alliance platform in areas in which they are credit deficient. Recognizing that extra help to pass certain subjects may be needed outside of regular school hours, students in grades 6-12 may utilize a program entitled "Project Pass."

With these added resources to support our students, LM is pleased to report that these measures are working! From September to November 2021, 180 recovered credits were earned by LMHS students & Project Pass is seeing regular student attendance. LMMS students in need of additional support are now demonstrating Math skill growth. Students in grades K-5 are reporting high percentage of growth in benchmark learning skills.

Little Miami Local Schools was fortunate to receive ESSER funds which offset the cost of providing additional programming for students where learning loss occurred. Although work will continue in this area, data indicates that through the first quarter of the 2021-2022 school year, LM's efforts are helping to close the gap and increase learning for K-12 students.



Multisensory learning



Students learning in small groups.



Student reading

LM Focuses on Mental Health

The challenges and pressures of being a young person today can be overwhelming. Supporting the mental wellbeing of our staff and students is an essential priority for LM. This school year, LM counselors, psychologists and other mental health specialists in our buildings have seen an increase in needs for mental health services—including a rise in hospitalizations for suicidal ideation, students returning to the classroom who were previously hospitalized, and mental health early intervention at school. At LMHS alone, the need for mental health early intervention during the 2021-2022 school year is anticipated to quadruple what was needed last school year.

This staggering reality has reinforced LM's priority of providing quality mental health services in all five LM buildings. At LMHS, in addition to regular one-on-one counseling sessions, counselors have planned monthly lessons and school-wide activities to engage students. Student Ambassadors have also taken on the responsibility of creating & hosting events for new Panther students – including “meet ups,” building tours, and other fun events to raise student morale. The LMHS HOPE Squad meets regularly as a productive system of peer to peer support. Additionally, support and programs are available for students working to overcome habits and addictions of controlled substances, including alcohol, drugs, and vaping.

Syndra Snelling, LM's Social Emotional Learning consultant, focuses on teaching younger Panthers about the important concept of emotional self-regulation, through her “Upstairs/Downstairs Brain” lesson. This lesson aims to teach students to know how their body feels when they are in their “upstairs brain” and experiencing feelings of calm, happiness, excitement, kindness, empathy, etc., and the ability to recognize when their body starts to “go down the stairs,” resulting in more anxious or unkind behavior. Syndra's goal is to equip students with coping mechanisms and methods to calm their bodies, to ensure a more conducive learning environment.



LMES Counselor Dawn Gasper & Winston enjoy recess with students



LMHS Ambassadors host a "Meet and Greet" for new students



Student recognized for exemplifying kindness in the classroom!

At LMES, Counselor Dawn Gasper & District Resource Coordinator Charlie Hartman, joined by a team of mental health professionals, build relationships with students by offering specialized weekly small group opportunities for students. In these group settings, students are able to share their emotions in a safe space of peer support while engaging in mindful activities, such as gardening, yoga, nature walks, and more! Winston, the LMES therapy dog, joined the LM mental wellbeing team this year, and his work is already making a big impact! Winston helps calm students down and regulate emotions during stressful circumstances & can change the course of a student's day with a wag of his curly tail!

While our efforts & mental health services to students have increased, we certainly understand there is much to continue to provide as we move forward. If you see a change in your student's mental health, please do not hesitate to reach out to their building counselor.

Honoring Our Veterans with New Traditions

While we were not able to host large in-person ceremonies to honor our local veterans this year, Little Miami teachers & staff got creative with new ways to celebrate and thank those who have served in our armed services.

A Wall of Honor was displayed at LMECC featuring students' special service members. Students at LMPR enjoyed learning about the importance of thanking veterans for their military service by listening to the story of "America's White Table." Students then demonstrated the symbols learned from the story to represent the sacrifices made by service members and their families to keep our country safe.



LMHS AFJROTC presents the colors at Countryside YMCA

We were proud that our Air Force Junior ROTC program supported the Countryside YMCA Veterans Day Ceremony with a presentation of the colors. Additionally, students across the district wrote thank you notes and drew pictures for veterans and learned more about each branch of the military, the history of Veteran's Day, and the importance of the Changing of the Guard Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

One incredible new celebration this year was the Veterans parade hosted by LMPR that featured hundreds of local first responders! The parade was a great success and enjoyed by both students and service members alike! Little Miami is honored to celebrate all active and retired service members!



Veterans Parade at LMPR

Thank You First Responders!

During the week of December 6-10, all Little Miami buildings participated in a "Safety Week," that focused on building emergency safety plans and overall emergency preparedness at school & home. Buildings were tasked with completing state-required safety exercises allowing staff and students to practice what to do if an emergency were to happen at school. Local first responders were integral in the success of Safety Week, not only participating in the exercises, but taking additional time out of their busy & hectic schedules to stop by each building to spend time with LM students.

The goal of the 2021 Safety Week was not only to ensure staff & students are aware of safety procedures at school, but also for students to build relationships with public safety personnel that will hopefully be remembered for years to come! Activities included:

- Emergency exercises conducted at all LM school buildings
- Reading with Responders – First Responders read books to students at LMECC
- Emergency preparedness & severe weather safety was taught by Warren County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) at LMPR
- Technical fire equipment/gear demonstration at LMES
- Warren County SWAT vehicle demonstration at LMMS
- First responder recognition at LMHS Home Basketball Game
- LMHS Digital Media Arts class featured a video spotlight on Student Resource Officer, Jordan Elzey



LMMS Student with SWAT gear



Thank you to our local first responders for keeping our students and community safe!

Mask to Stay Pilot Results

KEEPING HEALTHY STUDENTS IN SCHOOL

The results are in and we are excited to share the data gathered from the four-week Ohio K-12 Quarantine Alternative Pilot Program that Little Miami participated in during the Fall of 2021. With our focus on safely keeping students in school, in-person, five days a week, important lessons were learned by participating in this pilot.

The Test to Stay Pilot Program was implemented in 10 Warren County school districts, 1 school district from Butler County and 1 school district from Clinton County beginning the week of September 27, 2021. During the program, 790 students across the 12 districts (159 being LM students) were deemed eligible to participate in the pilot program. 457 students (of which 84 were LM students) chose to participate in the Test to Stay program while the other eligible students chose to follow the standard quarantine process at home.

96.5% of all participating students completed the program, testing negative during the quarantine period. Only 16 students throughout the 12 school districts (3.5%) tested positive for COVID-19 during the pilot program.

- o 12 students (2.6%) tested positive during the first test (1 LM student after the first test)
- o 4 students (.8%) tested positive during the second test (3 LM students after the second test)

We are so thrilled to report that as a result of implementing this pilot, approximately 3,370 in-person school days were saved during the 4-week Test to Stay program! This program was so successful at accomplishing its goal, that it was used as the model for the updated "Mask to Stay, Test to Play" guidance that was established state-wide in October 2021.

In the Spotlight:

Will Zegarski, 2021 State Cross Country Champion

Senior LM Cross Country runner, William Zegarski has officially crossed the finish line into the State history books! On November 6, 2021, Will became the 2021 OHSAA Division I State Cross Country Champion with a record-breaking time of 14:39.9!

Zegarski has been one of the most decorated runners in Little Miami history in both cross country and long distance events in track. He has made all conference teams (Southwest Ohio Conference and Eastern Cincinnati Conference) in both cross country and track and field throughout his time at Little Miami High School. Following his impressive State win, Will went on to earn a new PR while racing for the National 5k Title on December 4th, with a time of 14:35.31 and coming in 18th!

Will is set to continue his running career at Butler University in Indianapolis next year! Congratulations Will- we cannot wait to see what the future has in store!



Will Zegarski races to the finish!
PC: Shawn Conlon/Ohio MileSplit



Will stands atop the State podium as Champion!

FROM THE TREASURER

State of District Finances



Terry Gonda

The Little Miami Treasurer's Department has remained dedicated to good financial stewardship, while also providing the necessary support to students and staff to not only learn, but adjust and grow during a pandemic.

Ohio public school districts are required by law to prepare a five-year forecast of projected expenditures & revenues twice a year. As reported in the November 2021 Five Year Projection, a revenue shortfall is expected in FY2022.

This means that expenditures are expected to be greater than revenue by \$3,402,394 in FY 2022. Despite the significant student growth LM has seen over the course of a decade, we have still managed to strategically stretch out the funds generated from the passage of the 2011 Emergency Levy for more than ten years! With the passage of the Issue 12 in November 2020, which renewed the funding structure from the 2011 Emergency Levy, LM secured \$10.6 million annually. These funds represent one-fifth of LM's total operating budget and are a vital piece of the district's financial health. We are so thankful to the community for investing in the future for our students!

Utilizing ESSER Funds to Close Education Gaps

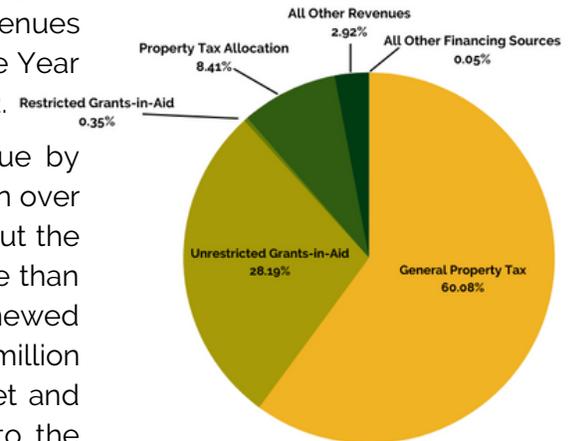
The district was grateful to receive funding from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund during the FY21 year. This funding was an essential piece of helping LM recover from learning loss due to COVID-19 interruptions, as it allowed LM to hire one additional teacher at grades K-6, ten Educational Specialists to support flex grouping and increase student learning. These ESSER funds also assisted with revenue recovery due to COVID-19 cuts.

Aligning with the district's prioritization of mental wellbeing, LM contracted a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) consultant as support for staff and students. ESSER dollars were also used to compensate staff for additional duties assigned during the pandemic and in the purchase of additional school buses that will accommodate our most at-risk students by increasing the ability to social distance students.

With careful planning & monitoring of the district's increasing growth in enrollment, the Board and LM administration will continue to provide the best opportunities available to our students in the most economical ways possible.

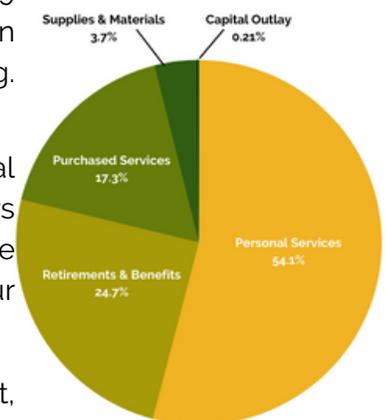
Revenue FY21:

\$49,805,149.00



Expenditures FY21:

\$51,819,665.00



Treasurer's Department Earns Distinctions

Little Miami has been consistently earning distinctions & awards for the department's work in assessment, financial planning, and careful record keeping. In fact, **LM has earned the "Achievement of Excellence in Financial Reporting" award every year since 2014!**

We are pleased to share the latest round of distinctions including:

- **2020 Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting** - Government Financial Officers Association
- **2020 Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting**- Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International



AIR FORCE JUNIOR ROTC PROGRAM EXCEEDS STANDARDS

Major congratulations are in order for the LMHS Air Force JRTOC program. After an extensive evaluation conducted by Region 7 Director for Headquarters Air Force JROTC, the LMHS unit earned the overall unit assessment score of "Exceeds Standard," the highest rating attainable! We are so proud of these students & their instructors, Chief Master Sergeant David Dillion and Lt. Col. Chas. Peterson for their dedication and the positive impact their service bears on the community!



From the Superintendent



Greg Power

It is hard to believe that we are halfway through another school year! While this year has not been without unique challenges, our LM teachers and staff continue to rise above and demonstrate their Panther perseverance. It is a testament to our great LM community that day after day, LM staff and students continue to make memories and build a solid educational foundation, despite the changes and circumstances that continue to unfold throughout the year.

With our goal of keeping healthy students learning in the classroom, we were grateful to have participated in an innovative Quarantine Alternative Pilot Program that saved 3,370 days of in-person learning program-wide!

As we venture into 2022, let's keep moving forward with positivity and resolve so that we can accomplish another successful school year together as Panthers!



Students thank Veterans at the LMPR Veterans Day Parade

Let's Talk!

LM TO USE THOUGHTEXCHANGE

Little Miami is now utilizing an innovative communications tool to engage with the community & gather public feedback!

ThoughtExchange allows the community to give insight and perspectives to LM administration that will help us gauge outreach success and make decisions. This tool is designed to gather a well-rounded picture of stakeholder priorities.

ThoughtExchange links may be emailed directly to families and/or posted on social media platforms and the LM website. Get started sharing now by scanning the QR code with the camera app on your mobile device. Thank you for your input!





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 Little Miami Local Schools

 @LM_Schools

 LMPantherPride

 LittleMiamiSchools

Important Dates

MARCH 1ST

**Kindergarten
Registration Begins**

Visit Registration Gateway
on homepage of
LittleMiamiSchools.com

APRIL 15-22

Spring Break

School Resumes April 25

MAY 14

Fine Arts Festival

Little Miami High School

MAY 29

Class of 2022 Graduation

6:00 p.m.
Wright State University
Nutter Center

JUNE 1

**2022-2023 Registration
Begins**

Grades 1-12 registration

JUNE 3

**Last Day for PK-11th
Grade Students**

Enjoy your summer!

