



Community Newsletter

Oak Grove - A National Blue Ribbon School!

We have some fantastic news to share with our families and the entire community! On behalf of the students, past and present, the faculty, staff, and administration of Oak Grove School, we are proud to announce that the United States Department of Education has named our school district as a National Blue Ribbon School.



This is the first time in history that Oak Grove has received this, the highest honor any school district can earn. I could not be more excited for, and proud of, the former and current students and staff members who are responsible for this achievement. Together, they make Oak Grove a wonderful place to learn and grow. Our community has good reason to be proud of its school.

The Illinois State Board of Education nominated Oak Grove for the award last spring. Schools cannot nominate themselves or seek National Blue Ribbon School status on their own. We are proud that the ISBE recognizes our accomplishments and nominated Oak Grove for the award. The administration and staff worked hard throughout the spring and summer completing the necessary documentation and testimony required for the Department of Education to review.



Oak Grove Teacher and Green Oaks Resident Heather McCarty speaking at our all-school NBR Celebration

The United States Department of Education recognizes schools and/or districts in one of two categories: 1) Exemplary High Performing Schools, and 2) Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools, with Oak Grove being in the former category. We have been recognized as being one of the highest academic performing school districts in Illinois. Eligible schools include public and private elementary, middle and high schools throughout the United States.

The US Secretary of Education recognized all National Blue Ribbon School recipients from November 6th through November 9th, 2016 at a special ceremony in Washington, D.C. Principal Andrew Fenton, teacher Katie Riley and myself were the proud representatives at the ceremony.



Andrew Fenton, Katie Riley and Dr. Lemon receiving the NBR award in Washington D.C.

We held an all-school celebration on the morning of December 21st. Local dignitaries, school board members, former superintendents, Oak Grove PTO and Education Foundation members, and staff members spoke to the audience. The Mayor of Green Oaks, Mr. Bernie Wysocki, presented the District with a fabulous proclamation. It was a proud day for all of us.

Ultimately, the award would not be possible if we did not have students and parents who were committed to learning. The faculty and staff are very appreciative for all that you do as community members to support us each and every day. It is our honor to work on your behalf. This is a great time in our school history. Congratulations!

Lonny B. Lemon, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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Oak Grove Completes 5-Year Renovation Project

Hooray! We are both happy and proud to announce that we are at the end of our complete building renovation. Approximately seven years ago, the school board and administration began planning for a total overhaul of the facility. The work started in the summer of 2012 and continued throughout this fall.



Digital Sign

In essence, Oak Grove is a completely “new” building. The classrooms, library, offices, gyms, other large spaces are refurbished. We have also added state of the art technology throughout every phase of the project.



Band Room

New heating and cooling systems have been installed, making the facility far more energy efficient. Most important, we have greatly increased building security.

Oak Grove is now a state of the art facility. It is a wonderful learning environment for our students. Much credit goes to the Facilities committee and our architect, Peter Graves, for their vision and planning. They kept the other board members informed throughout the process so that the renovation project would be successful. We are proud to say that the entire project was funded without going to referendum or selling bonds.



JH Library

Oak Grove is **your** school. We thank you for the support you continue to give us. Please stop by sometime and take a tour!

This past summer marked the fifth summer of major work. The largest projects included a complete renovation of the junior high entrance, office, teacher workroom, and administrative areas. The nursing office was completely rebuilt to meet latest ADA regulations. The junior high library was gutted and rebuilt. The Pat Patt gym floor was resurfaced and the new district logo installed. Several classrooms were upgraded and two new classrooms were created in an area formerly occupied by the library.



JH Office

Throughout the duration of the renovation project, electrical and technology upgrades were made. Additionally this year, our antiquated phone system was replaced. To meet the needs of our students and staff, a backup electrical generator was installed.



Terrazzo at Front Entrance

Oak Grove Enrollment Continues to Grow

We are pleased to share that our student enrollment continues to grow. Despite having substantially fewer new Kindergarten students than eighth grade graduates, our enrollment continues to trend upward. We have exceeded our expected enrollment projections the past four years as new families, with older students, have chosen to live in our district.

This past summer, we saw a dramatic, unexpected jump in our student population. We anticipated having approximately 800 students this school year. However, we currently have 877 students enrolled at Oak Grove!

We attribute this increase to the quality of life in our community, the excellent school system, and your commitment to Oak Grove. Thank you!

Geography Bee

Oak Grove was the site for an exciting National Geographic Bee on December 19th in the newly renovated Junior High Learning Center. The bee featured 12 contestants: Arianne Berner (8th), Matthew Berner (6th), Jack Regan (8th), Nikhil Patel (7th), Aamir Tanveer (8th), Sean Heard (6th), Prajna Penmetsa (6th), Marisa Tarica (5th), Tarun Movva (5th), Paige Regan (6th), Desi Nainar (8th) and Ramanan Srirajan (7th). The preliminary competition provided three perfect scores which placed Arianne, Aamir, and Desi in the Finals to compete for a berth in the championship. This round went to an unbelievable 18 questions, testing map skills as well as international geographic knowledge. Aamir and Desi faced off in the championship round where Desi prevailed 2-1, a nail-biter! Thanks to all the participants, and the great crowd on hand, including Dr. Lemon and our special guest time keeper and judge, Ms. Dugan.



OGS Social Media

Please make sure to keep up to date with what's happening at Oak Grove School by visiting our Facebook page (www.ogschool.org/fb) and following us on Twitter (@OakGrovePride).

Fifth Grade Science

Fifth grade science students studied ecosystems in first trimester. They learned about transfer of matter and energy, the water cycle and photosynthesis. Anna Dawson was hiking along the Des Plaines River during this study and found an old canoe buried in debris. She reported this to her friends Mahima Bhattacharya, Sophia Frecking and Emma Erisman. They want to keep the environment balanced. These young scientists are meeting on their own time to discuss ways they can raise awareness for care of the natural resources in Libertyville and especially the Des Plaines River. They plan to encourage other students to join their efforts in the spring of 2017 and beyond. Their science teacher, Mrs. Fillinger, is extremely proud of their impressive thinking and civic responsibility to apply what they are learning in class in their community.



Leave Your mark at Oak Grove!

Our children's memories of their time at Oak Grove will last a lifetime, and the Oak Grove School Education Foundation offers an opportunity to leave a permanent mark with a custom brick paver and support innovative curriculum enhancements for your children at the same time! For sizes, information and order, please visit www.ogsef.org/playground-pavers.html.



Kindergarten Pre-Registration 2017-18

Oak Grove School is in the process of determining kindergarten enrollment for the fall of 2017. Having correct enrollment numbers is important to us as it impacts the number of sections, teachers and classrooms. A child must be 5 years old on or before September 1, 2017 to attend kindergarten. If you have a student who will be attending kindergarten in the fall, we ask you to supply us with a bit of information ASAP by going to www.ogschool.org/kindy to pre-register your child. 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. For more information, please call Debi Shaffer at 224-424-4722.

Save the Date: Kindergarten Parent Information Night will be held on Thursday, February 9th at 6:30 p.m. in the Elementary Library.

What is the Oak Grove School Education Foundation?

The Oak Grove School Education Foundation exists to help our students, teachers and families optimize their educational experience at Oak Grove. Through your help, we sponsor and fund teacher-supported differentiated curriculum enhancements focused on the whole child in areas such as STEM, Arts & Language, Social & Emotional Learning, Physical Activity and Creativity. We want to give our students a competitive advantage and foster a curious mind that is the foundation for a lifetime love of learning.

Here are just a few examples of the impact we have had over the last year or two.

Through the **K-2 science program** we helped 300 students gain exposure to scientific concepts beyond the textbook in a lab environment.

Our **Green Screen room** offers our students an immersive educational experience – from Kindergarteners reading to their classmate to in-depth multimedia, programming and digital broadcasting projects. The Green Screen room has impact across all curriculum as Common Core emphasizes student-created projects integrating multimedia and visual displays, creative and scientific writing, and more collaborative projects.

The **Kindergarten Daily 5 Professional Development** helped our teachers create a structure to develop student independence, increase student engagement, and accelerate learning in literacy.

We brought in **stability Ball 'active seating'** to bring focus & concentration to our third graders. Brain research has shown that there is a link between movement and academic performance.

In short, the Foundation is here to help our teachers and students incubate and create out of the box learning opportunities that expand the horizons and minds of our young learners.



OGSEF Provides Scholarship for Oak Grove Alumni Graduating for LHS

As support from our community has grown, so has the OGSEF's ability to support our Oak Grove community as they move through elementary and junior high -- and even past high school. The Soaring Eagle Scholarship was launched to support a deserving Oak Grove School Alumni in their post-secondary studies. This \$1000 scholarship is open to graduating Libertyville High School Seniors. Applications will be available in the LHS Career Resource Center in January.



SHOP to EDUCATE!

Now you can make your shopping pay off for the kids at Oak Grove – at no additional cost to you. Start your online shopping through the Merchant Portal on our website and your favorite stores will contribute a percentage of your purchases directly to the Oak Grove School Education Foundation. Simply click the "Support Us" tab at the bottom of our website (www.ogsef.org) and then "Shop to Support" to view over 150 great merchants in the gallery – including Amazon, Nordstrom, Target, Sketchers, Adidas, Hello Fresh, Fandango, Starbucks, Orbitz, Fanzz and much more!



Student Council

The Student Council has been busy this year. Under the guidance of Ashley Evans, and the leadership of Jack Reagan, Cate McCarty, Ella Schaffnit, and Jane Arnold, they have been working for our school and our community. Their recent efforts allowed for 114 toys to be donated to Toys for Tots and a cash donation for their operating costs.



Hour of Code



Students throughout Oak Grove recently participated in the Hour of Code, a global movement that reaches tens of millions of students in over 180 countries. Proving that coding is not just for older students, first grade students met as an entire group to learn what coding is and that everyone can learn to code. They then had a chance to learn how to code using a variety of different games and tutorials. This took patience, problem solving and perseverance, and we are very proud of our students!

"Read With Me"

This is the 3rd year that Oak Grove 5th graders have participated in the "Read With Me" program. The program is run through Lake County Cares which is a non for profit, volunteer service hub that strengthens communities by operating essential outreach programs. Our 5th graders will work with A.J. Katzenmaier's 3rd graders, 3 times this year. Each time, the A.J. Katzenmaier student receives a book to keep that they will read with their OG buddy. Everyone has a snack and friendships are made through the reading of books!



In December, we went to A.J. Katzenmaier for our session. They will come back to Oak Grove in February for another session and in April for an end of the year celebration! It is a positive experience for everyone involved!



Pending Detachment Petitions

Families from two residential subdivisions which border Oak Grove, Daybreak Farms and Meadow Woods, petitioned the Regional Board of Trustees to detach from the Woodland Elementary and Warren Township High School districts and be annexed into Oak Grove Elementary and Libertyville High School Districts. Oak Grove and the other three districts opposed the detachment petitions. In both cases, the Regional Board of Trustees denied the petitioners' request and sided with Oak Grove and the others.

Currently, both the Daybreak Farms and Meadow Woods petitioners have filed an appeal of the Regional Board of Trustees decision with the Circuit Clerk. We are awaiting those decisions, which could come as early as late January or in February. If you have questions about these detachments, please feel free to contact Dr. Lonny B. Lemon, Oak Grove superintendent of schools, at 847-367-4120.

Snowflake 2016

Snowflake is an annual program for 7th and 8th grade students designed to promote healthy peer relationships, responsible decision making and resisting negative peer pressure. This year the event was held at Oak Grove School on Friday, October 14th, 2016 and was attended by over 400 students from Hawthorn North/South, and Oak Grove. In addition to the students, their parents, and close to 100 facilitators and high school students also attended the event. Our sincere thanks go out to the custodial staff, the many parent



volunteers, the administration and staff, and especially OGS Snowflake coordinators Gayle Timlin and Kimberly Wesley.

Jack Olsen, OGS Alumni

"Even as Hollywood screenwriters go, my story is fairly unusual. I sold my first script in 1990, but didn't see a movie with my name on it go into production until 2015. Through all those years, I worked steadily, often getting hired to rewrite other people's work as scripts got closer to (and sometimes further from) production. I can't complain about being able to make my living as a writer, but the appeal of creative jobs is often at least partly because of ego - and I spent a quarter of a century not seeing my name on movie posters or walking down a red carpet.



Screenwriter Jack Olsen

"As early as the second grade, I was fortunate to be part of a few different independent study experiments at Oak Grove, and I think these programs created a real foundation for me - teaching me the value of persistence and of trusting in my own abilities. Throughout my elementary school years, I learned about personal accountability and the opportunities that come with taking initiative in a supportive and tolerant environment. This year, I finally got to see two movies produced that were based on my own scripts. There is still a long story ahead of me, professionally, but as an Oak Grove alumnus I'm prepared to see it through, no matter what line that story takes."

(Editor's Note: Jack's movie "When the Bough Breaks" was released in theaters in September 2016. Oak Grove would like to thank him for taking the time to reflect on his days as an Eagle.)

Authors Visit Oak Grove

With the help of the Oak Grove PTO and the OGSEF, Oak Grove students were treated to some wonderful author visits recently.

Helen Frost is a teacher, writer and poet residing in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She is the author of a number of books, poetry and plays and is the recipient of a 2009 National Endowment for the Arts Poetry Fellowship and a Michael L. Printz Honor Award winner. Many of her works are appropriate for children and young adults, but she has also penned poetry for adults and has a body of work specifically geared towards teachers. Helen's presentation to our students showed just how fun poetry can be. During the presentation to our 5th through 8th grade students, Helen discussed her books, shared her writing process, and provided materials to our teachers to help inspire their students.



Helen Frost

Monarch award-winning children's book author and illustrator David Biedrzycki put on one of the most entertaining and informative assemblies we've had in years. David is a very engaging speaker who shared his passion with our students in a way that clearly connected with teachers and students alike. During his presentation to our K through 4th grade students, David demonstrated how he illustrates books with Photoshop, shared work he created as a young child, stressed the importance of reading and writing, and did it all with a style that was simply captivating.



David Biedrzycki

We are fortunate to be able to offer our students these experiences, and we thank OGS library staff members Jina Rappaport, Yvonne Timony and Lynda San as well as PTO Programs and Speakers Committee Chair Shellie Fahy for exposing our students to such amazing people!

Oak Grove Celebrates with Pablo!

The entire Oak Grove faculty and staff threw a surprise party on September 6th for Mr. Pablo Nino. The week before, Pablo became an official citizen of the United States of America in an induction ceremony in downtown Chicago. Pablo is one of our outstanding morning maintenance workers. He is a great employee and beloved by our staff.

We surprised Pablo with two cakes, balloons, a hat, certificate, and an American flag. Mr. Jones and some band members played the National Anthem during the festivities. Congratulations, Pablo!



Pablo Nino

Guitar Donation

The Oak Grove music department donated 24 of its used guitars to Bravo Waukegan this fall. Bravo was formed in 2010 in an attempt to maintain musical programming in district schools in times of deep financial cuts to the Arts.

Bravo's initial objective was to increase the number of children involved in the music programs and retain them throughout their later school years. Bravo is now touching the lives of more than 2,500 students each year and has become a respected and positive force in the Waukegan community.

"Show me a student with an instrument in one hand and I'll show you a diploma in the other."
- Patricia Sikorovsky, Bravo Founder

A special thanks goes to Oak Grove parent, Erik Larson, who serves as a board member for Bravo Waukegan for leading us to their organization and to the Oak Grove PTO for purchasing new replacement guitars for our music classes.



Oak Grove School District 68
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Veterans Day at Oak Grove

Every November 11th is a special day for our nation. This year Oak Grove continued its long standing tradition of honoring our service men and women on Veterans Day. 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 1,200 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.



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