



ORCHARD PARK CSD

WINTER UPDATES

IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE ACCESSING LINKS OR BUTTONS WITHIN THIS
NEWSLETTER PLEASE CLICK THE OPTION TO VIEW IN YOUR BROWSER.



Winter 2025

DISTRICT UPDATES



State of the District

Explore our State of the District presentation linked below to see how we are advancing student success through our District Comprehensive Improvement Plan. Learn how the Science of Reading is shaping K-6 education, discover transformative diploma pathways, and stay informed on key topics such as regionalization, NYS learning standards, safety initiatives, and inclusive programming. Additionally, see how community partnerships and family engagement are fostering a thriving learning environment. Stay up to date with these essential updates and important dates for the remainder of the 2024-25 school year.

State of District with Mr. Lilleck

SCHOOL DISTRICT



STATE OF THE DISTRICT

Calendar Update

For the past several years, the final scheduled elementary student day has depended on the number of snow days used. Each snow day adds an extra elementary student attendance day to the end of the school year to meet the NYSED 180-day requirement.

Currently, the last elementary school day is set for Thursday, June 26, 2025. The school year is expected to end as originally scheduled for middle and high school students. At the high school level we will remove the early dismissals scheduled for March 14 and April 11. Those will now be full school days. If additional snow days are used, adjustments may be necessary, such as transitioning to a virtual learning environment in order to meet the 180-day student attendance requirement. We will keep our families and community updated on any further changes.

Please view the graphic below to see a snapshot of end of the year dates and changes.



Important Dates

March 14	HS Early Dismissal Changed to Full Day
April 11	HS Early Dismissal Changed to Full Day
June 10	Last Day of High School Classes
June 11-27	HS Local and Regents Exams
June 17-24	MS Exams
June 19	No School, Juneteenth Holiday
June 26	Last Elementary Student Day

A Message from Superintendent Lilleck

We want to provide the Orchard Park CSD community with updated information regarding the possible presence of immigration officials in our schools, reflecting recent changes in federal policy and guidance from the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG).

As you may be aware, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has reversed its stance on enforcement actions in sensitive locations, including schools. In response, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the Governor and Attorney General have reaffirmed protections for immigrant students. New York State law prohibits taking legal action against a student based on their immigration status. Law enforcement's authority to interrogate or detain students on school grounds is limited. To be clear, the laws of the state of New York make it exceptionally difficult and extremely rare for a law enforcement officer to legally detain or remove a student from school due to immigration status. Schools must remain safe places where kids can attend, absent of fear. New York State law guarantees every student, regardless of citizenship or immigration status, the fundamental right to a free public education.

Recently, the New York State Department of Education, in collaboration with the offices of Governor Hochul and Attorney General James, reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining New York's schools as safe havens where all students are free to learn. I want to share the [joint](#)

[guidance](#) that was released recently by the Governor, Attorney General, and the New York State Department of Education that outlines the rights of students within public schools in New York.

Ultimately, this guidance aligns with our district's mission, as outlined in our long-range District Comprehensive Improvement plans. Our mission every day is to maximize every student's potential. Ensuring a welcoming and safe environment for all members of our school community is an essential commitment to this mission. We will continue to uphold this commitment for all students within our District.

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Quaker Camp Update



Important Quaker Camp Update

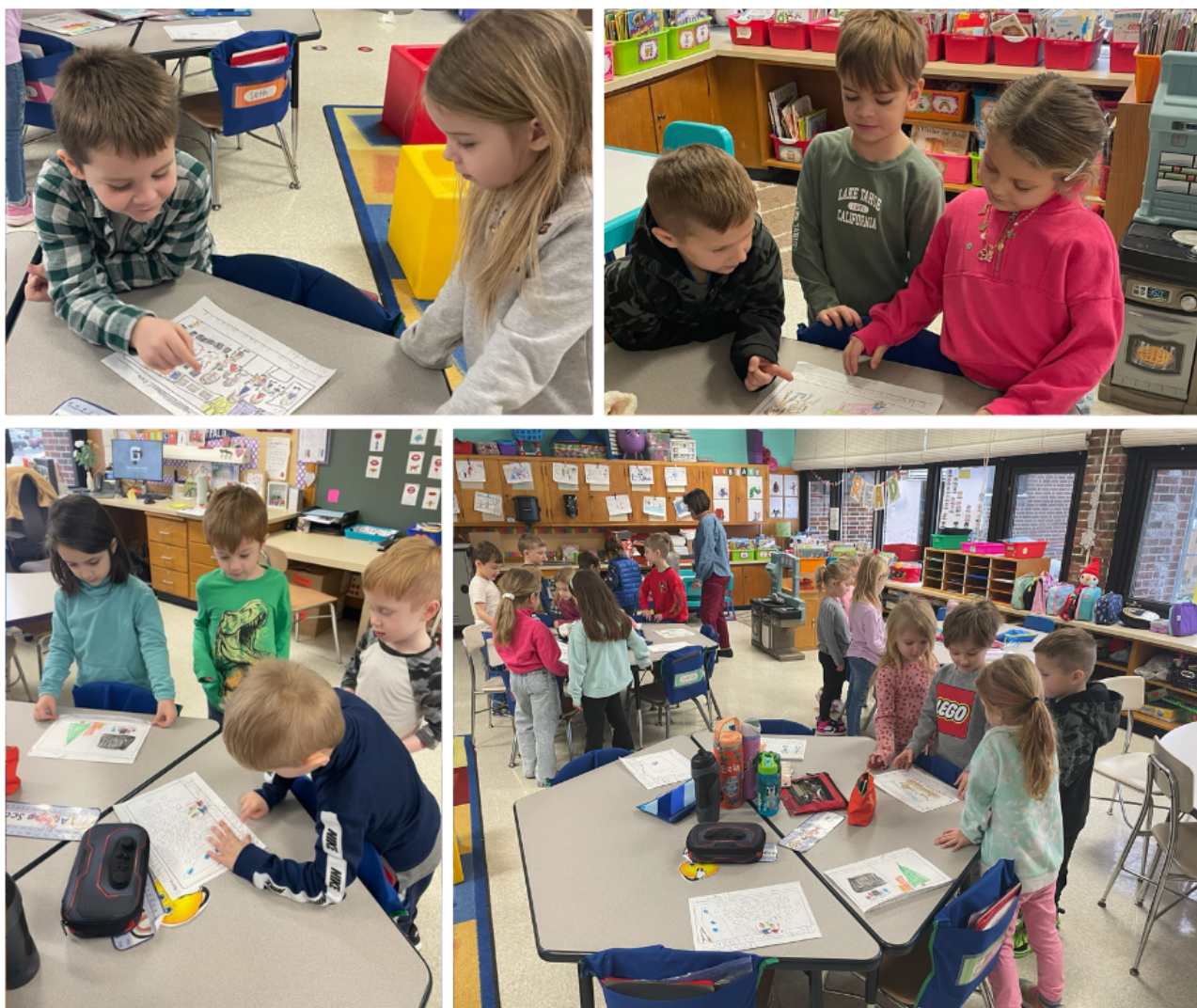
Due to the conclusion of COVID relief funding, Quaker Camp will not be offered in the same format as it has been in recent years. Instead, we are returning to a model similar to our pre-pandemic summer programming. Going forward, we anticipate a more targeted approach to identifying students who may be at risk of academic regression. The program's format and eligibility criteria are being finalized. The programming availability will be limited compared to recent years. We will share more details as plans are finalized. Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

🌟 Celebrating Student Growth and Success

Kindergarten Writing Celebration 🎉📖

Kindergarten students at South Davis recently participated in a special writing celebration, showcasing their creativity and storytelling skills. After reflecting on their winter break, students used pictures and words to share something meaningful or important. They practiced applying letter sounds they've learned to write words, combining visuals and text to express their ideas.

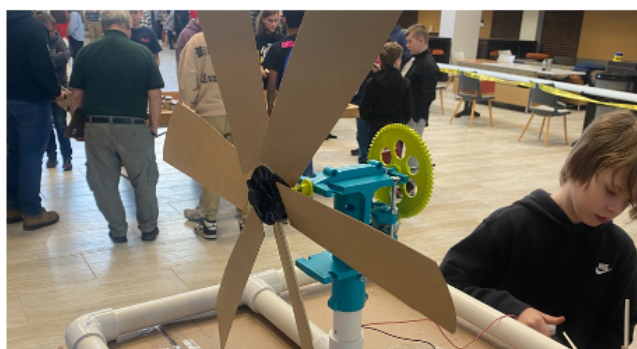
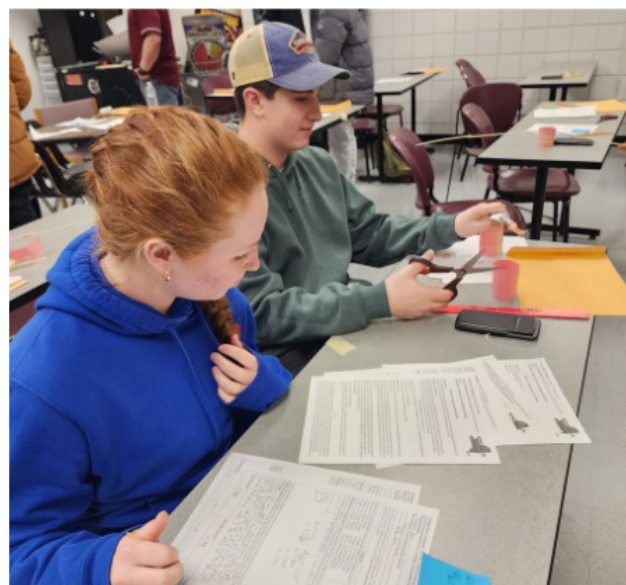
For the celebration, students were grouped with peers from other classes, creating a mix of 5-6 students per group. Together, they walked around to view and discuss each other's work. Many students found inspiration from their classmates' writing, sharing compliments and gaining new ideas to take back to their writing workshops. The celebration highlighted the value of sharing ideas and learning from one another, as students connected over their writing and appreciated the unique perspectives within their grade. It was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on their progress and spark excitement for future writing projects.



OP Technology Wins Big at Tech Wars 🌟

Orchard Park Technology and Engineering students were victorious for the fifth consecutive year! The WNYTEA Tech Wars competition was held at SUNY Niagara on January 8, 2025. More than 130 middle and high school students competed against over 30 other WNY schools in various technology education related competitions including: large wood bridge design, small wood bridge design, wind turbine design, photography, STEM challenges, picture frame design, and

cinematography. This year's win demonstrates the dedication and energy of students and their teachers in the district's technology and STEM programs.



Senior Athletes Commit To Play at the Collegiate Level



Congratulations:

Garret Adamy who will be playing Baseball at Hilbert College. 🏆

Brady Ciano who will be playing Football at SUNY Cortland. 🏆

Jack Ciano who will be playing Football at SUNY Cortland. 🏆

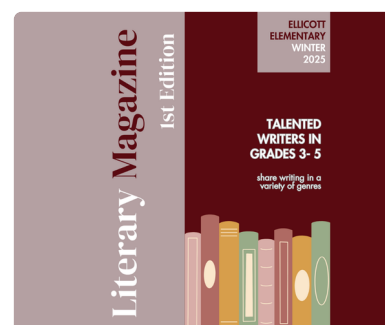
Giavanna Fanutti who will be playing Rugby at St. Bonaventure University. 🏆

Reese Politowski who will be playing Softball at John Carroll University. 🏆

Carter Switek who will be playing Football at Ithaca College. 🏆

Ellicott Students Create Literary Magazine 📖

Students in third, fourth, and fifth grade met after school this winter for Ellicott's Creative Writing Club. These talented young writers spent weeks brainstorming, drafting, and revising original writing pieces in a variety of genres. They published their writing digitally, using Google Docs, incorporating images and formatting their pieces for a professional look. The students' hard work culminated with the publishing of the first edition of the Ellicott Literary Magazine!



Orchard Park Students Thrive in SABAH's Adaptive Skating Program

Orchard Park students in the Life Skills classrooms are experiencing growth, confidence, and joy through SABAH's School Day Adaptive Ice Skating program. SABAH, a nonprofit organization, provides individuals with disabilities year-round physical activities, including skating, hockey, and outdoor sports.

Each week from October through March, Orchard Park students skate at Riverside Rink in Tonawanda. Initially, many students face challenges—apprehension, fatigue, and frustration—but as the months progress, their confidence, independence, and pride soar.

The program includes warm-up activities and skill-building games, culminating in a group skating routine set to music. These routines from all participating schools are compiled into a film, which will be showcased at the Buffalo Convention Center on April 15.

SABAH is more than just skating—it's about perseverance, achievement, and the joy of accomplishing something once thought impossible. For many students, it's the most valuable and rewarding experience of their week, proving that they can achieve great things.



Fashion Class Puts Best Foot Forward 🥿

Students in Miss Perla's Fashion class at Orchard Park High School held their annual Shoe Fashion Show held in January. Students prepared a shoe design for themselves or a model and the shoes were modeled at a fashion show at school. The students planned, coordinated and advertised the fashion show as a part of the class.



Ellicott Artists Create with Clay

Fifth-grade artists are preparing for their artwork to be on display at the Orchard Park Community Center during the month of March. Ellicott Elementary's fifth graders have been busy applying what they know about the parts of a landscape, by creating a foreground, middle ground and background that shows a depth of space. Students are working hard mixing colors and creating textures to draw the viewers' attention throughout their landscape composition.



Discovering Egypt: OPMS Students Share Their Findings

Students in Mrs. Daniszewski's class at OPMS recently explored Ancient Egypt by researching a topic of their choice and presenting their findings in creative ways. From pyramids to mythology, they delved beyond their textbooks to uncover fascinating details.

To showcase their knowledge, students created projects in various formats, including slideshows, dioramas, board games, and journal entries. Each presentation featured five new facts, a visual aid, and a properly cited bibliography with at least one book source.

This project encouraged creativity and research skills, allowing students to share their discoveries and bring Ancient Egypt to life for their classmates and teachers.



OP DECA Excels at Regionals, Advances to State Competition

OP DECA members traveled to Niagara Falls to compete at the regional level, striving to qualify for the state competition in March. Their hard work and dedication paid off, with several students earning top placements and securing a spot on this year's OP DECA "State Team."

Among the outstanding performances, OP DECA teams placed first in Travel & Tourism and Hospitality Services, while individuals and teams earned second and third-place finishes in categories such as Principles of Finance, Entrepreneurship, Accounting Applications, and Sports & Entertainment Marketing.



Upcoming Musical Performances

Ellicott Presents: "Dinosaurs Before Dark Kids"

Ellicott Elementary students will be performing *Dinosaurs Before Dark* on Wednesday and Thursday, February 5 and 6. Performances will be held at 7 p.m. both evenings. Ellicott is pleased to offer a livestream pass for all families to enjoy the show! Family streaming passes will be available for Thursday's show. Purchase a streaming pass for \$15 to view the livestream by clicking the link: <https://cur8.com/projects/EllicottEl>.



Windom Presents: "Finding Nemo Kids"

The talented fourth and fifth grade students of Windom Elementary invite you to dive into an undersea adventure as they take you on a heartwarming journey with Nemo, Marlin, Dory, and all your favorite characters from the ocean during their performance of *Finding Nemo Kids*. It's a show full of catchy songs, vibrant characters, and unforgettable moments. Performances will be held on Thursday and Friday, February 6 and 7 at 7 p.m. Tickets are available to the public at: <https://cur8.com/projects/FindingNemoWindomEI> Alternatively, both of our performances will also be livestreamed to allow for more friends and family to experience the Windom musical!



Eggert Presents: "The Lion King Kids"

Eggert Elementary fifth grade students will be performing *The Lion King Kids* on Monday and Tuesday February 10 and 11. Performances will be held at 7 p.m. both evenings. Join the fifth graders on the journey to Pride Rock and immerse yourself in the magic of this timeless Disney classic as we come together in the great Circle of Life. Both evening performances are available to be livestreamed at: <https://cur8.com/16711/project/129075>.



South Davis Presents: "Winnie the Pooh Kids"

South Davis Elementary fourth and fifth graders are proud to present *Winnie the Pooh KIDS*! Join Winnie the Pooh and his friends as they work together to save Christopher Robin from the danger he has encountered! This story is full of lovable characters, infectious music, and a lot of honey!" The show will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, February 12 and 13. Performances will be held at 7 p.m. both evenings.

Due to limited seating, there are few seats available for audience members beyond family members of our cast and crew. However, we are pleased to offer a Livestream pass for all SD families to enjoy the show! Family streaming passes will be available for both evening shows. Each \$10 pass will work for one device. To purchase a livestream pass visit: <https://cur8.com>.



OPHS Drama Club Presents: "Freaky Friday"

The Orchard Park High School Drama Club is excited to present *Freaky Friday*, a heartfelt and comedic musical based on the celebrated novel by Mary Rodgers and the hit Disney films. The story follows an overworked mother and her teenage daughter who magically swap bodies. With only one day to set things right, they experience each other's struggles firsthand, leading to greater understanding, self-acceptance, and a deeper appreciation for their unbreakable bond. Rated PG for some language, *Freaky Friday* is an entertaining and meaningful production for audiences of all ages.

Performances will take place at Orchard Park High School, 4040 Baker Road, on March 13-15 at 7 p.m. and March 16 at 2 p.m. Tickets go on sale starting February 24 and can be purchased by calling the OPHS Musical ticket phone line at (716) 209-6299. Beginning March 3, tickets will also be available for in-person purchase on weekdays from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. in the Baker Road foyer of OPHS. Additionally, tickets can be bought at the door before each performance. Ticket prices are \$15 for adults and students in the orchestra, \$12 for adults and students in the balcony, and \$8 for senior citizens in both seating areas.

ORCHARD PARK HIGH SCHOOL
PRESENTS



MARCH 13-15
7:00PM

MARCH 16
2:00PM

Disney
**FREAKY
FRIDAY**
A New Musical

BOOK BY BRIDGET CARPENTER
MUSIC BY TOM KITT
LYRICS BY BRIAN YORKEY

BASED ON THE NOVEL
FREAKY FRIDAY BY MARY RODGERS
AND THE DISNEY FILMS

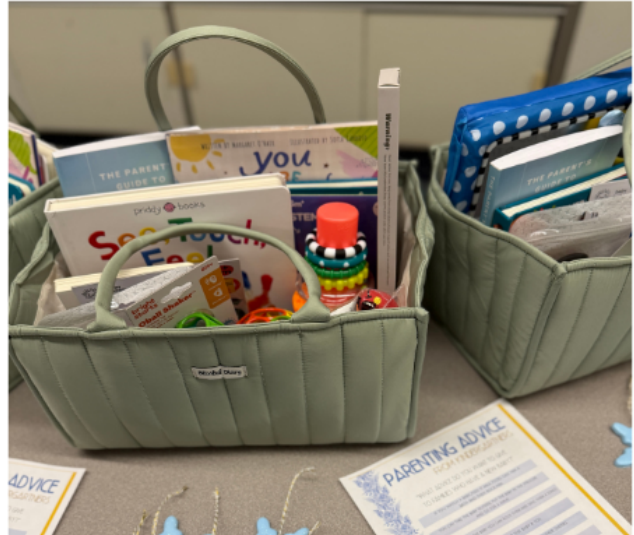
Call for tickets at 716-209-6299 or available at the door

Orchestra-\$15 Balcony-\$12 Sr.Citizens-\$8

✦ Fostering a Positive School Community

Miss Zimmerman's Class Celebrates A Day of Kindness

Miss Zimmerman's class at Eggert celebrated a Day of Kindness with an amazing project! The class partnered with Gigi's Playhouse, a local organization that supports families who have a child with Down syndrome, and created newborn welcome baskets and hand-painted snowflake ornaments for families. This heartwarming project was a beautiful way for students to learn the joy of giving back to their community.



Shadow Surprises: Third Graders and Pre-K Celebrate Groundhog Day Together

Mrs. Batchen's Pre-K students teamed up with Mrs. Hanlon's third graders for a special Groundhog Day craft! The older students helped their younger buddies create Groundhog stick puppets, which could pop out of a cup to check for their shadows. It was a fun-filled activity that encouraged teamwork!



5th Graders Get Inspired by Broadway's *The Lion King*

The entire fifth-grade class at Eggert Elementary recently attended a professional production of *The Lion King* at Shea's, a particularly exciting opportunity since their school musical this year is *The Lion King*. Of the 106 students in the 5th grade class, 99 are involved as cast or crew. For many students, it was their first time experiencing live theater, making the event even more special. Seated in the orchestra section, they had a spectacular view of the performance, taking in every detail up close.

After the show, students took part in a talkback with cast members, where they gained valuable insight into acting, movement, and the teamwork required to bring a production to life. The experience left a lasting impact, with directors noticing immediate improvements in their rehearsals. What an unforgettable experience!



Skittles the Hedgehog Visits Students at Windom Elementary

Mr. Morton of Sun-Dance- Kids-Farm visited Windom Elementary in January with Skittles the hedgehog. Mr. Morton visits local elementary schools to provide educational hands-on experiences with animals and science enrichment. The students learn about each animal's habitat, behavior, and how it lives. They even get to pet or touch the animal.



DARE Graduation Celebrations

In January Eggert, Ellicott, and Windom Elementary fifth grade students graduated from the 15-week D.A.R.E. program. The students spent the 15 weeks of the program meeting with their School Resource Officers and Officer Kristen Mazur, learning and discussing ways to appropriately make decisions that could affect their lives.

D.A.R.E.[®]

The D.A.R.E. program teaches fifth grade students many lessons that can be used throughout their lives. Students learn about making safe and responsible choices using the D.A.R.E. Decision Making Model, dealing with negative peer pressure, social media safety, dangers of alcohol, tobacco and vaping, bullying, and so much more. The program emphasizes teaching students how to become good citizens within our community.



✨ Connecting with Our Families and Community

Pajama Day for a Good Cause

Thursday, February 13, OPCSD will be participating in Pajamas for P.U.N.T. Students and staff will have the opportunity to wear pajamas to benefit P.U.N.T. the Pediatric Cancer Collaborative. The fundraiser will be supporting the "Helping Hands" Program. This program is a financial safety net for WNY families in pediatric cancer treatment.

If you are interested in donating please visit the link below, or send your student in with cash. You do not need to donate to wear pajamas.



Pajamas for P.U.N.T. 2025 - Orchard Park

Orchard Park School District will again become difference makers for local kids and families facing pediatric cancer and P.U.N.T. Pediatric Cancer Collaborative. P.U.N.T. has (6) programs to support families facing pediatric cancer and loss in Western New York that include: Helping ...

[classy.org](https://www.classy.org)

Orchard Park Middle School Presents the 4th Annual STEAM Expo

The Orchard Park Middle School will host its fourth annual STEAM Expo on Thursday, March 6, 2025.

Students, alumni, teachers, and community members will be actively engaging attendees in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math activities. Teachers involved in the STEAM Expo expect over 50 scientific projects, ranging from properties of matter, a functional hoverboard, Lego clocks, magic milk, (and more!) – all to be presented by over 50 students in grades 6-8.

The OPMS Robotics Club will give attendees an opportunity to drive student-built competition robots. The district-wide Art Department, the Orchard Park Visual Arts Boosters, and district-wide Technology and Math teachers will all be providing hands-on STEAM activities such as binary bracelets, swinging symmetry, sand art, optical illusions. The Science Department will be running an immersive planetarium experience for all attendees.

All in attendance will have a chance to partake in many hands-on activities and grab a bite to eat at the PTO sponsored Chicken Barbeque. The night will conclude with live student-created cardboard boat races.

ORCHARD PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL

STEAM
EXPO



MARCH 6TH, 2025
ORCHARD PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
HOSTED BY THE OPMS SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY, ART, & MATH
DEPARTMENTS

SET UP

5:30 PM -
6:00 PM

PRESENTATIONS,
EXHIBITS AND
HANDS ON ACTIVITIES

6:00 PM -
7:30 PM

**CARDBOARD
BOAT RACES**

7:30 PM -
8:00 PM

STOP BY THE CHICKEN BBQ HOSTED BY THE PTO



EXHIBITS AND
ACTIVITIES IN
ART, SCIENCE,
MATH, AND
TECHNOLOGY

PARENT

INFORMATION

SERIES



The Science of Reading 📖

Join us for another informative Parent Information Series event on March 4, 2025, at the Orchard Park Middle School from 6-8 p.m., presented by The Reading League. This event is open to parents, community members, and staff. Learn about the science of reading, the research behind how the brain learns to read, and the shifts happening in literacy education. You'll also gain practical tips for supporting literacy at home and expert advice on helping struggling readers thrive. Don't miss this valuable opportunity to empower your child's reading journey! This is an in-person event and will not be recorded.

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Family Solutions Center Offers Parenting Nights

The Family Solutions Center is offering this engaging series designed to help parents develop effective strategies for encouraging positive behaviors, strengthening relationships with their child, family, and peers, and enhancing overall parenting skills. Through interactive discussions and practical techniques, participants will gain valuable insights to foster a supportive and nurturing environment at home. Join us to discuss and navigate the successes and challenges of parenting. Babysitting is available. Register for the class by contacting the Family Solutions Center or by following this link: <https://bit.ly/opparentgroup>

Contact:

716-209-8181

Familysolutionscenter@opschools.org



UPK Parenting Enrichment Sessions

Mondays, 3:45 pm-5:30pm

**February 3
February 10
February 24
March 3**

K-5 Grade Parenting Enrichment Sessions

Thursdays, 5:30 pm-7:00pm

**March 6
March 13
March 20
March 27
April 3**

Registration Open for Universal Pre-Kindergarten

The Orchard Park Central School District (OPCSD) is currently accepting applications for Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) for the 2025-2026 school year. To participate, children must reside in the OPCSD's attendance area and be four years old on or before December 1, 2025 – meaning, their birthdate must fall between 12-02-20 and 12-01-21. Applications are available online at www.opschools.org/upk and are due by March 19, 2025.

OPCSD is once again able to offer UPK through a grant provided by the New York State Education Department. This grant covers the cost of the program but does not cover transportation. It is the responsibility of each family to transport their child to the UPK site.

There are only a designated number of UPK spots available. A “digital lottery” will determine who will qualify to attend. Children are randomly selected for the program and selection is not based on academic or economic need. All registered children are equally eligible for participation.

All students with complete registration before the March 19, 2025 deadline will have an equal chance for selection in the lottery. More information about the registration process and the UPK program is available online. Interested parents/guardians may also contact Amy Woodward at 716-209-6440 or awoodward@opschools.org with program questions. Registration questions may be directed to the Central Registrar at 716-209-6325 or registrar@opschools.org.



Universal Pre-Kindergarten 2025-2026



Apply Now

- UPK will be available in the Orchard Park Central School District for the 25-26 school year.



- Applications due by March 19, 2025
- Limited spots available; digital lottery may determine selections



Details

- Students must reside within the district area.
- Students' birthdate must fall between 12-2-20 and 12-1-21.
- NY State Education Department grant covers the cost of the program.
- Families are asked to provide transportation.



www.opschools.org/upk



Orchard Park Community Education

Winter 2025



**VIEW CLASSES, LEARN MORE INFORMATION, AND SIGN UP
BY VISITING WWW.OPSCHOOLS.ORG/COMMUNITYED,
CALLING 716-209-6295, OR BY SCANNING THE QR CODE:**



INCLUDED THIS SESSION:

- **ASTROLOGY**
- **BABYSITTER TRAINING AND CPR/AED**
- **BREAD & CHOCOLATE MAKING**
- **COOKIE DECORATING**
- **SENIOR FRAUD & SCAM PREVENTION**

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Upcoming Dates



Notable Dates

Feb 14	PreK-8 Half Day, HS Early Dismissal
Feb 17-21	Mid-Winter Break
Mar 7	Superintendent's Conference Day

School Calendar

Stay Connected with Athletics on Social Media

We invite you to stay connected and informed! Visit our athletics page at www.opschools.org/athletics, and follow us on X and Instagram for the latest updates and exciting highlights.



FOLLOW ATHLETICS ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

View scores, schedules, photos, and more!



@op_athletics



@orchardpark_athletics

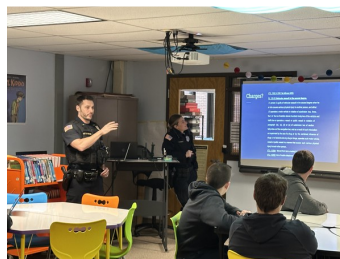


Additional Happenings ❄️



Buffalo Bills Art

Sixth grade artists created Bills themed drawings using donations from Rider Frames and Gallery in OP.



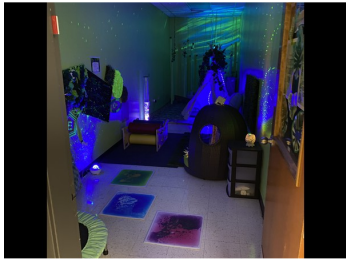
Law and Order

High School COPS students spent time learning how law enforcement assess criminal matters and apply charges per the NYS Penal Code. The group discussed different scenarios and which charges would apply to them.



WKBW Reporter Visits OPHS

Michael Schwartz (WKBW reporter) visited a Global 10 classroom at Orchard Park High School to discuss news literacy with the students.



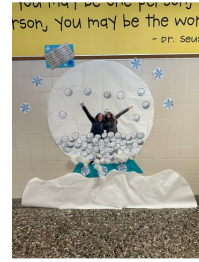
Sensory Room at Eggert

Eggert has completed the design and construction of a new sensory room to support students. The room offers a calm space for students in need . It will support the social/ emotional health for all students in the building.



Windom Faculty and Staff Volunteer

Faculty and staff at Windom Elementary spent time volunteering with their families at Sleep in Heavenly Peace an organization that provides beds for children in need.



Ellicott Celebrates Kindness Week

For Kindness Week, Ellicott created a *Blizzard of Kindness!* The students earned snowballs for kind acts they are found doing around the school. The snowballs were added to a snowglobe with Mrs. Nigro and Mrs. Brown inside.



Helpful Links🔗

Click to learn about how we are maximizing the potential of all students.

Parent Portal 👤 👤

📅 📅 📅 📅 Menus 📅 📅 📅 📅

Virtual Backpack📦

My School Bucks💵

Calendar 📅

Free and Reduced Meals/Milk 🍽️ 🥛



Orchard Park Central School District

Maximizing the potential of every student, every day.



Contact