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Horizon Science Academy welcomes back students

By **Briana Contreras**

The Morning Journal

Horizon Science Academy, 760 Tower Blvd. in Lorain, started its year Aug. 13.

Staff at the college preparatory academy welcomed kindergartners, sixth-graders and freshman students.

Remaining grades of the K-12 school will begin their school year the morning Aug. 14.

Fatih Sumer, principal of Horizon, and Jayson Bendik, assistant principal, said they were excited to begin the school year after a summer of planning and community involvement.

This is the second year Horizon had two first days of school between different grade levels and it has worked well, they said.

"Some grades are here now, then tomorrow, everyone comes," Bendik said. "We've noticed it works out well as it eases the flow of transitioning into a new school year for students."

Two first days give students an opportunity to settle in and create relationships with other students and staff, he said.

"We're really trying to establish a stable foundation to follow our (motto) of being respectful, responsible, ready and safe," Bendik said. "It creates a positive school climate and culture."

Sumer added the staff annually spends 1,110 hours on classroom instruction. The state minimum is 920 hours, he said.

INCREASE IN ENROLLMENT

Last year, there were 685 students enrolled at Horizon.

As of Aug. 13, the academy had 729 students, Bendik said.

During 2017-18, Horizon had 19 seniors who all graduated.

This year, there are 31 seniors.

"We have students for each grade on the waiting list, so there could be more," Sumer said.

Joy Nickoli, a kindergarten teacher,



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Top left, Joy Nickoli, kindergarten teacher at Horizon Science Academy in Lorain and Grace Brown, her teacher's aide stand with their new kindergarten class who is sharing their Play-Doh masterpieces during their first day of school Aug. 13. Kindergartners, sixth-graders and freshman students started school Monday while remaining grades of the K-12 school will Aug. 14.

said it's exciting to have new group of youngsters to look over and help begin their school experiences.

Nickoli said her new kindergarten class is exciting.

"So far, no one has cried," she joked. "We held a Kinder Camp over the summer which introduced school to them early. I think it helped a lot of the students get used to the environment."

She and her teacher's aide Grace Brown work together in the classroom.

Nickoli said the collaboration helps to work with students who learn at different levels.

Emmie Rogers, a kindergartner, shared her excitement on her first day of school.

Emmie said she enjoyed playing games with her fellow students and really liked playing with Play-Doh.

She said she attended Kinder Camp and was happy to come back and make friends.

Emmie was surprised when she learned older students would be coming to the school the next day, but said she's excited to meet them.

She hopes to become a cheerleader at Horizon and to sing on the auditorium stage.

Jack Watkins began his first day of school as a freshman, along with his sister who is in sixth-grade.

Jack said he has attended Horizon since he was in third-grade and loves it.

He said becoming a high school freshman made him nervous, but returning with staff and his friends have made it more fun.

Jack said he's also excited to learn more about becoming an adult and preparing for college.

"I'm in all honors (classes) and I feel that it'll keep me more engaged," he said. "It may be a bit more challenging, but I'm ready for it. I think this year will be great."