NEW INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL TAKES SHAPE: BOARD AWARDS FIRST BIDS

At a Special Meeting of the Olmsted Falls Board of Education held Thursday, February 7th at the Board office, the Board of Education voted unanimously to accept bids for the first two contracts related to the construction of a new intermediate school. The contract for preliminary site work was awarded to DiGioia Suburban Excavating, LLC located in North Royalton, OH; and the contract for the preparation of the geothermal field for the building’s geothermal heating/cooling system was awarded to Jamison Well Drilling, Inc. located in Mansfield, OH. Both bids came in below initial project estimates.

The accepted base bid from DiGioia Suburban Excavating, LLC for the early site work package was $918,400. This low base bid is $455,100 below the estimated cost for early site work. Early site work includes the installation of water, sanitary and sewer lines, overall grading of the site, and the preparation of the building footprint where the actual foundation will be laid.

The accepted base bid from Jamison Well Drilling, Inc. for the geothermal package was $844,486. This low base bid is $272,514 below the estimated cost for preliminary work on the geothermal system. Preparation for the geothermal system includes the boring of holes and installation of the underground pipes.

“We are extremely pleased to see these first two contracts come in at a combined total of $727,614 below the estimated amounts listed in the overall project budget,” said Jim Weisbarth, President of the Olmsted Falls Board of Education. “The Board of Education appreciates the quick and efficient work of District officials whose efforts helped to capitalize on timing and industry climate to garner a pool of competitive bids for these early contracts.”

The qualifications, references and bid proposals from both companies were reviewed in detail by Regency Construction Services, Inc., the construction management company for the new intermediate school project. Overall, the District received a total of thirteen bids for the Site Work Contract and two bids for the Geothermal Contract. After review of all bid proposals, both DiGioia Suburban Excavating and Jamison Well Drilling were determined to be the lowest, responsible bidders for the respective contracts.

The new intermediate school was made possible by the successful passage of a 2 Mill Bond Issue by residents in May 2007. The new building will address pressing space and overcrowding issues currently being experienced by the District, especially at the Pre-K to 5th grade levels. It is anticipated the new intermediate school will be completed by Fall 2009.

State Board of Education Member Colleen O’Grady visited Olmsted Falls November 17th to personally present the District with a special banner recognizing its 8th consecutive “Excellent” rating on the Local Report Card issued annually by the Ohio Department of Education. Olmsted Falls Board President Jim Weisbarth proudly accepted the banner on behalf of Olmsted Falls Schools.

New Intermediate School story continues next page...
NEW INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL continued...

“With overcrowding issues growing each semester, we are working very aggressively to meet the deadline of opening the new intermediate building in time for the 2009-2010 school year,” said Dr. Todd F. Hoadley, Superintendent of Olmsted Falls Schools. “Securing these early site work contracts will help us get a jump start on the project and allow us to stay on schedule to meet our goal of opening the new building in Fall 2009.”

Residents of the Olmsted communities can expect to see activity beginning on the construction site by the end of February. For additional information on the new intermediate school project, please call (440) 427-6000 or visit www.ofcs.k12.oh.us.

NEW GRANT ENABLES OFHS STUDENTS TO EARN COLLEGE CREDITS

Twenty-eight students at Olmsted Falls High School are participating in a new Dual Credit Program made possible through a grant from the Ohio Department of Education. A Dual Credit Program allows students to receive both high school and college credit for taking a single course.

This new grant program creates a partnership between Olmsted Falls High School and Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C). The grant stipulates that courses be taught at the participating high schools by current high school teachers who are able to qualify for adjunct professor status at Tri-C. In order for teachers to qualify for adjunct status, the teachers must possess a Master’s degree in the field that they are teaching. (Example: a math teacher would have to have a Master’s degree in mathematics in order to become an adjunct professor at Tri-C.)

At Olmsted Falls High School, math teachers Tom Lanning and Jeff VanArnhem meet these qualifications and have been granted adjunct professor status. Both teachers began teaching their dual credit courses in January. Nine students are taking Mr. Lanning’s Pre-Calculus course, and nineteen students are taking Mr. VanArnhem’s Calculus I course for the dual credit.

In order to qualify to take a course for dual credit, students had to meet GPA requirements and take a placement test for Tri-C. Students are also required to take additional tests throughout the course to confirm they are meeting the Tri-C requirements.

“This is a unique opportunity for our students,” said Mr. Robert Trapp, principal at Olmsted Falls High School. “By passing these courses, participating students will earn college credits that will be transferable to any state university in Ohio which ultimately reduces the cost of their overall college education.”

Proceeds from the grant cover the cost of the student’s Tri-C tuition, so there is no cost to the individual student for their participation in this program. Additionally, Olmsted Falls School District will receive $353 for each student who enrolls and completes this program. These funds cover course-related expenses such as the purchase of textbooks, materials, or lab equipment.

“We are pleased to be selected for this grant opportunity,” said Mr. Michael Berner, assistant principal at Olmsted Falls High School who coordinated the grant application. “We are working to build a relationship with Tri-C, as well as other colleges and universities, that would allow us to continue to offer such dual credit opportunities for our students, even beyond the life of this initial grant.”

Olmsted Falls High School math teacher
Tom Lanning’s pre-calculus course allows selected students to earn both high school and college credits simultaneously. A total of 28 OFHS students are participating in the new Dual Credit Program made possible through a grant awarded to Olmsted Falls Schools by the Ohio Department of Education.

DID YOU KNOW?

Updated enrollment projections report Olmsted Falls School District will reach an enrollment of 4,344 students by the 2017-2018 school year. Currently, the District serves more than 3,700 students.
Olmsted Falls High School math teacher Donna Langenderfer was recognized in early February at the E-Tech conference in Columbus as a finalist for the 2008 Technology Teacher of the Year Award. Ms. Langenderfer was nominated for this award for her integration of technology into the classroom and her leadership among her peers in the utilization of SMARTboard technology. She was one of just four finalists selected for the prestigious award.

Olmsted Falls Middle School has been named a “Physical Activity and Fitness Demonstration Center” school by The President’s Challenge, the cornerstone program of the historic President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. Olmsted Falls Middle School is one of only five schools in the State of Ohio to receive this distinction. A Demonstration Center school is one that clearly emphasizes physical activity and fitness in its physical education program. With this prestigious designation, Olmsted Falls Middle School will serve as a model for those interested in developing physical education programs throughout the State and will be available for observation by teachers, administrators, and community members.

“We recognize the vital role schools play in encouraging students to be active and establish lifelong healthy habits,” said Principal Mark Kurz. “We are thrilled to be recognized nationally as a Demonstration Center and look forward to serving as a model for other schools who want to provide exemplary physical education opportunities for their students.”

Olmsted Falls Middle School has shown an ongoing commitment to increasing students’ levels of physical activity. All students participate in physical education class for 45 minutes every other school day for the entire school year. In addition to regular physical education classes, all students and teachers also participate in a unique program entitled “Intramural Friday” each Fall and Spring, which features a variety of games and fitness activities. Fitness facilities and equipment such as pedometers also serve to raise awareness and encourage physical fitness among students beyond regular P.E. classes.

Olmsted Falls Middle School was nominated as a President’s Challenge Demonstration Center by physical education teacher Kathy Pruchnicki.

“We were encouraged to apply for this award by the Ohio Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance located in Columbus,” said Mrs. Pruchnicki. “They have been very aware of our outstanding program here at the Middle School and were confident that we would make an outstanding candidate for this prestigious honor.”
OFHS MUSICIANS TAKE STAGE AT RENOWNED SEVERENCE HALL

Olmsted Falls High School was recently honored with an invitation to perform at the renowned Severance Hall in Cleveland. On January 27th, 164 upperclassmen from OFHS performed at Severance Hall in conjunction with the Northeast Ohio Band Invitational, hosted by Case Western Reserve University. The OFHS Wind Ensemble, directed by Edgar Berry, and the OFHS Chorale, directed by Judy Crandall, performed individual selections on the program and then combined efforts on a joint performance of Eric Whitacre’s “Sleep.” Dr. Russell Mikkelson, Director of Bands at The Ohio State University, also guest conducted the OFHS Wind Ensemble on his composition, “Songs from the Heartland” at the event.

Congratulations to our talented young musicians on this memorable performance! Olmsted Falls was named one of the “100 Best Communities for Music Education” in 2007.

ADAPTIVE PLAYGROUND AT FALLS-LENOX ONE STEP CLOSER TO REALITY

Olmsted Falls School District is pleased to report that the privately-funded adaptive playground project at Falls-Lenox came one step closer to reality when our Board of Education accepted a bid at its January 24, 2008 meeting for installation assistance. To date, more than $56,000 has been raised through donations from our local community. While it is always dangerous to single people out, special thanks must go to Falls-Lenox teachers Sara Matthews and Michelle Schoenhofer, as well as Lee Ann Rader, Eve Ballas and Chuck Murphy for the immense amount of personal time and effort they have put into fundraising, and subsequent planning for this innovative new playground facility.

It is a true testament to the Olmsted community that such a project could be undertaken and brought to fruition in only one year. Preparations and installation of the new playground are scheduled to get underway this Spring. To donate funds to the Adaptive Playground Project, please contact Sara Matthews at 427-6467.

At right: 5-year old Isabella, a pre-schooler at Falls-Lenox, presents a personal donation of her birthday money to pre-school teacher Sara Matthews. Isabella’s donation is one of dozens of special donations that poured in from throughout the Olmsted community for the Adaptive Playground Project at Falls-Lenox.

HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOK STAFF RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Congratulations to the OFHS Publications Staff and their advisors Mr. John Gaba and Mrs. Leslie Pickenheim! It was recently announced that pages submitted from the 2007 OFHS yearbook were selected by Jostens into a National Jostens Publication titled “Look Book.” This is the first time that the OFHS Publications Staff has received this recognition and is a great compliment to the work of Mr. Gaba, Mrs. Pickenheim and their talented students.

At left: Current OFHS seniors (pictured L to R) Caroline Mader, Trisha Brockmore, Eileen Norton, Dan McKenna and Julie Trapp, who worked on the 2007 yearbook, pose with their certificate of recognition and the award-winning 2007 edition of the yearbook which was themed “What A Feeling.”
Students in teacher Jesse Judson’s 5th grade class at Fitch Intermediate recently completed an innovative language arts project. In mid-December, Mr. Judson’s 5th grade language arts class embarked on a collaborative project with 5th graders at Gilles-Sweet Elementary School in nearby Fairview Park. Together, the two classes used a “wiki” to collaboratively write, edit and publish a chapter book over the internet. A “wiki” is a website whose content can be edited by anyone who has access to it. The two classes shared access to this special on-line educational project, blending language arts and technology into an engaging learning experience for all of the students.

The theme of the book they ultimately created together was “The Mysterious Christmas Present.” Fifth graders here in Olmsted Falls wrote and published the first and third chapters, while 5th graders in Mrs. Nancy Koenig’s class in Fairview Park wrote and published the second and fourth chapters. The writing process was a sequential one with each class working to continue the story based upon the content of the previous chapter. Once the first four chapters were completed, both sets of 5th graders wrote their own fifth chapter ending to the story.

Once the story was completed, both classes posted their respective story endings on the “wiki” so all of the students could read them. The culminating activity for this special project was an on-line Skype chat between the two classes! Skype is an internet protocol application which allows people to video conference over the internet free of charge. On the afternoon of February 1st, Mr. Judson’s class connected with Mrs. Koenig’s class via the internet allowing the two classes to see and hear each other. Students introduced themselves and engaged in a discussion about the project and the different story endings.

“This activity provided a wonderful opportunity for my students to blend traditional language arts activities with new technology,” said Mr. Judson. “The collaboration with Mrs. Koenig’s class really added an element of excitement to our language arts curriculum, and I believe all the students had fun while they learned.”

Parents who are interested in receiving occasional information from building principals via e-mail are invited to contact the main building offices at the following phone numbers to provide your e-mail address:

- Falls-Lenox Primary School (440) 427-6400
- Fitch Intermediate School (440) 427-6500
- Olmsted Falls Middle School (440) 427-6200
- Olmsted Falls High School (440) 427-6100

“Enhancing our connection to parents is always important to Olmsted Falls Schools,” said Superintendent Dr. Todd Hoadley. “This new e-mail outreach offers yet another way for us to connect.”
DATES TO NOTE!

March 8
OECPTA Bargain Bonanza @ Middle School

March 14
OFHS PTA Talent Show @ 8:00 p.m.

March 21
Good Friday - NO SCHOOL

March 24-28
Spring Recess - NO SCHOOL

March 31
School Resumes

April 1
District-Wide Late Start Day

April 5
OFHS Music Department’s Ballroom Blitz

April 18, 19, 20
OFHS Spring Musical

For additional information on any of the above events, please contact the appropriate school building or contact the Board office at 427-6000.

OLMSTED FALLS HIGH SCHOOL
MASQUERS
PROUDLY PRESENT
“Once Upon a Mattress”

Performances of the Spring musical are OPEN TO THE PUBLIC and will be held in the high school auditorium on April 18th and 19th at 7:30 p.m., and April 20th at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are $7 for adults and $5 for students and seniors. Please call (440) 427-6070 for more information or to place an advanced ticket order.

OECPTA ANNUAL BARGAIN BONANZA
RESALE EVENT
SATURDAY, MARCH 8TH
Olmsted Falls Middle School
27045 Bagley Road

Shop for gently used baby and children’s clothing, toys & accessories

Preview Sale: 8am-9am $5 Admission*
General Sale: 9am-1pm $1 Admission*
Bag Sale: 3pm-4pm $2 per bag

*ADMISSION CHARGED FOR CHILDREN 8 YEARS & OLDER

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.