

School NEWS



WINTER 2019



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FLIGHT IN THE CLASSROOM**

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RAPTOR SYSTEM ROLL OUT

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A Message From **SUPERINTENDENT JOHN ALLISON**



The Vision of the Olathe Public Schools is Students Prepared for *Their* Future. The italics on “Their” is symbolic of our focus as a system on making sure our students have the skills they need to be successful in a world that is quickly evolving and changing. The world is changing and we need to help our students be ready for whatever the world looks like 15, 20, 30 years from now. This year’s kindergarten students will graduate in 2032. The reality is that if our schools in 2032 look like they do today we will have failed our kids. We as a system need to constantly evolve to make sure we are meeting student needs today and into the future.

This issue of *School News* includes example after example of how the district is looking at new and different ways to educate our students. The Board of Education approved the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan that maps out our path to student success. Through an

amazing partnership with Garmin, our aviation electronics program is up and running. The district is planning on launching a new Spanish language immersion program for the 2020-21 school year. Read more about these topics in this issue of School News.

I am excited for the new Strategic Plan and the direction it helps us set. I’m proud of the amazing students and staff who have embraced new ideas and new directions and who dedicate themselves to be better each and every day.

This is an exciting time in the Olathe Public Schools and I can’t wait to keep sharing the great work along the way.

Thank you for your support.

**John Allison,
Superintendent**

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Olathe Public Schools 14160 S. Black Bob Road, Olathe, KS 66063
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Tina McCleod, Olathe North High School student wellness advocate, meets with students interested in forming a club for mental wellness.

DISTRICT ADVOCATES FOR STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

As the health and well-being of students is the top priority for Olathe Public Schools, the district continues to address student need. At the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, Olathe added five student wellness advocates, one for each high school.

Student wellness advocates are available to work with students who need additional support to meet social-emotional learning or mental health goals. School counselors still provide preventative education and services to students in the areas of academic, career and social-emotional growth while student wellness advocates' sole focus is on student social-emotional or mental health needs. Advocates are also a resource to teachers and counselors to help design interventions for particular students.

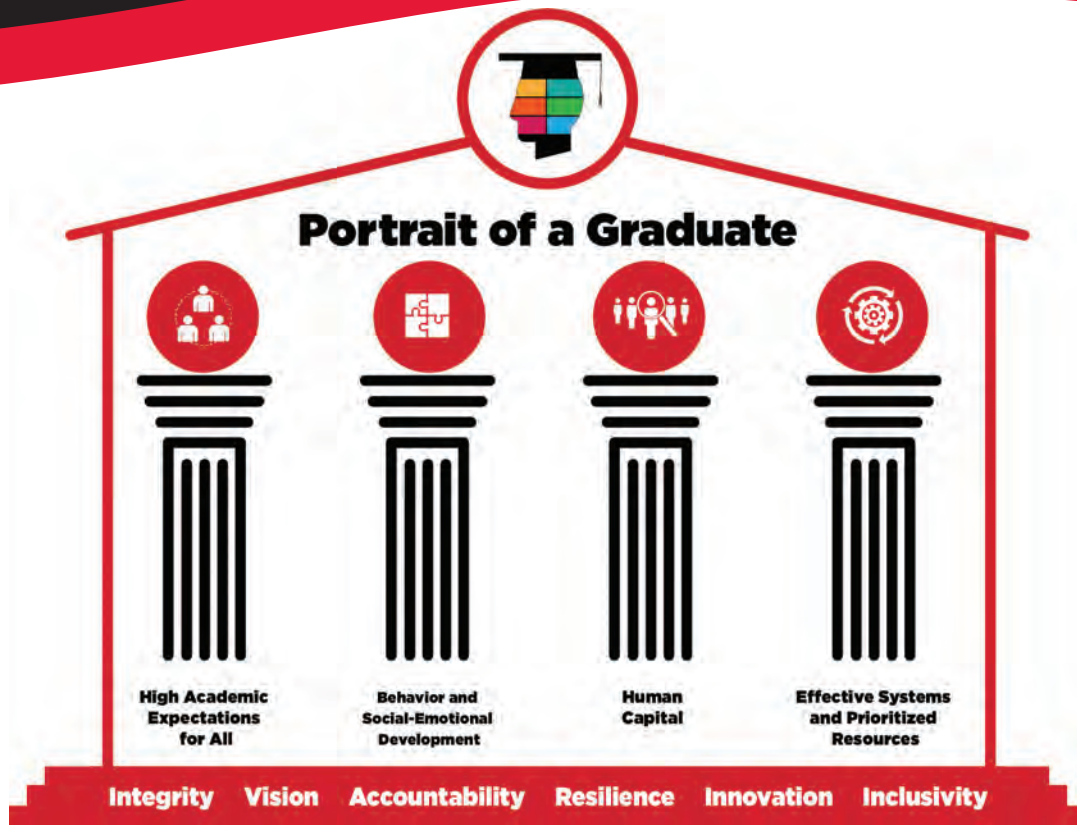
"By having a resource on site, it removes the barriers of time, transportation and even money that can prevent some parents from seeking help for their students," said Angie Salava, Olathe Public Schools Director of Social, Emotional Learning and Mental Health Services.

While located in the high schools, the student wellness advocates also will be available as needed to the schools within the high school's feeder pattern.

In the past few school years, the district implemented a vast array of initiatives and staff members to address the need of the student population as part of a multi-tiered approach. These initiatives included adding the initial contract therapist through a grant from the Olathe Public Schools Foundation, offering family counseling during the summer months, gathering student social-emotional and mental wellness data through Panorama, introducing Signs of Suicide programming at the high school level, using Second Step programming from pre-K to eighth grade, adding contract therapists at all secondary and select elementary schools, and being a founding member of the Zero Reasons Why initiative.

In providing services that help students achieve competencies outlined in the district's strategic plan and Portrait of a Graduate, student wellness advocates aim to increase student resilience and social and emotional well-being.

"The Olathe Public Schools cares for the whole child and knows that in order for students to succeed, mental health supports must be in place," Salava said. "These supports, along with the direct teaching of social-emotional skills at all grade levels, mean that our students will continue to thrive and be prepared for their future as a result of instruction through the Olathe Public Schools."



OLATHE PUBLIC SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024

The Olathe Public Schools Strategic Plan 2019-2024 outlines the district’s goals and core values to set the roadmap to help students achieve great success. The Strategic Plan was approved in October 2019, but began with the development of the Portrait of a Graduate (PoG) during the 2018-19 school year. District staff and the Board of Education, with much community input, created a Portrait of a Graduate to outline what we want our students to know and be able to do when they graduate from our schools. The new Strategic Plan provides the path and steps the organization needs to follow to help our students achieve the competencies outlined in the PoG: critical thinking and problem solving; resilience and social and emotional well-being; creativity and innovation; communication; initiative and self-direction; and social and cross-cultural skills.

“We are fortunate to work in a great school district filled with people who are committed to doing what is best for students,” Superintendent John Allison said. “Now our focus is on the relentless pursuit of excellence. So what does the new Strategic Plan mean for our district? It means direction and focus and the ever important knowing our end goal. It means integrating our six core values of integrity, vision, accountability, resilience, innovation, and inclusivity into every decision we make, every interaction we have and every part of our work. As we work to prepare students

for our continuously changing world, education will have to look different in order for us to achieve our Strategic Plan and Portrait of a Graduate goals. We will continue to have to adapt how we teach to prepare our students to be successful in 2032 and beyond.”

Our four strategic plan goals are:

- **High Academic Expectations for All:** Every student will be challenged and supported through tiers of instruction by all staff to achieve a high standard of academic performance and growth.
- **Behavior and Social-Emotional Development for All:** Every student will benefit from an educational experience that fosters their behavioral, social and emotional development.
- **Human Capital:** The district will attract, develop, engage and retain high quality talent.
- **Effective Systems and Prioritized Resources:** All systems and resources will be aligned based on organizational data to achieve strategic initiatives.

Core Values: Integrity, Vision, Accountability, Resilience, Innovation, and Inclusivity

Vision: Students Prepared for *Their* Future

Read more about the Strategic Plan at www.olatheschools.org/strategicplan.



Avionics instructor LeAnne Burt works with students to explain concepts during the early stages of the program.

AVIONICS TAKES FLIGHT IN THE CLASSROOM

In November 2018, the Olathe School District approved a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) career pathway. Following in-depth planning and creating an industry-standard work lab, Aviation Electronics (avionics) made its debut in August 2019 at the West Dennis Support Center.

Partnered with Garmin International, a global leader in technology, students have the opportunity to learn and develop avionic industry skills in a state-of-the-art lab furnished by Garmin with the same equipment that the company uses in its manufacturing department.

Avionics is a two-year program offered to high school students. For three hours each day, students leave their home high school and attend avionics classes at the West Dennis Support Center.

“Students will learn the basis of electronics and in the process learn how to make, troubleshoot and maintain a computer,” avionics electronics instructor LeAnne Burt said. “The first year of the

program, students are going to learn schematics, they’re going to learn what each component does and how to put it all together.”

As students progress through the program they incorporate work with microprocessors and have the skills necessary to troubleshoot and repair industry-standard equipment.

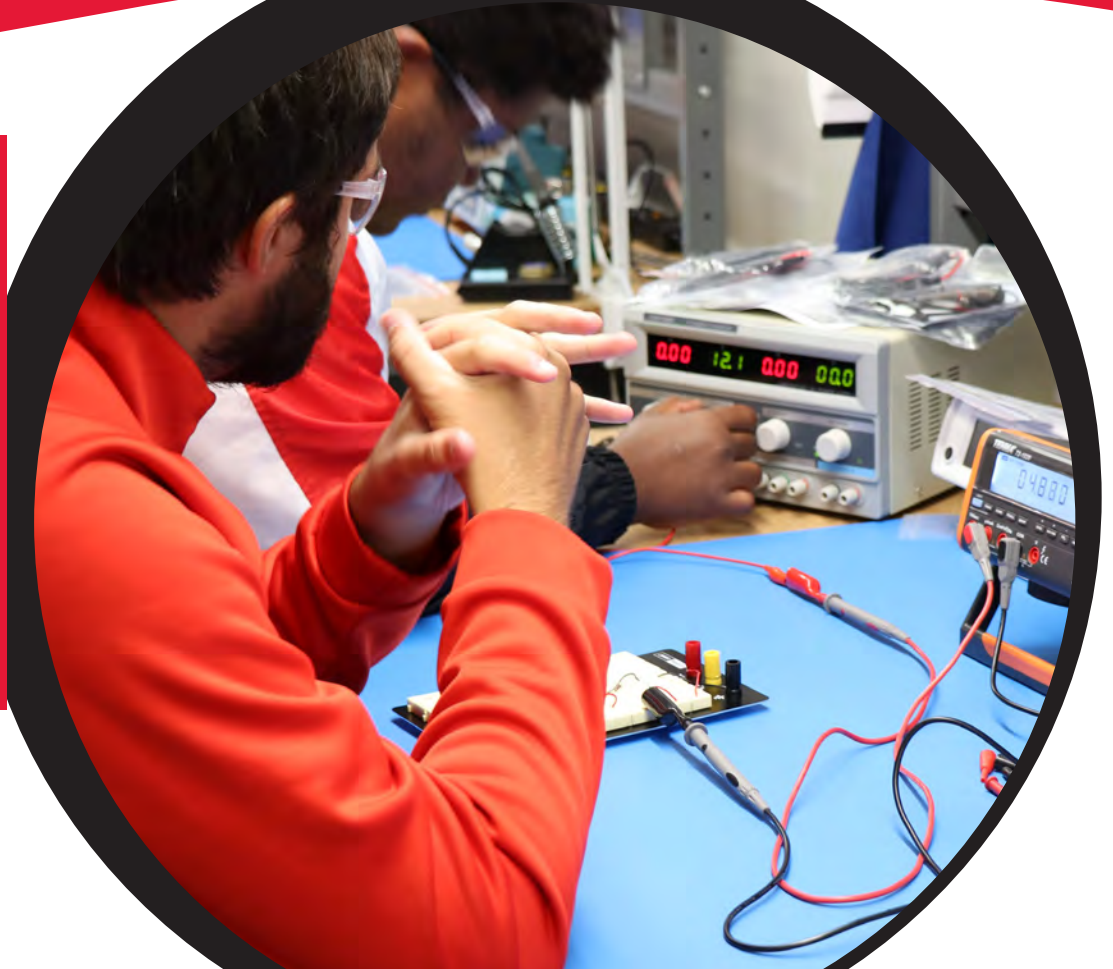
Students in the avionics program will see benefits from the community partnerships. Upon high school graduation and through Johnson County Community College’s College Now program, students will have completed one year of postgraduate studies.

During the final year of the two-year associate degree, eight students earn the opportunity to apprentice at Garmin with more opportunities available through other companies in the Olathe area.

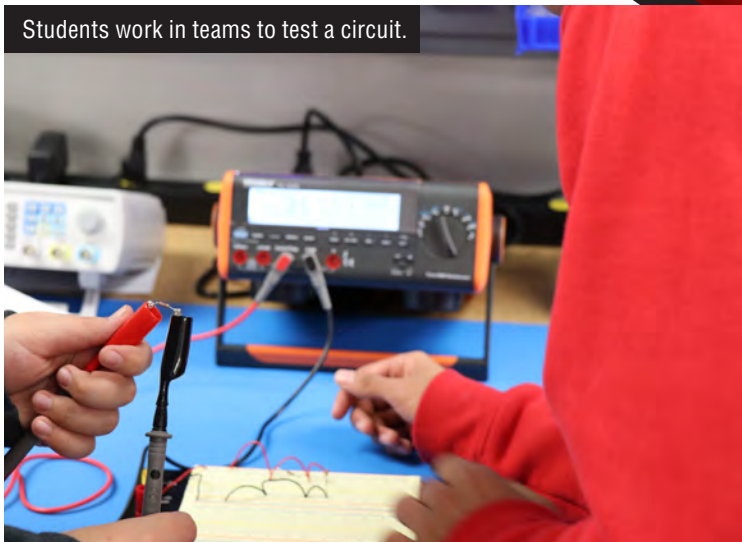
“Students who complete the program will have the opportunity to complete 22 college credits before graduation,” said Burt. The college credit hours are of no cost to students and their families because of the Kansas Senate Bill 155. The bill, passed into law 2012, was

One of the most exciting aspects of this career pathway is the ability to place our students right into the workforce in a high-demand career.

*- Dr. Jessica Dain
Olathe Public Schools
Assistant Superintendent of
Support Services*



Students work in teams to test a circuit.



designed to stimulate growth in CTE at both the secondary and post-secondary levels in Kansas.

While earning credits, students are eligible to take the International Society of Certified Electronic Technicians (ISECT) certification exam, setting students ahead when it comes to applying for jobs in electronics.

In addition, while working part time and while finishing their postgraduate degree, Garmin will offer tuition reimbursement and provide an opportunity to hire students full-time upon completion of the program.

“One of the most exciting aspects of this career pathway is the ability to place our students right into the workforce in a high-demand career,” Jessica Dain, Olathe Public Schools assistant superintendent of support services, said. “Never before has the district had a lab furnished from an industry partner. Never has the district had a program in which students can walk into an internship or apprenticeship and then a career, free of student debt. This is very exciting for the district and our students.”



RAPTOR VISITOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM INFORMATION

The Olathe Public Schools is dedicated to the safety and security of its students and staff. With this focus in mind, three schools in November began piloting an innovative security practice provided by the Raptor Visitor Management System.

Canyon Creek Elementary, Frontier Trail Middle School and Olathe East High School began the pilot program mid-November while a districtwide rollout is expected to be completed in the spring of 2020. This system is designed to help track visitors, contractors and volunteers in district buildings and continue to provide the safe learning environment for students and staff.

Funding for this initiative was provided by a grant from the Kansas Department of Education Safe and Secure Schools and is considered best practice by districts across the country.

What is Raptor?

Similar to the current visitor management process, visitors will show their government-issued ID at the front door before gaining access to the front office. Visitors who wish to go beyond the front office will be asked to show their ID again which will be scanned or manually entered into the Raptor system.

Visitors' identity will be scanned across a collection of publicly exhibited records known as the state sexual offender registries. The only database that Raptor checks against is a collection established by Kansas to identify sexual offenders.

It is important to note that data from the ID will not be shared with any outside agency.

Once the visitor has been cleared, a printed visitor badge will be issued with the individual's photo, date and purpose/destination of their visit and will be worn at all times while in the building. If an individual has forgotten their ID, they will be asked to enter their name and address into the system.

"Part of keeping students and faculty safe is knowing precisely who is in our buildings at all time," Olathe Public Schools Manager of Safety Services Rick Castillo said. "Raptor provides a formal process that will allow us to extend our current best practices for safety."

This process will only be used during the school day.

As the safety of district staff, students and patrons is the top priority of Olathe Public Schools, this system will provide an additional layer of safety in our buildings.



DISTRICT TO LAUNCH IMMERSION PROGRAM IN 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

Imagine students going to school and spending half of their day immersed in Spanish. Students would learn science, social studies, and math in both Spanish and English throughout the day. Imagine that they start in kindergarten and learn to read and write in two languages as they progress through elementary school. Imagine that they graduate from high school with both biliteracy and cross-cultural skills.

We won't have to imagine this idea for much longer as the Olathe Public Schools will launch a dual language immersion program at two elementary schools beginning in the 2020-21 school year. Starting in the fall, two dual language immersion kindergarten sections will be launched at Black Bob and Manchester Park elementary schools.

"We are very intentionally starting small," Assistant Superintendent for Learning Services Brent Yeager said. "We want to build a program that really serves the needs of our students and our community."

Incoming kindergarten students interested in being a part of the immersion program will enter an application into a lottery system.

Some seats will be saved for students living in the elementary attendance area and other seats will be open to families wanting to transfer into the program.

"Immersion programs set the stage for students to develop advanced language proficiency," District Coordinator for ELL and World Languages Mike Flenthrope said. "We are excited about this program because it offers the gift of language to our students."

More details will be shared in the coming months about how parents can enter their child into the lottery system for a spot in a kindergarten immersion class. Additionally, the district is actively seeking high quality teaching staff with native or near native Spanish skills to work as the inaugural teachers in the new program. But more than anything, district staff are excited for the possibilities ahead with language immersion.

"We know that studying foreign language not only makes our students more competitive in the global world, but also sets them up to better understand the world we live in," Yeager said. "We look forward to the opportunities this provides students to truly learn a new language and new culture, and develop and retain skills they can use for a lifetime."



A mock-up of the video scoreboard shows what attendees may see during outdoor graduation ceremonies.

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EVENT	ESTIMATED ANNUAL ATTENDANCE
HS Graduation	35,000
HS Band Showcase	6,500
HS JV/Varsity Football	50,000
HS Soccer	4,000
HS Track Meets	4,000
MS Football/Track	4,000
HS Cross Country	2,500
MS Cross Country	1,000
MNU College Football	1,500
Relay for Life	1,000
TOTAL	108,500

DISTRICT ACTIVITY CENTERS TO HAVE NEW LOOK

The stadiums at the Olathe District Activity (ODAC) and College Boulevard Activity centers (CBAC) will have a new visual component later in the spring semester. Video boards will soon replace the aging scoreboards that are at the end of their life expectancy.

In an innovative, fiscally-responsible approach to replacing the boards, business partnerships will finance the entirety of the project. The sound system, cameras, installation, training and equipment will all be covered through four Anchor and six Founding sponsors.

Sponsorships will be a multiyear agreement and, working with district partner Daktronics, the boards will be paid off using sponsorship dollars.

Patrons will experience events and athletic contests in a new way with LED video, improved sound and animation, said Olathe Public Schools District Activity Director Tim Brady.

“As graduation will be held at CBAC, regardless of where you sit in the stadium, every graduate will be able to be seen in high definition,” said Brady. Currently, video boards are installed in the high school gymnasiums. In the event that graduation is moved indoors due to inclement weather, the backup location at Olathe Northwest High School will have the

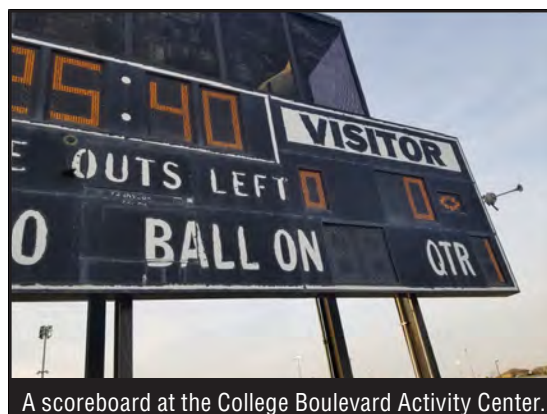
same video technology to provide guests a better visual experience.

Another component of this project involves student experiential learning. “Video production, camera operation, writing, editing and animation are career fields students will gain exposure to as they’ll be working the boards during events,” said Brady. “These skills are great resume builders and students can use these skills, gain experience before they reach the college level and enter into potential career paths.”

Graduation and athletic events are just a few events that utilize the district activity centers. The high school band showcase, Relay for Life and various middle school functions are also held at the centers. “This project allows us to better serve our patrons in the most cost-effective manner,” Brady said. “Providing educational and real-world opportunities to our students while enhancing the event experience for our attendees is an all-around win for our district.”

As high school graduations have more than 35,000 attendees, the impact of these boards will be beneficial to all parents.

If your business is interested in sponsorship opportunities, contact Tim Brady via email tbradec@olatheschools.org or by phone (913) 780-7989.



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