



Community Newsletter

Message from the Superintendent

Hello! We hope you will enjoy reading about some of the great activities and accomplishments of our faculty and staff. We are having a great 2018-19 school year. Our students and staff are the absolute best you would ever want to meet. This compilation is but a small sample of the

great happenings that occur at Oak Grove on a daily basis. Please enjoy the newsletter. As always, you are welcome to come visit. We are, in fact, your school.



*Dr. Lonny Lemon,
Superintendent*

Mathalon Competition

On Saturday, October 13, 2018, seventh-grade mathematicians Marisa Tarica, Vanessa Zhang and Hailey Baffico participated in a Mathalon contest at The Woodlands Academy in Lake Forest. The event was open to teams of seventh and eighth grade girls, and featured problem solving scenarios that required creative thinking along with application of mathematics. The girls reported that the



*Marisa Tarica, Vanessa Zhang
and Hailey Baffico*

competition was challenging and fun to be a part of. Well done, ladies! We at OGS are proud of you and your efforts!

OGS Enrollment Still On The Rise

Oak Grove continues “to be the place to be.” Prior to the school year, we anticipated an enrollment of approximately 900 students. At press time we have 931 students. This is a testament to the wonderful community we live in and the fantastic faculty and staff who proudly educate our great kids each day. Thank you for all you do to support us in every way! You are the reason we are a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence!

School Board Election

The Oak Grove 68 school board will have a contested election for its openings during the April 2, 2019 General Election. There are four candidates vying for three vacancies. Incumbents Amy Frantz and Anthony Giamis are running for re-election and Agata Karpowicz and Raabia Khan Mohammed are also running for the office. The Oak Grove PTO will conduct a Candidate Forum on March 14, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Patrick Patt gym. We encourage everyone to attend.

Volleyball Champions

The eighth-grade Lady Eagles were undefeated, conference champions this year! The team was coached by Mrs. Anna Edelson and was recognized for their outstanding accomplishment at the December Board of Education meeting. Way to go, ladies!



*Grade 8 Volleyball
Champions*

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Vice-President

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Member

Lane Hasler
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Superintendent

Dr. Sarah Cacciatore
Director of Curriculum

Julie Waehner
Director of Student Services

Andrew Fenton
K-8 Principal

Lilli Melamed
Assistant Principal

Dr. Kurt Valentin
Business Manager

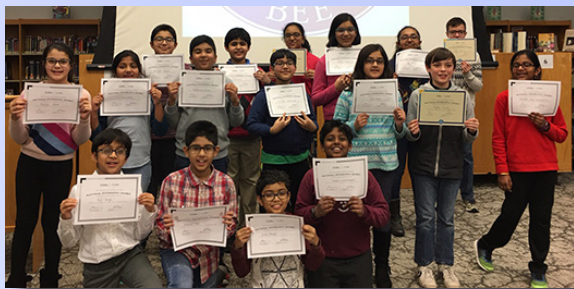
Spelling Bee

The Oak Grove Spelling Bee was held Thursday, January 17, 2019. Seventh-grade student Vanessa Zhang won with the word “insipid.” She will go on to represent Oak Grove at the regional spelling bee in February. Along with 24 other spellers from fourth through eighth grade, Vanessa spelled 18 rounds worth of words. We wish her luck on her spelling journey.



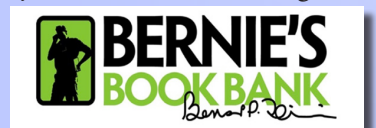
Geography Bee

This year's geography bee was an exciting one! In the end, 5th grader, Andrew Schinler, used his knowledge of Alpine skiing to win by one question in the championship round over 8th grader, Prajna Penmetsa. 6th grader, Gavin Wagner, was the last to exit prior to the championship round making him our 3rd place finisher. A special congratulation goes out to all of our participants: 4th graders; Kushanu Bhattacharya, Ira Chakraborty, Aayushman Panda, Aniket Mandal, Hooria Haroon, Mira Shah, and Tanmai Chadawaladat. 5th graders; Aryaman Hati, Shriteja Patil, Shrinidhi Satya Vadanabhatla, Nyl Wagh. 6th grader Asmi Wadehra and 7th graders Husnain Haroon and Mahima Bhattacharya. This was our largest Geo Bee field to date; we are looking forward to even more participation next year!



Bernie's Book Bank

The fourth graders ran a very successful three-week collection for Bernie's Book Bank. They collected new and gently used children's books. To promote this project, they made 400 bookmarks that they delivered to the K-3 grade students. The students culminated this collection with a field trip to the Book Bank to help process books. This charity drive was part of a unit on Martin Luther King Jr. and was inspired by the National Day of Service held in his honor.



School Safety

Providing a safe and secure environment has been a top focus over the past seven years. To start the 2012-13 school year, there were less than five security cameras on the inside/outside of our facility. We have installed nearly 40 new cameras so far, and by the end of the school year we should have over 70 cameras that are capable of capturing footage of nearly every area of our building. We are also upgrading our servers so that we can retain the footage for longer periods of time. In addition to cameras, we have dramatically increased the number of lights on the perimeter of our buildings.

During the renovation of the building we installed new door lock mechanisms in the building. Both our guests and staff are required to adhere to safety protocols to enter and move around the building.

This past summer, Oak Grove staff, led by John Mehnert, David Jones, Nurse Judy Klosterman, Nurse Callie Johnson, and social workers Brooke Schamber and Kari Meyer, hosted a Regional Safety Summit. Over 40 school officials from area school districts attended the half-day presentation. District architect Peter Graves, Lake County Sheriff Mark Curran, and the Head of Trauma at Advocate Condell were also featured speakers.

The staff and guests discussed school safety, medical procedures, and the ALICE training we use should we ever encounter a school crisis situation. It was a great event and Oak Grove is proud to be proactive in our safety training. Let's hope we never have to use it.

Our systems are not perfect, nor foolproof, but we have made extraordinary improvements in our efforts to make Oak Grove a safe environment.

Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award Evaluator's Committee



Alyssa Osterman

Fourth grade teacher Alyssa Osterman is a member of the Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award Evaluator's Committee. This rotating committee is made up of between seventy and eighty members that work with students in grades four through eight and include educators and librarians from geographic locations throughout the state.

Evaluators are required to read ten titles over the summer months, and then beginning in September, they are expected to read the list of 50 titles before the annual meeting.

On February 2, 2019, Mrs. Osterman attended the annual book selection meeting in Champaign to help create the 2020 Caudill Book List.

Serving on the Evaluator's Committee is a three-year commitment and she looks forward to continuing to read all of these amazing children's books. Thank you, Mrs. Osterman!

Oak Grove Class of 1969 Visits

Members of the Oak Grove class of 1969 toured the building with Dr. Lemon earlier this year. Many were in town to celebrate their 45th class reunion at Libertyville High School. Dr. Lemon met with them at a luncheon where they surprised their 8th grade basketball coach, Chuck Gohs, with a trophy, a signed basketball and personal notes from many of their classmates.

The group that toured our school with Dr. Lemon was the very first class to attend Oak Grove in grades one through eight. As Kindergartners, before the school opened, they went to school in what is now the Green Oaks Village Hall. At that time, only the current central office, basement and 4th grade hallway existed. What is now the 6th grade hallway was built in 1964. The visiting members of the class of '69 were amazed at the wonderful school we have and wish the current teachers and staff the very best!



Dr. Lemon with some members of the OGS Class of 1969

JANUS v. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

The Supreme Court of the United States ruled in June of 2018 that public sector unions can no longer collect agency fees (dues) from their members. A majority of the high courts justices said such fees violate free-speech rights, by forcing them to give money to organizations whose views they may not support. It was expected that union membership might plummet as a result of the Supreme Court ruling, as unions would still have to represent all of their members under the terms of their collective bargaining agreements with school boards, for example, but could not require those members to pay the fees. However, the reality since the Janus ruling has been that membership in Illinois teacher unions has actually increased. For every member the IEA lost since the Janus ruling, they have gained three members. Nationwide, members in teacher associations are up 4.7%.

The important point for our community is that the Oak Grove Board of Education and administration maintains an excellent relationship with its teacher union. Teachers do not fear that there would be any "retribution" should they elect to not pay the agency fees to their local union. It will continue to be our goal to maintain a great working environment between the local IEA, the teachers, the administration, and the school board. It is important for all that teachers can make their own decision without worry. Our district will abide with the JANUS decision and comply with its stipulations.

Oak Grove Featured at Annual School Board Conference

Each year during the month of November, the largest school conference in the nation takes place in Chicago. Three Illinois organizations, the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB), the Illinois Principals Association (IPA), and the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) sponsor a 3-day workshop. The conference attracts 10,000-13,000 school board members and district administrators from across the entire state. There are workshops, training sessions, and keynote speakers of every type.

This year two Oak Grove groups were selected to make presentations at the conference. School board member Jennifer Manski, Curriculum Director Dr. Sarah Cacciatore, and former Assistant Principal Michelle Jackson presented a panel entitled, "Include Stakeholders in Talented and Gifted Placement Appeals."



Michelle Jackson, Jennifer Manski & Dr. Sarah Cacciatore

District architect Peter Graves, Chief Business Officer Dr. Kurt Valentin, and Superintendent Dr. Lonny Lemon presented a session entitled, "Renovating Older Buildings: A Blueprint for Success."

Both Oak Grove presentations were highly attended and it was an honor for Oak Grove to have not one, but two panels selected to present at the nation's largest school board conference.

Oak Grove Teachers Showcase Their Talents

Oak Grove has become a place where other school districts are sending their teachers and administrators to observe our teachers implement best practices. We have had a number of area school districts ask if they could send their faculty to Oak Grove to witness firsthand the excellent teaching we provide our students.

The following school districts have sent staff to Oak Grove:

- Lake Forest - Social Emotional Learning
- Lake Forest - Elementary Bridges Math & AVMR math assessment
- Deerfield 109 - Writer's Workshop
- Deerfield 109 - Middle School Math (twice)
- Lincolnshire 103 - Elementary Bridges Math
- St. Augustine Preparatory Academy - Readers/Writer's Workshop
- Millburn Elementary - Elementary Bridges Math
- Gavin 37 - Standards Based Reporting
- Antioch 34 - Mentoring Support
- Big Hollow - grades 5-8 Science
- Chicago Regional Educational Technology Center - Green Screen Projection facility

As you can see from the list above, many of our guests teach at some of the finest school districts in the state. We are humbled that they want to visit and observe what we are doing at Oak Grove. It is a testament to the systems we have in place and the talent of our teaching faculty.

Kindergarten Pre-Registration 2019-20

Oak Grove School is in the process of determining kindergarten enrollment for the fall of 2019. Having correct enrollment numbers is important to us as it impacts the number of sections, teachers and classrooms.

If you have a child who is 5 years old on or before September 1, 2019, and is planning to attend

Kindergarten in the fall, please go to this address to pre-register your child: www.ogschool.org/kindy

We would also like to hear from you if you have a child that will be attending 1st grade at Oak Grove next year and is not currently attending kindergarten at Oak Grove this year.

Author Visits

Oak Grove School was delighted to welcome New York Times bestselling author Liesl Shurtliff and award-



Authors Brianna DuMont & Liesl Shurtliff

winning author Brianna DuMont on Tuesday, September 25, 2018. Ms. Shurtliff and Ms. DuMont spoke with fourth and fifth grade students about their careers and their books.

For our older students, author Jordan Sonnenblick visited with sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students on Thursday, December 6, 2018. Mr. Sonnenblick talked to students about finding something that they enjoy and are good at, practicing it until they get even better, then using that skill to help others. Fifteen students had lunch with Mr. Sonnenblick and 50 students were selected to participate in a writing workshop. Thank you to the PTO for sponsoring our author visits!



Author Jordan Sonnenblick

WSSA Sport Stacking

Congratulations to Mrs. Savage's P.E. classes for helping set a New Guinness World Record of 624,390 stackers!

Guinness thanks each of the 624,390 stackers, the 2,833 schools and the organizations from 25 countries who took part on November 8, 2018. It was a close one this year, but Oak Grove came through and helped to push past the previous Guinness Record of 622,809. Amazing!



Oak Grove Faculty Among Best in State!

Each year the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) recognizes the very best faculty and staff members from school districts across the state at its "Those Who Excel" awards banquet. This year three Oak Grove staff members were nominated and received awards at the ISBE banquet held in Bloomington/Normal on Saturday, October 20, 2018. Nurse Judy Klosterman, aide Julie Piazzi and 8th grade social studies teacher Kathy Mahoney were recognized in front of nearly 1,000 people for their outstanding performance. To put their accomplishments in perspective, there are over 4,000 schools in the state and tens of thousands of faculty members working in our schools.

The three ladies, their families, and Dr. Lemon attended the awards banquet and met Dr. Tony Smith, the Illinois State Superintendent of Schools.

The "Those Who Excel" is the highest award the ISBE presents to school employees. Each year, as the culmination of the ceremony, the ISBE awards its "Teacher of the Year." Ten finalists from around the state are nominated. The winner then spends the next school year touring other districts in Illinois, in other states, and in some foreign countries in an effort to share their expertise. ISBE informed Oak Grove this summer that, had Mrs. Mahoney not been retiring at the end of this year, she would have been a finalist for the state's highest award. So, instead, they created an award especially for her. Just before Dr. Smith announced the "Teacher of the Year," Mrs. Mahoney was awarded the first ever, "Illinois Teacher of Distinction." Mrs. Mahoney was lauded for her dedication to kids during her illustrious career. It was a great moment for her and her husband, Neil, and Oak Grove. Congratulations to Nurse Judy, Mrs. Piazzi, and Mrs. Mahoney for being named "best of the best" by the Illinois State Board of Education!



Julie Piazzi, Kathy Mahoney, Judy Klosterman & Dr. Lonny Lemon

Oak Grove School District 68
1700 S. O'Plaine Road
Green Oaks, Illinois 60048

**GREAT NEWS FROM
OAK GROVE SCHOOL!!!**



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**Veterans Day
at Oak Grove**

On Friday, November 9th, 2018, Oak Grove continued its long-standing tradition of honoring our service men and women at our Veterans Day ceremony and reception. This special occasion is much more than a single day for Oak Grove students. The 8th-grade class spends a great deal of time preparing for this event, including a "teaching day" where they teach our younger students about Veterans Day. The ceremony was attended by over 1,300 students, faculty, and guests. We are always moved when veterans in the audience are recognized for their service to their country and are honored to hear stories from our veterans at the reception following the ceremony.



This year held special significance for everyone at Oak Grove as our own Mrs. Kathy Mahoney will be retiring at the end of this school year. Mrs. Mahoney has been paramount to the success of our Veterans Day activities, and we are grateful for her many years of service to our students and community.



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