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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NWLSD Is Offering a Number of Summer Learning Opportunities

This year, Northwest Local School District (NWLSD) is offering a variety of educational opportunities for students over the summer in order to reinforce the knowledge that students retained over the course of the school year and to provide learning opportunities that will help prepare students for the upcoming year. These online resources will be available to all students, regardless of grade level. Students in kindergarten through grade 5 will have the ability to engage in skill practice in reading and math using IXL Learning. Elementary students entering grades 2 and 3 will also have the opportunity to participate in in-person literacy intervention classes in July and August and high school students will have the opportunity to participate in advanced placement camps.

NWLSD online resources:

The online resources include activities surrounding science, technology, engineering, math, reading, art and daily exercise. Students will also have the opportunity to hone their skills in math and reading through a new program adopted by the district called IXL Learning, an online resource that helps students build on essential skills through interactive questions, built in support, and motivating awards. The program, often touted as “the world’s most popular learning suite for students K-12,” not only offers a comprehensive curriculum, it also offers analytics and personalized guidance that allows teachers to identify where students are at in their learning and where they may need additional intervention or enrichment.

NWLSD distributed over 4,000 to students:

In order to ensure access, NWLSd is allowing students to keep their district distributed chromebooks over the summer. “We surveyed our parents during the school year to gain an understanding of how many of our students had access to devices and the internet at home,” said Brenda Miller, NWLSd Curriculum Director. “Our teachers and school administrators also reached out to families that were having difficulty participating in remote learning to identify needs and barriers. We found that well over 25% of our students did not have a dedicated
device to use for learning and were fortunate to be able to distribute over 4,000 district devices to our students for use at home. Reliable in-home access to the internet is an issue we still need to tackle and a need that we are eager to partner with our community and area businesses to address for our students,” said Miller.

Importance of summer academic engagement:

Outside of understanding the need for access, the district also understands the importance of summer academic engagement. Studies have shown that regular participation in summer learning activities provides structure for students and helps children stay engaged and focused. Research also shows that summer learning can be used to polish the academic skills students learned over the course of the school year and minimize or eliminate summer skill loss. Summer learning programs are especially beneficial for children from low-income households who may not otherwise have access to educational resources during the summer months and can also provide the extra time students need to master academic content. Students who choose to participate can select any subject and grade level to access activities, which will allow students to brush up on skills they may be weak in or accelerate their learning of skills that they are ready to tackle. This opportunity for practice is voluntary and the lessons will not be graded by a teacher.

“Due to COVID-19, schools across Ohio were forced to close their doors and to teach students virtually,” said Miller. “For many districts this created a challenge to reach and engage students and, without summer skill practice and intervention, may result in wider than normal gaps in skills when school resumes in the fall. As a result, we are encouraging students to utilize their summer to strengthen their academic skills. We believe that providing students with access to resources and opportunities throughout the summer will help reinforce what they learned over the course of the year and allow for continued learning. We are eager to welcome our children back into the classroom and want to ensure that they have every opportunity to succeed,” said Miller.

High School Pre-AP (Advanced Placement) Camp:

Students in grades 9 and 10 will have the opportunity to participate in virtual Pre-AP (Advanced Placement) Camp. Students enrolled in the summer camp will participate in a week-long program that allows them to collaborate with their peers on research and problem-based learning projects in order to prepare them to be successful with Honors and Advanced Placement coursework. NWLSD offered this program for the first time last year to incoming freshmen only. Students worked in teams to design classrooms of the future, completing the week by presenting their research and ideas to their peers and a variety of external guests. Feedback from teachers, students, and families was generally positive, citing particular benefits from bringing students together from across the district to collaborate and to have the opportunity to get to know one another prior to starting high school. This year, in an effort to
continue preparing students, the district extended the course offering to upcoming sophomores. The sophomore camp experience will focus on critical thinking skills, with a heavy emphasis on science and technology.

**Elementary school summer literacy Program:**

NWLSD is also planning to offer an in-person summer literacy program in July and August for elementary students entering grades 2 and 3. The program will offer individualized instruction and support to students that have fallen behind and academically perform below grade level in reading. The summer classes will be smaller in size and will focus on both literacy and social-emotional learning. Lunch and bus transportation will be provided for participating students. NWLSD teachers, counselors, bus drivers, nurses, food service workers, and administrators are working together to provide this exciting opportunity for our students.

“We will be able to offer these types of classes with our CARES Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds,” said Todd Bowling, NWLSD Superintendent. “Although we have never offered these courses for elementary students in the past, we are trying to create more out-of-the-box methods to reach all of our students. This opportunity will not only be a way to help students improve academically, but will also provide us with information so we can gather data on students to see where they are since closing the school year with a month and a half of remote learning. We plan to use it as a case study for how we move forward in the future. Bringing students into the buildings this summer will allow us to better prepare for a full re-entry, assuming we will be allowed in the fall when we start back. We plan to use the experience as a model to prepare for how we approach reopening for the 20-21 school year,” said Bowling.