

Creating Engaged Learners

When a change is made at OPS, it is often the result of the identification of an area we want to strengthen. A change we recently made in sixth grade is to return to the fully departmentalized model we piloted in 2019-2020;



Sixth grade students learn to use lab tools to measure liquids.

however, we decided when implementing this model to provide a separate science class each day. This allows students to have both traditional “book” learning and hands-on lab experiences. These hands-on experiences create higher levels of student engagement and an opportunity for inquiry to occur.

One of our current goals is to increase student engagement. We want our students to be as curious as four year olds, who question everything about the world around them. We want that curiosity to jumpstart creativity and provide opportunities for students to develop perseverance and grit as they work through the design process.

To work toward this goal, in addition to making science a daily period in sixth grade, we have also moved away from isolated science lab classes to a more integrated STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) approach. Our new STEM coach works with students directly in the Creative Thinker’s Lab and also works with staff to grow their ability to integrate design principles into the classroom. For example, our kindergarten and first grade students learn the basics of coding as they work with KIBO robots in the



Kindergarten and fifth grade students build balloon floats.

classroom. They use coding to tell the robot what to do. They sometimes even program the robots to act out the plot of a story. In second and third grades, students continue coding as they tell the Dash robots how to move through a maze. (Dash robots were a gift from the Oradell PTA.)



First and fifth graders compete to build free-standing index card towers.

At the November Board of Education meeting, several students came to share with the Board about their learning experiences in the Creative Thinker’s Lab. They shared how much they enjoy thinking, creating, and working collaboratively to solve problems, and they shared what they have learned and accomplished thus far. For example, second graders shared how constraints and criteria impact the solution for a problem. They even challenged the board members to complete a creative thinking task. Sixth graders were also represented at the meeting. They shared several of their invention ideas, from environmentally friendly catalytic converters to a locker organizer, and how they are working to create prototypes and put together presentations to submit to the New Jersey School Board’s STEAM Tank Challenge.

An inquiry approach does not just occur during science classes, it is also important that students question, develop theories, and construct understanding in all aspects of learning. As a result, our teaching staff received professional development in incorporating inquiry into all aspects of the curriculum from mathematics to language arts.



Third graders use coding to direct a robot's movement.



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350 Prospect Avenue
Oradell, New Jersey 07649

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ORADELL: Eye on OPS

WINTER 2023



Superintendent’s Message

Dear OPS Community,

As we ring in a new year, the mission of the Oradell Public School District remains the same – to stay true to the traditions that make OPS a special place while always working to be just a little bit better each day. Many of those traditions have already taken place this year, such as the annual Sharpe trip, which has been a staple for our fifth graders for over 30 years, the Halloween parade, the Turkey Trot, and, of course, our winter musical events. It isn’t a winter concert without the annual beginning band performance of “Hot Cross Buns,” and Winter Songfest brings our entire community together, smiling broadly as our youngest students sing, “If I Could Fly Like a Snowflake.” Each of these events says something about who we are as a community. For example, the Turkey Trot is one way that we instill in our students that they



Fifth graders enjoy the view at Sharpe Reservation.

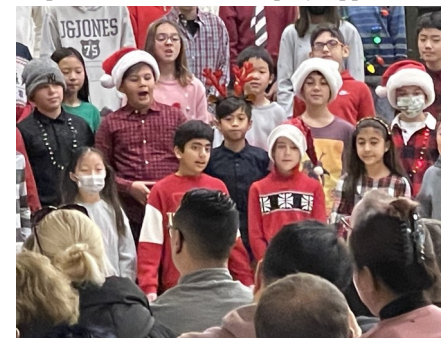
have the power to make the world a better place as they ask family members to donate food items that match the amount of laps they run in physical education class. The more they run, the more items of food they can help donate to those in need.

We look forward to the many events yet to come, such as our Spring Musical, *Beauty and The Beast Jr.*, the championship HoOPS game, our participation in the Odyssey of the Mind competition, and, of course, our annual commencement ceremony on the front lawn.

While embracing traditions is part of who we are as an OPS community, we are also committed to continual improvement, using data and assessment to evaluate our strengths and set goals. Our focus is to ensure our children are receiving the best education possible to prepare them for the future.

As a result, each year, the district sets goals to direct the work we will do. This year, our goals focus on developing the whole child as we:

- Continue to ensure that our academic achievement on standardized testing shows growth, aiming for a target of 80% of students passing the mathematics portion and 85% passing the language arts portion of NJSLA testing.
- Increase student engagement through the implementation of an inquiry approach to learning.
- Develop and document structures to effectively implement a differentiated approach to increase learning achievement for all students.
- Develop a comprehensive technology plan for students and teachers that identifies both hardware devices and software applications to improve operational efficiency and increase academic achievement.
- Research possible after school and evening enrichment opportunities.



Winter Songfest 2022 was a huge success.

As superintendent, I have the opportunity to spend time in classrooms, in lunchrooms, and on the recess field. I have the joy of seeing our children grow from year to year. I see the interactions between student and teacher. I have the chance to join in celebrations and work collectively with stakeholders to solve problems. I see each day how much we as a community have to be proud of as we continue to embrace tradition and aim to be just a little bit better each day. The Oradell Public School District is truly a special place!

Megan N. Bozios
Superintendent

Did You Know...?

- ◆ OPS continues to host a strong music program. In addition to vocal music, all third graders are now introduced to playing the recorder. Fourth, fifth, and sixth graders have the opportunity to learn an instrument and play in the band; and fifth and sixth graders can audition for the handbell ensemble.
- ◆ We continue to value providing opportunities for our students to participate in service learning. This year, we collected over 4,300 items as part of a food drive for the Center for Food Action.
- ◆ In Spring 2022, our Odyssey of the Mind team once again qualified for the World Championships in Ames, Iowa. The team placed ninth out of 57 teams from across the nation and the world.
- ◆ In Spring 2022, we had a team qualify for the Thomas Edison Pitch Contest. They placed first in the national elementary school division.
- ◆ We are in the process of renovating our school auditorium. Stay tuned for more information about the official unveiling!

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on the District's
YouTube channel

Oradell Board Members Honored for 30 Years of Service



Oradell Board of Education members Mary Katherine Norian and John Walsh were both recently recognized for 30 years of board service (with Mr. Walsh actually having served on the board for 31 years). Pictured from left to right are: Ray Pinney, director of county activities and member engagement at the New Jersey School Boards Association; Mrs. Norian; Mr. Walsh; and Megan Bozios, superintendent of the Oradell Public School District.

Spring 2022 NJ Student Learning Assessment Performance Analysis

Over the past two years, education has been in flux across the state as schools deal with the ramifications of the pandemic. Oradell Public School has diligently used data to identify any learning gaps our students had as a result of the pandemic and to design instruction and create programs to meet these needs. As a result, we are pleased to share that our standardized testing results from Spring 2022 demonstrate continued success in the classroom.

English Language Arts

Grade	Level 1 Did Not Meet Grade Level Expectations	Level 2 Partially Met Grade Level Expectations	Level 3 Approached Grade Level Expectations	Level 4 Met Grade Level Expectations	Level 5 Exceeded Grade Level Expectations	Combined Passing Level 4 & 5 Oradell	Combined Passing Level 4 & 5 State
3	4.8	4.0	17.6	53.6	20	73.6	42.4
4	3.0	3.0	10.0	48.0	36.0	84	49.4
5	0	4.9	13.1	41.8	40.2	82	49.6
6	1.8	4.5	7.2	40.5	45.9	86.5	47.6

The table above shows the percentage of students at each level of performance. The two columns on the right highlight the district's performance compared to state averages.

Mathematics

Grade	Level 1 Did Not Meet Grade Level Expectations	Level 2 Partially Met Grade Level Expectations	Level 3 Approached Grade Level Expectations	Level 4 Met Grade Level Expectations	Level 5 Exceeded Grade Level Expectations	Combined Passing Level 4 & 5 Oradell	Combined Passing Level 4 & 5 State
3	2.4	3.2	7.2	52.0	35.2	87.2	45.4
4	2.0	3.0	18.0	57.0	20.0	77.0	39.4
5	.8	7.4	18.2	43.8	29.8	73.6	36.0
6	.9	10.8	22.5	42.3	23.4	65.7	31.3

The table above shows the percentage of students at each level of performance. The two columns on the right highlight the district's performance compared to state averages.

Stop Everything and Read!

What if we offered to sell you the secret to putting your child, your grandchild, your favorite niece/nephew, or the child you love next door on the path to academic success? We bet you'd buy it; however, we are willing to give it to you for free! It's not listening to Beethoven in the womb or multiplication flash cards on the playground. It is something much simpler...reading. Having a book filled home is not only important for young children just beginning to build their language skills but also for students at all levels. Reading improves focus and develops attention spans. It increases vocabulary and builds analytic skills. Research shows that a child who reads 20 minutes per day at home will come across almost two million words per year and is likely to score better than 90% of their peers on standardized tests compared to a student who does not read or is not read to at home.

If you truly want to harness the power of books, it is important to read with your child. Reading together does not just build academic skills. It also creates a space to build a student's social-emotional toolbox and improves mental health. As students are introduced to characters with different worries or problems, it can become a jumping off point for conversations where children share about their own experiences or how they might handle a specific situation.

Reading routines don't happen overnight. It can start with five minutes of reading together a day, especially for children who say they don't love books. You can grow the amount of time you read together over time. It is also important to remember that it's the reading not what you read that is important. Just read...whether it is fiction, nonfiction, graphic novels, etc. If you want to expose your child to different types of text, take turns deciding who will choose what to read.



Scan this QR code to read about a father-daughter reading streak that lasted 9 years and get more book recommendations.

To get you started as you develop reading routines, we asked our staff to share some of their favorite read aloud book recommendations:

Where the Wild Things Are, by Maurice Sendak, is a favorite I read with my own young children. We would make the story interactive; I would read and together we would act it out. It offered an opportunity to show how much fun reading a book can be with lots of giggles! ~Amy Brancato

Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories, by Dr. Seuss, is a collection of three stories, all based on the theme of self-worth and what it means to be enough just the way you are. Who knew we could learn so much from a turtle, a bird, a bear, a rabbit, and a worm?! ~Rima Mason

Harry and the Terrible Whatzit, by Dick Gackenbach, was a favorite from my childhood that I shared with my boys. It takes something scary and turns it into something funny. ~Michele Kalotkin

Leonardo the Terrible Monster, by Mo Willems, is my favorite book. I read it to my children, nephews, nieces, and just about anyone who would listen. It is funny, like all Mo Willems' books, and also has a very sweet message. ~Kristin Terzano

Playing from the Heart, by Peter H. Reynold, emphasizes the power of music and the bonds of a family. ~Debbie Domingues

The Polar Express, by Chris Van Allsburg, is a book I love because of its message of always "BELIEVE." ~Lesley Maklin

Creepy Pair of Underwear, by Aaron Reynolds, is the second book in the Jasper Rabbit series. (Creepy Carrots is the first book and also a great read.) It is a funny picture book for K-3 students, especially those reluctant readers! ~Dave Roth

Encyclopedia Brown books, by Donald J. Sobol, were all the talk in my home when my children were young. It was our bedtime family gathering ritual. All of us wearing our PJs snuggled in together taking turns reading and trying to solve the mystery. ~Señora Garcia

Percy Jackson books, by Rick Riordan, are full of adventures. I read them with my son, and they will always hold a special place in my heart. ~Jenn Powers

Toys Go Out, by Emily Jenkins, is a series about three brave toys going on adventures. The compassion and empathy of the toys make it a must read! ~Ericka Mohr

Welcome to OPS...



Jamie Coccia, Fourth/Fifth Grade Teacher

Ms. Coccia has nearly 20 years' experience as an elementary educator, previously serving in New York City. She has served as a curriculum developer, grade team leader, model technology classroom coordinator, and drama teacher. She is passionate about creating a safe, fun, and engaging classroom community where all students can flourish.



Meredith Gleason, First Grade Teacher

Prior to joining OPS, Ms. Gleason has worked with students from kindergarten through second grade. Ms. Gleason believes kindness to one's self and others is the key to success in education, and encourages students to practice kindness and forgiveness. Outside the classroom, Ms. Gleason enjoys creative writing, acting, and singing.



Danielle Oxnard, Third Grade Teacher

Ms. Oxnard earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education and special education from Monmouth University. She is excited to begin her teaching career at OPS and eager to help her students grow into their full potential. In her spare time, she is an avid reader and frequent traveler.



Amelia Talarico, Third Grade Teacher

With a bachelor's degree in psychology from Felician University and a master's degree in early childhood education from Montclair State University, Ms. Talarico strives to educate the whole child, while making learning a fun and meaningful experience. Having grown up in Oradell, she is eager to foster the community's youngest members.

Oh What A Career! OPS Recognizes Our Retirees



Two pillars of our community, Helene Albrecht and Terry McGill, bid farewell to OPS on October 31 and transitioned into retirement. Together, these two exceptional educators served the children of Oradell for a combined 63 years. Along the way they influenced the lives of countless children and earned the love and respect of their students, colleagues, and the Oradell community.

We gave them one final homework assignment before their departure. We asked them to reflect on their years at OPS and share their words of wisdom with us.

What is something you feel is special about OPS?

Mrs. Albrecht: So much is special to me about OPS – I have met some of my very favorite families from teaching OPS children. The gratitude so many parents and students express at the end of each year truly touches my heart. I also have met many of my forever friends by teaching at OPS.

Mr. McGill: The most special thing about OPS is the people – students, staff, and administration. OPS is a special community that works and plays together. I have made lifelong friends at OPS.

What is your favorite OPS memory?

Mrs. Albrecht: I've been at OPS for 34 Septembers and have loved so many things. I have favorite memories of graduations, students, and Special Persons Day – my own children reminded me of the times each of them were my special person and they got to come to school that day too. I always loved how my own children were so welcomed to be part of the OPS family.

Mr. McGill: My favorite memories of OPS are the times spent at Sharpe with my students and colleagues. Every trip was a pleasure, and I've always felt that the students and staff were closer because of the experience.

What will you miss most about OPS?

Mrs. Albrecht: I'll miss the relationships I've made with my students, their families, the administration, and the faculty. I will miss professional development and learning new things. I will miss hugs from my students and the way former students make me feel like a Rock Star when they see me in the hall. I will miss catching up with friends.

Mr. McGill: I will miss the students most – how they made me laugh each day, and I will miss the wonderful colleagues I have been fortunate enough to work with all these years.

What advice would you give a new teacher?

Mrs. Albrecht: You have to love teaching – be passionate, be willing to learn new things, and don't be afraid to try new things. Also, don't be afraid to make mistakes. It's through learning from our mistakes that we become better and stronger teachers. Seek out new ideas, connect with teachers from other districts, and get involved at school and in the OPS community.

What advice would you give parents?

Mr. McGill: I would tell parents not to stress so much over grades, test scores, assessments, and the like. Every child develops at their own pace, and often does not hit his/her stride until middle school and high school. Throughout my career I've seen many children who struggled in their younger years grow and mature into excellent students.

What do you see as your legacy?

Mrs. Albrecht: I hope my legacy is that I cared, I loved, I believed, I was passionate, and I worked really hard! I encouraged my students to become more independent and trust in themselves. I taught my students life lessons, such as being kind, saying sorry when you mess up, and the importance of doing random acts of kindness. I hope I have taught them that actions speak louder than words.

Mr. McGill: I'd like to think I would be remembered for my kindness, dedication, sense of humor, and strong passion for the subjects I taught. I truly enjoyed my time spent with the students, my colleagues, and administrators. I'd like to think that I was a friend to all.

Staff Anniversary Recognition

The Board of Education recognized several staff members for achieving anniversary benchmarks. Each staff member was awarded a certificate and pin.



35 Years

Heide O'Keefe

15 Years

Debra Bendett
Debbie Domingues
Jennifer Tashjian

10 Years

Megan Bozios
Rosemarie Cataldo
Kimberley Dunphy
Samuel McLean
Nora Rose
Lisa Santangelo

5 Years

Jean Cleary
Patricia Erben
Eileen Gallagher
Michelle Hawley
JeeNa Krzastek-Kim
Frederick Mangol
Rima Mason
Yeidelin Tirpanciyan



Congratulations and thank you for
your service to the families of Oradell.

#PantherPride