Volume LXI No. 2
October 2026

dividends of Learning in Northridge Schools

Welcome New Staff Members

Northridge Local Schools is excited to welcome our new staff members for the 2026-2027 school year. We are grateful for the skills, experience, enthusiasm and heart they bring to our Northridge Family!

Nicholle Fiore joined the school main office as our receptionist.

Northridge Elementary School welcomed English as a Second Language teacher **Alison Purcey**; 4th grade teachers **Brody Lavigne, Angela Metzner** (not pictured) and **Samantha Stephens**; 5th grade teacher **Savannah Wead**; 2nd grade long-term substitute teacher **Morgan Wright**; and Instructional Assistants **Tiffany Colling** (not pictured)**, Isabel Houser, Tyson Housh, Nathaniel Roberts**, **Jessica Wallace** (not pictured) and **Paige Ward**.

Northridge Middle School welcomed science teachers **Cason Bennett** and **Teya Williams**; Intervention Specialist **JeMichael Blanton**; English Language Arts teacher **Kaitlyn Ferguson**; and 6-12 Instructional Assistant **Amy Nooks-Evege**.

Northridge High School welcomed American Sign Language teacher **Araina Bryant**; 9-12 Behavior Interventionist **Shaun Gunnell** (not pictured); English Language Arts teacher **Deanna Mobley** (not pictured); Band Teacher/Director **John Reed** (not pictured); mathematics teacher, **Claira Tipton**; and Instructional Assistant **Deonika Fowler** (not pictured).

Several staff members joined us last school year after the year was already under way. Please welcome Special Education Secretary **Tiffany Chaffin**; custodians **Da'Naan Colling** (not pictured) and **Steven Russell**; bus aides **Kennedy Collett** (not pictured) and **Karissa Lockwood** (not pictured); Instructional Assistants **Antoine Sain** (not pictured) and **Malik London** (not pictured).

Please join us in welcoming all of these wonderful new members of the Northridge Family!

Pictured from left to right - Front Row: ***Paige Ward, Claira Tipton, Isabel Houser, Samantha Stephens, and Alison Purcey.*** Middle Row: ***Tina Berger, Samantha Mutter, Amy Nooks-Evege, Kaitlyn Ferguson, Teya Williams, Ariana Bryant, Savannah Wead, Morgan Wright, and Brittany Robinson.*** Back Row: ***Abeba Mesfun, Steven Russell, Brody Lavigne, Michael Cyphers, JeMichael Blanton, Tyson Housh, Nathaniel Roberts, and Cason Bennett.***

Attendance Matters

Ohio's House Bill 96 changes the ways that Ohio's public schools handle attendance reporting. It counts all absences - excused, unexcused, and medical - toward a student's total. A student who misses 10% or more of their school year is considered chronically absent. This is like missing one school day every two weeks. Under the new law, the district must notify families if a student reaches 5% of absenteeism. This is about 7-8 days.

Why does attendance matter so much? Students who attend school more often learn better and faster. They reach reading proficiency sooner. They have higher graduation rates and studies show that they also show greater success in college and future careers. In addition, students who attend school more regularly build stronger friendships and have higher rates of self-confidence and a sense of belonging.

What can you do? Families can support school-aged children by helping them develop a healthy sleep schedule. Be sure that students understand how important it is to go to school, even when days are difficult. Of course, when students are sick with a fever or other contagious illness, they should stay home. But it's important that families report the absence by calling (937) 275-7469 or use the Google Form linked on the district homepage.

Northridge Community NEWS

Grandparents Day Breakfast

On September 15th, the Middle and High School were happy to welcome grandparents and other special people to enjoy a light breakfast with their family members in grades 6-12. Close to twenty families came to enjoy coffee or a hot chocolate bar with all the toppings. They played cards or games, and some colored Grandparents Day pictures together while they snacked on yogurt, fruit, and donuts.

This is the second year that middle and high school polar bears have invited their grandparents, great aunts and uncles, or family friends to enjoy a special breakfast together. It's quickly becoming one of our favorite events, and watching the smiles and special time together is sweeter even than hot cocoa.

Shane's Brains

It's October in Ohio, and you know what that means - hunting season! But I'm not talking about turkey or deer. I'm talking about hunting the most elusive prize of them all - full size candy bars. They are the Golden Goose of trick-or-treating. All kids hope to find that ONE house whose elusive full-size treat will become the stuff of legends.

Everyone loves candy and rightfully so. It's awesome! Speaking of legends, did you know there is one candy-related myth that persists to this day that's just not true - sugar makes kids hyperactive. That's just not true. Scientific study after study has proven that there is almost NO link between eating sugar and hyperactivity.

Too much sugar in your diet can lead to tooth decay, digestive issues (tummy ache), obesity, sleep problems and more. Hyperactivity in kids? Nope. Your grandma will say "that's a crazy lie" and "fake news"...but it's the scientific truth. So have a great Halloween season but remember... Brush your teeth WAY more often to keep that sugar away from those germs on your teeth that love to eat it and cause cavities. Don't eat candy before you go to bed. Finally, pick out your favorites and give the gross stuff to your grandma - you don't need too much, and she likes it anyway!

Northridge Hall of Fame - Class of 2027

The Northridge 22nd Annual Northridge Hall of Fame Dinner and Induction ceremony is Friday, October 2nd, in the Cub Cafe at Northridge Local Schools. This year's inductees include:

- **Alice Berry**
- **Linda Brentlinger Dawes**
- **James Henderson**
- **Nolan Jones**
- **Darrell & Margie Lairson**
- **Tod Perez**
- **Ruth "Sharon" Scanlan**
- **Alan Starnes**

Stay tuned to future issues for more details about our Hall of Fame Class of 2027 inductees!

The Rat Skate Park

During the construction of the new Pre-K -12 and Board of Education buildings, NLS also built something that most other schools in the area can't offer their communities: a skate park! Named The Rat, this custom built park gives our students and the community a chance to enjoy skateboarding, cycling, and scootering in a safe, well-kept environment. Inspired by the availability of our very own skatepark, NMS and NHS now offer a Sports Math class that teaches students to build and learn the operation of their own skateboards.

In addition to the class, Mr. Burkett hosts Ridge Rats, an after-school club where he helps interested students polish up their boarding skills.

The Ridge Is Rising

Celebrating Our Progress - and the People Behind It

Dear Northridge Family,

We have much to celebrate! Our latest Ohio School Report Card recognizes 5 stars in Graduation - Ohio's highest component rating - and 3 stars in College, Career, Workforce and Military Readiness! These accomplishments reflect determined students, dedicated staff, supportive families, the leadership of our Board of Education, and a community that believes in our children.

Our 97.2% combined graduation rate represents young people building a foundation for lifelong success. Across three report cards, our Graduation rating climbed from 3 to 4 to 5 stars, with both four-year and five-year graduation rates exceeding state averages and those of similar districts. Our 3-star readiness rating reflects our commitment to enrollment, enlistment or employment, with students meeting state-recognized readiness measures increasing from 33.3% to 63.8% over two years!

Our overall district rating remained at 2.5 stars, but that single rating does not tell the full story:

- Proficiency improved in 14 of 20 tested areas last year, with 12 gaining more than 4 percentage points. The two-year comparison also showed gains in 14 of 20 areas!
- Third-grade mathematics proficiency grew 28 percentage points over two years, including 12.3 points last year.
- Every building improved its Performance Index for the second consecutive year and increased its Gap Closing score.
- Northridge Elementary's overall rating rose from 2 to 2.5 stars, while Northridge High School maintained 3 stars overall.
- Attendance increased from 87.7% to 90.5%, while chronic absenteeism fell from 48.3% to 36.7% across three report cards.
- Both instructional Early Literacy measures improved, providing encouragement as we strengthen foundational reading skills.

There is still much work to be done, but the broader trend in our scores and ratings is upward! We will carefully review and analyze the data, identify needs and build on strengths to further refine our practices and improve student outcomes. This is Always Improving in action for student success.

As ONE FAMILY UNITED, we will ENGAGE, INNOVATE and INSPIRE - refining one another through honest conversations, equipping one another by sharing what works, and edifying one another with encouragement. Individually, we make a difference. TOGETHER, we multiply our impact and become THE difference!

Education is our calling, and love must shape our response. With faith, hope and LOVE, we will pair high expectations with compassion and keep showing up for every child, every day, whatever it takes! I am proud of our progress and excited about what we WILL accomplish together!

Together we can! Together we MUST! And as the Northridge Family… Together we will!!

Dave Jackson, Superintendent

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

#TheRidgeIsRising

EVENTS Calendar

4 Homecoming Parade - 2:00 p.m.
8 Board of Education Mtg. - 6:00 p.m.
16 Staff Development - **No School for Students**
19 **No School**
22 Board of Education Work Session - 6:00 p.m.

October Sports

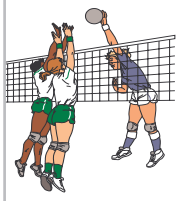
Varsity Football

(Game Time 7:00 p.m. unless noted.)

2 Riverside*
9 Covington*
16 Bethel
23 Troy Christian

Lady Bears Volleyball

(Game time 5:30 p.m. unless noted.)



1 Miami East*
5 Belmont
6 Riverside
12 Covington
13 Bethel*
15 Troy Christian*

Cross Country

10 Waynesville/Twin Valley South at Fort St. Clair Park, Eaton - 7:45 a.m.
17 Bethel/Covington at Eagles Picnic Grounds, Concord Township - 8:00 a.m.

*** Home**

2026 Levy Proposal: Facts for Northridge Residents

Dear Northridge Family,

On November 3, 2026, Northridge residents will consider a 2.2-mill Permanent Improvement Levy. We want to provide clear, factual information about the proposal and what it means for our community.

The district's 2.4-mill bond levy, approved in 2002, expires at the end of 2026. The proposed permanent improvement levy would begin collections in 2027 at 2.2 mills—a decrease of 0.2 mill from the former bond rate. The ballot identifies the proposal as an "additional" tax because it creates a new permanent improvement levy rather than renewing the existing bond.

The proposed levy would generate approximately $417,913 annually. Based on the auditor-provided median residential property value in Northridge, the estimated cost would be less than $43 per year, or approximately $3.56 per month, for the average homeowner in Northridge. The levy would remain in effect for a continuing period, with no scheduled expiration.

Revenue would support the care, maintenance, repair, and improvement of district facilities, including auditorium repairs, parking lot repairs, and safety and security updates, along with building systems, equipment, and other long-term facility needs. These funds cannot be used for daily operating expenses, salaries, employee benefits, or general educational programming.

A community informational meeting will be held Tuesday, October 13th, at 6:00 p.m. in the Cub Cafe. Please enter through Door 5. Residents are invited to learn more about the proposal and ask questions.

For residents who need to register or update their voter registration, the deadline for this election is Monday, October 5, 2026. Early voting begins Tuesday, October 6, 2026. Residents can register or update their information at **https://olvr.ohiosos.gov/**.

We remain committed to honest communication and responsible stewardship of the resources entrusted to our district. If you have questions, please contact me or Treasurer **Lori Green** at 937-278-5885. Thank you for your continued partnership with our students, schools, and community.

With care and thanks,

Dave Jackson, Superintendent

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Northridge Board of Education
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