



Community Newsletter

Message from the Superintendent

If there were a theme to describe the year, it would be, "OGS is back and better than ever!" We couldn't possibly encapsulate a year of accomplishments, celebrations, and hard work in a few statements. The following few pages will share the highlights of this past year at Oak Grove, and we are proud to share these with our broader community.

With the most challenging period of the pandemic behind us, the OGS community could bring back its most cherished traditions, and students flourished! The pages to come are full of student stories – highlighting how they came together to support their community, their recognition in academic and athletic competitions, and their pure enjoyment in activities that make Oak Grove a special place.

Of course, our students do not achieve at high levels without the support of our staff and parents. The Illinois State Board of Education recognized our teachers with the Those Who Excel award this year! OGS had a record number

of staff members recognized at state, county, and local levels. Our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) organized countless events this year that promoted the social-emotional development of our children and coalesced the community around our school. Oak Grove School Education Foundation (OGSEF) held its gala this year, exceeding its goal of raising funding for school programs. These organizations are pivotal to the Oak Grove family and help to keep the traditions we know and love a vital part of the student and family experience.

The stories in this newsletter exemplify why Oak Grove School remains an exemplary district. On behalf of our Board of Education and administration, we continue to appreciate your support and wish you all a restful summer break!

In partnership,

Allison Sherman
Superintendent



Allison Sherman

Oak Grove PTO Continues Support

The PTO has been busy this year raising funds to benefit Oak Grove School, hosting events to bring community members together, and giving back to the local community. Last fall, the PTO provided food and grocery store gift cards so the residents of Lake County Haven could enjoy a homemade Thanksgiving dinner. In February, the PTO organized three events at Feed My Starving Children. Collectively, families packed 45,144 meals. The PTO also collected new garments for PADS of Lake County. Families volunteered at Lake County Forest Preserves in the spring to clear out invasive buckthorn and garlic mustard. With the "All for Books Challenge," homerooms competed to raise the most money for the non-profit Reading Power. Together, Oak Grove students raised over \$2,400 to buy books for its students in North Chicago, Waukegan, and Zion.

In addition to giving back so much to the community, the PTO made sure Oak Grove Eagles had a memorable year! The annual Family Fest welcomed families back to campus. All

Eagles coming together again in person was celebrated with the "We Are Eagles Dance Challenge" and flash mob, which was captured beautifully with drone video footage. Despite the frosty weather in December, families were not deterred from shopping at the outdoor Winter Market. Additionally, the PTO sponsored student assemblies, family socials, and the Variety Show.

Perhaps the PTO's favorite work is supporting the OGS staff. The PTO offered \$100 teacher grants to every classroom teacher. Each month, PTO members delivered snacks to classrooms through the PTO Treat Train. Teacher Appreciation Week is also a highlight of the year, showing staff how much they mean to children. The PTO thanks local businesses that partnered to raise funds: Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory, Clucker's Charcoal Chicken, Sports 11, Donati's Pizza, Stan's Donuts and Coffee, and Tsunami Car Wash. These fantastic events would not have been possible without incredible chairpersons, volunteers, and donors.

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Alexa Dunn
Coordinator for Teaching and Innovative Learning

OGS Welcomes New Director of Business

Oak Grove is pleased to welcome Steve Cummins as new Director of Business/Chief School Business Official. Mr. Cummins began his career as a middle school math teacher at Aptakisic-Tripp School District 102 in Buffalo Grove and was then promoted to several administrative positions in District 102. His 15 years of school administrative experience also includes serving as Director of Human Resources at Adlai Stevenson



Steve Cummins

High School District 125 in Lincolnshire and Senior Director of Human Resources at Oak Park Elementary School District 97. Most recently, Mr. Cummins served as the Superintendent of Finance & Human Resources at River Trails Park District in Prospect Heights. He received his Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Illinois at

Urbana-Champaign and his Master's in School Business Management degree from Northern Illinois University. Public service is very important to Mr. Cummins, and in addition to his professional service, he also serves as an elected Park District Commissioner for the Buffalo Grove Park District. Mr. Cummins is a father of two children and met his wife, Sherrie, a fifth-grade teacher, while teaching at District 102.

Mr. Cummins is an alumnus of Oak Grove School, and in his words, "is excited to be back and contribute to the school and community that had a profound impact on my life. Returning to Oak Grove is an honor and a privilege." His roots are well entrenched in the Green Oaks / Libertyville area as he, his mother, and his grandmother were Libertyville High School graduates. His great-grandparent's farmhouse was located on River Road which is now Independence Grove Forest Preserve.

New Teaching & Innovative Learning Coordinator

Oak Grove welcomes Mrs. Alexa Dunn as she transitions into the role of Coordinator for Teaching & Innovative Learning after serving nine years as an 8th-grade English Language Arts teachers. Mrs. Dunn began her teaching career 13 years ago in Lake Villa, Illinois, teaching 8th-grade reading and writing after completing her undergraduate degree at Illinois State University. She received a Master's degree from Columbia College of Missouri in 2012 and fulfilled endorsements in science, social studies, gifted education, and special education over the past ten years. Currently, Mrs. Dunn is working toward an educational specialist endorsement in Educational Leadership from National Louis University. Mrs. Dunn is a wife and mother of two, and she enjoys

reading, listening to podcasts, golfing, and decorating her new home. She is thrilled to begin this next adventure working as Coordinator for Teaching & Innovative Learning. She shares, "Every day I come to work, I want to make Oak Grove a better place for children to learn and grow." Mrs. Dunn is dedicated to the profession of education and will provide expertise in the areas of curriculum and talented and gifted programming.



Alexa Dunn

OGS Welcomes New Director of Technology

Oak Grove is thrilled to have Dmitry Andrievsky join the team this summer as the new Director of Technology. Dmitry comes to the position with strong expertise in technology leadership through prior roles in three districts. He spent the first fifteen years of his career downstate in Quincy, then moved to Lake County, where he spent five years at neighboring Hawthorn 73. Most recently, he was the Director of Technology for Libertyville D70. Mr. Andrievsky is excited to begin



Dmitry Andrievsky and family

this new chapter in his life, having heard nothing but great things about Oak Grove School. He remarked, "When I saw the opening at Oak Grove, I knew it was an opportunity I simply could not pass up. I am so excited to begin working at your side, learning what is important in your daily work lives and how I can support you in my role." As a first-time father (daughter, Adele, born this past December), Mr. Andrievsky knows the importance of family. "Oak Grove is known as one of the most family-oriented school systems in the entire area. Being a part of a small, close-knit environment is appealing to me at this stage of my life." Mr. Andrievsky is eager to join the team to make every day special for OGS children.

Teachers and Staff Receive State Recognition

Since 1970, the Illinois State Board of Education has sponsored Those Who Excel awards to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to our state's public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools. Awards are presented in five categories: school administrators, student support personnel, educational service personnel, community volunteer, and teams. At the conclusion of each school year, the OGS administrative team reflects on the year and nominates personnel who have gone above and beyond. The administration is excited to announce that OGS has two awardees this year! Oak Grove parents, students, and administrators wrote letters declaring their support for these nominees. Below are the winners and just a snapshot of what parents, students, and staff had to say about each winner.

Mary Jo Swift (winner, Educational Services Personnel category)

"Although her official title is paraprofessional, to the students and staff of OGS, Mary Jo is a superhero because she excels in every role she is assigned." (OGS colleague)

"Mrs. Swift helped me tremendously throughout my junior high years at OGS. She was a great listener, very engaged and always went above and beyond to help me understand subjects and terms I struggled with. I was very lucky to have had Mrs. Swift in my corner." (OGS student)

Oak Grove Education Association (winner, Team category)

"My experience at Oak Grove would not have been remotely the same if it weren't for the marvelous staff. Anyone that is lucky enough to attend this school knows how incredible the staff and education here is." (OGS student)

"The OGEA embodies a true example of what it means to put students first and how to partner for the betterment of the community and the students..." (OGS parent)

Simply put, the teachers and support personnel make a difference each and every day in the lives of Oak Grove children. OGS administration, Board, and parent community are grateful for the effort and expertise they bring to their work each day. OGS is proud they are acknowledged this year across our state!

Summer Facilities Upgrades at Oak Grove

As part of Oak Grove's five-year capital improvement plan, the school district is replacing the aging south parking lot, south play area pavement, and the Junior High play area canopies. Once the project is complete, this will enable a new traffic flow for arrival and dismissal in the south parking lot. This new flow will allow the lot to hold more cars on campus simultaneously, which will ease the long traffic lines down O'Plaine Road.

The district planned to spend \$1,600,000 on this project. Fortunately, construction bids came in under budget at \$1,420,000. Oak Grove is using funding through its Capital Improvements budget, a \$50,000 state facilities improvement matching grant, and higher than anticipated Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax (CPPRT) revenue.

This year's increased revenue will allow Oak Grove to use its leftover fund balance for future projects. The school district's future capital projects include replacing roofs and HVAC units in the elementary wing, replacing the Junior High gym floor, and replacing the flooring and cabinetry in the elementary wing.

Come Drive For Us! Oak Grove needs bus drivers



- Drivers work flexible hours
- No weekends
- Competitive wages & benefits
- Starting pay \$22/hour

Great benefits:

- Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance
- Sick & Vacation Pay
- Life Insurance
- 401(k)
- Attendance & Safety Bonuses

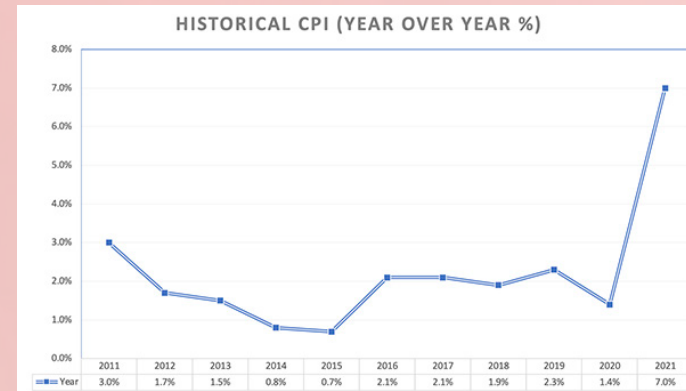
**For application information,
contact Steve Cummins
scummins@ogschool.org
847-367-4120 x 2003**

Inflation and Future Funding Implications

The country continues to experience its highest inflation rates in the last 40 years, with a CPI (Consumer Price Index) of 7% as of December 2021. As a result, Oak Grove is experiencing a rise in operational costs. For example, the increase in Oak Grove's transportation contract for the 2022-2023 school year is 19%.

Due to the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL), the district is capped to a levy based on the past December CPI number or 5%, whichever is less. This formula is good news for taxpayers since the 5% number will be used when Oak Grove levies for the total amount the district can ask to cover inflated costs. Should Oak Grove's levy go over 5%, the intent will be to capture any additional funding available from new construction that occurs within Oak Grove's taxing boundaries.

Oak Grove's Board and administration recognize the uncertainty of this economic climate. Practices and spending continue to be evaluated to ensure the district is making the most fiscally responsible decisions possible and being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.



Veterans Day

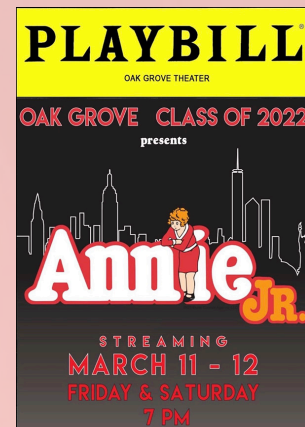
Oak Grove celebrated veterans living in the community on November 11th with a beautiful outdoor ceremony. The event honored and celebrated more than 30 local veterans. The 8th grade students, teachers, and other Oak Grove staff members made this traditional event possible. Student Council President, Aafiya Mohammed, gave the welcoming speech and Aarna Mishra and Evelyn Chaseley wrote beautiful poems and shared them during the ceremony. Following the ceremony, veterans and their families toured an

artifact museum in the JH cafeteria. Items such as uniforms, artillery and historical memorabilia were displayed and presented by the students. Thank you to the Treutelaar family who made a donation to Oak Grove in honor of their Grandpa Fritz and his service in the Navy. The donation funded a new display to honor all veterans, which will be completed by next year's Veterans Day celebration. Oak Grove looks forward to continuing this tradition next year and for many years to come. To view the ceremony, please visit youtu.be/y4B6owpX75w.

8th-grade Musical

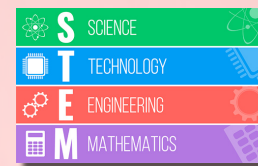
The 8th-grade class performed Annie Jr. this year! Through the dedication of Mrs. Ludington, Mr. Farris, Dr. Meltzer, and Mrs. Vance, families were able to view the amazing work of the students. The performances were recorded during rehearsals and compiled through hours of editing. There were two full casts and each cast did one full performance of the play. The recorded performances were released to families to view in the comfort of their homes. Annie Jr. is a classic and the talented 8th grade students did a tremendous job! Maddy Chung and Kaitlyn Rynes both played the role of

Annie. The Student Director of the play was Ava Vestal and the Assistant to the Director was Billy Sims. All enjoyed singing along and remembering the story of little orphan Annie. Oak Grove is looking forward to next year and what wonderful talents the incoming 8th grade students will share!



Community Support for Balanced Programming

In early April, the Teaching and Learning department sent a survey to families in regards to student choices for the rotation offerings for elementary and junior high students. Rotations are times during the school day when students have exposure to speciality classes such as art, music, drama, Spanish and technology. The survey included questions about potentially adding STEM to the rotation cycle. STEM is the integration of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The skills that are integrated in STEM are situated in a student-driven learning environment, where students take a lead of their learning through investigating and engineering solutions to real-world problems.



At the elementary level, exploratory STEM, music and art were the top choices for student rotations followed by world language, drama

and library. All of these options will continue to be part of the student rotations moving forward and students will have exposure to all through their K-5 experience. STEM, technology and world language were the top choices by families in junior high, followed by art, music and drama. The family survey provided useful feedback and confirmation of the need for more balanced programming that includes both fine arts and STEM as well as student choice during rotations.

Over the course of the next two to three years, Oak Grove will be gradually implementing STEM opportunities at all grade levels through creative play, exploratory STEM and a more focused curriculum through Project Lead the Way for the junior high students. With a significant connection to real-world skill application, STEM opens up an authentic opportunity for Oak Grove students to work with parents and community partners, including the corporate and non-profit sector.

OGSEF Scholarships



L-R: Laura Gomez Anez, Jeff Barry, Katrina Treutelaar and Kajsa Hawkinson

The Oak Grove School Education Foundation (OGSEF) announced Laura Gomez Anez and Kajsa Hawkinson as the 2022 OGSEF College Scholarship winners during the May awards ceremony at Libertyville High School. President Jeff Barry and OGSEF Scholarship Committee member Katrina Treutelaar presented Laura and Kajsa each with a \$1,000 check after the OGSEF Board of Directors chose their scholarship applications.

After high school graduation, Laura plans to major in Psychology and become a psychologist or counselor. She is excited to become the first-generation American college student in her family (as she moved from Venezuela to the United States at a young age). Her application essay described the positive influence one of her OGS 8th grade teachers had in her life. Kajsa plans on entering the healthcare field after attending college. Her application essay described how OGS teachers and learning specialists supported her and helped her overcome the academic challenges she faced. She is now a National Honor Society member with multiple college offers. The OGSEF was one of the dozens of local community groups and businesses that participated in the LHS scholarship process.

OGEA Scholarship Awarded

The Oak Grove Education Association (OGEA), representing the certified staff at Oak Grove School, was proud to present the seventh annual Eagle Scholarship to Oak Grove alum Andrew Sorensen for his demonstration of excellence in academics, character, extracurricular activities, and service. At OGS, educators are committed to the success of all current and former students. The 2022 recipient of Oak Grove's Eagle Scholarship displayed Oak Grove's impact on his high school career. In his words, "Throughout my nine years at Oak Grove, my teachers had continuously instilled a passion into my education. This desire for a broader and deeper understanding has continued throughout my high school career." Sorensen participated in multiple

activities, including Environmental Club, Life of a Wildcat, Wildcat Rise, and National Honor Society. He also balanced an athletic career that included soccer, basketball, and volleyball. Andrew's success at LHS is proof of his commitment to hard work, and the OGEA is proud to have played a small part in his accomplishments. Additionally, the OGEA is excited to see how Andrew will positively impact the world as his future unfolds. Congratulations, Andrew Sorensen, and good luck at the University of Michigan! Go Blue!



Andrew Sorensen and OGS teacher Casey Dugan

Accolades In Athletics and Academics

The students and staff of Oak Grove School have accomplished several notable achievements this past school year. Below are highlights of the accomplishments of our coaches and athletes this year – with OGS pride!

- The boys' cross country team took 2nd Place during the IESA (Illinois Elementary School Association) Sectionals, and Nathan Knight was one of the top 10 finishers. During the Lakeside Conference, the boys took 3rd-place.
- The 7th-grade girls' volleyball team and the 7th-grade boys' volleyball team took 2nd Place at the Lakeside Conference.
- In basketball, the 7th-grade girls' basketball team and the 7th-grade boys' basketball team each took 3rd-place at the Lakeside Conference. The boys' 8th-grade basketball team took 2nd-place in the Conference.

Sanchari Dasgupta took 7th-place in the 7th-grade division. The winner of the Nationals competition will receive a \$300 prize. Good luck, Oak Grovers!



L-R: Jasmine Kumar, Sanchari Dasgupta, Hamza Alsawaf, Shriteja Patil, and Jack Davis



Jack Treutelaar and James Liu

• During the wrestling season, five students took 1st-place as IESA Regional Champions: Brayden Liu, Gavin Torres, Matthew Liu, Logan Tayfel, and Jack Treutelaar. Also, Jack Treutelaar earned State Champion at 185 pounds, and James Liu took 4th-place as an All-State Champion at 126 pounds.

• In Track and Field, the 8th-grade boys were the Lakeside Conference Champions. Jack Treutelaar earned Sectional Champion in the 8th-grade discus, and at state, he earned 4th-place in the All-State 8th-grade discus event.

OGS students also achieved several academic awards this year:

- The OGS Spelling Bee winner was 6th-grade student Surya Meiyappan. Surya went on to win the regional bee in February and represented OGS in the county bee at the College of Lake County, his second year as school champion. Runner up was 8th-grader Roohee Patil. She has been a school participant for many years.
- Five students qualified for Nationals in the National Science Bee (NSB). Several of these students will travel to Orlando, Florida, in early summer to compete. Jasmine Kumar took 3rd-place in the elementary division. Jack Davis took 3rd-place in the 8th-grade division. Shriteja Patil took 2nd-place in the 8th-grade online division. Hamza Alsawaf took 1st-place in the 7th-grade division.

• During this spring's Noetic Math Contest, OGS had the following winners: Hamza Mohamed and Veeraj Bawa, both 5th-graders; Surya Meiyappan, 6th-grade; Will Davis, 7th-grade; Eli Cui, and 8th-graders Aryaman Hati, Jack Davis, and Shubh Varshney.



L-R: Hamza Mohamed, Veeraj Bawa, Surya Meiyappan, Eli Cui, Aryaman Hati, Shubh Varshney, and Jack Davis

• We also congratulated Claire Bilcox and Stella Parks, both in Miss Bernsee's 2nd-grade class, for being winners in this year's National Law Day coloring contest. The Judges of the Circuit Court of Lake County sponsored this year's theme, "Toward a More Perfect Union: The Constitution in Times of Change."



L-R: Stella Parks, Miss Bernsee, and Claire Bilcox

Educators of the Year

In addition to recognizing students' accomplishments this year, OGS also celebrated the nomination of Mr. Rob Rendon and Mr. Logan Farris for the 1st Annual Lake County Educator of the Year Ceremony - Mr. Farris for the category of Middle School Classroom Teacher and Mr. Rendon for the category of Educational Service Personnel. Mr. Rob has worked at Oak Grove for the past six years as the Director of the Extended Day Program and lunch and recess supervisor. Mr. Farris has worked as our main music teacher, developing the program for the past 15 years.



Logan Farris and Rob Rendon (center) with the OGS Board of Education

Substitutes Needed

Do you or anyone you know like to work with children aged K-8? OGS needs substitute teachers for the upcoming school year. Those interested should apply by visiting www.ogschool.org/employment.

Multicultural Fair

In the middle of May, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEI) hosted over 600 parents, students, and community members at the OGS Multicultural Fair. To help students prepare for the Fair, school support staff members provided lessons in early April highlighting different countries around the world: Kindergarten - Brazil; first-grade - Poland; second-grade - China; third-grade - India; fourth-grade - Nigeria; 5th-grade - Peru. The closer the event neared, the more eager the children became to share their special foods and maps of where they or their ancestors were born. Several English learners used the OGS greenhouse to plant seeds and grow vegetables and flowers sold during the Fair.



The DEI committee includes teachers, parents, and administration who voluntarily meet

Gala Exceeds Expectations

The Board of Directors for the Oak Grove School Education Foundation (OGSEF) is grateful to all OGS parents, teachers, students, and volunteers who supported OGSEF during the Gala '22 Fundraiser on 2/19/22. It was a fun night raising money for the school – as evidenced in the pictures below! The OGS community truly makes a difference, and their support is valued tremendously.

Over \$51,000 was raised, with \$7,000 going toward the Oak Grove School STEM Space Project. The Foundation Board is excited to share updates on those developments once they are finalized. The OGSEF's vision is to create a model school that inspires future leaders and engages the community. In the last five years, the Foundation has funded \$150,000 for school initiatives focused on innovation, collaboration, creativity, and learning enrichment.

Every donation is appreciated, and the Foundation wouldn't be what it is without the generous support of the OGS community. Donations can still be made to OGSEF www.ogsef.org or a corporate match submitted by your employer. With gratitude!



routinely throughout the year to set goals and advocate for the needs of students and families. The committee works hard to provide opportunities for professional development for staff, parent outreach, and clubs that welcome students and give them a voice - all with the overarching goal to provide students with what they need to feel safe and included at Oak Grove School.

This year's Fair would not have taken place without the support and dedication of our many volunteers. A special thank you to Raabia Khan, Elizabeth O'Neil, Noor Tarabishy, Susie Kiefer, and Krista Demma, as well as all of the wonderful families who prepared booths, food, and lessons that made the event an extraordinary day for our students, families, and Oak Grove community!



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

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



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Residential Customer
Local Post Office**

Teacher of the Year Awards

The Oak Grove School Education Foundation (OGSEF) helped end the year by honoring the amazing teachers at OGS! The Foundation Board awarded three recipients the 2nd annual Teacher of the Year Award from a group of teachers nominated by their colleagues. Nominees must demonstrate a commitment to self-improvement and



L-R: OGSEF secretary Hillary Bolke, president Jeff Barry, and OGS teacher Bonnie Brown

personal development, promote learning and growing, collaborate with others, have a positive rapport with students, and contribute to the success of OGS.

There were twelve teacher nominees across the three categories: K-4 Teachers, 5-8 Teachers, and Related Services. The Foundation Board was overwhelmed by the number of nominations and the compliments given to the nominees by their peers.

In the K-4 category, this year's Teacher of the Year is Bonnie Brown. Bonnie was described as someone who "brings a gift of sharing her love of learning to all around her," and as a teacher who "creates readers, writers, and mathematicians who want to come to school every day." In the 5-8 category, this year's Teachers of the Year is Mitch Picchiotti. Mitch was described as someone who is "supportive of all students, always engaging with students in the hall, and bringing his positivity in and outside of the classroom." For the Related Services category, this year's award recipient is Dr. Jason Meltzer.



L-R: Hillary Bolke Jeff Barry, and OGS teacher Mitch Picchiotti

Jason was described as someone who is "always available and willing to help staff and students accomplish their goals" and as "a true leader who always wants to make everyone's life easier."

Congratulations to Bonnie, Mitch, and Jason - Oak Grove is a better place because of them!



L-R: Hillary Bolke Jeff Barry, and OGS teacher Dr. Jason Meltzer

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