

Oxford Public Schools Newsletter



A Message From: Oxford Superintendent Ana V. Ortiz

Thus far, this winter has been pretty mild in comparison to other years. Spring is closer and closer each day, however; we know that it can change quickly. The budget season is moving fast and furious and the district continues to move forward with the second year of implementation of the Strategic Operating Plan to continue to increase student achievement and to provide opportunities for our students to succeed. A large factor in increasing student achievement is having the necessary resources in place to fully support all student learning.

As such, it is important that you become familiar with the education budget process that is currently taking place. Last year, Oxford squeaked by with a minimal education budget. We need an education budget that supports our

students and I need your support in making that happen. I urge you to attend the public hearing at 7:00 p.m. at QFS, the Town Meeting and the Referendum in May. Exercise your right to vote when it is time. (Dates not available at this time)

As usual, I continue to invite you to come to open office hour with the Board Chair and me once a month to ask questions and share your ideas as you have done in the past two years.

2017-2018 Education Budget

The budget process is well under way. Initially, I presented a 4.16% increase for the upcoming year. After many meetings with the administrative team and Finance subcommittee of the Board, a final budget was approved by the Board of Education members at the February 21st Budget Workshop at 3.01% increase. We will be moving this

forward to the Town's Board of Finance. The initial meeting to discuss the budget with that committee occurred last night, March 7, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. Goals and priorities that are in the Strategic Operating Plan continue to serve as the roadmap for the development of the 2017-2018 budget with the emphasis on ensuring that all students' needs are met through the proper interventions or extensions to enhance their learning. It is with that fidelity to the plan that we have been able to recapture investments that have been deferred from the last few years.

The 2017-2018 budget will continue to fund aligning curriculum and instruction to the CT Core Standards, building capacity of teachers and administrators, and providing appropriate resources for the implementation of standards in all areas.

I am hopeful that each of you can champion the proposed budget increase as it balances our commitment to fiscal responsibility while maintaining our commitment to our students of delivering an outstanding education to all of them.

As such, we need the support of all Oxford Public Schools staff and parents more than ever. Here are some ways you can help:

- Register to vote and exercise your right to do so!
- Talk to parents/guardians about how the budget affects their student's education.
- Talk to your neighbors about all the great things happening in the Oxford schools.
- Write a letter to the editor.
- Share information about the budget on your personal social networks.
- Host a voter registration drive.
- Start a phone calling tree to remind people of the vote.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Board of Education and the Town's Selectmen. Thank you so

much for your continued support!!

Sincerely,

Ana V. Ortiz



From the Desk of QFS Principal Rachael Cacace

It is difficult to believe that we are halfway through the school year. Hopefully, spring is right around the corner and we will be able to open our windows and breathe some fresh, warm air soon. All of our students have been very busy in their classrooms as well as participating in Fire Prevention Day, the annual Halloween Parade, the PTO Book Fair, and the Hour of Code. Students also participated in collections for The Pajama Program, the Valley Food Bank, and Toys for Tots. Preschool students have been learning a new

theme each week, (i.e. All About Me, Pumpkins, Gingerbread, Arctic Animals) as well as visiting various centers (i.e. an academic center, a fine motor center, an art center, and a make believe/creative play center). Kindergarten students visited Jones Farm and performed their annual holiday Sing-A-Long. First grade students visited Blue Jay Orchards and the Yale Museum of Art. Second grade students visited Rock House Hill and the Opera.

QFS is very proud of the implementation of PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports). At QFS, students work hard to show STAR behavior: S - Show kindness, T - Try our best, A - Act safely, R - Respect others. We had a school wide kick-off assembly at the beginning of the year where students were



recognized for showing STAR behavior. We also had a family night called, "Dancing Under the Stars," where QFS students and their families were invited to come dance, bring a picnic dinner, and enjoy time together. We are in the process of planning "Dancing Under the Stars 2" for the spring. Currently, each class is working on filling their class star bucket so we can earn a school wide reward! Students are individually earning tickets for STAR behavior and cashing them in at the end of each week for rewards. Staff members at QFS and bus drivers are enjoying catching students doing positive things and showing STAR behavior!

One ongoing curriculum initiative for all students in Grades K-2 is the use of the *Wilson Foundations Program*. *Foundations* is a phonological awareness, phonics and spelling program for the general education classroom.



It is based upon the Wilson Reading System principles and serves as a prevention program to help reduce reading and spelling failure. Each level of *Foundations* presents skills in a carefully structured scope and sequence. All lessons are directly and explicitly taught with a systematic approach that builds skills cumulatively. *Foundations* also incorporates Motor Memory Learning. Gross Motor Memory is connected to the learning through sky-writing, tracing and tapping. *Foundations* provides extensive practice of skills through multiple opportunities along with assessments to monitor student learning and skill mastery.

In September, K-2 students participated in the MAP Assessments. These computer-based assessments provide teachers with valuable student data, and feedback that is linked to grade-level content standards. Students completed their mid-year MAP Assessments in January along with some other curriculum based assessments. Teachers will be working to use this data to inform instruction throughout

the remainder of the school year.

Quaker Farms School has been having a very exciting school year. On behalf of our staff, I would like to thank you for sending us your children each and every day. They make QFS a shining place to be.

As I tell the students daily, "Always remember to shine like a STAR!"

Oxford Center School Celebrates Children & Learning

Oxford third graders held their annual "Pow Wow" on Thursday, October 28th as a concluding activity for their integrated Native American studies unit. This unit incorporated learning in the areas of social studies, language arts, music, and art.



The Student Council sponsored a "Mustache Mania" event to raise funds for Oxford Families in need of

assistance due to unexpected tragedy or illness. Thank you to the “guys” at Oxford Center for helping students raise \$1,600 for this cause!

The Oxford Center School fourth and fifth grade choruses performed at the Tree Lighting Ceremony at the Town Hall on Friday, December 2nd. They also presented their Winter Concert on Wednesday, December 7th, where they were joined by the third, fourth, and fifth grade Recorder Clubs.



Casting has been completed for the Oxford Center School Play, *Lady Pirates of the Caribbean*. Rehearsals are in full swing and the performances will be March 29th through April 1st.

In line with the commitment to academic excellence, Oxford Center School has made tremendous progress in developing curriculum, acquiring materials, and identifying new approaches to

instruction. These developments will allow students to acquire the knowledge and skills outlined in the Connecticut Core Standards in the areas of English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics.



OCS is in their second year of “Investigations,” a hands-on, inquiry based math program for grades K-5. The results that they are experiencing have been positive and significant in regards to student achievement data and the readiness skills with which students are entering the next grade.

OCS is also in the process of revising their ELA Units of Study to incorporate Readers and Writers Workshop models, embed a K – 8 “Word Study” program, and further integrate social studies content.

In the area of science, teachers are receiving training on the Next Generation Practice

Standards (NGSS) in preparation for rolling out a new science curriculum beginning next year.

Oxford Center’s special education and early intervention staff continue to identify and implement best-practice programs for students requiring additional support in ELA and math. The data provided by the progress monitoring tools contained within these programs gives them the ability to determine if adequate progress is being made or whether adjustments are needed for each child’s academic support plan.

Oxford Center School will be participating in “Start with Hello Week” during the week of February 6 – 10. “Start with Hello” is a prevention program that teaches children and teens how to be more socially inclusive and connected to one another. Fostering inclusion and a sense of community are



important life skills and are easy to implement on a daily basis. There is no age limit for reaching out and helping others! Oxford Center's "Start with Hello Week" activities will be followed up with a full-scale roll-out to students of our Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) initiative later in February.

Great Oak Middle School Service Projects

6th Grade:

Sixth grade social studies classes created blankets and dog beds for shelter dogs as part of their community service projects. The outpouring of help from



parents and grandparents was truly amazing and gave everyone a chance to learn from each other as well as join together for a great cause.

Students donated 40 blankets to Companion Pet Rescue

(CPR) that were made with love and care, as well as raise awareness about animal rescue.

7th Grade:

The seventh-grade Green Team worked on a Homeless Project in WIT to develop an understanding that not everyone is as fortunate. The idea was introduced through a movie about a homeless woman who desperately tried to take care of her daughter on the streets.

The students discussed circumstances that put people in very difficult financial situations that often lead to homelessness. They wrote emotional poems about how appreciative they are for the warmth and security of their own homes. The students proceeded to bring in all sorts of items to fill gifts bags for a homeless shelter.



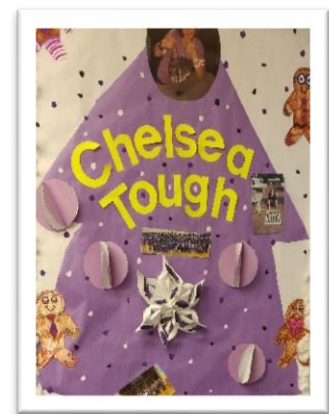
Parents and teachers outside the seventh grade also got involved when they heard

about the project. The children worked diligently decorating bags and making cards to give to the homeless during the holiday season.

They filled 100 gift bags for the Columbus House in New Haven. Great Oak Middle School is so proud of our students for bringing some joy into the lives of others less fortunate.

8th Grade:

The eighth-grade class officers sold hot chocolate and sponsored a classroom door decorating contest to support the Valley Veterans Family Support Program (VVFSP). The program helps veterans returning from active duty readjust to life in Connecticut.



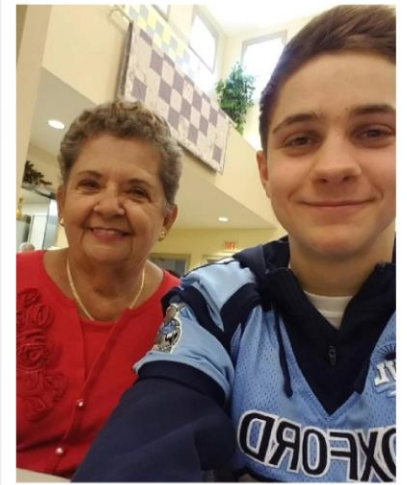
The eighth-grade class officers raised over \$100 and were able to speak with a member of the VVFSP who visited Great Oak Middle School to thank the students for their donations, as well as discuss

the issues some service men and women have when returning from active duty.

Oxford High School: In Pictures



OHS Connections Students at The Spooner House



OHS Football Team Visit to Oxford Senior Center



OHS Unified Sports Team



Save-A-Life



OHS State Diving Championship



Live at the LMC



Mr. Oxford High School Winner 2016-2017



Poetry Out Loud Winners 2016-2017

Curriculum Coordinator News

A message from Silvia Ouellette

I am so excited to have joined Oxford Public Schools as the curriculum coordinator on September 19, 2016. The superintendent, parents, staff, students, and board of education members have all been very welcoming. We have been off and running with great curriculum work since day one!

Highlighted work from the first half of the year includes: Working with teachers K-12 to transition to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), being accepted into a STEM grant with neighboring districts for 2017-2018, piloting a new math intervention program with our elementary students, being awarded a grant to allow two of our teachers to be trained in teaching computer science, adding new ECE and senior elective courses, launching an afterschool STEM club

program, bringing Writer's Workshop training to our K-8 teachers, and engaging in meaningful curriculum revision and audit work for grades K-12!

Make sure to take a look at the curriculum and instruction page on the district webpage for more information on curriculum happenings in the district!

http://oxfordpublicschools.org/curriculum_and_instruction



Silvia Ouellette

*Curriculum Coordinator
Oxford Public Schools
@Silvia Ouellette*



Oxford Public Schools educates, prepares, & inspires all students to reach their full potential as lifelong learners, responsible thinkers, & productive contributors to our global society

Superintendent Ana V. Ortiz

Oxford Public Schools
1 Great Hill Road, Oxford, CT 06478
(203)888-7754