

THE BLUE DEVIL BULLETIN



The official newsletter of the Oconto Unified School District

INSIDE THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

- 7 Tips for Preparing for the school year
- OMS Building Remodeling Updates
- Health Safety : Fire Chief Josh



NEW SESSION, NEW BEGINNING

By Superintendent Emily Miller

Welcome to our 1st Issue of our Newsletter!

We are very excited to present our first newsletter to our community. Our goal is to keep you informed on "what OUSD is up to" and to offer you a small sample of what this community resource is. Whether you're new to us or an old friend, our hope is to continue to help make our communities strong by bringing you helpful information, ideas, and a little fun!

Continued on pg.2

THE BLUE DEVILS BULLETIN

Throughout the year, we will send you stories and insights from our board, staff, and community leaders as well as OUSD kids and families. Do you have an idea or a success story to share? Maybe you've heard of an upcoming community event that we should all support. Did you just read a great parenting book or visit a website you'd like to suggest to other parents? Send us your ideas so we can help support each other and grow together! You can email us your stories or connect to us at:

letstalk@oconto.k12.wi.us



There are so many interesting experiences and opportunities to learn and our newsletter is just one way we can share that information. Another way OUSD will be reaching out to you is through our website filled with helpful information, resource and links.

We are so excited to have the 2020-2021 school year underway, even amidst these unprecedented times of opening schools during a pandemic. The pandemic may have put a spin on the way we are going to start our year. However, it didn't stop everything this summer. We needed to keep moving forward in our building projects and training and preparing teachers to be the best they can be.

Our buildings are looking wonderful. Our staff has worked hard! We have had many projects in full swing this summer as some of our campuses underwent a transformation to become safer, more accessible, and better equipped to prepare our students for a bright future.

The teaching staff spent many days in school networking and learning.

The teachers are committed to providing our students with a full rich learning experience. In doing so they took time to learn and enhance their understanding of our writing program as well as diving even deeper into different programs and platforms for connecting technology with learning. They understand that the year will have many twists and turns and they want to be ready!

Transitioning our students and staff back to school requires community collaboration and we thank you for your continued partnership. We will continue to update everyone as to the changing environment during the pandemic.

As we look to the school year ahead, we recognize that our greatest resource is the community we serve. I feel both fortunate and grateful to be a part of a community that values education and works together to provide support, love, and understanding for all of our students. Thank you for all you do and let's have another amazing school year!

BOARD MEMBERS QUOTES

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Since my time on the board I am proud of the amount of teamwork that has gone into the development and implementation of our current curriculum, centered on effective teaching and learning within our district. Administration and staff have devoted many working hours in the on-going approach of providing the best education possible for our students.

-Doug Thompson
BOARD PRESIDENT



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Since my time on the board I am proud of the way our school district has met the challenges of the changing school environment and needs.

-Kris Alwin

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Since my time on the board I am proud of.... having never missed a regular board meeting over my 11 years of service. I have prepared for each meeting by carefully reviewing our agenda enhancements and other materials, and have done my best to contribute in an informed and positive manner at the meetings.

-John Pinkart



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Since my time on the board I am proud of how well we all come together as a team and work to help the administration make our school the place to be!

-Maria Roberts

“

LEADERS & LEARNERS~TODAY AND TOMORROW

Expect Excellence

Igniting Passion, Purpose and Potential will drive all OUSD stakeholders to excellence

Student Achievement

Maximizing growth through rigorous and meaningful instruction

Strategy 1 - Continuous improvement on curriculum

Strategy 2 - Development of Writer's Workshop

Culture and Climate

Engage all in delivering an equitable, healthy and safe learning environment.

Strategy 1 - Development of site based MLSS plans, written processed resources, and process of implementation

Strategy 2 - Maintain annual safety drills and provide student and staff support in health and wellness through a mental health focus

Collaboration

Fostering a mindset of growth while enriching our learning communities through a collaborative team format

Strategy 1 - Engage the teaching staff in development of a growth mindset shift

Strategy 2 - Develop and implement expectations of collaborative team meetings which are rich in student focus and data





OCONTO UNIFIED SCHOOL BOARD IS LOOKING FORWARD TO A POSITIVE START TO THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

by Doug Thompson, Board President

Pandemic 2020 has surely placed educating our students into a spin. The virus has demanded our administration and all staff members to start the new school year in different safe formats of learning, in the attempt to provide what is best for students and their families.

As we move forward, we will be constantly evaluating our current modes of learning and will be looking forward to returning back to normal. With everyone's assistance and working together we will make it through this difficult time.

Let's Go **Blue Devils!**



THERE'S NO 'I' IN TEAM!

by SRO, Kassie Dufek

Welcome back students and teachers! I look forward to getting to know each one of you! So much preparation goes into starting a new school year, especially during a difficult time such as this. Students and teachers have essential "tools" that are used in the daily learning environment.

Writing utensils, calculators, iPads, and the list goes on. There are a few extra tools I am asking you to utilize.

Patience, this is a very important tool to have as teachers, parents, and students try to navigate through another year of nontraditional schooling. **Support**, being there for one another through this uncertain time is crucial. **Encourage**, if you see someone who may be struggling, lift them up.

Finally, choose to be **SAFE**; safe at school, home, and on social media. Your safety will always be my top priority! Students, my office will always be a safe zone for times you need to report an incident that happened to you or someone else, or if you just need to talk.

Have a great year!

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Your safety will always be my top priority!



NEW SCHOOL YEAR NEW NORMAL



By Fire Chief, Josh Bostedt

Welcome to the start of the 2020-2021 school year for the Oconto Unified School District. I'm sure there are some of us eager to get back to school and a little bit of normalcy while others may not be so eager. If we all approach the school year as one big team and continue to remind our children of proper hand sanitization, social distancing, and also perform self-checks on our students daily before sending them to school, with everyone working together we can slow the spread of COVID-19.



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With everyone working
together we can slow the
spread of COVID-19.
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You may be asking what all this means. Proper hand sanitization starts with us practicing and teaching our children at home how to properly wash our hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds or sing the song “Happy Birthday” to ourselves as we wash our hands. If soap and water is not available then using hand sanitizer is the next best option. We should continue the practice of using hand sanitizer after touching surfaces. Although this seems like a lot, it is a little step towards keeping each other safe.

Next question may not need a lot of explanation but, Social Distancing. The school is doing their very best with setting up procedures and practices to incorporate the social distancing concept. But we can remind our children that unfortunately social distancing also includes shaking hands, high fives with our friends. or the younger children that get excited to see their friends/teachers on the daily basis we must remind them that we shouldn't give hugs this year like we may have in years past.

Continued on pg.7



Daily self-checks consist of monitoring our children and ourselves daily before sending them to school.

SOME OF THE THINGS TO MONITOR ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Do they have a temperature?
- Do they feel feverish?
- Do they have a cough?
- Do they have a sore throat?
- Do they have difficulty breathing or shortness of breath?
- Do they have muscle aches/headaches?
- Do they have abdominal discomfort?
- Are they vomiting?
- Do they have diarrhea?

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Although this seems like a lot, it is a little step towards keeping each other safe.
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These are just a few suggestions that may help in making the 2020-2021 school year a success!

Welcome back students and good luck this year!

Fire Chief
Josh Bostedt
Oconto Fire Rescue Dept.





7 TIPS FOR PREPARING FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

By Megan Mills Koehler



We begin the 2020-2021 school year approach, we are faced with many challenges and uncertainties. These worries can make those challenges and uncertainties seem insurmountable. As we prepare our children and students for the school year we need to acknowledge that these feelings are okay and provide resources and coping skills to help them manage these feelings.

I have had the opportunity to do a great deal of professional reading over the quarantine and summer months in preparation for this school year. I would like to provide some tips and share some resources and/or articles that I believe will help you and your family as you prepare and embark on the 2020-2021 school year.

"Reinforce the importance of healthy habits"



7 Tips for Preparing for The School Year:

1. Begin talking with your child(ren) about how school may look and feel different. Take time to answer their questions and be honest if you don't have the answer.
2. Discuss the terms "physical and social distancing" and what that may look like in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus.
3. Reinforce the importance of healthy habits such as washing your hands frequently and not sharing items with other students.
4. Try to accentuate the positive aspects of being back to school. What are they looking forward to?
5. Find a time to connect with your child(ren) daily once school has started to address any questions and or concerns they may have.
6. Keep an open line of communication with school staff such as your child(ren)s classroom teacher, school counselor, and principal.
7. If you have chosen for your child(ren) to receive virtual instruction, create a designated workspace for each child. Work with them to create a space that meets their needs and is free of distractions.

Useful Resources:

Roger's Behavioral Health: Rogers Behavioral Health has a plethora of free resources related to mental health related to COVID-19.

Boston Children Hospital (Discoveries): Preparing your kids for the new school year during COVID-19

Cedar Center: A complete Family Guide at At-Home Learning

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP): Tips on Helping Children Cope With Changes Resulting From COVID-19.



OUR SPONSORS

#BLUE DEVILS



Strong



Thank You to
all the SPONSORS
who made this
possible!



Thank you to the following for donating SmartSaks to OUSD for students in need:

- Wagner Shell - Betty Wagner and Tim Turecek
- Oconto Kiwanis
- Robert's Hardware

thanks



THANK YOU

Thank you to the Huggett Family for organizing the Oconto School Supply Drive and giving away 160 backpacks to OUSD students!



THANK YOU!

Thank you to Bay Impressions for putting these SmartSaks together every year and making school supply shopping for OUSD families!

LITTLE HANDS

OCONTO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CORNER



What's New!



By Mr. Ben Bourassa
Principal, OES



At OES this year, you may notice some small changes with how we do some of our day to day business, all in the name of keeping our students and staff healthy.

Some of our strategies are simply enhancements of what we had already been doing: hand washing, walking to the right in the halls, covering coughs, etc. Other strategies are new to all of us.

Either way, we will come through this together, stronger. We are all very excited to welcome students back to OES!

OMS UPDATES

OCONTO MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS



News From OMS

By Mr. Adam Timm
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL



Oconto Middle received some TLC in recent weeks. New landscaping, refinished doorways, sidewalks, a new parking area, and a green space on the playground to make our facility look as good as ever.

We are looking forward to the community visiting our freshly "made over" school. The previous OHS scoreboards have been moved to the OMS Gym.



OHS NEWS

GRADUATION 2020!



RETURNING TO SCHOOL

By Mr. Adam DeWitt
Principal OHS



Returning to school on September 1 is exciting for students and teachers alike. It has been nearly five months since we faced each other within the classroom. Despite returning in full capacity, this year is far from ordinary. There are significant changes, like traffic flow, face masks, and closed campus during lunch. As the year progresses, we anticipate other changes, and we will adjust accordingly.

Lunch is not ideal, but it does allow for a more accurate contact trace if we have a positive COVID test amongst our student population. All of these changes will continue to be reviewed and adapted as we learn more.

Continued on pg.14



VALEDICTORIAN

ALAYNA WESTENBERG

Alayna Westenberg earned the honor of being called the class of 2020's Valedictorian. Alayna will represent Oconto well as she moves into the next season of life.

Alayna has been active in many school activities. Alayna was also very active in the community: Miss Copperfest 2019, Student Ambassador, regular blood donor for the American Red Cross, and volunteer at the Kingdom Come Food Pantry, Riverview Alliance Church, and Care Partners Assisted Living. She also established and is the stewardess of the Bond Park Little Free Library. Other interests include playing the piano, travel, and personal fitness. She is also a certified nursing assistant.

Alayna will be attending UW-Madison, majoring in neurobiology.

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We look forward to hearing from each of them and their classmates as they tackle the next phase of life.

SALUTATORIAN

HANNAH WUSTERBARTH

Hannah Wusterbarth earned the honor of being called the class of 2020's salutatorian.

Hannah will be studying Finance and Mathematics while also playing softball at UW-Whitewater. In high school, Hannah has participated in several school and community groups. In school, Hannah was active in: National Honor Society, Class Officer, Concert and Pep Bands, Jazz Band, M & O Honor Band, Regional Solo and Ensemble, Wisconsin State Music Festival, Prom and Homecoming courts, Science Club, Link Crew, Math Team, Student Council, OHS Wrestling team statistician, OHS Varsity softball team, and Cross Country.

In the community, Hannah pursued these ventures: Volunteering her time and talents in various roles with the Oconto Wrestling and Youth Softball Programs, the Trail of Terror, Oconto Fly-In, performing at local Memorial and Veterans Day programs, and working in the deli at Wagner Shell.

She is a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Oconto.



EXPECT EXCELLENCE

THANK YOU!

*Thank you to the following businesses and organizations for making the new scoreboards and videoboard in the high school gymnasium a reality!
We can't wait to see it in action!*



ANCHOR PARTNERS:

- Bellin Health
- Wayne's Family Restaurant
- Foster's, Inc.
- KC Stock Foundation

FOUNDING PARTNERS:

- Unlimited Services
- OHS Booster Club
- Chiropractic Advantage
- Shake A Burger

PREMIER PARTNERS:

- Dunks Doors
- Oconto Dental
- Youth Boys Basketball
- Youth Girls Basketball
- Copperleaf Realty

THANK YOU!

Thank you to the taxpayers of the Oconto Unified School District for passing the referendum in 2014. Here is a list of the projects that we were able to complete because of this referendum.

ALL THREE BUILDINGS

- The purchase of Chromebooks for one to one learning
- Purchasing security cameras
- Sprinkler systems
- Lighting upgrades
- New floor covering
- Grounds equipment

PROJECTS DONE AT THE HIGH SCHOOL

- Heating system
- Electrical system
- Auditorium sound system and lights
- Hallway lockers replaced
- Roof sections replaced
- Science room renovation
- Art room renovation
- Sanitary/sewer system
- Tech Ed remodel
- Tech Ed equipment
- Parking facility replacement

PROJECTS DONE AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Roof sections
- Sanitary and storm pipes
- Fire alarm bells and lights
- Exterior doors replaced
- Kitchen renovation
- Replacing 2 air handlers
- Parking facility replacement
- Sidewalk replacement



PROJECTS DONE AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- The entire roof was replaced
- Parking facility was added
- Heating system and heating controls
- Plumbing upgrades



Photos provided by
District Photographer, Caroline Laurin -Young &
Sargam Photography
Design By: Andy Anaam (OUSD Communications)



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