



THE BLUE DEVIL BULLETIN



The official newsletter of the Oconto Unified School District

INSIDE THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

- Speak Up Speak Out
- Title I Survey
- MATH Conference & Valedictorians Announced!
- Human Trafficking Awareness Month
- National Art Honor Society



LET'S GO OCONTO!!

By Superintendent Emily Miller

At Oconto Unified School District, our mission is to Achieve and Maintain Excellence in all we do, and though the 2021-22 school year was challenging, our community came together to ensure we lived up to our District's promise and goals.

We have worked hard to create and nurture positive relationships with our students in spite of the many obstacles that the pandemic has put on our paths. Every day I and the administrators hear from families and staff, throughout the district, about the importance and impact that these relationships have had on students as well as adults. The school district appreciates all stakeholders' partnership in starting the 2022 year by supporting OUSD's positive, safe, happy, and prosperous environment.

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With the current school year half of the way over, I have seen so many successes with teachers implementing our standards-based curriculum and supporting our students to show evidence of learning. The efforts of our teachers and support staff are not in vain. Our students are witnessing EXCELLENCE within the profession of education. So many of our staff inspire me and I am fortunate to be able to engage in this work with them and as the Superintendent.





OCONTO FIRE DEPT: FIXING BAD DAYS

Somebody's having a bad day when the Oconto Fire Department gets a call. While "fixing bad days" isn't the motto of the Oconto Fire Department and Ambulance, it's what they strive to do. The Oconto Fire Department responds to about 1,500 calls a year. That's a lot of bad days to put right!

Dedicated Staff of Firefighters & EMTs

The department is ready at a moment's notice to respond to an emergency. In fact, an ambulance or fire truck can be out the fire station just 90 seconds after a call comes in. The Oconto Fire Department is staffed by nine career employees and 14 paid, on-call personnel. Staff members are certified as firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), or both.



Fire Safety, Fire Prevention & First Aid

While emergency response is the department's most obvious duty, the department also performs other services.

- Fire safety inspections - Inspecting 325 commercial buildings in Oconto twice every year
- Fire prevention education - Teaching children about fire safety during Fire Prevention Week
- Community outreach - Interacting with over 1,000 children and 600 adults at civic events annually
- Stop the Bleed - Teaching basic first aid to scouts, bus drivers, and community members
- Smoke alarm installation - Installing free smoke alarms in homes that request them
- Career exploration - Providing EMT ride-along opportunities for students interested in healthcare professions



Fully Equipped for Fire & Rescue

The department is equipped with:

- **2 engines**
- **1 ladder truck**
- **1 water tender**
- **1 UTV for off-road rescues and brush fires**
- **1 Zodiac boat for water rescues**
- **1 multi-purpose rescue truck**
- **3 ambulances. The newest is a 2020 model with a power cot**

Multi-faceted Fire Department

The Oconto Fire Department is a multi-faceted organization devoted to fire safety, prevention, and response, plus emergency medical care and transportation. Staff members perform their duties with caring and compassion - as if they were helping their own mother, father, sisters and brothers. That's why "Our Family Serving Yours" is the department's motto. "Fixing bad days" is simply the result of their efforts.

WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS



Mr. Doug Thompson
Member, OUSD Board of Education



Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) has been an exemplary education tool to enhance the knowledge base of our board. WASB is a state - centered organization whose main focus is being current in providing boards to be demonstrating "lawful functions by meetings, communications, dissemination of information and providing other services to public school boards...and to otherwise support, promote and advance the interests of public education in the State of Wisconsin" (Article II, Purposes, WASB)

Our board has taken advantage of our membership with WASB through outreach workshops, advice/direction given to our members with questions, participation in yearly Conventions, and having a member of our board being one of two regional board members representing our Region 3 Policy and Resolution Committee. Over the years, Oconto Unified School District has been well represented and involved with activities and leadership with WASB.

On a personal note, becoming a member of the OUSD Board of Education requires continuous learning through working closely with our Superintendent and administration, operations, conducting meetings, laws/mandates to follow, defining and refining district policies, being current of all functions of the district from the hiring of employees, programs, curriculum, extracurriculars, building and grounds, finances, board outreach, and the list goes on.

Through learning and working, our board members have rolled up our sleeves to provide quality leadership for our students of OUSD.



HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH



By Officer Kassie Dufek
School Resource Officer



The cold weather continues in January, but the days are slowly getting longer! January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month. During this month, we celebrate the efforts of many dedicated people across the world who work tirelessly in raising awareness about human trafficking.

Human trafficking includes both forced labor and sex trafficking, an act that robs millions of their dignity and freedom. In 2021, there were 38 human trafficking victims from our area, Oconto County. It really happens HERE! Victims can be any age, but children are the most likely to be targeted.

How can you help protect your children?

By helping your child develop and maintain good self-esteem and healthy relationships, you reduce the risk that they will be targeted by traffickers. Know what your kids are doing online. Often, apps and games that seem innocent have chat features that can be misused by adults looking to contact children.

Know who your kids are with and where they are hanging out. Adults can target kids in public places like the mall, a very popular place for sex trafficking recruiters to meet their victims.

Talk openly about human trafficking. Maintaining open communication with your children is helpful in so many ways and may save your child from being victimized. Let your children know they can come to you without getting in trouble if they need help.

There are several online resources available about human trafficking. Please, keep yourself and your family educated. Oconto Falls School Resource Officer Kuhn recommends a book that benefits both parents and children. One of her favorite books to create awareness for teens and adults is "The Slave Across the Street" by Theresa Flores. Read the book and then decide if it is something your child should read also, and then have an open discussion with them.

January Is National Slavery And Human Trafficking Prevention Month



Everyone can help stop trafficking by keeping an eye out for indicators. The following could be signs someone is vulnerable:

- **A sudden or dramatic change in behavior**
- **Becoming disconnected from family, friends, or community organizations**
- **Signs of mental or physical abuse, or deprivation of basic needs**
- **Indication of being coached on what to say, or not in control of their own decisions**

NOTE: If you encounter a situation you suspect is human trafficking, do not approach anyone involved. Gather as much information as possible and contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or text "HELP" or "INFO" to 233733. If there is an immediate danger, call 911.



FIRST GRADE WRITING CELEBRATION

First grade marked the end of their informational writing unit with a camping themed celebration. The students shared their informational chapter books with their classmates while sitting on their blankets with a flashlight in the gym. After the celebration the students enjoyed S'mores (cereal) back in their classroom. Great job first graders on teaching all of us about your areas of expertise!





Japanese Origami At OES!

Students in Oconto Elementary Art have been learning about Origami! First graders created jumping frogs and raced to the finish line to claim a prize and bragging rights! Second grade students folded fortune tellers and had a competition to see who could fold the smallest one! The third grade class completed one of our most challenging origami projects by making paper cranes. It is said that if a person folds 1000 cranes, they will be granted one wish! And finally, our fourth grade classes made paper creatures, complete with arms, legs, wings, fins, horns, fangs... so much creativity! Although technically not origami due to the use of scissors and glue, these paper creatures can "fold" much like a slinky, and are hypnotizing to play with!





Pictured Right:
Kindergarten students
are in the process of
finishing their current
projects. The final step
will be to fold long
strips of paper in a
zig-zag pattern to
make our hair!



SPEAK UP SPEAK OUT



SPEAK UP, SPEAK OUT



By Matt Hartin
OMS/BCA Principal

OUSD is excited to now have Officer Kassie Dufek serve as our school resource officer full-time while school is in session. The role of a school resource officer typically includes working with district administration to develop safety procedures and protocols to ensure schools are a safe environment for all students to learn. In addition, Officer Dufek is looking at ways to incorporate programming to provide students and staff a direct pathway to resources on many issues our students face daily.

One resource being implemented across the entire district is **SPEAK UP, SPEAK OUT**. As explained on their web page, the SPEAK UP, SPEAK OUT platform is a resource offering a Threat Reporting System (tipline), Threat Assessment Consultation, Critical Incident Response, and General School Safety Guidance. The confidential tiplines are used to identify various daily safety concerns students encounter, such as bullying, drug use, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and more.

OUSD appreciates Officer Dufek's continued efforts to make our schools as safe as possible. We will soon join roughly half of all middle and high schools in the United States that offer a tipline to students, parents, school staff, and the community.



[Visit Speak Up, Speak Out Wisconsin](#)



SUBMIT A TIP



THE VOICES OF OUR STUDENTS AND APPS FOR MENTAL HEALTH



By Dennis Miller
OMS/BCA Counselor

As a school counselor, I have the unique opportunity and amazing responsibility to work with all students at OMS and BCA. My days are spent connecting with students each day, meeting with them one on one, in small groups, or walking into their classrooms to share in their educational experiences.

I would like to share with you some of what I have learned from our students that they feel would be helpful for parents to hear.

1. I want to talk more to my parents and share my experiences but I feel ignored when they are on their phone while I am telling them something I feel is exciting or interesting.
2. I know that I am growing up and experiencing changes but there is still that little boy/girl inside me where I feel vulnerable, still need you, need a hug, or just reassurance that everything is going to be okay.
3. I am still learning how to handle my emotions and I am going to make mistakes or say things that I don't mean. Please be patient with me and allow me time to emotionally regulate when I am angry or frustrated.
4. I have a lot of roles in my life that can be overwhelming and I am learning how to be successful in each. Being a student, a friend, a teammate, a sibling, your child...there are so many expectations and I need help learning how to prioritize my tasks and manage my time.
5. Sometimes I just go to my room to re-energize and escape the stress of life for a little while. I am not trying to be anti-social or rude but alone time can be healing.
6. I am experiencing physical and emotional changes. I am learning about who I am and developing my beliefs, values, and opinions. I will always be your child but I am trying to be my own person as well.
7. Sometimes all I really want is to spend time with you :)



Middle School years are likely the most challenging years for students, creating additional stress and anxiety. Here are some APPS for your child to help with Stress and Anxiety. These can be found on Google Play or the App Store.

1. Headspace - Helps your child feel happier, less stressed, and sleep better.
2. Colorfy - Your child can take their mind off of all their worries, troubles and stress and delve into the beautiful designs which will distract them from their anxious thoughts and help them calm down and relax.
3. Stop, Breath, Think - Whether your child feels anxious, angry, sad, sleep-deprived or anything in between, this app will help them find their quiet place.
4. Calm - Take a deep breath. That's the phrase that greets your teen when they open up Calm. It's both a call to action and a defining feature of this popular app's approach to meditation: It's okay... you're going to get through this.
5. Daylio Journal - Track your moods and daily activities. With regular use (as little as 5 days) you'll start getting feedback reports that reveal trends. Daylio's trends help you identify the connection between what activities you do when you feel great and what's happening in your life when you have bad days.



ATHLETIC UPDATES

THE RECRUITMENT OF OFFICIALS



By Mr. Adam Timm,
Athletic Director

Earlier this school year I had an opportunity to attend the Wisconsin Athletic Directors Association conference. One of the main topics of discussion was the rapid decline in the numbers of high school sports officials in our area and across Wisconsin. Before the pandemic, the WIAA had 9,249 registered officials across all sports. As of August 1, that number dropped to 6,071, a 34% decrease. The majority of officials tend to be older people and there aren't enough young people stepping in to replace them. In some places the recruiting and retaining of officials is difficult when there is a lack of sportsmanship at athletic events. A nationwide survey of 17,487 officials conducted by the National Association of Sports Officials that showed 75% of respondents stopped officiating because of adult behavior. Fortunately, those types of incidents are rare in our area; most people are respectful and appropriate during athletic contests.

As a former WIAA licensed official, officiating is an excellent way to stay in the game when you leave the game (as a player or a coach). Officials know when they officiated a great game and it is the same rewarding feeling you get from playing well. Officiating is also a great way to generate extra income. In areas where the shortage is widespread, contracts to ref games are well worth an individual's time and skillset.

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*Officiating is an
excellent way to
stay in the game*

If you think you have what it takes to officiate high school contests, the WIAA has done several things to make the job easier:

- Former officials can register to work games again without paying a late fee to the WIAA.
- People who are currently or who have served in the military can register free of charge for their first two years.
- If you will be a high school student for the current school year, you do not have to pay any licensing fees but you must license through your high school athletic director.
- Anyone interested in becoming an official can reach out at adam.timm@oconto.k12.wi.us or at 837-7812 ext. 1103.

It's important for fan bases to show appreciation to officials for a job well done because without officials, there would be no game.



ACADEMIC & CAREER PLANNING FOR OHS STUDENTS

By Adam DeWitt
OHS Principal

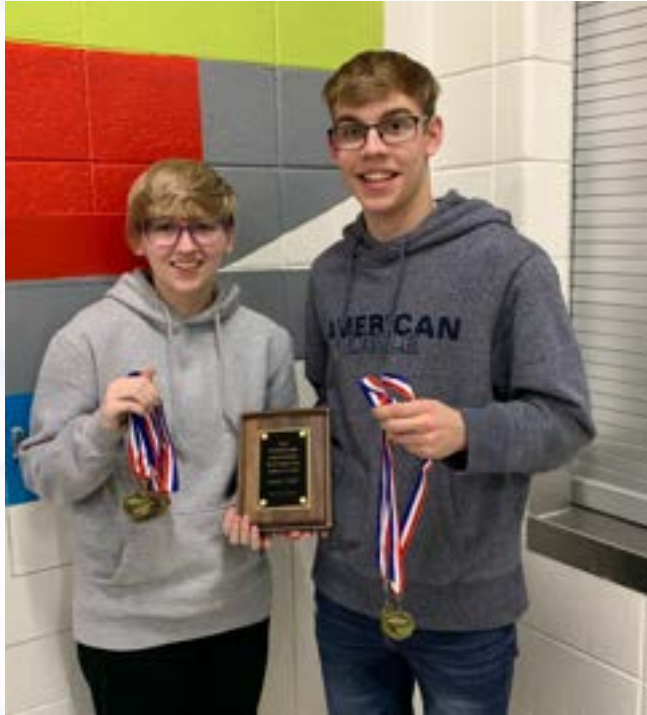
To educate and expose students to different career paths and opportunities, we coordinate guest speakers each Friday afternoon for our student body. Mrs. Eder has provided a great first semester of engaging professionals that shared their backgrounds. The more opportunities our students have, the better prepared they will be for the workforce, tech school, or college. Academic & Career Planning (ACP) is a statewide initiative that focuses on providing our students with information and opportunities to understand themselves and their pathways before graduation, preparing them to become positive contributors to our society.

We know your time is valuable and appreciate your consideration and collaboration on this exciting opportunity for our students. If you, or someone from your organization, can commit to presenting, please contact the high school office. The presenter(s) will have approximately 40 minutes from 2:34 p.m. - 3:16 p.m. They are welcome to cover any material they see pertinent to their career field during this time.

Possible discussion topics may include:

- How did you get to where they are today?
- What is your educational background?
- Career history and skills needed to be successful in your workplace.
- What is a typical day?
- What do you like best?
- What do you like least?
- Any interactive activities, job-related materials, or props would be a fantastic addition. Please feel free to share with any colleagues or organizations that may also be interested in participating.

OHS MATH TEAM FINISHES THIRD



***Grace Holmgren
earns All
Conference for the
4th year in a row***

On Monday February 10th, Southern Door hosted the final Packerland Conference Math League meet for the 2022 season. The places and points for the varsity (Team 1) for the season were: Sturgeon Bay 1st with 100 points, Sevastopol 2nd with 82 points, Oconto 3rd with 74 points, Southern Door 4th with 68 points, Kewaunee 5th with 66 points, NEW Lutheran 6th with 58 points, Gibraltar 7th with 40 points, and Algoma 8th with 32 points.

The Packerland Conference Math League awards team plaques to the first three places from the conference schools each year based on cumulative team points. This year Sturgeon Bay came in first place overall in the conference followed by Sevastopol in second place and Oconto in third place.

Oconto had two students who earned at least one meet medal this year. They included Grace Holmgren with four and Phillip McKeefry with two. Grace Holmgren earned All-Conference for seniors. This is the first time in a long time to have a student earn All-Conference all four years in high school.

There were several students who came very close to earning a medal. We also had three seniors who have been with us for all four years of high school. They are Grace Holmgren, Kyle McFadden, and Cole Pierucki. This year's team consists of 7 seniors, 5 juniors, and 2 sophomores. The seniors are Grace Holmgren, Lakyn Leary, Kyle McFadden, Philip McKeefry, Gavin Mlnarik, Cole Pierucki, and McKenna Seidl. The juniors are Katherine Alwin, Linda Boucher, Gracie Campshure, Abigail Klein, and Ava Kubichek. The sophomores are Alex Hyland and Sam VanEss. The team is coached by Mr. William Reis and Mr. Darren Holmgren.

Congratulations to all math team members for bringing home the third place team plaque and for an excellent and exciting year. Special congratulations to all members who earned a medal at various meets during the year.

OHS CO-VALEDICTORIANS 2022 **ANNOUNCED!**

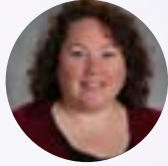


CONGRATULATIONS



Cole Pierucki & McKenna Seidl were named as
OHS Class of 2022 Co-Valedictorians!!

NATIONAL ART HONOR SOCIETY



By Heather Rennie

Art Teacher, OHS

Oconto High School Students held their second annual induction ceremony to the National Art Honor Society (NAHS). As a new member of NAHS, the members are encouraged to be involved in the arts as well as promoting arts throughout their youth and adulthood. I am honored to welcome you to the National Art Honor Society family, and I look forward to building a better art school community together.



#GoOconto



Here's the Scoop!



OUSD SUMMER SCHOOL

SAVE THE DATES!

JUNE 13- 24

JOIN OUR OUSD FAMILY

as a Substitute Paraprofessional or Substitute Teacher



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.

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.

Are you looking for a way to make some extra money? Do you want to pick which days you want to work? Being a Substitute Teacher or Substitute Paraprofessional for OUSD may be the perfect fit for you.

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.





Photos provided by District Photographer – Caroline Laurin Young (LY Photography LLC), Heather Rennie, Blake Ziobro, Dennis Miller & Andy Anaam

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