

Later this week, you'll receive the next edition of Lakota's printed community newsletter, "Inside Your Schools." At a cost of just 19 cents to produce and mail each piece, we deliver this to every single household and business in West Chester and Liberty townships three or four times a year.

The vast majority of our community doesn't currently have kids attending Lakota – and therefore don't visit our website or receive our electronic communications at nearly the rate our parents do. We take seriously our obligation to keep *all* of our stakeholders informed about what's going on in our schools, which is why we consider this piece such a valuable and necessary tool of accountability.

Speaking of value, this next edition revolves around Lakota's focus on providing a great value to our community. In recent years, we've made strong financial and academic strides to create great opportunities for students.

One such opportunity you'll read about is Lakota's new Career Readiness Academy. The alternative high school program was introduced as an option to both Lakota East and Lakota West students this year. Its flexible format combines online learning with a smaller classroom setting with more one-on-one support. It allows students to self-pace their education, according to their own personal circumstances, career goals, or learning styles.

The whole concept embodies the personalized experience we aim to deliver to each and every student to help them achieve their own definition of success. In a very short time, it's yielded some pretty impressive success stories you can read more about.

The Academy is just one example of how we've not only been able to meet the levy promises from 2013, but how we've exceeded them and restored important programs for students, too. The fiscal stability that has made that possible is another area presented in the newsletter by our treasurer, Jenni Logan.

She explains how over the last few years, Lakota has made significant changes to the way we operate our schools – all to provide greater student opportunities while also restoring a stable financial outlook for our future. Our commitment to maintaining a balanced budget shows through figures like \$13.8 million, which is how much less we spent last year, as compared to 2010.

It also shows in our follow-through with the levy commitments made back in November 2013, when this community approved the last ballot issue. The newsletter chronicles just some of the commitments we've delivered beyond the original scope. It's all evidence of the greater student opportunities made possible by changing the way we operate our schools. All of this contributes to our commitment to live within our means and prolong Lakota's levy cycle as long as possible.

As always, community engagement is another pillar of our work you'll find is part of almost every conversation and communication piece we put out. We recognize the integral role our community plays in the success of our students, which is why we introduce programs like our community fanfares for Lakota students. You can learn more about this in the next edition or on our website in the "Community" section.

*Robb Vogelmann is the acting superintendent for Lakota Local Schools.*

