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# The Times-Reporter

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W E E K E N D

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The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction added netting along the fence line at Richland Correctional Institution. The netting, so tall it looks like a Top Golf facility, is designed to prevent people from throwing drugs, phones and tobacco over the prison fence. Officers at Richland Correctional responded to a multi-person overdose on June 3, 2025. People smoke drug-soaked paper, which can contain a variety of chemical compounds. Depending on the compound and its potency, users pass out or become violent, go into convulsions, have hallucinations and/or start screaming.

SAMANTHA MADAR/THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

# SMUGGLED

## Ohio can't stop the deadly prison drug trade

**Anthony Shoemaker**

Columbus Dispatch | USA TODAY NETWORK

Jayson Murphy lit the speck of paper and held the smoke in his lungs as long as he could.

His cellmate, John Jenkins, got the drug-soaked scrap from another incarcerated man at Lebanon Correctional Institution. The paper — nicknamed K2 inside state prisons — was cut from a sheet soaked in unpredictably potent synthetic chemicals.

The drug was their escape from the cockroaches, the bad food, the brutality of their life in prison. The friends laughed themselves to sleep in their bunks that October evening in 2024.

The next morning, Jenkins nudged Murphy's leg. He didn't move.

"Oh man, my cellie is dead," Jenkins recalled telling a corrections officer.

Investigators with the Ohio State Highway Patrol

closed the case when the coroner ruled the death an overdose.

"They don't care to even waste time investigating it," said Murphy's sister, Amber Hall.

Murphy was one of a growing number of people dying behind bars as drug-soaked paper floods Ohio prisons.

Smoking paper is a uniquely prison thing. The common chemicals and synthetic compounds are hard to detect. The paper is easy to smuggle and hide.

A single sheet can sell for \$6,000 or more after being cut into as many as 1,400 tiny hits.

Incarcerated people, former staff and grieving families say the system comes down hard on people suffering from addiction behind bars while prison officials refuse to admit that the biggest smugglers are vendors and state employees.

See **PRISON DRUGS**, Page 2A

## New Philadelphia school board names next superintendent

**Jane Imbody**

The Times-Reporter | USA TODAY NETWORK

The New Philadelphia City Schools Board of Education has chosen Carole Sutton as the district's next superintendent.

The school board approved a three-year contract for Sutton, who will start Aug. 1, according to a community announcement. Her proposed annual salary is \$151,215, according to a previous notice from the board.

Sutton currently serves as the director of human resources at the Stark County Educational Service

See **SUTTON**, Page 3A

## Nine Tuscarawas County art students earn a state spotlight

**Jane Imbody**

The Times-Reporter | USA TODAY NETWORK

Nine Tuscarawas County students have been selected for the 56th annual Ohio Governor's Youth Art Exhibition. This event celebrates the artistic achievements of young artists from across the state, according to a community announcement.

The exhibition is open to all Ohio high schools and allows students from public, private and chartered schools to showcase their work in a statewide competition. The competition includes scholarships and recognition for participants.

### Multiple art categories represented

Tuscarawas County students earned spots in the exhibition after a competitive selection process. The featured students from Indian Valley High School and Dover High School will have their work displayed in the Ohio Governor's Youth Art Exhibition. Their pieces will also be featured in a cameo art show at the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

The students selected from Indian Valley High School are:

- Olivia Bamfield, digital art

See **ART STUDENTS**, Page 3A



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