

For immediate release: Monday, July 10, 2017

OA SCHOOLS' STUDENT-ATHLETES RECEIVE HIGH HONORS FROM STATE; OA NAMED "SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE"

OWEGO – The New York State Public High School Athletic Association, Inc. (NYSPHSAA) has announced its academics-athletics awards for the 2016-2017 school year and Owego Free Academy has received high praise, included in a very select group celebrated for athletics teams who achieved great success in the classroom.

New this year, schools can earn a School of Excellence award by having 75 percent of their varsity teams qualify for and receive the Scholar-Athlete team award. Scholar-Athlete teams require 75 percent of the students on the team's members achieve a grade point average be 90 or above. Only 47 school districts in New York state achieved this honor.

"We're used to hearing the phrase 'student-athlete,' so at times it might be easy to see it as a cliché," said Corey Green, Owego Apalachin superintendent. "But here at OA Schools, and especially at the high school and middle school levels, we're creating a landscape across which all of our well rounded students are celebrated for a number of talents and achievements, in and out of the classroom."

"Achieving state-level recognition in this area is an annual goal for the Athletics Department," said Andy Buchsbaum, OFA director of athletics. "The list of

schools being recognized is not a long one, so it really highlights how elite of an award this is, and just how difficult it is to accomplish. I couldn't be prouder of our student-athletes and coaches."

At the Owego Apalachin district, 339 individual high school students participated in athletics in 2016-2017 (220 varsity, 119 junior varsity). There were also 189 athletes competing at the modified level this past school year. Our overall varsity grade point average, across all varsity sports, was a 92.46, according to Buchsbaum.

"The world isn't one-dimensional, and our students know this," Green said.

"There's a real culture in our school district that celebrates our traditional and performance arts, our regional technology leadership, the pride and connection we have with our traditions and community, and certainly, our athletic spirit is on display when an award like this comes along.

"But at the base of everything we do," Green added, "the conversation begins and ends with academic excellence. To receive the high honor of being named a School of Distinction in New York state, and to be at the head of that movement in Section 4, confirms for us that our approach is working, and that we're on the right track."

+++

More information: Stephen Jensen at 743-0582, or e-mail at jensens@oacsd.org.

