



# LAKE CENTRAL SCHOOL CORPORATION

BIBICH ■ CLARK ■ GRIMMER ■ HOMAN ■ KAHLER ■ KOLLING ■ LCHS ■ PEIFER ■ PROTSMAN ■ WATSON  
LCHS Public Relations Interns contributed to this newsletter. Send any ideas or questions to Sarah Verpooten at [SVerpoot@lccsmail.com](mailto:SVerpoot@lccsmail.com)



Dr. Larry Veracco,  
Superintendent

## What if we all had it?

There's a television commercial playing this holiday season sponsored by the Marines that begins with a young girl stepping in to assist a school mate who is apparently being picked on. The voice over proclaims, "No one knows where it comes from. Why some have it. And some don't. It's the fighting spirit, and it needs to be fed." The first couple of times I saw the commercial, I wasn't even aware what was being promoted, but I knew I liked the message.

It got me to thinking, our teachers do a great job of celebrating random acts of kindness across our district and students receive Coyote coins, classroom celebrations, preferential parking spots, and thanks from adults when we act kindly towards one another. We as a group of caring educators are trying to feed the movement toward a kinder Lake Central. But, I cannot help but wonder what it would take to reach the tipping point where kindness becomes the norm and sarcasm, insults or downright

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## Homan: Winter Fest collects coats, smiles



by: Ryan Voss, senior at LCHS

On Friday December 1st Homan Elementary had their winter fest. The night consisted of food, arts and crafts, raffles, pictures with Santa, and Christmas shopping. They were also hosting a coat drive to help those in need. It was a nice night to kick off the Holiday festivities.



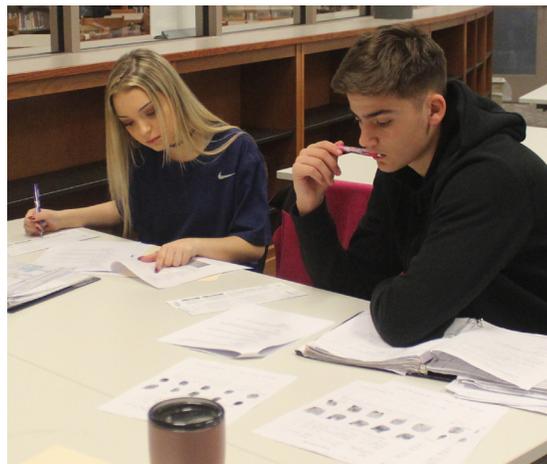
acts of harassing and bullying behavior are looked down upon by everyone.

A couple of years ago, on the way to a fishing weekend in Tennessee, I stopped by New Harmony, Ind. so my brother could conduct a work meeting. My free time was spent reading a few roadside plaques that chronicled how the town was settled in the early 1800's by individuals seeking a perfect society where all would be educated and treated equally. I wondered how well the current New Harmony met the ambitious goals of the founders. Then I questioned how in our much larger towns we might try to duplicate this lofty goal.

A few days ago, the television advertised an upcoming showing of 'The Grinch!' He thought his actions would negatively impact the tiny town of Whoville. Cindy Lou Who and her family and friends were having none of it. They knew who they were and held fast to what they believed. They were a small community but they did what they could. They influenced the mean spirited guy in an unimaginable way.

Perhaps our communities can become more like Whoville and our schools can continue to feed the spirit of kindness. And in our families can we put old arguments aside in order to enjoy the short time we get to spend together? Let's resolve to look for more than just a few good people and together we can create a community of individuals who have it!

We wish you all a relaxing and Happy Holiday season and Happy New Year.



## LCHS: Forensics final uses hands on technique

by: Kevin Holechko,  
junior at LCHS

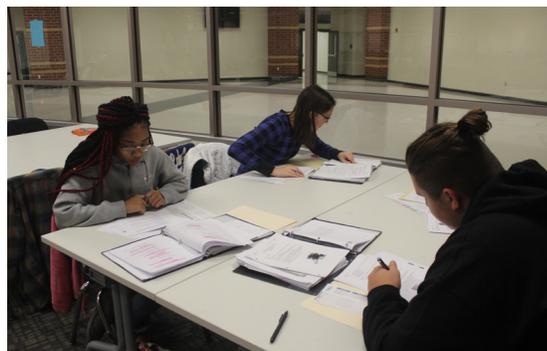
Lake Central students of Mrs. Rachel Thomas's Forensic Science class took their final in the school library on Dec. 8.

Students were forensic investigators who had to solve a crime with the lessons they

had learned throughout the semester.

Crime scenes had been set up in two rooms in the library, and in order to pass the exam, students had to solve the crime.

All students took a small written portion of the test and then Mrs. Thomas sent them to different lab stations



while she observed students to ensure that no one cheated. Each station had a different part to the crime and

students would have to perform different experiments in order to solve the crime and pass their final.



*Theresa Schoon,  
Director of Primary  
Education*

Spring 2018 will be the final administration of ISTEP, the state's academic assessment that has been given to Indiana students since 1988. Recent legislation details the creation of the new state academic assessment, ILEARN. Although the two assessments share some similarities, there are notable differences between the two.

Both assessments are designed to measure student achievement on Indiana's math, language arts, science and social studies academic standards. Both are given to 3rd through 8th graders in math and language arts and to 4th and 6th grade students in science. ISTEP tests 5th and 7th graders on social studies standards but ILEARN will only test 5th grade students. Also, like the ISTEP assessment, ILEARN will use end of course assessments for Algebra 1, English 10, and Biology.

Probably the most significant change is the format of ILEARN. The math and language arts tests will be computer adaptive rather than a fixed form, as ISTEP is. A fixed form test gives every student the same questions. A computer-adaptive test has questions that get more or less difficult depend-

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## Kahler: Veterans receive standing ovation

*by: Ryan Voss, senior  
at LCHS*

Kahler Middle School honored local veterans

with an all school assembly and breakfast. Kahler's Veteran's Day program took place

on Friday, Nov. 10th. The program included a standing ovation for veterans as they

entered, performances by the band and choir as well as multiple speakers.

## Protsman: Dreambox challenge? Accepted



*by: Kevin Holechko,  
junior at LCHS*

Mrs. Webber's third grade class participated in the Dreambox Math Challenge from Oct. 30 through Nov. 17. A

total of 9,307 classes competed in this challenge all across the United States and Canada.

In that time Mrs. Webber's class

completed 1,638 challenges.

The class set a number of goals for themselves, and in their free time they were on the Dreambox. The class

even sacrificed some of their indoor recess so they could complete more challenges.

When they were not working on the Dreambox at school, they were doing assignments at home.

Their hard work and effort paid off because the final ranking for the class was 97th out of 9,307 classes. The class also ranked 13th out of 1,560 classes in the Northeast Region of the United States in the third through fifth grade category.

This was the first time entering this challenge and the kids did an awesome job. They hope to do even better during the next challenge in the spring.

Congratulations to Mrs. Webber and her entire class!



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ing on how a student performs on the preceding questions. The adaptive nature of the test will provide detailed information regarding a student's strengths and weaknesses. The science and social studies tests will continue to be fixed form.

There are several issues with ISTEP that the ILEARN assessment program seeks to correct. ISTEP is given in two test windows, one in early March and the other at the end of April. The early March test window significantly decreases the amount of time teachers have to instruct students on all the grade level standards. ILEARN will be given in one test window near the end of the year making it a better assessment of a student's learning during the year. In recent years, ISTEP results were returned to school corporations in the fall after the start of the school year preventing educators from using the data to inform placement and make instruction decisions. House Enrolled Act 1003, which created ILEARN, requires test results be returned to corporations by August 15th the first year and by July 1st each year thereafter.

The vendor, American Institute for Research, has been selected and the process for developing the assessment has begun. It is anticipated that as the Department of Education works through the process, they will release more specific details regarding the test.



## Kolling: Kindness emphasized at the holidays

by: Justin Andrews, senior at LCHS

Before the start of winter break, students and staff had time to celebrate the holiday season with their peers, family members and others in the community.

Students donated a variety of toys and stuffed animals to the different police stations in Lake County that they use as "comfort toys" for children who are shaken up in situations such as car accidents. Instead of just picking the toys up on

their own time, police officers from different towns came and spoke to some third-grade classes and took pictures with them.

Kindergartners in Ms. Perfetti's class performed for members of their family and sang three songs before decorating Christmas trees made out of ice cream cones. The students performed at a nursing home days before, and Perfetti emphasized that while academics are important, she wants students to know that kindness is also important.



## Bibich: Holiday Showcase



by: Jessica Cook, senior at LCHS

On Dec. 7, Bibich Elementary held their fourth grade showcase. Led by Mrs. Maurek, each class and choir members were able to perform holiday tunes. Students read aloud lines they memorized to guide the audience through "Rock and Roll North Pole".



## Grad requirements change for all 7<sup>th</sup> Graders and younger



*Sarah Castaneda, Director of Secondary Education*

On Wednesday, December 6, 2017, the Indiana State Board of Education voted to approve new graduation pathways for all Indiana students starting with the class of 2023 (our current 7th grade students). If you have children that age or younger, this decision is something you need to pay close attention to because it significantly changes the requirements for high school graduation.

Up until now, high school students had to meet two criteria to graduate. They had to earn a minimum number of credits by passing their high school courses, and they had to pass graduation exams in math and language arts. If they did not pass the exams, students were forced to take remediation courses and retake the tests as many times as they needed to in order to pass prior to the end of their senior year. Almost all of our Lake Central students were able to accomplish these two things by the end of their senior year, providing the district with a high graduation rate. However, at all high schools across Indiana, some students would get stuck in a vicious cycle of remediation courses and testing, which is why the legislature put together a panel to come up with multiple pathways to graduation.

What the panel ended up creating, however, is a much more complicated beast. Instead of simply coming up with options for students who struggle with testing, the panel significantly increased the requirements for ALL students in order to graduate high school. The plan that the Indiana State Board of Education approved will force all students, starting with our current 7th graders, to complete three requirements now in order to graduate high school:

Earn enough academic credits to obtain a high school diploma;

Learn and demonstrate employability skills through a project-based, service-based, or work-based learning experience; and

Demonstrate post-secondary readiness by doing one of the following:

- Earn an honors diploma,
- Meet college readiness benchmarks on SAT or ACT,
- Meet the minimum ASVAB score to qualify for placement in one of the branches of the military;
- Earn an industry credential or complete an apprenticeship;
- Concentrate in an area of Career-Technical Education by completing 6 credits (3 years) of classes;
- Earn a C or higher in three AP courses; or
- Complete a locally created pathway.

School districts across the state now must determine in roughly a year and a half how to implement the new state graduation requirements. Some of the biggest challenges will be finding meaningful service or work based learning experiences in the community for all of our graduates (which in Lake Central means 800 students each year), ensuring we have enough CTE and AP certified teachers to support larger numbers of students in those classes now that they are needed by all students for graduation, and perhaps most important, determining how best to support our struggling students, who will now be expected to meet even more rigorous standards for graduation.

The other very real concern we have is how little room for error this leaves for our students, parents, and staff. The plan assumes basically that as students are scheduling their first high school courses in 8th grade, they are selecting their pathway. How many of us as adults are still in the same career we wanted when we were 14 or 15 years old? While our children can definitely benefit from doing career exploration and starting to think long term, we all know that they likely will consider many occupations during high school before deciding to pursue a career or college. Under the new plan, will schools and parents have to push students to finish the pathway they started as freshmen to make sure they meet the graduation requirements rather than allowing them to pursue a new interest? Or what happens if a student is pursuing a pathway, but then falls short of the requirement due to grades or test scores? Will we then have to push them into a pathway

or force them to take a test for something they aren't even interested in simply because it will be the easiest way for them to meet the criteria? Another serious concern about the tests that are options under the plan is that many of them don't occur until junior or senior year. Will there be enough time at that point to try something else? And what about students who struggle academically, or have special needs, or are English language learners? What happens if despite their hard work to overcome adversity, they cannot meet the new academic and testing criteria? All high schools also have students who move in from another school district in Indiana or from out-of-state. If a student moves in as a junior or senior, Will there be enough time for them to transition to and complete a pathway before graduation? There are just so many unanswered questions.

The plan is not just an issue that impacts parents and schools. Business and property owners in Indiana need to look at the long term potential fiscal impact of the new graduation plan as well. While the panel created the plan because universities and employers said young adults are lacking basic job skills, though the pathways may help improve work readiness to some extent, there is also a serious risk of causing Indiana's graduation rate to drop significantly. Several school corporations and the Indiana Department of Education have run numbers using the new pathways, and have come up with anywhere from a 10 to 50 percent decrease in their graduation rates. Will businesses and families want to move to Indiana if our graduation rate plummets? Other states that have pursued similar pathways have witnessed this very thing occur.

Although the plan has been adopted, we are asking everyone to continue to please reach out to the governor's office, State Board of Education and local legislators to ask them to pause and work out the details of this plan before it impacts our students and communities. As educators, it is not that we don't see the merit in having our kids start to look at the big picture and make decisions that will prepare them to be successful young adults. That is one of our most important goals. However, this plan does not give schools and communities the proper implementation time or detailed guidance and support needed to be successful, which means there is a great deal of risk for failure. And it is simply not acceptable for our state to set our children up for failure.



## Watson: Holiday carnival

*by: Jessica Cook, senior at LCHS*

On Dec. 1, Watson Elementary held their annual Holiday Carnival. The carnival contained games, food, DJ, silent auction, balloon twisting, face painting and ornament making. Children of all ages were able to take pictures with Santa throughout the night also. The Lake Central Choirs, Grimmer Middle School

Bells and Watson's third grade choir performed throughout the night and sang numerous holiday carols to spread some holiday cheer. Approximately over 800 people were in attendance. This was one of the biggest fundraisers of the year for the school and all the money raised will go to educational and technology advancements for Watson.



## Clark: Ten years of learning celebrated

*by: Justin Andrews, senior at LCHS*

This school year, students and staff at Clark Middle School are celebrating the 10 year anniversary of the school.

At the start of the school year, students and staff gathered on the football field and spelled out the number ten to showcase the anniversary for the first time.

Throughout the hallways, there a variety of posters and things created by students and staff members that have to do with either the 10 years or involve the word ten in some way. For example, they have 10 years of tech, the top 10 things about the school and teachers even took it a step further and put their students' pictures calling their students the "best". This gave everyone at the school the opportunity to come together to celebrate the anniversary as the year goes on.





## Grimmer: Yoga club meets to destress, ease mind and body

by: Whitney Raines, senior at LCHS

If you want a place to unwind and feel completely at ease and calm, yoga club is the place to be! Any student can be a part of this serene atmosphere. But not only do students take advantage of the quiet, other teachers in the school join as well.

The club starts out with simple breathing techniques to calm the body and mind and then they work their way to simple stretches. This happens in the library while gentle music is playing in the background to keep the atmosphere as mellow as possible.



## Peifer: Principal conducts magical experience

by: Whitney Raines, senior at LCHS

Polar Express Day at Peifer Elementary is a day to remember! It is a surprise to the 3rd graders every year but something the teachers look forward to. Some might say they are as excited as the students are. Their principle, Mr. DeLaughter, gets into the character of the conductor from the Christmas movie. But between him and the one on the movie, it's hard to tell the difference. It puts a smile on anyone's face to see the kids reaction when he

walks through the classroom door. Each have a ticket that gets hole punched to show their admittance and then they are on their way to get snacks in the cafeteria. While they are eating, the conductor is shuffling the tickets to choose a name. The name that is drawn is the winner of the first gift of the year, as from the movie. On arrival back to their rooms they are excited to discover they each have received a bell in their desk, like the one at the end of The Polar Express.

