



# Community Newsletter

## Message from the Superintendent

Creating this newsletter to showcase the staff and student accomplishments this year is always a highlight for us! It's an opportunity for our school community to reflect on our successes, which we use as a foundation to continue to grow and improve in subsequent years.

We were particularly pleased this fall when we received our annual standing amongst Illinois schools on the state report card. Oak Grove School saw significant increases in our standing during the last two years - the most challenging years for schools across the nation. Maintaining robust academic programs in 2020 and 2021 had a significant impact that set us apart from schools across the county and state. We've held a "commendable" designation by the state over the last several years, which we share with 2200+ schools. However, our recent growth placed us narrowly missing the "exemplary" designation (top 10% of schools in the state) by less than 2 points. This outcome can only be attributed to the hard work of our teachers and students and the strong partnership we maintain with our families.



Allison Sherman

In addition to the goal of maintaining this upward trajectory in achievement, we are continuing to evaluate our programming and facility spacing needs. This spring, our Board provided direction to explore some of the needs and interests of our community in this area. As we return to school, we will convene a broad sector of stakeholders to inquire about these interests, providing further direction to the Board and administration.

As I close this note, I also want to share that our Board approved the investment into equipment that allows Oak Grove to stream its Board meetings. Our families had requested the streaming option to increase accessibility to meetings and provide a benefit to our broader community. Links to view monthly meetings are posted on our website the day of the meeting.

I hope this newsletter finds you well and wish you a safe and restful summer.

Sincerely,

Allison Sherman, Superintendent

## Oak Grove Board of Education Welcomes Nuriddin Matthew Saratore

The Oak Grove Board of Education swore in new member Nuriddin Matthew Saratore this past April. Mr. Saratore is honored to join the OGS Board of Education, where he hopes to positively impact the school and the community. Having lived in District 68 for nearly eight years, he has seen his eldest daughter graduate from OGS. His two younger daughters are both currently enrolled, one as a fourth grader and the other as a kindergartener. Mr. Saratore's wife, Aayshah Mirza, has been active in the PTO as the Registrar and in various positions as a parent volunteer at OGS.

Mr. Saratore's background includes a start in healthcare, followed by years at a local medical manufacturer. Currently, he works for Veeva Systems, an IT company focused on advancing the cloud for life sciences companies around the world.



Nuriddin Matthew Saratore

When not working or spending time with his family, Mr. Saratore is often in his fruit and vegetable garden, where he grows a wide variety of heirlooms.

This last April marked the end of Dr. Anthony (Tony) Giamis's term on the Oak Grove Board of Education. He has served eight years on the Board, including four years as Board President and two years as Board Secretary. Tony is known for his passion for STEM education, an advocate of education as a leading indicator of future success, and his steadfast focus on the budget.

Dr. Giamis is a veteran of two Superintendent searches, two Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA), eight annual operating budgets for a combined \$150 million, a multiyear & multi-million district renovation, and when Oak Grove School was named a recipient of the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program Award.

Dr. Giamis plans to spend more time with his family in the next chapter, including visiting his sons away in college. In his free time, Tony is an active leader in the local Boy Scouts of America Council and is the Course Director for their National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) program



Dr. Anthony Giamis

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K-3 Principal

Joe O'Malley  
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Alexa Dunn  
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Innovative Learning

Brian Weintraub  
Director of Business Services

Dmitry

## Illinois Principal Association - Student Recognition

Each year the Lake Region Illinois Principals Association hosts a student recognition event for selected students. Students are chosen by the school principal and their teachers for their demonstration of leadership within the school and community. For the 2022-2023 school year, Oak Grove recognized Savannah Morgan and Nathan Likosar.

Savannah is dependable and serves as a positive role model for others. Savannah will always do the right thing, even if no one is watching. Savannah was also a tremendous help when volunteering at Lambs Farm and during our annual Veterans Day community event. Savannah's daily actions show that she is undoubtedly emerging as a leader at school and within her community.

Nathan is a talented student and a considerate young man who consistently does his best. Nathan's positive attitude is recognized and admired by his teachers and his peers at Oak Grove. Nathan's thoughtfulness, determination, and positive attitude set him apart from his peers. His daily actions show that he is undoubtedly emerging as a leader at school and within his community.



Principal Ryan Murray, Savannah Morgan, and Nathan Likosar

## OGSEF Soaring Eagle Scholarship

The Oak Grove School Education Foundation (OGSEF) seeks to support the teachers and students of Oak Grove School District 68. The OGSEF's vision is to create a model school that inspires future leaders and engages our community. The Soaring Eagle Scholarship was created to support deserving Oak Grove School alumni in their post-secondary studies.

Congratulations to former Oak Grove School students Paige Regan and Charles Verkoulen. They were the recipients of the Oak Grove Soaring Eagle Scholarship this year. Both students were honored at the scholarship celebration held at LHS this Spring.



Allison Sherman, OGSEF President Jeff Barry, Charles Verkoulen, Paige Regan, Scholarship Chair Katrina Treutelaar, and BOE president Raabia Khan

## OGEA Scholarship

The Oak Grove Education Association (OGEA) proudly presented the eighth annual Eagle Scholarship to an Oak Grove alumn who demonstrated excellence in academics, character, extracurricular activities, and service. The OGEA, representing the certified staff at Oak Grove School, is committed to the success of all current and former students.

This year, the annual Eagle Scholarship went to Sean Heard. Sean embodies the diversity of experience that is prioritized at Oak Grove. His time at Oak Grove included athletics, being involved in multiple sports, and academics, challenging himself outside of the classroom, and fine arts. He attributes his level of involvement at Libertyville High School as a byproduct of the "empowering environment" of Oak Grove School. Congratulations, Sean; we salute your growth and look forward to your future contributions.



Heather McCarty, Sean Heard and Casey Dugan

## Oak Grove Bids Farewell to Retirees

Thank you to our five retirees!. They have a combined 107 years of service to Oak Grove School! Students, parents, and faculty alike offer our sincere thanks for all

our retirees have done over the years, helping thousands of children in our school community. Best wishes to our retirees as they begin their well-deserved retirement!



Julie Waehner - 23 years



Cathie Saia - 23 years



Lynn Koehler - 16 years



Cindy Hamlin - 25 years



Diane Neiweem - 20 years

## OGS "Teacher of the Year" awards

The Oak Grove School Education Foundation continued its annual end-of-year tradition of presenting the OGS "Teacher of the Year" awards. The purpose is to recognize and honor outstanding teachers and staff accomplishments during the school year. Nominees (1) demonstrated a commitment to self-improvement and personal development, (2) promoted learning and growth, (3) collaborated with others in sharing best practices and ideas, (4) had a positive rapport with students, and (5) contributed to the success of OGS.

Winners were nominated by their colleagues across three categories, and each winner received a glass plaque and a check for \$500. The presenters in the photos below are BOE president Raabia Khan and OGSEF president Jeff Barry.

Matt Oesch won the 5th-8th grade category. Here are some of the comments he received in his nominations: "The kids love Mr. Oesch because he makes it fun, innovative, and interesting. He puts in countless hours to educate himself and help his team be successful. Oak Grove School is a better place because of Mr. Oesch."



Matt Oesch

Kelly Zanon won in the K-4th grade category. Here are some of the comments she received in her nominations: "Every student that has had her falls in love with Ms. Zanon. She is kind, patient, and loving. It is evident from the number of older students that light up when they see her."



Kelly Zanon

Meg Oesch won the Student Services/Special Areas category. Here are some of the comments she received in her nominations: "She is dedicated to Oak Grove and all who dwell in the halls. She puts effort into thinking about everything she can do and share to make it a better place. She is a real inspiration!"



Meg Oesch

Thank you to our teachers, support staff, and nominees this year!

## Veterans Day Celebration

Oak Grove's Veterans Day celebration was a wonderful event held on November 11th. The annual ceremony recognized and honored over 50 veterans and service members. More than 125 people were in attendance, and many more viewed the live-streamed broadcast to join in from afar. The new "Honoring Our Veterans" display, donated by the Treutelaar family, hung outside the Junior High Gym, showcasing the six service branches. Veterans and their families toured an artifact museum in the junior high cafeteria after the ceremony. The students displayed and presented items such as uniforms, artillery, and historical memorabilia. This ceremony is a longstanding Oak Grove tradition that illustrates how important Veterans are to our Oak Grove community, allowing our 8th-grade students to take on leadership roles in planning and executing a celebration of this magnitude.



## Early Childhood Program Update

Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, Oak Grove will be staffing and running its own early childhood special education program at the Lincoln Early Learning Center in Mundelein. The partnership with Mundelein School District 45 will allow Oak Grove to establish an early childhood classroom supported by Oak Grove teachers. Oak Grove is using one-time federal supplemental dollars to purchase the preschool curriculum and furnish the classroom.

Currently, the Early Childhood program is open to students who qualify for speech, social work, and/or occupational therapy services based on preschool screenings. Oak Grove will consider building upon the early childhood program for the 2024-25 school year and developing a blended learning environment to include all preschool-age students.

## Substitutes Needed

Do you or anyone you know like to work with children aged K-8? OGS needs substitute teachers for the upcoming school year. Those interested should apply by visiting [www.ogschool.org/employment](http://www.ogschool.org/employment).

## STEM Update

Mr. Henneberry had a successful first year introducing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) to students in the elementary grades and implementing the Project Lead the Way Medical Detectives. PLTW units engage students in a middle school STEM curriculum that builds knowledge and skills in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science and empowers students to develop essential skills such as problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, communication, collaboration,

and perseverance. Next year 8th-grade students will learn about mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems in Automation and Robotics. 7th-grade students will become engineers as they design, prototype, and test models to learn about the science of flight and what it takes to travel and live in space in Flight and Space. These opportunities will build a foundation for our students to continue to expand their knowledge through any of the Project Lead the Way pathways offered in high school.



## Joe O'Malley Hired as OGS Assistant Principal

Oak Grove is pleased to welcome Joe O'Malley as our new Assistant Principal. Mr. O'Malley is excited to join the Oak Grove community. He began his career as a Spanish and EL teacher at the high school level, after which time he served two years as Dean of Students at Hinsdale South High School. Most recently, Mr. O'Malley was the assistant principal at Grove Junior High School.

Mr. O'Malley notes, "I value teaching students the emotional skills they need to learn across all subjects. Above all, I value a strong school community and partnership among staff, students, and families. I look forward to building on the Oak Grove community's many strengths to help students continue striving and improving." Mr. O'Malley lives with his wife, Sarah, in Elk Grove Village. Sarah is a Spanish teacher at Hersey High School, and they have an 18-month-old daughter, Riley.



Joe O'Malley

## New Director of Student Services

With the retirement of Julie Waehner, Oak Grove welcomes our new Director of Student Services. Mrs. Angela Phillips started her career as a special education teacher in Lake County. With over 20 years in education, she has worn many hats, including teaching multiple grade levels of special education from kindergarten through eighth grade and leading initiatives as a building and district administrator.

As she begins her adventure here at Oak Grove, Mrs. Phillips is most excited about getting to know the people she will serve and work with. In her words, "I am excited and grateful for this opportunity. I cannot wait to work with the wonderful students, the amazing families, and the dedicated staff in the Oak Grove community." Mrs. Phillips loves being outdoors and taking on adventures with her husband and their pups.



Angela Phillips

## OGS Welcomes New Business Manager

Oak Grove is pleased to welcome Brian Weintraub as the new Director of Business/Chief School Business Official. Before this role, Mr. Weintraub spent eight years at Itasca School District 10 as the Director of Operations/Chief School Business Official. During his time at Itasca 10, Mr. Weintraub assisted with the school construction bond referendum for \$27 million, increased the district's bond rating, collaborated with the board and administration to establish a budget philosophy ensuring long-term financial health for the district, and led the planning of a multi-year, district-wide construction.

Mr. Weintraub earned his bachelor's in finance from West Chester University in 1999 and his master's in school business management from Northern Illinois University in 2015. Mr. Weintraub is currently an adjunct professor at Aurora University.

When not at work, Mr. Weintraub enjoys spending time with his family. He and his wife, Jodie, who teaches Spanish at Conant High School, have two children - a son who just finished 2nd grade and a daughter who just finished kindergarten. In his free time, Mr. Weintraub also enjoys attempting to play golf and cheering on his beloved Philadelphia Eagles.

Mr. Weintraub is excited to join the Oak Grove community and hopes to spend the next year learning about the culture and understanding the district's unique needs.



Brian Weintraub

# Student Athletic and Academic Accolades

## Cross Country

The Cross Country team had a fantastic season! The team showed spirit and camaraderie throughout the season, and many of our athletes set personal records. Congratulations on a great season! Some season highlights include:

- 6th-grade girl's team placed 2nd at the Hawthorn Invitational, with many of our runners placing in the top 25
- Our boy's team placed 6th in sectionals
- Our girl's team won the conference this year and placed 4th in sectionals
- Elsie Colin (7th) went on to represent OGS at the state meet, where she placed 41st out of 237 runners.



*Elsie Colin*

## Band

Isaac Stone (8th-grade), a member of the OGS Symphonic Band, auditioned against hundreds of other 6th-8th grade musicians in Lake County to secure a spot in the Illinois Music Education Association District 7 Music Festival Concert Band. Students recorded three different audition exercises to show mastery and technique on their instrument. Isaac represented Oak Grove in this ensemble made of the best players from Lake, McHenry, and Cook counties. Congratulations, Isaac!

## 7th-grade Boy's Basketball

The boy's season culminated in the championship game versus Highland, and despite tremendous team spirit and effort, their season ended as the conference runner-up. The boys had a tremendous season and worked well with each other. Their competitive spirit came through every game with intense full-court pressure and enthusiasm from start to finish.

## Spirit Squad

Our Oak Grove cheerleaders had a great season cheering on our girls and boys at the basketball games. The cheerleaders also competed at the Hawthorn Spirit Invitational and placed 6th overall. Way to go, girls!

## 8th-grade Boy's Volleyball

The 8th-grade boy's volleyball team finished their season in 4th place overall in the Lakeside conference. There were a few setbacks this season, including the match against Lake Bluff that had to be rescheduled due to a power outage and the match against Northwood that

got canceled due to icy weather. One of the highlights was when the 8th-grade team beat Millburn during the regular season. Also, nine boys on the team were able to balance playing volleyball while being part of the 8th-grade Musical! Way to go, 8th-grade Eagles Volleyball!

## Wrestling

The wrestlers had a great season! They started out with more than half their team beginning as first-year wrestlers, yet quickly coalesced into a winning team with a record of 8-1. Their hard work resulted in a 2nd place finish at Regionals, sending 15 wrestlers to advance, including Regionals champions Alexander Osborne, Brayden Liu, Elliott Hibbard, Deniz Korkut, and Karim Alaoui. The other sectional qualifiers were Leo Bouikidis, Gunnar Meyer, Cameron Kovach, James De Kock, Sam DeMoon, Kyle Ramirez, Dylan Treutelaar, Michael Savino, Lars Palmberg, and Colten Siebert. The wrestlers hit stiff competition at Sectionals. When the dust settled, Oak Grove finished 6th place out of 23 schools, sending seven wrestlers to the State Finals. The State contenders were Leo Bouikidis, Gunnar Meyer, Cameron Kovach, Dylan Treutelaar, Alexander Osborne, Brayden Liu, and Colten Siebert. At state, Alexander Osborne placed 2nd at 105 lbs.



*Wrestlers Leo Bouikidis, Cameron Kovach, Brayden Liu, Colten Siebert, Alexander Osborne, Dylan Treutelaar, and Gunnar Meyer*

## Bookmark Winner

1st-grader Anvi Gupta and Congressman Brad Schneider for winning artwork for his 2022 office holiday card.



*Congressman Brad Schneider and Anvi Gupta*

# Accolades (continued)



*Brad Schneider and Paras Acharya*

## Bookworm Program

Paras Acharya (2nd-grade) received a certificate of achievement from Congressman Brad Schneider for participating in the "Brad's Bookworms" program.

## Track and Field

For the 2023 school year, Oak Grove had 95 members on the track and field team! Each student was challenged to find their personal motivation for joining track & field and worked to improve upon their goals throughout. Well done! Some season highlights include:

- Elsie Colin (7th-grade) finished 2nd in the sectional meet for the 1600m
- Elliott Hibbard (7th-grade) qualified for the State Meet by throwing a discus a distance of 108 ft and placed 13th at state!



*Elliott Hibbard*

## Outstanding Paraprofessional in Lake County

Congratulations to Dalia Afify! Dalia was recognized on May 10th as an Outstanding Paraprofessional in Lake County at a dinner at the Lake County Fairgrounds. Mrs. Afify's dedication to our students and the relationships she builds within Oak Grove truly make her outstanding!



*Dalia Afify*

# Business Updates

The country continues to experience its highest inflation rates in the last 40 years, with a CPI (Consumer Price Index) of 6.5% as of December 2022. As a result, Oak Grove is experiencing a rise in operational costs. Due to the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL), the district is capped to a levy based on the past December CPI number or 5%, whichever is less. This formula is good news for taxpayers since the lower 5% number will be used when Oak Grove levies for the total amount the district can ask to cover inflated costs. Should Oak Grove's levy go slightly over 5%, the intent will be to capture any additional funding available from new construction that occurs within Oak Grove's taxing boundaries. Oak Grove's Board and administration recognize the current economic climate. We continue to evaluate practices and spending to ensure the district is making fiscally responsible decisions and being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

# Volunteer Breakfast

In April, Oak Grove hosted their first annual Volunteer Appreciation breakfast. Invitations were sent to over 350 individuals, honoring everyone who has volunteered their time to support students and staff in classrooms, during lunchtime and school events, and on committees. The breakfast was catered and served by our staff. Our volunteers are what make Oak Grove extra special!



*OGS teachers Ann Coughlin, Matt Oesch, Becky Honaker, and Cathie Saia*

## Come Drive For Us! Oak Grove needs bus drivers



- Drivers work flexible hours
- No weekends
- Competitive wages & benefits
- Starting pay \$22/hour
- Signing Bonus
- Paid Training

### Great benefits:

- Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance
- Sick & Vacation Pay
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For application information, contact Brian Weintraub  
weintraub@ogschool.org  
847-367-4120 x 2003

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

**GREAT NEWS FROM  
OAK GROVE SCHOOL!**



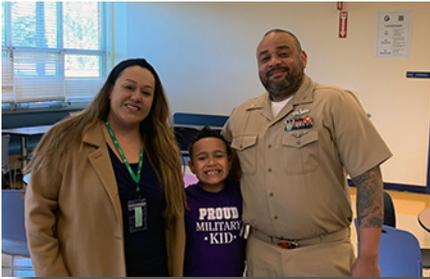
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## Purple Up Day 2023

Oak Grove and the PTO collaborated to host our first annual Purple Up Day to support our military families. On April 26th, students, staff, and families met in the Junior High cafeteria to recognize our military families and demonstrate our support.

The Air Force, Coast Guard, and Navy all wear blue. The Army wears green, and the Marines often wear red. When you mix green, blue, and red, you'll likely end up with some shade of purple. Because of this, purple signifies the entire military. We thank our community military members for their service!



*1st-grade student Isaiah Givens Reedus with parents Elpidia and Steven Givens Reedus*



*7th-grade student Ian Collins with parents Terry and Michael Collins*

## Summer Facilities Upgrades

As part of Oak Grove's five-year capital improvement plan, the school district is replacing the roof on the 1997 building addition (elementary wing and school office).



*Construction taking place on the north side of the building*

There will also be HVAC upgrades in this section of the school. Oak Grove uses funding through its Capital Improvements budget, a \$50,000 facilities improvement matching grant from the state, and higher than anticipated Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax (CPPRT) revenue. The timeline for this construction is June 5th through August 3rd, 2023. As a result, the entire elementary addition of the building, school office entrance, and lower parking lot will not be available to the public or staff throughout construction. The elementary playground will still be accessible to the community.

[www.ogschool.org](http://www.ogschool.org)



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