

School NEWS



OLATHE PUBLIC SCHOOLS USD 233

SPRING 2019



PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE: STUDENTS PREPARED FOR THEIR FUTURE

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A Message From **SUPERINTENDENT JOHN ALLISON**



In January, the Kansas Legislature convened for their 2019 session. Keeping up to date on the legislative session is vital for all of us and we always work to find ways to communicate what's happening at the state level. Be sure to visit our legislative webpage to read the latest updates about what's happening in Topeka. Our legislative update can be found at www.olatheschools.org/legislativeupdate.

Each year, the Board of Education develops legislative positions to make sure that our legislators know and understand what is most important to the district. This year, the six Johnson County school districts came together to develop consistent legislative positions that positively impact all students and educators in K-12 education. Our legislative positions also include pieces that are unique to Olathe and the needs in our district.

This issue of School News is packed full of interesting stories that provide you with insight into all the outstanding educational experiences our students are receiving on a daily basis. This issue also includes a look into the Portrait of a Graduate, which will drive our strategic plan and help guide it for years to come.

The Portrait of a Graduate outlines what we want our Olathe graduates to be able to know and do when they march across the stage at graduation. It's an exciting first step in our strategic planning process.

Thank you for your support of the Olathe Public Schools.

John Allison,
Superintendent

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Olathe Public Schools 14160 S Black Bob Road, Olathe, KS 66063
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At Olathe West High School, students gathered this winter to do good for others in the school and in the community. Why? Because they Give a Hoot!

The second annual Give a Hoot community service project kicked off in November at Olathe West to give students an opportunity to make an impact on others in the community.

"Oftentimes, we can get so busy and wrapped up in our own world and our own problems, we forget that it's important to appreciate and help others along the way," Olathe West teacher Julie Fishburn said. "Give a Hoot was a way that we could teach our students empathy and help them learn that giving is more important than receiving. Doing something nice or helpful for another is humbling and no matter how big or small the project or gesture is, it is always very much appreciated!"

Some of the projects the students worked on include adopting a family to buy and wrap gifts for Christmas, making cookies and thank you gifts for employees in the building, writing cards for residents of a local nursing home, making stockings and providing gifts to children battling cancer, collecting blankets and food for the Olathe Animal Shelter, collecting food and other items for the Mission Southside Backsnack program. This list goes on and on.

"It's incredible to see the students embracing these projects,"

Fishburn said. "It's been a tremendous event."

Give a Hoot is expected to be a yearly event for Olathe West High School.

"The Give a Hoot Project has very quickly become a tradition here at Olathe West," Principal Jay Novacek said. "I am proud of our entire student body and the way they have completely jumped in to make our community – both at West and Olathe as a whole – a better place. The wide variety of projects from small to large will benefit many people for a very long time. My hope is that our students have learned that giving back, serving your community, makes you a better person and a happier person. I hope that service to others is something our students will continue long after their time at West and that we have created lifetime servants to others."

Community service is a big part of life in all the Olathe Public Schools. Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education Jim McMullen said he is proud of the unique and dedicated approach to community service of the Give a Hoot campaign.

"It's incredible to see a building get participation from every student in such a huge way," McMullen said. "These students are making a tremendous impact on their community. Being active in the community reflects not only the values but the strategic vision of our district and community."

BOARD APPROVES PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

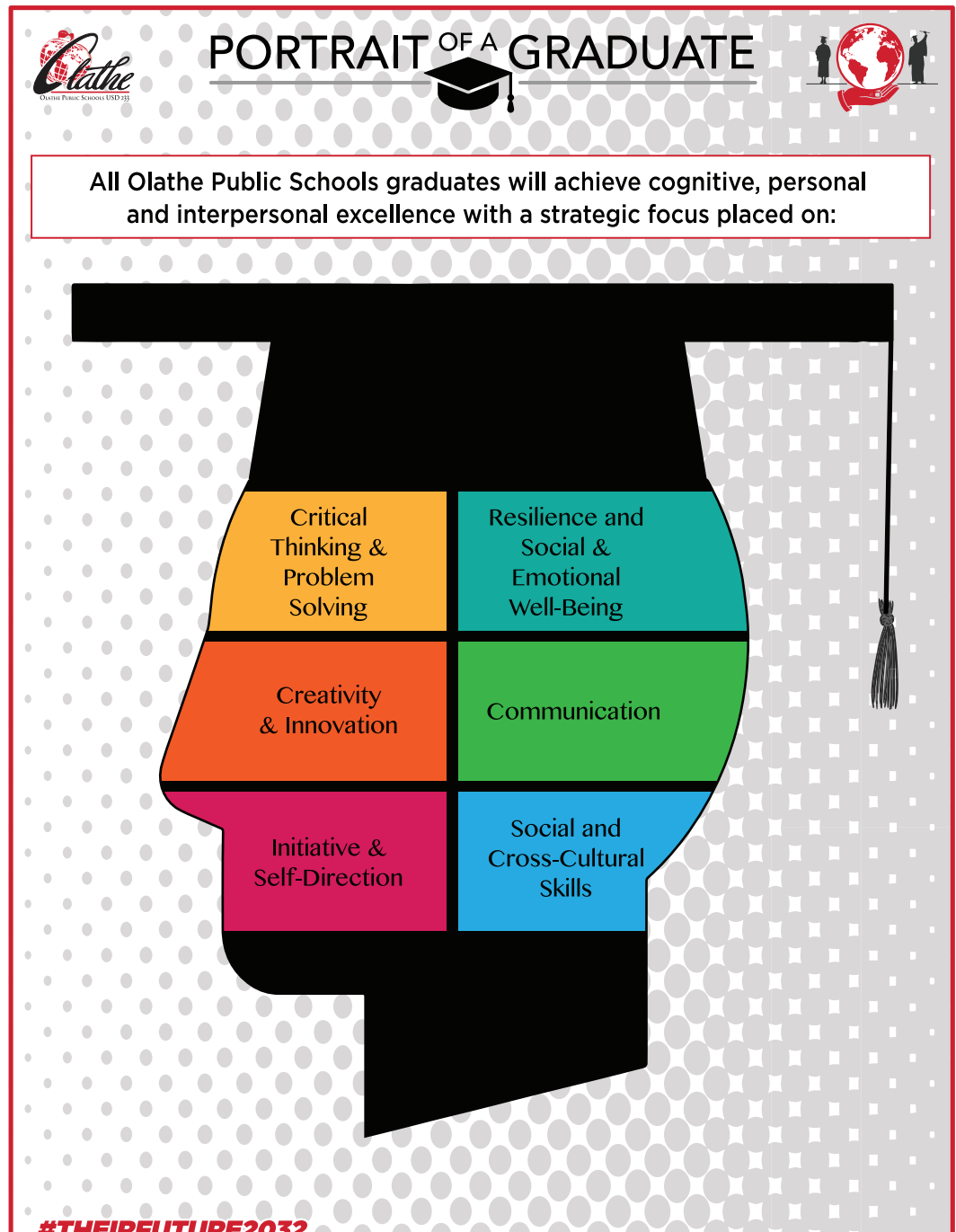
Every school system is unique, and is connected by a shared aspiration: that all students have an educational experience preparing them to be successful post-graduation. Now more than ever, that learning experience must not only provide for the acquisition of rigorous academic content, it must also be more intentional about fostering critical thinking, encompass specific 21st century skills, including habits of mind needed to navigate and thrive in a complex, rapidly changing world.

Last fall, the district embarked on a process to define the Portrait of a Graduate and answer the ultimate questions: What do we want our students to know? What do we want our students to be able to do?

The answers to those questions began a collaborative effort of sustained conversations and in-depth discussions with a wide variety of community representatives. These stakeholders included business partners, representatives from higher education and communities of faith, community members at large, social service agencies, district leaders, parents, teachers and students. The goal was to achieve a shared agreement on a community-owned picture of what graduates need for success. This process was branded #TheirFuture2032, as 2032 is when our 2019 incoming kindergartners will graduate from high school.

The competencies included in the district's Portrait of a Graduate include: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving; Creativity and Innovation; Initiative and Self Direction; Resilience and Social and Emotional Wellbeing; Communication; and Social and Cross-Cultural Skills.

The competencies represent a comprehensive course for our students and capture a dynamic vision for academic success. In addition, the Portrait of a Graduate is instrumental in the creation of an updated District Strategic Plan, which will drive our future work and educational focus as a district.



The graphic is titled "PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE" and features the Olathe logo on the left and a globe icon on the right. Below the title is a red-bordered box containing the text: "All Olathe Public Schools graduates will achieve cognitive, personal and interpersonal excellence with a strategic focus placed on:". The main graphic is a silhouette of a graduation cap (mortarboard) filled with six colored boxes, each containing a competency: Critical Thinking & Problem Solving (yellow), Resilience and Social & Emotional Well-Being (teal), Creativity & Innovation (orange), Communication (green), Initiative & Self-Direction (pink), and Social and Cross-Cultural Skills (blue). A tassel hangs from the right side of the cap. At the bottom of the graphic is the hashtag #THEIRFUTURE2032.

Portrait of a Graduate

All Olathe Public Schools graduates will achieve cognitive, personal and interpersonal excellence with a strategic focus placed on:

- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
- Resilience and Social & Emotional Well-Being
- Creativity & Innovation
- Communication
- Initiative & Self-Direction
- Social and Cross-Cultural Skills

#THEIRFUTURE2032

GARMIN PARTNERS WITH OLATHE SCHOOLS, TAPS STUDENT TALENT

At the October 2018 Olathe Public Schools Board of Education meeting, a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) career pathway was presented for board consideration, with the help of a local, global-leader in technology. Garmin International met with Olathe Public Schools leadership during the 2017-18 school year to discuss an innovative initiative that would place career-ready Olathe graduates into the workforce with no student debt.

In 2021, 50 percent of Garmin's electronic technician population is eligible for retirement. An aging workforce of trade workers is common among companies and many industries with plentiful opportunities are pulling from a smaller pool of candidates as a large number of students seek postgraduate degrees.

Garmin Human Resource Manager Jennifer Pozzuolo, Production Technical Supervisor Joe Kelly and STEM, Diversity and Recruitment Specialist Katie Allgood led the October Board of Education presentation where they discussed the need for trade workers across the county and offered a partnership to benefit home-grown Olathe students.

Jessica Dain, Olathe Public Schools assistant superintendent of support services, and Barb Gonzales, career and technical education coordinator, envisioned an innovative career pathway and partnership upon meeting with Garmin representatives.

"During the fall of the 2017, we were approached by Garmin representatives regarding building a partnership with the school district to help solve an industry labor need for electronics technicians," said Dain. "Curriculum for the Aviation Maintenance Pathway was developed in accordance with the district curriculum revision cycle. The curricula are aligned with the Kansas Department of Education standards at the high school level and requirements for CTE pathway approval."

The proposal includes a Garmin-sponsored Avionics lab at the West Dennis Learning Center as part of the Career and Technical Education offerings. Garmin proposed to furnish the lab with the same state-of-the-art equipment used in Garmin's manufacturing department and allow students hands-on opportunities to learn skills needed to thrive in avionic electronics.

Upon graduation through Johnson County Community College's dual credit College Now program, students would have one year of postgraduate studies completed. Then post-high school, during the final year of the two-year associate degree, selected students would work as an apprentice at Garmin and other companies in the Olathe area. In addition, while working part-time and finishing their postgraduate degree, Garmin offers tuition reimbursement



and then opportunities to hire students full-time upon completion of the program.

One year after graduating Olathe Public Schools, students will have earned an associate degree, have secured a full-time career and have accumulated no student debt.

By a unanimous vote, Board of Education members approved the CTE pathway for Aviation Electronics – Avionics in November 2018. This opportunity will be available to students this fall.

"Olathe Public Schools is grateful for the progressive vision of our Board of Education and their unwavering support," said Dain. "This project is a great example of realizing industry need, valuing the importance of community partners in developing a new CTE pathway, involving community advisory groups, and working with Johnson County Community College to articulate concurrent credit options for these students. We could not be more excited about the launching of our Aviation Maintenance Pathway for the fall of 2019!"

WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY FAMILY READING PROGRAM KICKS OFF TO GREAT SUCCESS

How do you encourage families to read together, while also bringing families together to support a school and its students? Washington Elementary found a way that is making a strong impact on the school and its culture.

With the hope of creating a better family connection to school and encouraging reading, Washington Elementary kicked off a family reading program. Every family in the school received the book “The 7 Habits of Happy Kids,” which encourages leadership in the home and at school. Each quarter one or two chapters are assigned to families to read together and each family creates a project together, inspired by what they’ve read.

“We felt like this was an opportunity to help families connect at home and also to encourage reading around the important themes in the book,” Principal T.J. Ulmer said. “The book provides a structure for working together. It helps give kids and families ideas about how to approach a problem, how to listen to others and be understood.”

The hallways in the school are lined with projects that families have created together. Nearly 40 percent of Washington families participated in the first semester.

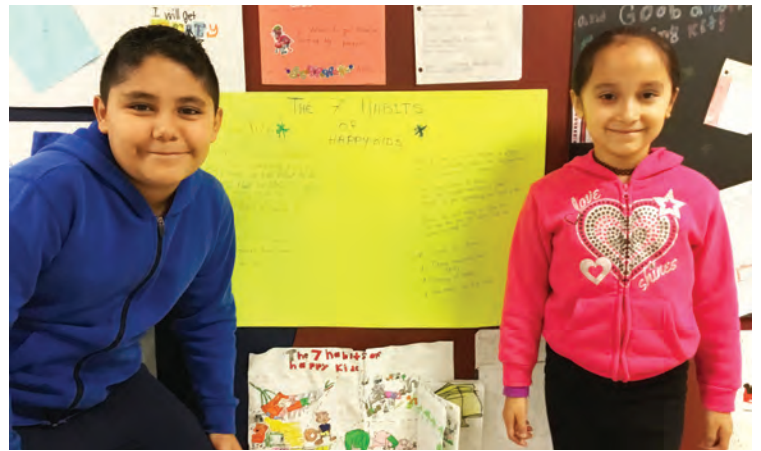
“We’re hoping to see it grow and become part of our traditions here at Washington,” Ulmer said. “It’s wonderful to see so many families connect to the project.”


Ulmer said his goal is to offer a new book each year for the family reading project.

Teachers have also noticed a difference in their classrooms, since the effort began.

“I have heard my students use the ‘7 habits’ in our classroom, using the words proactive and thinking of the end in mind. They are applying what they have read! As a parent, I enjoyed the characters and kid friendly stories with my own children,” teacher Amber Glover said.

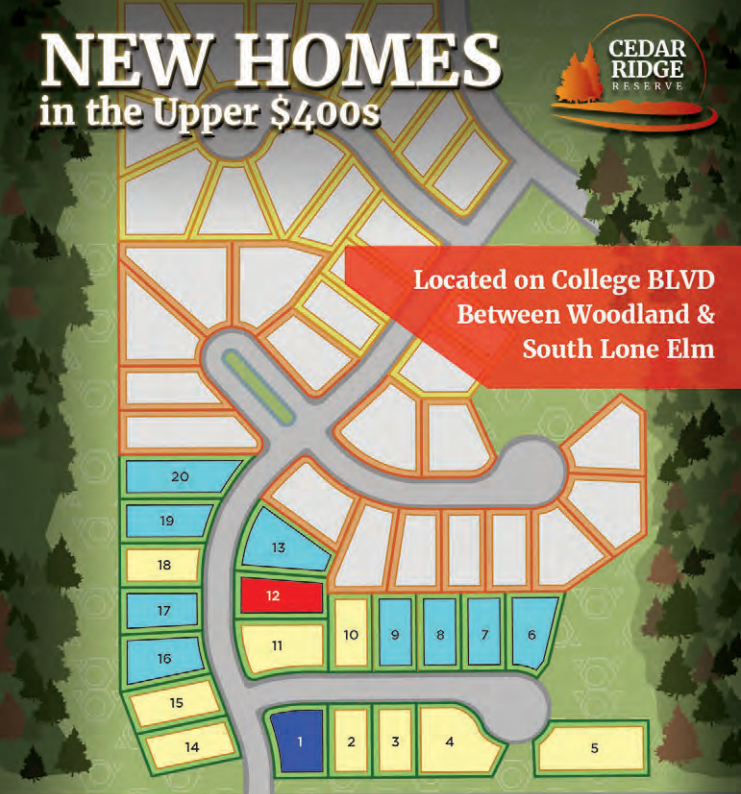
“My own children have started preparing for morning the night before,” teacher Brandi Morales said. “They also have been really good about getting homework done on Friday nights, and not waiting until Sunday to get started. I am really noticing the impact.”





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FIRST SEMESTER AWARDS RECAP

Students and staff experienced great success in the first semester and were recognized for a relentless pursuit of excellence.

- Bentwood Elementary first-grade teacher Nancy Smith was named the 2019 Janet Sims Memorial Kansas Agriculture Teacher of the Year by the Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom.
- The Olathe School District recommended 34 students to receive the Seal of Biliteracy based on their academic achievement in English and a foreign language.
- Three Olathe students achieved perfect scores on the ACT exam: Cory Zink, senior at Olathe Northwest High School; Dallin Armstrong, junior at Olathe Northwest and Eddie Dai, junior at Olathe North High School.
- The Olathe School District had 12 students named National Merit Semifinalists:
 - Olathe East High School: Robert Kullberg and Bryan Kwon.
 - Olathe North: Brian Beach, Anchal Gupta, Harvin Sangha and Vanya Shivashankar.
 - Olathe Northwest: Ethan Grantz, Gracey Hiebert and Matthew Paulson.
 - Olathe South High School: Logan George, Griffin Minter and Christian Petersen.
- Rod Smith, Frontier Trail Middle School principal, was named Kansas Middle School of the Year by the Kansas Association of Secondary School Principals.
- Three Olathe music educators earned honors from the East Central Kansas Music Educators Association (ECKMEA). Frontier Trail band director Sara Smitko was selected as the Middle Level Band Teacher of the Year. J.J. Wallace, Olathe West High School orchestra director, was selected as the High School Orchestra Teacher of the Year, and Olathe West assistant band director John Wickersham was selected as the High School Band Teacher of the Year.
- Olathe Northwest English teacher LuAnn Fox was selected as the inaugural recipient of the Kansas Association of Teachers of English (KATE) Outstanding High School English Language Arts Educator award.
- Olathe Public Schools' Impact Olathe program received the UCS Excellence in Community Service Award from the United Community Services of Johnson County.
- John Hutchison, deputy superintendent of business and operations, received the International Eagle Award from the Association of School Business Officials International.
- The Olathe East gymnastics team earned the 6A Kansas state title in gymnastics. Liz Wasinger, Olathe East junior, earned first place and won an individual state title in the balance beam.
- The Olathe North boys cross country team earned the 6A Kansas state title.
- Olathe East boys soccer team earned the Kansas 6A state title
- Alicia Jackson, counselor at Olathe West, was named Kansas School Counselor of the Year by the Kansas School Counselor Association.
- Manchester Park Elementary Principal Sean Bohon was named the 2018 Kansas School Counselor Principal Advocate of the Year by the Kansas School Counselor Association.
- Three Olathe East students were named to the National Association for Music Education's (NAfME) 2018 All-National Honor Ensemble. Nolan Ralph, senior, was named to the All-National Honor Ensembles Concert Band. Cora Miller, senior, was named to the All-National Honor Ensembles Mixed Choir. Evan Kappelman, senior, was named to the All-National Ensembles Jazz Ensemble.
- Olathe Public Schools is the beneficiary of an \$18,750 grant from the Baptist-Trinity Lutheran Legacy Foundation which modifies the way vision screenings are conducted.



Alicia Jackson, counselor of Olathe West, receiving award.



Eddie Dai



Rod Smith



Olathe East gymnastics team earned the 6A Kansas state title.



Dallin Armstrong



Cory Zink



Olathe East boys soccer team earned the Kansas 6A state title.



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