

2022-2027

Ottawa Hills Local Schools Strategic Plan

A Community-Driven Commitment
to **Guide the Future of Our Schools**



Our Journey to Unparalleled Academic Excellence

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A plan by and for Ottawa Hills

Ottawa Hills Local Schools has been consistently rated one of the top districts in Ohio and the nation. Our district has many diverse strengths: a student body with an amazing breadth of talents and interests; a dedicated, innovative faculty, staff, and district leadership; highly engaged parents; and a community that is deeply invested in its success.

Yet, over the past five years, rapid changes, both global and local, have shifted the landscape of education, altering and expanding the skills our students need for success. The workforce is more globally connected than ever, and technology and a pandemic are transforming job markets. The Village has also changed, with a 15 percent increase in enrollment and an increasingly diverse and international student body that has more nuanced educational needs.

These changes have necessitated a broadening of the district's priorities. In this new Five-Year Strategic Plan, we lay out the mission, core values, and Focus Areas that will serve as a new roadmap for building on the tradition of excellence: "Nurture a Joyful Pursuit of Learning," "Create a Lifelong Sense of Belonging," "Support a Comprehensive Approach to Modernization," and "Leverage Partnerships for Transformative Experiences."

To develop this plan, the district departed from previous practices, initiating an inclusive, grassroots process led by three Village parents. The planning committee included community members and alumni, faculty and staff, district leaders, and students. Through the fall of 2021, the committee worked with hundreds of stakeholders, drawing input through targeted surveys (in six languages), "brainstorming sessions" in our neighbors' backyards, and many in-person and virtual meetings.

We collected an impressive amount of incredibly valuable feedback on both the strengths and challenges within the district—feedback which directly informed the strategic Focus Areas.

We believe the plan you will read on the following pages represents a bold new vision that amplifies many of the district's traditional strengths, challenges us to adapt and modernize, and reflects best practices from current education research.

Working together we can ensure the success of this plan, that each student in the district is nurtured and supported so they thrive, find and pursue their passions, and reach their full potential. It has been our privilege to lead this effort and to introduce the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan.

As always ... Go Green Bears !

Rupali Chandar, Chelsey Gupta, and Katie Talbott
Co-Chairs, Strategic Plan Community Committee

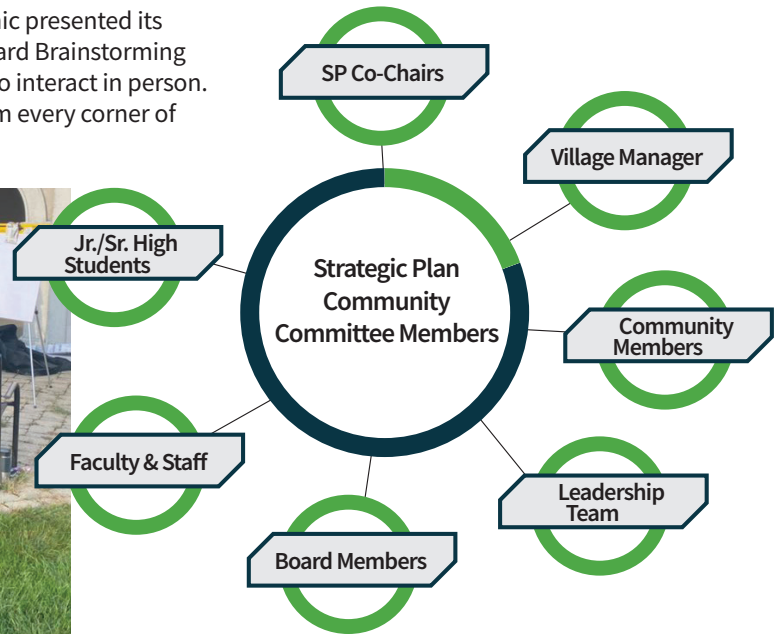
From left: Katie Talbott, Chelsey Gupta,
and Dr. Rupali Chandar



A Grassroots Process

Running a strategic planning process in the middle of a pandemic presented its share of obstacles. But the committee met the challenge. Its Backyard Brainstorming Sessions practiced social distancing and gave neighbors a chance to interact in person.

The Committee was structured to ensure voices were heard from every corner of the academic and Village communities.



**LAYING THE
GROUNDWORK**

**JUNE-AUGUST
2021**

**DATA COLLECTION
& COMMUNITY
INPUT**

**SEPTEMBER-
OCTOBER 2021**

**DATA SYNTHESIS,
PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

**OCTOBER 2021-
JANUARY 2022**

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED!

On behalf of the Board of Education, the district is excited to receive and implement this new Five-Year Strategic Plan. As the co-chairs noted, its strength is rooted in how it was constructed: by Villagers, for Villagers.

I want to publicly thank them and all the committee members for their time and talents. The district is entering a period of unmatched growth, energy, and opportunity. And this plan, so passionately and strategically created, will guide and fuel our ambitions for the years ahead.

Lastly, I want to thank Kalen Stanton, managing director at Root Inc., and Brad LaClair, associate vice president in ProMedica's Strategic Planning Division, for their expert guidance and contributions during the planning process.



Adam Fineske

Superintendent Dr. Adam Fineske
 afineske@ohschools.org

MISSION



In partnership with our community, Ottawa Hills Local Schools will inspire, challenge, and support each student to realize their unique and full potential; to embrace the joy of learning as a lifelong process; and to become an empathetic, responsible citizen.

VALUES



Adaptability, Collaboration, Creativity, Diversity, Empathy, Equity, Excellence, Innovation, Leadership, Tradition

The 4 Focus Areas

Four unified areas will guide our focus, goals, and actions in the coming five years. These Focus Areas represent the intention and vision for the future as defined by our community, faculty, staff, and students.

Our Mission will be fulfilled by focusing on these four strategic Focus Areas.



GOALS

Each Focus Area includes tangible Goals that define and specify our intention.



ACTIONS

Each Goal will be supported by specific Actions. Over time, we will achieve, add, or adapt these Actions to advance our Strategic Plan and respond to changing needs.

Nurture a Joyful Pursuit of Learning

Focusing on the act of learning as a joyful process allows the unique potential of each stakeholder to contribute to the tradition of academic excellence.



Create a Lifelong Sense of Belonging

Instilling self-confidence and empathy will create an inclusive school culture where each person feels celebrated and where ideas can be considered and debated respectfully.



Leverage Partnerships for Transformative Experiences

Collaborating at every level of the community expands opportunities, enhances student preparedness, and offers diverse roadmaps to successful futures.

Support a Comprehensive Approach to Modernization

Coordinating our use of space, time, finances, and technology will maximize our educational effectiveness, efficiency, and level of innovation.

Nurture a Joyful Pursuit of Learning

Focusing on the act of learning as a joyful process allows the unique potential of each stakeholder to contribute to the tradition of academic excellence.

Goals

- **Develop the Whole Child:** Deliver well-rounded content/curriculum that balances academics, social-emotional learning, and critical thinking skills.
- **Strengthen Academic Supports:** Fully implement a multi-tiered system with intention to support every student through a range of needs from intervention to enrichment.
- **Personalize Learning:** Pursue innovative ways to encourage and promote the exploration and learning for which individuals express a passion and drive.
- **Preserve Academic Excellence:** Remain among the top-performing school districts across a balance of educational benchmarks, including the preparation for successful post-secondary opportunities.

Action Items

- Continue our efforts to provide support based on best practices for students who have early literacy challenges and/or dyslexia.
- Invest in intervention programming at every level of student ability.
- Define and authentically integrate age- and grade-level appropriate project-based learning*.
- Identify robust and diverse ways to measure performance, beyond just test scores.



Create a Lifelong Sense of Belonging

Instilling self-confidence and empathy will create an inclusive school culture where each person feels celebrated and where ideas can be considered and debated respectfully.

Goals

- **Champion a Safe Place:** Nurture a school culture in which preventing bullying, promoting responsible digital citizenship, and instilling self-confidence and mutual respect are the expectations.
- **Foster Positive Connections:** Invest in a culture that is welcoming to all, where each student, staff, and family feels safe to express themselves and learn from others.
- **Develop an Equity Blueprint:** Implement a comprehensive, district-wide plan including hiring, training, and curriculum analysis to create an equitable and inclusive culture.

Action Items

- Provide mentors for new students and families and connect them with school and community support groups and other resources.
- Expand resources in support of English Learners* and their families, including making school communications accessible in multiple languages.
- Review and improve each step of the hiring and mentoring process to achieve a more diverse faculty and staff that reflects our student body.
- Support activities and programming that use restorative justice practices* to promote belonging and encourage better understanding and appreciation of individual differences.
- Assess curricula and instructional practices to focus on global cultural literacy.
- Continue our commitment to partnering with the Positive Coaching Alliance* to ensure athletic programs contribute to an inclusive culture.



* Definitions can be found in the glossary on page 11.

Support a Comprehensive Approach to Modernization

Coordinating our use of space, time, finances, and technology will maximize our educational effectiveness, efficiency, and level of innovation.

Goals

- **Practice Fiscal Responsibility:** Maintain fiscal integrity and transparency in future financial requests to the community.
- **Enhance Communications:** Continue to regularly inform and solicit feedback from district stakeholders.
- **Reimagine Space:** Examine and modernize spaces to maximize personalized learning.
- **Optimize Time:** Streamline procedures and align events, activities, and school calendars to efficiently carry out the district's mission.
- **Leverage Technology:** Integrate and use current and future technologies to full capacity.
- **Anticipate Growth:** Explore and plan for campus and building expansion to accommodate growth and evolving academic needs.
- **Promote Equity:** Ensure that equipment, technologies, and physical structures are accessible to all.

Action Items

- Fully align Multi-Tiered Systems of Support* (MTSS) components and integrate ongoing district efforts.
- Complete a facilities audit and prioritize existing needs in terms of space, equipment, and ADA compliance.
- Complete a time audit and set balanced priorities for scheduling instruction and collaboration.
- Provide an annual "State of the District" report to school and community stakeholders.
- Explore alternative funding sources to support district initiatives.
- Fully integrate technology and operations at both Foundries into the curriculum by 2023-2024.



Leverage Partnerships for Transformative Experiences

Collaborating at every level of the community expands opportunities, enhances student preparedness, and offers diverse roadmaps to successful futures.

Goals

- **Collaborate Within the District:** Increase opportunities for students and faculty to collaborate within and between the buildings and grade levels.
- **Collaborate Beyond the District:** Identify local, statewide, national, and global connections for potential collaboration.
- **Increase Global Competence:** Seek additional opportunities to develop adaptability, confidence, and resilience.
- **Expand Service Learning:** Organize opportunities for students to learn from and benefit the community.

Action Items

- Build in more time for faculty and staff to collaborate with one another.
- Plan more events where students have access to alumni and community members.
- Integrate new and existing programming into the Foundries*, science labs, art wings, and makerspaces.
- Increase internship opportunities to provide students insight into potential careers or fields of study.
- Plan local day exchanges* for students and faculty.
- Increase opportunities for students to have educational experiences beyond Ottawa Hills (e.g. Agora, Service Learning In Kenya (SLIK), 6th Grade Camp, Home to Home*, etc.).
- Explore the implementation of service-learning* requirements.



* Definitions can be found in the glossary on page 11.

Data Collection

"We collected an impressive amount of incredibly valuable feedback on both the strengths and challenges within the district—feedback which directly informed the strategic Focus Areas."

- » Meetings with faculty and staff at departmental and building levels
- » Meetings with students at the Junior/Senior High School
- » Five in-person Backyard Brainstorming Sessions hosted by committee members and one online session
- » Solicited feedback from parent-support and community groups
- » Online surveys of faculty and staff, parents and Villagers, alumni of the past 10 years, and students

BY THE NUMBERS

86 Attendance at in-person and online brainstorming sessions

Survey respondents:

52 Alumni

345 Community members

49 Faculty and staff

476 Students in grades 7-12

Top 3 academic priorities



Survey results:

Student-to-teacher ratio

Math and reading proficiency levels

Diversity of course offerings



Respondents chose from multiple options

Top 3 priorities for the next 5 years



Survey results:

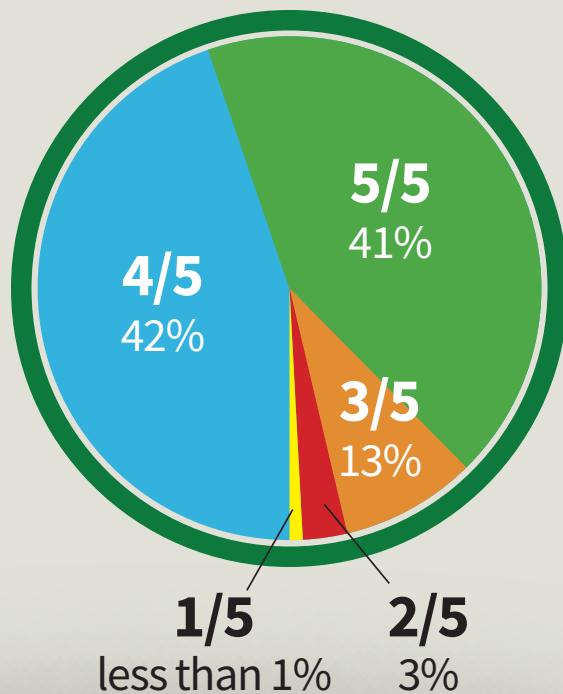
1. Preparing students for post-secondary options (e.g. college, trade school)
2. A school culture that is diverse, inclusive, and welcoming
3. (Tie) Academic support services and cultivating future leaders

“I like the district’s acceptance of all people, and that everyone is open to new ideas.”

“I like the amazing education we get and how much the teachers care about their students.”

Overall satisfaction with the current state of Ottawa Hills Local Schools

Based on 1-5 scale, 5 being the highest



GLOSSARY

English Learners: Students who are identified using state-defined parameters as needing additional instructional support because their first language is not English.

Exchanges: Whether across town or the other side of the planet, exchanges provide students and faculty with opportunities to learn about the world around them from peers. Exchanges provide a forum for sharing and discovering cultural and social differences at both the individual and community level.

Foundries: The student-inspired name (The Foundry) of the new destination that combines a range of current and future academic and support services inside the Junior/Senior High School. The Little Foundry is a companion instructional environment at the Elementary School that supports students’ interest in STEAM activities.

Home to Home: Launched in November 2020, the Home to Home program connects students at Ottawa Hills High School with peers from Scott High School (Toledo Public Schools) in order to help each learn more about the other by bridging differences and building a common future.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS): A data-driven, problem-solving framework to improve outcomes for students. It uses three tiers of intervention across academic, social-emotional, and behavior systems to help teachers work together to help students.

Positive Coaching Alliance: A national nonprofit organization that provides online tools, courses, and workshops to assist in giving youth athletes a positive, character-building sports experience.

Project-Based Learning: A teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge.

Restorative Justice Practices: A set of approaches that address disciplinary infractions through mediation. Offenders learn to take responsibility and make restitution with those they have harmed or offended.

Service-learning: A teaching and learning strategy that connects academic curriculum to community problem-solving.

STATE OF THE DISTRICT

Academic Success

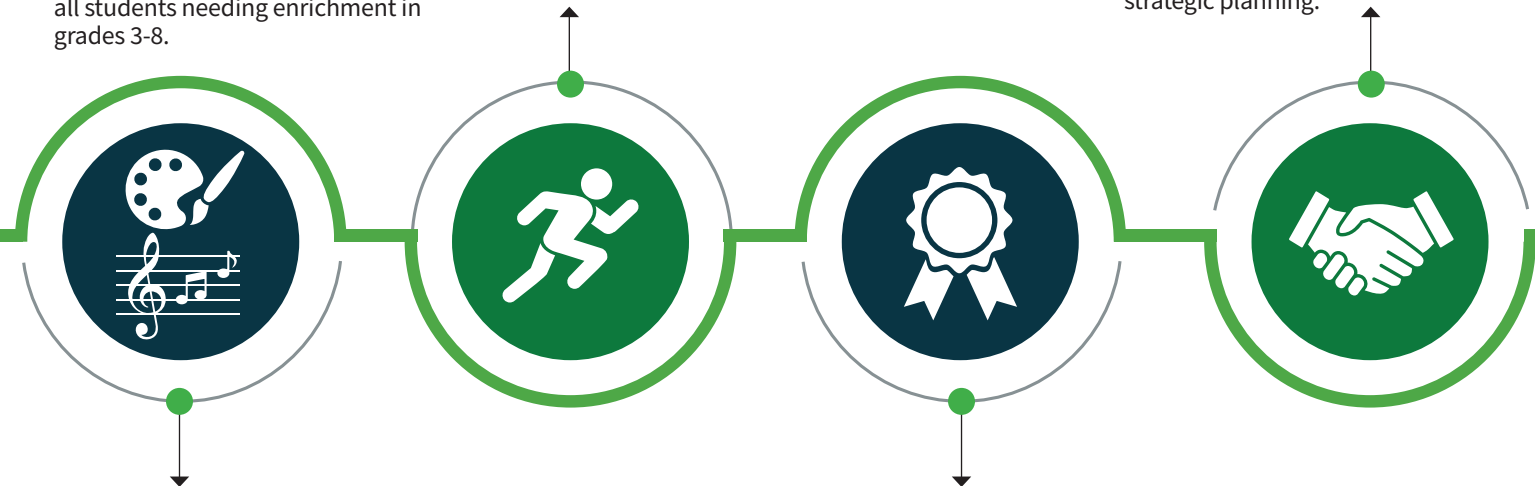
- Maintained small class sizes even as enrollment grew.
- Established a Summer Learning Program in collaboration with the Ottawa Hills Schools Parent Association and Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation in response to pandemic.
- Enhanced the Advanced Placement program with two additional courses; added a course in American Sign Language.
- Began three-year rollout of new Elementary School math curriculum (Math in Focus).
- Redesigned Junior/High School reading efforts in response to improved assessment of student need.
- Completed six-year transition to a more inclusive gifted education program, serving all students needing enrichment in grades 3-8.

Athletics

- New turf, track, and lighting installed at Niedermeier Stadium.
- Successful fundraising campaign leading to the opening of The Kadens Family Fitness Center.
- Expanded varsity sports (gymnastics and swimming), continued to offer the largest number of sports in the Toledo Area Athletic Conference.
- Began a three-year commitment with the Positive Coaching Alliance to help coaches, parents, and student athletes.
- Four-time consecutive winner of the TAAC All-Sports Trophy for most successful program.

Community Engagement & Partnerships

- Multiple community-led initiatives (two levy campaigns, Strategic Plan, Coronavirus Response Team, The Foundry Design Team).
- Strengthened working relationship with Village leadership.
- Established partnership with Scott High School via Home to Home program.
- Expanded outreach to alumni via reunions, Distinguished Alumni Awards, Athletic Hall of Fame, Alumni Video Series.
- Jointly funded population, enrollment study with the Village.
- Partnerships with This Is OH and OH Stand (community and student equity organizations) to provide professional development, contributions to strategic planning.



The Arts

- Choraliers performed on stage 14 times since 2017, including twice at Carnegie Hall (2016, 2020).
- More than 130 students in grades 5-12 played a band instrument in 2021.
- Nearly 30 percent of Junior High students played an instrument in 2021 (highest percentage in school history).
- Symphonic Band made its first-ever out-of-state performance trip (Toronto in 2020).
- Theater program continued to present three to four performances per year involving hundreds of students in grades 4-12.
- Art students shined competitively at the smART Show, the Congressional Art Competition (9th District), and the NWO Focus Show.

Awards/Accomplishments

- Overall 'A' grade for five straight years on Ohio's School Report Card.
- Three straight years as No. 1 district in Toledo area, Lucas County (Niche).
- High School ranked in Ohio's Top 5 for three consecutive years (*U.S. News & World Report*).
- Sixteen faculty and staff received The Governor's Thomas Edison Award for Excellence in STEM Education and Student Research (honored nine times in past 10 years).
- District of Recognition award from International Dyslexia Association-North.
- Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators' Hall of Fame School.

Facilities

- Districtwide improvements made/planned to climate systems at both buildings.
- Districtwide electrical upgrades to LEDs for interior lighting.
- Modernized learning spaces at the Junior/Senior High with the addition of STEAM classrooms, research labs.
- Adding intervention, classroom space at Elementary School by relocating district offices.
- Enhanced security via keyless entry system, Raptor visitor system, new curtain wall, and exterior doors at both buildings.

Here is a summary of key achievements over the past five years under the prior plan.

Fiscal Responsibility

- Prior state audits issued were “clean” audits with no findings for recovery.
- Received “Auditor of State Award” in 2019 for a clean audit.
- Voters in November 2020 approved a \$8.5 million bond issue for The Foundry, upgrades to classrooms, and HVAC improvements. The levy passed with 64 percent of votes in support.
- Voters in November 2020 approved a 4.9-mill operating levy for day-to-day expenses. The levy passed with 61 percent of votes in support.

Leadership

- Collaborative, engaged school board members who are passionate, transparent, and responsive to the community and students.
- Creation of a new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee under the Board of Education.
- Hired dynamic new teachers and administrators to enhance an already strong team.
- Continued development of student leadership capabilities via OHbreathe, OH Stand, and The Studio.



Innovation

- Implemented a live-broadcast model during pandemic to provide learning options to families.
- Re-imagined instruction and extracurricular offerings in response to the pandemic.
- Launched a new course titled “Honors Scientific Research in Partnership with ProMedica.”
- Creation of The Foundry and soon to be Little Foundry at the Elementary School to transform learning and student support.



Student Support

- Affirmed commitment to determining the individual needs of students, responding with appropriate interventions.
- Added full-time guidance counselors and a school nurse.
- Created Social-Emotional Task Force.
- Initiated the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) effort.
- Expanded students-helping-students programs (Teen PEP, GSA, Challenge Crew, OHbreathe).

2021-2022 SNAPSHOT

District data at the launch of the new Strategic Plan

21

Varsity sports (including club)

Percent of faculty with a master's degree

80

81

Number of full-time faculty

Clubs and activities at Junior/Senior High School

27

20

Average years of faculty experience

Percent of OH students at Accelerated, Advanced, or Advanced Plus levels on state tests.

65

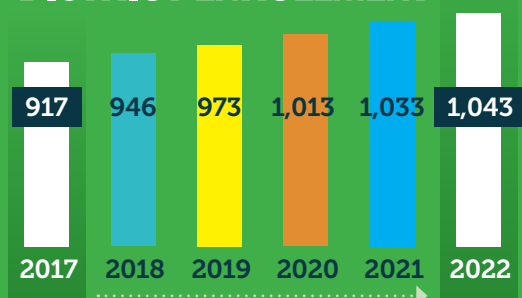
STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Total students:
1,048
 As of Dec. 22, 2021

- Asian: 147 (14%)
- Black, Non-Hispanic: 34 (3%)
- Hispanic/Latino: 34 (3%)
- Multiracial: 55 (5%)
- White, Non-Hispanic: 778 (74%)

Because of rounding, percentages do not equal 100.

DISTRICT ENROLLMENT



RESOURCES

During the strategic planning process, the committee regularly referenced several documents, including:

- The Ohio Department of Education's strategic plan titled *Each Child, Our Future* (the foundational guide for the work of the department)
- *Change by Design, How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation* by Tim Brown
- *The 2017-2022 Strategic Plan*

ONLINE RESOURCES

To view this plan and the past two district strategic plans, visit ohschools.org/strategicplan

Questions?

Contact Ottawa Hills Local Schools at info@ohschools.org

2022-2027

Ottawa Hills Local Schools Strategic Plan

A Community-Driven Commitment
to Guide the Future of Our Schools



Planning Committee

It literally took a Village to plan and create the new Five-Year Strategic Plan. Thank you to all the parents, other Villagers, students, and district employees for contributing their time and talent to the process.

Co-Chairs

Dr. Rupali Chandar, Chelsey Gupta, and Katie Talbott

Community Members

Bethany Dale, Rich Effler, Emery Geosits, Jason Huntley, Teanya Norwood-Ekwenna, Mona Parikh, John Roemer, Angie Schaal, Adrienne Shreve, Kalen Stanton, Elizabeth Weaver, and Sabrina Weaver

School Board Representatives

Kathy Lathrop and Adam Smidi

District Representatives

Dr. Adam Fineske (Superintendent)
Darrin Broadway (Dean of Secondary Teaching and Learning)
Ben McMurray (Junior/Senior High School Principal)
Kevin Merrill (Director of Communications)
Dr. Bill Miller (Director of Curriculum and Instruction)
Brooks Spiess (Technology Coordinator)

Village of Ottawa Hills

John Wenzlick, Village of Ottawa Hills Village Manager and Chief of Police

Students

Via Bridges (9th Grade), Nina Clark (8th Grade), Nash Malczewski (10th Grade), Abby Pommeranz (9th Grade), and Elliot Schaal (8th Grade)

Faculty & Staff

Stephen Bobak, Joan Keckler, Jonathon Siebenaler, Nikki Tolliver, and Tori Norman



MISSION

In partnership with our community, Ottawa Hills Local Schools will inspire, challenge, and support each student to realize their unique and full potential; to embrace the joy of learning as a lifelong process; and to become an empathetic, responsible citizen.



Ottawa Hills
 Local Schools

Defined by excellence. Supported by tradition.



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Superintendent Dr. Adam Fineske