



Community Newsletter

Farewell Message from Dr. Lemon

It is with great honor that I write this final message. Eight years ago, Board Members Kim Opsahl, Judy Egan, Paula Sterner, Jennifer Manski, Gordon Boulger, Lane Hasler, and Tony Pirih gave a downstate farm boy the opportunity of a lifetime. They entrusted me with the most precious commodity of any community - its schoolchildren. For that, I will be eternally grateful.

I am retiring after 37 years as an educator, 25 as an administrator, and the final 16 as a school superintendent. I have been blessed at each stop, but none as much as I have been here at Oak Grove. I could not have done it without the support of the extraordinary staffs, board members, parents, students, and community members who all give so much of themselves to make our school district a great place to teach and learn.

Sometimes it is difficult to analyze the many fortunes we have in our lives. I have worked for six different school communities during my career. I have worked in regions all across the state. I have served on state boards that serve schools. I believe I have a great sense of what school systems across the state look like, and I will share this with you: there is not a better school in the entire state than Oak Grove School. The teaching staff, the

facilities, the programs, and the parental support are second to none. I believe that with all my heart. Sometimes, it takes an outsider looking in to know. You have it here in Green Oaks. I hope that you continue to do what you are doing; which is whatever it takes, to ensure Oak Grove School is "the place to be." I expect you will.

You will love my successor, Allison Sherman. She has been on the job, alongside me, since February. She is smart, a good communicator, and has a passion for schools. She is exactly what Oak Grove needs at this time. I am honored to hand the reins of the district over to her.

Thank you for supporting me these past 8 years. I have developed relationships and friendships that will last my entire lifetime. Being your superintendent was never a job for me. It was an honor. I wish our current, and future kids, the very best as they grow into responsible young adults. I know you will support them in their journey. God Bless.

With Oak Grove pride,

Dr. Lonny B. Lemon



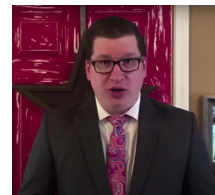
Dr. Lonny Lemon

Congratulations Class of 2020!

In the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic, our 8th grade graduates had to sacrifice their traditional graduation ceremony. While the long-awaited event did not commence as originally planned, select OGS staff and students worked hard to create a virtual event that encompassed elements of traditional graduations. During the virtual event, speeches were given by superintendent Lonny Lemon, principal Nick Heckel, graduate Hailey Baffico, alumni Albert Sterner, and PTO co-presidents Laura Reutzel and Julie Kovach. In addition to the positive speeches, each graduate is recognized and celebrated just as they would during an in-person event.

To see the virtual graduation ceremony, please visit www.ogschool.org/graduation2020.

To our graduates: we are proud of you, and we wish you the best of luck as you enter this new phase of your lives!



Principal Nick Heckel



Hailey Baffico

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Nicholas Heckel
K-3 Principal

Lilli Melamed
Assistant Principal

Scott Blumberg
Business Manager

Ryan Murray
SEL & Behavior Coordinator

“Those Who Excel” Award Night For Mrs. Sobey

On Saturday, October 19, 2019, the Illinois State Board of Education hosted its annual “Those Who Excel” banquet. Each year, the State honors its “best of the best” school personnel. This year, Oak Grove Kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Jenna Sobey, received an award in the Early Career Educator category. This recognizes teachers who are in the first five years of their careers. Administrators, parents, and Mrs. Sobey’s colleagues nominated



her for the award. State Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Carmen Ayala, presented the awards. Additionally, Governor J.B. Pritzker made a surprise appearance at the banquet and addressed the audience. Dr. Lemon and principal Nick Heckel attended the banquet with Mrs. Sobey and her husband, Austin. It was a proud night for the Sobey family and Oak Grove. Congratulations, Mrs. Sobey!



Summer Reading

Challenge: Pie in the Face!

On Friday August 30, 2019, Oak Grove school held the culmination of its Summer Reading Challenge program. Students set a personal goal for weekly reading during the summer months. The students who achieved their weekly reading goals got the chance to throw a pie in the face of one of their school administrators. Dr. Lemon and Mr. Murray each had



seven pies thrown in their face. Mr. Heckel had five pies smashed in his face and Mrs. Melamed only had four pies thrown in her face. A great time was had by all!

OGSEF Gala

The OGSEF Oak Grove Gala took place on February 29, 2020 at Independence Grove. We had a huge turnout for this event...our community definitely knows how to put the FUN in fundraising! The Oak Grove School Education Foundation would like to extend our sincere thanks to our teachers, administrators, sponsors, donors, bidders, volunteers, community and of course, the students who inspire this entire event!



Local Business Directories

The Oak Grove School Education Foundation (OGSEF) has produced an amazing “directory of businesses” featuring local family businesses and supporters of our school district. A copy of the directory was sent home with all students prior to our building closure. Thank you to Mr. Dan Wells, who spearheaded the project, and the OGSEF for all they do for our school! If you would like to receive a copy of this directory, please contact Dan Wells at danwells2166@gmail.com.

Oak Grove Wrestling

The Wrestling Eagles of Oak Grove have had a productive state wrestling series! Twenty Eagles wrestled at the IESA Regional Tournament at Shepard Middle School. Oak Grove had eleven qualify for the IESA Sectional Tournament at Wauconda High School. Of the eleven wrestlers, four qualified for the IESA State Tournament. Congratulations, Eagles!



Multicultural Committee Project: "Wishtree"

Students, teachers and parents had an amazing journey as they all read together, wished together, and planted a beautiful new tree together! Oak Grove's Multicultural Committee, along with the OGSEF, wanted to create an experience that all of us could participate in and enjoy. As we began this journey over a year ago, we couldn't have imagined it would have turned out the way that it has! We were able to listen to readers as they invited us into their homes and introduced us to their families. We created artwork and placed it in windows that connected us as we walked through the neighborhoods. We knew that although we have been physically separated, we were working together, sharing a story, and having rich family discussions. Our hope is that you were able to focus on how our young children, our community, and nature can

teach us about inclusion, acceptance, diversity, kindness and the beautiful friendships that can be found here in our Oak Grove community! A special thank you to Dan Wells and ELAN Landscaping for donating and planting this beautiful tree. Thank you, Dr. Meltzer, for the time you devoted to sharing the chapters and creating this beautiful keepsake to remember the journey we have taken together!



Oak Grove Bids Farewell to Retirees

We'd like to thank our eight retirees. They have a combined time of 162 years of service to Oak Grove School! Students, parents and faculty alike offer our sincere thanks for all that all of our retirees have done

over the years, helping literally thousands of children along the way! We wish you the best of luck as you begin your well-deserved retirement!



Mark Clement
26 years



Karla Fillinger
30 years



Dr. Lonny Lemon
8 years



Maria Luce
17 years



Jill Rogers
36 years



Julie Savage
22 years



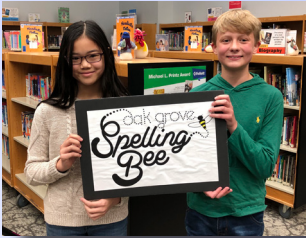
Bonnie Taylor
14 years



Dr. Kurt Valentin
9 years

Spelling Bee

The annual Oak Grove School Spelling Bee took place on Wednesday, January 15, 2020. Congratulations to all who participated! This year our winner was Vanessa Zhang with runner up Alex Loesch. Great job!



Geography Bee

Congratulations to all the participants of Oak Grove's Geography Bee, and a special congratulations to our 2019-20 Geo Bee winner, 6th-grader Andrew Schinler. Everyone did a great job, and we look forward to next year!



Veterans Day

On Monday, November 11, 2019, Oak Grove continued its long-standing tradition of honoring our service men and women at our Veterans Day ceremony and reception. This special occasion is much more than a single day for Oak Grove students. The 8th-grade class spends a great deal of time preparing for this event, including a "teaching day" where they teach our younger students about Veterans Day. We are proud to help instill the respect for service our Veterans deserve.



8th Grade Musical

The annual eighth-grade stage production took place in late February of 2020 with several performances of "Mary Poppins, Jr." The vast majority of the 8th-grade class were participants in this massive undertaking. The cast and crew did a fantastic job under the direction of drama teacher Mel Ledington and musical director Logan Farris. We can't wait to see what's in store for us in 2021... great job, everyone!



Teacher Appreciation Week

Thank you to all of our students and families that recently helped make our teachers feel so special! The teachers received emails, videos, a "Card My Yard" in front of the Village of Green Oaks, and "An Outstanding Oak Grove Teacher Lives Here" yard sign! Thank you to Lynsey Wolfe, Melissa Sallmann, Krista Sorensen, Karin Pawlowski, Courtney Johnston, Raabia Khan, Kris Wilson, Christine Merrild, Jen Tippet, Rhiannon Schmidt, Ashley Wilson, Krysia Ressler, Jen Sahagian, Debbie Greer, Jennie Schlitt, Kristin Sorensen, and Dana Huennekens for traveling near and far delivering signs, and to Mel Lyon for heading up Teacher Appreciation Week for the PTO!



Feed My Starving Children

Friday, December 6th, was volunteer night at Feed My Starving Children. Students, parents, and faculty packed 111 boxes, providing 23,976 meals, ultimately feeding 65 children for a year. A fulfilling experience was had by all.



Elementary Library Renovations

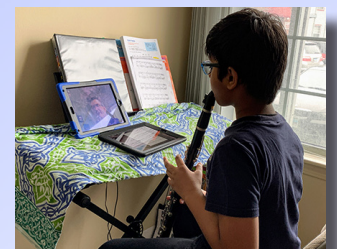
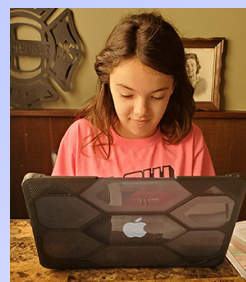
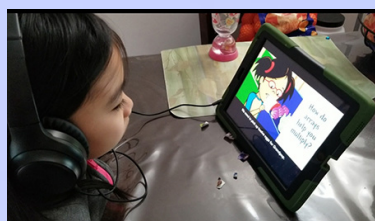
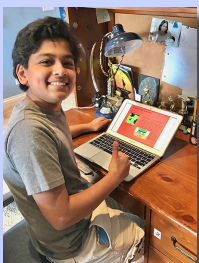
Oak Grove is completely renovating the much-used elementary library this summer. The facility was built in 1997 and has not had any updates since. After nearly a year of planning, visiting other libraries, and consulting with several learning experts, district staff developed a template for an up-to-date learning center.

The new library will be completely remodeled including new paint, flooring, cabinetry, and furniture. It is going to be a spectacular teaching and learning environment for our kids and staff. We will be sure to include pictures of the new space next year, when the project is complete.

We would like to thank the wonderful Oak Grove PTO and Oak Grove School Education Foundation who are contributing nearly \$50,000 to the project. Without their financial support, this project simply would not have happened. They truly are “Angels on Earth” for our students.

Remote Learning

On Friday, March 20th, Governor Pritzker issued Executive Order 2020-10 requiring all Illinoisans to stay in their homes to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. This, of course, had a tremendous impact on education across the state, but we are proud to share that the students and staff of Oak Grove School have handled this situation as well as could possibly be expected. Teachers and students were in contact regularly through a variety of methods. Our students used their school-assigned device to use for communication, access to educational materials and assessments, and regular “face-to-face” meetings with their teachers. While our hope is that we will all be able to meet in person safely soon, we are confident that together we will be able to meet any challenges in the days to come. In May, Oak Grove parents shared some photos of their children engaged in remote learning activities.



Oak Grove School District 68
1700 S. O'Plaine Road
Green Oaks, Illinois 60048

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OAK GROVE SCHOOL!!!**



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District 68 Selects New Superintendent

The Oak Grove School District 68 Board of Education is pleased to announce Ms. Allison Sherman as the next Superintendent of Schools starting July 1, 2020 to succeed Dr. Lonny Lemon, who has recently retired.

Ms. Sherman comes to Oak Grove with a Chief School Business Official certificate from Northern Illinois University and her State of Illinois Superintendent Licensure from Loyola University. She earned a Master of Arts in Educational Policy and Leadership from Stanford University, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Michigan. Ms. Sherman oversees the implementation of the Illinois ESSA Support and Accountability Plan at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). She led the launch and implementation of IL-EMPOWER, the state system of support for schools identified for improvement.



Allison Sherman

Prior to ISBE, Ms. Sherman was an Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services for Marquardt School District 15 and Director of Curriculum for Indian Prairie School District 204. While at Indian Prairie, Ms. Sherman worked with the Aurora University Institute for

Collaboration to design the John C. Dunham STEM Partnership School on the campus of Aurora University. The STEM school is a first-of-its-kind partnership school in the state of Illinois, comprised of a unique integrated STEM curriculum designed in collaboration with public school systems, corporate and non-profit partners, and a university. The Board of Education conducted a state-wide search with the assistance of BWP and Associates that produced 37 qualified applicants from diverse geographic and professional backgrounds. After months of meetings and interviews, the Board of Education is pleased with the search process and its outcome.

“Ms. Sherman has a passion for working with students and families and is excited to begin her new role at Oak Grove. She will continue to carry forward the vision of Oak Grove”, said OGS Board President Tony Giamis. Ms. Sherman would like the community to know, “The story of Oak Grove School District has been one of success under the leadership of the Board and Dr. Lemon. It was clear from meeting stakeholders that this is a community’s school – a family of staff, parents, administration, and Board committed to providing every opportunity for students to reach their potential. I am honored to step into the role of Superintendent.”

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