



OLATHE PUBLIC SCHOOLS USD 233

# School News

Spring 2024



## Inclusion at OPS: Results of MLK Jr. Contest

#OPSRebrand —  
Participate in a  
Districtwide  
Rebrand Campaign

14160 Black Bob Road  
Olathe, KS 66063

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
OLATHE, KS  
PERMIT NO. 2



**WE SUPPORT OLATHE  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Home of the  
**90 DAY**  
Money Back Guarantee



130 N Fir Street, Olathe  
913-390-6800  
OlatheKia.com



*Robert*  
**BROGDEN'S**  
OLATHE BUICK GMC

**Kansas City's #1  
Volume GM Dealer**

**1500 E Santa Fe Street, Olathe**  
**(913) 782-1500** RobertBrogden.com





## A Message From **SUPERINTENDENT DR. BRENT YEAGER**

Olathe Public Schools Community,

2024 is here and along with it comes the second semester! Our educators are engaged, our students are learning and we are excited to finish this school year strong. In just a few short months, our class of 2024 will walk across the stage and into the next chapter of their life. I am thrilled to see what learning and growth will happen through the end of school for all of our students.

This issue of School News is packed with information and celebrations. You will read more about the changes coming in the 2024-25 school year, our Kindergarten enrollment event and a very exciting rebrand that needs YOUR help. We also are continuing our series focusing on academic excellence and how we teach quality instruction every single day. Finally, you will read more about what inclusion means to Olathe Public Schools and an amazing award-winning poem from a talented Olathe South High School senior.

Thank you for your support of the Olathe Public Schools.  
We appreciate you!

Your very proud superintendent,

**Dr. Brent Yeager**  
*Superintendent*

## In This Issue...

- 4** Third Quarter Academics: Quality Tier 1 Instruction
- 5** Olathe Public Schools Announces Districtwide #OPSRebrand – We Need Your Help!
- 6** Inclusion is a Core Value of Olathe Public Schools
- 8** Be Informed. Get Involved.

### Olathe Public Schools

14160 S. Black Bob Road,  
P.O. Box 2000  
Olathe, KS 66063  
(913) 780-7000  
[www.olatheschools.org](http://www.olatheschools.org)

### Board of Education

Brad Boyd, *President*  
Julie Steele, *Vice-President*  
Will Babbit  
Becky Johann  
Robert Kuhn  
Claire Reagan  
Dr. Stacey Yurkovich

### Superintendent

Dr. Brent Yeager

*School News* is a newsmagazine published quarterly during the school year. Editorial and photography is created by the Communications Department of Olathe Public Schools and produced by CherryRoad Media. To advertise in *School News*, call Teresa Marrow at (913) 294-2311.

Follow us for up-to-date information:



olatheschools



olatheschools



olatheschoolsks



OlathePublicSchools233



## TIER 1

High quality differentiated instruction including both whole and small group methods for all students.

## TIER 2

Fluid, timely, targeted and remedial intervention based on protocol screening and placement assessments alongside peers with similar needs, in addition to Tier 1 instruction.

## TIER 3

Intensification of targeted supports based on individual needs of any individual student.



# Third Quarter Academics: Quality Tier 1 Instruction

Our focus year-round as a district is quality Tier 1 instruction, which is the core instruction delivered to all students on a daily basis. This tier also includes high-quality differentiated instruction including whole and small group methods for all students.

“Quality Tier 1 instruction is essential in providing a strong foundation for all students, reducing the need for intensive interventions,” Chief Academic Officer Dr. Tim Reves said. “By implementing best practices in instruction, educators can proactively address individual learning needs to ensure skills mastery and decrease the need for intervention. This approach not only supports academic success but also allows for individual growth at the student level to improve outcomes.”

Focusing on strong Tier 1 instruction and preparation is one key to recruiting and maintaining high quality educators.

“We have no interest in the status quo. We are looking for champions for kids who will meet them where they are and take them to their next level day after day,” Director of Secondary Human Resources Justin Howe said. “By hiring candidates who are focused on this quality everyday instruction, Olathe will always be a place where students are prepared for their future and families know they are getting the best!”

Another essential component to effective instruction is our commitment to the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and effective, research-based interventions. Learning needs are complex, and these tier categories are merely a starting point. Within each tier, the intensity of support can

vary. All educators are encouraged to adjust the intensity of interventions and instruction within each tier to meet the student's individual needs.

“Teachers deeply understand that learning is so much more than content in our books,” Olathe Public Schools Recruiting Liaison Amy Hillman said. “They are gifted in seeing the whole learner and that each student is an asset for exactly who they are and their individual goals for their future.”

This school year, Olathe Public Schools had two educators recognized at the state level for their teaching. Back in September, Prairie Trail Middle School eighth-grade social studies teacher Taylor Bussinger was named the 2024 Kansas Teacher of the Year. In January, Olathe West High School biology teacher Janelle Craig was selected as a winner of the 2024 Kansas Horizon Award. The Kansas Horizon Award program identifies and recognizes exemplary first-year educators at the elementary and secondary classroom level.

“As a teacher, you hope to be in a place that makes you feel like you made the right decision,” Craig said. “Being in a tough field and receiving this recognition means that there are people in my building and district who see me. I plan to continue leaning into my passion for generations to come!”

These amazing educators are just two examples of many in Olathe Public Schools providing high quality Tier 1 instruction every single day. By keeping high expectations for excellence, students are put in the best position to be prepared for their future, and it all starts with Tier 1 instruction.

# OLATHE PUBLIC SCHOOLS REBRAND CAMPAIGN



1965 - 1998



1998 - 2010



2010 - 2024

## Olathe Public Schools Announces Districtwide #OPSRebrand **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

Olathe Public Schools has officially launched a rebranding journey to revitalize our district's visual identity to better reflect its values and goals and support our Strategic Plan outcomes around streamlined communication and community engagement. As we look ahead to the new Open Enrollment requirements outlined by the state, as well as the continued teacher shortage and competitive job market – intentional marketing of Olathe Public Schools has become more important than ever. This initiative will be based on student, staff, family and patron input as we reflect on what Olathe Public Schools means to us as a community.

"Our district is more than just our neighborhood schools; it's a pillar in our community that requires an identity as modern and vibrant as the students and staff who represent it," said Superintendent Dr. Brent Yeager. "Olathe is a community where people grow up attending our schools receiving a high-quality academic education and return to live and raise their kids. As we partner with our community to envision a new Olathe Public Schools brand, our district remains dedicated to its vision of students prepared for their future and that will be reflected in the design."

The district encourages all stakeholders to take part in this process alongside its community partner, Mammoth Creative Co. Olathe South High School alumnus class of 2001 Micah Smith will take the lead in incorporating community input and district values into the final design.

"It's an honor to collaborate with the district on the branding for Olathe Public Schools, a city close to my heart and an institution that's played a pivotal role in shaping me into who

I am today," Smith said. "Working on this brand is not just another project for me; it's an opportunity to express gratitude for the immense impact Olathe and its educational system have had on my life."

From logo designs to color schemes and imagery, the district is calling on its community to share what Olathe Public Schools means to them. Here are a few ways you can submit your input:

- Submit ideas to the "#OPSRebrand Community Gallery" form on the district website at [www.olatheschools.org/rebrand](http://www.olatheschools.org/rebrand).
- Post your ideas to social media using #OPSRebrand.
- Staff can download classroom activities and submit those to the Communications department through inner-office mail.
- Send your input to the Communications Department at the Education Center (14160 S. Black Bob Rd., Olathe).

"We hope that with this invaluable input from our community, we can create a look that ties in our past and present and moves toward the future," Dr. Yeager said. "From our Pre-K students drawing on our #OPSRebrand coloring pages to the lifelong Olatheans filling out the survey on our website, we are so excited to listen and learn from our community what this district means to them."

For more information, including frequently asked questions, please visit [www.olatheschools.org/rebrand](http://www.olatheschools.org/rebrand).







# Inclusion is a Core Value of Olathe Public Schools

In Olathe Public Schools, we are committed to our strategic plan goal to actively include and value all students and staff to meet their unique needs. We do this by providing equitable opportunities in order to develop their understanding and respect of differences, thus preparing them to live in an inclusive, global community and world. When students feel they belong, their capacity to learn and grow academically, socially and emotionally increases.

“At the elementary level, we focus on kindness, communication and how to be a good friend in the classroom,” Director of Culture and Belonging Kathleen Smith said. “At the middle school level, we focus on students learning to collaborate with each other and communicate through classes and activities that truly help build relationships. At the high school level, students continue to grow academically and socially, while also picking up important life skills through critical thinking, problem solving and cross-cultural communication, to name a few.”

One of those activities that students have the opportunity to participate in is the annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Contest, a longtime arts competition for students in partnership with the City of Olathe’s Human Relations Commission,

Garmin and Olathe Public Schools. This year's theme was “Know Your Neighbor,” pulled from Dr. King’s quote: “People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they have not communicated with each other.” This quote directly reflects one of the district’s core values: inclusivity.

Olathe South High School senior Skylar Saragusa took home the “Best of Show” award with her written submission “The Waiting Room.”

“The inspiration for my piece was that the world is so beautiful, but it will never be perfect,” Saragusa said. “I believe people have good intentions but may wait to take action to make our society better because they’re afraid they’ll do it wrong, or it won’t be ‘perfect.’ But if all of us beautifully imperfect people choose to know our neighbor, be kind, do good, and be vulnerable with who we are together — we can make our world better.”

With inclusivity being a core value of the district, it not only reinforces social and emotional wellbeing but it ensures a sense of belonging for every child who walks into our schools.



# The Waiting Room

by Skylar Saragusa

Time.

The indefinite, continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and Future.

Each and every moment we eat, sleep and breathe it.

We fear its beginning, its passing,

And most of all,

It's ending.

Now picture this.

A waiting room.

Fingers tap on keyboards, babies cry, people sigh  
From different places, different stories, different backgrounds, different pasts,  
Somehow we will still end up in the same place at the same time.

Looking to the right you see a figure,

Woman or man,

Tall or short,

Wide or slender

The first picture you think of the ideal contender.

Why?

Because our minds create perspectives and environments at any given time,

And while everyday we sit near someone new,

The memories we create are not the ones we see,

But the ones we choose.

Fear.

To be afraid of someone or something,  
As likely to be dangerous, painful or threatening.

We fear what we cannot make out,

What we cannot picture,

What we cannot hear,

What we do not know.

Yet rather than find the cause of our fear,

We let it prosper, let it consume us, let it grow.

So,

We wait.

We wait for someone else to find out.

We wait for someone to solve the picture we can't make out.

The facts.

98% of people die without fulfilling their dreams,

A scary reality that many of us would rather live without knowing.

Because our biggest fear is not the people

We refuse to get to know,

But instead letting down on our own walls that allow our true selves to show.

So instead we wait for someone else to fulfill our dreams,

As we build hatred and anger toward those who took the leap,

The fear we disguise as the monster we call

Jealousy.

From a young age we place our children in desks of rectangles for security,

Instead of circles that foster teamwork and unity.

For generations we've called our children anti-social,

Yet we place wooden fences around them at home,

Lock the backyard gates,

And somehow expect them to make friends at school.

These children grow up to become adults

With jobs in cubicles and dividers,

Voting in left or right wings,

Hurting people with differing opinions behind screens.



A wish.

Something we make upon a star,

Something we toss upon a well,

Something that carries upon the smoke of a blown-out birthday candle from afar.

Everyday we wake up we wish we knew our neighbor.

Not the neighbor next door, or across the street,

But the neighbor we see in the mirror everyday.

The person we are forced to meet.

For this country cannot have the heroes we wait to see.

If we as individuals are the constant villains of our own story.

But rather than accept or merely get to know our identities,

We simply wish for the day we can say,

"I love the neighbor staring back at me."

The world is our waiting room.

For each day we wait for someone else to make a move,

For a bill to pass,

For our bank accounts to build up cash,

For our anxiety and depression to pass,

For the silence of this waiting room to end,

For a voice, any voice,

To come and save us from the dialogue we keep within.

Reality.

The reality is that we are ticking time bombs,

The clock set to end on its own accord.

And yet we make a mockery of this thing we cannot control,

As we refuse to get to know ourselves and each and every passing soul.

Everyday we awake we are given the power to choose,

The people we meet,

The people we greet,

And the people we lose.

In this waiting room we are given people, potential

And minds,

Yet we all let it go to waste.

For others we make no time.

For we fear what they may think of us.

If they know what we truly fear, what we wish,

And the reality of our lives.

So to the people in this waiting room,

This place we have chosen to reside,

Am I waiting on you,

Are you waiting on me,

Or are we both wasting our time?





# Be Informed. Get Involved.

## Changes Coming in the 2024-25 School Year

### New Start and End Times Beginning in the 2024-25 School Year

At the regular December Board of Education meeting, the board voted to change the start and end time schedule beginning in the 2024-25 school year after much discussion and evaluation of feedback from parents, students and staff. To learn more, please visit [www.olatheschools.org/startandendtime](http://www.olatheschools.org/startandendtime), which contains all the information from the last two years including the start and end time committee meeting presentations, feedback from the surveys and input at all levels and answers to frequently asked questions.

- High schools and Prairie Learning Center:  
7:40 a.m. - 2:40 p.m.
- Middle schools and Heartland Early Childhood Center:  
8:20 a.m. - 3:20 p.m.
- Elementary schools and Harmony Early Childhood Center:  
8:55 a.m. - 3:55 p.m.

This recommendation is the least disruptive to the overall system, both survey data from families and staff and input from

secondary students supported this schedule, and it is a long-term solution to address the labor market with annual financial savings.

The district understands this change will impact every family differently, and the magnitude of this decision has not been lost. Please be on the lookout for more information on solutions impacting each level and the transportation restrictions in place for this year that will be removed. Approving this new schedule now gives our district, families and staff a full semester and summer to make necessary plans and adjustments before school starts in August 2024.

Olathe Public Schools wants to thank its students, staff and families for their engagement in the last two school years as we have worked to allow access to educational opportunities for all students while also addressing our transportation challenges head-on with a three-tier bus schedule.

### Open Enrollment Policy

The Olathe open enrollment policy was approved during the Dec. 7 Board of Education meeting. This is a direct result of Kansas House Bill 2567, which applies to all public schools in the state and takes effect in the 2024-25 school year. HB 2567 states all districts must allow non-resident students, who reside



in Kansas, to enroll in and attend any school if the district has the capacity. All Kansas school districts were required to adopt an open enrollment policy outlining their own procedures by Jan. 1, 2024. A public hearing was held Nov. 2 in our district.

The policy includes an in-district transfer period that began on Jan. 4, followed by a district employee transfer period starting March 1. District enrollment capacity must be determined by May 1 and posted on the district website by June 1. Non-resident applications will be accepted June 1-30, followed by a non-resident lottery selection process July 1-15.

Transportation will not be provided. Once admitted to an Olathe school, the child could continue attending Olathe schools K-12 if they maintain good standing. Eligibility to participate in Kansas State High School Activities Association activities for open enrollment transfer students would be determined by KSHSAA policies.

### Graduation Requirement Changes for Class of 2028 and Beyond

In May 2023, the Kansas State Board of Education approved updated high school graduation requirements that will take effect with the class of 2028. A special Board of Education meeting was held on Sept. 21 to dive into the details of these changes.

Read more at [www.olatheschools.org/2024-25changes](http://www.olatheschools.org/2024-25changes).

### Kindergarten Enrollment on April 11

Kindergarten Enrollment for the Olathe Public Schools will be held from 1-6 p.m. Thursday, April 11 in each elementary school. Kindergarten Enrollment is an event for parents and their future kindergartners (children who will turn 5 on or before Aug. 31). Current kindergarten students do not have class that day.

Families should bring:

- proof of residency such as a utility bill,
- information about the child's immunizations and inoculations,
- a certified copy of the birth certificate of the child or hospital birth certificate with attending physician's signature and superintendent of the hospital's signature,
- as an alternative for the child in the custody of the Secretary of Social and Rehabilitation Services, a certified copy of the court order placing the child in the custody of the secretary.

State law establishes the age at which a child may enter kindergarten or first grade, and the district cannot deviate from the law. Reminder: parents must present a form of identification upon entering the building.

Families who are not sure which elementary school their child should attend may use the school locator feature on the district website. Please contact your child's school for additional details if you have questions about Kindergarten enrollment. For basic enrollment information, please visit [olatheschools.org/enrollment](http://olatheschools.org/enrollment).

"Kindergarten Enrollment in April gives our future students



and their caregivers a first glimpse into the kindergarten experience," Executive Director of Early Childhood Dr. Kim Hawkins said. "This is a wonderful opportunity for children and families to meet teachers and school staff while engaging in fun activities. This is an exciting time for families and the Olathe Public Schools staff is looking forward to partnering with families to make kindergarten an awesome experience!"



# JOIN THE OLATHE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TEAM!

**Anyone who wants to make a difference in the lives of children should consider a rewarding career with Olathe Public Schools.**

## **An AWARD-WINNING Place to Work!**

- 2024 Kansas Teacher of the Year - the eighth in our district's recent history
- Named Forbes No. 12 Best Mid-Size Employer in the nation, No. 4 in Kansas
- Voted the BEST Public School District in Kansas City Magazine's "Best of KC" edition

## **Our Students SUCCEED because of OUR STAFF!**

- ACT and SAT scores outpace national and state averages
- 119 seniors received the Kansas Seal of Biliteracy
- 206 seniors named CTE Scholars
- 21 National Merit Semifinalists in fall 2023
- \$50 million in scholarships offered to 2023 graduates

Flexible schedules and great benefits are two of the many reasons to join Olathe Public Schools!

Great employment opportunities are available in food service (in schools or in the Food Production Center), custodial and maintenance roles, and school-based roles such as paraeducators, aides and clerical. The district's food service department even offers shifts from 30 minutes to two hours each morning, making it a great opportunity for high school students 16 years or older as well as adults who have limited availability.

One of the great benefits of working for the district in a support position is the flexible schedule. Many positions coincide with the school year, giving working parents a chance to spend school holidays, breaks or the summer at home with their children.

All district employees working more than 30 hours per week qualify for medical, dental, vision, life, critical illness, accident, and hospital indemnity insurance; virtual care; health savings and flexible spending accounts; short-term disability; permanent life insurance with long-term care; Allstate identity protection; retiree benefits; and Hartford life essentials and value-added services.

**Anyone interested in making a difference in a child's life is encouraged to apply at [www.olatheschools.org/humanresources](http://www.olatheschools.org/humanresources) or contact Human Resources at 913-780-7000.**



SCAN ME





**NOW**

Visit the all new Downtown Library  
this spring at 260 E. Santa Fe St.  
Learn more at  
[OLATHELIBRARY.ORG/DTLIBRARY](http://OLATHELIBRARY.ORG/DTLIBRARY).

**OPEN**



OlatheLibrary.org

Want to *advance your career & enhance your classroom or school?*

## ED.D. in Curriculum & Instruction

All Online. 3-Years. GRE Waived.



### 3-Year Program, All Online

Complete the program in three years (nine consecutive semesters), All Online, while you continue to teach.



### Dissertation Integrated into Coursework

Curriculum is designed to support your dissertation research, while in coursework.



### Internships

Unique internships that support your dissertation research, as well as professional responsibilities and goals for your classroom and school.



### Cohort Model

Learn from experienced faculty and your colleagues nationwide with a cohort-based model.

For more information, contact Spencer Clark at [jspencerclark@ksu.edu](mailto:jspencerclark@ksu.edu) or visit our web page at: <https://online.k-state.edu/programs/curriculum-instruction-doctorate/>



Global Campus



### FOR TEACHERS:

- MS — Educational Technology
- M.ED — Reading Specialist
- M.A.C — School Counseling+
- Reading Specialist Certificate

### FOR PARAS & CAREER CHANGERS:

- B.S. — Elementary Ed Unified (with Licensure)
- M.S. — Elementary Ed Unified (with Licensure)
- Transition to Teach Restricted Licensure Certificate

**CONTACT:** [pgadmissions@mnu.edu](mailto:pgadmissions@mnu.edu) — [mnu.edu/rise](http://mnu.edu/rise) — 913.971.3800



**RISE**

**OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP**  
Up to \$6,000



**Provide  
support  
guidance  
limits  
for your teen.  
Not  
alcohol.**

**The average boy takes his first drink at age 11,  
the average girl at 13. Talk. It Matters.**



**CHOOSE  
UMKC**

MORE THAN  
**\$190  
million**

IN FINANCIAL AID AWARDED TO  
STUDENTS EVERY YEAR

*Automatic  
scholarships  
available*

**125+**

ACADEMIC AREAS  
TO EXPLORE

NAMED ONE OF THE

**159**

BEST MIDWESTERN COLLEGES  
— Princeton review

*UMKC  
Office of Admissions*

ATTERBURY STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER  
5000 HOLMES ST.  
KANSAS CITY MO, 64110  
816-235-8652  
800-775-8652 (TOLL FREE)

**UMKC.EDU/ADMISSIONS**

**UMKC**

UMKC IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION INSTITUTION.

ADM 21085650





## UNIVERSITY of SAINT MARY ONLINE MASTER'S IN EDUCATION

Customize Your Degree with  
Five Elective Courses

[stmary.edu/teach](http://stmary.edu/teach)

EARN A MASTER'S DEGREE  
AND COMPLETE TEACHING  
LICENSE REQUIREMENTS  
ONLINE IN 12 MONTHS.

**DON'T  
MAKE  
THE  
WORLD  
WAIT.**



**BEGIN TEACHING NEXT SEMESTER  
IN OUR NEW PRACTITIONER TRACK**

Now with Three Convenient Start Dates: August, December, and May  
[online.k-state.edu/campaign/master-of-arts-teaching/](http://online.k-state.edu/campaign/master-of-arts-teaching/)

**KANSAS STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

College of Education

**MASTER OF ARTS  
IN TEACHING**

## MNU IS –

Relational | Integrative | Experiential | Transformative

### PURSUE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Choose from over 60 undergraduate  
majors and minors and a variety of  
preprofessional programs.



**VISIT TODAY**

**(913) 971-3380**

[mnu.edu](http://mnu.edu)







## PREMIER SOCCER CLUB IN OLATHE+KC U5-U19 BOYS & GIRLS ALL LEVELS

**Kansas City Scott Gallagher Soccer Club strives to be the best club in the country and to positively impact our community.**

The club is built on the tradition of playing the beautiful game with technically efficient players and teams. Players are encouraged to respect all aspects of the game including parents, coaches, opponents, referees, and facilities. We want players to play the game with passion, yet have humility in everything we do. We believe we are stronger together and promote unity in our club, our teams, and our community.



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [KCSGSOCCER.ORG](http://KCSGSOCCER.ORG) OR EMAIL [INFO@KCSGSOCCER.ORG](mailto:INFO@KCSGSOCCER.ORG)





## PRE-K SOCCER SPRING 2024

### Micro Soccer

- PRE-K AGES 3-5 YEAR OLDS
- @ LONE ELM PARK
- COST \$80
- PICK A CLASS THAT FITS INTO YOUR BUSY SCHEUDLE
- ONCE A WEEK FOR 6 WEEKS
- STARTS IN APRIL
- FUN, HIGH ENERGY GAMES



### Class Schedule for Spring2024

- MONDAY 10:00AM, 5:00PM OR 6:00PM
- TUESDAY 5:00PM OR 6:00PM
- THURSDAY 1:00PM, 5:00PM, OR 6:00PM
- SATURDAY 9:30AM



[officestaff@kansasarush.com](mailto:officestaff@kansasarush.com)



913-764-4111







Virtual clinic.  
Genuine care.

Olathe HEALTH   
Virtual Care

Needing same-day urgent care or primary care services? Any member of your family can see a provider remotely for non-emergency concerns at our dedicated Virtual Care clinic.

- Use your computer or mobile device.
- Extended hours for your convenience.

Part of The University of Kansas Health System

Call to schedule or learn more today

**Olathe Health Virtual Care**  
**913-355-TELE (8353)**  
8 a.m.-7 p.m., Monday-Friday  
[olathehealth.org/virtualclinic](https://olathehealth.org/virtualclinic)