

Erlanger-Elsmere Schools

engage



Winter 2020/21

engage is a district publication of Erlanger-Elsmere Schools



From the Superintendent

As I pause and reflect on the last several months, I am reminded of the hardships and uncertainty we have faced as a school district, a community, a commonwealth, and a nation. Each of us has faced

challenging situations and tough decisions – whether as an educator, a caregiver, a family member, an employee, a member of our community, or any of the other important roles we fill.

During these difficult days, it can be easy to focus on the obstacles as we long for a return to normalcy in our lives. But while we don't see a clear end in sight, we must remain buoyed by the promise of better times to come. As we approach the new year, my hope is that we can each take the opportunity to celebrate the brighter things in our lives and remain optimistic for a better tomorrow.

What we have all been asked to do throughout this past year has been hard – there is no doubt about it. But our community has risen to the occasion with a spirit that exemplifies the vision and mission of the Erlanger-Elsmere Schools. Our students have adapted amazingly well to virtual learning and shifting routines. Our teachers have managed new teaching methods and added responsibilities with poise and professionalism. Our families have been flexible, committed, and supportive – despite juggling seemingly insurmountable tasks at home. And our community partners have found innovative ways to wrap support around our students and their families when we've needed them most.



Our school community is unquestionably one of the bright spots in my life, and I am proud to be your superintendent. There is no other group of people I would rather be with on this journey. I'm confident we'll reach the other side closer, stronger, and ready for whatever lies ahead.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2021!

Mr. Chad Molley, Superintendent

Caring for our community



We are committed to caring for the whole child – and the whole family – particularly during the holiday season.

THANKSGIVING MEAL SUPPORT

Due to COVID-19, the Manna Mission could not distribute Thanksgiving meals in its usual manner, but our School Nutrition Department was able to step in and assist – with help from a meal-sealing machine.

During the week of Thanksgiving, Mrs. Amanda Ponchot, School Nutrition Director, and her team put together individual Thanksgiving meals, safely sealed them, and provided the meals as a catering service for Manna Mission to distribute. We were grateful for the opportunity to partner with a valued community organization.

FOOD SUPPORT FOR DISTRICT FAMILIES

Take-home meals available every Friday

The School Nutrition Department is distributing carry-out meals to curb the cost of feeding children while they learn at home. These meals are available for students whether they are back in school part-time on the hybrid schedule or remaining full-time virtual.

Visit the district website at erlanger.kyschools.us or our Facebook page at facebook.com/erlangerelsmere for the latest schedule. If you have any questions regarding meal pick up, please call 859.342.4690 or email meal@erlanger.kyschools.us

Food pantry remains available

The Erlanger-Elsmere School District continues to operate two food pantries, open to all families of students in the district.

Located at Arnett Elementary and Tichenor Middle School, the food pantries are open twice a month and have minimal conditions for use. To keep things simple, the only requirement is that a student living in the household is enrolled in our district. Visitors to the food pantry complete a simple form consisting of just names of people living in the home. That's it! Plus, families can visit any time; there is no maximum number of visits.

As a bonus, the pantries are "choice" food pantries, meaning families can choose the food items they prefer, decreasing food waste and increasing the benefit!

Food is available through a partnership with the Freestore Foodbank.

NEED MORE INFORMATION? PLEASE CONTACT:

Mrs. Tracy Molley | 859.342.2351

Ms. Amber Evans | 859.342.2426



Learning in a pandemic

As we continue to navigate the unique circumstances of this global pandemic, we have been so proud of the cooperation, collaboration, support, and patience of all Erlanger-Elsmere Schools' staff, students, families, and community members.



In accordance with Gov. Andy Beshear's recommendation, we began the school year with virtual learning for all Erlanger-Elsmere students. With more time to prepare, this fall's virtual learning looked different from the non-traditional instruction (NTI) implemented from March through May. We aimed to make virtual learning a structured, teacher-led daily online model that engaged students in hands-on learning.



Many of our schools prepared learning kits, supplies, and other necessary items and distributed them to students at celebratory "reverse parades" to mark the unusual start to the school year. Throughout our weeks of 100% virtual learning, our teachers continued to find innovative ways to serve our students.

By early October, we were excited to safely welcome students back to the classroom as we began our hybrid model of in-person learning for kindergarten through 12th

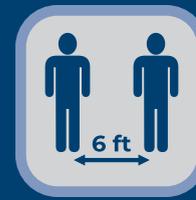
grade. In the hybrid model, students are separated into A/B groups. Students in the "A" group attend school in-person on Monday and Tuesday, while "B" groupers go in on Wednesday and Thursday. When not in the classroom, students participate in virtual learning. All students participate in virtual learning on Friday, giving teachers time to follow up, prepare, and regroup for the unprecedented task of simultaneously teaching students virtually and in person.

Just before Thanksgiving, we returned to 100% virtual instruction, in accordance with Gov. Beshear's Executive Order.

We are constantly evaluating the Kenton County incidence rate map against the latest state recommendations and restrictions to determine how to best and most safely serve our students.



Our staff, students, and families have worked diligently to implement new schedules, adapt to virtual learning, and follow health and safety requirements. We could not be more grateful for their efforts.



► SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing helps us ensure we don't have too many people in close contact with each other. When in school, we've had to reconfigure the ways we do a lot of things from school entry and basic instruction to bus transportation, meal times, and a number of our other daily activities.



► CLOTH FACE MASKS

Our students, faculty members and staff wear face masks, unless, of course, they're medically exempt from having to do so. Without a vaccine or clear course of treatment for COVID-19, masks are currently our best line of defense.



► HEALTH SCREENINGS

Anyone entering one of our school buildings first undergoes a quick health screening to ensure they're not exhibiting any key symptoms of COVID-19. The screening includes a touchless temperature check and a few basic questions.



► SANITATION STANDARDS

We are placing a strong emphasis on personal hygiene – including proper hand washing and the best ways to cover a cough or sneeze. Our school facilities are cleaned and disinfected regularly, with a priority on high-touch and high-contact areas.

We will depend on the continued cooperation, collaboration, support, and patience of all Erlanger-Elsmere Schools' staff, students, and families in order to remain successful in our fight against coronavirus.

We encourage everyone to follow the proven steps to defeat COVID-19. Together we can meet this challenge, keep each other safe and healthy, keep our schools open, and reach our ultimate goal of returning to a daily schedule of instruction for all students.



A good neighbor: Erlanger Baptist Church

It's no secret that the interruption to our typical school schedule is difficult – particularly for working families. As our district adjusted our instruction model to adapt to the pandemic, Erlanger Baptist Church recognized a need in our community for a safe, supervised place for students to go on days they wouldn't be learning in the school building.

The church quickly got to work, and earlier this fall very generously opened its doors to students from Erlanger-Elsmere Schools.

Volunteers are staffing rooms at the church several days a week to offer an organized environment for families that might need a space for their students to safely and efficiently complete their schoolwork during their "out of school days."

Students are separated into groups by age; elementary school students follow a more structured schedule, while middle and high schoolers experience a more flexible model of support.



For the students who benefit, it is a little piece of stability in our ever-changing world. It gives students a place to learn and receive support. Logistically, it provides reliable internet access, lunch, and plenty of room to spread out to do work.

"We're motivated to live out loving our neighbors... and our location is perfect, we're in the heart of Erlanger and Elsmere," said Ms.

Diane Brown with Erlanger Baptist. "We have a thriving children's program, we already run two schools, and we have a really big facility. Picking up more students seemed like a natural thing for us to do. We are happy to engage with our community in a deeper way to meet this essential need."

Beyond learning, students get support and encouragement from caring adults, safe socialization, and the opportunity to participate in enrichment activities Erlanger Baptist offers. This seemingly simple outreach makes a big difference for families with working parents who have struggled with what to do with their children when they're unable to learn in school.

"We know that this school year has presented many challenges to the families in our district," said Mr. Chad Molley, Superintendent. "The support of good neighbors like Erlanger Baptist is invaluable to our community, and we couldn't be more grateful."

For more information about Erlanger Baptist's School-Aged classrooms and their other outreach, visit erlangerbaptist.org



Unsung Heroes

Community caregivers provide support in time of need



As much of the world was locking down, caregivers in our community's childcare centers, daycares, preschools, and learning centers were ramping up. In the time since the coronavirus pandemic took hold, businesses and organizations that care for our community's youngest members have adjusted schedules, implemented difficult safety mandates, and found creative ways to deliver care in a tremendous effort to address the unique needs that have accompanied these unprecedented times.

What's more, directors, teachers, staff, and caregivers have put aside health threats and personal challenges in order to support our working families. They have become unsung heroes of this pandemic – providing safe, enriching care for young and vulnerable members of our community during a time of great need. Because we know such critical brain development occurs in a child's early years, their commitment is truly an investment in the brighter future of Erlanger and Elsmere.

We are so grateful for the unwavering support of our community's caregivers.

- Bright Future Child Enrichment
- Building Block Early Learning Center
- Early Head Start
- Erlanger-Elsmere Schools Preschool
- Grace Edgett
- Head Start NKCAC Elsmere
- Kindercare Erlanger
- learning grove Lloyd
- Sonlight Preschool
- St. Henry Preschool
- The Kidz Club



Heroes needed!

This has been a challenging time for childcare providers. Many in our area are in need of loving caregivers who enjoy working with children to meet increasing demands. Does this describe you? Please contact Mrs. Amy Cooley, Early Childhood Community Connector for Erlanger-Elsmere Schools, at amy.cooley@erlanger.kyschools.us.

Digital Equity Initiative gets students connected

Nearly 250 students in our school district who previously did not have internet access are now connected – thanks to the Northern Kentucky Digital Equity Initiative.

While access to the internet is unquestionably useful for families with school-aged students regardless of the circumstances, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the importance of a reliable connection in today's world. As learning moved outside of the classroom last spring, many students found themselves unable to participate in virtual learning.

Amanda Greenwell, director of United Way's Northern Kentucky Area Center, said approximately 10 percent of the 60,000 K-12 students in Northern Kentucky lack internet service at home. This digital inequity creates unequal access to information, technology, and opportunities to learn – which further widens well-documented achievement gaps.



The United Way recognized the need to bridge the digital divide created between students with home internet access and those without. Through a partnership with Cincinnati Bell and with the support of generous donations from area businesses and organizations, the United Way is facilitating affordable high-speed internet access for families in need. Initial funding partners included the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Horizon Community Funds, and RC Durr; more recently Atkins and Pearce, the Cincinnati Bengals, and Erlanger-based Perfetti Van Melle have generously provided financial support.

“Virtual learning presents a unique set of challenges to any family, but a lack of reliable internet access makes things especially difficult, right out of the gate,” said Mrs. Stefanie Stubblefield, the district's Instructional Coordinator for Technology. “The United Way's NKY

“It is critical that all students in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky have access to education – which means that all students must also have access to the internet to participate in remote learning,” said Leigh Fox, President and CEO of Cincinnati Bell. “We have invested over \$1 billion to build out our fiber network – but that investment means nothing if students can't access the internet for school. We are proud to be part of this program and to be working with so many great organizations and individuals on this effort.”



Representatives of Perfetti Van Melle present a check for \$10,000 to the United Way of Greater Cincinnati on Tuesday, September 22 for the Digital Equity Project for NKY schools as part of Community Day 2020.

Digital Equity Initiative has been invaluable, allowing more students to engage in a rich digital learning experience by providing affordable, high-quality internet access to nearly 200 households in our district. We are so grateful for this layer of community support and the essential role it's playing during these unique circumstances.”



Help students connect

The United Way has worked with multiple funders and Cincinnati Bell to extend access to nearly 1,500 students in Kenton, Boone, Campbell, Pendleton, and Grant counties. **Those who want to support the effort can text “NKYWIFI” to 71777.**

A \$78 donation connects a household for six months of service at \$12.99 a month.

Home Internet:

The keys to a safe, secure, and productive experience



Home networks have recently become the technology centerpiece of work, teaching and learning, and more. The Kentucky Department of Education released some tips to help ensure your household devices can connect to the virtual world safely, efficiently, and effectively.

WiFi STRENGTH

A strong WiFi signal enhances your family's internet experience.

- Place your WiFi device in the middle of your home, in an elevated location.
- Sit in the same room as your WiFi device.
- Turn off video when possible.
- Check your speeds to see your internet strength. Try testing it with different devices running.

WiFi SECURITY

Secure WiFi protects your family from external interruption and threats.

- Use strong passwords.
- Be cautious of emails and attachments.
- Be mindful of what you download and install.
- Maintain regular updates.
- Use up-to-date security software.
- Change the default password on any device that uses or provides WiFi.

Honoring Mrs. Amanda Ponchot

Mrs. Amanda Ponchot, School Nutrition Director for Erlanger-Elsmere Schools, was recently named a Kentucky Colonel by Governor Andy Beshear for her leadership efforts in feeding the children of Erlanger and Elsmere during the coronavirus pandemic.



Mrs. Ponchot was nominated by Officer Joel Shepherd, a School Resource Officer with the Erlanger Police Department.

From Officer Shepherd's nomination...

Many people do not realize that school is not just about education, but for so many children, it is their next meal. School is a foundation in their lives that sustains their very existence. No one understands more the imperative need for a learning child to have a full belly than Amanda Ponchot.

During the early days of the pandemic, Mrs. Ponchot was tasked with providing take-home meals to children throughout the district. This was no ordinary school lunch, but three meals a day for each child – with some families receiving close to 100 meals per week. For some this would be an overwhelming, daunting task. But for Mrs. Ponchot and her team, it was just what they do for our children: provide meals so no one goes hungry.

Through those early months, I worked with Mrs. Ponchot to build routes for food delivery. I was astounded by how many meals she was preparing for delivery daily and weekly. I believe that her heart for children, her belief in the district's mission, and her leadership in the storm compelled her to rise to the occasion and feed our children.

Mrs. Ponchot is a valuable member of our Erlanger-Elsmere district family and thanks to the signature of Governor Andy Beshear, she is now recognized for her generosity and commitment as a Kentucky Colonel. She truly embodies the spirit of the Commonwealth – where everyone works together to help each other rise together.

The commission of Kentucky Colonel is the highest title of honor bestowed by the Governor of Kentucky. It is recognition of an individual's noteworthy accomplishments and outstanding service to our community, state, and nation.

Athletics Updates

Our middle and high school fall sports teams were authorized to enter practice and competition in September. To do so under the Kentucky High School Athletic Association's Healthy at Sports guidelines designed to keep athletes, coaches, and fans safe during COVID-19 has required significant support and cooperation from all involved.

It comes as no surprise that our athletics community has risen to the many challenges we've faced during these most unusual circumstances.

Groups of parents supporting the district's football, volleyball, and cross country teams helped out tremendously during the season with providing sideline water, administering temperature checks, providing stadium decorations, organizing safe senior night festivities, coordinating life-stream of games, and transporting athletes to away games and meets.



"Overall the group effort from coaches, parents, and staff during Fall Sports is what makes our Erlanger-Elsmere community as strong as it is," said Mr. Bill Pilgram, Athletic Director. "The students were at the forefront of every decision we made, and as a result our parents and student-athletes helped make the season a success!"



"I would like to thank all of the student-athletes, coaches, families, and fans for supporting our athletes this fall," Mr. Pilgram added. "Thank you for wearing masks at games, completing screening forms, undergoing temperature checks, and transporting your student-athletes to our games on the road. We truly appreciate all your efforts!"

Juggernauts playing college sports

Three members of the Class of 2020 are continuing their academic and athletic pursuits in college this year.

Hunter Belville is running cross country and track at Wilmington College.

Dylan Compton is playing baseball at Kentucky State.

Jayla Labordeaux is playing basketball at Pensacola State College!

Best of luck in your new pursuits. You make us proud!

Around the district...

STEM... after school!

Our elementary schools continued to offer after-school programs when our schools offered in-person instruction... and many of those fun activities focused on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math)! For example, during October, groups explored pumpkins by hitting, decorating, counting, and discussing a pumpkin's life cycle.



The Science Gals featured in newsletter



Arnett Elementary School's Arts Integration Team was showcased in the recent Northern Kentucky Arts Institution newsletter for their video series, *The Science Gals*.

The Science Gals – also known as Ms. Kimberly Rockwell and Ms. Rebecca Nooe, teachers at Arnett – explore various science topics and are particularly interested in integrating arts and science. In a recent episode, they explored sound energy by delving into how sound works in various musical instruments!

Congratulations, Dr. Neaves!

Congratulations to Ryan Neaves, teacher and makerspace coordinator at Tichenor Middle School, on earning his Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of the Cumberlands.

“My career aspirations and personal achievements have become inextricably linked with the Erlanger-Elsmere Schools,” Dr. Neaves said. “I’ve been afforded many opportunities to diversify myself both as a teacher and leader while working to enhance the learning environment for all members of our educational community.”



Schools honor our nation's veterans



Many of our schools have long-standing traditions for celebrating our nation's heroes on Veteran's Day. Pandemic life altered some of the usual plans, but our schools did not give up on their commitment to learning about and honoring the sacrifices of those who have served our country. Instead, teachers and students came together to create special tribute videos for virtual celebrations of those who have served in the military.

Howell students strive to be virtually perfect



At Howell Elementary, students have earned rewards for being “Virtually Perfect.”

In response to beginning the school year with virtual instruction, Howell's counselors, Mr. Craig Dollins and Mrs. Sherry Ryle implemented “Virtually Perfect,” an incentive program designed to keep students engaged and excited about learning while outside the classroom. Howell students worked hard, accumulating points for daily tasks to earn a highly-coveted “Virtually Perfect” t-shirt!

“Great work, Howell-agators,” Mrs. Ryle said. “It's so fun to see everyone in their cool t-shirts!”



Crusing Right Along: The Annual Chelsea Ryann Festival of Hope

Things looked a little bit different this year, but that did not stop the fifth annual Chelsea Ryann Festival of Hope, a fundraiser to support mental health and suicide prevention.

Organized by the Westwood family in honor of their daughter Chelsea, whom they lost to suicide when she was a student at Lloyd, this year's event was a drive-thru experience for the whole family!

The Westwoods' efforts raised significant funding which will be put to work to help students at Lloyd who are searching for hope while dealing with mental health issues.



Community Updates

What's happening in Erlanger and Elsmere?

IN THE CITY OF ERLANGER...

Mr. Dale Wilson, a 20-year veteran of the Erlanger Public Works, recently retired from his position as the department's Operations Director.

Mr. Wilson joined the team as a maintenance tech, working his way up to the position of Operations Manager, where he managed a crew of 10 people whose duties include cutting grass, removing snow, leaf collection, street maintenance, and other maintenance and public-works jobs in the city.



Ms. Emi Randall has joined the City of Erlanger as Economic Development Director.

In the position, Ms. Randall will provide assistance to existing and potential new businesses within the City of Erlanger by answering questions and providing assistance with business locations, zoning, incentives, infrastructure, relationships, and more.

With over 15 years of professional experience in community development and planning, Ms. Randall is a skilled project manager, strategic planner and team collaborator. Prior to joining the City of Erlanger, she most recently served as the Director of Planning and Zoning Administration at PDS of Kenton County.



Mayor Fette swears in firefighters

Erlanger Mayor Jessica Fette swore in three new firefighters and two firefighters for promotion at a recent ceremony at the City Building. Please join us in congratulating Erlanger's finest:

James Blom
Promotion, Shift Lieutenant

Brad Foley
New Hire, Firefighter/Paramedic

Tom Herman
New Hire, Firefighter/EMT

Sam Krugel
New Hire, Firefighter/EMT

Randy McMullen
Promotion, Shift Captain



We are grateful for your public service.

Elsmere breaks ground on new city building

The City of Elsmere recently broke ground on its new city building at 3225 Dixie Highway. Mayor Marty Lenhof was joined by city council members, City Administrator Matthew Dowling, engineer D. Scott Noel, and construction workers for the occasion.

The new building will have 15,500 square feet of space – more than twice the size of the current building – and will house the council chambers, administrative offices, and the police department, bringing together the city administration and police department, which are currently separated by several blocks.

"It's been a long time coming," Mayor Lenhof said. "Now everyone will have a chance to do all their business at one place. This will be a one-stop shop."



The city looked at eight possible locations before deciding on the spot that was previously home to Elsmere Drugs. Use of the site required the removal of multiple buildings, but it provided a desirable location and the added bonus of ridding the city of blighted space.

The building was designed by D. Scott Noel from Summit Architectural Services of Lexington and will be built by Cincinnati's Graybach Construction. Construction is expected to be completed in January of 2022 at a cost of \$5.6 million.

Alumni Association holds Hall of Fame event

The Lloyd Memorial High School Alumni Association hosted their annual Hall of Fame event earlier this fall, streaming on Facebook and Zoom in support of student scholarships.

Alumni Hall of Fame Inductions included: Terry Collis, '57, Matt Westwood, '88, and John Tomlinson, '96. Irene McCracken was presented with the Distinguished Alumni Award.

Guest speaker Bronson Arroyo, retired pitcher for the Cincinnati Reds, shared stories about growing up in Florida, playing in Cincinnati, and winning a World Series with the Boston Red Sox. An accomplished musician, he shared some songs between his stories. A video is available on the Lloyd Alumni Facebook page.

Mark your calendar for the fourth Sunday in September for 2021's event!



Former Cincinnati Reds Pitcher Bronson Arroyo served as the guest speaker.

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500 Graves Avenue
Erlanger, KY 41018

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our vision

Erlanger-Elsmere Schools will provide essential opportunities for all students to reach their greatest potential.

our mission

It is the mission of the Erlanger-Elsmere Schools to embrace and attend to the individual needs of our students, regardless of the obstacles.



stay in touch

Visit us on the web: www.erlanger.kyschools.us
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Send your name and email address to:
engage@erlanger.kyschools.us

write to us at...

Engage, Erlanger-Elsmere Schools
500 Graves Avenue, Erlanger, KY 41018
or email: engage@erlanger.kyschools.us

Please let us know if you receive duplicate mailings of **engage**.

we like to hear from you!

Central Office.....	859.727.2009
Lloyd Memorial High School.....	859.727.1555
Tichenor Middle School.....	859.727.2255
Arnett Elementary.....	859.727.1488
Howell Elementary.....	859.727.1108
Lindeman Elementary.....	859.727.1188
Miles Elementary.....	859.727.2231
Bartlett Educational Center.....	859.342.2460
Erlanger-Elsmere Preschool.....	859.342.2427 or 859.727.2009

board of education

Robin Cooper • Rachel Faris • Sarah Meyer • Jeffrey Miller • Sarah Shackelford

The Erlanger-Elsmere Board of Education meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Central Office, 500 Graves Avenue, Erlanger.

central office administrators

Chad Molley, Superintendent • Matt Engel, Assistant Superintendent
Chris Klosinski, Director of Special Education
Shawn Neace, Director of Pupil Personnel
Laura Deters, Chief Information Officer • Lisa Goetz, Finance Director
Michael Goodenough, Director of District-Wide Programs
Stefanie Stubblefield, Instructional Coordinator - Technology
Al Poweleit, Instructional Coordinator - Student Services • Donna Schulte, Preschool Director

Erlanger-Elsmere Schools

LLOYD MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL • TICHENOR MIDDLE SCHOOL
ARNETT ELEMENTARY • HOWELL ELEMENTARY • LINDEMAN ELEMENTARY
MILES ELEMENTARY • BARTLETT EDUCATIONAL CENTER