

# Wildcat Community News



## New high school dedication March 2; classes begin March 4

Franklin City Schools is excited to announce that the new Franklin High School will open to students on Monday, March 4, 2024. A dedication and open house of the new facility are scheduled for Sat., March 2, 2024, at 1 p.m.

"The building design was a collaboration between the board, administration, high school staff, and the public, and we're excited for everyone to see how their ideas have come to life," said Dr. Mike Sander, superintendent of schools. "It's an absolutely beautiful space that will be a wonderful learning environment for our students."

Transitioning from the current high school to the new

one will involve high school students learning remotely for two weeks. Grades 9-12 will be remote from Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024, through Friday, March 1, 2024.

The high school is the first of the District's new classroom facilities to open; the construction project is possible thanks to district taxpayers overwhelmingly approving a bond issue in 2020 for construction of this new building, the renovation of the current high school into a 6-8 middle school, and construction of three new elementary buildings. The State of Ohio is paying 57% of this \$130 million construction project.

# Important District Information

## Stay connected with us!

### Board of Education

Lori Raleigh, President  
Rachel Ruppert-Wolfinbarger, Vice President  
Andrew Fleming  
Bob Knipper  
Chris Sizemore

### District Administration

Dr. Michael Sander, Superintendent  
Robyn Donisi, Assistant Superintendent  
Kevin Hawley, Treasurer  
Kelli Fromm, Business Manager  
Jim McFarland, Director of Student Services

### District contact information

Superintendent's Office (937) 746-1699

Assistant Superintendent's Office (937) 743-8601

Business Manager's Office (937) 743-8600

Treasurer's Office (937) 743-8603

Transportation Office (937) 743-8670

Department of Special Services (937) 743-8602

Franklin High School (937) 743-8610 or 8611

Franklin Junior High School (937) 743-8630 or 8632

Anthony Wayne Elementary (937) 743-8640

Gerke Elementary (937) 743-8650

Hunter Elementary (937) 743-8655

Pennyroyal Elementary (937) 743-8660

Wm. C. Schenck Elementary (937) 743-8665

Welcome Center Central Registration Office (937) 743-8602

## 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: Franklin City Schools

Twitter handles are:

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

## Kindergarten Registration

Kindergarten registration for the 2024-2025 school year will begin April 9, 2024, for all students turning five by August 1, 2024.

### Step One: Online

Registration will be available online at <https://www.franklincityschools.com/departments/enrollment-5/kindergarten-registration-85/> beginning April 2, 2024. Online registration will be required in order to select an appointment.

### Step Two: In Person

Location: Welcome Center – located at 754 E. 4th Street. All required documents must be brought to the registration appointment.

Not having documents at the time of the appointment will require a new appointment to be scheduled at a later date.



The following documents are required for registration:

- ◆ Original Birth Certificate
- ◆ Custody Papers/Court Ordered Placement (if applicable)
- ◆ Shot/Immunization Records
- ◆ Parent/Guardian Driver's License
- ◆ Proof of Residency

We strongly encourage families to complete the registration of their kindergarten students as soon as possible to assist in the proper placement of all students. If you have any questions, please call the Welcome Center at 937-743-8602.

## FHS class reunion coming up?

If your class is having a reunion, the district would be happy to post your information on the district website's alumni page. Send your information to [communications@franklincityschools.com](mailto:communications@franklincityschools.com)

## 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.



# News from Franklin City Schools

## Around the District!

### DARE training continues tradition

Franklin's 6th grade students graduated from DARE in December. DARE, Drug Abuse Resistance Education, celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2023. The program, taught in the United States and 29 other countries, reaches over 2.5 million K-12 students in officer-led training annually. Its scope has evolved from curbing the use of drugs to broader topics of avoiding drugs, alcohol, and tobacco and peer pressure, dealing with stress, and communications skills.

DARE is partially funded by a state grant, which requires stats on the number of schools and students reached.

Warren County Deputy Kelly McKay has been the County's DARE officer since 2013. She recently reflected on the program and the changes that it has undergone.

McKay noted that student questions have changed with the times and that students now have questions about vaping because that's what they see other kids doing. She added that different topics are "a-ha" moments for students. "Some

[students] really get it with the tobacco and alcohol lessons but some kids [it's] with peer pressure. I think the communication lessons are great too because they realize they don't always communicate the best way." She added that lessons on bullying also stimulate a lot of discussion.

Students really enjoy the peer pressure lessons. "We practice saying NO to our friends so they act it out and get to laugh, but I remind them this is real life. She noted that when she asks who has ever been offered a vape, "I have a few students raise their hands and it's starting and to be more and more [students who raise their hands]."

McKay has been with the Warren County Sheriff's Office since 1999; she started as a Corrections Officer and went on the road in 2003. In addition to DARE, she is part of the Crime Scene Unit, crime prevention, and assists with community events. She took a chance on the DARE role to see a different side of law enforcement and enjoys the positive atmosphere.

Above left, the Gerke DARE ceremony; below left, some of Anthony Wayne's DARE grads, with Deputy McKay (center).



### Operating levy on March 19 ballot

The Board of Education has voted to place a levy on the March 19 ballot. Per the promise they made in 2014, the district has not asked for new money in ten years. Prior to that, the district had not passed a new operating levy since 2005; prior to that, new money was last passed in 1995.

Issue 5 is for 6.301 mills, and will raise \$3,615,000 annually. Additional taxes would be \$221 per \$100,000 in appraised value. The increase would first appear on the 2025 tax bills.

Funds are needed to replenish the depleting cash balance. Since 2016, revenue has increased 1.19% annually, while expenses have increased 3.57% annually. Additionally, the annual inflation rate from 2016 to 2023 was 3.4%

It is a common misconception that property tax payments increase in line with appraisals. While residential tax values have increased 5.32% since 2016, property tax collection has increased 2.31%.

When state monies for our new elementaries are released, the

district will move to three elementary campuses. If the levy fails, the district will **redistrict and** realign **all** elementary schools prior to school starting in August 2024.

- Anthony Wayne and Pennyroyal will close.
- Hunter (South Campus) will house students in grades K-5 plus one Tier II classroom. The number of modulars will be reduced.
- Gerke (Central Campus) will house students in grades K-2, plus two Tier III classes and one Tier II classroom. Modulars will be eliminated.
- Schenck (North Campus) will house grades Pre-K, 1, and 2. It may be possible to eliminate a modular at Schenck.
- The three modulars currently housing grades 7 & 8 would be reconfigured to an Intermediate campus for grades 3-5, plus one section of Tier II and two sections of Tier III.

Those with questions may call the Superintendent's office at (937) 746-1699.

# News from Franklin City Schools

## "Magic happened" in integrated Public Speaking class

"I wish every single educator, every parent, every administrator, and every community member could experience the magic that occurs between my four walls. My room [was] bursting with patience, empathy, love, and the inclusion of special-needs Rockstars that should be happening in every corner of our world. We need to do better as a society, and my students are leading the way!!"

The magic to which Selena Combs refers resulted from the integration of Wendy Telatko's Tier III class with Selena Combs' General Education students into one, 30-student Public Speaking class during the fall semester.

Combs noted, "I absolutely adore Wendy's insight and ideas when it comes to blending our classes. FCS is so fortunate to be blessed by her focus, her professionalism, and her experience. She SEES the potential in each student and helps them achieve the highest of goals!"

Public Speaking, a graduation requirement for all students, includes organization, advanced research skills, and basic public speaking skills. Projects and assignments range from speaking to demonstrate, speaking to inform, speaking to persuade, formal debate, storytelling, and lots of quality research.

Tier III students receive more intensive, individualized support to improve their behavioral and academic outcomes, and the Public Speaking class bolsters the vital skill of communication. Telatko said, "The aspects of communication are so important and often look different for students with neurodiversity. Some students communicate verbally, some through utterances and facial expressions, some through a combination of sign and words, and some through augmentative communication devices. The ability to express thoughts, needs, opinions, and choices is vital on the road to the goal to be as independent as possible in their future lives."

Combs and Telatko had several goals for combining the groups. Combs wanted Tier III students to learn that they can do the same things Gen Ed students can do and for Gen Ed students to learn "empathy, patience, and the importance of inclusion." Telatko noted, "Neurotypical students can begin to experience and develop an understanding and friendships with those who communicate differently than they do. Neurodiverse students are mo-

tivated to expand their communication skills while making lasting friendships with peers."

Telatko said Tier III students found the informative speech assignment impactful. "The assignment was modified to include a single slide as part of a larger slide show. Each student designed a slide to inform their classmates about themselves and their classified disability. Some students chose to include photos of their family, some included clinical definitions of their disability, and some combined these and other aspects of their lives. Knowledge opens the door of understanding; this was a very impactful lesson for everyone."

"Formal Debate allowed all students to problem solve ways to allow their voices to be heard on various sides of topics. The neurotypical students took the lead in finding ways for everyone to express their views."

It's fair to say the class was a rousing success. Combs said she was "SO proud and amazed by how well my Gen Ed students have welcomed our Tier III Rockstars. (They actually call them 'our Rockstars!')

Combs said she was surprised at the open attitude of the Gen Ed students. "They were committed to integration and inclusion from day one! Toward the end of the semester, this course was almost exclusively student-driven. Gen Ed kids were doing most of the task-related decisions as most of the Spec Ed Aides and I watched in awe. I am so proud of each and every student in that class! I have a couple of Gen Ed students considering a career in special education."

Telatko noted that, "As long as students are given the opportunity and empathetic guidance to learn from students they perceive as 'different' from them, the more they realize how similar we all are in our want and need to be accepted and understood."

What were the students' reactions? Combs said, "My Gen Ed students were surprised at how confident and motivated the Tier III students are in everything they do. They learned that everyone is capable and has the right to be treated with respect. They were patient, accepting, and warm."

Combs noted, "I saw lots of smiles and positive energy from our Tier III students. I don't think they are used to being so included, so befriended, and so LOVED. We became a family. Magic happened in my classroom this semester, and those moments need to become the norm!" (story continues at right). ➡





# News from Franklin City Schools

## Outstanding alum: Wendi Shumard

Wendi Shumard, a 2001 FHS grad, has degrees from Miami U. (BAs in both English and French Language and Literature), U of Maryland, Baltimore County (MA in Teaching English as a Second or Other Language) and is working on a M.S. in Measurement, Evaluation, Statistics, and Assessment (Psychometrics) from U of Illinois, Chicago. She calls herself an International Educator, and her career has taken her around the world:



■A four-year stint teaching at Baltimore City Public Schools where “the learning curve was steep” and she started teaching math and caught the grant-writing bug. “During the years I spent in Baltimore, I grew as an empathetic practitioner. I am practiced at de-escalation of difficult and tense situations, and boy, have those grant-writing skills come in handy!”

■A stint acting as International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Coordinator for a beginning program in Bucharest, Romania; the IB Diploma Programme is a prestigious high school program recognized by top-tier universities. She and her team implemented this program during the pandemic.

■Acting as a school evaluation leader for the Council of International Schools, visiting with a team to give schools an improvement roadmap. This has taken her to Austria, the Netherlands, Armenia, and Switzerland and other countries.

■Establishing and running an educational NGO (non-governmental organization), Refugiu Sigur (Safe Haven) Romania

Telatko echoed Combs’ assessment: “In observing the students, the most surprising thing to them was the friendships they have made and how much they can do” In closing, Telatko noted, “I am so blessed to work with such amazing staff and students at Franklin City Schools who understand that all students are valued.”

Combs added, “I am SO proud and SO amazed by how driven our Tier III students are.

They are my students volunteering to speak first, try new activities first, and shine first. They have taught my Gen Ed students that they have incredible capabilities that exceed ALL of our expectations! Our students are SO productive given the right environment to flourish. This heartwarming group of teens reminds me every single day why I entered the teaching profession.”



to aid underrepresented and refugee children in Romania. Shumard noted, “This is a little difficult to do at the moment—I didn’t anticipate leaving Romania when I did, but there were some residence/immigration issues that I was contending with as a non-native (to Romania) NGO president.

■Currently running Refugiu Sigur remotely, and working for EF Academy, NY, as a Mathematics and French teacher. “After the pandemic, it was time to be a little closer to home and luckily, I work with incredible and flexible people who make this possible.” Refugiu Sigur was established in response to two things:

First, “during the pandemic, Romanian schools were mandated to go online for almost two years. Romania is known for excellent internet infrastructure, but some populations in Romania don’t have access. “We wanted help students recover and thrive.”

Second, when the pandemic ended, Ukraine was invaded. She said, “(In the words of one of my Bucharesti Uber drivers, ‘Putin... Can’t this guy just give us a minute?!’) Romania has two borders with Ukraine and we saw many refugees. It has really fueled my interest in educational responses to crisis situations, and how we can turn a corner after a tragedy.”

Shumard said her career was not all what she anticipated: “I did not think I would be teaching, and circumstances led me to teach Mathematics. I’ve now dabbled in school administration. I don’t think I’ll ever fully leave the classroom. Ideally, I’d like to continue to teach part-time and write grants and manage the NGO part time. Teaching just takes a different amount of energy.”

She attended Pennyroyal, and says, “I have amazing memories from my time there.” She noted special teachers: Mr. Dwyer and Mrs. Daniels, and said, “I have a special place in my heart for Mrs. Jayte Howard, whom I try to see whenever I’m home.” Shumard was part of the band (“which became a bit of a family”) and worked at Franklin Public Library and for Pisanello’s catering operation.

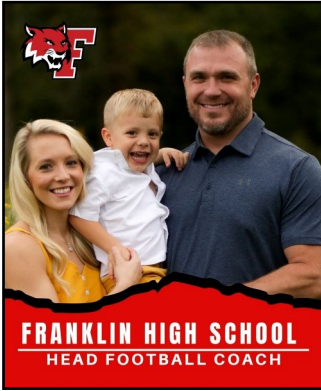
She recalled an amusing high school incident: “When I was a freshman, my brother, Brent, was a senior. He’s tall, so we gave him a hard time for driving his Chevy Sprint (a 3-cylinder! Who has ever heard of that?) because he barely fit in it. He’d drive me to school and one morning the Sprint stalled at the 4-way stop up the street from the high school. I asked him if he needed me to help him push: ‘Nah. This is no problem. The car’s so light!’ So he opened his door and pushed the car to school with one leg, like a skateboard. This way he could also steer!”

She said, “Thanks to my mom for always supporting my endeavors, even though I scare her sometimes. Shumard added, “I consider myself a world citizen, but when I talk about “home home” I’m talking about southern Ohio. I come from a family that values education (my dad retired from Carlisle School System), and I think that is a common thread for many people in the area. Also, people from Ohio are genuine and kind, which we somehow balance with being practical, resourceful, and no-nonsense. I hope I’m representing y’all well in this regard.” Photo credit Kyla Dunlavey



# News from Franklin City Schools

## Around the District!



### Meet a Wildcat

Welcome to **Matt Muncy**, who has joined the district as Head Football Coach.

Matt is a graduate of Miamisburg High School, where he starred on the football field. He has a degree in Public Administration from Ohio University, where he was captain of the football team and an all-conference selection in the 2005 and 2006

seasons.

He spent three seasons in the NFL with the Cincinnati Bengals and Tennessee Titans. Matt has served as Miamisburg's assistant football coach for several seasons and was recently named the OHSFCA Assistant Coach of the Year. He and his wife, Chelsea, have one child with a second on the way.

"I am proud as can be to be named the 31st Head Football Coach in Franklin history and I'd like to recognize all of the men who came before me. They have built a rich tradition of winning football in this community with 14 League Titles and 13 State Playoff Appearances. I'm honored to be passed the torch to lead our young men to even more success."



### Hunter holiday happenings

At **Hunter**, students' end-of-the-year activities combined lessons and fun. Students in Mrs. Banks' class played reindeer bingo and created holiday art projects.

### FHS Art with a Heart Club!

The **FHS Art with a Heart Club** students have been using their artistic talents to serve! The club unites students of all backgrounds, ability levels, and artistic experience to use artistic expression to serve the community by partnering with various outreach organizations, non-profits, and charity organizations, making artwork that they can use to support their missions.



During fall semester, the club completed two service projects. Students painted dog portraits to raise money for Furgotten Dog Rescue, raising over \$500 for the rescue organization. For the holiday season, the students designed and assembled art-themed stocking-stuffer goodie bags for families and children in need at Hope House Mission in Middletown. Students made 20 bags for children spending the holidays in the shelter.



### Local author visits Anthony Wayne

An **Anthony Wayne** parent, Mrs. Kara Cooperstein, recently published a children's book, *If I Were....* Mrs. Cooperstein both wrote and illustrated the book. She visited students during their library times to read the book aloud, and discussed the writing process. Students completed activities that accompanied the story.





# News from Franklin City Schools

## Around the District!



### Board honors students for achievement

The Franklin Board of Education has recently honored a number of students for achievement. Twelve were honored for passing the OELPA (Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment), which is the test that Ohio uses to determine an English learner's progress to English proficiency. Debbie Erwin is the district's TESOL instructor. Evan Turner (**Hunter**) was honored for earning 10 quarters of straight A's.

OELPA students honored were: Ryan Otanez (**Anthony Wayne**); Iker Santos Santos (**Gerke**); Caleb Hurtado, Logan McDaniel, Eliana Solis Estrada, and Nabian Villegas Bula (**Hunter**); Rijad Krasniqi, Genesis Torres Ramos, and Turan Tyuranov (**Pennyroyal**); Stacy Talvera Torres (**Schenck**); Perla Paredes (**FJHS**); and Prince Busbus and Diego Torres Ramos (**FHS**).

Franklin City Schools established the Student Achievement Award in 2001; hundreds of students have been honored since its inception.

Student Achievement Committee members include parents, community residents, board members, administrators, and students; they meet during the school year to evaluate nominations



Prince (left), Eliana, Debbie Erwin

Nabian (left), Caleb, and Logan.

Evan

which may be submitted by students, teachers, administrators, or community members. The nomination form is available on the district website under Departments > Curriculum > Student Achievement.

### Schenck students completed soil unit

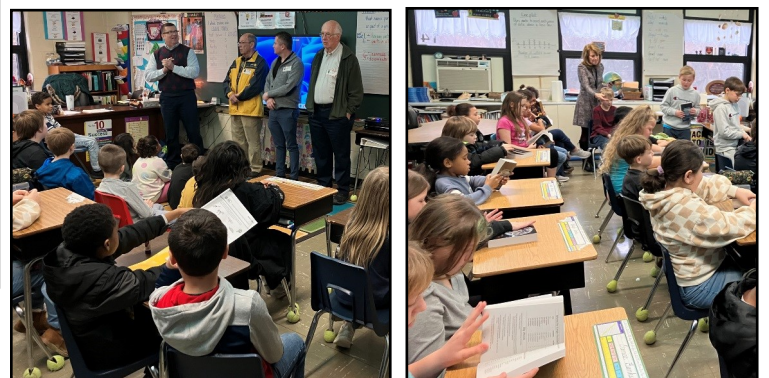
Students in Kaitlyn Deaton's class learned about the five layers of soil, then recreated them using edible ingredients: cookie (bedrock); chocolate chips (parent material); pudding (subsoil) crushed cookies (topsoil) and sprinkles/gummy worm (organic material).

They absolutely loved this activity and ate it right up!



### Third graders receive dictionaries

The Franklin, Carlisle Rotary Club is a great partner to our district! The Rotary Dictionary Project is a nationwide effort to provide young students with their own dictionary. The local club, shown here at **Pennyroyal**, donates one to every district third grader.



# News from Franklin City Schools

## Winter and Spring Arts Events

Mark your calendars for winter and spring arts events. For the most up-to-date list of events, please watch the calendar on the district website's homepage.

**February 9, 10, and 11:** *Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express* presented by Franklin High School Drama Club.

**March 1 and 2:** *Disney Newsies Jr the Broadway Musical*, presented by Franklin Jr High Drama Club.

**March 5, 7 p.m.:** FHS Mid-winter choir concert.

**March 6, 6:30 p.m.:** FHS Band Winter concert.

**April 19, 20, and 21:** *Mamma Mia*, presented by the Franklin High School Drama Club.

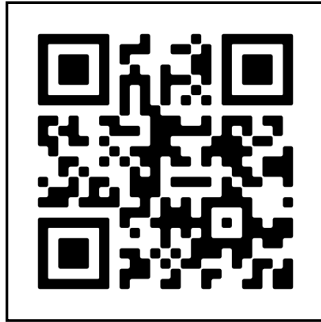
**May 2, 7 p.m.:** FHS Spring choir concert.

**May 3, 6:30 p.m.:** FHS Spring Band concert.

**May 4, Noon to 6 p.m.:** Location TBA: All-district art show.

**May 9, 7 p.m.:** Franklin Junior High Spring Concert.

Tickets for the junior high and high school drama productions may be purchased online at [fhsdrama.booktix.com](https://fhsdrama.booktix.com). Use the QR code to reach the site.



## 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 Franklin City Schools Administrative Offices, 754 East Fourth 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.



754 E. Fourth St.  
Franklin, OH 45005