



# The EXPERIENCE

Official Newsmagazine of Mariemont City Schools

## Superintendent's Update

Each new school year brings a spirit of optimism and limitless possibilities for our students and their futures. We continue to work hard, create experience, and embrace growth with a sharp focus on preparing students to reach their full potential and be ready for college and careers.



Our district leads in many areas, including academics, experiences, and wellness. I am so proud of the many accolades our schools continue to receive and you can read about many of our recent accomplishments in this newsletter. We have many reasons to celebrate the incredible work of our students and staff!

On November 5, Mariemont City Schools will appear on the ballot for a 5.95-mill operating levy to generate \$3.1 million annually. This is the district's first levy in six years after stretching funding longer than expected. We were able to do this by securing grants, containing healthcare and maintenance/utility costs and making strategic and continued reductions totaling \$1.2 million.

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## MCSD Honors and Awards

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## Mariemont City Schools' Financial Future

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## NABT Outstanding Biology Teacher

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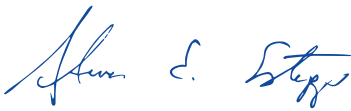
# Superintendent's Update

(continued from front page)

If the levy passes, the revenue will offset the expected budget shortfall due to rising costs for the current levels of programming and services offered. The Board of Education also has adopted a Budget Reduction Plan to be proactively prepared should the levy fail. Details on the operating levy are available on pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter, and on the district's website.

Fall is a wonderful time to join in the festivities with our school community. Please take some time to look at our upcoming events; we would love to see you there!

Sincerely,



Steven Estepp  
Superintendent



# Treasurer's Update



On November 5, 2024, the Mariemont City Schools community will vote on a 5.95-mill operating levy request from the Board of Education to generate \$3.1 million annually. This is the district's first request in six years, the longest stretch between funding requests in the district's recent history.

Detailed information on the levy, school funding cycles, and Ohio's school funding formula can be found on the district's website at [mariemontschools.org/2024levyinformation](https://mariemontschools.org/2024levyinformation). At a very high level, this is where our finances are today:

- Approximately 85% of district revenue comes from local sources.
- 72% of the district's expenditures pay staff salaries and benefits.
- Despite historic inflation, inflationary growth of district expenditures has been held to 3%.
- \$1.2 million in savings and cost reductions have been secured through innovation and efficiency.

On page 4 of this newsletter, an infographic explains the two possible outcomes of the operating levy in November and the impact on the school district. I want to stress that the reductions listed are proactive plans for steps the district will need to take without additional revenue.

Simply put, the district's reductions will impact each classroom, staff, and student because the budget does not have enough margin to buffer the impact without additional revenue. Our commitment to maintaining a tight budget keeps most of our dollars in the classroom and connected to students.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions on these topics or others relating to the district's finances.

In Service to Our Students,



Tom Golinar  
Treasurer, CFO

# A Class Above

Mariemont City Schools has a lot to celebrate!  
Check out some of the district's outstanding honors and awards.

# #1

for overall academic  
achievement

# #1

for early literacy

# #1

for gifted  
achievement

# #1

for English language  
arts and mathematics  
achievement

Mariemont City Schools ranked #1 in Hamilton County on these indicators for the 2023-2024 school year based on state assessment results, reported by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (September, 2024)



## Overall 5-star rating

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce rated the Mariemont City School District 5/5 stars on the most recent state report card. Only 68 school districts in Ohio earned this recognition for the 2023-2024 school year.



## National Blue Ribbon Standard

All four school buildings have earned a National Blue Ribbon from the United States Department of Education, an extremely rare feat for a school district. Mariemont High School has earned the distinction four times (1984, 1988, 2001 and 2005) while Terrace Park Elementary School won in 2004, Mariemont Elementary School won in 2018 and Mariemont Junior High School won in 2021.



## Mariemont High School Tops National Honor Roll

Mariemont High School was named to the Advanced Placement Honor Roll with a Platinum Distinction, the highest honor awarded to the schools on the AP Honor Roll. Schools earn this recognition based on criteria that reflect a commitment to increasing college-going culture, providing opportunities for students to earn college credit and maximizing college readiness.

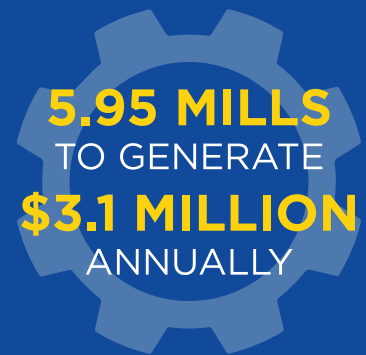
93% of Mariemont High School AP test takers passed their assessments this past spring, and MHS had a 100% passage rate on six different Advanced Placement tests.

# Mariemont City Schools' Financial Future

## OPERATING LEVY WILL BE ON NOVEMBER 5 BALLOT



**\$208** annually per **\$100K** of home value determined by the County Auditor (listed as Market Total Value on the county auditor website)



## 2018 FUNDING CAN NO LONGER BE STRETCHED

2018 was the last request for increased funding. Back then, the district promised it could cover 4 years of expenditures and it was stretched to 6 years.



## HOW DID MARIEMONT CITY SCHOOLS STRETCH FUNDING FOR 2 MORE YEARS?



Utility savings of  
**27% on gas** and  
**33% on electric**



**\$600,000 annually**  
in local, state and  
federal grants secured



**\$3 million**  
in one-time  
grants secured



Healthcare  
costs kept  
**20% below**  
state average with  
14-district consortium

### at the new high school



**\$100,000 saved**  
to-date due to more  
efficient utilities



**\$1 million saved**  
annually in  
maintenance costs



**\$1.2 million** in budget  
reductions through  
staffing reallocation  
and attrition



Staffing  
numbers  
remained the  
same



**Join Superintendent Steven Estep and Treasurer/CFO Tom Golinar for a pair of Finance Forums to learn more about the financial picture of our school district.**

- Thursday, October 10 at 7:00 p.m. at Mariemont High School
- Tuesday, October 22 at 7:00 p.m. via virtual presentation  
(The livestream link can be found at [www.mariemontschools.org/2024levyinformation](http://www.mariemontschools.org/2024levyinformation) ahead of the presentation)
- Be sure to mark your calendars for one of these two events if you are interested in learning more



## WHAT IF THE LEVY PASSES?



avoid budget shortfall  
and reductions

# 72%

of operational  
expenditures are staff  
salaries and benefits

## WHAT IF THE LEVY FAILS?

**\$1.2 Million** in reductions in 2025-2026



### ELIMINATE

- elementary classroom instructional aides
- base pay increases for staff
- seven additional teacher and administrative/support positions



### REDUCE

- elementary specials/electives
- jr. high and high school art, STEM, music, and electives



### INCREASE

- pay-to-play and facility rentals

**\$1.9 Million** in reductions in 2026-2027



### ELIMINATE

- all field trips
- base pay increases for staff
- office aides in all schools
- 15 additional teachers, mental health/counseling support, and administrative/support positions



### REDUCE

- jr. high and high school course offerings
- counseling and mental health support
- experiential learning
- extracurricular clubs, programs, athletic programming
- purchased services, supplies, subscriptions



### INCREASE

- elementary class sizes

# ***Best of the Best***

The Mariemont City School district has truly excellent staff members, students and programming that make it stand above the rest. Below are some examples of how the district is turning this excellence into national, state and local accolades.

## **Mariemont High School Biology Teacher Named Best in Ohio**

The National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT) has recognized Mariemont High School's Jennifer Broo as the 2024 recipient of the Outstanding Biology Teacher Award for the state of Ohio.

Each year, the NABT recognizes an outstanding biology educator (grades 7-12) in each of the 50 states, Washington, D.C., Canada, Puerto Rico and overseas territories. Candidates must have devoted a major portion of their careers to the teaching of biology and/or life sciences, and are judged on their teaching ability and experience, cooperativeness in the school community and student-teacher relationships.



Broo will be honored at a special luncheon at the NABT Professional Development Conference in November.

Mariemont City Schools is proud to have fantastic staff members like Jennifer Broo leading its students in and out of the classrooms.



## **TPE Vocalists Shine in Local Showcase**

Four Terrace Park Elementary School students were able to put their musical abilities on display in September as part of the Cincinnati Youth Choir (CYC) Singfest program.

Singfest is a day of music and friendship for young singers in grades 3-7. It brings together voices from across Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky for a unique learning experience under the guidance of the CYC founder and artistic director Robyn Lana and artist-in-residence Dr. Anthony Trecek-King.

Congratulations to Lisa, Nate, Julia, and Jasmine for being selected to participate in the event and thanks to TPE music teacher Annie Hobson for arranging this opportunity for her students.





## MHS Junior Elected DECA State Officer

Camryn Martin, a junior at Mariemont High School, recently accomplished a spectacular feat, becoming just the second MHS student to ever be elected as a DECA state officer.

Camryn competed against 15 other nominees from across the state for five open state officer positions. The election process began in February with an initial screening where she interviewed with DECA officers, advisors and leadership and took a state test. At the state Career Development Conference in March, she gave a speech to all student voting delegates and was then selected by her peers for the officer position.

She will serve on a team with seven total officers representing over 7,000 Ohio DECA members. Recently, she was selected by the state supervisor to serve the role of secretary due to her display of leadership skills. In this role, her primary focus will be to engage more of the Ohio community with career-technical education (CTE) programs, like DECA. She has hit the ground running in this role, reaching out to various universities and businesses in Ohio to forge new partnerships, fund scholarships and grow the Ohio DECA program.

Camryn is only the second Mariemont High School student to be elected as a DECA state officer, and the first since 2019-20.

DECA is an organization for students enrolled in marketing, business and finance education. It is designed to promote a total program of activities that develop leadership, teamwork skills and individual growth. DECA is the only international student organization operating in the schools to attract people to careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, management and entrepreneurship.

Mariemont City Schools offers this opportunity for high school students through its partnership with Great Oaks Career Campuses.



## MHS Broadcasting Program Wins Three Local Broadcasting Awards

The Broadcasting department at Mariemont High School recently took home some hardware at the local Blue Chip Awards. This awards program is a cooperative venture among Greater Cincinnati area cable access organizations to recognize the achievement of local access producers.

The three MHS awards are:

- **Live Remote Programming, Youth** – Football vs. Reading on 10/20/2023 – Commentators Will Stevens and Max Miller; Camera operators Carter McGahey, Ben Hojnoski and JP Widecan
- **Short Subject, Youth** – International Bagpipe Day story for Good Morning Mariemont by Jordan Murdock
- **Podcast, Youth** – Survive and Advance March Madness Podcast by Luke Brenneman







## A Message from the Superintendent

warriors



Welcome to the latest edition of the Warriors BEwell Mental Health Message, an annual report to our community designed to share what we are doing, what resources are available and how you can best support the students and staff of our school district when it comes to mental health.

In this edition of the Mental Health Message, we have some incredible data to share, as you will see below. These numbers reflect the hard work that our staff, students and families have poured into mental health education and advocacy over the last five years. These results could not have been possible without the dedication of our entire community working together to help improve the mental health of our students.

And while we have come far, there is still so much work to do. I am looking forward to continuing this important work to promote the mental health wellbeing of our students for years to come. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Steven E. Estepp

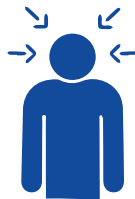
## Measuring Student Mental Health and Causes

During the 2019-2020 school year, Mariemont City School District partnered with 1N5, Mindpeace, Dr. Stuart Slavin and Cincinnati Children's Hospital to participate in a research study measuring student mental health and causes. We surveyed students in grades 9-12 (prior to the school closure) and 88% of the data was determined to be valid. We continued this partnership and surveyed the students in grades 9-12 again during the 2023-2024 school year to see how our data compared and 86% of the data was determined to be valid.



### Students having moderate to severe anxiety

2020 – 47%  
2024 – 27.7%



### 2020 Top 5 Stressors for Students (grades 9-12)

1. Pressure from self
2. Pressure to get into a good college
3. Time pressure
4. Amount of homework
5. Pressure not to disappoint parents



### Students having moderate to severe depression

2020 – 33%  
2024 – 19.6%

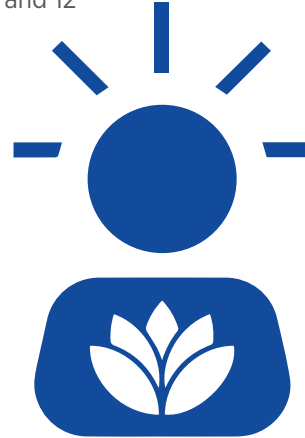


### 2024 Top 5 Stressors for Students (grades 9-12)

1. Amount of homework
2. Amount of material to learn
3. Pressure from self
4. Time pressure
5. Pressure to get into a good college

## Education and Programs That are Working

- School counselors in all four buildings providing prevention and intervention support for students and families
- Child Focus mental health partner - Providing mental health services in all four buildings paid for through insurance, private pay, or use of mental health funds donated to the district
- Donations to help provide therapy to families in need - Mariemont Parent Preschool Group, Mariemont School Foundation, Standing Up To Stigma nonprofit
- Signs of Suicide mental health screener and instructional program in grades 8, 10 and 12
- Sources of Strength - Peer-to-peer suicide and violence prevention group at Mariemont Junior High School and Mariemont High School
- Mindfulness practices incorporated into all four buildings
- Therapy Dogs Pet Partners for grades K-8
- Sensory/calming spaces - Mindpeace rooms in all four buildings
- 24/7 Online anonymous reporting
- Internet search filter alerts from school devices, documents and emails to monitor student safety
- Warriors BEyond programming - experiential learning



## Community Connectivity Cultivates Student Wellness

### *What can you do?*

- Check in with your child, make sure they have a trusted adult that they can talk to at school and outside of school
- Monitor your child's use of social media - our study shows that social media amplifies the problem
- Download the 1N5 Reach Out App to have access to resources
- Support our students, 1N5 and the Warrior Run - participate, donate and sponsor (the funds raised through the Warrior Run help pay for the district's mental health programming)
- Be a mentor - support an Experienceship or connect to students through our Warriors BEyond programming (scan this QR code to get involved!)



**If you are interested in discussing this topic further and finding specific solutions with your family and friends, contact Tricia Buchert, Director of Student Services (513-272-7519, [tbuchert@mariemontschools.org](mailto:tbuchert@mariemontschools.org)), to set up a small gathering in your home.**

## ***Dennis Koenigsknecht Named 2024 Award of Excellence Recipient***

The Mariemont City School District Award of Excellence is awarded annually to an individual who exemplifies dedication to and support of Mariemont City Schools. Maintenance Technician Dennis Koenigsknecht is the recipient of the 2023-24 Award of Excellence.

It is not hyperbole to say that Dennis has built this school district. He has worked in the Mariemont City School District for 30 years, forging relationships with staff, students, parents and community members. Everyone knows and love Dennis because he spends time in each school building and the central office every week.

As the Maintenance Technician, he is the problem solver and “fix-it man” of the school district. He has built shelving in classrooms and offices throughout the district to aid in storage and organization. He constructed concrete stairs leading up to a new parking lot at the high school. He also designed and built an outdoor terrace at Mariemont Elementary to give teachers a safe and secure outdoor classroom option. You can routinely find him fixing fencing around playgrounds or assisting in grounds maintenance at all school buildings when needed. As many staff members can attest, Dennis will always answer your call and will be on hand to fix your problem as fast as possible.

Dennis also contributes to the arts as the lead set designer for the Mariemont High School fall play and spring musical. He works closely with the directors and student performers to build beautiful and intricate sets to allow our performers to shine. We are a small district with a history of immensely popular and successful musicals, thanks in large part to the stage production that Dennis creates each year.

He has truly unique life experiences that give him a one-of-a-kind perspective on the job. Upon graduating high school he entered the seminary where he met his future wife. He also decided to go back to college later in life to get a degree in education, a passion he discovered after his many years working in the school district. Dennis is a certified 4-9 language arts teacher, but decided to stay in his role as the maintenance technician for Mariemont City Schools. Now he uses his leadership skills to mentor colleagues.



But his biggest gift to our district might be his endearing kindness and charisma. No matter the task, Dennis does it with a smile on his face, often asking how else he can be of service. He is a renaissance man in the truest sense and we are lucky to have him on our Mariemont City Schools team.

## ***Chief Richard Hines Named 2024 Friend of the School Recipient***



In 2015, the Mariemont City School District launched the Marie Huenefeld Friend of the School Award to recognize individuals in the community who make significant contributions to the school district with their time, service and/or expertise to create a better experience for students.

At the June Board of Education meeting, Chief Richard Hines was recognized as the 2024 recipient of the Marie Huenefeld Friend of the School Award.

Chief Hines has been serving the Mariemont community as a member of the police department for 39 years and has served as its Chief of Police since 2005. In that time, he has been dedicated to forming positive relationships with

everyone in the community, but especially with the students and staff of Mariemont City Schools.

He was the driving force behind the creation of the School Resource Officer position in our high school ahead of the 2016-2017 school year. Now eight years later, the SRO position in our school district is an invaluable member of our team and we are incredibly thankful that Chief Hines understood that need and worked to make it a possibility.

Chief Hines works tirelessly to maintain a strong and positive relationship with our school district. He and his team are committed to keeping our students and staff safe and are always available to assist any time the need arises.

We are so thankful to Chief Hines for his unwavering determination to serve and protect not only the Mariemont City School District, but also the entire village of Mariemont.



## Meet Principal Miller!

In July, Mariemont City Schools Superintendent Steven Estepp announced Courtney Miller as the next principal at Mariemont Elementary School. Miller, who has nearly two decades of educational experience, has spent the past 16 years as a kindergarten teacher at ME.

"I am thrilled to have Courtney Miller serve as the new principal of Mariemont Elementary School," said Estepp. "Courtney is a beloved and well-respected member of our Mariemont City Schools family who is well vested in the culture of ME. She has the experience and the leadership capabilities to lead the staff, students and families of Mariemont Elementary and I am excited to see all that she accomplishes as our principal."

During her time as a kindergarten teacher at ME, Miller has served several leadership roles and been a part of many district committees, including the yearlong Mariemont City Schools Emerging Leaders Fellowship, which she completed in the spring of 2024. She also has been a part of the district's PBIS team, Instructional Leadership



Team, Literacy Team and Olweus bully prevention teams. In the classroom, she has planned and implemented many programs to instruct our district's youngest learners, including the Bridges, Foundations, Heggerty, Being a Writer and Little Spot curriculums.

Prior to joining the Mariemont City School District, she spent two years in Marblehead Public Schools in Massachusetts. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in early childhood education from Xavier University and a Master's in teacher leadership from Concordia University of Chicago.

"Mariemont Elementary School has long been a building I have not only called home but have a deep affection for," said Miller. "After years of teaching there, I am excited to lead the building as its next principal. I am deeply committed to fostering a positive and inclusive school culture where all students feel valued, supported, and empowered to succeed. I believe that strong relationships with students, staff, parents, and the broader community are essential for the success of a whole school. I am keenly aware that Mariemont Elementary has a reputation for academic excellence and a strong sense of community and I am eager to contribute my leadership skills, passion for education, and dedication to student success at ME."

## Child Find Policy

Mariemont City Schools' Child Find policy requires that all children below twenty-two (22) years of age residing within the district who have a disability, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located and evaluated in accordance with all federal and state standards.

For children birth through age two, a disability means that a child has a behavior, cognition, communication, physical development, sensory development and/or social or emotional development deficit. For children ages three through five years of age, a disability means that a child has a

documented deficit in one or more of the following areas: communication skills, hearing abilities, motor function, social-emotional behavior functioning or vision abilities. For school-aged students, a disability means a person having one or more conditions such as autism, developmental handicap, hearing handicap, multi-handicap, orthopedic and/or other handicap, emotional/behavioral handicap, specific learning disability, traumatic brain injury or visual handicap.

If you are aware of a child who you think may have a disability, please contact Linda Lee, Special Education Supervisor, at 513-272-7517.

## UPCOMING DATES

### OCTOBER

- |           |                                                     |           |                                           |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>2</b>  | Elementary Bike/Walk to School Day                  | <b>17</b> | Parent/Teacher Conferences, All Buildings |
| <b>3</b>  | Mariemont Athletic Boosters Golf Outing             | <b>18</b> | MJHS Expeditions Day of Service           |
| <b>3</b>  | TPE PTO Mum Sale Fundraiser                         | <b>21</b> | Mariemont Athletic Boosters Meeting       |
| <b>4</b>  | MHS Homecoming Parade and Football Game             | <b>22</b> | District Finance Forum                    |
| <b>5</b>  | MHS Homecoming Dance                                | <b>22</b> | MJHS Fall Sports Awards                   |
| <b>7</b>  | Board of Education Meeting                          | <b>23</b> | MHS NHS Induction                         |
| <b>8</b>  | Mariemont Arts Association Meeting                  | <b>24</b> | MJHS Parent/Teacher Conferences           |
| <b>9</b>  | Fall Orchestra Concert (Gr. 7-12)                   | <b>25</b> | End of First Quarter, Early Dismissal     |
| <b>10</b> | District Finance Forum                              | <b>25</b> | TPE PTO Pumpkinfest                       |
| <b>14</b> | No School for Staff or Students                     | <b>30</b> | MHS Parent/Teacher Conferences            |
| <b>15</b> | Mariemont Academy for Staff, No School for Students | <b>31</b> | Elementary Halloween Parades              |
| <b>16</b> | Fall Chorus Concert (Gr. 7-12)                      |           |                                           |

### NOVEMBER

- |          |                                                     |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> | Report Cards Available Online                       |
| <b>6</b> | MHS College Planning Meeting for Parents of Juniors |
| <b>7</b> | Elementary Parent/Teacher Conferences               |
| <b>7</b> | ME Book Fair Family Night                           |
| <b>8</b> | ME Book Fair Family Night                           |



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