



# ISSUE 23 FACTS

Learn about new pre-K-8 schools  
**SEE PAGE 3**

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# THE ELYRIA SCHOOLS **Pioneer** **Press**

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WWW.ELYRIASCHOOLS.ORG



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Apple Art winners gather for a group photo at the fountain in Ely Square during Elyria's annual Apple Festival. More than 1,500 art pieces were entered into the competition by students in the Elyria Schools.

## Drawing inspiration

### Apple-themed artwork earns accolades and awards

**Amy Higgins**  
Communications director

More than 1,500 young artists put pencil, pen and paint to paper to create this year's selection of apple artwork at the annual Elyria Apple Festival "Apple Art Awards."

Students in grades three through 12

are eligible to participate in the juried art competition that is a cornerstone event of the weekend community festival.

Art pieces are judged on best use of color, best message and most creative, and ranked first through third place.

There is also a best of show category and

accolades are given for honorable mention and participation.

"This was one of our larger ones (competitions) with 1,584 total (pieces)," said Apple Festival director Linda Brown. "The committee was just overwhelmed with the number and with

See **ART**, 10



MARTY YADON / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Elyria High School students use virtual reality to pilot an F-35 jet fighter through a challenging course in the Air Force Performance Lab that visited EHS.

## Students 'Aim High' with skill, wit in Air Force simulation lab

**Amy Higgins**  
Communication director

For one day, Elyria High School students were able to step inside the mind, body and spirit of an elite airman in the Air Force.

Through virtual reality and advanced digital technology, students challenged their strength and endurance in boot-camp-style pull-up drills.

They tested their skills, knowledge, logic and reasoning through hands-on experiments and games.

They felt the staggering force of an F-35 fighter jet as they piloted it through challenging courses, using throttle and stick controls for accuracy and following the strict commands of a mock air traffic controller.

They experienced all this thanks to the Air Force and an asset the Air Force uses to attract tech-minded youth to the fields of science, technology, engineering and math, as well as special operations and careers in the Air Force.

See **LAB**, 9



# That's a wrap on pink cookie party

**Amy Higgins**  
Communications director

The iconic Elyria Schools Pink Cookie earned notoriety several years ago when it was banned from school lunchrooms for having too many calories by government standards for school lunches and snacks.

So when this beloved, delectable treat surfaces at community events like the Elyria Apple Festival, we stock the shelves for the inevitable onslaught of orders. This year alone, the Elyria Schools foodservice department baked and frosted more than 6,000 cookies for the Apple Festival.

The Pink Cookie is a labor of love for baker and foodservice employee Dee Dee Shullick who heads up the arduous process of hand preparing, baking and frosting every single Pink Cookie.

Once the cookies are ready to go, she individually bags each one to seal in freshness. For a batch of 6,000 cookies, this final step can take days to complete.

Like superheroes there to save the day, students in the Special Education Department of Elyria High School swooped in to help.

"I would have been able to do it without them," Shullick said. "They were extraordinary and awesome and they really made it easy. They worked so hard and did such a great job, and they really seemed to enjoy it. They should be so proud of themselves."

As thanks, the foodservice department treated the students to an exclusive smoothie party in the Elyria High School Wi-Fi cafe.

"We wrapped over 6,000 cookies and the students probably did three-quarters of them," said Tera Fridley, Elyria Schools Sodexo foodservice director. "We really want to thank them for their help. It saved us a lot of time and I think they enjoyed it."



PHOTOS COURTESY SODEXO FOODSERVICE

**ABOVE:** Elyria High School students spent many hours individually wrapping more than 6,000 Pink Cookies for the Elyria Apple Festival.

**BELOW LEFT:** The famous Elyria Schools Pink Cookie can be ordered throughout the school by calling Jacob Latsnic at (440) 284-8262.

**BELOW RIGHT:** Employee Dee Dee Shullick is the district baker responsible for preparing the homemade sour-cream cake cookies known as Pink Cookies.



## Student-created T-shirt hits the shelves

**Tim Brown**  
EHS Principal

Spirited T-shirts in Elyria colors of red, white and black are plentiful around town and each has a certain panache all its own.

A brand new one that was displayed at the Elyria Schools booth during the Apple Festival is an attention grabber with its jet black background and white emblem

showing two thumbs up and the words "I am Elyria" on the front and "Pioneers" on the back.

Its design was one of several sketches created by art students from Elyria High School. Community members were asked last spring to cast votes for their favorite design among the sketches and the one with the most ballots was to be printed and sold, as pro-

ceeds would be collected by the Elyria Pioneer Club.

This bold design was created by student Zach Opperman and it came in first. This one-of-a-kind "I am Elyria" T shirt is just \$15 and is available for purchase at Elyria High School. Standard sizes are on hand but youth and larger sizes can be specially ordered.





# Issue 23 on Nov. 8: Plan for new pre-K-8 schools

**Tom Jama**  
Superintendent

On Nov. 8, residents will have the opportunity to vote on Issue 23, a bond issue that will fund the construction and furnishings of new pre-K through 8th grade schools. These new schools will replace the district's aging elementary and middle schools that the state deemed no longer suitable for education. Through its thorough analysis, the Ohio School Facilities Commission determined it's more cost effective to rebuild the district's elementary and middle schools than to renovate them. This is the same commission that helped fund the new Elyria High.



**Jama**

In the state's evaluation, the buildings were found to have structural concerns, inadequate heating and cooling, failing plumbing, lack of modern safety and security features, and aging electrical systems that can't handle today's technology.

The plan for new schools calls for reducing the number of buildings from 11 to five, and locating them in neighborhoods where the most students live. Two of the schools will house grades kindergarten through fourth; two more will house kindergarten through eighth grade in age-appropriate wings; and one would house Pre-school through eighth grade. This issue also funds a new stadium to replace the deteriorating 90-year old Ely Stadium complex.

The state will pay for \$79.9 million of the plan, which is 67 percent of the cost, but only if voters approve Issue 23 on the November ballot. With this issue and new facilities, the district can better align curriculum among the schools and give students learning environments that will help prepare them for their advanced schooling years and for futures in college and careers.

If Issue 23 is approved, it will cost the owner of a \$100,000 home value less than \$11 per month.

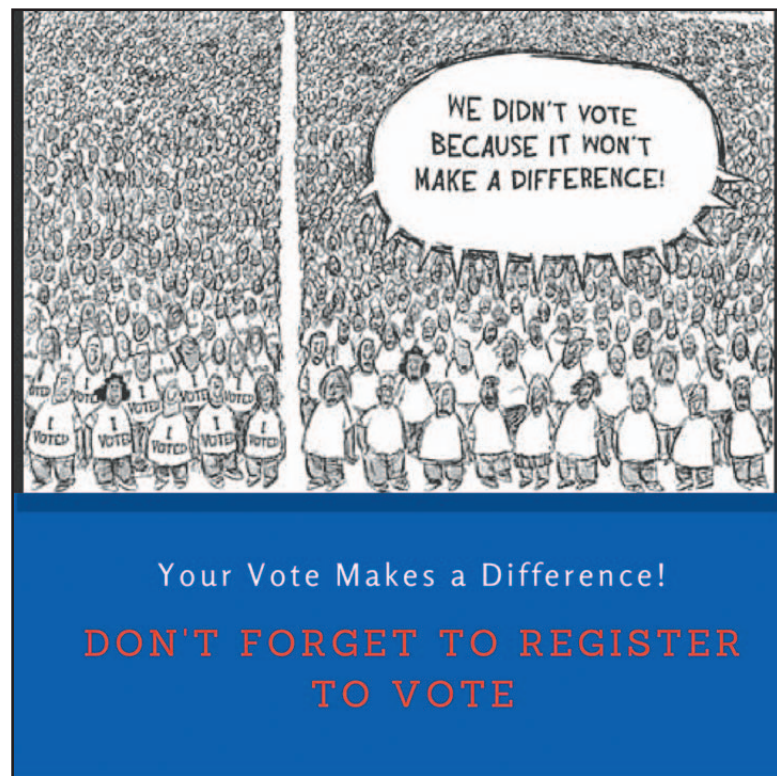
More information is available at [www.elyriaschools.org](http://www.elyriaschools.org) under the Facilities Master Plan heading.



JACK DIBEE / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS

**ABOVE:** Students at Ely Elementary Schools huddle in a tight classroom space for small-group instruction.

**BELOW:** Ely students receive help from their teacher in the only space available outside the classroom: the main hallway of the school.





# Elyria schools throughout the years

## 1907 (McKinley Elementary built)

- The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.
- The average wage was 22 cents per hour.
- The American flag had 45 stars.

## 1920 (Ely Elementary built)

- The 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, was ratified the same year that Ely Elementary School was built.
- A new car cost around \$200.
- First transcontinental airmail flight from New York to San Francisco.
- Bread cost 12 cents a pound.
- Coffee cost 47 cents a pound.
- Milk cost 33 cents a half gallon.

## 1951 (Franklin Elementary built)

- The first tests for color television pictures were broadcast from the Empire State building.
- Gas cost 19 cents per gallon.
- A loaf of bread cost 16 cents.
- Dennis the Menace appeared as a regular comic strip in newspapers.

## 1952 (Eastern Heights Middle School built)

- Kellogg's Frosted Flakes' Tony the Tiger was created the same year that Eastern Heights opened.

- I Love Lucy was America's most popular TV show.
- Gas cost 20 cents a gallon.
- Charlie Chaplin was refused entry back into the U.S.
- "The Today Show" debuted.
- The diary of Anne Frank was published.
- The first KFC franchise opened.
- The world's first passenger jet was produced and flew.

## 1955 (Crestwood Elementary built)

- Minimum wage was \$1.
- Gas cost 23 cents a gallon.
- Rosa Parks was arrested during the Civil Rights Movement.
- The Cleveland Browns were NFL champions.
- The microwave oven was invented.
- McDonalds first opened.

## 1960 (Oakwood Elementary built)

- U.S. Sen. John F. Kennedy accepts the Democratic nomination for president.
- Gas cost 25 cents a gallon.
- A new car cost an average of \$2,600.
- A U.S. presidential debate was televised for the first time.
- American Heart Association links smoking to heart disease.

## 1961 (Northwood Middle built)



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

The state has assessed that Ely Elementary School, seen here, needs to be replaced.

- Gas cost 27 cents a gallon.
- Eggs cost 30 cents a dozen.
- The first men went into space.
- John F. Kennedy becomes president.
- Construction on the Berlin Wall begins.

## 1963 (Windsor Elementary built)

- Martin Luther King Jr. was Time Magazine's Man of the Year.
- The first woman went into space.
- Kodak introduced the Instamatic camera.
- Gas cost 29 cents per gallon.

- A loaf of bread cost 22 cents.
- ZIP codes were implemented.
- The Flintstones debut.

## 1964 (Prospect Elementary built)

- Beatlemania — The Beatles had a ton of No. 1 hits.
- A loaf of bread cost 21 cents.
- A postage stamp cost 5 cents.
- A movie ticket cost \$1.25.
- Sony introduced the first VCR home video recorder.
- Bubble wrap was invented.
- Cleveland Browns were NFL Champions (the Browns' last championship).

## 1972 (Preschool/Early Learning Center, Westwood Middle)

- The floppy disk was invented.
- "The Godfather" was released in theaters.
- The musical "Grease" opened on Broadway.
- The Goodyear blimp flew for the first time.
- A postage stamp cost 8 cents.
- A movie ticket cost \$1.75.
- Milk cost \$1.20 per gallon.
- Tuition to Harvard university cost \$2,800.

# Heroin crisis spurs school-community response

Heroin use has reached epidemic proportions in Elyria and Lorain County and throughout the nation. Medical experts and emergency first responders are calling it a public health crisis.

Last summer, I was contacted by Elyria Police Chief Duane Whitely with an urgent request: help spread a message to students of Elyria Schools about the dangers of heroin and other drugs.

He said with all the medical advancements in saving lives and even with antidotes on hand like Narcan, a drug that throws the body into immediate recovery in overdose situations, heroin use and overdoses weren't diminish-

ing. Addiction cases continue to spiral out of control.

His plea to us was to warn kids of the deadly consequences of drugs and hopefully impress on them to never, ever use.

We came up with a plan to create a video that would offer enough information to teach students about heroin — what it is, where it comes from, what it looks like, and what it does to the body — but also to convince them to never try it.

An Elyria parent, Kerry Johnson, told us the story of her son who became addicted to drugs in middle school and died from heroin use in his early 20s. Her poignant and powerful message



AMY HIGGINS

reminds kids the addiction gene is only revealed to you when you use; so if you never use, you never have to know if you carry the addiction gene.

Elyria Schools video producer Marty Yadon and I interviewed a multitude of experts on the topic of heroin: detectives, first responders, medical professionals, officers of the court and parents like Kerry Johnson. Yadon masterfully collected images and content like hospital reenactment scenes and

ride-alongs to produce a final powerful video titled, "Heroin: Your first time could be your last."

You can find it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SMdoGwHgRoE>

We began rolling the video out to students in fourth through 12th grade in September. Throughout the process, we've had the solid support of the Elyria Police Department, the Lorain County Sheriff's Office, UH Elyria Medical Center, Life Care Ambulance and the LCADA Way. The experts from these organizations have spent many hours and days attending these sessions within our schools, tak-

ing great care to answer student and staff questions and offering resources for help.

We are grateful for the support of these agencies, departments and organizations but most specifically for the personal efforts of EPD Chief Duane Whitely, Lorain County Sheriff Detective Greg Mehling, Life Care Ambulance responder Adam Yandall and Mike Bridge, UH-EMC Pharmacist Don Halliday, LCADA Director David Marr, and parent Kerry Johnson. Thank you for taking steps to better our community and truly serve the students of Elyria Schools.

*Amy Higgins is communications director at Elyria Schools.*



# Collaboration, development strengthen gifted service

**Michelle Buga**  
GATE coordinator

In Elyria, it's about the kids. When an opportunity to expand the district's gifted services became an option, we were tuned in and ready. We know all students have specific learning needs, including our students with identified areas of giftedness. We recognize these needs exist all day, every day, and not just when our Gifted Intervention Specialists appear at the classroom door. Our gifted service now reflects that understanding.

Gifted programming in Elyria lets students receive gifted services in their classrooms from teachers who collaborate with our Gifted Intervention Specialists. These students benefit from learning environments and instructional opportunities developed with the combined expertise of the classroom teachers and the Gifted Intervention Specialists.

Together, these educators use their understanding of students, curriculum, and instructional strategies to plan for student growth. The Written Education Plan, or WEP, is used to communicate with all stakeholders about each student identified as gifted. Components of the WEP include learning goals, a plan to support student growth, and a progress measure to provide feedback throughout the year.

Elyria's gifted services are further strengthened as dedicated teachers participate in high-quality professional development, or HQPD, in the area of gifted education.

HQPD, as defined by the Ohio Department of Education, is professional development characterized by purposeful, structured, collaborative and continuous processes occurring over time using multiple sources of data and varied learning experiences, evaluated by impact on student achievement and professional practice.



**Buga**

Elyria teachers providing service to students identified as gifted in their classrooms have access to a broad spectrum of options for professional growth. As teachers take

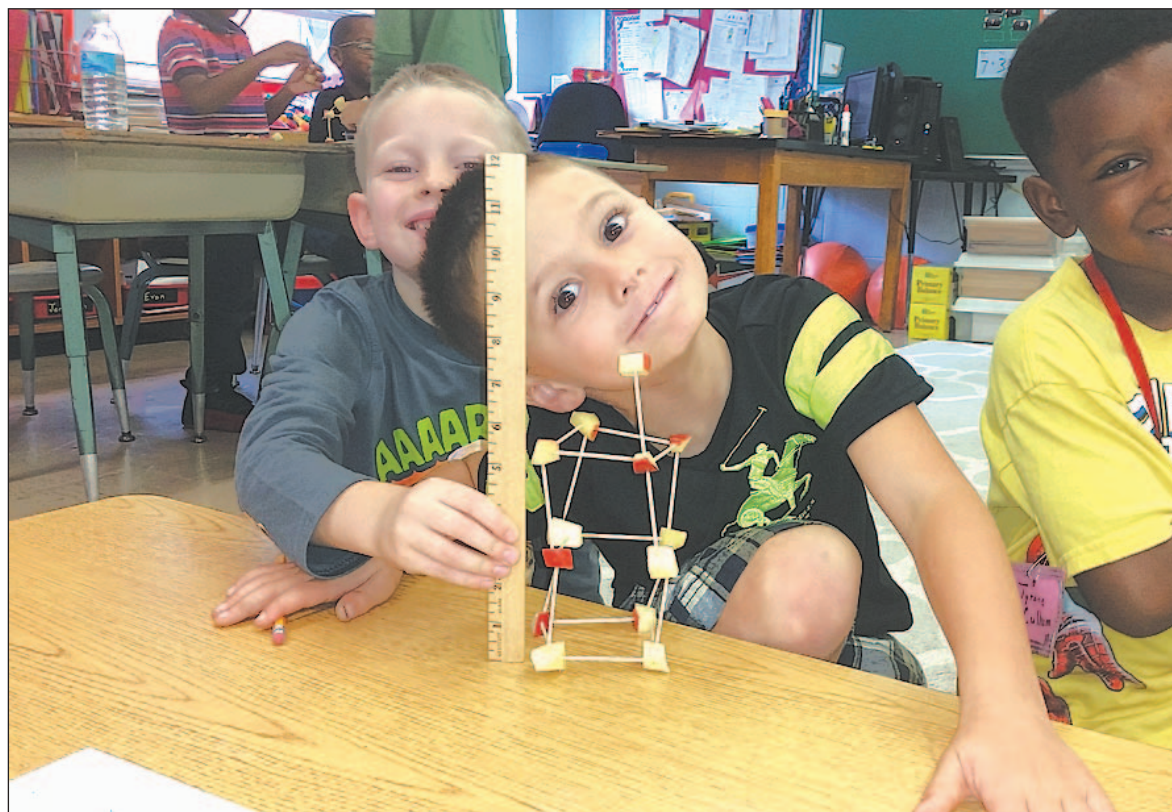
advantage of these opportunities, they expand their knowledge, understanding, and application of best practices to serve all students.

HQPD comes in many forms. Collaboration with Gifted Intervention Specialists regarding specific students' needs occurs throughout the year to support selection, implementation and evaluation of WEP goals. Resources are shared in the Schoology learning management system to allow for online collaboration and teacher selection of topics relevant to current needs.

Also online this year, teachers will have access to modules on GTignite, an online professional development library, bringing experts in gifted education from around the nation right to teachers' laptops, on demand. Through Elyria University, teachers also can participate in coursework and/or workshops to explore differentiation strategies and therefore can meet students "where they are" — ensuring that all students get what they need to learn and grow every day.

In addition, all Elyria Gifted Intervention Specialists are available to support HQPD during staff meetings, on professional development/in-service days, during data team meetings, and at "Piecing it Together" sessions, a monthly district-wide collaboration time.

This team approach of focusing on student needs for growth all day, every day, ensures all learners make the next great leap in achievement. Working together and learning together, educators in Elyria strive to develop the potential within every student.



STEPHANIE BURNSIDE / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS

Students at Prospect Elementary School in Ms. Burnside's class enjoy a STEM lesson based on the training she received in HQPD gifted education.





# Tech E clubs for 'Tech E kids'

**Cindy Tobel**

Technology implementation specialist

Robotics, coding, circuitry, video-game design .... Sound interesting? These are just some of the applications students experience in the Elyria Schools Tech E Clubs! With Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) education as the focus, these clubs let our students expand on what they are already learning in their classrooms.

The clubs were piloted last year at in fourth and fifth grade at Franklin and McKinley Elementary Schools. Thanks to an extraordinary donation of \$130,000 from the Nordson Corporation Foundation the district expanded the program this year to fourth and fifth grade at Ely and Prospect Elementary Schools, and sixth grade at Westwood Middle School. Next year, the district aspires to have it up and running in all elementary and middle schools.



**Tobel**

Tech E students commit to attend by completing an application. There are advisors at each building; Sharon Duffner at Ely, Kristin Kappa at Prospect, Stacy Corfman at Franklin, Michele Vrooman-Kennett at McKinley, and Angie Bugess at Westwood. IT services, academic services and building principals and staff lend support.

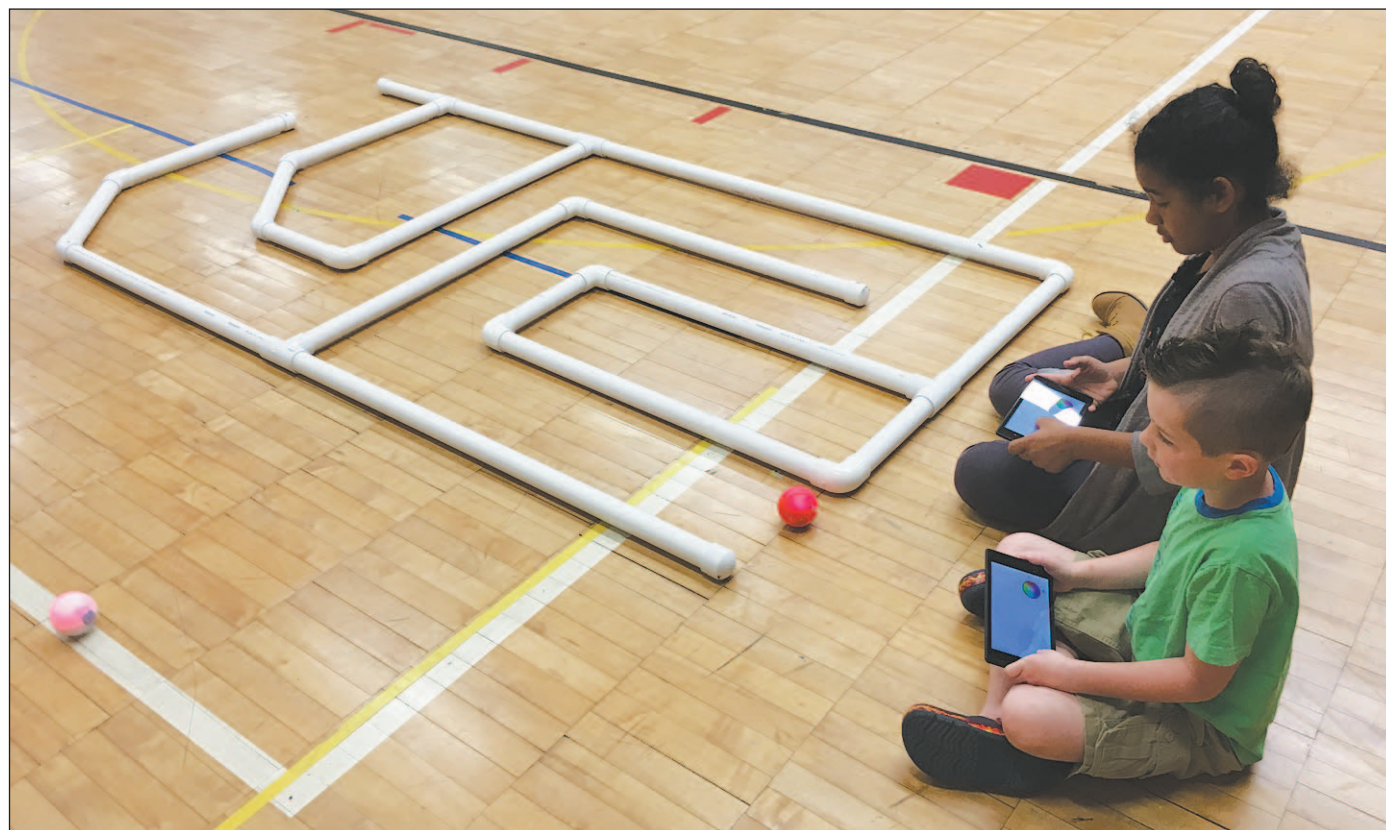
Many devices, materials, and resources are incorporated into Tech E Club. Code.org is one of them. This is a nonprofit organization that gives access to computer science to all students. Students receive a Code.org account at Tech E Club and learn to program with characters from popular games and movies like Minecraft, Frozen and Star Wars. This is free to our students and they can even use it at home!

One of the devices used at Tech E Club is the Sphero. This is a robotic ball that can be driven and even programmed on a smartphone or tablet. Students are presented with different challenges such as creating a program to navigate through a maze. Sphero soccer is another huge hit!

Other components incorporated into the clubs are Little Bits and Legos. Using both, students can create circuits to power a car or even install a house alarm to protect their Lego home.

Bloxels is yet another creation tool that is used at Tech E Club. This kid-friendly platform allows students to create their own characters, settings, and challenges in their very own video games.

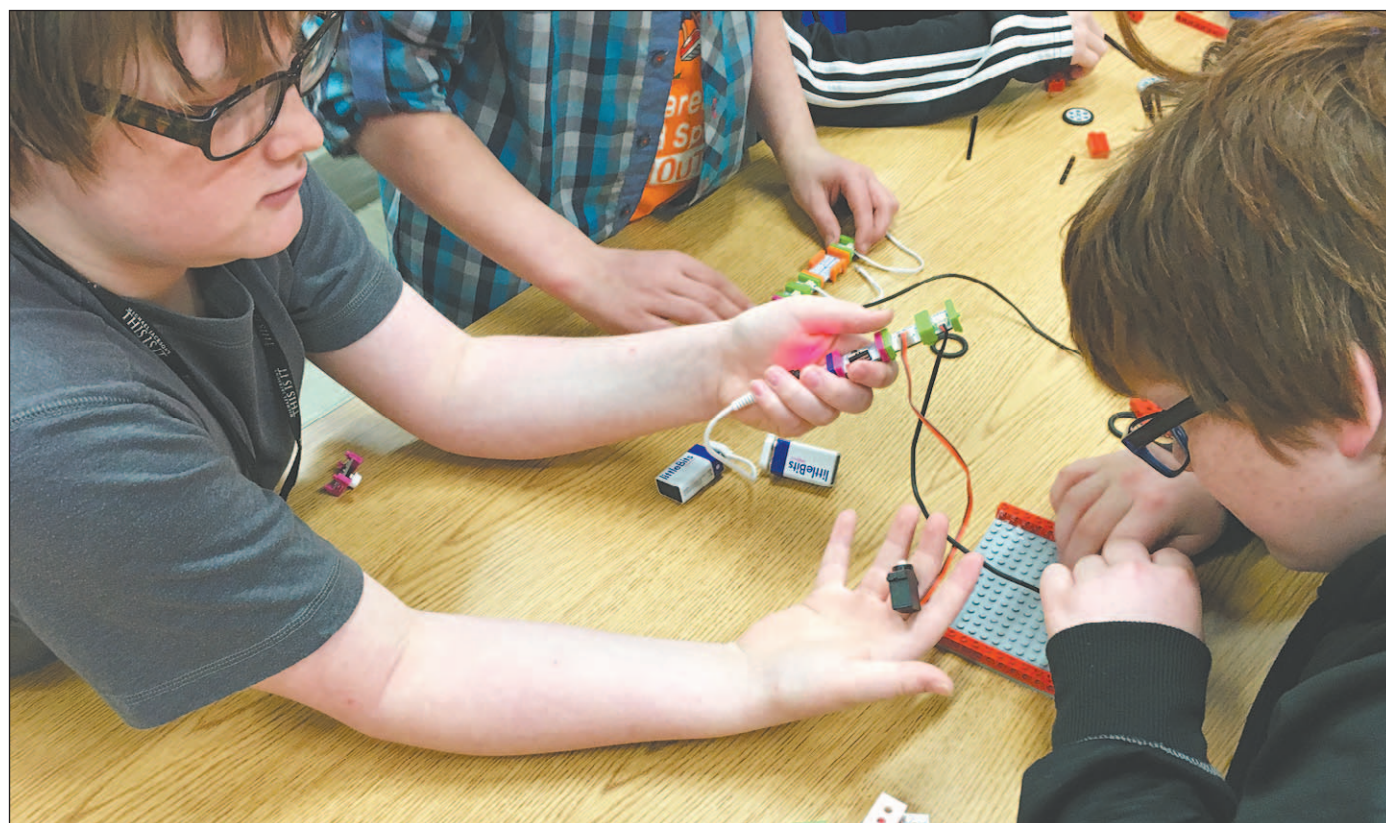
Students truly enjoy the chance to have access to technology that they may otherwise not have the opportunity to explore. They are able to work together with other peers while experimenting and discovering different ways of completing a task. Tech E Clubs promote collaboration, teamwork, creativity, and critical thinking along with lots and lots of fun. Tech E clubs are helping to make outstanding Tech E kids!



BRIAN KOKAI / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS

**ABOVE:** Elementary students in Elyria Schools use coding software and tablets to program robotic balls to move through an obstacle course.

**BELOW:** Elyria students in elementary and middle schools are participating in new engineering, math and science clubs throughout the district, using robotics, design skills and programming to create products and inventions of their own.





# The new face of mathematics in Elyria Schools

## Kathy Koepp

Teaching and learning coordinator

A new math program piloted last year in select K-8 classrooms has gotten a big thumbs up by teachers and students who've used it, and now it's being rolled out in elementary and middle schools throughout the district. The package also has a component for advanced math studies in sixth and seventh grade.

The K-8 program is called enVisionmath2.0 2016, and its advanced math module is called Digits. These programs use comprehensive, blended digital and print mathematics to build a strong foundation in math for students today and into the future.

The program actively engages students in concrete and digital learning so they develop deep mathematical understanding and are able to apply it through practice and problem solving in every math lesson. Additionally, students learn and practice new math ideas and concepts in a variety of ways, such as:

- Solving problems and explaining how they reached a solution



Koepp

in written and online formats.

- Using online animations to help build understanding in a visual way.

- Working individually, in pairs, and in small

groups, to solve problems and share knowledge.

- Completing homework that promotes computational thinking, fluency, and application through rich problem solving.

- Engaging in online practice that provides help as needed through worked-out examples and self-help videos.

- Experiencing a variety of math activities that include math games, math and science activities, and "today's challenge" to apply understanding in different contexts and different levels of learning.

The enVisionmath2.0 2016 and Digits program are an exciting step in mathematics today and we're looking forward to partnering with parents to promote a successful math year!



KIM KELLEY / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Elementary students test out the district's new math program and give it a thumbs up.

# School district calendar: A step back in time

## Amy Higgins

Communications director

The Elyria Schools 12-month calendar has become a district tradition. Each year it features a different theme but the students of Elyria Schools are always the cornerstone of this popular publication.

In 2017, Elyria will celebrate its 200th birthday and so this calendar gives a nod to our school district's history in this bicentennial year.

Elyria's founder, Heman Ely, established the city in 1817.

Local historians say Elyria's first school was built in 1819, which means Elyria Schools can celebrate its bicentennial in just a few years.

One of the neat things about working in the school district's main central office is that it's a "catch-all" place for historic items and artifacts that have passed from one generation to another. Finding no permanent home, these treasured items are eventually donated

*One of the neat things about working in the school district's main central office is that it's a "catch-all" place for historic items and artifacts that have passed from one generation to another.*

to us.

When appropriate, we display these items in our school buildings, or we tuck them away for safekeeping. We also work with the Lorain County Historical Society to archive historic artifacts, photos and documents.

Over the last five years, one Elyria Schools employee in particular has spent a good deal of time studying these relics and assembling a history of the district's nearly 200 years.

Mary Wright, executive assistant to the superintendent, has earned the in-house moniker of "district historian."

She masterfully assembled an extensive log of events and photos telling the district's life story. In

brainstorming ideas for the annual calendar, Mary and I chatted about how appropriate it would be to give our early history a nod in this special anniversary year for the city.

We recruited help from Lorain County Historical Society's director Bill Bird, archivist Eric Greenly and education coordinator Anne Michael, a group whose collective knowledge of local history proved especially useful.

The photos displayed throughout this calendar are only a small snapshot of the rich history that is Elyria and Elyria Schools. While it's a history that spans generations, we chose to focus significantly on the 1800s and early 1900s, particularly the grand old buildings of



PHOTO COURTESY THE LORAIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Historic photos like this one fill the pages of the district's new school calendar due out this month.

those years.

As Elyria Schools heads into the fall, residents will have the opportunity to vote on a bond issue that could fund the construction of all-new buildings for grades preschool

through eighth. It's a chance to add a new chapter to the city's remarkable history.

To request a copy of the Elyria Schools calendar, call Amy Higgins at (440) 284-8183.



# **E** THE ELYRIA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Problem

Our 11 elementary and middle school buildings are old, expensive to repair and we have too many for our enrollment

## Solution

We can replace our aging schools with new schools on 5 sites, saving millions of operating dollars

**The state will pay 67% (\$79.9 million), if we pass a bond issue this November for the remaining 33%**



**More info at:  
[www.elyriaschools.org](http://www.elyriaschools.org). Under Facilities Master Plan**



# LAB

From 1

The Air Force Performance Lab is the size of a semi-trailer and just before Labor Day weekend, it stopped at Elyria High School while on its way to the Cleveland National Air Show.

“We brought this asset to Elyria High School to give students a chance to live a day in the Air Force,” said Air Force Master Sgt. Luke Bistor, Lorain County recruiter. “There’s a lot of interaction they get when they go through the Performance Lab; they can do an F-35 flight simulation, they can live the lifestyle of a battlefield airman as far as a combat controller, they can play a couple different games to test their knowledge and skills to see if they’d be a good fit for the Air Force.”

“I’m their local Air Force recruiter and last year at Elyria High School, we had about 13 or 14 students join the Air Force so I had a chance to get the Performance Lab here so I wanted to bring it here to let them know everything they do.”

Bistor said the Performance Lab is in high demand and makes visits to only a handful of high schools each year.

“They (the Performance Lab staff) only travel to about 10 high schools per year so we’re just really lucky to have it here in Elyria for the students.”



**LEFT:** EHS students test their skills in the Air Force Performance Lab.  
**RIGHT:** A pull-up drill in the Air Force Performance Labs tests students strength and stamina.

MARTY YADON / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS



Air Force Master Sgt. Luke Bistor is the Lorain County Air Force recruiter responsible for bringing the simulation lab to Elyria High School.





# ART

From 1

how good the paintings were.

There was so much thought and preparation in them. To display them all, we had five judges and five different people to set them out. It took us about five and a half hours to judge the pictures and it was very difficult," Brown said.

"They (judges) were amazed at how much technical experience and enthusiasm the pictures showed," she said. "It told us that they loved Elyria and they wanted to be part of this and we were very happy with that."

Elyria High School student Keon Green took the title "Best of Show" with a pencil sketch depicting the city of Elyria inside of an apple.

"I was inspired by looking up ideas and I just thought of making my city inside of an Apple," Green said.

Green's skills bowled over EHS art teacher Kara Lowery who hadn't had him as a student before this year.

"Keon brought up this sketch and I was blown away by it," she said. "I'm very proud of all my kids. We spent about a week and a half on the projects and they did an excellent job."

"Creative thinking is used in every aspect of your life, every day," Lowery said. "Shows like this are important for the kids to boost their self-esteem, and then they can move on to bigger projects like Scholastics and enter their artwork there."

## 2016 WINNERS APPLE ART CONTEST

**Elyria Apple Festival Apple Art Contest**  
"Best in Show" — Keon Green, EHS

### Grades 3-4-5

#### Most Creative

1st Place: Brooke Widener — Crestwood — Grade 4  
2nd Place: Adrian Dotson — Oakwood — Grade 5  
3rd Place: Abigail Prather — Prospect — Grade 4

#### Best Use of Color

1st Place: Christian Betz — Windsor — Grade 5  
2nd Place: Kaili Overall — Prospect — Grade 5  
3rd Place: Amarie Bondi — Ely — Grade 5

#### Best Message

1st Place: Michael Widener — Crestwood — Grade 5  
2nd Place: Nikia Doniver — Crestwood — Grade 5  
3rd Place: Imanie Johnson — Crestwood — Grade 5

### Grades 6-7-8

#### Most Creative

1st Place: Zarría Todd — Westwood — Grade 8  
2nd Place: Alexander Snyder — Northwood — Grade 8  
3rd Place: Marquae Pilson — Northwood — Grade 8

#### Best Use of Color

1st Place: Mariah Kidwell — Northwood — Grade 8  
2nd Place: Nicole Basinger — Northwood — Grade 8  
3rd Place: Jada Stephens — Northwood — Grade 8

#### Best Message

1st Place: Shyanne Adams — Northwood — Grade 8  
2nd Place: Natania Reyes — Northwood — Grade 8  
3rd Place: Sierra Carpenter — Westwood — Grade 8

### Grades 9-12

#### Most Creative

1st Place: Keon Green — Grade 11  
2nd Place: Thomas Binkley — Grade 12  
3rd Place: Jennifer Hernandez/Leah Coolcaugh (tie) — Grade 10

#### Best Use of Color

1st Place: Casandra Koons — Grade 11  
2nd Place: Zachary Opperman — Grade 12  
3rd Place: Danielle Truxhall — Grade 12

#### Best Message

1st Place: Amber Wysocki — Grade 11  
2nd Place: Klair Barr — Grade 11  
3rd Place: Randi Schmidt — Grade 11



MARTY YADON / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

EHS sophomore Keon Green took the ultimate title of Best of Show in the Apple Art contest for his pencil sketch of Elyria inside an apple.



ONLY 1 IN 4 YOUNG PEOPLE  
VOTE.

Be The Change, You Want To See.



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Green earns a trophy and cash prize for top placement in the art contest.





# The Herald

A supplement  
to the  
Pioneer Press

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

ELYRIA HIGH SCHOOL, ELYRIA, OHIO

FALL 2016



PHOTO COURTESY JASON MILLER, PIXELATE PHOTOGRAPHY

The Elyria High School Performing Arts Center theater.

## Theater director: Performing Arts Center will meet your needs

**Alexis Jordan**  
The Herald writer

It's been one year since JR Simons began working at Elyria High School and yet little is known about him or what he plans as the manager of the Elyria Performing Arts Center, or EPAC.

Simons is the advisor of EPAC Team and he has experience in performing arts; he majored in theater in college and has been working in performing arts for 30 years.

This year he said he intends "to make sure every organization has the opportunity to use EPAC." The school has many organizations and clubs that can make use of the EPAC, as well as organizations outside of school, though they may not know of these opportunities.

He said new student groups began using the EPAC last year. It does not limit anyone or any organization, he said.

"Guest speakers are welcome," Simons said. "The EPAC is not just for performances."

Simons has made changes in the EPAC while he's held his position. He created the EPAC Team as a student organization, which led to new student officers who will be assisting with training. He plans to organize team training and take the EPAC Team on an out-of-school field trip, which will help with teamwork and training.

Simons expects to see all of the EPAC team members get experience in all areas of theater and theater technology. He said he believes that having the EPAC run by students "gives students the opportunity

to learn leadership and management."

He has set a goal to regularly make audio recordings of the performances that occur and to use video equipment to record school events.

The EPAC Team has three components: student organization, extracurricular and work. It is primarily a student-run group that holds meetings and is able to learn in the theater. The team puts its knowledge to work when outside organizations come in to use the facility.

If you are looking for a place to hold an event, from meetings to a performances, Simons said, "We'll work with you to meet your lighting, sound and video projection needs. For ticket sales, a box office can be provided, and any kind of backstage needs can be met."

## Link Crew fosters lasting friendships

**Anna Torres**  
The Herald writer

Link Crew at Elyria High School is a transitioning, mentoring, relationship-building group that encourages bonds and friendships that go beyond freshman year and even beyond high school. Some of the friendships built through Link Crew have completely changed some students' high school experiences.

Link Crew is a group consisting of teachers and upperclassmen who work with freshmen and new students during their first year at Elyria High School.

Amanda Belcher, EHS teacher and co-advisor of Link said the purpose "is to make freshmen successful and comfortable in their first year at Elyria High."

Link Leaders host events and teach lessons to younger students. All of the lessons have skills that are designed to help freshmen be successful throughout the school day.

Belcher's favorite Link event is the ice cream social.

"I like it because the year is complete and you can see everyone's relationships that have been built through the year," she said. "Everyone is relaxed and comfortable."

Morgan Flores, a senior and second-year Link leader, said she joined Link Crew because: "When I was a freshman, my Link leaders weren't the best and I thought I could make a difference with some freshmen now. Plus, I thought it might be fun."

Morgan said her favorite part of being a Link leader is "getting close with certain kids who let you in, and the feeling of knowing that I made freshman year a little less scary."

Freshman Ciara Billman said she enjoys Link Crew because "I like my Link leaders. They're fun and cool," she said. "They're great!" Ciara also admitted to often putting on a "tough exterior because that's how people know her," but her Link leaders have gotten her to have fun and to loosen up.

Both Morgan and Belcher were asked the same question at the end of each of their inter-

See **LINK**, 8



# Just one more to reach the top

**Ashley Moen**  
The Herald writer

I stopped to take a breath. I could feel my legs start to shake. I was on the third beam of three in my ropes course class at Lorain County Community College. Since I needed one more physical education credit to graduate high school, I decided to take a weeklong ropes course at the local college using the College Credit Plus Program that permits taking college classes for high school and college credit.

This particular class was quite a workout. From climbing telephone poles and rock walls to walking across balance beams 30 feet in the air, the class definitely gave me a run for my money.

My challenge at this moment was to climb three vertical beams hanging off of each other, using the small pegs bolted into them. It was not an easy task getting this far. Because of my less than average height and the distance between each peg, it became a struggle of upper body strength to get my foot up to a peg where I could then use my legs to push myself up farther and repeat the process. I tried my best not to stop and to go straight up.

But there, only a short distance from the top, I could feel my body letting go. I was ready to give up. My arms were losing strength and my sweaty palms were not helping. I needed a good foothold to go up farther and I could not see one. There was no way I could pull myself up the rest of the way using just upper body strength. I was defeated. I looked down at my classmates with a defeated look and shouted, "I can't do it!"

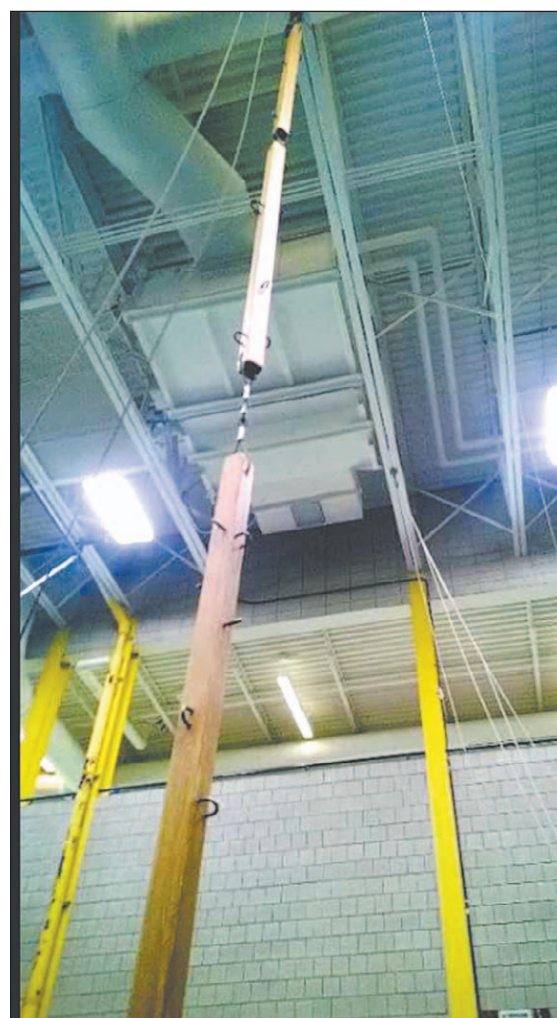
Almost immediately I regretted it. It felt

horrible saying those words. I felt like I was weak. But my classmates wouldn't let me feel any regret. They all started shouting at me to not give up. They told me to go just one more step up. They told me I was right there, I was almost done and I could do it. So I took a deep breath and a leap of faith.

I jumped up and used my arms to pull myself as high as I could. I wrapped my legs around the beam and desperately searched for a foothold before I slipped. To my surprise, there was a foothold. It was in just the right place but I did not see it earlier. I stepped on it and pushed myself up. I was at the top. I had made it. I had won. I could hear my classmates cheering, and I could feel my heart racing. I felt amazing. Not a shred of regret. I felt strong.

What amazes me most about is the foothold was right there. It was on the other side of the beam so I could not see it, and it was placed perfectly to help me get up. If I had given up, I never would have known about it. It was there the whole time; I just had to step on it. If no one had told me I could do it, to just go one more step, I would have been defeated. I would have regretted it. I would have been so close to getting to the top, and simply given up when I was almost there. But because I went just one more step, I was victorious.

Even if I was unable to get to the top by taking that leap of faith, I know I wouldn't have regretted it because I didn't give up. I tried and it paid off. My classmates helped me get the confidence to try — to take that extra step, because sometimes you only need just one more step forward to get to the top. If you give up, then you never stand a chance.



HERALD STAFF PHOTO

A high climbing beam at LCCC was the prop for a test in perseverance and bravery for one EHS student.

## A writer and an author: Realizing your dreams

**Karina Primmer**  
Editor-in-chief, The Herald

What does it mean to be a writer, and what does it mean to be an author? To many people, these two words are interchangeable, but when you really look, they are very different.

A writer is anyone who writes. Whether its short stories published only on online forums, or full-length journals and novels printed and sold in every major bookstore there is, you can call yourself a writer. Despite it being a rather ambiguous term, it is a title that shouldn't be looked upon with discredit.

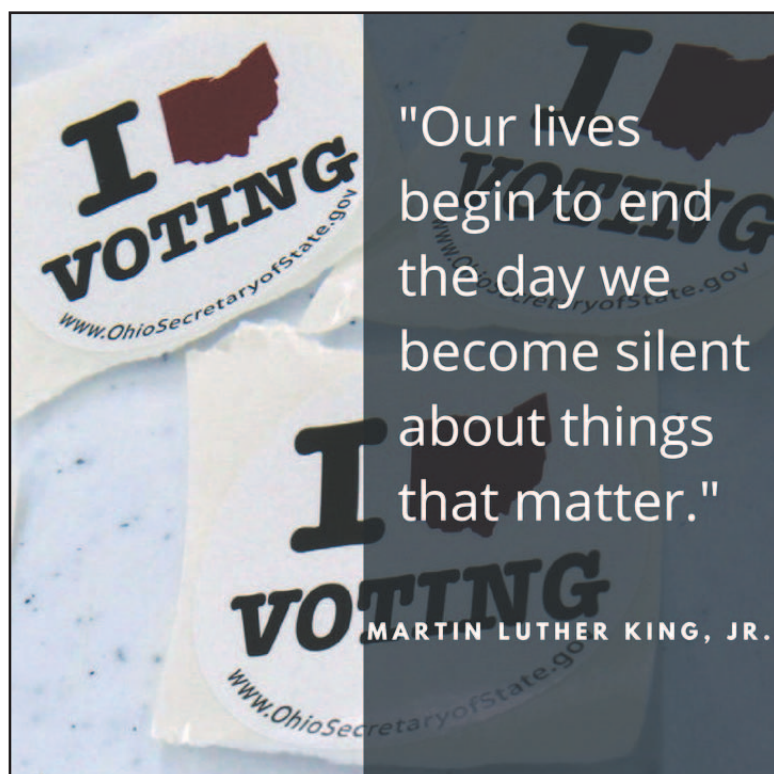
I call myself a writer, but I dream to one day be an author. To successfully live off of my imagination, and to share my thoughts with others who may enjoy them, has been my dream since I was a child.

I have no shame in my menial title of writer, though. I do not write professionally, I have not physically published any works, and I have not even completed writing that isn't a short story or article; however, I practice.

As a member of The Herald, I write articles about various goings-on in our community and our lives. As an attendant of the creative writing club, I share my works with fellow writers for critiquing. I follow blogs online that post prompts and tips. I want to be an author, and I will achieve that through learning how to become a better writer, and I can realize that through research and practice. Practice, practice, practice; trial and error; look for resources.

So many writers either don't take writing seriously enough to really make something of it, or they simply aren't interested in it enough to pursue it, but that's all right because each person has their own skills and dreams.

The overall meaning though, is that even if you're not good at something at first, if you really want to do it, take it one step at a time. You may be a beginner now, but one day you'll look back, see how far you've come, and you'll be proud. Just like I will be, one day, when I am truly an author.



MARTY YADON / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

The EHS Link Crew helps freshmen start high school on the right foot.

## LINK

From 7

views. They were both asked what they would change about Link

Crew, if anything. Belcher admitted she would like to see more freshman involvement.

Morgan, on the other hand, said she wouldn't change a thing. "I honestly love it!"