

## INDEPENDENCE PRIMARY SCHOOL CREATES NEW REPORT CARD SYSTEM

Over the past year, the staff at Independence Primary School has worked closely to review the structure of their report cards with support from Teaching and Learning Consultants, James "Ike" Holzapfel and Jamie Smith, from the Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio. Standards-based report cards allow teachers to gather information on a student, come together as a team, and more authentically communicate student growth throughout the year. Districts across the country are turning to this new form of reporting. For the IPS teachers, it has led to collaborative conversations, a better understanding of grade-level standards, discussions on common assessments, reflection on how they assess their students, and the development of assessment rubrics. Standards-based reporting ultimately allows parents and caregivers to know more deeply how their child is progressing and in the ways they need to improve on specific year-long learning.

The goal is to provide families with a report card that better reflects a child's progress towards mastery of key skills in each grade and subject. Previously, Independence Primary School used check marks with M/I and +/- in kindergarten, first grade and second grade with third and fourth grades using letter grades. Report cards with grades only provide a periodic glimpse of "a point in time" performance on year-long learning standards. Beginning this school year at Independence

Primary School, kindergarten through third grade will use a "new" report card system to reflect students' learning progress and they will be released in November. To ensure consistency in grading practices, fourth-grade students will not make the transition until the 2023-2024 school year. The fifth and sixth-grade teachers are currently working to align their grading philosophies and practices to support a seamless transition as students graduate to Independence Middle School.

The following letter scale will be used to communicate student progress:

- B - Beginning** - Student requires adult guidance and support to achieve the objective and/or standard being introduced.
- D - Developing** - Student can achieve the objective with guided practice and/or is able to achieve the objective with some support. Student performance may be inconsistent.
- S - Secure** - Student consistently demonstrates the objective independently or with minimal support and can generalize the skill beyond a specific task/lesson.

Independence Primary School has found a far more informative method to communicate how students are developing throughout the school year, placing the focus right where it needs to be—on the learning.



## RICHMOND HEIGHTS SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ATTEND GREAT LAKES SCIENCE CENTER MANUFACTURING DAY

On October 7, students at Richmond Heights Secondary School who are interested in the field of manufacturing, attended the Great Lakes Science Center Manufacturing Day.

The event was filled with interactive activities that highlighted different aspects of advanced manufacturing. Students also had the chance to meet with representatives from Rockwell Automation, Inc., Swagelok, The Timken Company, Lincoln Electric, Saint-Gobain, Olympic Steel, Sherwin-Williams and PPG Industries Inc.

Richmond Heights student and MAGNET standout, Kaleb McSears, was a member of the panel who presented to more than 500 students throughout the day. Other students who participated in this event include: Anaysia Englebrecht, Giovanni Caldwell, Danifae Haught, Dana Cousin, Bre'Asia Smith, Katherine Fox, Kenajah Beard, Shaniah Wilkins, Trintite Kyle, Antoine Edmond, Taylor Robinson and Javeon Reeves.



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## STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN ALL-INCLUSIVE SPORTS DAY

The rain came down, but it did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of students from Cuyahoga Heights Middle/High School and Independence High School who attended the Chagrin Valley Conference (CVC) Inaugural Inclusive Sports Day at West Geauga High School on September 28. The event was a collaboration between the CVC and Empower Sports, a nonprofit organization that provides sports and exercise programs for children and adults with physical and cognitive disabilities and additional programs for typically-developing kids.

Cuyahoga Heights and Independence were two of several districts to have their students partner with student-athlete volunteers from other CVC schools who served as coaches.

"This event was a fantastic opportunity for our students to be in our community, meet new peers from other schools, and participate in fun sporting events that tapped into their kinesthetic needs," said Intervention Specialist Elena Paporizos, Cuyahoga Heights Middle/High School.



Students participated in soccer, baseball, softball and football stations, as well as relay races and obstacle courses.

"Our students had a great time," said Intervention Specialist Kayla Traut, Independence High School. "Every child got multiple chances to participate in each sporting rotation. Everyone was so friendly, including the volunteers. We were even surprised to see some old friends." Independence High School alumni Joey Sorace was at the event on behalf of Empower Sports as a student trainer.





## INDEPENDENCE MIDDLE SCHOOL GOES GREEN WITH HYDROPONIC GARDEN

A new hydroponic garden at Independence Middle School not only provides students with a hands-on learning experience but produces fresh produce for the cafeteria.

The plants, according to Vincz, can grow vertically rather than horizontally, taking up less space than an outdoor field. "The garden ensures efficient delivery of nutrients to the root of the vegetable," she said.



When a company called Fork Farms called the school about adding the garden, it was a dream come true for Rio Vincz, gifted teacher at Independence Local Schools and advisor to the Junior Biology Society. Vincz had wanted a hydroponic garden since she began her career with the district seven years ago.

Service Manager Francine Kane approved the idea of adding the

hydroponic garden, which is an indoor garden that doesn't use soil for growing. Plants hold themselves up in material and water runs over the roots of vegetables, making them grow.

Some of the greens grown include lettuce, spinach, and herbs, which are all used by the school cafeteria. The garden requires consistent attention, making it an ideal project for the Junior Biology Society, a group of students interested in science and the world around them.

Students harvest the vegetables, clean the garden weekly, and keep nutrients levels correct, sometimes even taking Ph tests during recess time. Vincz said the society members now have infrastructure for the winter months when outdoor activities are limited for the junior biologists. Vincz said the garden is teaching more than just growing food, but teaching sustainable practices and environmentalism.

"This skyrockets the district into the future as far as STEM," she said. Vincz added that students are learning innovative ways of doing things, noting that Independence is only one of two school districts that she knows of with a hydroponic garden. "It teaches students autonomy and responsibility," said Vincz.



## RED WOLF RUCK CLUB MAKES STRIDES AS AFTERSCHOOL ACTIVITY FOR CUYAHOGA HEIGHTS MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

Being a member of the Red Wolf Ruck Club at Cuyahoga Heights Middle School isn't exactly a walk in the park. "Basically, it's walking or hiking a set distance while carrying a weight on your back," explains George Burich, Director of Pupil Services and Assistant Principal 6-12, who is leading the Red Wolf pack. An admitted "Rucker" for the past two years, Burich wanted to give middle schoolers an opportunity to get outside and do healthy things. He brought the idea to Principal Scott DeTray, who immediately agreed.

At their first rucking session, eight students practiced rucking up the hill behind the baseball field and in all, completed two miles of rucking. The following week, the students rucked the stadium bleachers in remembrance of first responders who died at Ground Zero on 9/11. And most recently, they "rucked" from the middle school down the Cuyahoga Valley Park Towpath to the second bridge along the Erie Canal, completing a 2½-mile loop.

"The students are having a lot of fun, and I'm enjoying getting to know them," Burich said. "The kids are learning what their capabilities are, and they are getting to know one another and making friends."

According to Burich, rucking burns up to three times more calories than walking and is good for a person's posture and back. To increase their strength and endurance, the students sometimes do curls and presses. At other times, they trade off using heavier weights to build strength, focus on increasing speed, or work on rucking in high elevations.

Getting started is simple. Participants just need a backpack or rucksack, a 10-lb. weight, (dumbbells, bricks, books, or even potting soil wrapped in a towel for cushion will do), tennis shoes, and good socks.

The Red Wolf Ruck Club is open to all middle school students and welcomes new members. Ruckers typically meet on Thursdays from 2:45 - 4:15 p.m. in all weather conditions and after each session they can take the activity bus home. "About the only time we'll cancel is if there's lightning," noted Burich. Students or parents with students interested in joining or having questions can email him at gburich@cuyhts.org.

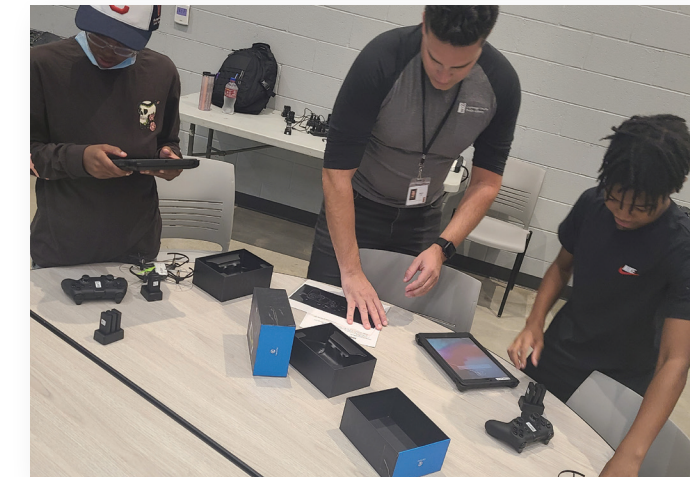


## RICHMOND HEIGHTS LOCAL SCHOOLS LAUNCH NEW AFTERSCHOOL DRONE PROGRAM

Richmond Heights Local Schools launched a new after-school program this year for 6-12 grade students. The Drones in Flight program teaches the students how to safely fly and operate unmanned aerial vehicles. The pilots in training test their flight skills through challenge-like activities, learn about different types of drones, how they work, how they are built, and about other aerial aircrafts as well. The 10-week program is run by the Cuyahoga County Public Library system.



One of the students in the program has decided that this is a career field he would like to pursue post graduation. "It gives the students another activity to do and explore beyond athletics," said Curtis Boykins, Wraparound Coordinator, Richmond Heights Local Schools. "It allows the students to take their brain in another direction."



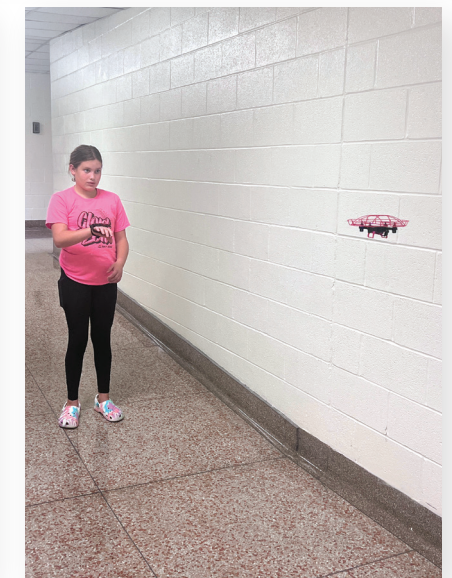
Richmond Heights has introduced drones to the students through drone activities during their summer school program the past few years.

## INDEPENDENCE MIDDLE SCHOOL INCORPORATES DRONES INTO CURRICULUM

In March 2021, Rachel Pietrzak, the computer teacher at Independence Middle School, began researching a variety of drone curriculums. Being that drones are one of the fastest growing career fields, and are fun and engaging, made the decision to bring them into the classroom an easy one.

Pietrzak contacted several teachers in other school districts who currently incorporate drones into their classroom. She researched what curriculum they were using, what prior knowledge students need, and what students enjoyed about the drone curriculum. After reviewing the information, the district decided to purchase drones from LocoRobo. LocoRobo offers a self-paced curriculum in which students learn a foundation in piloting, drone technology, programming and data analysis.

The curriculum allows students to use a codable drone to learn coding with graphical blocks and python. Each student has a unique login for the "LocoRobo Academy." Once logged in, they are able to participate in self-guided learning through video tutorials, formative worksheets, and online assessments. Seventh graders in Pietrzak's computer class are able to choose a learning path that interests them. Several students have chosen drones as their path and are now using the new drones.



## IMMERSIVE VIRTUAL REALITY HELPS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS LEARN MATH

As an ESC of Northeast Ohio first ring school district, Richmond Heights Local Schools has access to virtual reality technology, called Prisms Virtual Reality (VR).

Last spring, ESC Consultant Bob Glavan trained the secondary school teachers in the district on how to use Oculus headsets for this immersive virtual reality learning opportunity. This fall, students in Honors Geometry at Richmond Heights Secondary School will be using this technology for spatial and abstract learning. Wearing these headsets, students will learn and experience math through 3D, 2D, and 1D movement and meaningful discovery. They will be solving real-world current, compelling math problems that naturally gravitate towards intuitive

problem solving. The hope is that this platform will close achievement gaps in learning and will take abstract, challenging math concepts and define them in real world, story-telling examples that a student can understand.

Parents and other community members interested in exploring this technology may access basic information at <https://www.prismsvr.com>.

