



Okanogan School District Newsletter

Issue #2 – February 2026

Connecting our schools, families, and community

Celebrating Our Okanogan Community

Our schools thrive because of the students, staff, families, and community members who support them. In this issue, we're excited to share updates on district projects, student activities, and programs that continue to strengthen our schools. Thank you for being an important part of the Okanogan School District.

Facilities Update: Bond & Modernization Projects

Since voters approved the district bond in April 2025, the district has been working steadily behind the scenes to move both major facility projects forward. While construction isn't visible yet, the work happening now is critical to keeping the projects on schedule and protecting taxpayer investment.

Bond Project Overview

The district's \$14 million bond unlocked more than \$24 million in state matching funds, creating a modernization investment totaling over \$38 million. Current work includes architectural design, safety planning, environmental review (SEPA), permitting, and budget alignment.

Key improvements include:

- Safer, redesigned building entries
- New roofs
- Classroom and building modernization
- Turf football/soccer field
- New all-weather track at Virginia Granger
- Relocated baseball and softball facilities

Key dates:

- **Feb. 23:** Public preview of draft architectural drawings at board meeting
- **Late July 2026:** Competitive bidding
- **Fall 2026:** Phased construction begins
-

Dawson Gym & Vo-Ag Modernization

A separate \$6 million state modernization grant is funding upgrades to the Dawson Gym and Vocational Agriculture building, including roof replacement, HVAC improvements, and infrastructure modernization.

Timeline:

- **Mid-May:** Project bid
- **Summer 2026:** Construction begins
- **Target completion:** January

This work is coordinated with the bond project to maximize efficiency and minimize disruption to school operations.

Moving Forward

Even when construction isn't visible, progress is constant. The district remains focused on safety, long-term durability, and responsible stewardship of public funds so these improvements serve the community for the next 20–30 years.

For more detailed information, please visit our [website](#) under District Office and “Construction Updates.”

Food Service

Nourishing Our Students Every Day

Providing healthy, balanced meals for our students is a priority in our school district. We'd like to share an overview of the nutrition standards and menu requirements that guide our School Nutrition Program and ensure our students are fueled for learning and success.

Our district participates in the **National School Lunch Program (NSLP)**, a federally funded program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). All meals are planned and prepared in compliance with USDA meal pattern requirements, nutrition standards, and applicable state and local regulations to support students' health, growth, and academic success.

Each reimbursable lunch includes five required components:

- **Fruit:** Offered daily; fresh, frozen, canned (in juice or light syrup), or dried.
- **Vegetables:** Served daily and planned weekly to include all required subgroups (dark green, red/orange, legumes, starchy, and other).
- **Grains:** All items are whole grain-rich (at least 50% whole grains).
- **Protein Foods:** Age-appropriate portions of approved meat or meat alternates (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, yogurt, or cheese).
- **Milk:** Low-fat (1%) or fat-free options only.

Menus are developed to meet USDA standards for calorie ranges, sodium limits, saturated fat, and added sugars, with requirements varying by grade level (elementary, middle, and high school).

Under **Offer Versus Serve (OVS)**, students may decline some meal components; however, they must select **at least three of the five**, including **one fruit or vegetable**, for the meal to be reimbursable.

The School Nutrition Program maintains required menus, standardized recipes, and production records and is routinely reviewed to ensure compliance with all NSLP regulations.

In accordance with USDA civil rights requirements, the district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. Families needing meal accommodations due to disabilities or special dietary needs are encouraged to contact the School Nutrition Department.

For questions about menus, nutrition standards, or program compliance, please contact the School Nutrition Department. Thank you for your continued support of our School Nutrition Program.

Okanogan High School

Brayden Meyer Earns Prestigious Regents Scholarship to Washington State University

There are moments in a school year that remind us just how extraordinary our students are. This is one of them. Brayden Meyer has been named a recipient of the highly selective **WSU Distinguished Regents Scholarship**, an honor awarded to just **11 students across Washington State**. The scholarship provides a full, four-year ride to attend Washington State University—an achievement that speaks volumes about Brayden’s dedication, talent, and character.

When Brayden first learned the news, he was understandably thrilled. Although counselor **Erin Radke** had submitted his name and credentials for consideration, Brayden admitted he didn’t fully realize just how exclusive the scholarship was and had no expectation that he would be seriously considered. That humility makes the recognition even more meaningful.

For Brayden and his family, the scholarship represents more than academic recognition—it provides significant financial relief at a pivotal time. With his sister beginning graduate school this fall, the opportunity to attend college tuition-free eases financial pressures and allows Brayden to focus fully on his academic and personal goals.

Even before receiving the scholarship, Washington State University was Brayden’s first choice. Now, with the Distinguished Regents Scholarship in hand, attending WSU feels like a dream realized.

Inspired by Family, Driven by Curiosity

Brayden credits much of his motivation to his sister, whose academic journey inspired him to pursue higher education with purpose. That influence helped shape his interest in a field that blends hands-on problem solving with intellectual rigor. Brayden currently plans to major in **mechanical engineering**, drawn to its practical applications and engaging challenges.

Some of his favorite high school experiences came in Calculus and Physics classes taught by **Mr. Cheeseman** and **Mr. Ingraham**. Their teaching helped Brayden develop a genuine love for these subjects and encouraged him to explore engineering pathways more deeply.

Excellence On and Off the Field

Beyond the classroom, Brayden has been a standout student-athlete, lettering in football, basketball, and baseball. While he has always dreamed about the possibility of playing sports—especially baseball—at the collegiate level, Brayden is clear about his priorities. With a full academic scholarship secured, he sees education as his primary focus. If an opportunity to play athletics at WSU presents itself, he views it as a bonus—“icing on the cake.”

Brayden is also an active member of the **National Honor Society**, where he has enjoyed opportunities to serve the community and give back. He values the sense of connection and purpose that comes from contributing to something larger than himself.

Gratitude for a Supportive Community

When reflecting on the people who have influenced him most, Brayden speaks warmly about his parents, sister, and the many teachers and staff who have supported him throughout high school. He shared special appreciation for Erin Radke, noting how much time he has spent in her office researching scholarships and planning for the future. He describes that space as one of encouragement and guidance, where he always felt supported.

A Cougar in the Making

Brayden Meyer represents the very best of our school community—a student who excels academically, contributes athletically, and demonstrates humility and gratitude along the way. His recognition as a WSU Distinguished Regents Scholar highlights not only his individual achievements but also the collective support of family, educators, and community members who helped him reach this milestone.

We are incredibly proud of Brayden and look forward to seeing all he accomplishes at Washington State University. He will undoubtedly represent our school and community with excellence.

Virginia Grainger Elementary School

January was a busy and productive month, with a strong focus on student learning and growth. Recently, students completed **i-Ready assessments** in both mathematics and reading. These assessments allow students to set individualized goals while helping staff monitor progress toward both typical and stretch growth targets throughout the year. The data gathered will guide

instructional decisions moving forward, and staff look forward to upcoming data meetings where student growth will be reviewed and intervention supports further strengthened.

While assessment work has been underway, staff have remained fully engaged in high-quality teaching and collaboration. **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)** continue their regular work, including **MTSS** and **Special Education PLCs**, with teams thoughtfully adjusting instruction and student groupings to better meet the needs of all learners. This shared commitment reflects strong collective teacher efficacy—when educators work together toward common goals, meaningful outcomes follow.

Students are also benefiting from expanded learning opportunities through **after-school programming**. The **Highly Capable Program**, taught by *Mrs. Beery*, is currently serving approximately **11 students**. **Math Is Cool** is underway as well, with **4th grade instruction led by Miss Coffee** and **12 students participating**, and **5th grade instruction taught by Mrs. Richards** with **11 students enrolled**. These programs provide students with valuable opportunities to extend their learning and challenge themselves academically.

Strong partnerships with families and the community continue to enrich our school culture. The **PTO** once again hosted its annual **Valentine's Candygrams fundraiser**, a student favorite that continues to be a fun and successful way to support school activities. **Kiwanis Terrific Kids celebrations** remain a monthly highlight, and we are grateful for the ongoing support of the **Okanogan Kiwanis** in recognizing and encouraging our students.

This year's Elementary Spelling Bee was a wonderful showcase of our students' hard work, confidence, and dedication to learning. We are proud of all the participants who challenged themselves and represented their classrooms so well. Congratulations to our Spelling Bee winner, **Samuel Vizcarra**, whose perseverance and impressive spelling skills earned him this year's top honor. Well done, Samuel—we are so proud of you!



Front – Stella Hulse, Samuel Vizcarra, Colette Bangerter, Madeline Hoffman, Langley Gardner, Huck Morris. (Continued next page)

Back – Ty Judd, Mia Vargas, Olivia Coffman, Emmanuel Alvarez, Henry McElderry, Caleb Gaines, Danikah Ranck, Oliver Thompson, Kaylilly Cornett-Martin

Okanogan Middle School

Our middle school students have been busy expanding their learning beyond the classroom through a variety of engaging, hands-on experiences this year. Seventh and eighth grade students recently had the opportunity to travel to **Central Washington University (CWU)** for a college tour through **GEAR UP**. Prior to their CWU visit, **all 8th grade students** also toured **Washington State University**, giving them an early look at college life and future academic possibilities.

In addition, **7th and 8th grade STEM students** will be traveling to **Eastern Washington University's Spokane campus** to visit the **Catalyst Building**, where they will explore innovative spaces focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. These experiences help students connect classroom learning to real-world applications and potential career pathways.

Looking ahead to March, **all 8th grade students** will take an exciting field trip to the **LIGO Laser Interferometer Gravitational Observatory** at the Hanford site. This visit will allow students to learn firsthand about cutting-edge scientific research and the study of gravitational waves.

Middle school science students also welcomed visitors from **Chillowist and Raw**, who presented an engaging **sourdough lesson**. Students enjoyed learning about the science behind fermentation while participating in a fun and interactive presentation.

Additionally, our **Native students** have been participating in **monthly Nature Immersion activities**. These meaningful, hands-on experiences include digging roots, skinning animals, building fires, fishing, and more, while fostering cultural connections and learning through the outdoors.

These opportunities reflect our continued commitment to providing enriching experiences that inspire curiosity, cultural understanding, and a lifelong love of learning.

Central Washinton University



Chilliwist and Raw Sourdough



Fish Skin Tanning



Washington State University





Camp Progress: Supporting Outdoor Learning for 6th Grade

Each May, our **6th grade students** attend **Camp Progress**, a five-day, four-night outdoor learning experience that provides hands-on learning, teamwork, and personal growth opportunities outside the traditional classroom setting. Teacher Amy Cheeseman witnesses, "One of the most valuable aspects of the Camp Progress experience is the social and emotional growth students demonstrate. Throughout the week, students build closer relationships with their peers, practice teamwork and perseverance, and often form lifelong friendships. For some students, this is their first time spending a night away from home, making the experience both challenging and deeply rewarding as they grow in confidence and independence,"

Amy says, "The Sixth Grade Outdoor Education program at Camp Progress is a unique opportunity that blends academic learning, personal growth, and community tradition, creating lasting memories and meaningful learning experiences for our students."

In past years, this experience has been supported by a **Washington State Outdoor Learning Grant**. Due to recent funding cuts in Olympia, the district is working creatively to ensure that **Camp Progress can continue**. The total cost to operate the camp is approximately **\$25,000**, which includes transportation, food, portable restrooms, a cook, substitute coverage, and staff stipends. Students will be asked to contribute **\$50** to help cover food costs for the week. **Financial assistance will be available** to ensure no student is excluded due to inability to pay.

To cover the remaining **\$22,000**, the district is seeking support from our community. If you are interested in helping provide this valuable outdoor learning opportunity for our 6th grade students, please contact the **district office or middle school office** for more information.

Families and community members can also visit our website to view **videos and photos** from past Camp Progress experiences:

👉 <https://oms.oksd.wednet.edu/parents/camp-progress>

Thank you for your continued support of meaningful, hands-on learning opportunities for our students.

Outreach School

The Okanogan Alternative School is exploring community interest for a Parent Partnership Program. Parent Partnership Programs (PPPs) in Washington State are public-school options designed for families who want to take an active role in their child's education. These programs blend home-based learning with school-supported resources. Parents remain primary teachers using school curriculum, but they have the ability to contact school personnel with questions, and concerns as well as request school supplies. Additionally, students will be able to participate in labs with other students their age.

PPP's offer personalized learning with each student receiving an individualized written student learning plan. Learning plans can include at home, on campus or online instruction based on the family's preference. Certified instructors will be available to help families and students with lesson plans, curriculum choices, and pacing calendars. Additionally, students will be eligible for district services that include special education, 504 support and being able to participate in school activities.

The most exciting part of the Parent Partnership Program is the opportunity for students to participate in school labs with their peers. These labs will be in subject areas such as Math, Science, English and Art. The labs will be held in multiple grade groups and can last half a day to a full day based on interest. Virginia Grainger will host the Parent Partnership Program and there will be lunch options available during lab days. Additionally field trips will be offered on a monthly to bimonthly schedule depending on interest and availability. Possible destinations are Dry Falls, Fort Okanogan, Grand Coulee Dam, Ruby, Lost Lake Guard Station, and Chief Jospheh Memorial.

REQUIREMENTS

- Students must be enrolled in the partnering school district.
- School District approved curriculum will be supplied and utilized, although there is flexibility from family to family on curriculum choices (must be secular)
- Parents help implement the Written Student Learning Plan.
- Weekly check-ins with the certified teacher are required (in person, phone, text and e-mail)
- Monthly progress reviews with a certificated teacher are also required.
- Out of district students must fill out a choice transfer request

If you have any questions about the Parent Partnership Program, please contact Roy Johnson at 509-322-7195 or through e-mail at rojohanson@oksd.wednet.edu.

Important Dates

- **Board Meeting:** Monday, February 23, 2026, 5:30 pm (MS/HS Library)
- **No School:** Friday, February 27th – Professional Development
- **No School:** Friday, March 20th - Professional Development
- **Athletic Events:** <https://www.oksd.wednet.edu/athletics/oksd-athletic-new>

Stay Connected

Questions? Email: bwilliams@oksd.wednet.edu

Visit us: www.oksd.wednet.edu

2025-2026 Okanogan School District Calendar

July 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August 2025						
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September 2025						
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28	29	30				

October 2025						
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November 2025						
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December 2025						
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28	29	30	31			



2025-26

Aug 19-21 & 25	Professional Development Days
Aug 26	First Day of School for Students (1-12)
Aug 26&27	Screening for Preschool, TK, and K
Aug 28	First day for Preschool, TK, and K
Sep 1	Labor Day - No School
Sep 5	Fair Day - No School
Sep 26	Professional Develop for teachers
Sep 26	Native American Day - No School
Oct 24	Professional Develop for teachers
Oct 31	Quarter Ends-Early Release-Grading Day
Nov 6-7	PT Conferences - No School
Nov 10-11	Veterans Day - No School
Nov 26-28	Thanksgiving Vacation
Dec 22-Jan 2	Winter Break
Jan 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - No School
Jan 23	Semester End-Early Release-Grading Day
Feb 13	No School (Possible Snow Day Makeup)
Feb 16	Presidents' Day - No School
Feb 27	Professional Develop for teachers*
Mar 20	Professional Develop for teachers
Apr 3	Quarter Ends-Early Release-Grading Day
Apr 6-10	Spring Break
Apr 16-17	PT Conferences - No School
May 25	Memorial Day - No School
Jun 6	High School Graduation
Jun 8	Outreach Graduation
Jun 9	Preschool Last Day
Jun 10	Last Day of School - Early Release

No Preschool on any Early-Release or Late-Start Day

Inclement weather to be made up Feb 13.
If no days are off because of weather, Feb 13 will become a vacation day from school.
Make up days beyond one will be added to end of year.

January 2026						
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February 2026						
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28						

March 2026						
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29	30	31				

April 2026						
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May 2026						
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June 2026						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Other Events to Consider
 Aug 20 HS Football Begins
 Aug 25 HS VB, Soccer, CC Begin
 Aug 25 MS Football Begins
 Aug 25 MS VB Begins
 Aug 25 MS CC Begins

Other Events to Consider
 Oct 27 MS BB and MS Girls WR Begin
 Nov 17 HS Winter Sports Begin
 Jan 5 MS GB and MS Boys WR Begin
 Feb 20-21 State Wrestling Championships
 Mar 4-7 State Basketball Championships

Other Events to Consider
 Mar 2 HS Spring Sports Begin
 Mar 23 MS Track Begins
 May 30 Final HS Spring Sports Champions

 School Closed
 Early Release

 PD Teacher Professional Development - No School
★ Graduations

 Parent Teacher Conferences
 First & Last Day of School