

OUR SCHOOL REPORT



Olmsted Falls School District

Winter 2025

OLMSTED FALLS SCHOOLS AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION

By Superintendent Jim Lloyd, Ed.D.



Like all organizations, the Olmsted Falls School District has a leadership structure in place that, at first glance, resembles a traditional organizational chart. The School Board, elected by the public, is responsible for hiring a CEO and CFO (i.e., Superintendent and Treasurer) who, in turn, recruit talented individuals to conduct the business of the organization. On the surface the “business” of the school district is public education. However, we have a specific strategic vision that sets us apart. In Olmsted Falls, we are in the business of inspiring and empowering, which requires our organization to operate quite differently from traditional public school districts.

Traditional public schools accept the notion that school quality is defined by the standardized testing system created by Ohio’s Legislators - a system that has been in place for 30 years yet has failed to improve the long-term outcomes for Ohio’s students. As we’ve stated many times, we have chosen a different path, one with greater depth and breadth, because being in the “inspire and empower” business demands it. Measuring school quality and student success in our district requires a more comprehensive and holistic approach. This entails shared decision-making and evidence-gathering processes that involve more people and a more meaningful communication of progress to our stakeholders.

Our shared decision-making model includes groups such as our Parent-Teacher Organizations, our District Key Communicators, the Finance Committee, the Facilities Master Planning Committee, our Strategic Planning Commission and our own internal leadership teams composed of administrators and teachers. These internal teams are the District Leadership Team, Building Leadership Teams and our Teacher Based Teams.

The District Leadership Team (DLT) has been in place for almost 20 years and has evolved over time. Originally it was a forum where administrators and teachers discussed contractual issues. However, over the past decade it has become a haven for discussing how we can develop as a learning organization and most importantly, how we can more effectively implement and account for the district’s vision of inspiring and empowering students. At our organizational meeting this year, the DLT established itself as an advisory and governance group for three main areas that align with the district’s vision: designing engaging work to enhance student learning, supporting our positive behavioral intervention support (PBIS) systems in all buildings, and data collection for our benefits-based accountability system. This system communicates progress in the areas of Student Learning, Student Readiness, Engaged and Well-Rounded Students, Safety and Well-Being, Community Connections, Effective Systems and Effective Adults.

Successful organizations act with intention and a definitive purpose. Learning organizations are a place where collaborative teams have freedom from adverse consequences and are able to develop new knowledge as they tackle big problems. This is central to a learning organization and how it functions. Our DLT has created progress-monitoring protocols to support our Building Leadership Teams and Teacher Based Teams as they gather evidence to measure their impact on the three main components mentioned above. Those that serve on both Teacher and Building Leadership Teams help to support the implementation of our initiatives, gather data, and then aggregate the evidence to determine impact. We celebrate our accomplishments and make adjustments when things didn’t go as planned.

To ensure continuity, members of the District Leadership Team also serve on the Building and Teacher Leadership Teams. This form of accountability is different in that we’re accountable to one another for our vision of inspiring and empowering-school personnel, students and the broader community. If you visit any of our school buildings, ask teachers and administrators how this work is going. Inquire about the specific goals that each building is progressing on in order to account for the vision they’ve set for students. I’ve been very impressed with the pride and ownership that our staff takes in talking about the work they do for students and families. I believe you will share in this pride as well.

TREASURER'S UPDATE: PLANNING FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR



**BRETT
ROBSON**
Treasurer & CFO

It's hard to believe we're already halfway through the school year and deep into planning the budget for next year.

Our budget plan for the 2025-2026 school year comes with a few challenges. The biggest hurdle is estimating how much funding we'll receive from the state. The state is still in the early stages of its own budget process, and the current school funding model hasn't been fully implemented.

Adding to the uncertainty, the state is focused on balancing its own budget while reducing income and property taxes. This creates a lot of unknowns for school funding. Given this, we are not projecting any growth in state funding for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years. There simply isn't enough reliable information for us to plan otherwise.

On the local side, we do expect modest growth in property tax revenue due to the recent property revaluation. However, this growth only impacts the portion of our taxes based on inside millage (5 mills). The rest of our property tax levies are designed to generate a fixed amount, so even as property values increase, the county adjusts the tax rates to maintain consistent revenue.

On the expenditure side, the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) recently reduced the service requirement for retirement from 34 years to 33. This change may lead to earlier retirement savings than expected, which is good news for our budget. However, there is ongoing discussion in Columbus about increasing employer contributions to the pension fund. If approved, this could offset those savings.

Health insurance premiums remain a concern. Over the past few years, the district has seen significant increases—14% in FY23 and FY24, and 6.6% this year. We anticipate a similar increase next year. If reserve balances improve, we hope to return to a more typical annual increase of 3.5%–5%.

We remain committed to maintaining our bus fleet by replacing two buses each year and prioritizing preventative maintenance for our buildings and grounds. Curriculum and technology updates remain key priorities, and we will continue to follow our replacement schedules to ensure these areas are well-supported.

In summary, we are facing pressures on both revenue and expenditures. Until we have more concrete information, we will continue to budget conservatively. As always, we take our responsibility as stewards of district resources seriously and are grateful for the support of our school community.

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SECRET SPIRIT WEEK AT OFIS KEEPS STUDENTS GUESSING

Prior to winter break, the staff at OFIS participated in a Secret Staff Spirit Week! Staff members got creative and dressed in daily themes including matching outfits, mismatched outfits, favorite holidays, sports day, PJ's and "anything but a cup"! It was a great way to celebrate the holiday season! Students loved guessing the themes at the end of the week, and prizes were given out to some of the students who were able to identify all five themes correctly. Activities like these are a fun way for teachers and students to build relationships and create a warm and engaging school community.



CHALLENGE COIN RECIPIENTS EXEMPLIFY “THE BULLDOG WAY”

In our last school report, we introduced the Olmsted Falls Board of Education (BoE) Challenge Coin. This coin is a way for our BoE to recognize and reward exceptional performance, achievement, or service, and is a symbol of excellence and commitment to “The Bulldog Way.”

BoE member Bob Perez has awarded two coins so far this school year. The first coin went to Barrett Marchetti. Mr. Perez said in part, “Barrett is an inspiration; his kindness and empathy for others espouses The Bulldog Way. Barrett is a great example for all of his friends.” The second went to Mrs. Chrissy Pettit of whom Mr. Perez said, “Her dedication and commitment to the Olmsted Falls City School District and to “The Bulldog Way” is evident due to her stewardship and leadership as the Falls-Lenox Elementary & Early Childhood Center (FLECC) PTA President. Her steadfast devotion to our district and its youngest students and the staff at FLECC goes without question.”

Board member Kelly Walker has also presented two coins this school year. The coins were awarded to Piper Ponikvar and Addie Mackert, both students at Olmsted Falls High School. Mrs. Walker paid a visit to OFHS on January 10 to award the coins. Both students were recognized for their actions at a recent swim meet with Olmsted Falls, Berea and Fairview Park. Mrs. Walker said, “These students showed sportsmanship and leadership when organizing a “team tunnel” for an opposing swim team to honor their Seniors. This was a perfect example of The Bulldog Way!”

Congratulations to Barrett, Chrissy, Piper, and Addie! Who will be the next Bulldog to receive a Challenge Coin?



ECC TAKES A WINTER HOLIDAY WITH WEEK-LONG EVENT

The Early Childhood Center (ECC) building design team worked to design a week-long “Let’s Take a Winter Holiday” unit. This design unit focused on holidays and cultures celebrated around the world. ECC staff members paired up, selected a country and designed engaging work around the selected country and the holidays and traditions that are celebrated in that country. They transformed the ECC into an airport and the classrooms into countries such as China, India, Israel, Jordan, France, Germany, Mexico, Australia, Sweden and Italy.

Preschool and Kindergarten students traveled to three or four different countries throughout the week-long study. Students made suitcases, applied for passports, learned phrases and songs in different languages, played games, and collected souvenirs (crafts) and passport stamps in each country. Students were actively engaged in exploring different countries and traditions, learning about the world around us and understanding and appreciating our diversity.

FALLS-LENOX HONORS OUR VETERANS WITH ANNUAL CELEBRATION

On Veterans Day, Falls-Lenox hosted their annual Veterans Day program. Students invited a veteran and read poems, shared thank you letters, and sang patriotic songs during the student-led program. Veterans then paraded around the building as students waved flags and thanked them for their service. As they left, veterans received a gift bag made by students with donated goods from Roasted and the Drenzo family. Special thanks to Mrs. Stephanie Rivera and those who worked with her to coordinate this special event.





FALLS-LENOX HOSTS WINTER “WONDER”LAND

Falls-Lenox recently held their first student-led discovery day, “Winter ‘Wonder’land”! Students were given an opportunity to research a question or topic of their choice, like “how deep is the ocean?” and “why do cheetahs have spots?” and then present their findings to their classes. Fostering students’ curiosity promotes student voice, engagement, and ownership of their learning. Students are required to think more deeply about a question and effectively communicate their knowledge. A special thank you to our PTA for decorating our school for the special day!

OFMS EXPLORATION DAY IS A HIT

Olmsted Falls Middle School (OFMS) hosted its third Exploration Day on January 10, giving students a chance to explore interests beyond the standard curriculum. After completing Winter Math MAP testing in the morning, students participated in seven chosen sessions based on their interests. The day, designed to be an enriching experience, was supported by staff and 10 parent volunteers who helped students navigate the sessions. A post-activity survey revealed that 94.4% of students found the day engaging. Students emphasized the importance of considering their interests, stating it helps them feel valued, heard, and better connected to the school community, enhancing their overall learning.



BULLDOG BUCK DONATIONS REWARD GREAT BEHAVIOR AT OFMS

At Olmsted Falls Middle School, we use PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports) to encourage positive behaviors! Students are encouraged to Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible and Be Kind. Students earn Bulldog Bucks for making great choices in the hallways, cafeteria, and on buses. They can spend their bucks every Wednesday morning at our Bulldog Buck Store, stocked with candy, school rewards, Swings ‘n Things prizes, and gift cards—all generously donated by our amazing parents, community, and local organizations.



STUDENTS GIVE BACK TO OUR VETERANS THROUGH HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Students in Mr. Pellerite’s high school Home Maintenance and Repair class are learning how to fix common problems that come with being a homeowner. The class has a Veteran Support program where they provide home repairs for veterans, both active and retired, in the Olmsted community.

The veteran supplies any materials that are needed and students supply the FREE labor as a way of saying, “Thank you for your service!” Our students gain valuable experience and the veteran gets their problem fixed for FREE. It’s a community win-win! What a fantastic way to give back and make a difference!





BULLDOGS OF ALL AGES SHARE KINDNESS AND FRIENDSHIP

This school year, the students in Mrs. Timura and Mrs. Vormelker's second-grade classrooms have been Pen Pals with Mrs. Radigan's Child and Parenting Development classes at the high school. After writing back and forth several times, the students were able to meet during the day, play games and get to know one another. It was great to see relationships formed between our older and younger students.



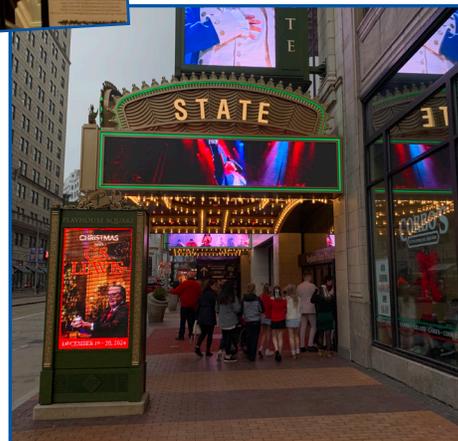
OFIS FIFTH GRADE CHOIR BRINGS JOY TO ITTY BITTY BULLDOGS

The Olmsted Falls Intermediate School (OFIS) fifth grade choir stopped by the ECC to put on a fun show! A HUGE thank you to Mrs. McClellan and the OFIS fifth grade choir members for their fantastic winter performance! The Itty Bitty Bulldogs loved watching you all!



A MAGICAL EXPERIENCE: 8TH GRADERS ENJOY "A CHRISTMAS CAROL"

On December 10, Olmsted Falls Middle School's eighth grade students had the opportunity to attend a performance of "A Christmas Carol" at the Playhouse Square State Theatre. This unforgettable experience brought the classic tale to life, immersing our students in the magic of live theatre.



The arts inspire creativity, empathy, and critical thinking. Live performances like this allow students to connect with powerful storytelling while deepening their appreciation for the arts.

Moments like these help foster a lifelong love for the arts and remind us all of the joy and lessons they bring to our students.

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NEWS AS IT HAPPENS: OLMSTED FALLS SCHOOLS ON FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM & X

There are great things happening **every day** across the Olmsted Falls City School District! Keep up with the news and information via the district's social media channels.

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YUMMY FRESH VEGGIES CONNECT THE CLASSROOM AND THE CAFETERIA



Mrs. Jones' Urban Agriculture class has collaborated with the Food Service Department to bring their freshly-grown produce into the cafeteria! Their hydroponic lettuce and herbs have been used for fresh salads across the district,

and any produce scraps from the cafeteria are used for the students' composting projects. This has been a perfect example of what it looks like to create connections between the classroom and the cafeteria.