

# Returning to Our Roots

As we looked to the 2021-2022 school year, we were filled with trepidation. While confident that we had put in place safety protocols that would allow for continuity of instruction, we were most concerned about achieving a balance between accepting a new normal and a return to the traditions, activities, and routines that make Oradell Public School a special community.



**Third Grade Halloween Fun**  
With each day, we proudly continue to find ways to return to our OPS roots. With a full day of instruction, we have increased opportunity to differentiate for individual needs during the WIN (What I Need) instructional period. There is also more time to devote to social-emotional learning through the continued implementation of the Open Circle program, which focuses on the development of a child's self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

We happily have instrumental, choral, and handbell programs in full swing. Our children are also visiting special area classes regularly. They demonstrate their creativity in the art studio and delve into a new culture and language during world language class. They also visit the science lab where they have the opportunity to bring textbook learning to life, and regularly check books out from the library with the help of parent volunteers.

PTA-sponsored lunches have returned to the delight of our parent community. Our student activities,



Fifth graders enjoy Soprano's Lunch.

including safety patrol, student government, and math league, are happening onsite each week. We are doing what we believe is best for children – providing opportunities for the whole child to develop.



Second graders explore solids and liquids in the Science Lab.

Turkey Trot. During physical education classes, students ran laps around Memorial Field and asked family and friends to donate nonperishable items for each lap completed. These items were then delivered to the Center for Food Action. Students also enjoyed shopping at the holiday boutique and look forward to both choral and instrumental concerts in the new year.

Some events will still look slightly different this year; however, we continue to focus on returning to our roots. OPS is dedicated to finding a balance between putting in place protocols that will keep our community safe and providing the quality educational experience our children deserve. We continue to be a community where strong roots grow.



Kindergarteners participate in their first Turkey Trot.



Oradell  
Public  
School  
District

350 Prospect Avenue  
Oradell, New Jersey 07649

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# ORADELL: Eye on OPS

FALL 2021



## Superintendent's Message

Dear OPS Community,

During the 2020-2021 school year, the Oradell Public School District faced numerous challenges – implementing new safety protocols, overseeing both a hybrid and a virtual instructional program, and, most importantly, making sure we kept the academic and emotional needs of our students at the center of each day. With the 2021-2022 school year underway, we continue to be diligent with regard to safety protocols. However, we also continue to ensure that our students have access to everything they need to grow and flourish as learners.

Our children's needs are what we focus on each day at OPS. The first step in deciding what our children need is to collect data about what they can do and what they are expected to do. We are staunch believers in using data to inform actions. This data can come from formal assessments given to students and also from the observational data that our faculty and staff collect each day. With regard to what our children are expected to do, we first focus on the New Jersey State Learning Standards for each subject and grade level. However, we also look at our students with regard to social-emotional competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Finally, we reflect on the mission statement of the Oradell Public School District to guide us:

*"The Oradell Public School is dedicated to the ongoing pursuit of educational excellence through comprehensive innovative curriculum and instruction. The District is committed to providing opportunities for social, emotional, and academic discovery to foster curiosity, courage, and character. Our goal is to prepare our students to become life-long learners who are self-directed, resilient, productive and responsible citizens."*

As the administrative team, in collaboration with the Board of Education, set this year's District goals, we considered what we know about our school community and what we dream for our students. The following three goals were set for the 2021-2022 school year:

- Utilize data effectively to provide differentiated academic and social-emotional instruction.
- Explore ways to integrate STEM/STEAM principles and activities into the OPS environment.
- Increase the number of students on the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) who move from Approaching (or below) to either Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Math and English Language Arts.

These goals anchor us as a District as they remind us what we are collaboratively working toward; however, our goals also reflect the mission and heart of who we are as a community. For example, utilizing data reflects the District's belief that we need to know where each learner is and move them forward. Moving forward may mean providing intervention instruction to a student who is struggling in a specific area; however, it may also mean providing enrichment through a digital platform to extend learning for a student who has mastered the content. It may mean noticing that a class as a whole struggles with demonstrating resilience when they fail at a task. The data continually informs our next steps. Our STEAM (Science/Technology/Engineering/the Arts/Mathematics) goal reflects back to our mission statement as we work to find ways to develop curiosity and self-direction. Integrating STEAM opportunities is about focusing on skills such as problem solving and communication, skills that will be critical for success moving forward. The final goal focuses on the District's belief that we need to continue to measure our academic progress. While we are proud of our results in language arts, tripling the number of students exceeding expectations over the past several years, there is always room for growth.

As superintendent, I am well aware of the challenges we face each day. I am also aware that we have 780 students who are expecting us to push past those challenges and help them grow. As a District, we need to continue to embrace our goals and make sure our daily actions reflect our goals and our dreams. Our children deserve our best efforts, and I look forward to working together with all members of our community to ensure they get just that.

Megan N. Bozios  
Superintendent

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## #PantherPride



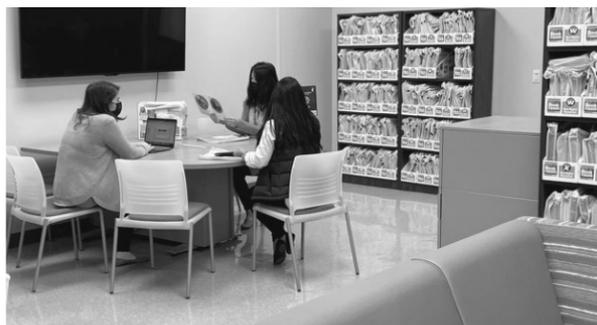
Strong Roots Grow at OPS

## Making Improvements That Benefit Our Whole OPS Community

The Oradell Board of Education, in collaboration with District administration, is committed to maintaining a culture of ongoing improvement. We are always looking for areas that can be made better for our students, our staff, our families, and the greater Oradell community. This District is proud of improvements made to our curricular programs and facilities over the past year including:



One goal of the Board of Education during the 2018-2019 school year was to identify additional instructional spaces within the building. This led to a remodel of a storage room into a classroom during the 2019-2020 school year. With our return to full instruction this year, the room is finally being enjoyed by students in the Talented and Gifted Program.



When the District renovated the storage room, this also led to a redesign of the adjacent faculty room, creating a new office for the Director of Curriculum, and more importantly, a professional development and lounge area for staff.



Parking is at a premium around OPS, and one grounds improvement project completed during the summer of 2021 was the expansion and repaving of one of the District parking lots. This project increased onsite parking by six spaces and also provided onsite storage for unused furniture and materials.



Making improvements also includes a focus on ensuring our students and teachers have the materials they need to achieve an optimal environment for teaching and learning. This year, the District has added one-to-one technology devices to second grade and also provided new laptops for every staff member.

## Thank You to Our Retirees!

### Ms. TONI BOCCANFUSO

Ms. Boccanfuso served as art teacher at OPS for 22 years. During that time, she not only shared her knowledge of artistic technique and art history with students, she also helped them to see themselves as artists. Never was this more apparent than at the annual OPS art show where every student displayed a masterpiece in the hallway. The art show allowed not just for students to showcase their work, but also for our older students to remember creating those birch trees in the art studio and our younger students to dream of the weaving they would do in the future. Always willing to lend a hand to a school or PTA event, Ms. Boccanfuso clearly left her mark on our community.



### MRS. DIANE MALWITZ

For the past 35 years, Mrs. Malwitz has been a part of every day at OPS. While her OPS career began in the upper grades, kindergarten has always been her home. She was the welcome to OPS for many students and their families. While teaching letters and sounds, she also shared a love of nature, especially the garden. She encouraged her students to use their words to make a difference, even having them write a class email to Crayola when their colored pencils would not stay sharpened. Each day was an adventure for the children Mrs. Malwitz taught, and while we will miss seeing her each day, the fingerprints of her teaching have made an indelible mark on our community.



## Recognition of Years of Service

The Board of Education recently recognized several staff members for achieving years of service benchmarks. A certificate and pin was awarded to each staff member.

### 35 Years

Diane Malwitz

### 25 Years

Lesley Maklin

### 20 Years

Roberta Kenyon

Ericka Mohr

### 15 Years

Jane Jeffs

Jennifer Powers

### 10 Years

Michele Kalotkin

### 5 Years

Nikki Dell'Olio

Karen Heinz-Marron

Reischell Velmonte

*Congratulations and thank you for your service to the families of Oradell.*

# Welcome to OPS...



### Melissa Avgerinos, Assistant Principal

Ms. Avgerinos joins OPS with 16 years of elementary teaching experience. She has served as Title I Program Coordinator, Curriculum Specialist, Teacher in Charge, Literacy Coach, and After School Club Coordinator. She looks forward to collaborating with OPS students, families, and staff.



### Kristen Collins, Preschool Teacher

Ms. Collins is certified as both a special education and an early childhood education teacher. She joins OPS with six years of experience teaching kindergarten in Virginia. Ms. Collins is excited to welcome our youngest learners into the OPS family.



### Maria Constandinou, Third Grade Teacher

Ms. Constandinou has over six years of experience in elementary education, previously serving as an instructional aide and leave replacement teacher. A graduate of Fairleigh Dickson University with a master's degree in elementary education, Ms. Constandinou enjoys using her creativity to make learning fun.



### Julia Giacobbe, Kindergarten Teacher

Ms. Giacobbe earned a master's degree in elementary and special education from Rutgers University. She uses her expertise to help plan, support, and differentiate activities for students in her classroom. She believes all students can achieve success when given a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment.



### Michele Haas, Third Grade Teacher

Ms. Haas joined OPS last spring as a first grade leave replacement teacher. During her 15 years of elementary teaching experience, she has previously held positions as both a classroom teacher and intervention specialist. She is looking forward to helping her students become independent, responsible learners.



### Ailza Karathomas, Special Education Teacher

A second career educator certified in both general and special education, Ms. Karathomas first joined OPS two years ago as an instructional aide. She is currently completing additional certification in autism disorders. She enjoys being part of the OPS community and is ready to help her students reach their goals.



### Carrie Malady, Sixth Grade Teacher

Ms. Malady has over 15 years of experience as an educator. She earned a master's degree in education from Fordham University, held teaching positions in New York City and New Jersey, and was a staff developer for many years. She is delighted to teach our sixth graders math, science, and social studies.



### Kalene Marulis, Kindergarten Teacher

After serving as an OPS student teacher and instructional aide, Ms. Marulis is excited for her new role as kindergarten teacher. A second career educator who spent the past 10 years as a dance educator, Ms. Marulis is currently pursuing a master's degree in special education.



### Cristina Perla, Learning Disabilities Teacher-Consultant

Ms. Perla is a 16-year veteran teacher and LDT-C who began her career teaching art and special education. Her mission is to provide instructional strategies to assist students struggling academically and/or behaviorally, and to help students learn how to advocate for themselves.



### Erin Riesebieter, Music Teacher

Ms. Riesebieter is in her 13th year as a music educator, having taught all across the U.S. She earned both a bachelor of music in vocal performance and a master of music education from the Boston Conservatory. She is a mom of three young children, an Army wife, and a proud River Dell graduate.



### David Roth, Supervisor of Special Services

Dr. Roth has 20 years of experience working in New Jersey public schools. He previously worked as a school psychologist in Bergenfield and as the supervisor of Special Services in Norwood. Dr. Roth's goal is to foster communication and collaboration with students, families, faculty, staff, and community stakeholders.



### Mia Rutigliano, Fifth Grade Teacher

Ms. Rutigliano earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education and special education at the University of Delaware. After spending last year as an instructional aide in a nearby district, she joins OPS as a fifth grade language arts teacher. She is eager to help students reach their full potential.



### Tara Schlessinger, Art Teacher

Ms. Schlessinger is a second career educator with an undergraduate degree in psychology and studio art from Tufts University and a master's degree in East Asian studies (focusing on Japanese art) from Washington University in St. Louis. Ms. Schlessinger is excited to merge her passion for art and education together at OPS.



### Kate Windram, Third Grade Teacher

A second career educator, Ms. Windram was previously an additions therapist for more than 15 years. She is joining the third grade team at OPS after serving as a classroom teacher in a Hoboken. Her favorite part of teaching is watching the children learn and grow throughout the year.

## Recognizing Our 2021 Educator of the Year

It was a normal Thursday at OPS last year when suddenly everyone stopped to hear the following announcement: "This year's Educator of the Year is a teacher who never says no. She never says it can't be done. She has found ways to support students learning English while also challenging students who sometimes find school too easy. Her colleagues regularly reach out to her for advice and she is always willing to take on a new challenge. And she does it all with a kind and calm spirit, with a smile and the ability to find the good in each person and each situation. Congratulations to Oradell Public School's 2021 Educator of the Year, Ms. Jeanne Black."

The OPS community has benefited from Ms. Black's (pictured right) teaching for the past 17 years. During that time, she has taught fourth through sixth grades, created a basic skills writing program, and developed a new class in applied learning. Prior to teaching, Ms. Black worked in marketing and communications. She was called to the classroom by a desire to mentor children, and she has drawn on her years in business to help budding journalists learn the power of the correct word and also to bring the real world into the classroom. No matter the challenge she presents to her students, what always remains the same is the passion and compassion she brings to the classroom as she guides her students to their "Aha!" moments. Congratulations, Ms. Black! Oradell is lucky to have you!

