

Local newspaper highlights school year kick off

Horizon Science Academy (HSA) Lorain's recent kick off to the new school year was featured in the local newspaper, *The Morning Journal*, which highlighted its staggered approach to students returning, with those in transitional grades – kindergarten, sixth and ninth – coming back a day early.

“The goal with staggered starts is to give the kids, who are in the transitional grades, that extra day to get them ready,” explained Assistant Principal Jayson Bendik. “We are off to a quick start here in general because we have 185 days which are outlined by Concept Schools, our management company. The goal is to have the extra time to really go above and beyond for our students as we prepare them for college.”

Reporter Zachary Srnis also spoke with the school's librarian, Angelica Jayaraman, who explained that the focus for kindergarteners – who spent some of their first school day in the library – will be an introduction to reading.



Photo credit: *The Morning Journal*

“We have 8,000 books in the library ranging from picture books to adult fiction to nonfiction works,” Jayaraman said. “Kids grades kindergarten through fifth have library as a rotation making it almost a regular class. For the older grades, the library serves as a place for them to stop by during language arts classes.”

Sixth- and eighth-grade math teacher Melissa Gibson met with a group of sixth-graders who offered insight into what they should expect to focus on this school year including fractions, ratios, geometry and graphing.

“This is an adjustment period for them,” she said. “When they are in elementary school, they kind of have their hands held. When they reach this stage, they need to start asking for help and taking the necessary steps to make sure they are prepared.”

“If they have a question or are confused by something, they need to ask; I don't want anyone to fall behind,” she continued. “This is a college-prep school, and they are always being challenged to make sure they are ready. The high school teachers here teach like college professors, so I want to make sure these students are ready for that.”

Bendik highlighted the school's remarkable growth – from 90 students in 2009 when first opened, to 800 this year.

“We have a K-12 building that really gears kids for college,” he said. “It's not a question of *if* the kids will go to college, but *where* they will go. We actually begin working with students at the middle school level to build a place for what it will take to go to the school they want. We are proud to say we had 100 percent of our seniors last year graduate from high school.