



APRIL 2025

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PURPLE PRIDE

East Knox Local School District From the Superintendent

Greetings,

We are already gearing up for the 2025 - 2026 school year with hard work and excitement at East Knox Local Schools. Students are thinking about their schedules and activities for the upcoming school year as we are working on staffing, future learning, and facilities.

East Knox Elementary School just completed a very impressive instructional material review to purchase materials for English/Language Arts in our classrooms. We look forward to a productive Science of Reading implementation process.

To better serve the needs that match the skills, aptitudes, and interests of our students, at the Junior Senior High School, we will be adding semester courses in the seventh and eighth grade in Career Connections and Computer Applications. We will also be offering courses around Engineering and Robotics for our seventh and eighth grade students that we hope to build interest for a more robust, comprehensive Engineering Pathway for our high school students in the future.

As we finish the school year, we will be using the YouScience program to survey the interests and aptitudes of the students to give them direction as they explore a more personalized approach to their future coursework. This process will also help us look at the best options for course offerings and career pathways in the future. All of this will help engage our students and their families in their learning.

Mr. Cody Reese has accepted the superintendent position at Clear Fork Valley Local Schools, and we will be posting that position. Congratulations to Mr. Reese. In addition to Junior Senior High School Principal, we will also be posting two fifth grade teaching positions, an intervention specialist position, and a gifted specialist position.

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Elementary (K-6 grades)

23081 Coshocton Road
Howard OH 43028
Phone: 740-599-7000

Mrs. Melissa Moreland, Principal
Mr. David Coleman, Assistant Principal
Mrs. Amanda Wilson, Building Secretary,
X3002
Mrs. Krista Reese, Secretary/Aide X3003

Jr./Sr. High School (7-12 grades)

23227 Coshocton Road
Howard OH 43028
Phone: 740-599-7000

Mr. Cody Reese, Principal
Mr. Scott Brickner, Asst. Principal/A.D.
Mrs. Fawnda Stahl, Building Secretary, x2002
Mrs. Marjorie Williams, Attendance/Athletic Secretary,
x2003
Mrs. Tara Scarazza, Guidance Counselor, x2008
Mrs. Alicia Simmons, Guidance Secretary, x2004

Dr. Ben Snedeker, Director of Student Services/Spec. Ed.
Coord., x1008
Ms. Kathleen Herrmann, Student Services/Spec. Ed.
Secretary x1088

School District Nurses x2006 or x3006

Transportation Supervisor
Ms. Angela Wells, x1016

East Knox Board Office

23201 Coshocton Road
Howard, Ohio 43028

Mr. Richard Baird, Superintendent
Mrs. Jessica Busenburg, CPA, Treasurer
Mrs. Tracy Beckett, Assist. Treasurer
Mrs. Kim Grindle, Superintendent Secretary
740-599-7000 x1002

East Knox Board Members

Lindsay Bush-President
Randy Reese-Vice President
Larry Campbell
Alan Huffman
Kathy Tate

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news
to the resi-
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East Knox
Local School
District*



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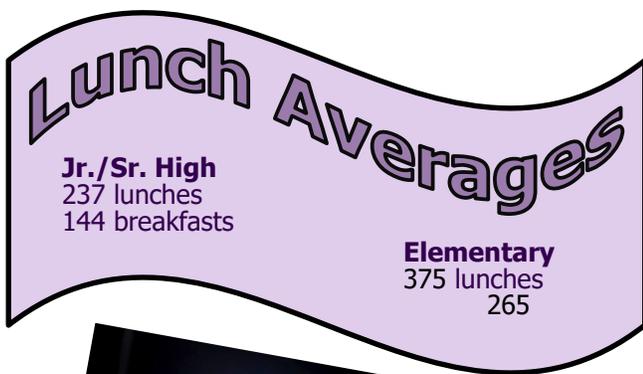
Report concerns for student safety

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We are also in the midst of our Strategic Planning Process facilitated by the Ohio School Boards Association. We have over 25 core team members involved in the process including community members, local businesses, parents, staff, and students. We are currently developing our mission, vision, and core beliefs that stand for East Knox. We are proud of the input from our team, and just some words to describe where we are and where we want to be are: **community, preparation, support, life-long learner, opportunity, communication, safety, transportation, and heart.**

East Knox is a great place, we thank our community for your firm support and partnership.

Sincerely,
Richard J. Baird, Superintendent



This is a picture from the county spelling bee in Mt. Vernon that took place on Wednesday, January 15th. **Callie May, 7th grade**, took home second place out of 18 participants. All of our East Knox Students in grades 5-8 did a fantastic job and represented East Knox very well!

Essay Contest Students Move on to District

Mount Vernon Elks Lodge presented an Essay Contest, to all the Knox County Schools, on the topic of **“What Does Patriotism Mean to Me?”** Three essays from East Knox 6th grade students were chosen as the best 3 6th-Grade essays for countywide and will move on to the District Competition.

The three students, **Maria Scarazza, Makenzie Flowers, and Ave Hoobler**, attended the March 13th Board of Education meeting to read their winning essays to the board and community.

Best of luck to these 3 students.

Picture: Maria Scarazza reading her essay at the Board of Education Meeting.



BANDS OF PRIDE

The EAST KNOX BANDS OF PRIDE are having a great year of change and growth. Brian W. Dodd has come out of retirement and returned to East Knox to lead our bands, a position he held from 1985 till 1999. The bands have returned to the nickname **“BAND OF PRIDE”** and the belief that this is more than just a name, it is a core set of beliefs and ethics. Our Marching Band has returned to their show-band style of high energy music combined with movement and dance. This year our band performed at all football games, Mount Vernon Band Festival, Ashland University Band Festival, several Pep Rallies, East Knox Opening Day Staff Breakfast, Apple Valley Family Palooza, Bladensburg Christmas Parade, East Knox Veterans Day Assembly, Devil Dog Parade & Bonfire and other community and school events. The band also traveled to Cedar Point in October.

This year has also seen the return of our Pep Band after several years absent. The band performed at several basketball games and even hosted an Alumni Pep Band for one of the games. Next year, Mr. Dodd plans to host several more events to include EK band alumni to perform.

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The Band of Pride was also pleased that several members were selected as members of the Ohio Music Education Association District Ten Honor Bands. These students rehearsed and performed with students selected from over fifty schools in Central Ohio who performed in concert at Mount Vernon Nazarene University in December. Students selected for the Junior High Honor Band were: **Kierra Goheen**-Flute, **James Keith**-Alto Saxophone, and **Aubrey Francis**-Alto Saxophone. The High School Honor Band students selected were: **Hayden Priest**-Clarinet, and **Ryan Peck**-Alto Saxophone. Both of these students were selected as members of the 2024 All-Ohio State Fair Band this past Summer.

In December, our Jr./Sr. High School Band and Choir performed seasonal concerts showcasing their concert skills. Our younger bands continue to develop their musical skills and show their Bulldog Pride. Fifth and sixth grade bands have been rehearsing early mornings at the High School with Mr. Dodd. The students have shown wonderful growth throughout the year while having fun rehearsing and performing as two separate groups. We enjoy watching our students musical growth and look forward to watching what happens in our East Knox Music Program at all grade levels in the future.

On May 8th, all bands, grades 5-12 will be presenting their Spring Concert at 7pm in the high school gymnasium. This event will showcase our different grade level bands. The showcase will be combined with our wonderful Jr./Sr. High School Art Show, which will be presented in the cafeteria before and during the concert. The community is invited to come out and support a great night of Arts and Music, showcasing the talents from many of our students.



Preschool Times

In November our preschool students had the opportunity to visit the post office in Howard. We spent the month of November learning about thankfulness. During class we wrote our own "thank you" cards to people we are thankful for. Parent's helped to address the cards and then we were ready to mail them! We walked to the post office and we got to tour the building. Linda showed us how post office boxes work, where they sort mail, and where to put cards that are being mailed out. Each student got to place their envelope in the box to be sent to their loved one. We had a great time!

District Core Team Developing Strategic Plan

Submitted by: Mr. Larry Gibbs

East Knox Local Schools is working on a community-based strategic plan to help define the district's short- and longer-term goals.

Twenty-seven district residents and staff members accepted an invitation from Lindsay Bush, Board of Education President, to serve as strategic planning core team members.

The group met Feb. 25 at the elementary school for the first of four 2½-hour sessions scheduled through April. Cheryl Ryan of the Ohio School Boards Association and consultant Kristi Robbins moderated the meeting and set the stage for sessions on March 18, April 1 and April 22.

OSBA is facilitating the two-month planning process through a contract with the district.

"This strategic plan will build on current initiatives and assist the district in aligning its vision, mission and key goals," Bush said in a letter explaining the project. "We hope the process will be inclusive and highly effective, resulting in a solid and workable plan that will serve as a roadmap for decision-making, continued school improvement and student success over the next several years."

Much of the planning will center on the results of a recent survey about the district which generated 546 community responses.

"The Feb. 25 session was a great start to the strategic planning process," said Superintendent Richard Baird. "We look forward to sharing our planning results after the final meeting in April."

Participants in the initial strategic core planning meeting included:

Mikhailon Brady, HS Student
Julie Brodie, Kenyon College
Lindsay Bush, President, EK Board of Education
Merry Cassetto, AV Insurance Group, Community Partner
Ron Fannin, EK District Leadership Team
Brooke Fox, Elementary School Parent
Larry Gibbs, District Grandparent, Knox Educational Service Center
Jeff Gottke, President, Knox Area Development Foundation
Misty Hammond, PTO Junior/Senior High Representative
Alan Huffman, EK Board Member
Nathan Keirns, District Parent
Darcy Knight, President, Athletic Boosters
Lindsey Lamp, Director, New Directions
Melissa Moreland, EK Elementary Principal
Rebecca Nourse, PTO Elementary Representative
Jim Riggle, KCCC Principal, EK Junior-Senior High At-Large Parent
Sheri Ryals, EK District Leadership Team
Emily Scardena, Community Member
Ben Snedeker, EK Director of Student Services
Kailee Wallace, EK Elementary School
Bria Warner, EK District Leadership Team
Shawn Wears, EK Elementary Student
Audrey Williams, EK Elementary Student
Katrina Wobbecke, EK District Leadership Team
Chris Wolford, Howard Hilton, Community Partner
Tisha Melick, EK District Leadership Team
Treasurer, Jessica Busenburg
Superintendent Richard Baird



KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Registration for the 2025-26 school year is tentatively scheduled for **Tuesday, May 6th**, and **Wednesday, May 7th, 2025**, at the elementary building. If you have a child or know of a child within our district who will be **five years old on or before August 1, 2025**, please notify the elementary school. Registration packets will be sent to parents or guardians upon completion of the following form. The scheduled time for your child's screening will be mailed to you. **Please return this form by April 25, 2025.**

Child's name _____

Child's date of birth _____ Male ___ Female ___

Parent or guardian _____

Address _____

P.O. Box _____

City _____

Zip Code _____ Phone# _____

Email Parent/Guardian _____

Return this completed form by either mail: 23081 Coshocton Rd Howard Ohio 43028
fax: 740-599-6397 OR email: awilson@ekschools.org

Superintendent/Student Advisory Committee (SAC) collects donations as part of their committee project through-out the school year. SAC Donation collected. The student would like to thank the Dollar General Store in Howard and their customers for the donations making their project a success.



CONGRATULATIONS MR. HOLTON

Article submitted by: Mrs. Scarazza

Tom Holton, sole agricultural teacher and FFA advisor at East Knox Jr./High School, is one of 10 finalists in Ohio for the Golden Owl Award. The Golden Owl Award is sponsored by Nationwide, the Ohio FFA, Ohio Farm Bureau, Farm Credit Mid-America, and AgCredit. John Ball & Kari Ball of Nationwide Insurance Agency presented the plaque to Mr. Holton, while representatives from the other respective organizations attended the surprise assembly on Wednesday, February 19th to honor Tom Holton as the Ohio District 7 recipient of the Golden Owl Award. This is the second time in seven years that Tom Holton has received this honor. Nationwide takes pride in its agricultural heritage and unwavering support for the broader agricultural community, including the National FFA Organization and FFA chapters across the country. The Golden Owl Award extends their commitment by honoring agricultural educators who dedicate countless hours and often their own resources to enrich their students' lives.

Since its launch in 2018, the Golden Owl Award has grown from two states to 13, distributing nearly half a million dollars to bolster teachers, students, school agricultural programs and FFAs. Through this award, students, fellow educators, and supporters can nominate their favorite agricultural teacher, highlighting their exemplary contributions within their state.

Upon the announcement of receiving the Golden Owl Award, Mr. Holton made his way to the podium while receiving a standing ovation from students and school staff. Mr. Holton humbly accepted the award acknowledging his FFA students for their successes. Tom's teaching skill in the classroom is exemplified by 228 top ten Ohio CDE teams, 20 National, 16 Big E and 29 National Soil teams, 10 state speakers, 111 State Degrees, 54 American Degrees, 4 State Officers, 1 State FFA President and numerous other accomplishments. Generations of students respect and admire him, and he works tirelessly to provide them with opportunities in agriculture and learning. The overall state winner for Ohio will be announced at the FFA convention in May 2025.



Mr. Holton with Josie (Rine) Morningstar, EKHS 2009 graduate and former EKHS FFA student of Mr. Holton's who represented Farm Credit Mid-America at the surprise assembly honoring Mr. Holton for this award on Wednesday, February 19, 2025 .

FFA Updates—The Students Have All Worked So Hard

EAST KNOX FFA CONDUCTS ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

On February 19, 2025, the East Knox FFA chapter conducted its annual member awards banquet in the High School Gymnasium following a catered meal in the cafeteria. Approximately 240 members, parents, and guests were in attendance. Scholarship awards were given to members with a 3.5 or higher overall Grade Point Average. They were seniors **Dylan Springer, Ariana Talbott, and Aidan Holobaugh**; juniors **Ariel Atkinson and Jasmine Smith**; sophomores **Isabelle Bostic, Miranda Fawcett, Ava Page, Hunter Schrienk and Rylan Winkler**; and freshmen **Curtis Divan, Cason Faucett, Hayden Garman, Aaron Raber, and Alexia Wine**.

Ethan Phillis and **Andrew Poff** were recognized as American FFA Degree candidates. They will be awarded their degree at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis on November 1, 2025 pending approval at the National level as they have cleared the State evaluation. **Jesse Wolford** and **Hailey Frazee** were recognized for achieving the State FFA Degree. They were notified that their applications met State approval and they will receive their degrees at the State FFA Convention on May 2 at the Ohio Exposition Center in Columbus.

Officer pins were presented to the newly elected 2025-2026 team who are: **Mackenzie Wilson - president, Ava Page - vice president, Nealie Oliver -secretary, Miranda Fawcett - treasurer, Hayden Garman - reporter, Will Stokes - sentinel, Kylie Griffith -student advisor, Breidyn Burch - historian, John Schillinger - parliamentarian, and Cash Cook - chaplain**. Retiring officer plaques were presented to senior officers **Dylan Springer - president, Hayden Baker - vice president, Blake Elliott - treasurer, and Aiden Kapper - reporter**.

Forty-six different FFA members were presented with career development event awards and recognized for competing in one or more of the chapters forty-two different district elimination, state-level, or national contests.

First year members received the Greenhand Degree. The first year members are **Brock Bailey, Wyatt Baker, Kevin Beaver, Gavin Brooks, Landon Bunger, Breidyn Burch, John Chadwick, Cash Cook, Landon Dawson, Curtis Divan, Marcus Dunn, Frederick Evans, Cason Faucett, Madisyn Frost, Hayden Garman, Ethan Garrett, Bruz Gibson-Hagans, Mason Keene, Ayden Grandstaff, Laiden Matthews, Aubrey McCoy, Brayden Moran, Laureyah Neely, Nealie Oliver, Adrianna Price, Jaylen Pruitt, Aron Raber, AJ Salmons, John Schillinger, Chloe Stevens, Parker Schwartz, Keaton Spence, Ariana Talbott, Gavin Williams, Rhyan Williams, and Alexia Wine**.

The Chapter Degree is earned by second year members. Those receiving this degree were **Wesley Boggs, Isabelle Bostic, Weston Bostic, Robbie Downes, Miranda Fawcett, Quinten French, Nathan Gardner, Kylie Griffith, Peyton Harris, Braxton Lahmon, Michael Metcalf, Aidan Holobaugh, Ava Page, Hunter Schrienk, Will Stokes, and Rylan Winkler**.

Third year award plaques were presented to **Ariel Atkinson, Peyton Finch, Zayne Grennell, Joseph Lively, Gianna Ruhe, Jasmine Smith, and Mackenzie Wilson**.

Fourth year honors went to **Hayden Baker, Blake Elliott, Aiden Kapper, and Dylan Springer**.

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Star awards were earned by **Alexia Wine** and **Ariana Talbott** - Star Greenhands; **Ava Page** - Star Chapter Degree; **Ariel Atkinson** and **Mackenzie Wilson** - Outstanding Juniors; and **Hayden Baker**, **Dylan Springer**, **Blake Elliott**, and **Aidan Kapper** - Outstanding Seniors. **Mackenzie Wilson**, **Blake Elliott**, and **Aiden Kapper** were presented outstanding service awards for their state gold-rated officer books. **Jasmine Smith** - first place and **Mackenzie Wilson** - second place were presented the outstanding achievement award as the chapters top fruit salesmen.

The Honorary Chapter Degree was presented to adults who have contributed outstanding service to the East Knox FFA. This award went to East Knox Jr/Sr High School Building Secretary Fawnda Bible-Stahl, East Knox Local School District Assistant Treasurer Tracy Beckett and East Knox Local School District Administrative Secretary Kim Grindle. The chapters' twenty-fifth VIP award was presented to High School Science Teacher, Kevin Oldaker for his continued support of the East Knox FFA chapter in proctoring CDE tests.

In 2018 the chapter started a new award for adults who have continually given tremendous support to the East Knox FFA. It was named the Didinger Service Award in honor of Carol and her husband the late Gary Didinger. The inaugural award was presented to Carol Didinger with eight additional recipients since then. This year the tenth ever Didinger Service Award was presented to Kay Holton for her continuous and tireless support of the East Knox FFA.

The East Knox FFA would like to thank all who have contributed to their success throughout the year.



Picture Front row (L to R) - Mackenzie Wilson - Outstanding Junior, 3rd year award, State Gold-Rated Secretary and Top Fruit Sales; Joe Lively - 3rd-year award; Alexia Wine - Star Greenhand; Ava Page - Outstanding Sophomore; and Jasmine Smith - 3rd year award and Top Fruit Sales.

Back Row (L to R) - Aidan Kapper - Outstanding Senior, State Gold-Rated Reporter, Retiring Reporter, and 4th-year award; Ariel Atkinson - Outstanding Junior and 3rd year award; Ariana Talbott - Star Greenhand; Blake Elliott - Outstanding Senior, 4th year award, State Gold-Rated Treasurer, and Retiring Treasurer; Hayden Baker - Outstanding Senior, 4th year award, and Retiring Vice President; and Dylan Springer - Outstanding Senior, 4th year award, and Retiring President.

EAST KNOX FFA COMPETES IN AG POWER DIAGNOSTICS CDE

Two members of the East Knox FFA recently competed in the District 7 FFA Ag Power Diagnostics (formerly known as Tractor Troubleshooting) Career Development Event held at Bane-Welker Equipment in Utica on February 8th. Hayden Baker and Dylan Springer placed eighth in the six-county District 7 event which consists of 31 schools that have FFAs.

The District is composed of Knox, Licking, Fairfield, Franklin, Pickaway, and Ross Counties and Clear Fork Schools out of Richland County. The top team from each of Ohio's 10 FFA districts advances to the state competition at The University of Northwestern Ohio in Lima.

The Ag Diagnostic Power competition is a hands-on event where students perform various diesel mechanics skills. In the contest students had to find "bugs" that are placed in tractors, combines, skid-steer loaders, and other diesel engines.

They are given a scenario that mimics a work order and then are judged on their process and whether or not they find the problems.

The Ag Power Diagnostics Career Development Event is an educational activity designed to increase student knowledge and skill in the area of diesel mechanics.



Picture (L to R) - East Knox FFA members Hayden Baker and Dylan Springer at Bane-Welker Equipment in Utica competing in the District 7 FFA Ag Power Diagnostics Career Development Event.

EAST KNOX FFA COMPETES IN STATE AG COMMUNICATIONS CDE

On February 8, 2025 four members of the East Knox FFA competed in the state FFA Agricultural Communications Career Development Event held at The Ohio State University in the Agricultural Administration Building. The team, consisting of Ariana Talbott, Ariel Atkinson, Alexia Wine, and Rhyan Williams placed seventeenth in the competition out of a field of teams representing the ten FFA districts in the state.

East Knox FFA qualified for the state event after placing seventh in the State online test which was over agricultural communications and also included an editing exercise based on the Associated Press Stylebook. They also participated in the District 7 contest held at Amanda Clearcreek High School. District 7 is made up of 31 schools that have FFA chapters from the six counties of Knox, Licking, Fairfield, Franklin, Pickaway, and Ross.

In the contest the team had to submit a communications plan based on a press conference that was conducted at the start of the event. The team also completed four practicums which consisted of writing a feature story, completing a broadcast video exercise, developing a social media plan, and completing a magazine layout design.

The agricultural communications career development event is an educational activity designed to develop members' skills in all areas of communications by using hands-on activities to test their competency.



Picture (L to R) East Knox FFA Agricultural Communications Career Development Event Team members Alexia Wine, Ariana Talbott, Ariel Atkinson, and Rhyan Williams

Elementary Important Dates:

The dates for our grades 3-6 Spring Ohio State Assessments have been scheduled and are as follows:

ELA: Part 1 for grades 3-6: Tuesday, April 8, 2025
ELA: Part 2 for grades 3-6: Wednesday, April 9, 2025
ELA: Make-Ups for grades 3-6: Thursday, April 10, 2025
ELA: Make-Ups for grades 3-6: Friday, April 11, 2025

Science: Part 1 for grade 5: Monday, April 14, 2025
Science: Part 2 for grade 5: Tuesday, April 15, 2025
Science: Make-Ups: Wednesday, April 16, 2025
Science: Make-Ups: Thursday, April 17, 2025



There is NO school on Friday, April 18, 2025 in observance of Good Friday

Math: Part 1 for grades 3-6: Tuesday, April 22, 2025
Math: Part 2 for grades 3-6: Wednesday, April 23, 2025
Math: Make-Ups for grades 3-6: Thursday, April 24, 2025
Math: Make-Ups for grades 3-6: Friday, April 25, 2025

Kindergarten will be doing the Dyslexia Screener this week April 21-25

April 28-May 2: Spring Book Fair Week

Tuesday, April 29, 2025: Literacy Night (This is for our Title/Parent-Family Engagement)

Tuesday, May 6, 2025: Kindergarten Screening (During the school day)

Wednesday, May 7, 2025: Kindergarten Screening (During the school day)

Wednesday, May 7, 2025: Elementary Art Show (Evening)

Tuesday, May 13, 2025: 4-6 Fun Day with Inflatables

Thursday, May 15, 2025: K-3 Fun Day with Inflatables

Friday, May 16, 2025: Kindergarten/Senior picture and walk through

Wednesday, May 21, 2025: Kindergarten Graduation @9:30 in the elementary gymnasium

Thursday, May 22, 2025: Sixth Grade Graduation @9:30 in the elementary gymnasium

Elementary Summer School

Monday-Thursdays 9:00-11:00

Breakfast and Snack provided

Bussing provided

June 2- 5

June 9-12

June 16-19

(The window for third graders to take the summer third grade Ohio state reading assessment is June 23-27)



Purple Pride

Published to bring school news to the residents of East Knox Local School District

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23201 Coshocton Road
Howard OH 43028
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

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East Knox Local School District

*“Every man who rises above the common level has received two educations:
the first from his teachers; the second, more personal and important, from himself.”*

– Edward Gibbon

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES—This publication, a report to the residents of the East Knox Local School District, fulfills the requirements of section 3313.94 of the Ohio Revised Code. Suggestions or questions should be directed to the Board of Education Office, 23201 Coshocton Road, Howard, OH 43028.



Safer Ohio
School Tip Line

844.723.3764

Report concerns for student safety