OKANOGAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

THE BULLDOG BEAT

FALL 2026 | DISTRICT NEWSLETTER



Celebrating Our Schools, Students & Community

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Okanogan High School

Looking Back: Homecoming Week Was a Success!

Homecoming Week (October 5–10) was a huge success! From class board paintings and spirit dress-up days to PowderPuff Football, Macho Volleyball, the assembly, and the dance, our Bulldogs showed their school pride and made it a week to remember. Thank you to everyone who helped make Homecoming a success!

Haunted House a Halloween Hit!

The OHS ASL Club hosted its annual Haunted House on October 30 and 31 at the Old Flour Mill, bringing spooky Halloween fun to the community. Thank you to everyone who supported our students and helped make the event a success!

Celebrating Excellence: School of Distinction

For the second consecutive year, Okanogan High School has received the School of Distinction Award from OSPI! This recognition celebrates our strong graduation rate and the dual-credit opportunities we provide to students. We are proud of our Bulldogs, staff, and community for helping make these achievements possible!

November 11 | K-12 Veterans Day Assembly

Community Members Welcome! Okanogan School District will host its K–12 Veterans Day Assembly on Wednesday, November 11. We invite community members to join us as we honor and recognize the veterans who have served our country. We look forward to coming together as a school community to show our gratitude.

December 14-18 | Winter Wishes Week

A Week of Holiday Cheer! The holiday spirit is coming to OHS! During Winter Wishes Week, our ASB works hard to spread cheer throughout the student body with cocoa, candy, winter wishes, and other festive activities. The week will culminate with a special assembly on Friday, December 18.

Once a Bulldog, Always a Bulldog!

Thank you for supporting Okanogan High School and helping make our school a place where students can learn, grow, and take pride in being Bulldogs. We look forward to celebrating these upcoming events with our students, families, and community!

Okanogan High School | Photo Highlights

School spirit and honoring our veterans



Bulldog school spirit



Veterans recognition

Okanogan Middle School

Creating, Connecting, and Learning at Okanogan Middle School

From musical performances and robot competitions to creative artwork and outdoor science, Okanogan Middle School students are putting their learning into action.

Three of our musicians recently represented OKMS at the Sarge Huber Honor Festival. Mrs. Kathy Bryson took trumpet players Max Robeck and Charlie Hulse and clarinet player Lyla Fisher who joined students from schools across North Central Washington for a day of learning, rehearsing, and developing their musical skills. The experience culminated in an evening performance showcasing their collective talents. We are proud of these students for representing our school!

In STEM classes, Mr. Nick Fletcher's students are combining engineering, creativity, and problem-solving as they build remote-controlled LEGO robots and put their designs to the test in a Robot Demolition Derby. Advanced STEM students are taking on a project of a different scale: using blueprints to construct an 8-foot-by-20-foot shed. They are also creating a scaled digital replica using computer-aided design (CAD), connecting their design work to the structure they are building. A special thank you to Timber Quest LLC and Dan (DJ) Shiflett for creating the shed blueprints and supporting this hands-on learning opportunity for our STEM students!

Creativity is not only flourishing in Mrs. Amy Cheeseman’s ELA classroom, but also her Art classroom, where students are creating wonderful artwork and developing their skills and individual expression. The student artwork pictured with this article offers a glimpse of the imagination and talent found in our middle school.

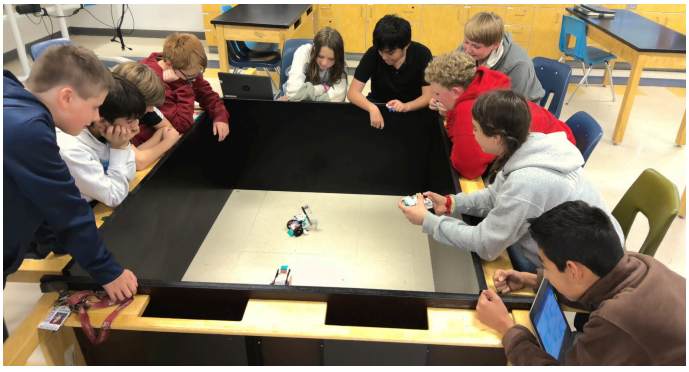
Our entire seventh grade recently joined Miss Wiesner, seventh-grade science teacher, for a field trip that connected classroom learning to the environment and our community. Activities included salmon dissection, macroinvertebrate collection and identification led by ecology students working with the Conservation District, a sewage treatment plant tour, and a wildlife activity led by Conservation District staff. These experiences gave students opportunities to investigate science beyond the classroom and learn from community partners.

Alongside these learning experiences, we are bringing student voice front and center. We recently surveyed students about connection, belonging, and safety. Their responses are helping us reflect on an essential question: “How do we ensure that every student at OKMS can identify at least one adult in our building who knows them, cares about them, and whom they trust enough to approach when they need help?” We want every student to feel known, supported, and connected to our school community.

Our staff works hard to provide meaningful instruction, build strong relationships, and maintain high expectations for every student. Whether students are practicing an instrument, designing a robot, creating art, or investigating the natural world, we expect them to participate, persevere, and grow.

At Okanogan Middle School, learning is required.



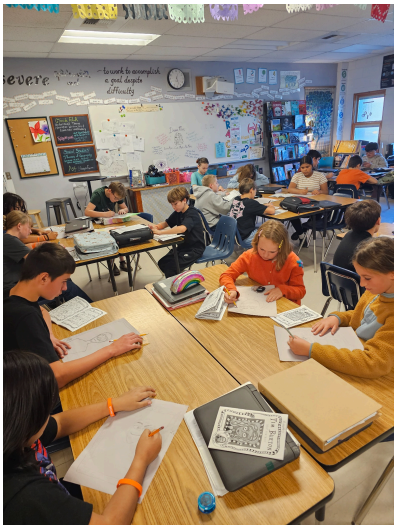


Okanogan Middle School | More Photos











GEAR UP

In celebration of National GEAR UP Week, Okanogan GEAR UP welcomed retired NFL Player Alex Green on September 23rd! His mission is to build resiliency and work ethic in young people so they can dream big and believe in themselves! His hour-long assembly was full of energy, personal narrative as a broke college student, a stubborn aspiring athlete and humility after injury and pivoting his career. Students were reminded to "REFLECT, RESET & RISE" no matter the adversity they face.

GEAR UP is here, there, everywhere! As part of GEAR UP's college & career going initiatives, Casey & Jesse are in your student's classroom to build awareness of post-high school pathways including apprenticeships and military careers, life skills like self-advocacy and financial resources that fund their future! Students hoping to get the most out of GEAR UP also come in during free periods, lunch and stay after school for academic tutoring and tailored conversations about their interests. Many students also are taking their exploration beyond the figurative with hands-on college & career trips, GEARing UP for life after graduation!

Opportunities are always arising so encourage your student to listen to the morning bulletin, follow us on Instagram or Facebook (OKSDGEARUP) and pop in Room 112 to know what's happening!

Huge shoutout to GEAR UP Graduation Specialist, Jesse Villaraldo, for his personable work supporting every student and family. Jesse is a huge advocate for first-generation families in accessing the information and resources they need, often serving as a bilingual bridge for Okanogan. His mentorship to students also extends past his official job as a volunteer coach for the HS Girls Soccer Team. GEAR UP has had a tremendously busy Fall season, and he's giving his time to students and athletes without hesitation. Thank you to Jesse for being an essential other half of the GEAR UP program!

Upcoming Dates:

10-12 Gonzaga Preview Visit 11.13

7/8 EWU Athletics Campus Visit 11.18

CWU Rep & Admission Presentation 11.19

Air Force Recruitment Presentation 12.3

PUD Career Presentation 12.9

Winter Break Bash for Graduating Classes '25-27 coming soon in mid-December!





GEAR UP | More Photos











VIRGINIA GRAINGER ELEMENTARY

Community connections and fall celebrations

Bikes for Books

The Okanogan Masons Club visited Virginia Grainger Elementary to present bicycles through the Bikes for Books program. Thank you for supporting our young readers!

Pumpkin Bingo Night

What a turnout! Students and families gathered for Pumpkin Bingo Night, enjoying a festive evening together.



Bikes for Books



Pumpkin Bingo Night

VIRGINIA GRAINGER ELEMENTARY

Halloween spirit and student recognition



Halloween Golden Awards Assembly



Ms. Coffey's fourth-grade class



October Terrific Kids

OCTOBER TERRIFIC KIDS

Congratulations to October Terrific Kids! Thank you to the Okanogan Kiwanis Club for sponsoring this student recognition.

PARENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Hands-on learning, exploration and connection

The Okanogan Parent Partnership Program combines homeschooling with one full school day per week focused on peer relationships, inquiry-based instruction and hands-on opportunities. Students also participate in a monthly field trip. Jill Streeter supports families with curriculum selection, tutoring options and home-based lesson planning.



Collecting leaves for an art project



Outdoor leaf-collecting activity



Solving math equations



Show and tell: a snake

Contact Jill Streeter: jstreeter@oksd.wednet.edu | 509-826-7612

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Building skills for life beyond high school

As part of transition planning, high school Life Skills students are building independence, work skills, functional and social skills, community connections and confidence through hands-on activities.



Community Service

Nine or more students volunteer weekly at Community Action, assembling food boxes and helping distribute them.



Community Garden

Students helped clean up a local community garden while practicing teamwork and job-related skills.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Transition experiences and employment preparation



Public Transportation

Students learned about TranGO and rode a local bus route to practice navigating community resources.



Employment Opportunities

One student is working with WorkSource to prepare for a temporary employment opportunity at Dairy Queen.



Work-Based Learning

One student spends an hour each day assisting in a preschool classroom, practicing responsibility and communication.

BULLDOG ATHLETICS

Pride, passion and teamwork

Our Bulldogs represent Okanogan with dedication, teamwork and school pride across football, volleyball, cross country and soccer. For current postseason schedules, results, brackets and announcements, visit oksd.wednet.edu > Athletics > Athletic News.



Football



Football



Volleyball



Volleyball



Cross Country



Cross Country



Soccer



Soccer

Highly Capable Program

Referral information · November 2-30, 2026



School Construction Projects Moving Forward

Superintendent Steve Quick

There is a lot happening across the Okanogan School District as we continue moving forward with two major construction efforts: our voter-approved bond projects and the separate $6 million state-funded modernization project.

Bond Projects

After receiving bids that exceeded our budget earlier this year, we took a hard look at our construction plans to determine where adjustments could be made. Working closely with our architects, we evaluated what was driving costs higher than anticipated and identified areas where we could reduce expenses without compromising the overall intent of the projects.

This required some difficult decisions, including removing or modifying certain items while protecting the improvements we believe are most important for our students and community. Fortunately, that strategy worked! We received acceptable bids on September 29 and October 1 that brought the projects within our available budget. For details of what has changed between the bidding documents and results, please visit our website where you can find a detailed report on this topic.

We are still moving forward with new baseball and softball fields, a new football/soccer field, additional athletic improvements, classroom renovations, roof replacements, heating and cooling upgrades, and improvements to building safety and security. These projects represent a significant investment in our schools that will benefit students and our community for decades to come.

Currently, the bond projects are going through the City of Okanogan's permitting process. We are also awaiting state approval for excavation work west of Virginia Grainger Elementary, where the new baseball and softball fields will be located. We anticipate finalizing contracts with Cascade Central Construction in the near future.

Within the next several weeks, we expect portable classrooms to begin arriving to accommodate the different phases of construction. This will mean relocating classrooms at various times throughout this school year and next. We recognize that these moves will create inconveniences for students and staff, but they are necessary to keep school operating while renovations take place.

$6 Million Modernization Project

Meanwhile, construction is already well underway on our separate $6 million modernization project, which includes Dawson Gymnasium, the Vocational/Agriculture building, and our new wrestling facility.

The new wrestling building is taking shape, with roofing expected to be completed in the coming weeks so that interior work can move forward. Paving of the new parking lot is scheduled for November 9. New HVAC equipment is scheduled to be installed at Dawson Gym and the Vo/Ag building next week, with roofing work continuing as weather permits.

We did encounter a challenge with roofing work that began this summer. During installation, we discovered that some of the materials being used did not meet the specifications necessary to provide the 30-year warranty required in our construction documents. We stopped that portion of the work until the issue could be corrected. While this created an unexpected delay, it was important to ensure the district receives the quality of work and long-term protection we are paying for.

The contractor remains confident that this entire modernization project will be completed by March 1, 2027.

Looking Ahead

The next year or two will certainly bring challenges as we work around construction, temporary classrooms, and disruptions to our normal routines. However, it is also an exciting time for the Okanogan School District!

When these projects are complete, our students and staff will benefit from safer, more comfortable, and more efficient learning environments, along with athletic facilities that will serve our schools and community for many years.

We appreciate the continued patience and support of our students, staff, families, and community as we work through these improvements. We are committed to being responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to us and making sure these projects are completed correctly.

Thank you for supporting our schools and helping us build a better future for Okanogan students!





Wrestling facility construction progress

Wrestling Facility | Construction Progress

From site preparation to roofing installation



Site preparation



Rebar and foundation work



Concrete pouring



Walls and interior work

Wrestling Facility | Construction Progress

A look inside the developing facility



Crane and exterior progress



Roof installation



Roof structure in place