



# THE BLUE DEVIL BULLETIN



*The official newsletter of the Oconto Unified School District*

## INSIDE THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

- Guest Column: All In-Girls Leadership Conference
- Holiday Recipes
- Student Success Closet Updates
- Athletics & ART News



*A still from Moana Play*



## EMPOWERING EDUCATION THROUGH COMMUNITY: A REFLECTION ON OCONTO'S COLLECTIVE JOURNEY

By Superintendent Emily Miller

Dear Oconto Community,

I hope this message finds you in good health and high spirits. As we delve into the heart of the school year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the remarkable journey we've been on together. Our commitment to fostering a strong sense of community within our educational system has never been more evident, and it's my privilege to share with you the benefits of this approach.

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One of the most significant advantages of a strong community approach to education is the positive impact it has on our students. The nurturing environment, encompassing not just the school but the entire community, plays a vital role in their growth and success. When students feel connected and supported by their community, they are more likely to excel academically. In fact, studies have shown that students who have a strong support system are more likely to graduate from high school compared to those who do not. This underscores the power of our collective commitment to their well-being.

A thriving community approach to education goes beyond the classroom. It instills in our students a strong sense of civic responsibility and a deeper connection to the world around them. As we prepare them to become responsible and engaged citizens, we are also nurturing the next generation of community leaders. It is no surprise that communities with strong educational ties boast a significantly higher rate of volunteerism and civic engagement. Our students are the future, and we are actively shaping a brighter tomorrow by integrating them into the heart of our community.

In our journey towards community-based education, let us remember the words of Helen Keller: "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

Our community is a testament to the power of togetherness, from parents and teachers to community leaders and, most importantly, our students. Together, we have the ability to accomplish great things and pave the way for a more promising future.

In conclusion, it's clear that a strong community approach to education offers tangible benefits that extend far beyond the classroom. By fostering an environment of support, engagement, and shared responsibility, we are sowing the seeds of a brighter and more prosperous future for our students and our community as a whole.

At OUSD, we appreciate your continual support, dedication, and commitment to the district. Collectively, we will persist in shaping a more promising future for our students.

Wishing you a holiday season filled with joy, good health, and boundless opportunities as we approach the New Year.

Warm regards,  
Emily Miller, Superintendent  
Oconto Unified School District





## ALL IN-GIRLS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE **INSPIRES** **CONFIDENCE AND EMPOWERMENT** IN MIDDLE SCHOOLERS



**By Samantha Boucher**  
*OUSD Board Member*

The Oconto County Economic Development Corporation recently held the All In-Girls Leadership Conference at Oconto Middle School in Oconto, Wisconsin, on Tuesday, September 26, 2023. The conference was attended by 7th and 8th-grade girls from the Lena, Peshtigo, and Oconto School Districts. The conference's mission was to motivate young women and girls to be smart, strong, and confident while overcoming obstacles in life.

The conference featured three inspiring speakers: Ali Starr, Judy Hehr, and Sara Mercer. Ali Starr delivered thought-provoking, high-energy, engaging keynotes that moved the audience to take action and build the best version of themselves. Judy Hehr inspired deep reflection so the girls could confidently own their influence and impact. Sara Mercer spoke about the importance of setting goals and how to use them to reach dreams.

The All In-Girls Leadership Conference was a great success, with the girls leaving feeling empowered and inspired. The speakers provided valuable advice and tips on managing the stress of peer pressure, feeling pretty, maintaining friends, self-esteem, bullies, academics, and more.

The conference's mission was to inspire girls to love themselves and dream big, and it certainly achieved that goal. These young women are better equipped to take on the world and reach their full potential with the knowledge and tools they gained from the conference.

The conference was made possible by the generous support of sponsors: The Women's Fund of the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation, Amphenol-Unlimited Services, Leon H. and Clymene M. Bond Foundation, Bellin Health, Wisconsin Public Service Foundation, and Kwik Trip.







# ATHLETIC UPDATES

## FOSTERING A WINNING CULTURE: EXPLORING TEAM DYNAMICS ON AND OFF THE FIELD



By Mr. Adam Timm,  
Athletic Director

At the end of June district advisors and coaches worked with Elevated Performance to discuss upcoming 2023-24 extra-curricular goals at a summer inservice. At the end of the day the group of advisors and coaches decided on three points of emphasis:

**Participation:** Students that participate in extracurricular activities report better social interactions, stronger relationships, and higher academic performance. There is one opportunity to participate at the high school level. Our goal remains to have as many students involved in extracurricular activities as possible and for students to take a risk and try a new sport or activity.

**Improvement:** Where the individual and team's performance starts to where it finishes is measurable. An individual's athletic performance is made up of genetic and environmental factors. A team's athletic performance is made up of a group of individuals working to improve. A coach or advisor can control one of these factors but not the other. It is our coach or advisor's obligation to work on ways for the athlete and team to improve over the course of a season or extracurricular experience.

**Culture:** How do our athletes work together towards a common goal? How do they treat each other? What are the values, beliefs and attitudes shared by the team? Culture is not only determined by the way extracurricular participants respond during practice and games. It is determined by how they act in our school and community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year.

At the end of each season families will receive a questionnaire based on participation, improvement and culture. We ask that you have an honest conversation with your child and provide feedback for administration, coaches and upcoming inservice activities. Your feedback will be valuable as we plan future training and activities for advisors and coaches.

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*Culture is not just about how our athletes perform during practice and games; it's a reflection of their actions in our school and community every day.*



## **SERVING UP FOR A CAUSE: OCONTO COUNTY VETERANS MEMORIAL BENEFITS FROM FUNDRAISING VOLLEYBALL AND FOOTBALL GAME**



**By Brook Youngs**

*OES Social Worker and Social Media Specialist*

In a heartwarming display of community spirit and support for veterans, our Oconto high school Volleyball and Football teams gathered for a special fundraising event that combined sports and patriotism. The Oconto County Veterans Memorial, a symbol of gratitude to those who served their country, became the focal point of a charitable endeavor during an exciting volleyball game and homecoming football.

The fundraising games took place the same night as homecoming, attracting community members of all ages. The atmosphere was electric, as team our Oconto volleyball team wore military jerseys in support of the night. Thank you to the parents of OHS Volleyball and Football for your basket and baked good donations.

Also, a thank you to Michelle McDowell and Courtney Christensen for organizing this event and contributing to the event's success.

The funds raised towards The Oconto County Veterans Memorial serves as a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by these brave men and women, and the volleyball and football games were a testament to the community's commitment to preserving their memory. The night raised \$3,200 demonstrating the significant difference our community can make in supporting a legacy of those that have served our nation.

## **ELKS CLUB SUPPORTS OCONTO SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT SUCCESS CLOSET WITH GENEROUS DONATION**

The Elks Club is known for their dedication to our Oconto community and in a meaningful display of community commitment and generosity, the Elks Club has made a significant contribution, in strengthening the resources to the Oconto School District's Student Success Closet, a vital resource that helps students in need.

This charitable act represents the organization's commitment to fostering a supportive and caring environment for our OUSD students. The Student Success Closet, a valuable initiative within the Oconto Unified School District, provides students with essential resources, including school supplies, food, clothing, and hygiene products. Its mission is to ensure that every student has access to the tools and necessities they need to thrive in their educational journey.

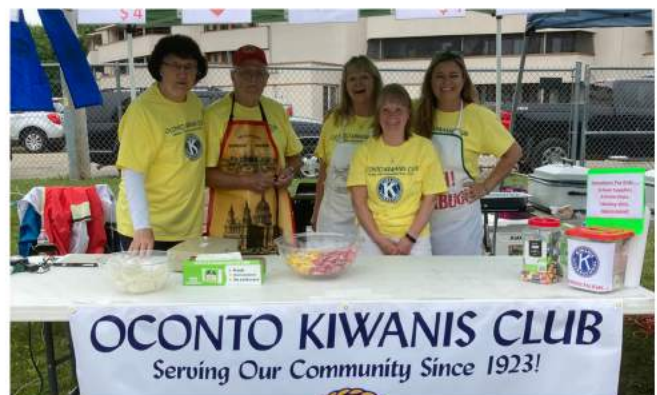
This donation will make a meaningful difference in the students and families lives the Student Success Closet serves. The Elks Club reminds us of the potential impact local organizations can make in the lives of our students.

## **ONGOING COMMITMENT OF THE OCONTO KIWANIS CLUB TO THE STUDENT SUCCESS PLAN**

The Oconto Kiwanis Club has made a generous and heartwarming commitment to the Student Success Plan by providing monthly contributions and support to the plan.

The Student Success Plan is an essential outline that enhances the development of our Oconto School District students by providing resources, support, and opportunities for a student's educational experience. The well being of our students in helping them overcome obstacles and reach their full potential underscores the importance of sustained and consistent support we receive from the club's decision.

The club demonstrates the sustained commitment required to foster student success and empowerment. Thank you Kiwanis Club for not only investing in our students well being but also for your support in the prosperity for every student within the Oconto Unified School District.





## EMPOWERING CHANGE: HIGH SCHOOLERS LEAD THE WAY IN RAISING \$1,800 FOR MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS



In a remarkable display of bringing awareness to mental health, Oconto high schoolers, Betsy Finger, Elaina Moody, and Owen O'Connor successfully raised \$1,800 to establish a Hope Squad at a nearby school by donating the funds to 988, the nation's suicide and crisis hotline.

Hope Squad is a school-based peer-to-peer program that is dedicated to fostering a supportive and caring environment for students through peer to peer suicide prevention trainings and mental health awareness.

With the Hope Squad in place, students will have access to a network of peers who are trained to provide support and resources to those struggling with mental health challenges. The efforts to raise funds and create a Hope Squad have not only united the community but also underscored the importance of mental health awareness.

By raising money, **Betsy, Elaina, and Owen** are a powerful reminder that, with determination and dedication, we can all make a difference ensuring that young people have a support system in place to address their mental health concerns.

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*The trio successfully fundraised \$1,800 to establish a Hope Squad at a neighboring school, contributing the funds to 988, the national suicide and crisis hotline.*



*Hope Squad is leading the way!*



# HOLIDAY RECIPES



**Laura Charlier**  
Director of Nutrition

## AFTER SCHOOL SNACKS

### Apple Slices with Cinnamon Almond

- 1 Medium Apple
- 1 Tablespoon of Almond Butter
- Pinch of Ground Cinnamon

Core Apple and cut into 8 slices. Spread each slice with a little almond butter and sprinkle with cinnamon.



### Cinnamon & Sugar Toast

- 2 Slice of Toast
- Butter
- 1 Tablespoon Sugar
- Pinch of Cinnamon

Put the Sugar and Cinnamon in sandwich bag. Zip lock the bag or twist tie it and shake until blended. Make toast and butter to your liking. While it is still hot take a spoon and sprinkle Cinnamon and Sugar mixture over toast.



### Stuffed Bell Peppers

- 4 medium bell peppers (any color)
- 1 lb lean (at least 80%) ground beef
- 2 tablespoons chopped onion
- 1 cup Minute Rice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 2 cans (15 oz) tomato sauce
- 3/4 cup shredded mozzarella cheese (3 oz)

#### Pre-Heat oven to 350°F.

- Cut thin slice from stem end of each bell pepper to remove top of pepper. Remove seeds and membranes; rinse peppers. If necessary, cut thin slice from bottom of each pepper so they stand up straight. Use a Deep Roasting Pan.
- In a bowl hand mix beef, Worcestershire sauce, onion, salt, pepper and garlic until well blended. Stir in rice and 1 cup of the tomato sauce
- Stuff peppers with beef mixture and pour the remaining tomato sauce over the top of peppers
- Cover with foil and bake for 45 minutes, take the foil off, sprinkle with mozzarella cheese or your favorite shredded cheese, and bake for additional 10 minutes or until center of meat in the pepper reaches 155\*.
- Let set for 5 minutes after taking out of the oven and serve.

*Great when accompanied with mashed potatoes*



## PLEASE WELCOME - BROOK YOUNGS



Brook Youngs has demonstrated a remarkable dedication to the well-being and development of our students during her time in the older grades. Now, she brings her passion and knowledge to our elementary school, where she will undoubtedly play a crucial role in ensuring that our students receive the support they need to thrive both academically and emotionally. We are confident that Brook's familiarity with our community, coupled with her expertise, will make her an invaluable asset to our school and a trusted advocate for our students.



**By Dr. Ben Bourassa**  
OES Principal

It is with great pleasure that we introduce Brook Youngs as our newest social worker at Oconto Elementary School. Some of you might already know Brook, as she has been making a positive impact in our community for some time now. With her wealth of experience working at our middle school and high school, we are excited to have her join our team and bring her expertise to our youngest students.

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*Brook has been making a positive impact in our community for some time now.*



## FIRE SAFETY FUN WITH THE 4-KERS



Our local heroes from the Oconto Fire & Rescue recently visited GoOconto Elementary School to spend quality time with our fantastic 4-K students. The firefighters engaged the little ones in valuable lessons about fire safety, covering essentials like "Stop, Drop, and Roll," calling 911, and establishing a family meeting place.

The highlight of the day was when our 4-Kers became honorary firefighters, getting hands-on experience with the hose and having a blast. A big thank you to the Fire Department for their dedication and time in educating our young ones. Let's all take a moment to review our own fire safety plans at home, ensuring the safety of our families. Kudos to our local heroes and the enthusiastic 4-K students for making our community a safer place!





# OES Art Room

in

With the new school year officially underway, first graders have begun learning about symmetry in Art, as well as positive and negative space on their pumpkins!



Kindergarten students are learning which primary colors mix together to create their secondary colors! Orange, Green, and Purple!

Third graders are getting messy with their hands covered in paper mache! They are making forms for their Day Of The Dead skull projects!





## EMPOWERING EXCELLENCE: OMS BLUE DEVIL FAMILIES EMBRACE A YEAR OF **GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT**



*Engaging in learning & building community*



**Katey Ambrose**  
Principal, OMS

### ***Greetings OMS Blue Devil Families,***

As your child dives into the new school year, we're making waves at OMS to ensure an enriching educational experience. At OMS, we're committed to providing a nurturing and enriching educational experience for all our students. Here are some of the latest updates and highlights from our school:

#### **Settling In**

Getting acquainted with all the students, staff members, and a significant number of parents during the initial few weeks has been an incredible experience. Each day, I gain a deeper understanding of the strengths, needs, and reasons to celebrate within OMS. It brings me immense joy to join in celebrating the achievements and accomplishments with everyone. On a weekly basis, we honor two OMS staff members as "Staff of the Week," granting them the privilege of front-row parking and an extra day to wear jeans.

#### **Extracurricular Opportunities**

Participating in extracurricular activities is pivotal in shaping a student's growth. At OMS, we provide a diverse array of clubs, sports, and organizations to accommodate a wide range of interests.

The football and volleyball seasons are nearing their conclusion, while winter sports are gearing up for the upcoming season. Simultaneously, OMS is buzzing with activity as the Art Club, Publishing Club, and Student Council are actively engaging students. We urge you to inspire your child to delve into their hobbies beyond the classroom and become actively involved!

#### **1st quarter OMS citizenship award winners**

OMS Citizenship Awards are given to two students in each grade who demonstrate responsible, respectful, and empowering leadership qualities.

- Be responsible by completing homework on time, maintaining good grades, and following directions. Show respect by being courteous, following rules, and appreciating diversity.
- Maintain a positive attitude by having an open mind, being a positive role model, and staying honest and trustworthy.

#### **Our 2023-24 First Quarter Citizenship Award Winners are:**

5th grade ~ Connor Gilligan & Rachel Mitchell  
6th grade ~ Maks Bostedt & Ava Filz  
7th grade ~ Dillon Colvin & Brooklyn Viestenz  
8th grade ~ Hannah DeHut & Dane Helnore





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*At OMS, we provide a diverse array  
of clubs, sports,  
and organizations to accommodate  
a wide range of interests.*

#### **Stay Informed**

Keep up-to-date with OMS news by visiting our school website and following us on social media. As we move forward, our mission remains to empower excellence through education. Together, we will continue to inspire, challenge, and support our students in achieving their fullest potential.

Thank you for being a part of the OMS community. We look forward to an incredible year ahead!

Leading & Learning Together,  
Katey Ambrose





## OHS PRIORITIZES SUCCESS: ATTENDANCE, PHONE ETIQUETTE, AND DUAL CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES



**Adam DeWitt**  
Principal, OHS

Congratulations on an outstanding and a successful homecoming and a great start to the school year! As we progress through the academic year, I want to share some important updates and highlight three key focus areas at Oconto High School: Attendance, Mobile Phones, and Dual Credit Classes.

### **Attendance Matters:**

We understand that students have various commitments and responsibilities, but consistent attendance remains critical to academic success. Regular attendance ensures that your child stays engaged with their learning, builds strong relationships with their peers and teachers, and keeps up with the pace of instruction.

- Please encourage your child to attend school daily unless they are genuinely ill or face extenuating circumstances.
- Please notify our office immediately if your child needs to miss school.
- We actively monitor attendance patterns and appreciate your partnership in ensuring that your child attends school punctually and consistently.

### **Mobile Phone Usage:**

In today's digital age, mobile phones are ubiquitous and can be valuable tools for communication and learning. However, they can also be a distraction if not used responsibly. We are committed to maintaining a focused and productive learning environment. Your support is evident as mobile device usage is now rare in the hallway or classroom.

- Our school policy on mobile phone usage is straightforward: phones should be turned off and placed in lockers during instructional time.
- We encourage students to use their phones responsibly during designated breaks and lunch periods.
- Please take a moment to discuss responsible phone usage with your child and reinforce the importance of respecting classroom rules.

### **Dual Credit Classes:**

We are proud to offer dual credit classes, which allow students to earn college credit while still in high school. These courses can significantly reduce the cost of higher education and accelerate your child's academic journey. During the 2021 – 2022 school year, OHS had 57.1% or 148 students complete at least one dual credit course. The state average was 23.2%. That is OUTSTANDING!

- Encourage your child to explore the dual credit courses available at our school.
- Speak with our school counselor to determine if these courses align with your child's academic and career goals.
- Be aware of application deadlines and requirements for dual credit programs, as they may vary.

We value your partnership in ensuring the success of our students and focusing on attendance, responsible mobile phone usage, and dual credit opportunities will contribute to a positive and productive school year.



## OHS ART NEWS



Chris Cleason, from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, began his "Fall Tour" with the Oconto art department.



A.C.E. (Art Community Enrichment)  
The month of October Mrs. Rennie provided an art activity building Jack O'Lantern or decorative pumpkins. All events are free for the public to participate.



## ART Classroom



### Art Foundation

Life study and proportion of the human form



"Creativity takes Courage!"  
Henri Matisse

### Graphic Arts

Made Military Appreciation shirts, OES Let's Go For It, OES staff shirt, and district shirts



### Art Deco

Toilet paper relief sculptures experiment.



### Ceramics

Handbuilding, pinch pot, Greek vase, visual pun (crabapple displayed) and, pottery wheel work







## Art Club

*The Art Club had their first meeting in the month of October. Information included upcoming events, Racine Danish Kringles Fundraiser, and food art.*

*The skeletons were built with brownie bits, pretzels, and marshmallows with gel food color. What we didn't realize was that everyone would leave with black mouths.*



10 talented art students at OHS were inducted into the National Art Honor Society on October 26th. Sponsored by Mrs. Rennie, a member since 1987, this lifetime membership recognizes outstanding art abilities. NAHS, founded in 1978, encourages excellence in art scholarship, character, and service. Congratulations to these young artists! We are proud of you!





## OHS ACHIEVES NGPF GOLD STANDARD RECOGNITION AMONG TOP 200 SCHOOLS IN WISCONSIN



Leading financial education nonprofit Next Gen Personal Finance has recognized Oconto High School as one of 199 NGPF Gold Standard Schools in WI because we require a standalone personal finance course!

With 23 states - and quickly growing - now requiring this course for all high school students, NGPF celebrates the high schools, like Oconto, that are ahead of this exciting trend. Congratulations to Oconto High School for teaching real-life skills like budgeting, credit management, career preparation and beyond!

To learn more about **Gold Standard School**, click here: <https://www.ngpf.org/got-finance/>

## OUSD WINS 2023 WSPRA SPECTRUM AWARD FOR BLUE DEVILS BULLETIN: EMPOWERING COMMUNICATION

The prestigious WSPRA Spectrum Award for the Oconto Unified School District's Blue Devils Bulletin: Empowering Communication, Connecting Communities (Summer Edition 2023) was proudly received during the Annual WSPRA Fall Conference.

This recognition underscores the district's commitment to excellence in communication and community engagement. For more details about the award and the outstanding publication, you can visit the official website at [wspra.org](http://wspra.org)





## JOIN OUR OUSD FAMILY!

We're hiring for multiple positions!



Do you want to work for OUSD? Check out our Employment page on our District website to view our open positions - <https://www.oconto.k12.wi.us/domain/81>

### Join Our Team as a

- OHS Spring Play Director position
- Middle School Girls Basketball Coach

If you would like more information, please contact **Brenda Walkowiak** at (920) 834-7814 ext. 4103 or [brenda.walkowiak@oconto.k12.wi.us](mailto:brenda.walkowiak@oconto.k12.wi.us)







**Photos provided by** District Photographer -  
Caroline Laurin Young (LY Photography LLC),  
Blake Ziobro, Heather Rennie, & Brook Youngs  
**Design by:** Andy Anaam (OUSD Office of  
Communications)

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