



# THE BLUE DEVIL BULLETIN



*The official newsletter of the Oconto Unified School District*

## INSIDE THIS MONTH'S **ISSUE:**

- New OES Learning Spaces in Action
- OUSD Student Success Plan
- New Feature: Community Business Update
- Tips to end the 2022-23 school year strong



## OUSD CELEBRATES ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR OF **TRIUMPHS AND RESILIENCE**

**By Superintendent Emily Miller**

Dear Oconto Unified School District Community,

As we embrace the fresh warmth of spring and bid farewell to another school year, I find myself reflecting on the incredible journey we have undertaken together. It has been a year of triumphs, growth, and unforgettable moments. I am immensely proud of our students, staff, and families for their resilience and unwavering commitment to education.

Continued on pg.2

Amidst the ups and downs, it is crucial to celebrate the positives we have experienced throughout the year. Our students have shown remarkable adaptability, embracing new ways of learning, connecting, and engaging with enthusiasm. They have discovered new talents, explored their passions, and achieved remarkable success. Our teachers and staff have gone above and beyond, demonstrating unwavering dedication to their craft and ensuring that our students receive the best education possible.

Let us also acknowledge the power of our community's support. The parents, guardians, and caregivers who have stepped up as partners in education, providing a nurturing environment at home and helping their children navigate the world of learning. Community organizations, local businesses, and volunteers who have rallied together to offer resources, mentorship, and assistance during these times. It is through the collective efforts of everyone involved that we have managed to create an environment of care, growth, and success.

As we enter the summer months, I encourage each and every one of you to prioritize your happiness and health. Take time to rest, rejuvenate, and recharge. Engage in activities that bring you joy and allow you to explore new horizons.

Whether it's spending time with loved ones, immersing yourself in nature, pursuing a hobby, or simply enjoying a good book, remember that self-care is essential to our well-being.

I would like to leave you with an educational quote that captures the spirit of our district and the values we hold dear:

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." – William Butler Yeats

These words remind us that education extends beyond textbooks and tests. It is about igniting curiosity, fostering a love for learning, and empowering our students to become lifelong learners. Let us continue to fan the flames of knowledge, creativity, and resilience as we embark on new adventures this summer.

Thank you for your ongoing support, dedication, and commitment to the district. Together, we will continue to create a brighter future for our students.

Wishing you a summer filled with happiness, health, and endless possibilities.

Warm regards,  
Emily Miller, Superintendent  
Oconto Unified School District



## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HELPING LOCAL BUSINESSES WITH **SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING**



High school students at the Oconto Unified School District are helping local businesses with their social media marketing needs. These students are using their digital savvy to create, manage, and optimize social media campaigns for businesses in their local area.

According to recent surveys, student-run social media campaigns are increasing in popularity as businesses look for innovative and cost-effective ways to reach their target audiences. High school students are able to leverage their knowledge of current trends, technology, and social media platforms to create campaigns that are tailored to the needs of their clients.

This newfound opportunity for high school students to gain valuable real-world experience is proving to be mutually beneficial for both the students and the businesses. Through this collaboration, businesses are able to gain access to the latest marketing strategies and technology, while students are able to gain valuable insight into the world of digital marketing.

Small businesses are taking advantage of these student-run social media campaigns. With the help of these high school students, local businesses are able to reach a larger and more diverse audience, resulting in increased brand awareness and customer engagement.

At a time when many small businesses are struggling, this new partnership between high school students and local businesses is proving to be a win-win for both sides.

### **About the Oconto Area Chamber of Commerce**

*The Oconto Area Chamber of Commerce invites all businesses, industries, and nonprofit organizations to join the Chamber. Together, we can build strong partnerships, support and promote one another, and create a vibrant Oconto-area business economy.*





# OUSD STUDENT SUCCESS PLAN



**By Brook Youngs**  
*Resource Specialist & Social Media Specialist*

## Empowering Students through Career Exploration and Supportive Conversations

In recent news at Oconto High School, students were treated to an engaging Career Expo, featuring representatives from various fields. Curated by esteemed companies and educational institutions, this event provided a valuable opportunity for students to inquire about different career paths, gather insightful information, receive exciting giveaways, and even participate in hands-on learning activities. The OUSD expresses gratitude to all those who contributed to making this experience a success for our high school students!

Furthermore, the OHS Hope Squad has been actively fostering meaningful conversations among students. In the past month, Hope Squad members led discussions on the topic of identifying the "rocks" in their lives and developing effective strategies for handling challenging moments through self-care. Students explored the distinction between factors within their control and those beyond their control, empowering them to navigate difficult situations with resilience and well-being.

## OES Student Success Initiatives

Oconto Elementary recently welcomed a group of special visitors from the local high school as part of their exciting Fun Fridays Program.

During this interactive session, elementary students had the opportunity to share their own written works with the high school students, participate in engaging story time activities, practice multiplication facts, and enjoy games alongside their older peers.

Student Success Plan, aims to foster a connection between younger and older students, providing numerous benefits for all children involved. By creating this intergenerational bond, students gain a sense of responsibility, understanding, support, and encouragement, while also benefiting from the positive influence of their high school role models. A similar approach is being implemented at the middle school through their after-school tutoring program.

Although the primary focus is on completing homework and addressing missing assignments, valuable conversations take place between high school and middle school students, shedding light on both the triumphs and challenges experienced by students. This interaction not only supports the development of better work ethics, organization skills, and study habits but also serves as a platform for mutual understanding and empathy.

The Student Success Closet has been used 65 times this school year! The closet holds hygiene items, clothing, and some food. It is a great resource for students to stop by and get the items they are needing. If you feel your student(s) could benefit, please reach out to Brook Youngs at

[Brook.youngs@oconto.k12.Wi.us](mailto:Brook.youngs@oconto.k12.Wi.us)



# CREATING A **SAFE, SUPPORTIVE, AND SUCCESSFUL** LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AT OUSD



**By Bobbi Christopherson**

*OUSD Board Member*

As I reflect on a board member's perspective over this past school year, I can see themes in our work with a focus on student-centered decisions that supported teaching and learning and a dedication to Expecting Excellence.

Over the past academic year, our school board has remained committed to putting students at the center of our decision-making process. We recognize that every student has unique needs and abilities, and we have worked to ensure that our policies and programs are designed to meet those individual needs and support their learning and growth.

One of the key areas in which we focused our efforts this year was teacher support and development. We understand that the success of our students depends on the quality of teaching they receive, and we are committed to providing our teachers with the resources and support they need to excel in their work.

We provided ongoing professional development opportunities, coaching and mentorship programs, and resources to support teacher growth and development. We also worked to create a positive and supportive school culture that values and celebrates the contributions of all staff members.

We have prioritized creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. We have implemented policies and programs to support students' social-emotional development, such as restorative justice practices and mental health support.

We have also made efforts to ensure that every student has access to the resources they need to be successful, regardless of their background or circumstances. This includes providing technology resources, funding for extracurricular activities, and support for families who may be experiencing financial hardship.

Throughout the year, we have seen the efforts of all members of our school community to strive for excellence. Students have demonstrated a commitment to their academic success and have taken advantage of the many opportunities available.

Teachers have worked tirelessly to support their student's learning and growth and are willing to go above and beyond to ensure their success. Parents and caregivers have actively engaged in their child's education and are willing to partner with us to create a supportive and nurturing learning environment.

Overall, we are proud of the student-centered decisions we have made this year and the positive impact they have had on our school community. We remain committed to creating a school culture that fosters academic excellence, supports teacher development, and puts students at the center of all we do.

Thank you for your continued support and for being proud to be a part of the Blue Devil family.

“

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Fun Friday

## KEEPING OUR STUDENTS **MENTALLY & PHYSICALLY HEALTHY!**



Hope Squad at OHS



**By Dr. Ben Bourassa**  
OES Principal

Summer vacation is a time for relaxation and rejuvenation, but it can also be a time when children and teenagers spend an excessive amount of time in front of screens. While screens can provide entertainment and education, it is important to limit screen time during the summer months to promote healthy habits and overall well-being.

First and foremost, excessive screen time has been linked to a variety of negative health outcomes. Studies have shown that spending excessive amounts of time on screens can lead to decreased physical activity, poor sleep quality, and increased risk of obesity. Additionally, prolonged screen time can also lead to eyestrain, headaches, and other physical discomforts.

Beyond physical health, excessive screen time can also have negative effects on mental health. Research has found that spending too much time on screens can lead to increased feelings of depression, anxiety, and loneliness, particularly among teenagers. Furthermore, excessive screen time has been associated with decreased social skills and may contribute to behavioral problems.

Limiting screen time during summer vacation can help mitigate these negative effects. By encouraging children and teenagers to engage in other activities, such as outdoor play, reading, or socializing with friends and family, parents can help promote physical and mental well-being. Additionally, by setting boundaries around screen time, parents can help establish healthy habits that can carry over into the school year.



*Beyond physical health,  
excessive screen time can  
also have negative effects  
on mental health.*

It is important to note that limiting screen time does not mean eliminating it entirely. Technology can provide valuable educational and social opportunities, and completely cutting off screen time may not be practical or desirable for many families. However, by setting reasonable limits and encouraging alternative activities, parents can help strike a healthy balance.



# Oconto Elementary Art!

**From pinch pots in 1st, to ceramic apes in 4th, and everything in between, students at OES break out the clay projects in the spring! We learn about proper techniques such as kneading our clay, using the slip and score method, and maintaining moisture consistency.**

**Also pictured: 5k students blow painting the water on their whales!**





# ATHLETIC UPDATES

## BEYOND THE GAME: EMBRACING PURPOSE BASED SPORTS FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS?



**By Mr. Adam Timm,**  
Athletic Director

Late last fall I was fortunate to be invited to "The Inside Out Initiative" along with other AD's in the Packerland Conference and area schools. A key theme of the initiative is "purpose based sports." One thing we learned is that only 1% of high school athletes will play sports professionally and only 3% will participate at the college level. 96% of high school student's athletic experiences will end with the completion of high school. The skills athletes learn by being part of a team carry on long after high school.

Sports are not the most important thing that schools do, but they are often what students and parents care about the most. At the high school level we are lucky to get 25 visitors on a parent conference night. We easily draw 300 people to a high school basketball game. Purpose-based athletic programs are an extension of the classroom. Our coaches should be teachers who try to influence players to grow athletically, emotionally and socially, to build resilience, to have perseverance, and grit. The purpose of extra-curricular activities should be to connect students with the previous listed character traits that a school believes are important.

What about winning? High school sport programs should always prepare, practice, and play to win a game or event. Winning a game should still be the goal of athletics but it is not the purpose.

The success of a coach should not be based on the score of a game or the number of wins in a season. Success should be based on participants coming back as adults, telling us something we did right and in turn, supporting the educational and athletic programs. In purpose-based sports, success is measured beyond the scoreboard. If coaches model and teach desirable traits, the wins will happen.



*"We learned is that only 1% of high school athletes will play sports professionally and only 3% will participate at the college level."*



# ELECTRONIC ATHLETIC REGISTRATION IS COMING

For the 2023-24 school year, enrolling an athlete in a Blue Devil Fall extra-curricular activity is going to look a lot different. Our extra-curricular management tool, **rSchool**, will handle all registrations online. This will be found on the district website. The online registration will handle everything from physicals, handbook information, Permission to Treat, WIAA eligibility, parent contact information, auxiliary insurance, and signatures.

Historically, Oconto coaches and trainers had access to the needed player information through the paperwork. Once registration is complete, this information will now be available to coaches through an rSchool app. Schools using the registration process have reported that the online process makes it easier for parents, athletes, and administrators to access needed information and creates less paperwork. The online enrollment will go into effect on July 1, 2023.

**You can currently view the new registration online at <https://oconto-ar.rschooltoday.com/>.**



## **BROTHERS THREE: PIZZA, BURGERS & MORE – INDOOR AND DECK DINING!**



Brothers Three, located in Oconto's historic Holt & Balcom's Saw Mill Company headquarters, has been a local favorite for over 40 years. This bar and restaurant serves up tasty pizza, burgers, and refreshing drinks in a friendly atmosphere.

With outdoor dining along the Oconto River, as well as family-friendly indoor seating, curbside pick-up, and delivery options, Brothers Three caters to all preferences.

Their pizzas are a must-try, made fresh daily from scratch. They offer a variety of 15 specialty pizzas, including the popular Hungry People Pizza with five meats, the cheesy Wisconsin Cheese Melt Pizza, the unique Rueben Pizza with corned beef and sauerkraut, and the flavorful Drunken Cow topped with beer cheese. The menu regularly introduces new pizzas, and upcoming additions include Chicken Cordon Bleu and Bratwurst varieties.

Not only known for their pizzas, Brothers Three also offers delicious smash burgers. These burgers are different from traditional ones as they are "smashed" during cooking, resulting in a crispy exterior and juicy interior.

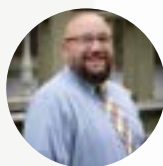
Additionally, their Friday fish fries, featuring deep-fried haddock, walleye, shrimp, parmesan crusted pollock, and baked haddock, are highly popular among Oconto residents.

For families, Brothers Three provides a kids' menu and free arcade games to keep children entertained. The restaurant has expanded its back deck along the Oconto River to accommodate more diners, including boaters who can dock their boats and enjoy food and drinks on the patio.

Open five days a week, Brothers Three welcomes customers for indoor and outdoor dining (weather permitting). They are open from 3-8 pm on Wednesday and Thursday, 11 am-8 pm on Friday and Saturday, and 3-7 pm on Sunday. In addition to sit-down services, the restaurant offers convenient curbside pick-up and delivery within the Oconto area.

Located just a couple of blocks from downtown Oconto, Brothers Three is a gathering place where people come together to enjoy great food and drinks in a friendly and casual environment. Visit Brothers Three today to savor their delicious offerings on the scenic outdoor patio or inside the restaurant.

## EMPOWER YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS: TIPS FOR SUPPORTING A STRONG FINISH TO THE SCHOOL YEAR



**Mr. Adam DeWitt**  
Principal, OHS

As we near the end of the school year, we wanted to share some tips on how you can support your child to finish the year strong:

- **Encourage organization:** Help your child create a schedule of important dates and deadlines for exams, projects, and assignments. Encourage them to keep track of their progress and stay on top of their workload.
- **Help manage time:** Prioritizing tasks and allocating time can be challenging for students, but as a parent, you can help by encouraging them to avoid procrastination and stay on task.
- **Encourage active engagement:** Ask your child to participate in class discussions, ask questions, and take thorough notes. Active engagement will help them retain information and perform well on exams.
- **Offer support:** Let your child know that you are there to support them, and encourage them to reach out to their teachers, counselors, or tutors if they need extra help or guidance.

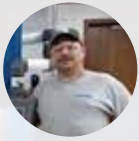
- **Take care of their well-being:** Encourage your child to get enough sleep, exercise, and eat well to stay healthy and energized. Taking care of their physical and mental health is important for their academic success.
- **Focus on the future possibilities:** Don't focus just on the end of the school year but on upcoming summer employment, summer sports, and summer trips. Now is the time to nail down all of those plans to maximize an enjoyable and rewarding summer break.

As we approach the end of the school year, your support can make a big difference in your child's success. By encouraging organization, time management, active engagement, and well-being, you can help your child finish the year strong. We wish your child all the best in their future endeavors.

“Offer support and let your child know you're there for them.”



## OHS RECEIVES METAL DONATIONS FROM US NAVY AND FINCANTIERI MARINE



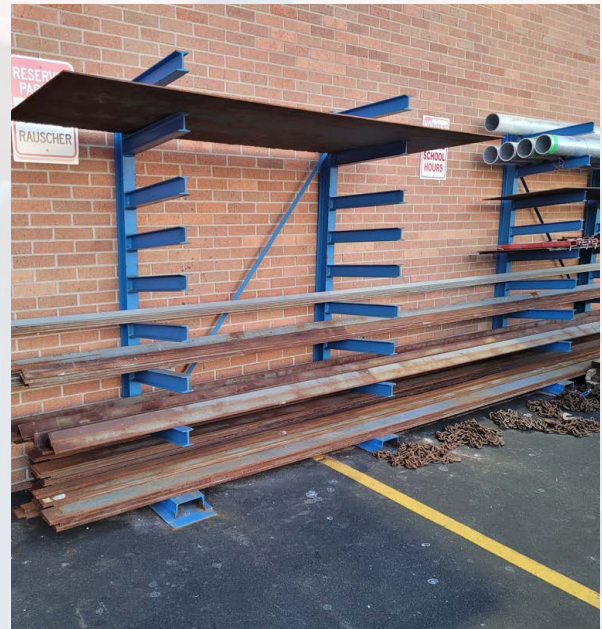
**Shawn Porath**  
Tech Ed Instructor, OHS

Oconto Tech Ed Department expresses deep gratitude for the United States Navy and Fincantieri Marine of Marinette for their recent donations of metal to Oconto High School.

Over the past several months the United States Navy, and Fincantieri Marine of Marinette made 3 very large donations of metal to Oconto High School with a value exceeding \$60,000.00. The donations will help support our metals classes for years to come. In December we were able to procure over 5000 lbs of flat bar that will be able to be used everywhere from welding large projects to making practice coupons for many years.



In January, Mr. Porath was able to hook up the trailer again, and bring home 2 trailers of sheet steel weighing nearly 30,000 lbs. and a value of over \$44,000.00. These sheets have already started to be used by students making welding tables for home, and Tech Challenge projects procuring scholarships to further our students' education.



And finally, in early March, Mr. Porath got 2 more trailers full of angle iron and a flat bar that would be shared by over 10 schools. This angle iron provided a project for one of our students to win the Tech Challenge competition with a well-built trailer.

These donations along with the support of our local businesses will allow us to help train tomorrow's workforce with well-educated and skilled workers. Thank You once again for supporting the students of Oconto.



## UNLOCK YOUR LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL: GB LEAD WORKSHOP AND CONFERENCE FOR HIGH SCHOOL LEADERS



**Mrs. Alana Eder**  
**Business Teacher, OHS**

GB Lead is a 3-part leadership workshop and conference designed for emerging and active leaders in high school. Students take a series of personal assessments to help them determine their strengths and improvement areas. The workshops use these assessments and other tools to analyze how they can continue growing in these areas and what resources exist to help them in the process. The following is reviewed, personal values, communication styles, conflict modes, social styles, task vs. person orientation, leadership styles, and more. Students have the opportunity to connect with their peers and learn new ways to advance their leadership abilities.

The main goals of GB Lead are: 1. Learn different types of leadership qualities 2. Identify personal leadership strengths 3. Prepare students for leadership after high school/in college 4. Provide opportunities and resources to help students grow as leaders.

This program takes place at multiple high schools in the area simultaneously. After the three workshops take place at the respective high schools over the course of 3 months, there is a final Leadership Conference at the UW-Green Bay, Marinette Campus. This conference allows students from the different high schools who participated to network with each other and other leaders in their community.





## District Art Show

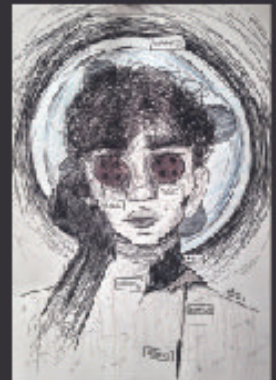
The Oconto Elementary, Middle, and High School art students displayed their art at the Farnsworth Public Library during the month of March. The art show is to promote Youth Art Month (YAM) which is an annual observance held to emphasize the value of art education for all children and to support quality school art programs.

Thank you to the OHS Art Club for setting up and taking down the display. It's much appreciated Mrs. Rennie ●



Mrs. Rennie

# OHS Art



**Congratulations!**

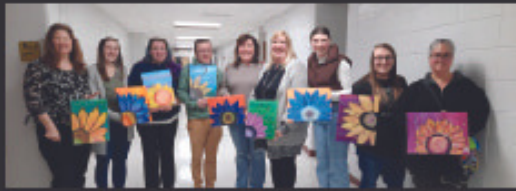
Serenity Moede

Serenity upon accepting will receive a \$60,000 Scholarship to MIAD Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design.

If interested in supporting Serenity in her new adventures she will be selling her artwork. Please contact Mrs. Rennie at OHS for more information. [heather.rennie@oconto.k12.wi.us](mailto:heather.rennie@oconto.k12.wi.us)







National Art Honor Society, Art  
Community Enrichment, Field Trips



## Highlights from the year!



Art Club, Classroom work, National

Portfolio Days and Open Studio!



# THANK YOU DONORS

WE'RE DOING MORE WITH YOUR SUPPORT!

## **Furniture for Mrs. Eder's Business Education classroom**

- Funded by Bond Foundation Grant (\$6,236.39) and Gold Standard Advocacy Grant (\$10,000)
- Creates a conducive environment for learning, collaboration, and innovation

## **Tuners to enhance band student success:**

- Help students stay on key
- Improve performance in all grades and provide real-time feedback on pitch accuracy.
- The Bond Foundation's grant award of \$1991.60 to the OMS/OHS Band Program will assist in purchasing 65 individual tuning devices and tuner caddies for band student use.

## **Generous donations for HOPE Squad:**

- Peer-to-Peer Suicide Prevention Program awarded a \$1,000 grant
- S.T.E.F. Organization gave a cash donation of \$2,000

## **About S.T.E.F.**

The S.T.E.F. was formed as a way to honor Stefanie Kanack's passions in life, a way to give back to the communities that have been incredibly supportive, and to bring awareness through education to end the stigma associated with suicide. The organization aims to raise awareness and end the stigma associated with suicide (donation link: <https://foreverstef.com/>)

## **OUSD Student Success Plan supported by local organizations:**

- Oconto Kiwanis Club, Oconto Elks Club, and Oconto Lions Club generously donated to the OUSD Student Success Plan.



## 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  
**District Nurse**  
**District Administrative Assistant**  
**Special Ed Teacher**  
**8th Grade Float Teacher**

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)







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Caroline Laurin Young (LY Photography LLC),  
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