

School NEWS



SUMMER 2019

HIGH SCHOOL TECH EXPANDS LEARNING



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A Message From **SUPERINTENDENT JOHN ALLISON**



Keeping our parents and patrons informed and engaged in the Olathe Public Schools is vitally important. District staff are committed to using a variety of tools to reach as many stakeholders as possible. In the 2019 district parent survey, 94.4% of respondents said that they received the information they need from the Olathe Public Schools.

School News, the district's quarterly newsmagazine, is an important tool for reaching all of our patrons. We are grateful to the advertising partners that help keep the costs low on this publication. Through this, we are able to keep our patrons informed about district programs, news and accomplishments.

There are also a variety of other ways to stay informed and engaged with the Olathe Public Schools.

Social Media: Follow the district on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Here you will find unique stories, accomplishments, news and reminders to stay engaged with what's happening in our schools. Find us on Facebook and Twitter @olatheschools and on Instagram @olatheschoolsks.

Website: The district website, www.olatheschools.org, is a one stop shop of information about the Olathe Public Schools. Everything you need to know about the district, including links to school websites, lunch menus, the latest district news, and vital parent sites such as ParentVUE and MyPaymentsPlus can be found here.

Mobile App: The district's mobile app puts district information right in the hands of all parents and patrons. Read more about the mobile app in this issue of *School News*.

District staff are always looking for the best way to share information with the community. Keeping our community informed and engaged will always be a priority.

Thank you for your support of the Olathe Public Schools.

**John Allison,
Superintendent**

In This Issue...

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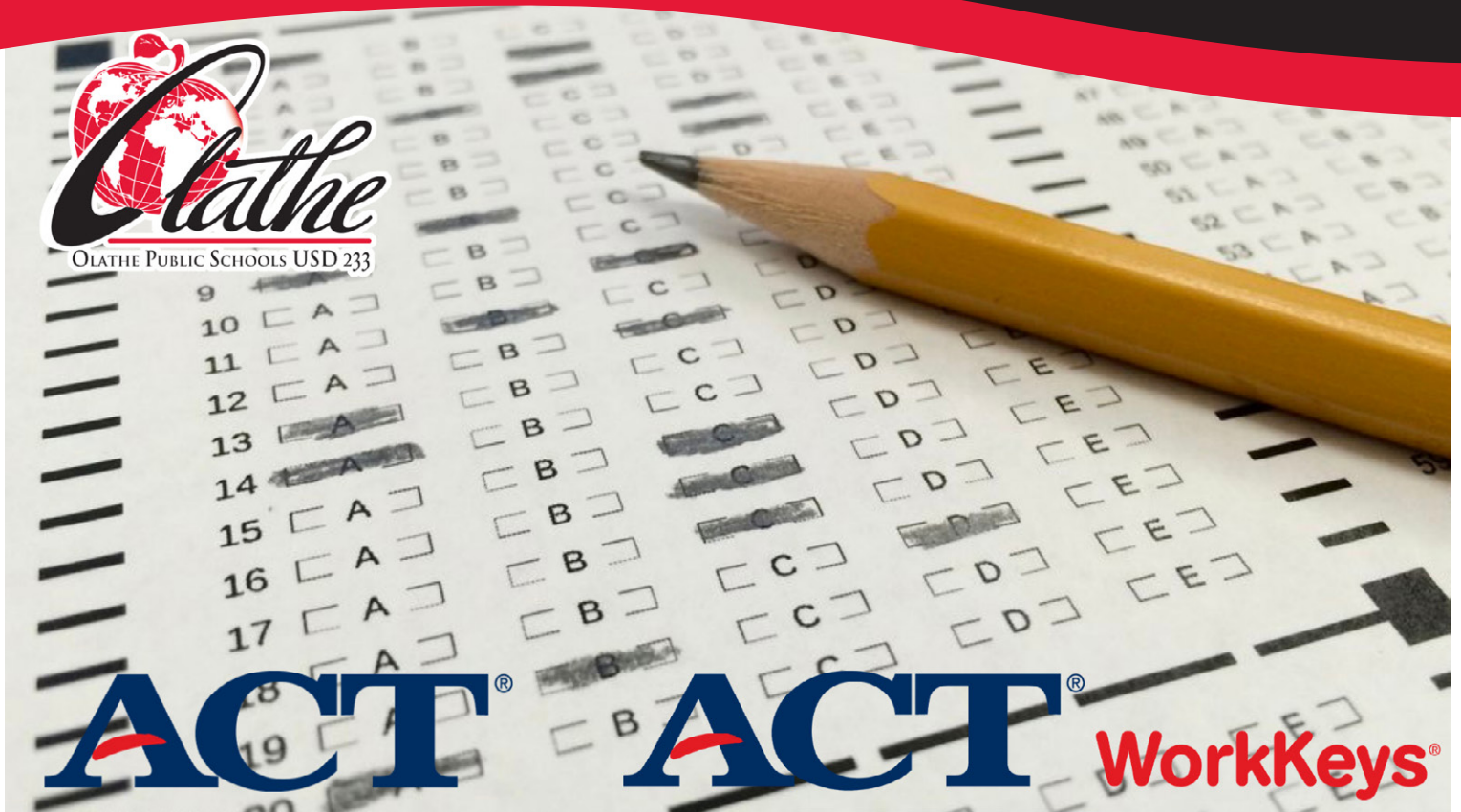
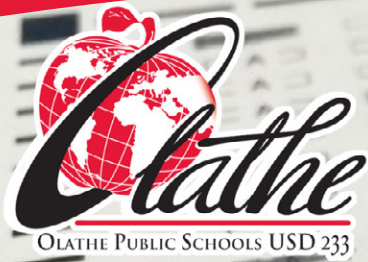
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ACT AND ACT WORKKEYS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

This spring Olathe high school juniors and seniors had the opportunity to take the ACT and/or ACT WorkKeys for free and send their results to up to four colleges for admission. The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) secured funds for all juniors and any senior who had not already taken the exam in which they were interested. The funding allowed students to take either exam or both exams.

Due to inclement weather on Feb. 20, students were unable to take the ACT exam on the originally scheduled date but it was offered during the school day on April 2 at all Olathe high schools. Fortunately, students were able to take the ACT WorkKeys exam during its scheduled date on Feb. 21 during the school day.

Students who were not taking either exam had a traditional day of school.

More than 1,800 students signed up for the ACT exam, more than 800 took the ACT WorkKeys and roughly 550 students chose to take both tests. Students and the district receive their results and data roughly eight weeks after the exams.

As the ACT is a college entrance exam used by the vast majority of colleges and universities for admittance, it measures students' college readiness and is the most reliable data point to compare applicants. The ACT is also used as a measure/criteria in many scholarship programs. For the past several years, Olathe students have scored well above both state and national ACT averages.

The ACT WorkKeys is a skills assessment exam used by some community colleges, technical schools and many businesses. It is used to measure a student's workplace readiness. Students with qualifying scores will be credentialed with a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), which many businesses are beginning to use as criteria for employment. Olathe has had roughly 100 students per year take this exam over the past several years and is the only school district in Kansas to do so.

"Our administration and building leadership worked very hard to organize the testing in their schools," Rich Wilson, director of assessment and research, said. "We were very excited for this opportunity for our students and are thrilled that so many were able to take advantage of the offering."

Parents need school supplies too.

(Luckily, it's just a single download away.)

Download the free **Olathe Public Schools USD 233 app** today for access to your school's news, calendars, push notifications, and much more!



OLATHE PUBLIC SCHOOLS MOBILE APP PROVIDES NUMEROUS BENEFITS TO USERS

The Olathe Public Schools mobile app keeps the community informed and allows students and patrons to see all the district news, events from the district website, and social media platforms in one easily accessible application.

“One feature of the mobile app that we are particularly proud of is the ability to tailor it to meet your needs,” Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations Maggie Kolb said. “You can subscribe to not only news from the district, but to individual schools as well. Keeping our parents informed is vital and this app helps us accomplish that goal.”

The Olathe Public Schools mobile app can be found and downloaded for free in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

On snow days, mobile app users were sent a push notification detailing that information and subsequent messages related to services or activities. This push notification was ahead of cancellation news on social and traditional media.

Patrons are also sent push notifications of reminders about planned days off from school such as professional development days or parent teacher conferences. Additionally, individual schools have the opportunity to send push notifications of important school events.

The district calendar, school and district social media pages, news, lunch menus, student and parent resources, transportation and ParentVUE are all available within the mobile app.

In an effort to keep student, staff and patron safety a top priority, the Olathe Public Schools mobile app features an innovative Safe Schools Safe Students Tip Line that allows users to notify school and district leadership of any safety risks. By utilizing this feature, users can describe the nature of their concern, attach pictures of the concern and even include GPS coordinates to that picture. Users can also include their name and contact information so they can be contacted later or they can choose to remain anonymous.

Manager of Safety and Security Rick Castillo said that information delivered via the Tip Line is taken seriously and acted upon immediately.

“There is nothing more important than the safety and security of our students and staff,” Castillo said. “Once a tip has been submitted, several key stakeholders are immediately made aware of the concern and we work together to act.”

At press time, the mobile app has been downloaded over 7,900 times.

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)



Sophia and Jim Caputo enjoy working as a father and daughter team.

OLATHE STUDENT BRIGHTENS HAVENCROFT LIBRARY

From bland to grand – the entrances to the Havencroft Elementary library received a makeover for the ages.

Havencroft library media specialist Angie Case wanted to brighten the school's library with a bright reflection of Havencroft's school spirit and make the space more inviting. "The entrances to our library were a unique shade of orange and green," Case said. "I saw the walls as a blank canvas waiting to be enlivened."

Case didn't have to search far to find an artist. Havencroft Center-Based Resource (CBR) teacher Jim Caputo is an artist and suggested that his artistic daughter, Sophia Caputo, would be interested in a large-scale project.

Sophia, a sophomore at Olathe East High School, quickly leapt at the opportunity. "I've never done anything as large as this project,"

Caputo said. "But it was a challenge I was looking to meet."

Over the summer, Jim and Sophia started the planning process.

"We took pictures of the entrances and Sophia came up with the designs," Jim said. "She really took the lead and ran with the opportunity. Angie was really supportive of the designs and it was such a collaborative process."

The Caputos began with a layer of primer and then painted the yellow base coat. Using renderings created from the photographs, Sophia sketched her design in pencil before painting the design in blue. After school and during days when school was not in session, Sophia and Jim meticulously worked toward completion.



Caputo's design wraps around the doorway creating a unique visual experience.

While no one tracked minute by minute, the Caputos estimated that it had easily exceeded 400 hours from beginning to end.

"The students were able to see the artist in action," Case said. "They watched the project progress step by step and witnessed how she sketched the design then slowly filled it in. Our students have a great appreciation for how long a project can take and what it takes to bring such a project to completion."

While Sophia and Case enjoyed the project for its benefits and artistry, Jim had a special, heartfelt reaction. "By far the best part of this project has been working with Sophia," he said.

"This project certainly stirred up excitement and students looked forward to visiting the library and seeing progress," Case said. "It was an important lesson for students; with persistence and hard work, you can create great things."

As Sophia hopes to have a future with art, this project gave her confidence and she hopes it can teach young students. "I hope students know that they can take risks and learn along the way," Sophia said. "All you have to do is try and then keep going."



Sophia Caputo spends her free time creating a large-scale masterpiece.



Future Educators Academy Facilitator Shelley Staples works with students during a lesson.

HIGH SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE IGNITES STUDENT LEARNING

Olathe East High School language arts teacher Matt Rentfrow has embraced the use of technology in his classroom. He loves teaching students with a variety of tools that keep them engaged and excited about what they are learning. He loves helping them problem solve through technology and helping them be digitally literate. Thinking about teaching in new and interesting ways has energized not only his classroom, but him personally as a teacher.

Rentfrow is one of hundreds of district high school teachers working to incorporate technology into the classroom through the district's high school 1-to-1 technology initiative.

During the fall semester of 2017, Olathe West High School opened with laptops for all students as a pilot project. First semester of the 2018-19 school year, the other four Olathe high schools launched a 1-to-1 laptop initiative with each student assigned a laptop for school use. The high school 1-to-1 technology initiative completes the district's continuum of technology for

students in the Olathe Public Schools. The district previously launched a 1-to-1 iPad initiative at the middle school level and a 2-to-1 iPad initiative at the elementary level.

"As we continue to focus on preparing students for their future, devices and technology skills have become an important part of post-secondary success," Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools Jim McMullen said. "We feel that devices enhance classroom instruction and also allow for more creative teaching and demonstration of learning. I'm proud of our staff for jumping in



and incorporating technology into their lessons. I think our teachers have found a good balance of utilizing this technology in addition to using more traditional instructional strategies. We feel that the quality of our instruction and use of technology will greatly increase each year as we move forward.”

Teachers like Rentfrow have found that having technology in the classroom helps with problem solving. It also provides an important opportunity to teach digital citizenship. Each high school offered digital citizenship learning opportunities as the devices were launched in the building. Digital citizenship will continue to be taught at all levels.

In the art room, teacher Melissa Sellers has her students document and submit their work digitally. They are also using programs to display and share their artwork.

“We get a better idea of the growth and development that is happening as students document their process,” Sellers said. “Students are asked to photograph their work at the beginning of class and then again at the end on block days so we can then see progress; it serves as a formative assessment. This also helps keep our students engaged as there is accountability to what gets done in that class time. Having the skills of file management, resizing digital images, uploading and backing up work are essential skills. They are getting a real world artist experience. Most

everything in our world is technology-driven these days. If we are not willing to make adjustments in our instruction to help assist our students in learning digital responsibility and literacy, then are we really preparing them for the current workforce?”

In the 21st Century Future Educator Academy, instructor Shelley

Staples has the unique opportunity to use technology to teach her students how to utilize technology in their future classrooms. Every day, Staples is encouraging new and innovative ways to incorporate technology into the teaching and learning process.

One important way Staples helps her students grow in their quest to be educators, is using an app called Flip Grid that allows students to videotape themselves as they prepare and teach lessons. They can watch those videos to see where they need to improve. Staples can also document their progress through the semester.

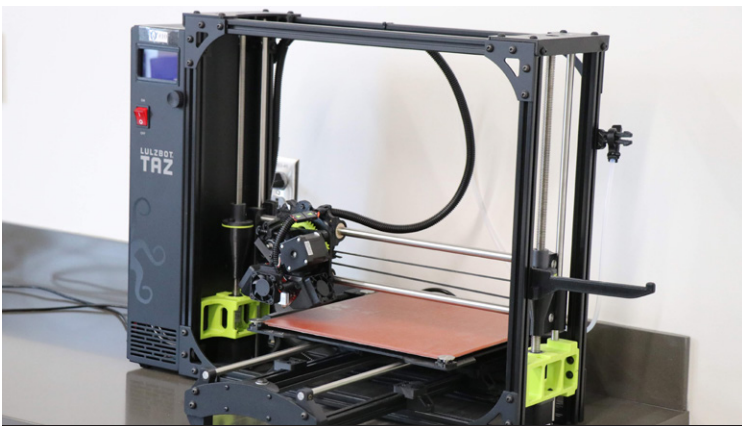
In addition, students take virtual field trips via Skype, taking them inside classrooms around the world, from Dubai to France to an Apple Innovative School in the United States.

“It’s amazing what you can do with technology,” Staples said. “We have truly embraced it and are always looking for innovative ways to teach. My goal is to give them an authentic experience to help them truly understand what I’m trying to teach.”

If we are not willing to make adjustments in our instruction to help assist our students in learning digital responsibility and literacy, then are we really preparing them for the current workforce?

- Melissa Sellers
Art Teacher

MAKERSPACES PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THEIR FUTURE



At Olathe West High School, a 3-D printer is available for student use.



Makerspaces are designed to encourage peer collaboration to achieve greater results.

Fostering inquisitive minds, makerspaces have taken innovative education by storm promoting a growth mindset for students. As Olathe educators challenge students to think globally to create solutions and solve problems, makerspaces allow students to deeply engage with their learning while collaborating with peers on small- and large-scale projects.

In numerous schools across the district, makerspaces have been created in existing classroom areas. These areas provide a collaborative work space used for creating, learning or exploring that can include simple, no-tech or more intricate high-tech gadgets. Makerspaces can include 3-D printers, virtual-reality goggles, computers, robots and coding stations, Legos or any number of other manipulatives.

Students have been able to tour locations and time periods from around the world utilizing virtual reality. In early spring, students at Olathe West High School traveled back to World War I and experienced trench warfare. The use of makerspaces allowed for collaborative activities after visiting trenches.

Olathe West High School and Summit Trail Middle School were among the first district buildings to be built with makerspaces as part of the original floorplan. Olathe Public Schools' 36th elementary school, Canyon Creek Elementary, will open in the fall and will also feature a makerspace.

"A makerspace is much more than the physical space it encompasses," Summit Trail Middle School QUEST teacher Karli Taschner said. "It allows students to take hypothetical ideas and act on them in a creative way, and provides a safe space for students to explore with unknown concepts and take educational risks to further their learning."

Canyon Creek will be the first elementary in the Olathe Public Schools with a makerspace specifically designed in the footprint to allow a dedicated space for teachers and students to conduct expansive learning projects.

"We want all students to be able to think critically and solve problems," Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education Tim Reves said. "Their future success in life will be dependent on their ability to do both of these things in an efficient manner. Project-based learning, also referred to as problem-based learning, allows students to learn in a hands on manner through meaningful project work. Students are able to apply their learning and create or invent solutions to the driving questions that pique their natural curiosities."



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SPORTING Blue Valley

FALL PROGRAMS

Most programs are at Scheels Overland Park Soccer Complex-training facility for SPORTING Blue Valley



Recreational

The Recreational Program teams are formed for Pre-K through High School aged players. The Pre-K through 2nd grade teams play their games through a SPORTING Blue Valley in-house league – most games being played at Scheels Overland Park Soccer Complex. The 3rd grade through 12th grade teams play their games through the Heartland Soccer Association League.

Premier Program

SPORTING Blue Valley's Premier program is unique as it is a tiered system. Teams are formed based on player ability. Some age groups may have three premier teams, while other age groups have many more. Where there are players with a similar skill set, a team is formed. Teams are tiered within that age group. Team ranking does not always mean the same ranking in league.

Futures & Juniors

Futures & Juniors is the youth player's initial opportunity to venture into the world of competitive soccer. Core soccer fundamentals are taught, players are challenged and creative play is encouraged. Each week, an area of concentration is the focus and that week's game will highlight this new skill. The program includes fall, winter and spring sessions coached by an experienced soccer professional. A player may choose to play on their recreational team while also participating with SBV Futures if desire.

Skills Club

Skills Club is designed for players ages 4 to 12 wishing to maximize their existing soccer skills while learning new skills of the game. Players are taught a variety of soccer skills including dribbling, passing and receiving, juggling, shooting and controlling. Improving the player's level of comfort, balance, agility, and creative confidence on the ball is also a goal of this program. The Skills Club is coached by experienced soccer professionals who are all SPORTING Blue Valley premier team coaches or professional trainers.

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