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WINTER 2018
As we continue to strive for excellence in Oxford Community Schools, we have paid specific attention to the desires of the district families and staff from the survey results of previous years. In order to achieve many of the items identified in those surveys, we needed the support and trust of the community to approve both the Bond and Sinking Fund proposals.

Thank you, Oxford Community, for your partnership in education through the passage of the Bond and Sinking Fund proposals on November 7, 2017.

In the best effort to provide transparency, we would like to share with you the process and planning that is required to accomplish the improvement projects throughout the district.

The sale of bonds fund school capital improvements, similar to a bank buying a home mortgage. Principal and interest are paid to investors, and the proceeds of the sale finance construction projects. For the first time in the history of Oxford Schools, the bonds will be sold in three installments (or series) rather than all at once. This financially responsible strategy reduces the total amount of interest owed, ultimately saving the district money. The primary benefit of this plan results in homeowners not receiving the burden of a tax increase.

The sale of the first series of bonds is scheduled to be completed in June, at which point, the design, bidding and construction of the district’s capital improvements will begin. Each of the three bond installments anticipates to net approximately $9 million in proceeds. With the first installment, we will address prioritized improvements and the district’s most severe needs.

In the first series, work will begin in the summer of 2018 and extend through 2020. It will include the addition of air-conditioning at all elementary schools, along with the installation of a new boiler and hallway carpeting at Daniel Axford Elementary. The damaged roofing sections and the air-handling unit on the west portion of the high school will be replaced. We will allocate $1.0 million of the bond proceeds in this series to purchase new buses.

The second series will fund projects slated to go to bid in November of 2020 with work completed through 2022. These projects will improve the middle and elementary schools’ parking lots, sidewalks and parking lot lighting. We will replace the water boiler, HVAC controls and sanitary/heating piping at the middle school, as well as the vinyl flooring in the high school cafeteria and corridors. We will earmark another $500,000 for the purchase of new buses in series two.

The final series will fund work currently scheduled for 2023 through 2024. The replacement of doors and exterior lighting at all elementary schools and outside lighting at the high school will take place during series three. We will refinish the high school pool and install a new HVAC unit servicing the pool. Paving and sidewalk replacements at OHS and the district’s bus garage will also occur at this time.

The Sinking Fund dollars first received by the district in October of 2018 (after the summer taxes have been collected) will offset any site improvements that the bond does not cover and purchase instructional technology for students. Sinking Fund dollars will be collected for five years and can only be spent after they have been collected.

We will publish regular updates on the Bond and Sinking Fund process and project progress on our website at www.oxfordschools.org under the District menu tab.
This December the Oxford Middle School students researched many different charities. They chose to use their third annual Penny Wars fund-raiser during Giving Week to benefit the St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. In one short week, students and staff worked hard to collect $7,444.13 for the non-profit organization that specializes in ground-breaking research to treat childhood cancer and other life-threatening diseases. Students raided coin jars at home, hunted in couch cushions for loose change, and found creative ways to earn money such as shoveling during their snow day.

On December 22, an all-school assembly was held to recognize and honor St. Jude’s. Principal Dacia Beazley opened the gathering reminding everyone to “always be better every day” and challenging the students to think of their futures, “Who of you is going to be a nurse, who will do research, or marketing, or finance and perhaps choose to work for St. Jude’s and help cure the incurable? Nothing is beyond your reach!”

The choir sang the touching song “Nothing More” that truly reflected the heart of Giving Week with the lyrics “We are love. We are one. We are how we treat each other when the day is done.” Half-dozen middle school students were selected to share portions of the compassionate essays they had written about what it means to give and the impact their giving has on the lives, hopes and dreams of others.

Each year a spokesperson from the chosen charity is invited to speak to the student body and accept the donation. This year the check was presented to 2008 Oxford alumni and Senior Regional Development Representative for St. Jude Children’s Hospital, Nicole Laidlaw. She shared with the students and staff the impact their actions will have on children battling for their lives. Since 1962, St. Jude’s has increased survival of childhood cancer from less than 20% to more than 80%. The money raised by our Wildcats will pay for four days of chemotherapy, or 30 red blood cell transfusions, or 15 hours of physical therapy, or 20 chest x-rays for a patient.

Nicole expressed how proud she is to be from the Oxford Community and to have its support. She informed the audience that 75% of St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital is funded by donations, “The hospital would not be possible if it weren’t for fund-raisers like this one and every dollar really does count.”

Dedicated St. Jude volunteer, Toni Casey, also spoke at the assembly commending the students for their kind hearts and expressing gratitude for all the school community is doing to help children in need.

Representatives from each advisory carried beautiful, heartfelt signs created for the Parade of Banners while the orchestra played “Colors of the Wind.” Students cheered with excitement when the winners of the Penny Wars for each grade level were announced, and the band played “All I want for Christmas” as everyone dismissed for the holiday break.

After the assembly, Toni Casey shared with tears in her eyes, “I felt so blessed to be a part of today, kids helping kids. Your kids are amazing!” We could not agree more. Way to go, Wildcats!
In the fall of 2013, the Oxford Dance Conservatory was launched to prepare interested students for a future in college and professional dance. The program has seen consistent and growing success ever since. On November 18, Oxford High School’s Dance Conservatory had a performance place in the top three out of one hundred dances at the Oakland Dance Festival. This Festival is a college recruitment and adjudicated competition at Farmington Harrison High School. Oxford junior, Megan Vernier (as seen in the adjacent photo) was invited to perform in the college showcase at the end of the day. She was one of three high school students to receive this honor.

OHS had four juniors recruited by several top college dance programs and Senior Payton Kozlowski, received scholarships to both Madonna University and Ball State University!

DANCE CONSERVATORY PLACES IN TOP 3 OF 100

On October 23, Oxford High School welcomed nine students from our sister school in Puebla Mexico to join us for two weeks. During their visit they spent time visiting our district schools, various attractions and landmarks in southeast Michigan, and engaging with our students and staff to learn more about one another’s culture. In turn, the exchange students shared insight into Mexican holidays, traditions, culture and customs. Much to the students’ excitement, they were able to experience snow for their very first time.

DANCE CONSERVATORY PLACES IN TOP 3 OF 100

LET IT SNOW!!

OMS TEACHER TO TRAIN SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE IN WEB PROGRAM

OMS teacher and Where Everybody Belongs (WEB) Coordinator Josh Smokovitz has been awarded the opportunity to be a part of the Boomerang Project. The Boomerang Project travels throughout the country to train school staff who are preparing to bring the WEB & LINK orientation programs to their schools. These powerful programs assist students in making the transition from elementary to middle school and middle to high school. Josh is an integral factor in how WEB & LINK are effective and have thrived here at Oxford. The honor of becoming a trainer for Boomerang involved an extensive interview process including video submission of him teaching the program. We are honored to have an Oxford Staff member serving others nationwide.
Congratulations to our very own Dee Thiele who was awarded the Paula Bragan Staff Excellence Award on Saturday, October 28 at the Oakland Professionals for School-Age Child Care Conference. Dee has served Oxford Schools for 28 years and is the district’s Extended Day Program Site Director. The Paula Bragan Staff Excellence Award recognizes an individual for exemplary performance in consistently excelling in his/her position, demonstrating integrity and a strong commitment to the mission and values of quality school-age care.

According to Dee’s supervisor Sue Roeher, “Her genuine interactions with the students allow every child to thrive in their own way, while celebrating milestones of their development.” Sue went on to explain Dee’s dedication and service to our students is unwavering, “In an effort to further enhance the Extended Day experience for her students, Dee earned several hours of Professional Development in the National STEM Program. She has shared her knowledge of STEM with several different groups for the past two years.”
LEONARD HOSTS 9TH ANNUAL VETERANS BREAKFAST

Each year as teachers at all levels in the district dive into educating our students on our country’s history, they seek first-hand knowledge from those who were a part of that history themselves—our veterans. This year the Leonard Elementary fifth-grade class hosted its 9th annual Veterans breakfast. The students interviewed nearly 40 veterans from all divisions of the United States Armed Forces about their personal experiences serving our country here and abroad. The students honored our country’s heroes with a meal, patriotic songs and words of thanks and praise.

15TH ANNUAL AMERICANA CONCERT HONORS OUR COUNTRY’S HEROES

Voices of more than 200 choir students filled the Performing Arts Center with patriotic music on November 3, 2017, to honor our community’s veterans with a beautiful tribute. OMS Choir Director Jan Flynn has been organizing this outstanding event for the past 15 years.
This year 277 eighth-graders attended the 6th annual bus trip to Washington D.C. They learned about our country’s history by touring the sites of Gettysburg, Mt. Vernon, and our nation’s capital. The trip concluded at Arlington National Cemetery for the Wreath Laying Ceremony honoring all unknown soldiers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. Students Ava Wiscombe, Griffin Hoard, Esme Roda, and Lauren Hudson won the essay contest to earn the honor of representing Oxford Middle School at the ceremony. Oxford Community Schools would like to thank and honor our country’s veterans for their selfless service.

EIGHTH-GRADERS LEARN OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

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SWEETS SENT TO OUR SOLDIERS AND K-9 HEROES

At the beginning of every November, Oxford students and families collect Halloween candy to package in Christmas stockings and ship to our active service men and women overseas. This year, 469 pounds of sweets were sent to soldiers. In addition, their K-9 heroes also received their own holiday treat bags this year. Many notes and photos of soldiers receiving their packages were sent back to thank our students.

STUDENT’S WINNING DESIGN

Talented OMS eighth-grader Luke Farwell (pictured far left below) won the Washington D.C. shirt design. His artistic creation was transferred into the class trip souvenir sweatshirt that students proudly wore as they explored the sites. Luke has hopes to continue developing his artistic talents at the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit after high school.

VETERANS SHARE THEIR STORIES AT OHS

High school students are given the opportunity to personally thank our country’s past protectors for our freedoms. Veterans from every branch of service are invited every year to come in and share their first-hand personal accounts with OHS American History students.
OVA STUDENT SETS GOAL TO HELP
SOLES FOR SOULS

OVA student Max Van de Vyver was inspired by a geography project he did on the culture and people of Kenya. He learned about the poor conditions in which many Kenyans live and how they are not afforded the same privileges, safety, and education that he has here in America. Max decided to do what he could to help the people of Africa and began collecting shoes for them through the Soles for Souls organization. He set a lofty goal of collecting 50,000 pairs of gently used shoes. He has partnered with local schools, businesses, neighbors, and churches to reach his goal. If you would like to help Max make a positive impact on the lives of others, you are invited to donate your gently used shoes, any size and any color, at the drop box at the OVA Elementary Learning Center at 168 S. Washington. For more information or the location of other drop boxes, visit MaxsShoeDrive.com.
The Oxford Girls’ Swim and Dive team was undefeated this season in the OAA Blue Division League, earning the title of League Champions. The league meet took place on November 3 where our Wildcats were victorious over six area teams. Individual League Champions include Ashlee Weltyk in the 200 Free-style and the 100 Backstroke, Jenna Fistler in the 200 Individual Medley and the 100 Butterfly. Keira Veltigian set a new diving record for the school, pool and the OAA Blue League with a score of 448.85! Victoria McClenaghan now holds the Oxford School record in the 100 Breaststroke and was also named the Senior of the Meet. Oxford won all three relay events with a new school record in the 200 Medley Relay. Members of the three relay teams were Claire Alexander, Peyton Bailey, Grace Charnstrom, Jenna Fistler, and Rachel Commons. Coach Jacquelyn Rank was honored by being named Coach of the Meet. Veltigian and the 200 Medley Relay team (Commons, Fistler, McClenaghan, Welteyk) went on to compete at the State Swim meet finishing 29th in the state.

BOYS’ CROSS COUNTRY RUNNERS ADVANCE TO STATES

This fall the Boys’ Cross-Country team earned the Red OAA League title and advanced two runners to the state competition. Senior Dominic Bruce and junior Hunter Green both earned placement to run in the MHSAA Cross Country State Championship meet at the Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn, Michigan on November 4, 2017. They represented Oxford well.
On December 19, Oxford High School students performed extremely well in the Business Professionals of America (BPA) Regional Leadership Conference at Baker College in Flint, Michigan. All students who placed within their respective events will be competing at the 46th Annual BPA State Leadership Conference in Grand Rapids from March 15-18, 2018.

TEAM EVENT PLACERS

Presentation Management Team- First Place
Samantha Malinich
Kamryn Royster

Economic Research Team- First Place
Izaak Ossege
Philip Fietko

Video Production Team- Second Place
Clayton Willis
Bryce Darrin
Ove Rivera III
Zachary Rauh

INDIVIDUAL EVENT PLACERS

Interview Skills- Third Place
Kati Sullivan

Extemporaneous Speech- Fourth Place
Brandon Sank

Graphic Design Promotion- Fourth Place
Sarah Haske

Legal Office Procedures- Fourth Place
Halla Swindle

Banking & Finance- Fourth Place
Alex Matczak

Visual Basic/C#- Fifth Place
Addison Wojciechowski

Way to go, Wildcats!

MANY MOODS OF CHRISTMAS

The Many Moods of Christmas annual dessert show presented by the Oxford High School Choirs sold out all five of its performances this year. More than 1,400 guests from December 14 - 16 enjoyed the outstanding holiday sounds of the Oxford choirs in a beautiful and festive setting at Oxford Middle School. The concerts are the primary fundraiser for the choirs and tickets this season were $8 per person. Anyone interested in purchasing a professionally produced DVD of the concert may contact Choir Director Christopher Card at Christopher.card@oxfordschools.org. The cost for the DVD is $8.

OHS WRESTLING BACK TO BACK COUNTY CHAMPS!

Congratulations to the Oxford High School Wrestling team who won its second straight Oakland County Championship on December 16, at Lake Orion High School. Last year was the first time in 15 years the Wildcats brought this trophy home, and the back-to-back repeat was a great victory. The Wildcats had ten placers in the competition.

First place:
145 lbs- Ryan Miller; 171 lbs- Devin Trevino

Runners-up:
103 lbs- Matthew Curtis; 112 lbs- Ashton Anderson; 125 lbs- Liam Hillary;
135 lbs- Joe Vackaro; 140 lbs- Sergio Borg; 160 lbs- Trent Myre; 189 lbs- Austin Schlicht

Fourth place:
152 lbs- Caleb Tabert
Lakeville parent and volunteer April Ventline got creative when thinking of ways to get students excited to come and read at the Cozy Cat Reading Café located inside of Lakeville Elementary. She brought in her pet chicken Trish to be the students’ audience. Trish sits on a chair (wearing a diaper) to listen as kids read their stories to her once a week. Trish has stirred such excitement that she has a long line of kids that are eager to share their favorite books with her. April is thrilled the kids have found excitement in reading to Trish and she plans to continue bringing the pet chicken in on a weekly basis to the Cozy Cat Reading Café for the kids as long as the excitement continues.

Clear Lake Receives Its Little Free Library

The fourth Little Free Library in the district has been installed outside of Clear Lake Elementary. These small wooden boxes house books donated by Oxford parents and teachers for everyone in the community to borrow and share. The Little Free Libraries were built to help support the third-grade reading initiative, aimed toward helping students to read by the time they reach third grade. The Oxford Early Learning Center and Realestate Gives Corporation partnered to raise money and supplies for the project. One library remains to be installed at Lakeville Elementary, and this will complete the project with a Little Free Library at each of the district’s five elementary schools.

Chris Hankins is a 2017 graduate of Oxford Community Schools. He came to Oxford his freshman year as a Schools of Choice student. Not only did Oxford make a significant impact on him, Chris made a significant impact on all of those he encountered. Currently, Chris is a freshman at Madonna University majoring in Broadcasting Cinema Arts and running Track and Field. We asked Chris to share with you how his Oxford experience has influenced him and to share his advice for current Wildcats.

“I did not know what to expect coming into Oxford High School as a freshman. It was a big transition from junior high with a much bigger environment but I was ready to see where this step in my life took me. At first, I was so worried about fitting in or not being accepted and fear caused me to miss out on a lot of opportunities that the school and community had to offer. It did not take me long to realize how big of a support system I had behind me. With teachers, coaches and counselors guiding me throughout my years as a Wildcat, it helped me to gain the confidence and motivation that I needed to grow and excel as the student and athlete that I was. Getting involved and trying new things might have been my best decision because it made me realize how much fun there is to have; from school dances and big games, to just creating bonds and friendships that will last well after high school. Most of all, being a Wildcat has taught me how to prepare for bigger obstacles in life such as college. I can honestly say that the years I have spent at OHS have no doubt shaped me into the person that I am today, and has so far been the biggest and best years of my life.

Today, I now attend Madonna University majoring in Broadcasting Cinema Arts. I am also a collegiate athlete running Track and Field, aiming to be the best athlete I can be for the next four years. I enjoy writing poetry as a hobby and learning French as a second language. One day I hope to travel the world and become a writer and a movie producer.

To all the current Wildcats at Oxford High School, my advice to you is to just enjoy the time you have there while it lasts. Try new things and never be afraid to fail because failure is only a stepping-stone to success. It might get hard sometimes but never give up. Get involved and cherish the small moments that will make a big impact on you in the future. Take advantage of every opportunity and work hard because it will all pay off in the end. Make goals, work toward them and always remember that you are only young once so have fun but also be smart. You will look back and high school will be over in a flash and at one point in time you will miss it. You will find yourself sharing old memories with someone and reminiscing on the good times and moments you have had. So good luck to all the Wildcats out there and leave OHS with no regrets.”
The Wildcat Review is published for residents and families of the Oxford Community Schools District. All residents receive this publication because of their support for the district through tax payments.

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