



# Oceanside Schools

## Anchored Together

BY PURPOSE, PASSION, AND PEOPLE

Autumn 2025

## District Launches “Let Grow” Campaign

The school district’s Parent University committee, chaired by Diane Provvido, assistant superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Technology, has launched a Let Grow campaign this December with the slogan, "Give the Gift of Independence." It is part of the national Let Grow movement. The initiative aims to provide students across all grade levels with opportunities to build confidence through age-appropriate challenges.

Elementary schools are offering activity challenges while OHS, Castleton and OMS are focusing on experiences that match older students' developmental stages. “Our goal is to encourage opportunities for students to develop self-reliance and problem-solving skills,” said Ms. Provvido.

The Let Grow movement advocates for children to tackle manageable risks and responsibilities, and encourages parents and educators to foster children’s independence. It’s a gift that has an immediate payoff in increased confidence for young

people, while also building skills that will have life-long benefits.

The Parent University committee is composed of district administrators, including building principals, and parents.

*A School #3 student sprang into action upon hearing of the Let Grow campaign, and made cookies for her family.*



## Science Research Students Gain Lab Experience



Research students at Oceanside High School regained hands-on lab skills through partnerships between OHS and universities, hospitals, scientists, and doctoral level researchers. The students were mentored last summer by leading research professionals, learned to use advanced tools, and confronted genuine scientific challenges. They are now writing research papers for science competitions, including the prestigious Regeneron Science Talent Search.

*continued on page 7*

## Ending Hunger is a “Can” Do for Elementary Students

Sixth Grade Project Extra students raised awareness of the United Nations Zero Hunger goal and donated food to local pantries via their Canstruction projects. Canstruction is a charity initiative in which teams build structures with and then donate canned foods. The projects foster problem-solving, STEM concepts, creativity, teamwork, awareness of global issues, and social responsibility. Here are some Canstruction spotlights:

**School #2's** Project Extra sixth graders launched a canned food drive for their build. A well-designed poster using the 6, 7 meme energized the student body. Many students brought in 6 or 7 cans, flooding the drive with a whopping 2,099 cans. It was five times the previous can drive record. Teacher Michelle Gamache gave an impromptu lesson on assembly lines and enlisted help from Ms. Sunderberg's class, which won a pizza party for most cans donated, to move the cans downstairs. The sixth graders built a replica of School #2, complete with security monitor Avery Torres out in front.



**School #3's** Project Extra class has raised the funds needed for their spring build. Their theme, a bowling alley, comes with the tagline, “Let's Strike Out Hunger.” Since they are currently sponsoring a model in the Limb Kind Foundation's annual adaptive fashion show, they will complete their Canstruction build in May.

**School #4** continued the tradition of using familiar characters to spark student interest and commu-

nity conversation. Their build featured a cheerful minion with a mission, and included posters explaining the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals and suggestions for anyone who wants to help combat hunger.

**School #5** Project Extra students raised \$150 for World Food Day in October, which funded the items that would bring their design to life. Imagination, teamwork, and the engineering design process guided the project. Art teacher Cristina De-Figueroa assisted with hand-crafted waves, and one dedicated student brought a light from home for inside the lighthouse. The slogan is “Light the way to end World Hunger.”



**School #8's** Project Extra class generated about 20 ideas and slogans. They whittled it down to three choices via a Google poll. At a pretzel sale to raise funds, they asked fellow students to weigh in on a final choice. The consensus was clear: A three layer cake with the colors green, yellow, and red (to match the can labels) and the slogan, “Life isn't always a piece of cake but if we work together, we'll be sure that everyone gets one.”

**School #9E** brainstormed and voted on concepts for their structure and slogan which they completed in October for World Food Day. The winner: a lightning bolt striking Earth, paired with the message: “Shock the Hunger out of this World!” Their efforts gathered over 120 cans plus \$60 in monetary donations.

# College Credits Add to Allure of Computer Science Pathway

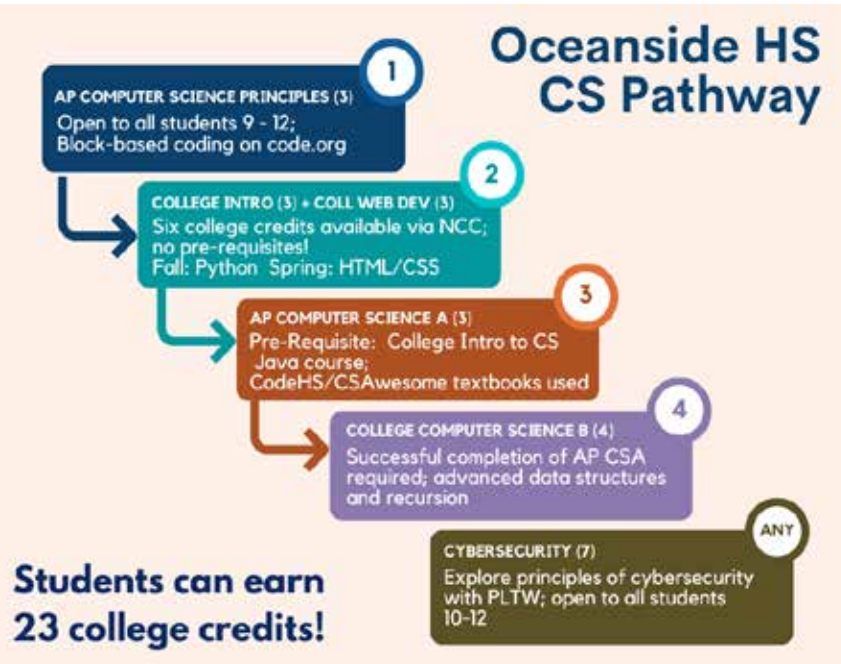
Students can add “earn up to 23 college credits,” in addition to their affinity for the topic, to their list of reasons for pursuing the computer science pathway at Oceanside High School. The courses can also be an excellent headstart on a future career.

in computer science,” said Brandon Crofts, who teaches math and computer science and is the advisor for the Computer Science Honor Society.

The computer science pathway aligns with the district’s comprehensive approach to ensuring that all students, beginning in kindergarten, are equipped with the tools they need for digital fluency. K-6 students learn computational thinking, introductory coding skills, robotics, digital citizenship, cyber security, and more. In middle school, students can learn to create apps and join clubs for coding and robotics. OHS also has a robotics club.

Students in the Cyber Security class (pictured below) recently demonstrated their knowledge by presenting on major cyber attacks and security issues. Each student covered a different historical incident, including the 2013 Yahoo data breach, the Code Red worm from 2001, the Equifax breach, and the PlayStation cyber attack.

Student Dan De LaRosa went back to the first cyber attack, 1988’s Morris Worm. Dan cleverly used a font and background colors to simulate the look of a 1980s era computer screen in his presentation. The cyber security students also created a series of posters for the OHS library featuring digital security tips.



The computer science pathway is a sequence of six elective courses that offer college credit. It begins with Advanced Placement (AP) Computer Science Principles, which is open to all students in grades 9-12 and offers 3 college credits. Students learn block-based coding as part of the introduction to fundamental concepts.

Next are College Introduction to Computers and College Web Development, both 3 credits via a dual enrollment arrangement through Nassau Community College. AP Computer Science, College Computer Science B and Cyber Security complete the sequence. Some courses have pre-requisites but otherwise, students may jump in anywhere in the sequence. Those who successfully complete all six courses may earn 23 college credits. Nassau Community College, all SUNY schools, and Hofstra University accept the credits.

“The middle school’s App Creation course is also a great starting point for students interested

Computer science and coding background can be useful for fields other than computer science, as they are foundational courses.



# UPK and Kindergarten Registration Begins January 5, 2026

## Universal Pre-Kindergarten September 2026

Tuition-Free for all participants



Scan the QR code above to sign up for the UPK lottery between January 5-22, 2026.

### Lottery



Seats are limited.  
Lottery selection is  
January 26, 2026.

### Eligibility



Oceanside District  
Residents born between  
Dec 2, 2021 - Dec 1, 2022

### Hours



9:20am - 2:40pm  
Monday - Friday  
Follows  
School District Calendar



Scan QR Code for additional information on UPK, eligibility, and logistics.

## 2026-2027 Kindergarten Registration Starts January 5, 2026

Who is eligible? Children born between December 2, 2020 and December 1, 2021

Questions? Call Central Registration at 516-678-6238.



Current UPK (School #6 and JCC) students do not need to re-register for Kindergarten

Submit your child's  
registration application



## Culture and Careers: An Immersive Workshop at OHS

To support Oceanside High School's Work-Based Learning program and celebrate Native American Heritage Month, Broadway and television actor-composer-director Shaun Taylor-Corbett visited OHS just before Thanksgiving for an immersive workshop on Native American song, dance, and culture.

Taylor-Corbett, who grew up in Rockville Centre and has Black, Blackfeet, Irish, and Scandinavian heritage, shared the story of his first visit to the Blackfeet reservation in Montana at age 15. That trip sparked a lifelong exploration of his heritage, and he returns to the reservation regularly. During a student Q&A, he described how connecting with his Blackfeet heritage has shaped both his life and career, noting that the tribe's wisdom can be applied anywhere. He also spoke about growing up locally, his path to the arts, and how understanding his identity continues to inform his work.

Much of the visit was spent practicing a powwow song. Theatre students stepped onto the stage in small groups to connect the song with drum rhythms and traditional dance as Taylor-Corbett kept pace with a handheld drum. The workshop concluded with all students gathering onstage to perform the full ceremonial sequence they had learned.

The experience resonated deeply with students. Senior Logan Bowe, who hopes to write for Broadway, said the workshop showed him "how mean-



ingful it is to look deeper into your own roots" and that opportunities like this give students rare, early connections to industry professionals. He added that hands-on moments—like the drum circle—pushed him out of his comfort zone and revealed "the importance of what Shaun does" in blending culture and creativity.

Taylor-Corbett's credits include Broadway's *In the Heights*, *The Artist*, a new television series starring Mandy Patinkin and Zachary Quinto, and *Distant Thunder*, an Off-Broadway musical he wrote and produced with his mother, Tony-nominated choreographer Lynn Taylor-Corbett, who has since passed away. Informed by Taylor-Corbett's own experiences, the production tells a fictional story of a young man returning to his Native culture after being separated from it as a child.

## OHS Castleton and School #6 ELC Team Up for Special Events

OHS Castleton students and staff have forged a partnership with School #6 ELC that began with Halloween a few years ago. It continued with Castleton students preparing the Oceanside Research Center in the Arboretum for visits from School #6 and elementary school students. Last year, the two schools also teamed up for an Earth Day snack/craft, with older students helping little ones decorate their pretzel trees. Left, Castleton students and staff once again hosted School #6 visitors for Halloween.



# Winter DOCA Activities

## JANUARY



**Winter Youth Programs 2026:** Look for our January Booklet!  
Online Registration begins at 7 pm on Thursday, January 8.

Walk-In Registrations accepted by appointment only starting January 9 at the DOCA office 9 am-3 pm. Classes begin January 17 and run for 8 weeks.

## DOCA Youth Basketball Program Begins

Wednesday, January 14 & Thursday, January 15.



## FEBRUARY



## February Break Activities

February 17, 18 & 19, 2026 - Classes to be Announced

*Scan the code with your phone camera to learn more about DOCA programs.*



## Girls Soccer and Cheer Teams Emerge Victorious!

**C**ongratulation to the Girls Soccer Team which was the Conference, County and Long Island Champion. In securing the Nassau County championship, the team broke a 40+ year drought and went on to make history again by winning the LI championship.

Congratulations to the the Cheer Team, as well, for being the Conference and County Champions.

Coaches of both teams were also lauded with Coach of the Year awards.



## Science Research Students Gain Lab Experience *continued from page 1*

Kritika Kumar, a junior, worked at Hofstra's Summer Science Program with Jase E. Bernhardt, associate professor of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability. She studied whether a virtual-reality simulator could help drivers navigate hazardous winter weather conditions. Kritika surveyed participants who used a VR headset to simulate driving during a snow squall. Her analysis found that most participants—including both English and Spanish speakers—felt the tool effectively depicted the storms.

Several students worked on cancer-related studies. Juniors Phillip Konnov and Mark Gorny, whose families have experienced cancer, collaborated at CUNY Queens College researching proteins involved in metastatic cancers. Daniela Sanchez, a senior, investigated abnormal chromosome numbers at Columbia University and their implications for early cancer detection. Jadon Maroto, a junior, explored nanoemulsion-based methods to improve lung cancer treatment at St. John's University. Arianna Shamin, also a junior, synthesized cancer treatments known as PARP inhibitors.

Sabrina Zendaki went in a different direction, investigating genetic pathways that influence fat

distribution and cardiovascular disease risk at Mount Sinai's Icahn School of Medicine.

The Research Program, taught by Michael Pepe, offers three courses including the College Research course, which requires 90 hours or more of lab work under doctorate-level mentors. The summer work earns students college credit and develops research, data analysis, and presentation skills. Students will present their papers at competitions in the spring.



## OMS Students Give Back

Oceanside Middle School students raised over \$4,000 for breast cancer research this fall with a walkathon on the school track. In addition, members of the Builders Club came together to provide food for a Thanksgiving feast to 10 families. Back in September, students washed cars (and a fire truck!) in support of the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

The desire to be helpful is a sign of growing maturity and develops students' sense of purpose, competence, and connection to the community. At OMS, community service is a win-win.

**Wishing our students, staff & families a wonderful holiday!!**

**Oceanside School District  
Board of Education**

Michael D'Ambrosio, President  
Stuart Kaplan, Vice President  
Seth J. Blau  
Laura Lisi  
Donald Maresca  
Sandie Schoell  
Robert Transom

**Superintendent of Schools**

Dr. Phyllis. S. Harrington

**Communication Director; Editor**

Donna Kraus

**Administrative Offices**





145 Merle Avenue, Oceanside, NY 11572.  
Phone: 516-678-7525

Visit our website @ [oceansideschools.org](http://oceansideschools.org)

NON-PROFIT  
ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Oceanside, N.Y.  
Permit No. 417

**ECRWSEDDM  
POSTAL CUSTOMER  
Oceanside, NY 11572**

**Don't Miss A Thing ~ Follow us at:**

-  [oceansideschools.org](http://oceansideschools.org)
-  [Facebook.com/OceansideSchools](https://www.facebook.com/OceansideSchools)
-  [Instagram.com/OceansideSchools](https://www.instagram.com/OceansideSchools)
-  [YouTube.com/OceansideSchools](https://www.youtube.com/OceansideSchools)

**Students Give Cell Phone Ban A Passing Grade**

Oceanside High School students may not love the new rules requiring them to keep their cell phones in their lockers during the school day, but they acknowledge it has been better than expected. They're also finding that they socialize more with their peers during the school day.

"These student responses show that breaking a phone addiction is difficult and adjusting to the ban takes time," wrote OHS student Megan Osborn in the school's digital newspaper, *'Sider Press*, referring to comments from her interviews with fellow students.

Megan continued in her article: "However, most students seem to agree that their social skills (valuable skills we need to learn as we grow up) are improving. Social media has made real life interactions less common because it's easier to communicate through texts or calls.

The phone ban encourages face to face conversations which is extremely beneficial to all students. The ban provides us students with new opportunities to make stronger connections with each other," she concluded.