



# Community Newsletter

Winter 2024-25

## SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE

The School District of Onalaska Board of Education approved former district administrators Fran Finco and Roger Fruit to serve in part-time capacities as the District's interim superintendents.

Finco was with the District for 27 years and was the superintendent from 2011-2019 before retiring. He also has experience as the principal of Onalaska Middle School as well as the Director of Instruction. Fruit started with the District in 1999 and served as the principal at Northern Hills Elementary and Onalaska Middle School before becoming the Director of Instruction in 2011. He also retired in 2019.

"We are excited to welcome back Fran and Roger," said board president Ann Garrity. "With their familiarity with our schools, staff, and community, we couldn't think of a better team to lead us through our ongoing major projects and initiatives throughout the District."

Finco and Fruit began their new roles in December and will remain with the District for the 2024-25 school year.



Fran Finco

Roger Fruit

### → the superintendent search

The Board of Education is actively searching for the next superintendent of our District and has retained the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) to assist with the search.

#### Timeline

- Application window is from January 17, 2025 - February 14, 2025
- First round of interviews will occur on February 25 and 26, 2025
- Final round of interviews will occur on March 6, 2025 and include a community open forum
- Start date of the new superintendent is July 1, 2025

For more information, including timely updates, visit: [onalaskaschools.com/district/superintendent-search](https://onalaskaschools.com/district/superintendent-search)

# School District Budget

## How local municipalities contribute to the operation of our District

By Janet Rosseter, Director of Finance & Business Services

This is the time of year when property owners are receiving their tax bills. Since the School District of Onalaska spans five different municipalities, you might wonder how each municipality contributes to the District’s annual budget.

The table below shows the percent of equalized property value for each municipality within the District’s boundaries, and how the 2024-25 tax levy is apportioned to each municipality’s property value. This year’s total levy represents a 3% increase over 2023-24.

The total District annual operating budget is approximately \$53 million. The funding sources come from: local taxes - \$25.6M, State Equalized Aid - \$16.8M, and \$10.6M in other local, state, and federal sources.

Thank you for your support of the School District of Onalaska. We do our best to ensure that your investment in our schools is managed wisely.

Have questions? Visit the Finance and Business Services webpage or contact Janet at [rosja@onalaskaschools.com](mailto:rosja@onalaskaschools.com) or 608.781.9700.

Municipality	% of District's Equalized Value	2024-25 Share of Levy
City of Onalaska	92.13%	\$23,554,662
Town of Onalaska	4.12%	\$1,053,165
Town of Medary	1.85%	\$471,887
City of La Crosse	1.69%	\$432,918
Town of Hamilton	0.21%	\$53,673
Total	100.00%	\$25,566,305

## 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](https://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](https://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., Onalaska, WI 54650



## District Construction Update

The middle and high school building projects continue to progress. If you have ridden down Quincy or Wilson Streets, you can see noticeable changes on a weekly basis. At OMS, the main entrance, administrative offices, and new gymnasium are now complete. Classroom area build outs and interior remodeling continues. The current areas of focus at OHS are the tech ed and music learning spaces. The completion target date for both projects is September 2025. We are forever grateful for the community support of our schools. You have made a long-term investment in the learning of our students.



Middle School Commons and Entrance



Middle School Library



High School Fieldhouse

### Onalaska Middle School

Completed:

- **Building main entrance and administrative offices\***
- **New gymnasium and library\***
- New cafeteria and commons area
- 6th and 7th grade pods addition
- Outdoor artificial turf area
- New roadway for family pick up and drop off

In progress:

- 8th grade pod addition
- Co-curricular addition including art, tech ed, and music
- Boys & Girls Club of Greater La Crosse partnered space

**\*= New update**

### Onalaska High School

Completed:

- **New fieldhouse bleachers\***
- Math and science lower level classrooms
- South parking lot

In progress:

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

For timely construction project updates, visit [onalaskaschools.com/district/building-updates](https://onalaskaschools.com/district/building-updates)

# NEWS FROM AROUND THE DISTRICT

## District Receives 4-Star “Exceeds Expectations” Rating

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction released the latest report cards for school districts across the state in November. As part of the state’s accountability system, these report cards celebrate our schools’ successes as well as highlight opportunities for improvement.

As a district, Onalaska received a score of **71.5** which is categorized as **“Exceeds Expectations.”** Highlights include our achievement score being the same or higher than 78.2% of districts in the state along with our growth scores being the same or higher than 86.3% of districts in the state. For more, including individual school scores, scan the QR code.



## High Schooler Authors and Illustrates Children’s Book

Onalaska High School junior Aditi Muduganti wanted to teach elementary students about the importance of sustainability. Thanks to a grant through the La Crosse Youth Climate Action Fund, Aditi was able to write, illustrate, and publish her own children’s book. The book, titled “Tech Tales,” looks to teach kids on the important role they can play in the environment. After reading the book at a few elementary schools, Aditi distributed the rest of her books to the La Crosse County Public Library.

## Manny Putz set to become Wisconsin Badger

Onalaska High School senior Manny Putz signed his letter of intent to join the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His commitment was celebrated during an event at Onalaska High School in November. Manny is one of the most accomplished runners in state history. Some of his accolades include:

- Multiple WIAA D1 State Cross Country and Track and Field Championships
- High School Cross Country All-American
- 2x Wisconsin Gatorade Athlete of the Year
- Multiple Nike Cross Country and Outdoor Track and Field National Qualifier



# GOOD TO KNOW

## Open Enrollment

The Wisconsin Open Enrollment period for the 2025-26 school year is February 3 - April 30. Open Enrollment is available to any non-resident student in grades 4K - 12 and allows students to attend a public school district other than the one in which they reside. Open Enrollment does not permit attending a different boundary school within the same district. To find out more, visit the Department of Public Instruction's Public School Open Enrollment page at [dpi.wi.gov/open-enrollment](https://dpi.wi.gov/open-enrollment).

Have a child that's ready to start their early learning journey? Be on the lookout for information on our 4K and Kindergarten Camp programs for the 2025-26 school year! Visit [onalaskaschools.com/families](https://onalaskaschools.com/families) for details. More information, including registration, will be available this spring.



## Notice of School Board Elections

Onalaska School Board members are elected in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 120.06. Elections are held in April each year. There are two seats open for the April 2025 election; both are three year terms. Candidates who filed and declared for the next election are (in ballot order, left to right):

**Bridget Thomas**

**Ann Garrity (Incumbent)**

**Shawn McAlister (Incumbent)**

For more information on the board and the election process, visit [onalaskaschools.com/school-board](https://onalaskaschools.com/school-board).



## District and Ho-Chunk Support Program

The School District of Onalaska and the Ho-Chunk Department of Education have partnered to provide support services to students affiliated with the Ho-Chunk Nation. Ho-Chunk staff provide students and families support with academics, life skills, advocacy, and collaboration. To apply, please contact the Ho-Chunk Nation Education Department at 608.783.6025.

Looking to come to the next game? In need of a good show choir performance?  
 Unsure when there's no school? Use the QR code to view our calendar of events!



# Community Donations

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

- \$2,000 from the La Crosse Area Autism Foundation for the adapted sports league
- \$1,449 from the Onalaska Band Boosters for a sound package
- \$131.25 from Melissa Snider for Eagle Bluff Elementary
- \$100 from an anonymous donor for Eagle Bluff Elementary
- \$100 from an anonymous donor for Eagle Bluff Elementary
- School Supplies from members of Curves Onalaska
- 40 student backpacks from Morrie's Onalaska
- \$1,695 for Onalaska High School student needs in memory of Bonne Olson from friends and family of Bonne Olson
- \$5,000 from Kent Handel for a canopy for the Onalaska High School tennis teams
- \$1,000 from Syed & Mateen Abidi for STEM activities at Onalaska High School
- \$2,000 from an anonymous donor for Onalaska High School student needs
- \$100 from Chris Matuska for the district food pantry
- \$3,500 from Eileen Upton for the district lunch fund
- \$100 from Sue & Aurel Mailath for the district food pantry
- \$2,000 from Elizabeth Brock-Jones and Katharine Brock for Onalaska High School student needs in honor of Jan Brock and memory of Tom Brock
- \$500 from an anonymous donor for Onalaska High School student needs
- \$7,395 from the Northern Hills PTO for a playground shade structure
- \$100 from an anonymous donor for the district food pantry
- Groceries for 140 families from Dahl Automotive for the district holiday meal drive
- \$1,000 from an anonymous donor for the holiday meal drive
- Two weighted blankets, a pillow, and blanket cover from Joe & Carol Sherman for the special education program
- \$1,894.29 from the Office Depot School Supply Drive for supplies for Northern Hills Elementary
- Clothing for students from members of St. Patrick's Church
- \$500 from Kathryn and Paul Schams for the ONAbility Program
- Gifts valued at \$1,600 from members of Shepherd of the Hills Church for students in need
- \$5,000 from the Eagle Bluff Elementary PTO for the encore program
- New winter clothing and school supplies worth \$2,506 from Bernie Buchner for students in need
- \$3,030 in gift cards from members of St. Patrick's Church for students/families in need
- \$1,500 from DBS Group for the district food pantry
- A memorial flag holder from the Onalaska American Legion Auxiliary Post 336
- \$1,500 from Anne Farning for student needs
- \$900 From student Ellie Dahl for the district lunch fund



## New Food Pantry Location

The Onalaska Schools Food Pantry - open to all Onalaska families with children in any of the Onalaska schools (public, private and home-schooled) - has moved to its new location at Onalaska Middle School! To utilize the pantry, visit **OMS Door C** on the following dates between the hours of 3:15 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.

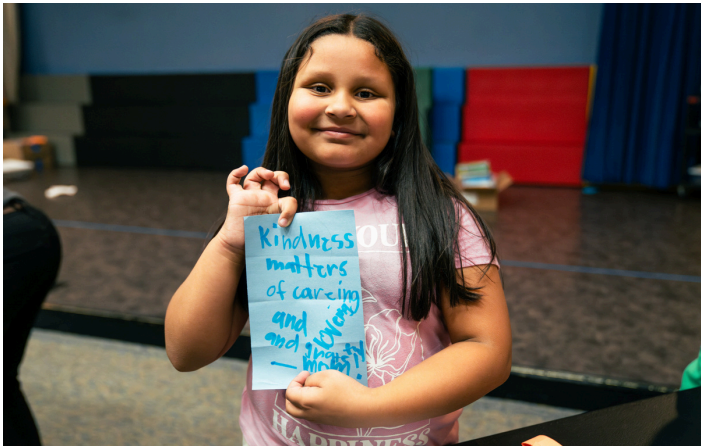
- February 3
- March 3
- April 7
- May 5
- June 2

More information: [www.onalaskaschools.com/families/food-pantry](http://www.onalaskaschools.com/families/food-pantry)

# HILLTOPPER SNAPSHOTS

follow us on social media!







**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 - District Office: 608.781.9700**

Co-Interim Superintendent	Fran Finco	finfr@onalaskaschools.com
Co-Interim Superintendent	Roger Fruit	fruro@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

## **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, marital 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.

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



*\*Opting-in for email communications **will not** discontinue future newsletter or district mailings.*