

Our SCHOOL REPORT



Olmsted Falls School District

Spring 2021

THE BULLDOG WAY *By Superintendent Jim Lloyd, Ed.D.*

Future Shines Brighter as We Emerge From Pandemic

At this time last year, we were coming to terms with the fact that learning for the remainder of the year would be done remotely. We were working hard to create engaging experiences for our students despite facing the reality of our situation. We were disappointed, yet determined, to celebrate our graduating Class of 2020 in new ways, as our traditional celebrations were not possible.

Throughout the past year, we have been vigilant in our efforts to educate our students to the best of our abilities despite challenges. We have been fighting to see light at the end of the tunnel. Finally, that light is becoming more and more visible. The familiar energy of the end of a school year is building and the anticipation feels amazing after a year of drastic changes.

Our Bulldogs finished up a successful winter athletic season, and for the first time since spring of 2019, our spring athletes are competing. The stands may look a little less full and our athletes may have to train with increased safety protocols, but we have a season. We are eternally grateful.

Spring music concerts for choir and band, the spring musical, and the annual May Art Show all welcomed

in-person audiences, while still providing streaming options for some of the performances.

Seeing our students safely inside school buildings full time has been our ultimate goal for this school year and on February 22, this goal was realized. Furthermore, Olmsted Falls staff were given the opportunity to receive their second vaccination March 12 and a very significant majority of our staff have taken advantage of this. We were also able to offer vaccinations to our 16+ students in early May. Vaccinations and compliance with safety protocols increase the odds of maintaining our “all-in” education model! Thank you for remaining steadfast in your commitment to reducing the spread of COVID-19. As I’ve said all along, “we are at our best when our students are in person with us” and our students are where they belong.

Amid all of the changes throughout the past year, we have elevated our communication with our Bulldog families. Our district-wide community engagement resource, LINK, has premiered the first episode of “LINK UP,” a new show designed especially for parents and caregivers. This show provides a virtual connection to the people,



Guest Reader Dr. Lloyd reads to Falls-Lenox Primary students during the Right to Read celebration. See additional student photos inside.

stories, and news specific to the Olmsted Falls School District community.

Finally, we are ever-grateful for the ability to plan year-end activities for our senior class of 2021 and the rest of our student body. While events like prom and graduation will still look a little different than years past, we will celebrate with a new level of gratitude as we are afforded more options.

We have come to this place due to the support and flexibility of our Bulldog family. It’s time to find your sunglasses, Bulldogs, because as we continue to look forward, the future shines brighter and brighter.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jim Lloyd, Superintendent

THE BULLDOG FIELD INITIATIVE

Community Non-Profit Raising Private Funds For Stadium Turf, Other Athletic Facility Enhancements

The Olmsted Athletic Commission (OAC) was established in August of 2019 as a formal 501(c)(3) non-profit entity by a group of local community members with the mission of raising private funds for The Bulldog Field Initiative. The Bulldog Field Initiative seeks to improve playing fields and athletic facilities throughout the school community **WITHOUT THE USE OF ANY TAXPAYER DOLLARS.** Modeled after similar successful, privately-funded initiatives, this grass-roots community effort is being led by Olmsted Township resident and Bulldog parent Joe Singleton along with six other members of the organization's Board of Directors.

Since August 2019, the OAC Board, along with a dedicated group of community volunteers, have been busy fundraising for a series of athletic improvement projects including the renovation of six infield baseball diamonds at Olmsted Falls Early Childhood Center (ECC), Falls-Lenox Primary School and Olmsted Falls Intermediate School, completed in spring 2020. The organization's next major undertaking project is to contribute financial and in-kind construction resources to **privately fund** the installation of artificial turf on Vitamix Field at Charles Harding Memorial Stadium.

While the majority of school districts in the state have funded the installation of field turf through a bond issue, permanent improvement levy and/or general fund dollars, **NO NEW TAXPAYER DOLLARS** will be spent on the installation of the stadium field turf. Through corporate sponsorships with Vitamix (field naming rights) and Southwest Hospital (sports complex naming rights) \$410,000 will have been raised towards the cost of the turf project. The only funds dedicated to the project by the school district itself are those dollars already allocated for the ongoing annual maintenance of the existing grass field. The Board of Education has committed its support to the Olmsted Athletic Commission on these improvement projects with the understanding that **no additional taxpayer dollars** will be provided by the school district beyond what already exists in the annual maintenance budget for its existing grass football field.

"It is important for our community to know that Olmsted Falls City School District operates on a very

lean and efficient budget, with one of the lowest cost per pupil rates in the county," said Dr. Lloyd. "We have continually pledged to our taxpayers that the tax dollars they generously provide to our district will be spent prudently, and our limited budget does not allow for the kinds of enhancements being made possible through the private grass-roots efforts being led by the Olmsted Athletic Commission."

"The Olmsted Athletic Commission was founded with the mission of rallying our community to raise private funds to dramatically improve athletic fields and facilities for our children," said OAC President Joe Singleton. "Our goal is to secure funding through community fundraising, corporate sponsorships, grants and advertising revenue that will improve grass fields, build new turf fields and invest in capital improvements that benefit the entire community."

"This is not just a football project, or just a high school project," Mr. Singleton added. "This is for all BULLDOGS - young and old."

Significant progress has been made toward the fundraising goal of \$800,000 to cover the cost of turf installation. In March 2021, the OAC donated \$49,589 to the Olmsted Falls City School District to cover the cost of the initial engineering study of the field area necessary for moving forward with the project. Fundraising efforts have picked up in recent months with several opportunities to support the effort including End Zone Letter sponsors and the Bulldog Backer Wall. Additionally OAC has been pursuing a number of sponsorships from corporations and other local community organizations and non-profits. To date, approximately \$320,000 in private cash and donation-in-kind services have been secured and OAC remains hopeful they will reach their total fundraising goal in time to have turf installed by fall 2021 or soon after.

Once successful with the stadium turf project, other privately funded athletic facility enhancements on the OAC future project list include the baseball field/community park project behind the Olmsted Falls Library, continued expansion of available grass fields, and the eventual construction of an indoor field house.

SOUTHWEST GENERAL PARTNERSHIP

Southwest General Partnership Brings Increased Revenue, Enhanced Opportunities for Students

Olmsted Falls City School District is expanding its partnership with Southwest General Health Center. The latest agreement gives Southwest General naming rights to the sports complex at Olmsted Falls High School, while generating a supplemental alternative revenue stream for the district that gives students additional opportunities without tapping into funding provided by local taxpayers.

“Demonstrating that our district can get creative in securing new revenue streams to enhance programs and resources for our school community has been a priority for my administration for some time,” said Dr. Jim Lloyd, superintendent. “It is very rewarding to see this latest endeavor come to fruition.”

Southwest General is a state-of-the-art health center that has been serving the Olmsted community since 1920. This partnership expansion will allow the center to enhance its support of community health and wellness.

As a result of the growing partnership, planning is underway for the official dedication of the Southwest General Sports Complex at Olmsted Falls High School, which will include signage at the Bagley Road entrance to the facility recognizing Southwest General as the sponsor. The Southwest General Sports Complex will encompass all outdoor athletic facilities including the

Vitamix Field at Harding Memorial Stadium, varsity baseball and softball areas, tennis courts and shotput area.

“Southwest General is committed to partnering with the Olmsted Falls School District to support the building of teamwork skills, aid in the safe training of athletes and support a healthy lifestyle for young adults and families,” said Albert Matyas, FACHE, vice president, Ambulatory Operations & Business Development, Southwest General. “Southwest General’s dedication to the community’s health and wellness, along with the school district’s commitment to enhancing the education and well-being of students, are central to this partnership.”

The initial revenue from the 10-year agreement will be dedicated to the field turf initiative being coordinated through the Olmsted Athletics Commission.

Additionally, Southwest General is now the proud sponsor of Bulldog Youth Football, Olmsted Falls Lacrosse Association and Olmsted Falls Soccer Association. Their sponsorship will also support the Olmsted Falls Alumni Association’s Annual Golf Outing.

Stay tuned for more details on the official dedication of the Southwest General Sports Complex, and we look forward to seeing where this new opportunity leads us.

Did You Know?

Since 2018, Olmsted Falls City School District has secured more than \$1 million through partnerships, sponsorships and grant dollars for projects that benefit both our school district and community. Highlights include:

- Digital Scoreboard
- Renovations and upkeep of Sports and Arts Facilities
- Harding Center for the Performing Arts
- School Pride Boards within OFHS
- Athletic Turf (Coming soon!)

Generous donations from local businesses and individuals help enhance the Triple A Experience without raising taxes. Local donors include: Vitamix, Southwest General Health Center, First Federal of Lakewood, Westside Ganley Subaru, Harding Family Charitable Trust, Olmsted Athletic Commission, Ryco Sports, Olmsted Falls Alumni Association, Ripcho Studio, Friendship Kitchen, and Monin Insurance.

Financial Forecast: Commitment to Efficient Operation Will Yield Positive Long Term Health of OFCSD



**Brett Robson, Treasurer,
Chief Financial Officer**

I am both honored and humbled to have been selected as the Treasurer/CFO of the Olmsted Falls City School District (OFCSD). The staff and community have been genuinely inviting and welcoming of me since early January. It is very apparent that the community holds the district in high regard, and that the staff is proud, caring and dedicated to providing the best, well rounded

experience for the students. It is a pleasure to work in such an environment.

Improvement in the OFCSD Fiscal Forecast

The current financial situation of the district is improving, and we will all continue to work together to make it better over time. The past financial forecasts have depicted an erosion in our cash position, even after the collection of the 8.9 mil levy most recently passed. Based on the trends reflected in those forecasts, the district has worked hard to improve our cash position through the implementation of various cost reduction and cost containment strategies. In addition, the district has recently negotiated with both collective bargaining associations resulting in financial concessions in an effort to assist the long term financial health of the district. We are grateful for their trust, understanding and cooperation.

The fiscal year of 2022 (FY22) is the first fiscal year of the full collection of the 8.9 mil levy. This new revenue stream was necessary for retaining our solvency, and allowing the district to continue to provide the offerings we are accustomed to. We are thankful for the continued support of our community for the resources provided. It remains our pledge to be good stewards of the resources the community provides us by operating efficiently.

COVID-Relief Funding

Last year, in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic effect on the Ohio economy, our state funding was reduced by approximately \$740,000. That net reduction was also carried over into the current school year, resulting in

an initial funding loss of \$1.48 million over the course of two years. In February, the state provided a 'partial restoration' of lost funds with an increased amount of \$389,000, bringing our lost revenue from the state to \$1.1 million.

That said, the federal government provided funding relief in three significant measures. The first was a grant in the amount of \$214,750. These funds were utilized primarily to provide for the equipment and supplies necessary to protect students and staff from the spread of COVID, along with increased technology to better serve the students in the remote learning environment. The second phase provided the district with access to \$847,397. These funds have been earmarked in similar fashion as the first round, but will also provide us with some relief to the general fund by way of eligible wage and benefit payments. Technology infrastructure upgrades are also planned as the increased use of staff and student devices are assumed to be a new normal. Round three of the funding relief has been announced, although the allocations are not formalized as yet. We anticipate this could be as much as \$2 million to OFCS, to be utilized through the 2023-2024 school year. We are working diligently to plan for use of these funds, which will be similar to round two; accounting for staff and student safety, general fund relief, and eligible capital improvements such as HVAC upgrades.

EPA Grant Funding

The district has been diligent in acquiring and maintaining capital needs despite the reduced availability of general funds. One example is in our transportation department where Heath Krakowiak secured grant funding through the EPA, providing for one half the total cost of two buses for the coming school year. In addition, the Board of Education elected to participate in a grant program with the State of Ohio, also providing the funding for approximately one half of the cost for a third bus. We appreciate the legwork conducted to attain those dollars and help keep our fleet as current as possible.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic and some bumps in our fiscal path, we are committed to making the fiscally responsible choices our community deserves. We will maximize our resources to stretch your hard-earned tax dollars to benefit our students in the most efficient manner.

Build the Bridge Initiative Brings Teams Together

The Build the Bridge initiative was launched last June by Cleveland Heights football coaches Kahari Hicks and Mac Stephens to unite football teams from different backgrounds. Since then, the Olmsted Falls Bulldogs and Cleveland Heights Tigers have come together multiple times to learn more about one another and build relationships. Most recently, Olmsted Falls High School hosted the Tigers for a Chalk Talk and Legacy Bench Build activity.

Organized by the Cleveland Browns Youth Football program, which is committed to assisting the development, safety and growth of youth and high school football throughout Northeast Ohio, athletes crafted legacy benches for their respective home fields, which will serve as a visual reminder of the two teams' ongoing collaboration.

Olmsted Falls' head coach Tom DeLuca said he thinks a program like this is critical. "I feel this is one way that as coaches and teachers, we can make a significant change in society," he said.



Falls-Lenox Celebrates Right to Read with "Only One You!" Theme

Falls-Lenox celebrated Right to Read Week this year with the theme "Only One You!" The crew at Falls-Lenox transformed the building into an ocean oasis of fun!

Each day, students were encouraged to dress for the theme of the day to get in the spirit of the week.

Classrooms hosted virtual guest readers -including Board of Education member Phil Eckenrode and Superintendent Dr. Jim Lloyd.

The week wrapped up with a virtual visit from one of the favorite authors of our Falls-Lenox students, Steve Harpster! Keep celebrating and READING! Great job, Falls-Lenox!



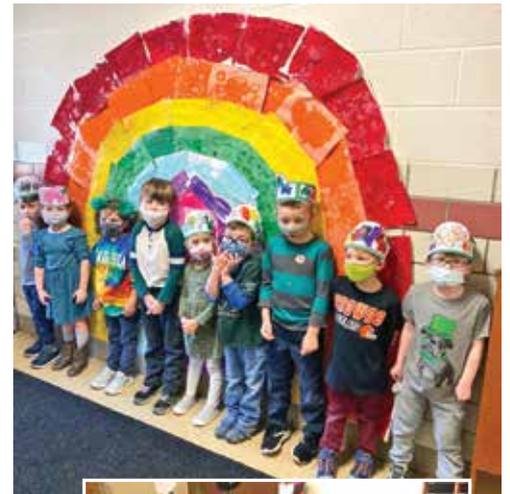
Early Childhood Center (Preschool and Kindergarten)



Making friends and learning through play



Exploring the world of community workers



St. Patrick's Day fun



Celebrating the 100th day of school



Olmsted Falls Intermediate School

Fifth Grade students get comfy for Reading Day.

Monarch Room students participated in the Kindness Challenge and drew messages of kindness to surprise the students as they went out to the buses at the end of the day!



LINK Program Keeps Families and Community “In The Loop” with Olmsted Falls City Schools

The LINK (Learn, Inspire, Nurture, Know) Family & Community Engagement Program was just getting off the ground when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. LINK Coordinator Julianne Allen was poised for the district to begin to implement programs, practices, and policies to encourage strengthened partnerships between families, schools, and communities, for the purpose of promoting student success.

The plans to welcome parents and families into school buildings for new programs, and provide opportunities to learn and share with other parents and families would have to wait, as the buildings’ doors were mandated to close in March of 2020, and the district was forced to press pause on the LINK program.

With the start of the 2020-2021 school year, the essential need for the LINK program quickly became evident. With students at home and parents now tasked with assisting students with daily learning and managing remote school schedules, it became even more important for parents and caregivers to feel empowered and to possess the needed tools to support student success. Mrs. Allen explained, “My goal with the LINK program is to find new ways to engage parents, answer their questions, and empathize with their struggles. As a Bulldog mom, I am able to relate to many of the issues that are on the minds of our families in Olmsted Falls which puts me in the perfect position to support our families.”

The District is incredibly proud of the way this

program was adapted to fit the needs of our district. The first official LINK Program – the inaugural *E-Assembly for Parents* titled “Pandemic Pressure” – was a success and LINK looks forward to offering additional E-Assemblies in the future.

The new *In the Loop* newsletter for parents and caregivers provides important information about opportunities for family engagement with the school district, highlighted resources, programs, and websites, answers to commonly asked questions, and anecdotes from one Bulldog parent to another. The title sums up the purpose – keeping families “In the Loop” and creating much-needed CONNECTIONS!

Finally, *LINK UP*, a talk show hosted by Mrs. Allen, features people, stories, and news from across the district. With two episodes released and more to come, LINK UP is a unique and fun new way for Olmsted Falls parents and caregivers to LINK UP with the district.

In short, the district has found a way to make this exciting new program fit the needs of this historic school year. “The LINK Program is something unique to Olmsted Falls and I’m very proud that it is part of our school district,” said OFCS Superintendent Dr. Jim Lloyd. “Julianne has done such a great job working through the challenges that the pandemic has presented. We’re all really looking forward to a normal year so that we can further expand the program.”

Olmsted Falls Middle School

Students at Olmsted Falls Middle School were “Walking on Sunshine” during Science class and celebrating weather!



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NEWS AS IT HAPPENS: OLMSTED FALLS SCHOOLS ON FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM & TWITTER

There are great things happening **every day** across the Olmsted Falls City School District! Keep up with the news and information via the district's social media channels.

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OLMSTED FALLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

President: Holly Neumann **Vice President:** Linda Parkowski
Members: Joanna DeMarco, Phil Eckenrode, Cynthia Tomasch

Olmsted Falls High School



Students in Mr. Haydn's engineering classes at OFHS celebrated National Engineers Week with an engaging project that entailed building intricate paper plate marble tracks! These awesome engineering courses available at OFHS take place in the building's "Fab Lab" space and are offered through the district's partnership with Polaris Career Center and the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) program.

Students were assigned to make wheels for the Mars Rover kits. Students then 3D printed the wheels and ran them on a simulated Mars surface. Students are in the Principles of Engineering class.

The Olmsted Falls City School District hereby gives notice that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability in the educational programs and activities operated by the district.