

Owego Apalachin Central School District

Superintendent's Highlights

November 2, 2017

Dear Owego Apalachin Community,



I hope everyone is enjoying the beautiful fall weather we've had, to date. At the school district, we are back in full swing with plenty of exciting things happening, as we continue to focus on improving in all areas especially student achievement.

Construction Completion/Stadium Project

First, we are proud to announce that construction of Owego Elementary School, OA's Administrative Building and the district's Maintenance Building are now officially complete. Thank you to everyone, from the very start, to the final stages, for all your patience, dedication and important work in helping us reach a happy conclusion.

We now have shifted our focus toward a new project that will update our athletic stadium. With several hurricanes hitting communities in the United States this fall, movement has slowed within the FEMA offices, so we are still awaiting approvals for certain portions of the stadium upgrades. You will, however, begin to see some movement this winter as we begin to tear down the old bleachers and get a jumpstart on some site work. Our goal, our hope, is that we will have a new stadium ready for use by the fall of 2018.

STEAM Academy

This year we opened our STEAM Academy for students in grades 6 through 12, and we're thrilled to be able to offer such a comprehensive program to our students with a focus on 21st-century learning skills. The following areas below are what we currently offer:

- Aquaponics
- Makerspaces
- CNC Machining
- Manufacturing Processes
- Fabrication Lab
- Engineering/Design 3D Printing
- Pre-Engineering
- 3D Virtual Learning
- Coding
- Vex Robotics
- Traditional and Digital Arts
- Performing Arts



Thought-Sharing

In the next few weeks all our stakeholders will begin to see survey information distributed throughout the community. We will be looking for everyone's input on how we're doing as a school district, and people's thoughts on which ways we can improve as we move forward. Community input is very important, as we know so many in the area take great pride in OA's progress, as well as our deeply engrained traditions.

OFA's Melby Joins Ranks of Master Teacher

Congratulations to OA's Barb Melby, our OFA chemistry teacher who was recently named a New York State Master Teacher. The announcement came in a Press & Sun-Bulletin newspaper article October 18. The Master Teacher Program is made up of secondary school teachers and educators who have been found to be among the highest performing in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math. The new members include 30 from the Southern Tier. The teachers are affiliated with local colleges. We're very proud of all our teachers, but this moment in the spotlight is much deserved for Mrs. Melby.



Our Teachers Ranked Among Top 25 of Upstate, New York Educators

OA Schools' teachers received a nice tip of the cap in mid-September, as they were listed in the Top 25 of the website NewYorkUpstate.com's most recent rankings of educators in the Upstate, New York, region. OA's teachers were ranked 22nd-best in Upstate New York, and were the only Broome-Tioga BOCES region teachers to receive a mention in the Top 25.

We realize that some of these rankings can be very subjective. Still, while we consistently celebrate our teachers for being among the best in the state, it's always nice to have an independent organization take a look at what we do, then offer kudos. Our teachers, by and large, are not in this profession to receive accolades. That said, when they receive recognition and validation that all their dedicated efforts are paying tangible dividends for our students, it's certainly a bonus for them to receive attention, as individuals, and for our community's pride, for what they do in the classroom here every day.

OFA Recognized as a School of Excellence

If you missed our announcement over the summer, I think it's worth mentioning again. The New York State Public High School Athletic Association, Inc. (NYSPHSAA) announced in July that its academics-athletics awards for the 2016-2017 school year included Owego Free Academy. Our high school student-athletes were 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, so again, congratulations to our students, our coaches and our teachers for setting that high standard.

Our Graduation Rate

At OA, we're thrilled to share the news that 2017 was our highest graduation rate that anyone can remember in several years. The OFA student graduation rate climbed to 94 percent. We're very proud of our students and staff for doing such a tremendous job.

OFA June Regents Results

We're also very happy to report that our OFA Regents exam scores continue to climb. The students performed very well this past spring, and were ranked in the Top 5 in 7 of the 10 exams taken, across the Broome-Tioga BOCES region. We'll continue to strive for excellence in this area, as one of our district goals is to elevate all of our 10 Regents exams scores into the Top 5 regionally.

Summer Enrichment Camps

Our 2017 Summer Enrichment Camps were a huge success. We moved to full-day and half-day opportunities, with free lunch and breakfast part of the experience, and as a result of our offerings, we saw more than 700 campers take part in a multitude of learning experiences. Another of our district goals is to attain

85 participation in school/community programs, so having the ability to offer a robust lineup of summer enrichment opportunities for six straight weeks allows our students to remain engaged with our teachers and staff long after the regular school year has ended.

Breakfast in the Classroom (K-8)

This school year OA offers free breakfast to all students in grades K through 8. We are very happy with the participation of our students, and the staff has done a fantastic job with encouraging and educating our students about the importance of breakfast to a successful school day.

New York City Visits: Agriculture in the Classroom

In October I had the great fortune of touring a couple of established school agriculture programs in New York City with Senator Fred Akshar and a few staff members from Cornell Cooperative Education staff. We visited John Brown High School and Food & Financial High School. Both programs are outstanding and we gained a great deal of insight as we begin to build this pathway for our students.



Last school year we worked collaboratively with Cornell Cooperative Extension to bring Agriculture in the Classroom to our students at Apalachin and Owego elementary school. The program went extremely well and allowed us to be one of two school districts (alongside Windsor) in the Broome-Tioga BOCES region to pilot the next phase of the program in 8th grade. Our goal is to continue to build a comprehensive agriculture pathway for our students at OFA. We believe that our area of New York state is on the cusp of opening up several new opportunities in the field of agriculture, offering that important exposure to our students in the near future.



In the three photos above, Corey Green visited two New York City high schools that have exemplary STEAM and agriculture programs. Green was joined by Fred Akshar, state senator, and other regional education leaders.

Best regards to everyone, as we head into the colder months, and toward the holiday season.

Corey A. Green