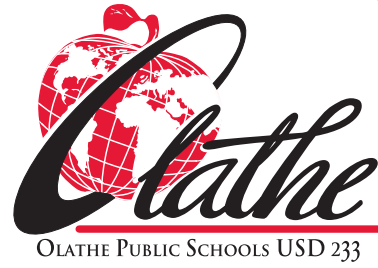


# School NEWS



SPRING 2021



## STUDENTS AND STAFF HELP COMMUNITY

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**SUPERINTENDENT TRANSITION**

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**THE SPOT: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

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# *A Message From* **SUPERINTENDENT JOHN ALLISON**



Olathe Public Schools families,

It is with mixed emotions that I share my intent to retire at the end of this school year. This was not an easy decision to make. I have loved my time in Olathe and I have greatly appreciated the people and the community. From my first day here, I have been astonished by the support of this community. Olathe is a special place.

It is now time to focus on my family. My wife and I are planning to move back to Dallas, a place where we lived for a number of years and always hoped to one day return. Our son is currently living in Dallas and our daughter hopes to move there in the next few years. Being closer to and spending more time with family is my focus now as I leave this chapter and start the next one.

I am thrilled to share that the Board of Education announced its decision to appoint Dr. Brent Yeager, current

Assistant Superintendent for Learning Services, to the role of Superintendent starting in July. I have had the great honor of working with Dr. Yeager the past four years and I have truly been impressed with his leadership, his vision and, most importantly, his love for education and the children of Olathe. I could not be more supportive of this decision. Dr. Yeager is a fantastic choice to lead the Olathe Public Schools into the future. You can read an article about Dr. Yeager and this transition in this issue of School News.

I wanted to assure you that Dr. Yeager and I will work closely together during the coming months to ensure a smooth transition.

Thank you all for your encouragement during the past four years. It has truly been an honor to lead this organization. Thank you for your support of the Olathe Public Schools.

Respectfully,  
**John Allison,**  
**Superintendent**

## *In This Issue...*

**Olathe Public Schools** 14160 S. Black Bob Road, Olathe, KS 66063  
(913) 780-7000 • [www.olatheschools.org](http://www.olatheschools.org)

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# OLATHE SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION ANNOUNCES SUPERINTENDENT SUCCESSION PLAN

*Dr. Brent Yeager*, Olathe Public Schools Assistant Superintendent for Learning Services, will succeed John Allison as superintendent on July 2, 2021. Mr. Allison is retiring from his career in education administration at the end of the 2020-21 school year.

Joe Beveridge, Olathe Board of Education President, announced: “The preparedness of Dr. Yeager to seamlessly assume this key leadership position is an outcome of deliberate efforts by the Board of Education and the vision of John Allison to effectively identify and develop our internal talent.” Beveridge continued, “On the heels of a challenging period for students, staff, and community, it is reassuring that this decision will support stability and continuity for our future.”

Dr. Yeager has 20 years of accomplished experience within the classroom and in administrative positions. His leadership of the Learning Services division has demonstrated a track record of results at building and developing teams, improving critical key performance metrics in a large public school district, and the ability to catalyze collaborative efforts throughout the district and community. Recent highlights include leadership of the district’s school improvement process, development and revision of curriculum and resources, establishing the

Diversity and Engagement Department, and selection for the 2018 Aspiring Superintendent’s Academy, a cohort of 18 nationally selected participants.

“I am thrilled to be named the next superintendent for the Olathe Public Schools,” says Dr. Yeager. “I believe in our strategic plan and appreciate the foundation that has been established under Mr. Allison’s leadership. Next fall, with the help of our Board of Education, our outstanding staff, and our community, we will relaunch our relentless commitment to fulfilling the ambitions of our strategic plan. This plan is truly our bedrock as we prepare ALL of our students for their future.”

Allison became superintendent of Olathe Public Schools in 2017 and is retiring after 34 years in education.

“It was a very difficult and emotional decision for me to retire, but after almost 15 years as a superintendent, it is time to start a new chapter that will allow me to spend more time with my family,” says Allison. “I am grateful to have had the opportunity to finish my career as a superintendent in Olathe. Olathe has always supported their schools and understood how vital they are to our community. Having been a part of the creation of our new strategic plan based on the ‘Portrait of a Graduate’ and



Dr. Brent Yeager

helping build the foundation for the next generation of Olathe students has been a highlight of my time in Olathe. Under Dr. Yeager’s leadership, I am confident that the best is yet to come. I look forward to helping him transition to his new role.”

Allison and Yeager will spend the remainder of the 2020-21 school year preparing for the transition, and will be working to identify, recruit, or develop the individual to assume the helm of Learning Services. Dr. Yeager has a background in ethnic studies and believes in the importance of attracting district staff and leadership of diverse backgrounds. He is committed to making this a central part of our work in Olathe.



# STUDENTS AND STAFF PULL TOGETHER TO HELP COMMUNITY

*One* of the negative side effects of COVID-19 was more families in need of assistance. However, Olathe students and staff members shined brightly as they organized and carried out massive community service projects to help everyone from health care providers and nursing home residents to families and homeless individuals. Here is a sample of the generosity shown by Olathe students and staff this school year.

- The Student Lighthouse Team at Brougham Elementary School went “all out” on the school’s Pennies for Shoes campaign. Every contributing child counted their coins at home, then pooled the donations into a classroom bucket. Then the entire classroom added up the individual contribution amounts as a math problem. They raised more than \$2,465.
- Students in Kristi Woenstendick’s eighth grade Careers class at Mission Trail Middle School made wreaths for the residents’ doors at Good Samaritan Society – Olathe. The idea stemmed from Woenstendick’s personal connection to the facility, and a Project Citizen research project in which her students chose an issue facing the community. They wanted to focus on “Loneliness Due to COVID in Nursing Homes.”
- The Raven Service Club at Olathe Northwest High School donated about 30 no-sew blankets for the district’s Community Development Office to share with students in need. Earlier in the year the RSC members wrote thank you notes to medical staff at area hospitals. They also made reindeer ornaments and wrote Christmas cards for the residents of Benton House assisted living facility, and gathered hygiene kit items and food for the Veterans Community Project.
- Olathe West High School’s annual Give a Hoot program

went virtual in 2020 due to the pandemic. Students were creative in planning and implementing their projects, such as writing uplifting messages on sidewalks around nearby schools, Zooming with elementary classrooms and nursing home residents, and collecting food, clothing, blankets, diapers, etc. for area charities.

- Several classes of students at Pleasant Ridge Elementary School put their computer skills to work making holiday cards for veterans. This was computer lab associate Sandra Bluhm’s first time to organize a community service project, but it was successful with about 85 cards to be distributed through The Honor Center for homeless veterans in Gainesville, FL.
- Prairie Center Elementary School students collected about 200 pounds of food (more than 600 items) to benefit M.U.F.F.I.N (Mothers United For Families In Need). MUFFIN Fund is a group of women who provide food, clothing, fees, etc. for children in the Olathe Public Schools.
- The Prairie Trail Middle School sixth grade academic extension class led by Dana Davis and Missie Klusman put a creative twist on a typical food drive. Inspired by their entry for Olathe’s Martin Luther King Jr. Contest, students used the theme “Call to Action” to make a piece of art made from canned food labels. They also filmed announcements, organized, and collected more than 715 pounds of canned food for Harvesters.
- Students throughout Regency Place Elementary School organize community service projects each year. This year fourth grade students collected about 30 boxes of toiletry items and laundry detergent for homeless people in the Kansas City area. Their Dignity Drive benefited the organization Giving the Basics.

# STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 2: BEHAVIOR AND SOCIAL- EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*In* October 2019, the Olathe Board of Education approved the 2019-24 Strategic Plan. In past and subsequent issues of School News, we will highlight and explain individual aspects of the plan. In this issue we'll discuss Goal 2: Behavior and Social-Emotional Development.

To best explain this goal, we sat down with Angie Salava, Olathe Public Schools director of social-emotional learning and mental health services, for a question and answer session.

**Q:** What is Goal 2 and what does it mean?

**A:** Goal 2 is all about the whole child. We know that in order to succeed in our world, students need more than just academic skills. Students need to be able to manage their emotions and stresses, work in teams, understand their own mental health, and treat others with respect. This goal provides for the development and implementation of a social-emotional curriculum, augmented mental health services, the implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports framework districtwide, and updated bullying and suicide prevention programs.

**Q:** What is Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)?

**A:** According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), social-emotional learning is the process through which students acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and to make responsible decisions. The Olathe

Public Schools uses this definition of SEL to guide all of our practices.

**Q:** How does this goal impact the work in the district?

**A:** This goal has systemized SEL throughout the district. There have been pockets of SEL taking place throughout our district for many years, but this goal now makes social-emotional

learning a deliberate, consistent practice throughout all schools. In addition, this goal provides for additional staff to support classroom behavior management and mental health needs.

**Q:** How will we see this goal demonstrated in the classroom?

**A:** We will measure the success of this goal through a tool called Panorama, which measures students' social-emotional learning and by schoolwide behavior support fidelity checks. As a district, we will be looking at these tools to assess for consistent improvement and will look at the data to see where we need to target our focus and interventions.

**Q:** What excites you most about the work being done in the district?

**A:** The Olathe Public Schools knows and understands that students won't achieve their academic potential without social-emotional support and resources are being

targeted in order to provide this support. I'm so excited to see the student growth that will be taking place over the next few years. The Olathe Public Schools is a statewide leader in Social-Emotional Learning and I'm grateful to work for a district that values the whole child.

**The Olathe Public Schools knows and understands that students won't achieve their academic potential without social-emotional support and resources are being targeted in order to provide this support. I'm so excited to see the student growth that will be taking place over the next few years.**

- Angie Salava  
*Olathe Public Schools Director of  
Social-Emotional Learning and  
Mental Health Services*



## Portrait of a Graduate



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# COMMUNITY MEMBERS VISIT VIRTUALLY WITH REMOTE LEARNERS



*In* early November, a new initiative was started to help bring community members into virtual classrooms. During a typical school year, guests from the community help to bring learning material to life through firsthand accounts. This year to help meet students where they are, Olathe Public Schools Director of Blended Learning T.J. Ulmer and Alisha Drummond, Olathe Public Schools remote support for blended learning, sought

other ways to involve community perspectives.

Drummond emailed and sent letters to local authors, notable Olathe alumni, Kansas City area celebrities and community organizations and invited them to be guest readers to elementary remote learners. “Seeing notable individuals enjoy reading plays a critical role instilling a lifelong love of reading in students,” Drummond said. “Not only do guest readers bring joy to students, they provide a positive reading role model.”

Guest readers can either record themselves reading a book or join a live Zoom session. Readers introduce themselves and explain their ties to the Kansas City area and why they have chosen their particular book.

A notable guest reader was Kansas City Chiefs mascot KC Wolf.

“Through this initiative, we hope to be able to bring a broad array of community members to the forefront for our students,” Ulmer said. “This broadens the horizons of capabilities for the students and lets them know that the community cares about them.”

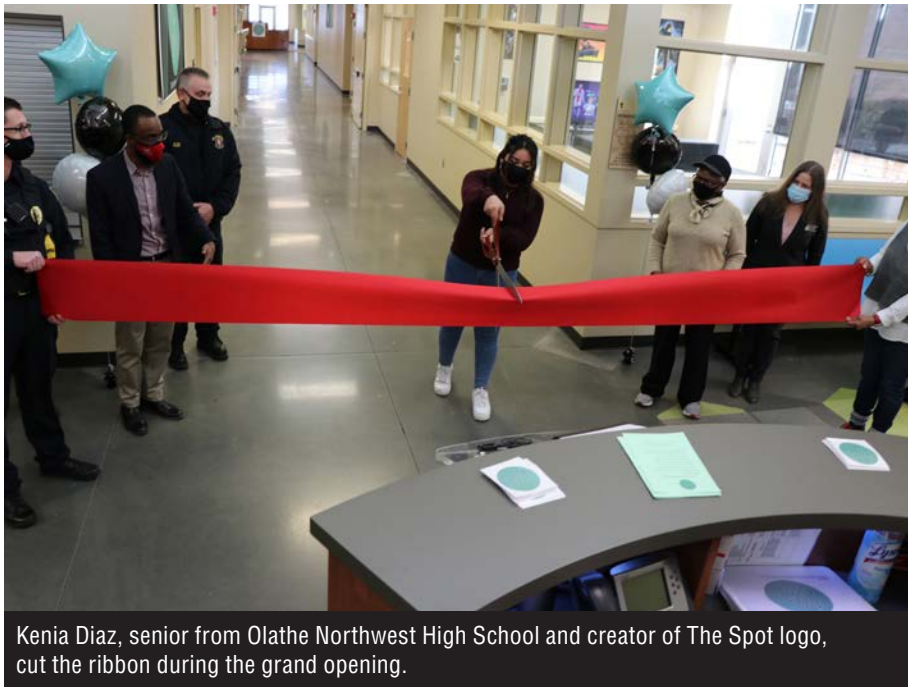
As this program is still in its infancy, guest readers are welcome through the remainder of the school year. If you or your organization has interest, please contact Alisha Drummond at [aldrummond@olatheschools.org](mailto:aldrummond@olatheschools.org).

## NOTIFICATION STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION.

The Olathe Public Schools prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity in its programs, activities or employment, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups to its facilities as required by: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Equal Access Act of 1984 and other relevant state and federal laws as amended. Inquiries regarding compliance with applicable civil rights statutes related to race, ethnicity, gender, age discrimination, sexual orientation, gender identity or equal access may be directed to Staff Counsel, 14160 S. Black Bob Road, Olathe, KS 66063-2000, phone 913-780-7000. All inquiries regarding compliance with applicable statutes regarding Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act may be directed to the Assistant Superintendent of Support Services, 14160 S. Black Bob Rd. Olathe, KS 66063-2000, phone 913-780-7000. Interested persons including those with impaired vision or hearing, can also obtain information as to the existence and location of services, activities and facilities that are accessible to and usable by disabled persons by calling the Assistant Superintendent of Support Services. (03/19)



# THE SPOT: A COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP



Kenia Diaz, senior from Olathe Northwest High School and creator of The Spot logo, cut the ribbon during the grand opening.



Erik Erazo speaks to attendees at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

**A** community partnership involving Olathe Public Schools, Johnson County Department of Corrections, Olathe Public Library, Johnson County Mental Health, Olathe Fire Department and the Olathe Police Department works to provide homework support, mentorships and a fun and safe environment for secondary students.

The Spot, located at the Johnson County Youth & Family Service Center, held a ribbon-cutting ceremony in mid-January. This youth program is hosted from 3-5 p.m. each Tuesday and allows students in grades 6 through 12 an opportunity to build their social

capacity with other students and work with professional mentors from the community. Information will also be shared with students about careers as a first responder, college access, mental health services and more.

The Olathe Public Schools Foundation provided a grant to help fund parts of this initiative.

This free initiative provides a positive alternative for at-risk youths.

“Our youth need to see unity and collaboration and The Spot will provide that unique opportunity,” Olathe Public Schools Facilitator of Diversity and Engagement Marquis Harris said.

“The Spot will have both the social and

academic components that keep students accountable on their path to graduation,” Erik Erazo, Olathe Public Schools coordinator of diversity and engagement, said. “As part of a countywide committee, Disproportionate Minority Contact, we seek to develop programming and strategies which lower the rate of minority representation in the juvenile justice system and this initiative provides a safe and cost-free environment after school.”

For more information about The Spot, contact the Olathe Public Schools Department of Diversity and Engagement at (913) 780-7880 or [diversity@olatheschools.org](mailto:diversity@olatheschools.org).

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Olathe Youth Baseball is Not affiliated with Olathe Park and Recreation, all we do is baseball for Spring and Fall for grades 3 thru 8. Olathe Youth Baseball has been an asset to the Olathe community since 1953.

Olathe Youth Baseball Inc., (OYBI) is a Federal 501 (c) (3) and State Registered Non for Profit Organization in the interest and welfare of the youth in the community.

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Visit or register on our web-site  
[www.olatheyouthbaseball.com](http://www.olatheyouthbaseball.com).

We will begin on-line registration January 4 thru March 15, 2021, we are also offering an Early Bird registration period from January 4 thru January 22 only.

**Early Bird saving of \$20.00  
January 4 thru January 22 only.**

Regular registration fees from January 4 thru March 15, 2021 (Deadline) after the deadline there is no guarantee of placement on a team, please register early.

Regular registrations fees:

Grades 3 thru 6 = \$230.00

Grades 7 & 8 = \$250.00

Practices will begin in April, with games to follow through mid - June. Following the season will offer a Post Season tournament beginning after July 4, for all teams wanting to participate. No entry cost.

For more information call 913-393-9891, or e-mail us at [olathebaseball@sbcglobal.net](mailto:olathebaseball@sbcglobal.net).

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