LIFELONG LEARNERS

Intergenerational SCHOOLS

Community News & Insights

October 2026

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A Message from Our CEO

Measuring Progress, Making Connections

This fall's Ohio State Report Card gave us plenty to celebrate. Both of our campuses met the state's standards this year, with standout results worth highlighting on their own: Near West reached 100 percent proficiency in fourth grade math, earning another three-year designation as an Ohio High-Quality Community School, while TIS-East earned 3 stars overall and posted its strongest Gap Closing rating yet, real progress in supporting every learner. Scores are one part of the story.

This issue has the rest of it: two teachers turning fourth-grade math into confident problem-solving, decades of friendship built one monthly visit at a time between our students and older adults across Cleveland, and TIS-East students who represent the consistent commitment to improved attendance reflected across the school and earned a very special celebration with the Cleveland Browns because of it.

Every one of these wins comes from the same place: a community that shows up, for our students and for each other, in the classroom and far beyond it.

You can be a part of this community. Enroll your child, become a volunteer Learning Partner, consider board leadership with Friends of the Intergenerational Schools, or join us April 17 for A Storied Celebration, as we honor more than 25 years of history and look ahead to what's next.

Brooke King, CEO
Intergenerational Schools

FEATURE STORY

Conversations that Connect

How Monthly Intergenerational Visits Shape Our School Community

The Intergenerational Schools have once again been named a Program of Distinction by Generations United, the national organization behind the country's leading certification for intergenerational programs.

Monthly intergenerational visits have been core to our model since the schools' founding. Our 21 classes partner with 12 community host sites, including senior centers and residential care communities, for roughly 160 visits over the school year.

Residents recognize returning students, ask about them, and look forward to every visit. "We're interested in reciprocity," said Seamus O'Hara, Director of Intergenerational Programming.

"Both generations should walk away having contributed something and having gained something."

During a typical visit, students and older adults spend about an hour playing games, making art, reading, making music or just talking. Teachers plan each visit to connect with classroom learning, and our oldest students often serve as helpers and ambassadors.

Whatever the planned activity, some of the most meaningful learning opportunities come from the impromptu conversations that happen during the visit. For example: Recently, an older adult shared that she was born in Alabama and was almost 80 years old. Students did the math and realized she would have been a child and teenager during the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Birmingham Campaign and the Selma voting rights marches. Someone sitting across the table from them had lived through history they study in school.

PROGRAM of DISTINCTION
generations united
Because we're stronger together®

As Seamus put it, these relationships "create opportunities for students to ask questions, develop historical perspective, and understand that history is not nearly as distant as it can sometimes seem."

More to the story: Read an extended version of this excerpt on our blog at igschools.org/news

Learn more about Intergenerational Programming, how to volunteer as a Learning Partner or become a host site on our website: igschools.org

Near West Intergenerational School

Roll for Innovation

Meet the Teachers Behind Near West's 100% Math Score

More to the story: Read an extended version of this excerpt on our blog at igschools.org/news

On this year's Ohio State Report Card, every Near West fourth grader scored proficient or above in math. Behind that milestone are two teachers with very different styles and one shared belief: students do their best math when they feel confident as math learners.

Kori Morris, in her tenth year at Near West, has taught fourth-grade math for about six. She gives math a payoff students can feel right away, using tabletop role-playing games she adapts for her classroom. Once students master a concept, practice turns into play: a dungeon game board where solving multiplication problems moves their character forward, and later, Dungeons and Dragons-style adventures built entirely around word problems.

Matthew Phelps joined Near West last year after more than two decades as a college professor. He keeps whole-class instruction to about ten minutes so students spend most of the period practicing at their own level, with Phelps offering questions rather than answers. New units often start with play, like a recent Decimal Olympics, where students measured long jumps to the nearest thousandth of a meter.

“Anyone can be a math person,” Phelps tells his students. “It's easy: Step one, be a person. Step two, do some math.”

Both teachers treat mistakes as part of learning, not something to avoid. “I never want education to be about the test,” Morris said. “Math can be really hard, like a lot of things in life, and we learn to work with it, and to fail, as part of the process. Then they talk about how much they love math. That's an amazing thing to see.”

Different approaches, one shared commitment: meeting every learner where they are. It's how Near West's small, multi-age classes help each student build real understanding, along with the confidence and pride that come with it.

“Anyone can be a math person. It's easy: **Step one, be a person. Step two, do some math.**”
– Mr. Phelps

The Intergenerational School – East

Field Trip to the Field House

TIS-East Students Celebrate Attendance Achievements with the Cleveland Browns and Stay in the Game!

Just a few weeks in, students at The Intergenerational School – East kicked off a new academic year with a very special recognition for their consistent commitment to attendance.

On September 15, 45 TIS-East students kicked off the school year with an unforgettable celebration: a day at the Cleveland Browns' CrossCountry Mortgage Campus, complete with a facility tour, football drills, and a surprise visit from U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon. These students were honored as part of Stay in the Game! Attendance Awareness Month, recognized for showing up, consistently, for their classmates and their own learning.

"If you want to play football, you have to show up, be at practice and listen to the coach and understand the plays," McMahon told students. "No different than being in school."

It was a fitting message for the students, who earned their trip to Berea through their commitment to attendance, an effort reflected schoolwide. Over the past two years, TIS-East has reduced chronic absenteeism by approximately 20 percent, meaning more students are in school, engaged, and ready to learn. That progress is part of what's reflected in this year's Ohio State Report Card results for TIS-East. This progress belongs to our entire community," said Aziz Ahmad, principal of The Intergenerational School – East. "Our leadership team, teachers, staff, partners, students, and families have continued to work together and remained committed to growth and excellence, even when the work was difficult."

Thanks to Battelle, the Cleveland Browns Foundation, the Stay in the Game! Attendance Network, Channel 3, and the U.S. Department of Education for making the day possible, and to the teachers, staff, families and students who strengthen our school community each day, starting with showing up. Congratulations, again, to the students whose commitment to showing up earned them this amazing opportunity!

LOOK AHEAD

You're Invited!

Join friends and families of the Intergenerational Schools for an evening of celebration, community and connection. Together, we'll honor more than 25 years of stories that shaped our schools and celebrate the chapter we're writing next.

Saturday, April 17, 2027
6 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Martin Luther King Jr. Branch of the Cleveland Public Library
10601 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland

Get your tickets today! Sponsorships are also available for businesses, individuals and families who want to help make the evening possible. Learn more at igschools.org/celebration or contact advancement@igschools.org.

Intergenerational
SCHOOLS

EAST
Buckeye-Woodhill

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OUR MISSION

The Intergenerational Schools connect, create, and guide a multi-generational community of lifelong learners and spirited citizens as they strive for academic excellence.