

The Storm Report

OAKES TORNADOES UPDATES

September 26th, 2025



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Stan Hokana Opportunity Fund

By: Jyles Meier

Who was Stan Hokana?

Stan's granddaughter, Karlie Sitzler, said "He was a dedicated man and farmer, working tirelessly until the day he passed away. He was an avid farmer and golfer, but also knew to sit down and enjoy the "view" (he loved taking pictures of sunrises and sunsets, but more importantly the view being his family)." Stan was inducted into the OHS Hall of Fame in 2010. Stan is an OHS alumnus but was born in Washington DC! He was also a track star for Oakes winning state in 1966 bringing home a 180 hurdle state title along with the one and only boys state track award.

The Stan Hokana Opportunity Fund was set up by the family of Stan Hokana to ensure every student has the ability to participate, regardless of his or her financial situation. These funds will help cover the costs of their participation, gear, clubs, music, athletics, or any other extracurricular activities. Jennifer Knutson (Stan's Daughter) said "When Dad passed away, we thought about different charities, but none of them embodied who our Dad was. That is why we created the Stan Hokana Opportunity Fund. We know he would be proud of this." Stan felt as though being part of a team sets people up for success, by allowing everyone an opportunity to be a part of a team.

Stan not only left a legacy behind for the future generations to follow but also opened up so many opportunities for both current and upcoming students.

How to apply for this fund? Talk to your coach or Activities Director Robin Paul.



A Peek Into Our School Library

By: Ava Thompson

Have you ever wondered what books are the "must-reads" for students? Our school librarian Mrs. Dobitz says there isn't just one right answer. Reading is personal, what one student thinks is amazing, another student might think is boring. That's why she says it's important to try different kinds of books until you find the ones you really like.

Even though there's no single "must-read," some types of books are very popular right now. Mysteries are at the top of the list, students love trying to figure out the clues. Romance and realistic fiction are also favorites because they tell stories about everyday life and relationships. Fantasy books let readers explore magical worlds, while war books are often checked out by students who want to learn about history through stories.

Some book series never lose their popularity, such as Diary of a Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney. This series is one of the most read in the library. Every year, a new book comes out, and students rush to read it. Another favorite is Dog Man by Dav Pilkey. Kids love these books because they're funny and silly, which makes reading exciting. Books that get turned into TV shows or movies also become really popular. For example, The Summer I Turned Pretty series became a hit after it was made into a Prime Video show. The librarian loves when this happens because it gets more students interested in reading. She says it's fun to see how books look when they come to life on screen.

Mrs. Dobitz doesn't like to say there's one book that everyone should read, but she did share a personal favorite she's reading right now. It's called We Were Kings, a mystery thriller for young adults. She tries to read lots of new books so she can give students great recommendations.



Krista Dobitz



Mrs. Dobitz also talked about something called Library Corner. This will be a short newsletter section that highlights new books and events happening in the library. For example, it might include blurbs about three brand-new books students can check out. It's a fun way to keep everyone updated on what's new and exciting.

At the end of the day, Mrs. Dobitz says the most important thing is to just keep reading. There's no single book that everyone has to read, but there are plenty of options—fun, exciting, magical, or even serious. The goal is to try new things until you find the stories that make you want to keep turning the pages.

Librarians Corner By: Krista Dobitz

Genre: Mystery

AR Level: 3.9 / 6 points

Synopsis: This summer, as Brooklyn teen Kaylani McKinnon trades city streets for Martha's Vineyard beaches, paradise quickly turns chilling. When a local boy dies under mysterious circumstances, Kaylani dives into a suspenseful investigation that uncovers secrets, lies, and danger lurking beneath the surface. With sharp twists and rich cultural history, this thriller is JAWS meets Nancy Drew and a must-read for mystery lovers!

Genre: Romance

AR Level: 5.0 / 10 points

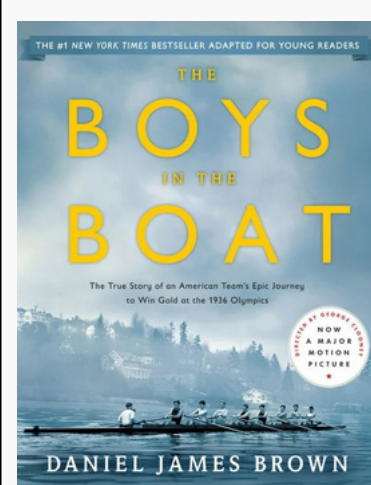
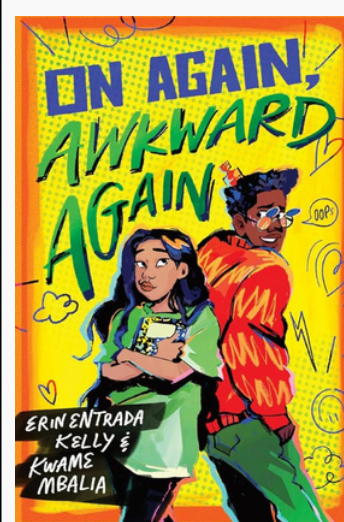
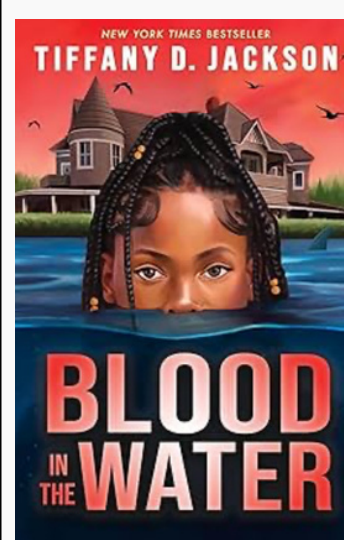
Synopsis: Freshman year gets hilariously complicated when quirky teens Pacy and Cecil lock eyes in a painfully awkward meet-cute - complete with clumsiness and an IBS incident. As they navigate crushes, bad advice, and the chaos of planning the school dance, this laugh-out-loud rom-com celebrates nerdy love, messy moments, and the magic of being unapologetically yourself. Perfect for fans of To All the Boys I've Loved Before!

Genre: Nonfiction

AR Level: 6.9 / 9 points

Synopsis: Before the 1936 Olympics, nine scrappy college rowers from the University of Washington defied poverty, personal hardship, and elite competition to chase gold in Nazi Germany. The Boys in the Boat is a powerful true story of resilience, teamwork, and triumph against the odds. With vivid storytelling and emotional depth, this book brings history to life; and now, it's a movie you can watch on Amazon Prime Video!

Read the book and then watch the movie that was inspired by it!



The Storm Report



Closer to home, Closer to Students

By: Breann Young

This year, Oakes welcomed back a new face to the teaching staff. After spending time teaching in Mapleton, Sydney Meehl decided to come back to Oakes. The biggest reason for the move was that the long drive every day was difficult, and coming back to Oakes meant a shorter commute and being closer to family again.

Her previous teaching experience also prepared her for success here. At her last school, she worked with personalized learning, used scales, and worked with Empower. Those skills gave her a “jump start” at Oakes since many of the same teaching methods are used here. She explained that one new thing she is looking forward to this year is figuring out how to take the new curriculum and make it more personalized for her students.

When asked what she hopes students will remember most from being in her class, her answer was not about academics. Instead, she said “I want my students to remember that they were accepted and cared about.” To Mrs. Meehl, creating a safe and supportive classroom is the most important part of teaching

Outside of school, balancing life as both a teacher and a parent can be tough. Sydney Meehl explained that having a shorter drive now makes it much easier. She also tries to leave at a decent time after school so she can be home with her family. Being a parent has even changed the way she teaches. She said it makes her more empathetic, especially when students have a rough morning at home and need time to adjust to the school day

Her oldest daughter, who is four, especially enjoys visiting the classroom. At home, she even pretends to play teacher, which is something that makes Mrs. Meehl proud. Sometimes, Sydney Meehl even shares funny stories and pictures of her kids with the class

Overall, Sydney Meehl is excited to be back in Oakes, closer to family and ready to start a new year. Her focus on both personalized learning and creating a caring environment shows how much she values her students. Most of all, she hopes every student leaves her classroom knowing that someone believed in them.



Back stage pass inside our theater production!

By: Lila Iverson

The lights are off the curtains are opening, the thoughts of this season are starting to uncover. This year Oakes one act play will present to you The Application by Brent Holland. Our hard-working cast and crew cannot wait to show the play to you!

This year we have added fresh faces to our cast, 7th graders JJ, and Lexi! We have a lot of cast and crew from last year.

Have you had a job interview, and everything went wrong? “The best and brightest adults and college students are invited to apply for their dream job. Applicants for this government job are tasked with seemingly simple games in order to advance to the next round. But they soon find out failure has severe consequences. Dr. Kellas explains what awaits the lucky one. What will each of the applicants do in order to secure their promising future?”

Some might ask why director Sarah Neer chose this, well she did not. In fact, she didn’t there was a problem with script ordering and shipping. In her words “it was a happy accident, so it’s good.” I asked some of the cast what they hope the audience takes away. Kaia hopes people “don’t sign up for sketchy stuff.” JJ “hopes we take away that you should never apply for a job.” Weston says “things may not always be as they seem. Always judge a book by its cover.” Finally, Lexi thinks “never to go to a job that has you play connect four.”

We finally got a key for our closet! Sarah is excited that new people tried out and we have more boys. Her goals are to master more with the skills we haven’t utilized yet. Sarah’s pre thoughts are “based on last year and how awesome we did at the one act competition; we’ll either do that well or better.” Hopes and dreams are a high. She thinks “it would be really amazing for the cast to experience, a win.” Behind the scene people help the actors excel, that is why they all appreciate Sarahs and the crew to help things come to life.

Let us hear Braylyn’s side from behind the scenes. A big part of her learning curve has been “a lot from lights and how they operate.” “The reward is “making it be more convincing and to help tell the story.” In three words she would describe her part as “special effects, creative, and invisible.”

Now welcome on the stage! Let us see what the actors and actresses have to say. What are some things they are excited for? Kaia is excited about “having new cast members.” JJ thoughts are “even from a young age, he wanted to be like those people on the screen one day. Now he gets to live a small part in that.” Lexi cannot wait to “put it in a theater so people can see it.”

Can they relate to their character in any way to help with their role? Will that change so let us see. Kaia said her characters, like her, are “cool, nonchalant, with the art of jiu-jitsu.” (I do not think she knows how to do that but great answer!) Lexi said, “she is a risk taking, by keeping on going on in the job.” JJ “feels like he is my opposite.” But he physically fits the role. Weston also said “my role is nothing like me. I am not emotionless; I am pretty emotional.” Despite the challenges Weston is excited to do a more serious play.

Drama is more than just a play; it is a way to build confidence teamwork and creativity. Either on stage or behind the scenes everyone plays a part in bringing the story to life. When they work together, they can make something unforgettable. So even when the stage lights go dark after the final bow the lessons learned and the memories shine long after. That is what drama is all about and hopefully this article has inspired you to join or come in to see!

Study Tips

By: McKenna Allston

Are you tired of pulling all nighters, but still forgetting everything by test day? I sure am! After kicking off a new school year, most student are left feeling stressed. With all the learning, testing, and trying to balance life outside of school. Today, I am here to share some study tips to help with some of that stress.

1. Handwriting notes. Studies show that handwriting notes can help you learn more. That is because you cannot write as much as you can type, so your brain has to process the information to get the key points. Taking notes by hand makes it for your brain to retain the information.

2. Take breaks. You might think that taking breaks would be worse, however that is false. Students usually have a 30- 60-minute-long attention span. Taking a break or breaks helps prevent study fatigue and will help you return with sharper focus. Be cautious not to take too long of a break or you will lose motivation.

3. Catch some zzz’s. Getting enough sleep is extremely important. Sleeping helps the brain process and retain information. Studies show that about 8 hours of good sleep is the ideal, but everyone is different. Getting into a good sleep schedule can help students be more productive by enhancing focus.

Now, whether you are a student or just trying to get some some helpful information, these tips can help you. If you want to ace your next test make sure you hand write notes, take breaks while studying and most importantly, get some sleep!

The Storm Report

New Students, Old School

By: Isaac



The adjustment between our educational curriculum from 6th to 7th is definitely a strange one. You're separated from your main class, you have new subjects, and you're always moving around constantly. It can be a difficult adjustment period for some, which is why we want to check in on our new peers, see how the fresh meat is handling their new school life. Interviewing a new face in the high school building, I had Kasen from 7th grade sit down with me to discuss how he feels about his new school year.

The adjustment between going from the grade school building to the high school building is only one different turn from the office, so asking Kasen how the transition has been, he luckily responded "Pretty good." With new schools comes with its many quirky teachers, though one especially important thing is making sure students feel secure around their new school educators, so thankfully when Kasen was asked if the teachers were treating him well, he answered "Yep." When asked about how he was handling the new subjects, he replied "They're mostly the same, not exactly easy though, but they aren't hard either." Hopefully his peers are handling their new subjects deftly as well. Asking about the new schedule changes, he said "It's very different not dealing with the same teachers." Hopefully every new student is adjusted to their schedules so they're not wandering the halls. Finally, students need an end goal to look to at the end of their school year. Though when pressed on if he had any goals, Kasen responded "Not really." So, I'm hoping he's able to figure out his goals for this year, as well as every other student's goal.

As us former juniors move into our senior year, looking back on when it was us first coming to our new school, memories flash on by. We're hoping that new students are able to make their own high school memories to look back on. New students will have their work cut out for them this year, but I know they got this. So, to close off we hope you 7th graders have a great school year this year, just go easy on the teachers.



Senior Spotlight

By: Nadysen McKay



Throughout high school, Elexis Haring has stayed really involved at OHS. She's has been part of speech, drama, and choir- spending three years in both drama and choir, while doing speech all four years. Speech has been the most important to her, and she's proud of qualifying for state five years in a row, hoping to go again for a sixth time this year.

Elexis says her biggest influence has been Mrs. Duvall, her choir teacher and speech coach. She says Mrs. Duvall has helped her improve a lot and has also been someone she can count on. If she could relive one day from high school, Elexis would go back to the day she chose her solo for competition. Even though the song was good, she says it just didn't click with her the way she wanted it to.

Her favorite school event is prom because she loves getting dressed up and dancing all night with her friends. She also has a favorite quote she lives by: "Live a simple life in a complex world." To her, it's a reminder to not overthink things and just focus on living life simply.

After graduation, Elexis plans to go to college and study finance and business analytics. Right now, she's looking at UND, but she hasn't made a final decision yet. She's most excited about the independence of living on her own and getting to meet new people from all over.

Who Stole the Cookies From the Cookie Jar?

Oakes High School Honor Society and Vision Zero are selling Otis Spunkmeyer Cookies to raise funds for their organizations. If you would like to order, reach out to Kalyn.Haafke@k12.nd.us. Orders are due October 13th.

\$5 a dozen:
Chocolate chip
Sugar
Double Chocolate Chip
Oatmeal Raisin
peanut Butter
M&M

\$7 a dozen:
White Chocolate Macadamia Nut
Strawberry Shortcake
Turtle Caramel Pecan
\$10 a dozen:
Jumbo Chocolate Chip



Football Season Update

By: Mrs. Haafke

Season Overview

Under head coach Greg Dobitz, the team is currently sitting at 2 wins and 2 losses. They are 2-1 in District play. The team has had 5 injuries, but players have been stepping up and filling the gaps. The team has been adjusting with filling in for injured players and they are showing great promise of a continuing season.

Player Statistics- According to Max Preps

Beau Thorpe- 568 Passing Yards

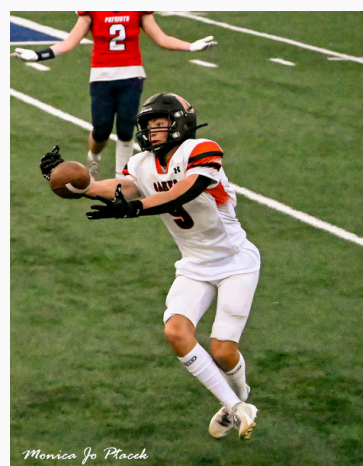
Andrew Rosendahl- 255 Rushing Yards

Zade Heier- 247 Receiving Yards

Mathias Dahlstrom- 43 Tackles

Jacob Ptacek - 1.5 Sacks

Landon Titus- 1 Interception



Volleyball Season So Far

By: Mrs. Haafke

The Tornados are 3–4 overall. In district play, Oakes is currently 0–2, placing them 7th in the district. Their most recent match saw a dominant 3–0 victory over Tri-State (Rosholt/Fairmount/Campbell-Tintah), winning 25-8, 25-16, 25-11.

The season so far has been a mix of dramatic close matches and challenging losses. Oakes has shown both potential and areas for growth, particularly in consistency and finishing sets under pressure.

Memorable Matches & Trends

Season Opener vs. Lisbon — Oakes won a tight 3–2 match, closing out the fifth set 15–13. That match set a tone: when the Tornados keep composure, they can hang in tight battles.

Tri-State Match — Their most one-sided win came in their latest game: a straight-sets victory with convincing set scores (25-8, 25-16, 25-11).

District Play Pressure — Their district matches so far haven't gone their way, and those are critical for playoff positioning. Building confidence in those matchups will be key moving forward.



The Storm Report



Homecoming ReCap

By: Addie Umbreit

The long-awaited homecoming week has finally arrived! Before this week's exciting events kick off, coronation and Hall of Fame Induction took place on Sunday which added two members-Rich Voegeli and Sarala Nagala. As of Sunday, we now know our king and queen-congratulations to Max Cline and Emily Rosendahl!

As this activity-filled week flies by, students are showing up to school each day dressed in themed outfits. On Monday, we saw an ocean of red, white, and blue for "Merica' Monday." On Tuesday, you saw double with twin day. How will the Oakes Tornadoes be getting to school on Wednesday-by anything but a car? And what creative items will they have used as backpacks? Thursday, the Tornadoes will wrangle the Broncs by dressing up as cowboys. Finally, Friday brought orange and black flowing through the school as everyone showed up in their Tornado pride.

Another highlight of homecoming week for students is walking through the creatively decorated hallways. The eighth graders earned third place for their Hawaiian themed hallway, in second place was the seniors with their casino theme, and the staff won first place with their sports centered theme. Along with this, many activities happened throughout the week whether it was a volleyball game, football game, or exciting challenges during school.

The Oakes volleyball team played back-to-back on Monday and Tuesday, while the boys' football team played on Friday. The volleyball team played both Ellendale and Hankinson while the football team took on the Lisbon Broncos.

As a recap, hallway decorating, dress up days, volleyball, football, and even a pep rally are all tied into this jam-packed homecoming week, which always flies by fast. Let your excitement and school spirit carry you through the 2025-2026 school year!

Dress Up Days Highlight

'Merica Monday



Twin Tuesday



Anything but a Backpack/Car/Adam Sandler Day



Cowboy Day



Orange and Black



Activities Highlight

Monday-Hungry Hungry Hippos, Mattress, Inflatable Costumes

Hungry Hungry Hippos, where teams raced to collect balls while sliding across the gym on scooters. The blow-up costume relay, where students ran in big inflatable suits. The air mattress race, where teammates pushed the mattress across the gym in a fast and funny relay challenge. These games were not only entertaining but also brought students together and showed off our school spirit.

Tuesday- Rock, Paper Scissors

During the passing periods the students played rock, paper, scissors with each other. It was two out of three and if you lost you have to give the winning player all of your necklaces. At the end of the school day you go turn in all of your necklaces to see if you win.

Wednesday- Water Palooza

Water palooza went down at the elementary football practice field. Where all 7-12 went on a ride on the slip 'n slide. They also played a fun game of slip n slide kickball.

Thursday- Rodeo Round Up

Rodeo round up was where two people competed against each other with roping and then barrel racing with pool noodles, then they had to do poles and then cross the finish line. The person with fastest time won.

Pep Rally

All students in grades K-12 gathered in the North Gym for a pep rally on Friday of Homecoming Week. The pep rally started with the seniors making their traditional walk- through the gym. Their walk was followed by a cheer led by Mr. Sell and Mr. Greenmyer. The football coaches and senior players then battled it out with a pool noodle sword fight. There was also a relay race that involved a student from each grade. Mr. Lynch received a pie in the face because the high school crowd was too quiet during a cheer off. The gym was full of posters, excitement, and cheering as the school geared up for the homecoming football game.



Football Game

The Oakes Tornadoes took on the Lisbon Broncos for the homecoming game this year. The final score was 8-18 and the Tornadoes had their second loss of the season. Zade Heier received player of the game for 122 receiving yards and 6 receptions.



Hall of Fame

By: Ava Thompson

At the Oakes Public Schools Homecoming Coronation on Sunday September 14th 2024, two very special people were added to the hall of fame: Rich Voegeli & Sarala Nagala.

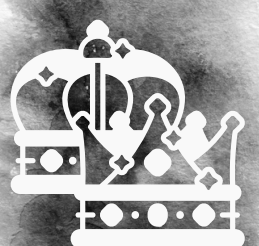
Rich Voegeli who moved to Oakes and spent a lot of time helping kids in sports. He started programs for the elementary football and wrestling, and many people knew him as the "Voice of Tornado Wrestling." He also helped with the Boy Scouts, showing how much he cared about his community.

Sarala Nagala grew up in Oakes and graduated from Oakes High School in 2001. She worked very hard and was chosen by President Joe Biden in 2021 to be a United States District Judge in Connecticut. She also made history by becoming the first judge of South Asia descent on that court.

Coronation

Max
King

Emily
Queen



The Homecoming Coronation also had class and sports nominees. For volleyball and football, the nominees were Max Cline and Breann Young. The senior class nominees were Ben Wagner and Emily Rosendahl. For junior, it was Jack Thorpe and Brooklynn Witkowski. The sophomore class had Zade Heier and Shanna Buttke, while the freshman class Jackson Sorum and Lexi Harris. Max Cline and Emily Rosendahl were crowned as this years King and Queen.