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Parent Partnership Breakfast at Horizon Science Academy in Lorain engages families

Briana Contreras

The Morning Journal

Kindergartners and their parents shared breakfast Sept. 28 at Horizon Science Academy in Lorain for a Kindergarten Parent Partnership Breakfast.

The families filled the gymnasium of the school, 760 Tower Blvd., ready to eat and eager to learn.

While breakfast dishes such as eggs, fruit, donuts and more were consumed, staff and guests, including District 2 State Board of Education member Charles Froehlich, who was invited to speak on behalf of education at Horizon and in the state.

Froehlich discussed the state's strategic plan of keeping consistency between all of the school districts in the state.

Following the breakfast and after their children went to class, parents were invited to attend an interactive presentation.

Jayson Bendik, assistant principal at Horizon, and Fatih Sumer, the school's principal, lead the presentation.

Its purpose was to familiarize parents of Horizon's education and to create an opportunity for communication and trust, Bendik said.

"This shows parents we are committed to helping their child," he said. "Knowing a student or their child is powerful toward motivating (them) in the classroom. That can lead them to flourish."

Bendik and Sumer informed parents of the educational goals and personal growth at the K-12 concept school.

The school's core values for students to develop into their futures are respect, responsibility, integrity, courage, curiosity and effort.

Bendik and Sumer also looked at successes of the 10-year-old STEM school, which are studies in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Bendik added Horizon received an overall "C" grade last year from the Ohio Department of Education.

Concept schools are growing, with Horizon being one out of 17 in the state, serving 14,000 students in 30 schools in the midwest, he said.



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Britta Howell, of Lorain, said she was happy to enjoy a breakfast with her children Eric, 5, and Emma Howell, 3, during a Parent Partnership Breakfast on Sept. 28 at Horizon Science Academy of Lorain. Howell said she enjoys attending the breakfasts because she's able to spend more time with her youngsters and also be informed on updates and operations of the academy.

Bendik and Sumer later emphasized the importance of close relationships between staff and parents that can benefit their children and their education.

"This is all about making sure their child has a better future," Bendik said. "Some may have challenges, obstacles or things they are doing well in and cultivating the relationship.

"It will typically lead toward success at the school. We also realize (parents) are the first teacher at home. So, if they need resources or help in any way, we can make sure we provide that."

Bendik said this was the first year Froehlich visited the school; adding it's good to bring people into Horizon because they can bring different perspectives and programs that can ultimately help their students.

"You can get things accomplished with these meetings, or in an intimate setting like this," Bendik said. "It's hard to get things done through email or text messages, and we really want to give parents an opportunity to ask questions and get to know our schools. This is an

avenue to communicate with us."

Options used at Horizon to communicate with parents are through email, text, letters, the school's phone application ConceptSIS and home visits.

Shalanda Rogers, a Horizon parent and an intervention specialist at the school, said home visits are an effective and positive way to communicate with parents and their children.

Rogers said her child and other parents love seeing their teachers at their home, creating constructive and encouraging relationships.

Britta Howell, of Lorain, attended her second parent breakfast with her children Emma, 3, and Eric, 5.

Howell said she attended last year for her daughter Annabella, now a first-grader, and enjoys the breakfast because Horizon does well with keeping parents updated on how it operates.

"It's amazing they do that," she said. "I'm so happy I chose this school for my children. Not all schools work this closely with parents to build these relationships."