



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 2, 2022

Jeffrey Riel, Coordinator of Strategic Initiatives and Communication
West Clermont School District
513.943.5000 — riel_j@westcler.org

Grants Help Enhance Culture of Safety for West Clermont Schools

The culture of safety at West Clermont Schools will soon look different thanks to the recent awarding of not one but two grants.

The district received an Ohio K-12 School Safety Grant for \$261,945 earlier this year. Applicants were eligible for up to \$100,000 per school building. The funds will be used to cover expenses associated with physical security enhancements such as security cameras, public address systems, automatic door locks, visitor badging systems, and exterior lighting.

Chuck LaFata, Director of Operations, said, "We are carefully assessing where and how these dollars will be used based on the recommendations of our leadership, law enforcement, and Hamilton County Educational Service Center during recent safety audits."

The grant program is managed by The Ohio School Safety Center and Ohio Facilities Construction Commission. West Clermont has applied for a second Ohio K-12 School Safety Grant, the results of which will be announced by the end of 2022.

The district was also awarded a nearly \$1 million grant through the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs Bureau of Justice Assistance as part of their STOP School Violence Program.

"We are elated to have been awarded a STOP School Violence Grant by the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance. The funding from this grant will not only assure that the district is able to provide much-needed mental-health services to students, with no out-of-pocket costs to families, but will also go a long way toward jump-starting our sustainability plan for services to continue beyond the grant's 3-year term," said Eric Dool, Director of Student Services. "I look forward to partnering with our community partners to realize the vision of the model we are working to build, and to continue to grow our Whole Child Network!"

West Clermont Schools is the only Ohio-based awardee of this grant funding. The monies will be used to contract with Child Focus for three additional therapists for the next three years. They will be focused solely on the needs of West Clermont students and families.

The district is continuing to seek alternative funding that is aimed at increasing attendance, engagement, positive behavior, and academic performance to help meet its mission of committing to excellence with every learner, every day, every way.

About West Clermont: West Clermont School District commits to excellence with every learner, every day, and in every way. Its vision is that together as one community, we learn, lead, and succeed. The district believes that together we are ON THE RISE and values strengthening relationships, cultivating innovation, being relentlessly student-centered, and fostering empowerment.

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