

# The Storm Report

## OAKES TORNADOES UPDATES



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### Straight Outta Mass Media

By: Mrs. Haafke

Big things are happening in Room 206. This year, the Mass Media class is proud to launch a brand-new school newsletter designed to inform, inspire, and involve our student body and the Oakes community.

With just eight students powering the project, the team is taking on the exciting challenge of bringing the school community closer together through bi-weekly issues packed with updates, features, and fun. The newsletter will be posted online for you to read at your leisure.

#### So... What's the Newsletter All About?

The goal is simple: to keep the community in the know. Whether it's the latest club news, sports updates, fundraiser highlights, or behind-the-scenes classroom stories, we're here to give you the inside scoop.

#### Why It Matters

This newsletter isn't just for reading — it's for connecting. It's about celebrating what makes our school special, shining a spotlight on students and staff, and building school spirit.

Got a story idea? Want your club or event featured? Talk to Mrs. Haafke— we want your voice in the newsletter too!

So whether you're looking for event updates, student spotlights, or just want to know what's going on, stay tuned.

### New Cell Phone Policy Sparks Debate at OPS

By: Nadysen McKay and Ava Thompson

During the 2025–2026 school year, major changes have taken place in schools across the country. Many states, including North Dakota, banned cell phones during the school day. The policy was approved by the North Dakota Legislative Assembly and signed into law by Governor Kelly Armstrong. It officially took effect at the start of the school year and is supported by state and federal education authorities.

Under this policy, students must keep their phones, smartwatches, and headphones silenced and stored in their backpacks during the school day. If a student has a medical condition, such as diabetes, they may request a signed waiver, though it does not give unlimited phone access. Teachers and staff must also follow the same rules unless they have a medical reason.

At Oakes Public School, many students have voiced their concerns. The biggest worry is not being able to contact parents during the day, especially if something urgent happens like bullying, last-minute schedule changes, or personal issues. One student said, "It is hard for me to follow the phone rule because if I need something from my parents, now I cannot message them until after school or call from the office. It's also tough during free time, like lunch, when I can't use my phone to pass the time."

While most students are against the rule, some do see positives. One student admitted, "It's kind of a good thing because you get to see more people talk to each other during the school day. It also helps me because I don't have to worry about what's going on in the world while I'm at school."



Teachers, on the other hand, seem to be just following the new law. Some believe it has reduced distractions and made students pay more attention in class or interact more face-to-face. However, teachers also recognize that phones can be useful tools, and some feel that learning how to use them responsibly might be better than banning them completely.

North Dakota Superintendent Kristen Baesler explained the reason behind the law, saying that phones were harming student focus, mental health, and grades. She also noted that some students themselves admitted phones were "out of control," and their voices helped shape the new policy. Baesler added that students should not feel unsafe without their phones since schools already have emergency systems in place.

At OPS, consequences for breaking the rule start small, such as turning the phone in to the office, instead of strict punishments right away. The school also posts its guidelines on the website so everyone knows the expectations. Teachers did not receive much extra training, but the process is simple: if a phone is seen, it is handed to the principal.

In conclusion, students at OHS generally dislike the new cell phone policy, mainly because they cannot easily communicate with parents or use their phones during free time. Teachers see it as a way to reduce distractions and improve focus. Since the policy is now state law, schools must follow it, but there is a chance it may change in the future depending on results. For now, the question remains: will banning phones really help students feel more connected with each other?

### Spotlight on: Drama Teams New Season is Starting

By: Mrs. Haafke

The Oakes High School Drama Team had tryouts on Thursday, September 5<sup>th</sup>. Ten Students auditioned for the One Act Play which is led by Mrs. Neer. This year they will be performing "The Applicant" by Brent Holland, where job interviews become deadly...and hilarious. There will be a community performance on Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup> and regionals will be November 6<sup>th</sup> at Wishek Public School.



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## From Student to Teacher: Brackin Awender Returns to Oakes Public School

By: Breann Young

This year, OHS welcomed back a familiar face, but this time, he's not a student. Brackin Awender, an OHS graduate, has returned to the halls of his old high school as a social studies teacher.

Awender said that many of his role models growing up were teachers and coaches right here at OHS, which inspired him to follow the same path. "I just knew I wanted to be that same form of light for other kids as they grew up in our great school system," he explained. His goal now is to give students the same guidance and encouragement he once received.

Teaching wasn't always part of his plan, though. Awender first studied exercise science at NDSU with the goal of becoming a physical therapist. After realizing it wasn't his passion, he changed course and discovered a love for teaching and coaching. "I loved history growing up and I always wanted to be a coach," he said. "But I realized that being a teacher was the most important of those three things."

Sports also played a major role in his journey. After injuries kept him from running cross country his first two years of college, he never gave up. In his senior year, he finally had the chance to compete. "I stayed resilient and ended up getting to run my senior season, so I was really happy about that," he shared.

Now back at OHS, Awender's main focus is building strong relationships with his students. He hopes his classroom is a place where students work hard and learn skills they'll carry into the real world. "I know not every student loves social studies, but I hope they can still take something valuable away from my class," he said.

One of his favorite quotes, "Nobody cares, work harder" by Cameron Haynes, reminds him to keep pushing himself and setting an example for his students.

From walking the halls as a teenager to teaching in them today, Awender has truly come full circle. He hopes to inspire the next generation of OHS students just as his teachers once inspired him.

## Splish, Splash Oakes kids had a blast at Pool Day

By: Lila Iverson

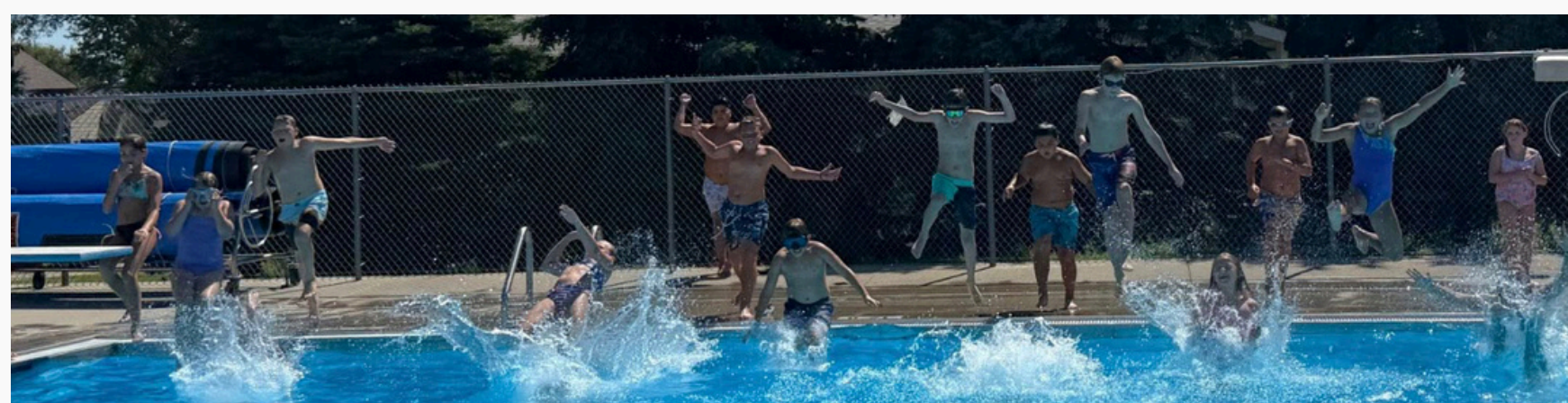
On Friday August 22nd Oakes pre-k to sixth grade students embarked on the Oakes Pool Day. The pool day is the last day of the pool season and is only open to school use. I interviewed a few of the participants. Interviews included the pool manager Deb Van De Venter, our first-grade teacher Mrs Gebhardt, and some of the third graders.

Pool day is at our local pool just two blocks from the school. Deb, the Park Board, and Mrs. Dobitz all helped organize it. In the early morning for the first group the water was a little chilly, later in the day it got warm. Some of the third graders said the water was cold period one kid it said, "it was a hot day in the cold wavy water." Everyone came through the door with smiling faces and left with them too.

Each grade came at separate times. But before they could jump in, they took a picture in their swimsuits before they got to jump in. They went down the slide as well as the diving boards. Many of the kids got out of their comfort zones and I tried it new things they have never done before. Things like going down the slides and trying new tricks. Even having some friendly competitions. Seeing who could jump with the biggest or smallest splash off the boards. But do not worry monitoring it these events were lifeguards and teachers.

Voices of the day. Deb had some great answers to my questions. Her favorite part of the pool day was "watching all of the kids swimming and act like it was their first time there. Even though it hasn't been and the the kids it was their first time." Deb also expressed that "Even though the kids were having fun most didn't feel the need to be naughty and that they could have fun and still enjoy what they were doing." Going to Mrs. Gebhardt, she has been to all ten of the pool days. When asked she described the vibe of the event as "Even though the kids have been going to the pool all summer long there's just something special about getting to go to the pool on that last day." Her overall thoughts were how it was how it was "Fabulous and it is wonderful thing that the park board lets them do." The kids' best moments were going off the high dive doing flips/tricks, and the big yellow slide. They are also ready to go back next year.

Overall, the Oakes pool pool day was a success and way to end summer. From the first to chilly splash in the morning to the warm wavy waters in the afternoon captured it the spirit of summer one last time it is a tradition that proves that memories are not just made in the classroom they are also made in pools on diving boards and under the sunshine.



## iPads Vs Laptops

By: McKenna Allston

In the debate of iPads vs Laptops, students make their voices heard. In a recent survey here at OHS, 80% of students said they prefer having laptops over iPads. The other 20% was mostly made up of students with a neutral opinion, with a few liking iPads better.

Both devices bring their pros and cons. Well talk about a few. iPads are more portable. They are slim and lightweight making it easy for students to carry around. As a downside, iPads can cause more eye strain than a laptop does. Moving on, laptops allow more efficient note taking. However, laptops consume more power than iPads, causing them to have a shorter battery life.

I asked a few high school students here at OHS which they prefer using. One senior said, "Personally I feel like I work better on a laptop." Their reasoning was because, "I feel like typing is easier on a laptop then a computer." Other students had similar opinions.

On the other hand, staff at OHS thinks that iPads are more beneficial for student learning. They believe that iPads bring less distractions. Not to even mention the price difference. iPads are significantly cheaper to fix.

In conclusion, both iPads and laptops bring their own pros and cons. Laptops are preferred by most students and iPads are preferred by most teachers and staff. At the end of the day, both grant students with efficient learning.

# The Storm Report



## Back to School Stress: Don't Let it Consume You

By: Addie Umbreit

School has begun once again, which means the return of packed schedules filled with classes, activities and social interactions. Some students are excited for the new year, while others can find the transition stressful. School is a major source of stress for students. Studies show that 23% of students experience extreme stress levels during the school year. It's crucial to acknowledge the causes and understand the impact and learn what strategies are helpful for not only yourself, but others around you.



School stress is mental strain from several different factors such as: sports, academics, social challenges, and much more. Academic stress is just one type of stress students experience during school. There are high expectations for a student to maintain a high GPA and test at expected levels. While trying to meet each standard some students are balancing extracurricular activities, home life, and for some, a part-time job. Another source of school stress would be time management challenges. This is when students who do take part in activities and have part-time jobs must work on making sure they show up and get their schoolwork done.

How does school stress affect students? Prolonged stress can affect a student's mental health, which can lead to anxiety, depression, and even burnout. Stress that mentally affects a student can impact their academic performance, social relationships, and physical health. Sleep issues, headaches, and appetite changes are all physical health consequences of school stress. Getting enough sleep at night is extremely important, especially as a teenager. Lack of sleep can then create reduced concentration during class time which could lead to lower grades.

### 1. Time Management

The first way to deal with school stress is time management techniques like using a planner to organize events, prioritization; completing tasks that have a closer deadline, and breaking tasks into chunks. Instead of stressing about a big assignment or homework load, try working on something for a little bit, then switch subjects you're working on, or even take a short break then continue.

### 2. Proper Routine

Maintain a proper routine to improve sleep hours, keep a balanced diet, and make sure you exercise. Time management and having a routine go hand-in-hand; you can plan out your routine based on extracurricular activities you have, jobs, and even being with friends.



## Tornadoes Persevere, but the Cardinals Fly Away Victorious

By: Mrs. Haafke

The Oakes Tornadoes opened their 2025 football season on August 22 with a hard-fought 34-6 loss to Langdon/Edmore/Munich. While the scoreboard favored the Cardinals, the Tornadoes showed resilience and flashes of potential—setting the stage for what could be an exciting season ahead.

Junior Reese Nitschke led the way for Oakes, recording 68 receiving yards and adding an interception on defense. His all-around effort earned him Player of the Game. Senior fullback and defensive end Braysen Sagert topped the rushing stats with 44 yards, followed by junior Mathias Dahlstrom and freshman Andrew Rosendahl, who each added 28 yards on the ground. Junior Joseph Dobitz also made an impact with 28 receiving yards in his first varsity game—a standout moment for Head Coach Dobitz was, “As a coach: seeing us respond after halftime with a solid 3rd and 4th quarter offensively. As a dad: seeing Joseph make his first Varsity reception.”

## Learning in a heatwave

By: Jyles Meier

On August 19th the school year launched off. But what had also seemed like it had launched off was the thermometer. This marks the 2 year mark of no air conditioning in OHS. The administration has tried to fix it but failed. Because the project was \$350,00-\$500,000 and required the community of Oakes to pitch in for the school to fix it. Which the community declined. After a few questions, I figured out what the students at OHS thought about not having air conditioning. I asked some students if not having AC affects their mood or productivity throughout the day. Xavier said, “Yes it makes me crabby.” Xavier wasn't the only one who thought this way, Adam also said, “Yea i get in a bad mood when it gets hot.” Showing that not having AC also affects the students mentally too. Another question I asked the students was how do you cope when it gets really hot in the school. Reese says, “I complain and stand by a fan.” Another student said, “I go to the bathroom where it is cooler.” These answers show how not having AC can also be a distraction. Do you think being in a room with an 85 degree temperature and give your best effort?

### 3. Support from Others

The third way to help with back-to-school stress is having support from others. This could range from a friend or family member, teacher, coworker, there are no limits to who can help you. This person could offer you suggestions or even help you study to make you feel more prepared.

### 4. Study Groups

Along with support from others, the fourth way to help with stress is study groups. Studying doesn't have to add on to the pressure of school, instead get together with people who might be in the same class, or someone willing to help and study with them.

### 5. Set Realistic Goals and Expectations

Throughout all of this, make sure you're setting realistic goals and expectations for yourself. Try to avoid perfectionism, there's no need for you to put extra pressure on yourself to be the best at everything you do in school. Don't forget to celebrate small wins, for example completing an assignment, understanding a lecture, or even being to class on time.

Different types of stress come with school, but it doesn't have to consume you. With the right strategies and people, you can succeed emotionally and academically. Make a plan and remember you're not alone. Student, teachers, and family must work together to decrease the stress levels of students.

Senior Zade Heier contributed 30 receiving yards and scored the team's only touchdown. On the defensive side, Mathias Dahlstrom was a force—recording nine tackles, causing a fumble, and contributing to key turnovers. Brody Moore and Andrew Udem each added six tackles. Assistant coach Nolen Peterson noted the team's physicality up front, saying, “The trenches held their own—improving consistency here could shift momentum in tight matchups.”

Senior lineman Max Cline spoke about the early-game adversity, sharing that the biggest challenge was “trying to keep the morale up after the first couple of plays.” He added that the team needs to play with more aggression moving forward, explaining, “We need to get more violent because they kept breaking through, and our linebackers couldn't catch them.”

Looking ahead, the Tornadoes will host Hillsboro/Central Valley on September 5 at 7:00 P.M. The theme for the game is “Country Night,” so fans are encouraged to throw on their cowboy hats and come out to support the team under the Friday night lights.

The JV team took on Fargo Davies on Monday, August 25th and came away with a win with a final score of 20-8. Matvei Dimitrov had 2 touchdowns and Andrew Rosendahl had 1. The team successfully completed a 2 point conversion.

Junior High had a home game against Richland on Monday, August 25<sup>th</sup> with a final score of 20-0.

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## Homecoming Court

By: McKenna Allston

With homecoming right around the corner, OHS students nominated their homecoming court. Students vote anonymously. Each grade nominates one boy and one girl, and the volleyball and football team each chose one nominee.

Senior's nominees: **Ben Wagner** and **Emily Rosendahl**

Junior's nominees: **Jack Thorpe** and **Brooklynn Witkowski**

Sophomore's nominees: **Zade Heier** and **Shanna Buttke**

Freshman nominees: **Jackson Sorum** and **Lexi Harris**

Volleyball and Football nominees: **Max Cline** and **Breann Young**

Congratulations to our 2025 homecoming nominees!

## Activities

By: Breann Young

### Twister Tracker

Sunday

Coronation @4:00 p.m

Monday

Volleyball vs Ellendale

C-squad @5 JV & Varsity to follow

Tuesday

Volleyball vs Hankinson

C-squad @4:45 JV & Varsity to follow

Friday

Parade starts @ 2:30 p.m.

Homecoming game vs Lisbon @7:00 p.m

## Dress Up Days

By: Ava Thompson

### HOMECOMING WEEK DRESS UP DAYS

MONDAY



AMERICA MONDAY



TUESDAY



TWIN TUESDAY



WEDNESDAY

ANYTHING BUT A CAR OR BACK PACK OR ADAM SANDLER



THURSDAY



WRANGLE THE BRONCOS (DRESS LIKE A COWBOY)



FRIDAY



ORANGE, BLACK, & WHITE

## Butter Braids

By: Mrs. Haafke

The junior class is cooking up something sweet (and savory) to raise money for prom this year — Butter Braids! Each Butter Braid is just \$16, and all proceeds go directly toward funding the 2026 prom. With a delicious variety of flavors and a clear fundraising goal, juniors are being asked to step up and sell to friends, family, neighbors — and maybe even a hungry teacher or two.

There are seven flavors to choose from:

- Apple
- Blueberry Cream Cheese
- Strawberry Cream Cheese
- Raspberry
- Cinnamon
- Four Cheese & Herb
- Caramel Rolls

Whether you're craving something fruity, cheesy, or cinnamon-sweet, there's a Butter Braid for everyone. These pastries arrive frozen and bake up fresh — just in time for fall breakfasts, cozy weekends, or holiday gatherings.

But act fast because orders are due by September 24. The Butter Braids will be delivered on October 20.

Each junior has a goal of selling at least 20 Butter Braids to help meet the class fundraising target.

So if you're looking for a tasty way to support the junior class, grab a Butter Braid (or three) and help make prom 2026 one to remember!

## Volleyball Starting Off with a Bang

By: Mass Media Class

The Oakes High School Volleyball team, led by three seniors: Lexi Harris, Emily Rosendahl, and Shanna Buttke, opened their 2025 season with an exciting first home match. Lexi is the only returning starting volleyball player, which means the majority of the Tornado team is made up of young players. The first set was a slow start due to a lack of communication on the court. Lisbon won the first set 25-19. The Tornadoes found a rhythm and started communicating and were able to come back strong on the second set and win 27-25. The Broncos took the third set 25-18 with Oakes then taking the fourth set 25-19 and forcing a fifth set. Oakes won the game with a final score on the fifth set of 15-13. The first player of the game for the season was Mallory Harris. Mallory had 13 kills and 15 assists for the game.

The Lady Tornadoes had their first away game of the season in Ashley against South Border on Thursday, September 4<sup>th</sup>. It seems as though the Tornadoes have found a rhythm as a team and were able to pull off a win taking all three sets. Set 1 25-21, Set 2 25-20, and Set 3 25-23 Sophomore Jillian Miller received player of the game for her standout performance. Jillian had 9 kills and a double-double with assists and digs.

Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup> is their next home game against MPB. C Squad will start at 5 P.M. with JV and Varsity to follow. Join Student Council and wear your teal and purple. We are coming together for more than just a game, it's suicide prevention night.

