



THE BLUE DEVIL BULLETIN



The official newsletter of the Oconto Unified School District

INSIDE THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

- Middle school: Expanding opportunities
- High school: HOPE Squad
- New Firefighter 1 Class
- Musical trip to Mackinac Island



CORE PILLARS OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

By Superintendent Emily Miller

My experiences have taught me that all educational leaders need the understanding and the focus on developing operating systems for their districts within the reality of our times. The linkage of clear district and school goals, a clearer vision/mission, paired with the commitment to driving broader, cultural change is at the heart of my leadership.

Leadership has to be focused on the foundation of five organizational pillars. Pillars that are designed to facilitate educational equity, improve school culture, better effective student experiences, develop innovation, and foster community participation in school decisions. This will all lead to positive sustainable transformation.

Continued on pg.2

PILLAR 1-Educational Equity

"Equity in education requires putting systems in place to ensure that every child has an equal chance for success. That requires understanding the unique challenges and barriers faced by individual students or by populations of students and providing additional support to help them overcome those barriers."

- The staff is developing MLSS with multi-level symptoms of support, helping students at all levels. Many teachers are currently working through the UDL practice which helps teachers understand that we are teaching students to learn not just teaching the subject matter.

PILLAR 2-Climate & Culture

"School culture is often used interchangeably with school climate; however, "school climate" refers to the individual experiences and feelings that students, teachers, and staff have about the school, while "School culture" typically refers to the long-term physical and social environment, as well as the values."

"A positive school climate is the product of a school's attention to fostering safety; promoting a supportive academic, disciplinary, and physical environment; and encouraging and maintaining respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community."

- OUSD is currently working to change the culture by maintaining and building goals. We are working to create our safe and respectful environment using forms of behavior programs in all areas. Our SRO has been brought on full time and is developing relationships with all students.
- We have developed a climate and culture committee formed of teachers and staff. This group helps review our survey data and develop targets for schools and staff to reach to help provide the best environment for all.

PILLAR 3-Student Outcomes

"The true measure of student success is how well students are prepared to accomplish their current and future academic, personal, and professional goals through the development of knowledge, a sense of responsibility and self-reliance, and a connection to the college and wider community."

- We have aligned many of our goals to work on our curriculum to get students ready for college, career, military or the workforce. We work starting at middle school with an academic and career planning inquiry. Students start to think about what they have passion for and what they want to do.
- Teachers have been engaged over the last 4 years to align learning outcomes to our standards provided by the state and then making sure we have aligned our grading and assessment to what we have actually taught. We are always working with staff on a growth mindset and working together to use the knowledge we have internally to achieve high expectations. Students are asked to learn the content but also demonstrate proficiency in workforce skills, such as responsibility and collaboration.

PILLAR 4-Innovation

"An innovative classroom includes teaching strategies that are always evolving, and are different from day to day. Innovative learners will set goals for themselves, and crush them. These goals may be large or small, or ideally contain some aspects of both types, but should guide learners towards innovation."

- In Oconto, this is a strong focus. We are always looking for ways to up our game and create environments that are changing with the speed of our students and technology. We are creating paths for our students and environments that are flexible and insight creativity and collaboration. That is the goal of the referendum renovations at each school.
 - Flexible classroom environments,
 - Community classrooms for collaboration
 - Future ready learners.....meaning what is next is unknown and our students need to be able to pivot and change as needed for success.

PILLAR 5—Community Relations

"School factors that cultivate these strong relationships include a welcoming attitude that encourages involvement and a focus on the specific needs of families and the community. Effective partnerships are strengths-based and power is shared among all stakeholders."

- We are always looking to create a better relationship between our schools and the community. We need all to understand that we are building the next generation to take the lead in our community. We have established an Outreach Communication Coordinator position that can act as a person to help share our story and find areas in the community where we can be more impactful or create a better connection. We have a strong partnership with our industries through our Youth Apprenticeship Program. OUSD respects the voice of our community and wants all to be proud to be a Blue Devil.



OCONTO COUNTY SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE



Going above and beyond to help families during the pandemic.



Brittney Dequaine & Amy Huggett

Guest Article

The Oconto County School Supply Drive was started in January of 2020. The idea started when we observed our community going above and beyond to help families during the pandemic. When I was young my mom would take me to an event where we could receive free school supplies and this has always been a positive memory from my childhood. In bringing the idea of doing a school supply drive to those I work with, the idea quickly became a reality.

The support from the community was overwhelming and has, from day one, been a key to the success of our program. With donations from our sponsors, we quickly grew and became a 501c(3) nonprofit as of August 2021.

In addition to support from sponsors, we hold regular fundraisers to raise money for the program. Each Easter we offer a Torte Sale which has been very successful. We also host the Stuff the Bus event each June to kick off our school supply donation intake.

We will also be at Thompson's Brat Barn and selling concessions at Tuesdays in the Park this summer behind the Beyer Home Museum.

The drive continues to grow each year. Year one we distributed 120 backpacks, year two 235, and this year with rising inflation, we expect to easily double last years count as the financial need of families is the greatest we have experienced. We also continue to reach more students from other districts as word continues to spread to other Oconto County communities about the drive.

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The idea started when we observed our community going above and beyond to help families during the pandemic.

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Picture 1: Amy accepting a donation from Kwik Trip Oconto.

Picture 2: A happy student picking up his backpack, supplies and water bottle on distribution day.

Picture 3: Brittney with her sons Franklin and Anthony preparing to throw candy in the Copperfest Parade.

Picture 4: Kids at Oconto County Supply Drive Concession Stand.

The distribution day for handing out supplies is held each year on the second weekend of August. We try to make the day a fun and special day, as that is how I remember receiving my supplies as a child. During the distribution event, students are able to choose their new backpack, customize their water bottle and go home with the supplies they need for a successful school year.

We don't see the drive slowing down any time soon. We are two moms who are very passionate about helping families and children, and will continue to look for ways to grow the program. We know that without the support of our sponsors and community none of this would be possible. You are able to view the complete list of sponsors, make donations, view our wish list and register for supplies all via our website at www.Ocontocountyschoolsupplydrive.org. We do accept donations any time of the year at 215 Main St. Oconto or through the website. We would like to thank everyone who has donated, volunteered, and continues to support the OCSSD!



OCSD COLLABORATES WITH OCONTO SCHOOLS



Mrs. Samantha Boucher
Member, OUSD Board of Education

The collaboration between the Oconto Unified School District and Oconto County Economic Development helps to strengthen the community in so many ways. Quality education is the foundation for economic development. When relocating, people often look at the quality of the schools in the area before deciding where to live. High academic performance makes communities more attractive to entrepreneurs, business owners, and potential new residents. The same goes for teachers, administrators, and educational support staff – even bus drivers and “lunch ladies.” Healthy economic development makes it easier to recruit and retain top talent, whether for the school district or other Oconto businesses and industries.

Of course, quality education involves quality people, but it also involves quality facilities. Research shows that school improvements lead directly to better student performance. Oconto-area residents understand the correlation. In 2021, voters approved funding for operations and facility upgrade, including updated learning environments at the elementary, middle and high school.

As more residents move into the district, the Oconto County economy grows. Local businesses benefit from an influx of new consumers buying groceries, gas, and other products and services. Employers benefit by adding new talent to grow their businesses. Students benefit when these employers provide equipment and learning experiences to help prepare them for the future.

OCUSD is actively involved in economic development by connecting instruction with real-world application. By engaging with the business community, the district learns what skills are needed, then creates pathways that align with these workforce development needs.

OCUSD collaborates with Northeast Wisconsin Technical College and the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay to provide learning opportunities aligned with the community's needs.



Community outreach is an essential part of collaboration.

Certainly, school improvement and positive economic development are mutually beneficial. As schools improve, it's easier for cities to increase development. As development increases, it becomes easier for schools to improve. Research shows that everyone benefits from a strong local economy, higher property values, and a better-skilled workforce. OCUSD and OCEDC are building a partnership to realize these benefits.

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Archery Class



Mini Golf



OUSD SUMMER SCHOOL 2021-22

HIGHLIGHTS at a glance!

- 10 days, full days of fun and exciting classes.
- Rural busses were provided.
- The courses were designed to provide kids with the opportunity to engage in a variety of subjects and support cognitive development.
- Breakfast and lunch were provided to the students.
- Academic and enrichment classes were part of the summer school camp.
- Reinforced core class knowledge to achieve learning gains.
- High school students were extremely involved and helped with supervision and instruction of some classes.
- Several new classes were introduced this year including The Ruins, Archery, Baseball, Basketball, Football, Cooking, Art Journaling, Cheer, Makerspace, STEAM, Spa, Slime, Mario Kart.
- Community partners include Bellin Health swim lessons, The Good Place Bowling, The Farnsworth Library, The Ruins, UW Extension, and 4-H Coordinator.



Summer School Coordinators: Mrs. Kim Baker (L) & Mrs. Alana Eder (R)



Volleyball Fun

OCONTO ELEMENTARY ART



Above: Students call out primary and secondary colors and race to avoid being tagged during our ColorTag game!

Below: Students traced each other with chalk and worked together to add details! Other classes designed a top-down view of a zoo!

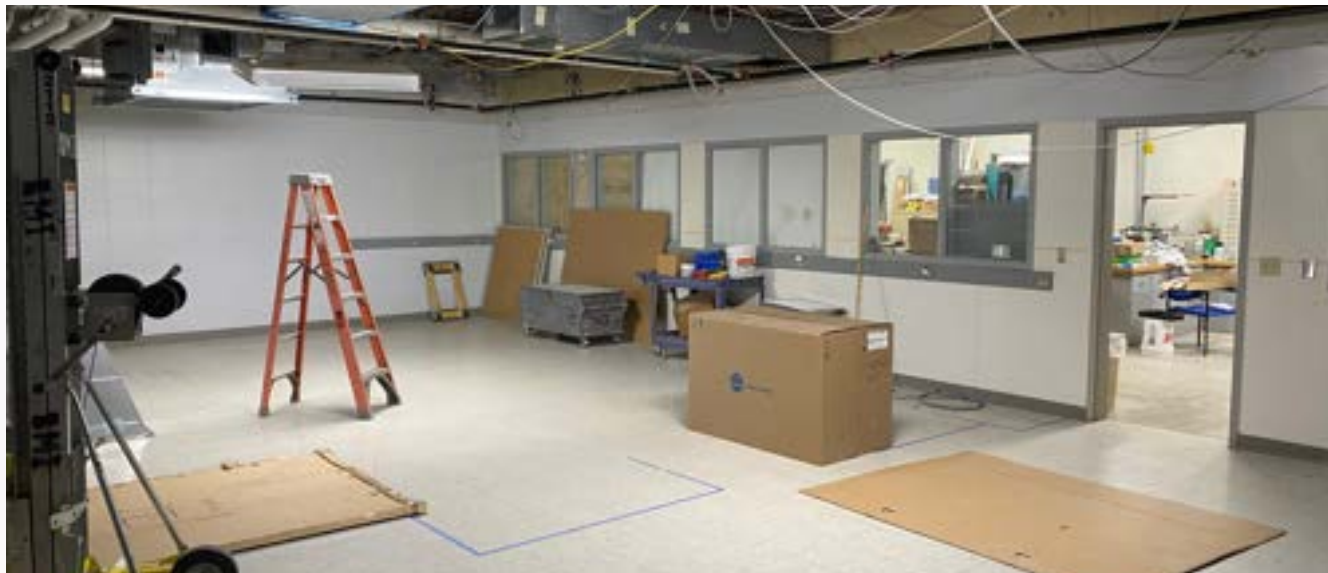


ART CONTINUED...



Students practiced their modeling abilities alongside their observational art skills during Mr. Z's figure drawing lessons! We quickly discovered how hard it is to pose still for any length of time so our friends can draw us!





OMS IS EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES



By Matt Hartin
OMS/BCA Principal

Benefiting from community support and the passing of the most recent referendum, Oconto Middle School will now have a fully functional Tech Ed Lab for the 2022-23 school year and beyond. A Tech Ed Lab is not new to Oconto Middle School, as it once was an offering for students. Unfortunately, this program has been dormant since approximately 2002, but that is no longer the case.

Ms. Jill Hermesen will be transitioning from her 6th-grade teacher role and spearheading the effort behind this much-needed space for our students. Jill's experience as a classroom teacher and her interest and drive to create unique experiences for our students make her an excellent fit for developing a highly impactful Tech Ed Program at Oconto Middle School.

The benefits of adding Middle School programming in this education realm will be seen with time. The offerings will enhance our students' foundational skills and create congruency between our middle school and what is already highly impactful Tech and Auto programming at the high school level.



Tech Ed Lab work in progress

As construction is underway, we must highlight the generosity of the Bond Foundation in addition to referendum funding for their significant monetary contribution of \$50,000 to help rekindle this opportunity for the students of Oconto Middle School.



ATHLETIC UPDATES

THE ARGUMENT FOR MULTIPLE EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT



By Mr. Adam Timm,
Athletic Director

During the 2021-22 school year our Blue Devils have experienced success in multiple extracurricular programs. As we continue to grow our offering, being involved in multiple extracurricular activities helps to make our student body diverse learners who are better fit to enter the workforce, go to college, join the military or attend trade school. Below are a few benefits of being involved in multiple extracurricular activities:

Exposure to different kids: Exposing kids to different extracurricular activities allows them to share experiences and expand their opportunities for interaction. Cross Country friends and coaches will be different from band friends and teachers, who will most definitely be different from the kids and coaches on the wrestling team!

Fewer overuse injuries: Studies show that playing multiple sports leads to better muscle, motor and skill development. It promotes general athleticism, balance, speed, and agility. All athletes need breaks (including professional athletes). Growing bodies become stressed by repetition and that stress can lead to injuries (shin splints are a perfect over use example).

Less opportunity for emotional burn-out: Specializing raises expectations, the costs for parents for club travel, and puts pressure on school-aged athletes. Having a variety of extracurricular experiences, not only athletic related activities, keeps things interesting. The goal of high school extracurriculars should be to learn life skills, experience new things, and most importantly, have fun. The fun component should be the last thing we should want to remove from extracurriculars.

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Extracurricular activities helps to make our student body diverse and support the learners!”

Exposure to different roles: Having a supporting role is a different experience than having a star role but both opportunities broaden experiences. It's an opportunity to become a better performer, teammate, and the kind of individual an employer will value because they are multidimensional.



Not putting all your eggs in one basket:

Doing only one activity limits your options. An injury, a bad experience, or a reduced role can bring an end to a participant's involvement in an activity. Being involved in multiple extracurriculars give the individual something else to "fall back on."

We will continue to support our extracurricular programs and encourage students to take a risk and try something new!





HOPE SQUAD FOR OHS STUDENTS

By Adam DeWitt
OHS Principal

Supporting students in their time of need can be the most important and rewarding part of working with young people. OHS has committed to ongoing investment to ensure our students are supported when they need it the most, and it includes all of us. Hold On, Persuade, and Empower are the powerful words behind the acronym H.O.P.E. The faculty advisors have already started training students. It is essential to have their involvement due to their peer groups and daily experiences.

Our trained advisors continually remind the HOPE Team that they are not counselors but our learning community's eyes and ears. In August, our team will be grafting in our newest 9th graders so that we have a team representing each grade level at OHS.

Together we are strong. Our team will keep you updated as the 2022-2023 year progresses!!

HOPE SQUAD RESOURCE

How to Say "NO"

Saying "no" often takes courage, but it's important when setting boundaries.

Boundaries are self-set limits to protect oneself. Below are some ideas on how to teach your children to say "no."

~ **Encourage them to think about and set their boundaries before anyone crosses them.** Saying "no" can be even harder if no boundaries are in place. To help them get started, ask them what their priorities are and how they want others to treat them.

~ **Come up with possible ways to say no.**

"That doesn't work for me this time."

"I'll talk to my parents and let you know tomorrow."

"Thank you for thinking of me, but I have other commitments that night."

"Let me think about it and get back to you."





OHS LifeSmarts TEAM SECURED THIRD PLACE IN THE NATIONALS

The Blue Devils team bagged third place in the nation. The team was led by Team Captain - Grace Holmgren, and team members were Cole Pierucki, Ellie Finger, Ava Kubichek, & Marcus Perrizo. They were mentored by Mrs. Alana Eder.

She says, "It was truly an honor to be part of their competition experience at nationals. They are an extremely smart group of students with great personalities. They worked hard to prepare but they also had fun and enjoyed the competition. They are an independent and self-led group of students. As their advisor it was a privilege to be part of their journey. It was extremely refreshing to watch them engage at a national level with such poise, confidence, and humility."



Proud moment



MUSICAL TRIP TO MACKINAC ISLAND



By Mrs. Emily Mauro
Band and Choir Teacher

On May 13-14, twenty-eight students from OHS Band & Choir traveled to Mackinac Island. This was the first such field trip organized by the music department, and proved to be a wonderful opportunity for Oconto's musicians. On Friday afternoon, students attended a music clinic. The band worked with Dr. J. Nick Smith from Eastern Michigan University and the choir worked with Kevin Miller. Each group received about an hour of instruction with the clinicians.

In addition to the clinic, students were provided with a number of ways to enjoy the island. After a delicious meal on Friday night, students went to a concert by Three Men and a Tenor, which proved to be highly entertaining. The next morning, students were treated to a tour of the Island's highlights via horse-drawn carriage. During the tour, students learned much about the history of Fort Mackinac & the Island. They were also able to get out of the carriage for a view of photogenic Arch Rock.

Next on the agenda, students were able to enjoy lunch at the historic Grand Hotel, which got its fame in the movie *Somewhere in Time*. Finally, students were able to do what they wanted to do most - explore on their own. Many hoodies and substantial quantities of fudge were purchased during this time.

This field trip would not have been possible without the liberal support of the Oconto community. Thank you to those who purchased a mattress during last fall's fundraiser and/or donated money to the cause. Your generosity fully funded the trip for the OHS musicians.



Students arriving on the island (above). Taking a leisurely stroll down the busy streets of the picturesque Mackinac Island (below).



OHS NEWEST COURSE OFFERING: NWTC FIREFIGHTER CLASS 1



Mrs. Lara Nichols Timm
OHS, Life Science Teacher

When students return to school on September 1, 6 young men and 4 young women will begin their days at 7:30am in the new NWTC Firefighter 1 course. This class is a combination of 9 Oconto students and 1 from Lena, who will receive in-person instruction in the classroom and hands on training from NWTC certified instructors, including many from Oconto Fire and Rescue.

All instruction will be preparing these students for the Wisconsin Technical College System Firefighter 1 Practical Skills exam at the end of the semester. In the classroom, the students will be learning about the Fire Service, including their roles and responsibilities as a Firefighter 1.

This list includes, but is not limited to:

- Donning (putting on); Doffing (taking off) personal protective equipment (PPE) properly.
- Hoisting hand tools using appropriate rope and knots.
- Understanding and correctly applying appropriate communication protocols.
- Use self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).
- Respond on apparatus to an emergency scene.
- Establish and operate safely in emergency work areas.
- Force entry into a structure.
- Exit a hazardous area safely as a team.
- Set up and use ground ladders safely and correctly.



Department of Safety & Professional Services awarding grant to Oconto Fire Rescue Dept. and OUSD students.

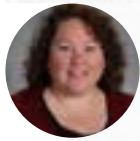
- Attack a passenger vehicle fire, an exterior Class A fire, and an interior structure fire.
- Conduct search and rescue in a structure.
- Perform ventilation of an involved structure.
- Overhaul a fire scene.
- Conserve property with salvage tools and equipment.
- Connect a fire department engine to a water supply.
- Extinguish incipient Class A, Class B, and Class C fires.
- Illuminate an emergency scene.
- Turn off utilities.
- Combat ground cover fires.
- Operate as a team.

NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) 1001, Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications is the overlying standard regarding training and performance qualifications for fire fighters. The State of Wisconsin, and all local fire departments adhere to these standards strictly. Age, education requirements, medical requirements, etc. are established locally.

CELEBRATION ART CONTEST

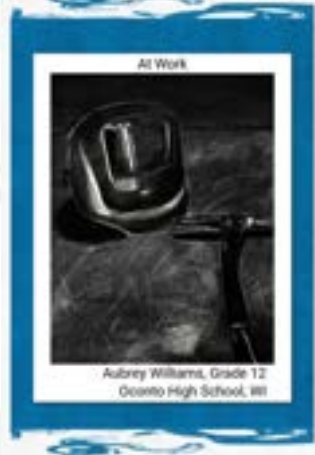
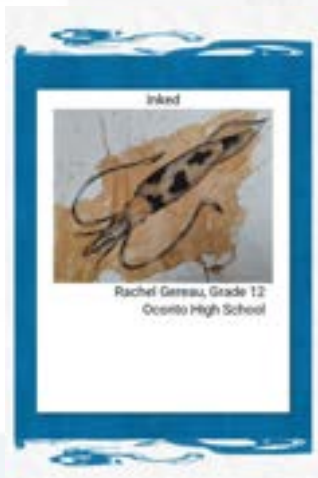
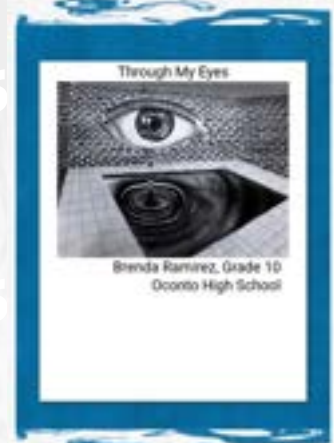
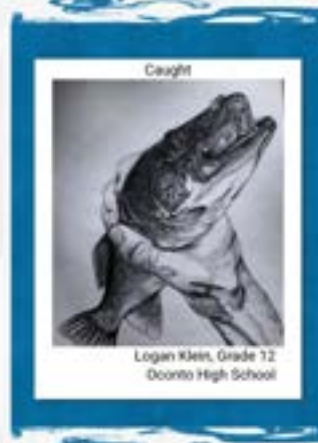


OHS Art students who entered the contest.



Mrs. Heather Rennie
OHS Art Teacher

Oconto Students Brenda Ramirez, Broden Krause, Logan Klein, Hannah Good, and Rachel Gereau entered the Celebration Art Contest. There were over 1000 students that entered this contest throughout the 50 states. The top 10% were selected to be published earning a spot in the Celebration Art Book. I am pleased to announce that **Logan Klein** and **Hannah Good** have won the High Merit for their artwork and will have their first piece of artwork published. Congratulations to all the students that participated and for achieving high standards in the art field.



JOIN OUR OUSD FAMILY!

We're hiring for multiple positions!



We're hiring for a diverse team of dynamic, dedicated and collaborative Paraprofessionals and Special Ed Teachers with an unyielding belief that every child will succeed!!

The District has recently increased the Substitute Teacher and Substitute Paraprofessional pay rate! Substitute Teachers will now receive \$110 per day, PLUS once the substitute has worked ten full days in the District, they will receive a one-time \$250 BONUS. Substitute Paraprofessionals will now receive \$12 per hour.

To become a Substitute Teacher:

1. You must have either a Teaching License OR a Bachelor's or Associate's Degree and a Short-term Substitute Teacher License issued through the WI Department of Public Instruction.
2. To become a Substitute Paraprofessional, you must have a High School Diploma or GED.

APPLY TODAY!

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

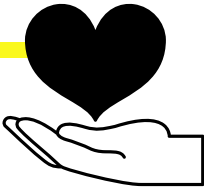
Special Education Paraprofessional Position OMS

- Candidates must have a high school diploma or GED
- Part-Time (4 days a week when school is in session)
- Paid Time Off (7 sick days of which 2 can be used for personal days as well as paid holidays)
- Pay \$13.75/hr
- Assist students with disabilities under the direction of a special education teacher in the school environment.

Special Education Paraprofessional Position OHS

- Candidates must have a high school diploma or GED
- Part-Time (5 days a week for partial days)
- Paid Time Off (7 sick days of which 2 can be used for personal days as well as paid holidays)
- Pay \$13.75/hr
- Assist students with disabilities under the direction of a Special Ed Teacher.

If interested, please contact **Megan Mills-Koehler**, Director of Student Services at 920-834-7814 or megan.mills-koehler@oconto.k12.wi.us



THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION

We're doing more with your support!!

DONATION:

- The Bond Foundation approved a grant for \$50,000 to revitalize the OMS Tech Ed Program.
- GFWC Oconto Women's Club donated snow pants, jackets, boots, hats, and gloves to OES.
- The "Ride for Ty" group made a cash donation of \$1000 to OHS to be used for suicide awareness and prevention programs.
- Jake Chandler from Baumann Electronic Controls, LLC, donated a controller to the Oconto Student Racing Club.
- Jim Rugowski made a cash donation to the Oconto Student Racing Club.
- John & Linda Brantmeier made a cash donation to the Oconto Student Racing Club.
- The Bayshore Bombers made a cash donation to the OHS Baseball team.
- The OHS Booster Club made a cash donation of \$200 to the Boys Golf team.
- The OHS Booster Club made a cash donation of \$100 each to the Classes of 2022, 2024, and 2025.

- The OHS Booster Club made a cash donation of \$350 to the Class of 2023.
- The OHS Booster Club made a cash donation of \$500 cash donation to the OKATO Memories Matter Program.
- The Bond Foundation made a cash donation of \$600 to the OKATO Yearbook Memories Matter Program.
- The Bond Foundation made a cash donation of \$1500 to OMS Wrestling to put towards new uniforms.
- The STEF Organization made a cash donation of \$1500 to the OMS & OHS Hope Squad Programs.



STEF donating \$1500 to Superintendent Miller for Hope Squad Suicide Prevention Program



CLICK the link





Photos provided by District Photographer - Caroline Laurin Young (LY Photography LLC), Heather Rennie, Blake Ziobro, Abbie Stecker, Matt Hartin, Amy Huggett, Brittany Dequaine, & Andy Anaam

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