



JOURNAL-NEWS

TRUSTED SINCE 1898

JOURNAL-NEWS.COM

A PRODUCT OF
THE DAYTON
DAILY NEWS

\$2.00

**INDOOR
GOLF
FACILITY IN
FAIRFIELD
OPENS. A2**



**UNBEATEN
REDHAWKS TOP
TOLEDO, HOIST
MAC TROPHY. D1**

**STRATEGIES
WILL HELP
PREVENT
GARDEN
PESTS. C1**

TOP LOCAL STORY

Edgewood school district prepares for funding hit

Property tax reforms, local tax rollbacks, dwindling enrollment imperil school budget.

By Bryn Dippold
Staff Writer

The Edgewood City School District has announced a plan to address a looming funding shortfall and steady enrollment decline.

ECSD Superintendent Curtis Philpot said in a statement Thursday recent changes to the state funding formula through property tax reform legislation, combined with local tax rollbacks, will "negatively impact Edgewood City Schools dramatically beginning next year."

At the same time, enrollment continues to fall. The district has 500 fewer students than it did six years ago, and another 500-student decrease is projected by 2030.

"Fewer students result in less state funding," he said.

He attributed the decline to smaller family sizes and increased educational options, including homeschooling, open enrollment, charter and private schools and expanding programs at Butler Tech.

While budget cuts may seem like an obvious solution, Philpot said the district has already averaged more than \$1 million in reductions each of the past three years.

"We've done the best we can to make cuts, just keep our heads above water, but with these recent changes, there's no way we can keep our head above water," Philpot told Journal-News. "We're in



The Edgewood City School District has announced a plan to expand services rather than make additional cuts to address a funding shortfall and declining enrollment. NICK GRAHAM / STAFF

trouble."

Any future cuts would no longer be "small, strategic adjustments," Philpot said, but sweeping reductions that could include program eliminations, moving to state minimums for instruction and transportation, cutting staff, ending extracurricular activities and closing buildings.

Because of this, he said ECSD's Board of Education has adopted a plan to "give the community the best version of Edgewood."

The plan includes:

- Launching a Jump Start Summer Program for grades K-8
- Reinvesting in the district's Virtual Academy
- Expanding preschool offerings
- Returning Edgewood Early Childhood Center and Edgewood Primary School to neighborhood preschool-grade 2 buildings

"Our approach is not to continue to make cuts because ultimately we're going to have to rely on the community or a bail out

from the government," Philpot said. "Our feeling is, let's try to give the community something that they like and see as worth saving. We just have to improve our product, and we have a short window to do it."

Philpot said the district will also review participation fees to determine whether the current structure creates barriers for families. If reduced fees boost student involvement, he said,

Edgewood continued on A6

LOCAL IMPACT

New West Chester Twp. plant to bring 230 jobs

Steel & O'Brien given 9-year tax credit from Ohio.

By Sue Kiesewetter
Contributing Writer

Steel & O'Brien Manufacturing plans to open a new plant in West Chester Twp.

A subsidiary of FCH Inc., Steel & O'Brien manufactures sanitary stainless-steel fittings and precision flow solutions for the data, food, beverage and pharmaceutical industries.

The move is expected to create 230 jobs with an annual payroll of about \$13.4 million. To assist in that effort, Steel & O'Brien has been awarded a nine-year, Ohio Job Creation Tax Credit tax credit of 1.636 percent.

The project came together through the efforts of West Chester Twp. and its partners REDI Cincinnati and Jobs-Ohio, working with the Ohio Department of Development.

"This expansion reflects both confidence and momentum," said Scott Kerns, FCH Inc.'s chief executive officer.

"We are investing where we see long-term opportunity - in talent, in infrastructure, and in the industries that depend on precision and performance. Ohio has been

Plant continued on A6

CLOSER LOOK

Wright-Patterson AFB extends U.S. air power's reach in Epic Fury

'It really is an aerospace powerhouse,' one analyst says of Ohio.

By Thomas Gnau
Staff Writer

Operation Epic Fury involves the "largest regional concentration of American military firepower in a generation," according to U.S. Central Command.

Several missions at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base are contributing to that effort.

In fact, it's arguable that Wright-Patterson has an outsized role in shaping modern American air power, at least on the Air Force side.

"The evolution of America's air power is the story of Wright-Patterson," said Michael Gessel, vice president of federal government programs at the Dayton Development Coalition.

Wright-Patterson has been involved from the birth of modern military aviation in developing the technology and weapons that project global air power, he said.

Clayton Swope is deputy director of the Aerospace Security Project and a senior fellow in the Defense and Security Department at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

He's also a Middletown native familiar with the Dayton area and Wright-Patterson.

"I'd say (Wright-Patterson) makes sure the Air Force is a well-oiled machine," Swope said in an interview Monday. "It's kind of soup-to-nuts, making sure things

WPAFB continued on A6



A C-17 Globemaster III conducts flare testing operations at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., on Feb. 13. Eglin AFB units coordinated flare-testing operations to evaluate and field improved defensive-system capabilities for Air Mobility Command aircraft.

MASTER SGT. J.D. STRONG II / U.S. AIR FORCE

THE LATEST

Father who gave gun to son accused in school shooting. B1

Iranian Americans fear for relatives as bombs fall on homeland. B2

IN YOUR PAPER

Read your newspaper anywhere, any time with bonus and updated content at Journal-News.com/epaper.

INDEX

BUSINESS.....	B3
COMICS.....	C4
DEATHS.....	A4
PUZZLES.....	C5



2026 BEST OF BUTLER COUNTY
JOURNAL-NEWS

IT'S TIME TO VOTE
YOU DECIDE THE FOOD, SERVICES, PEOPLE AND PLACES THAT MAKE BUTLER COUNTY GREAT.

SCAN & VOTE
VOTE AT bit.ly/bestofbutler2026