



EAST HOLMES LOCAL SCHOOLS DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026



Congratulations

TO THE CLASS OF

2026



UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 7 Labor Day (No School)
- 22 Early Dismissal (2 Hours)

OCTOBER

- 15 End of 1st Nine Weeks (Hiland)
Early Dismissal (2 Hours)
- 16 District In-Service (No School for Students)
- 23 Report Cards Sent Home (Hiland)

NOVEMBER

- 2 & 5 P/T Conferences Hiland (Evening)
- 6 P/T Conferences Hiland 7-8 (Day)
No School 7-8
End of 1st Trimester (Elementary K-8)
- 16 Report Cards Sent Home (Elementary)
- 16 & 19 P/T Conferences Elementary (Evening)
- 20 P/T Conferences Elementary (Day)
No School All Elementary
- 25 Early Dismissal (2 Hours)
- 26-27 Thanksgiving Break (No School)
- 30 Conference Comp Time (No School)

MISSION

Inspiring excellence to prepare students in becoming productive and responsible citizens through a partnership of exceptional leadership, dedicated staff, and a supportive community.

INSPIRE. PREPARE. CHALLENGE.

eastholmes.org

Safety Enhancements Continue Across East Holmes Local Schools

The safety of students and staff at East Holmes Local Schools remains our highest priority. As shared in previous newsletters, we have spent the past year strengthening our safety and security measures, building on existing practices and equipping students and staff with the tools, training, and resources needed to respond confidently in any situation.

Throughout the summer, the district completed several important security improvements. Entry door access systems were upgraded at every building, new and repaired fencing was installed at our elementary schools to fully enclose playgrounds, and privacy screening was added in high-traffic areas. We also completed a districtwide upgrade to our security camera systems, providing staff with clearer, more accessible monitoring of our buildings and grounds.

This school year, every building will implement the Standard Response Protocol (SRP), developed by the I Love U Guys Foundation. The protocol establishes consistent, easy-to-understand actions for emergencies such as lockdowns, evacuations, and shelter situations. Using a common language across all schools helps students, staff, and first responders respond quickly and effectively. Families will begin seeing this terminology in district communications, and a parent guide will be available to help reinforce these concepts at home.

Later this fall, staff members will begin using a new wearable emergency alert system that allows for immediate emergency notification and lockdown activation. The system also provides first responders with digital building maps, giving them faster access to critical information during an emergency. Installation is expected to be completed in late September or early October.

Creating safe, secure, and welcoming schools requires ongoing attention and improvement. We are grateful for the continued partnership of our families, staff, and community as we work together to provide the safest possible learning environment for every student.

Phase Two of Classroom Renovations Complete at Berlin, Hiland, and Chestnut Ridge

This summer, East Holmes Local Schools completed the second stage of its Phased Classroom Renovation Project, bringing refreshed learning spaces to Berlin, Hiland, and Chestnut Ridge.

East Holmes' small, close-knit school communities are an important part of what makes the district unique. This summer's work is one more step toward making sure those communities continue to thrive for years to come.

As you may have seen in our summer updates, these projects moved from demolition and site preparation in the early weeks to finishing touches as the school year approached, including new furniture, lighting, and flooring, giving staff time to settle into their updated spaces before welcoming students back.

This phase of renovations was made possible through funds the district set aside in advance, meaning these improvements happened without asking the community to approve a new ballot measure. That kind of long-term financial planning has allowed the district to invest in its facilities while remaining thoughtful stewards of community resources.

Looking ahead, the district will turn its attention to the next stage of the multi-year renovation project, with plans to bring similar updates to additional East Holmes buildings in the coming summers.

The district is grateful to the families, staff, and community members for their patience and support throughout the construction process. Updated classrooms are now ready to serve students at Berlin, Hiland, and Chestnut Ridge for years to come.



Berlin Elementary



Hiland High and Middle School



Chestnut Ridge Elementary

Welcoming New Staff to East Holmes Local Schools!

Maia Bagnato, Kindergarten Teacher, Flat Ridge

Lucas Clark, 8th Grade ELA, Hiland

Janet Crilow, Paraprofessional, Berlin

Morgan Crites, First Grade Teacher, Winesburg

Jaimie Davis, Intermediate Teacher, Wise

Jeremy Gerber, Custodian

Stephanie Lawson, Custodian

Gracelyn Mathias, Title I Teacher, Mt. Hope

Ryan McVicker, 5-8th Grade Social Studies, Chestnut Ridge

Garrett Miller, Elementary PE, Berlin/Chestnut Ridge

Silas Miller, Intervention Specialist, Hiland

Sydney Miller, School Secretary, Walnut Creek

Kayla Nofsinger, General Teacher, Walnut Creek/Winesburg

Sarah Smith, Intervention Specialist, Berlin

Charles Sours, Intervention Specialist, Berlin

Kari Sparling, Biology Teacher, Hiland

Lance Swartzentruber, Elementary PE

Kirstyn Thut, 4-6th Grade Science & Social Studies, Winesburg

Jamie Wellert, Paraprofessional, Chestnut Ridge

TJ Yerian, Bus Driver

Alan Yoder, Bus Driver

Paul Zacour, Social Studies Teacher, Hiland

East Holmes Local Schools Receives Auditor of State Award

East Holmes Local Schools is proud to receive the Auditor of State Award for the fourth time! This distinction is made possible through the hard work of our Treasurer's Office, Superintendent's Office, administration, secretaries, and Board of Education. This recognition highlights our continued dedication to strong financial management, communication, and accountability.

The Auditor of State Award recognizes Ohio public entities that demonstrate excellence during their annual audits. Earning this recognition requires submitting the audit report on time without extensions, along with a clean audit free of findings, material weaknesses, or significant noncompliance. Receiving this award reflects the value of a coordinated, responsible approach to managing public funds.

East Holmes remains committed to upholding the standards of integrity and responsibility that made this achievement possible. Congratulations and thank you to Accounts Payable Specialist Heather Lehman, Assistant Treasurer Ruby Shoup, and Treasurer Daniel Reiman for their hard work and dedication!



Meet Michelle Sauernheimer, East Holmes' New Instructional Coach

East Holmes Local Schools is proud to introduce Michelle Sauernheimer, the district's new Instructional Coach.

One of the greatest assets of East Holmes Local Schools is our teachers, and as a district, we are committed to providing ongoing professional development and support. As our district's instructional coach, Michelle will work side by side with teachers throughout the year, observing lessons, offering practical feedback, and helping refine teaching strategies in real time. Traditionally, professional development for teachers happens in training sessions and workshops, away from the classroom and without the ability to adjust, adapt, or ask follow-up questions. Instead, Michelle's role offers a different model with emphasis on sustained, classroom-embedded support.

Importantly, an instructional coach is entirely separate from teacher evaluations. Michelle's focus is collaboration and growth, working alongside teachers as a trusted partner, not an evaluator, so that every classroom benefits from strong, evidence-based instruction.

Families can expect to see Michelle around the buildings often. She'll be a familiar, friendly presence in classrooms and hallways across the district, building relationships with teachers and getting to know our students and school communities along the way.

Please join us in giving Michelle a warm welcome as she settles into her new role this school year.

"The most valuable resource that all teachers have is each other; without collaboration our growth is limited by our own perspectives."

- MICHELLE SAUERNHEIMER

East Holmes Celebrates Class of 2026 at Academic Awards Ceremony

On May 9, Hiland High School celebrated the Class of 2026 at the Academic Awards Ceremony held at the Carlisle Inn in Walnut Creek. A total of 47 seniors were recognized for earning a GPA of 3.5 or higher during the 2025–2026 school year, and 16 of those students maintained that GPA throughout their entire high school career. The evening also highlighted the community's tremendous support, as the Hiland Academic Boosters and the Holmes County Foundation awarded more than \$260,000 in renewable scholarships to help graduates pursue their educational goals beyond Hiland.

Moving forward, the organization and administration of local scholarship opportunities will look a little different, as the Holmes County Foundation will take the lead in managing many of these scholarship funds. This transition will maximize opportunities for Hiland students while giving businesses, families, and community members the option to create long-term, sustainable scholarship investments and lasting legacies. The Hiland Academic Boosters remain fully committed to supporting Hiland students in the classroom and beyond graduation, and look forward to continuing their partnership to help students achieve their goals.



Superintendent's Message



Welcome back, East Holmes!

It has been wonderful to see our hallways buzzing with students once again as we begin another exciting school year. Our students fill classrooms with energy,

curiosity, and a sense of possibility, and I am excited to see them grow this year.

This summer marked another exciting milestone in our multi-year Classroom Refresh Project. Students and staff at Berlin, Chestnut Ridge, and Hiland returned to refreshed learning spaces as part of our continued investment in existing school facilities. Following successful renovations at Mt. Hope and Winesburg last summer, work will continue next year at Walnut Creek, Flat Ridge, and Wise, with final updates to Hiland, as we move toward completing the project in 2028. We are also beginning to plan the next phase of our capital improvements by exploring long-term solutions to replace our modular classrooms.

Providing safe, welcoming schools remains one of our highest priorities. In this newsletter, you'll learn about several new safety and security enhancements, including Standard Response Protocol, upgraded security cameras, wearable emergency buttons for staff, improved main entrance access controls, and exterior fencing improvements.

At East Holmes, our staff is deeply committed to making a lasting difference in the lives of our students. This year, we are embracing the theme "Be the One. Inspire. Prepare. Challenge." This call to action encourages every staff member to lead by example and make a positive impact on students. Whether it's offering encouragement, building confidence, providing support, or inspiring a new passion, each of us has the opportunity to "be the one" who helps prepare a student for a bright future.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support. Together, we'll make the 2026-2027 school year another outstanding one for East Holmes students.

Warm regards,

Erik Beun
Superintendent



Board of Education

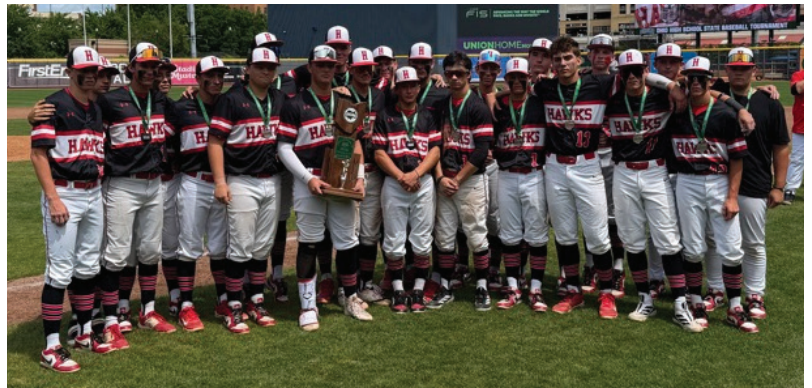
The Board is composed of five elected citizens and meets in regular session on the third Friday of each month unless otherwise noted. Meetings are held at the East Holmes Administration Office and begin at 7:30 am. The public is invited to attend.

Board Members

Bryan Coblentz, President
Steve Miller, Vice President
Julia Ann Klink
Bryce Troyer
Wendyl Swartzentruber

Meeting Dates

September 18, 2026
October 16, 2026
November 20, 2026
December 18, 2026



Congratulations, Hiland Hawks Baseball!

The Hiland Hawks baseball team finished as District Champions and the Division VI State Runner-Up. Congratulations on an amazing season!

Say Something Anonymous Reporting System

East Holmes Local School District utilizes the "Say Something" Anonymous Reporting System (ARS) in partnership with Sandy Hook Promise, a national leader in school safety programs. This initiative is part of East Holmes' ongoing commitment to creating a safer, more supportive environment for all students, educators, and community members.

The Say Something ARS program is designed to educate students and staff on how to identify warning signs and threats, whether online or in person, and respond effectively. Through this program, students learn to recognize at-risk behaviors in their peers, take them seriously, and act promptly. They can choose to talk to a trusted adult or report concerns anonymously via the Say Something ARS mobile app, website, or a 24/7/365 crisis hotline.

