

Community Newsletter

September 2024

GREETINGS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Community Members,

As we start the new school year, I want to take a moment to express my excitement and gratitude to our dedicated students, families, and staff. This month marks the beginning of what promises to be an inspiring and productive year for our entire school district. A few key updates:

Middle & High School Renovations: We are now roughly at the halfway point of renovations at each site. Much work went into preparing the buildings for the start of the year. The high school work shifts from renovation of math and science rooms to the exterior of the building. You will notice there is no longer access to the southeast parking lot off of Wilson Street as we begin the expansion of the tech ed and music areas. At the middle school, both 6th and 7th grade are in their new classroom spaces. We hope to move 8th grade to their new space later this school year.

Welcome New Staff: We are thrilled to welcome several new members to our team. Each brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm that will enrich our students' learning!

Continuous Improvement: This year marks the third year of implementation of our strategic plan. We are very pleased how this plan has focused attention on our greatest areas of need with concrete goals for improvement. You can learn more about the plan on our website: onalaskaschools.com

Safety and Wellness: The health and safety of our students and staff remains a top priority. This past summer, employees from Onalaska participated in an exercise to learn more about the Standard Response Protocol, which went into effect here at the School District of Onalaska. As part of the implementation, staff received training, communication went to families, and we've updated our safety drills to also follow this protocol. There is more information on this change later on in this newsletter.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our schools. Together, we can make this school year one of growth, achievement, and positive change. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

With regards,



Todd L. Antony
Superintendent
608-781-9700
antto@onalaskaschools.com

OUR MISSION

Working together to ensure high levels of learning for all

OUR VISION

A model school district in service of students, staff, and community



DISTRICT CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

Two sizable projects within the School District of Onalaska were made possible thanks to a $75 million referendum passed in 2022. Approximately $50 million was designated for Onalaska Middle School while the remaining $25 million was allocated for renovations at Onalaska High School. Both projects are still in-progress with total completion expected in late summer and early fall 2025. You can see the specific updates and their status below. A big thank you to our taxpayers for your investment in our schools! These improvements will have a large impact on our students, district, and community success moving forward!



Onalaska Middle School
Completed:

- 6th and 7th grade pods addition
- Outdoor artificial turf area
- New roadway for family pick up and drop off
- New district copy center

In progress:

- 8th grade pod addition
- Co-curricular addition including art, tech ed, and music
- Building main entrance and administrative offices
- New gymnasium and library
- Boys & Girls Club of Greater La Crosse partnered space



Onalaska High School
Completed:

- Math and science lower level classrooms
- South parking lot

In progress:

- Tech ed expansion and renovation
- Music expansion and dance area renovations
- New fieldhouse bleachers
- Additional storage for physical education and athletics
- New elevator
- Updated flooring throughout lower level
- Bathroom and locker room updates

For construction project updates, visit onalaskaschools.com/district/building-updates

NEWS FROM AROUND THE DISTRICT

Northern Hills Elementary Recipient of Generous Donation
Northern Hills was the recipient of a $15,000 donation from Dahl Subaru and the "Subaru Loves Learning" Campaign. Approximately $12,500 will be allotted for teachers to purchase school supplies with the remaining funds to be used for general school needs. On top of the donation, representatives from Dahl Subaru stopped by the school to deliver school supply kits to teachers and students (pictured). Thank you for your support!





ONAbility Creates Class Shirts for Eagle Bluff Kindergarten
Last year, Eagle Bluff Elementary recognized the need to replace their kindergarten classroom shirts. They called the crew at ONAbility, a School District of Onalaska program that helps students with varying abilities transition from high school into adult employment and independent living. ONAbility students set up a business meeting, took Eagle Bluff's order, sent an invoice, and got to work to make sure the shirts were ready ahead of the new school year. They visited Eagle Bluff during the first week of school to see their finished product in action (pictured). To learn more about the ONAbility program: onalaskaschools.com/families/ONAbility

David Limberg inducted into Wall of Excellence
The Onalaska High School Alumni Association and the School District of Onalaska are proud to announce the 2024 Wall of Excellence inductee is David Limberg, Onalaska High School Class of 1986 and West Point Class of 1992.

David learned from his father that it is: "Better to aim high and miss than to aim low and hit." He took that mantra and applied it throughout his life from inside the walls of Onalaska High School as a student to his nine years as an officer in the U.S. Army to his decades-long career as a leader within Target Corporation. David has also spent an immense amount of time giving back including volunteering, taking part in community boards, and assisting students interested in attending service academies.

An induction ceremony was held in September (pictured). To watch the ceremony and for more information on the Wall of Excellence: onalaskaalumni.com/wall-of-excellence





School District adopts Standard Response Protocol
The "I Love U Guys" Foundation's Standard Response Protocol, abbreviated SRP, is an all-encompassing action and communication response system for safety situations that may arise at schools such as medical emergencies, threats, and severe weather. Area partners are familiar with SRP, including various nearby school districts and first responders - giving the School District of Onalaska the ability to collaborate and support one another if necessary. This is not a significant change from past protocol, rather enhancing clear and standardized communication with a more trauma informed approach. For more information on SRP: onalaskaschools.com/families/school-safety

STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

Q & A with Dr. Ben Burns, Onalaska Middle School Principal







When did you start with the district and where were you before?
I started in July 2024. Before coming to Onalaska, I was a high school administrator in Colorado for two years. Prior to that, I was at Hamilton/SOTA 1 in La Crosse for four years and spent a couple years in Sun Prairie. I also worked as a school psych for seven years between Tomah and La Crosse.

Where did you get your degree(s)?
- Bachelor's in Psychology, UW-Madison
- Master's in Education, UW-La Crosse
- Educational Specialist in School Psychology, UW-La Crosse
- PhD in Educational Leadership, UW-Madison

Where are you from originally?
Hudson, WI. All of my family lives in and around the twin cities, so that's essentially where I grew up, BUT I want to be on the record that I am a Packers fan.

How did you get your start in education?
I actually started in the school of engineering, but eventually decided I wanted to work in public schools supporting our next generation. I randomly went to a presentation on school psychology, and given my engineering background, it seemed like a good fit. After several years as a school psych, I decided to go back to school for my admin license because I wanted to have a broader impact.

What are you most excited for this year at OMS?
There is so much to be excited about this year with the construction and all the changes that come along with that but I think I would say the opportunity to meet new people and establish new relationships.

What do you enjoy outside of school?
We're a big sports family, especially football and basketball. Really anything outdoors is time well spent.

Join our team!
Visit onalaskaschools.com/jobs for our latest list of job openings!

GET INVOLVED

Athletics Season Passes

Hey all you Hilltopper sports fans! GoFan All Sports Passes are now for sale! These passes get you into any Onalaska High School non-playoff event for the 2024-25 school year. If you're planning to attend multiple events across multiple sports, this is perfect for you! Use the QR code to visit GoFan and purchase your pass today!

New this year: All fans ages 62 and over get into regular season Mississippi Valley Conference events for FREE!



Child Find: Early Childhood Screening

Do you have a 3, 4 or 5 year old?

Join our FREE early childhood event including a variety of fun activities, free resources and a play based developmental screening!



Remaining 2024-25 School Year Screening Dates:

October 17, 2024: 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. at Eagle Bluff (during family-teacher conferences)
January 24, 2025: 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at Eagle Bluff
March 13, 2025: 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at Eagle Bluff (during family-teacher conferences)

Screening Details:

The screening is designed to provide an overall developmental review to any child between the ages of three and five years old living in the School District of Onalaska boundary. Specialists in the early childhood field will be available to address any questions or concerns raised by parents.

You must schedule an appointment in order to attend. For questions and to schedule your appointment, visit: onalaskaschools.com/departments/student-services/child-find

---

District Calendar

Looking to come to the next game? In need of a good Hilltopper Marching Band performance? Unsure when there's no school? Use the QR code to view our calendar of events from around the district!

DONATIONS

The district received the donations listed below from February - September 2024. These dollars allow us to continue providing the best experience for our students. We are very grateful for this community!

- $2,427 from Office Depot for school supplies for Northern Hills Elementary
- $100,000 from an anonymous donor for the middle school solar project
- $250 from Community Credit Union for the school nutrition lunch fund
- Fidget boxes from Community Credit Union for the middle school
- Flatware from various community members to be used in the school cafeterias
- $150 in gift cards from an anonymous donor to Target, Walmart and Woodmans for the ML Family Engagement Event
- $25 gift card from Kwik Trip for the ML Family Engagement Event
- $10,000 from the Eagle Bluff Elementary PTO for playground equipment at Eagle Bluff
- $400 from Mary Cody's Restaurant for the food pantry
- $125 in books from the American Kennel Club for the Irving Pertzsch LMC
- $1,250 from the Harold E. Lemke Fund of the La Crosse Community Foundation for L Screens and batting helmets for OHS baseball
- $1,500 from the La Crosse Autism Foundation for the special education program
- $534 from the La Crosse Autism Foundation for a printer for ONAbility small business
- $350 from the Jonathan Wondra family toward the 5th grade trip to the Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center trip
- $40 from Mark & Cindy Cassellius for student needs, in memory of John Dudley
- $3,000 from the Onalaska Enhancement Foundation for the district food pantry
- $500 from the UW-La Crosse Cooperating Teacher Grant for books for the Officiating and Coaching class at Onalaska High School
- $375 from the UW-La Crosse Cooperating Teacher Grant for books and literacy materials for the music program at Eagle Bluff Elementary
- $782 from 2Brothers Powersports for the district food pantry
- $250 from Supriya Daithankar for any student needs
- $5,500 from the Onalaska Band Boosters for the purchase of a vibraphone for the Onalaska High School Band Department
- $1,596 from Beer by Bike Brigade for meal account deficits
- $1,520 from Jim's Grocery Bag/Schroeder Fund of the La Crosse Community Foundation for food for students in need
- $8,000 from the Tom & Trudy Kennedy Endowment Fund/Tom's Grocery Bag of the La Crosse Community Foundation for food for students in need
- $13,995 from the Onalaska Band Boosters for drumline equipment for the high school band
- $1,000 from Robert George for the Irving Pertzsch Elementary ML program
- $795 from Altra Federal Credit Union for Onalaska High School student activities
- School supplies from 3 Amigos Apartments
- $5,000 from Burlington Store 'Adopt a Classroom' for classroom supplies for Irving Pertzsch Elementary
- $250 and school supplies from Sue Soltau and Tom Hansen for student needs
- $70 from the Eagle Bluff first grade teachers in memory of Mary Saner for the district food pantry
- Approx. $147,100 from the Onalaska Athletic Booster Club to support athletics for the 2024-25 school year
- Approx. $23,000 from the Onalaska Band Boosters to support the Onalaska band programs in the 2024-25 school year
- Approx. $44,000 from the Choir Parent Support Group to support the Onalaska High School choral program in the 2024-25 school year
- Support from the various PTOs (Parent Teacher Organizations) in the School District of Onalaska

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

STAYING INFORMED

Board of Education Meeting Schedule

Board of Education meetings are held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the Board of Education Room at the District Office, 237 2nd Ave S.

Regular meetings are streamed, archived, and made available to the public. For more information on our board or to view past meetings: onalaskaschools.com/school-board

---

Annual Notices

We want you to be informed of important policies and procedures impacting student and employee safety, responsibilities and rights. Annual notices can be found on our website: onalaskaschools.com/district/annual-notices

If you do not have internet access, you can request a written copy by contacting the Superintendent in writing at the district's address, 237 2nd Ave S.











Follow us on social media!

/schooldistrictofonalaska @onalaskaschools School District of Onalaska

School District of Onalaska
237 2nd Ave S
Onalaska, WI 54650

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

President	Ann Garrity	garan@onalaskaschools.com
Vice President	Aaron McDonald	mcdaa@onalaskaschools.com
Clerk	Brian Haefs	haebr@onalaskaschools.com
Treasurer	Shawn McAlister	mcash@onalaskaschools.com
Director	Mark Cassellius	casma@onalaskaschools.com
Director	Erik Archer	arcer@onalaskaschools.com
Director	Tracy Laufenberg	lautr@onalaskaschools.com

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent	Todd Antony	antto@onalaskaschools.com
Director of Finance	Janet Rosseter	rosja@onalaskaschools.com
Director of Instructional Services	Fayme Evenson	evefa@onalaskaschools.com
Director of Student Services	Laurie Enos	enola@onalaskaschools.com
Director of Human Resources	Sonya Ganther	ganso@onalaskaschools.com

Sign up to receive this newsletter and other community updates via email!

Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Educational Opportunity

The School Board is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students in the District. The Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, martial status, parental status, sexual orientation, sex, (including transgender status, change of sex or gender identity), or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability ("Protected Classes") in any of its student program and activities. Please refer to Policy 2260 - Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Educational Opportunity for further information.

Employment Nondiscrimination

The School District of Onalaska is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against applicants on the basis of age, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation, disability, citizenship status, marital status, pregnancy, national origin, handicap, creed, color, political affiliation, genetic information, ancestry, arrest or conviction record, or military service. The District encourages applications from all segments of the population.