

# Oakland News

February 2012



Oakland Elementary School  
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## Messages from the Principal

One of our families recently experienced a fire which resulted in the total loss of the home and all belongings. While the family of Nathan Mekus and Latrice Saunders was fortunately insured, it takes a long time and a great deal of energy to begin to rebuild. When the family is settled in a temporary home, Nathan and Latrice's mom, Amber, indicated she will communicate any needs with which we may be able to assist.

While there are multiple fundraisers at school each year, our families have always been patient and generous. The student council is hoping the parents will support one more as they conduct a coin drive for schoolmates Nathan and Latrice. The student council members plan to purchase books, games, and toys as gifts. In my experience as a principal, fundraisers for causes this "close to home," result in greater involvement and meaning. The lesson of helping others is more clearly realized when the people helped are familiar. You will receive additional information about the coin drive soon.

If your child is in 3rd-5th grade, he or she is eligible to attend the **SIT Conference** at Heartland Community College. SIT, or Students in Technology, is conducted each year and includes informational technology sessions presented by students in 3rd through 8th grade. Having attended several years, I can assure you the students enjoy the conference, are well supervised, learn about technology, become motivated to someday be a presenter, and also often arrive home with cool gifts from the door prize table! Information has been sent home with our students...so I included the web address here...just in case! To learn more or to register, visit [www.sitconference.org](http://www.sitconference.org).

If you work for a business that may support our reading incentive program, please contact me or Martha in the office. This support could include coupon/certificates, cash, activities, etc. Thank you for considering this.

Last week, I sent home thank you notes with students for the many kind gifts I received at Christmastime. There were a few gifts that became separated from the names of the givers. I apologize for not thanking you directly. However, if you were the giver of a mug with hot cocoa mix, a small stocking with an Old World candy ornament, or a lighted owl key holder...thank you for your thoughtfulness.

-Mary Kay Scharf

## Did You Know?

- ◆ If you qualify for free or reduced lunch, you also qualify for free or reduced breakfast. The reduced breakfast price is \$.30.
- ◆ The cafeteria has Juicy Juice available for \$.60 and bottled water for \$.50.
- ◆ Students are not allowed to ride a different bus than the one to which they are assigned.
- ◆ Parents should contact their child's teacher before bringing birthday or any type of treats to be shared with the class. Scheduling a date and time to bring treats will prevent a class from having more than one treat on the same day.
- ◆ All changes in after school transportation should be communicated to your child's teacher *in writing*.
- ◆ If you have concerns about a late bus or a situation that has occurred on the bus, please contact the school office at (309) 662-4302. Please keep in mind factors such as the weather and traffic may affect arrival times.
- ◆ Electronic devices such as MP3 players, handheld game systems, eReaders, etc. are not allowed on buses or at school.
- ◆ Telephones are allowed, but they must be powered off and left in the school bag at all times.



## **HOOT at Home**

### **“How Oakland Operates Together”**



Each month, we track our office discipline referrals in an effort to target skills we need to teach or re-teach to our students. Over the next few months, our school will focus on decreasing referrals made to the office by students who are physically aggressive with other students. The definition of physical aggression used at Oakland School is: The intentional use of force against another person including physical contact and throwing or shoving for the purpose of harm. As we focus on this at school, here is some helpful information about teaching positive social skills to your children at home. This article was adapted from [pbs.org/wholechild](https://pbs.org/wholechild).

#### **Setting Limits:**

By setting limits for children, you help them learn self-regulation, that is, how to set limits for themselves. The goal is to guide children and set limits so they feel supported and valued, not judged and rejected.

#### **Learning to Deal with Frustration:**

The process of learning self-control is linked very closely with how a child feels about herself and the frustrations that are part of day-to-day life. Children need help and practice building their frustration tolerance. One of the best ways to make this happen is to provide opportunities for children to make their own choices and decisions.

#### **Aggressive Behavior:**

Physical aggression (biting, pushing, hitting, throwing) is very common in the early years. Very often, episodes of aggression can be prevented before they begin. Anticipation is always helpful and relieves stress for adults and young children alike. When possible, alert children before transitions, such as the end of playtime, leaving an outing, or the arrival or departure of guests. Reinforcing or rewarding desired behavior will help children learn what is expected of them. Have as few rules as possible, but make the ones you do have stick. Be persistent because it often takes repeated experience for learning to take place.

#### **Taking Action:**

When young children play together, moods can shift quickly and tension can quickly build or resolve. Over time, parents want to teach children how to solve their own problems. But when is it best to get involved, and when should children be allowed to handle a situation themselves? Ask yourself: If this continues, what is the likelihood that someone will get hurt or something will be damaged? If trouble is really brewing, be decisive. Take action before your child does. If this is not the case, speak with your child about strategies to use in trying to solve the problem independently.

Unfortunately, children don't always stop hitting, grabbing or throwing simply because we ask them to. In these cases, these steps may help:

- ◆ Tell your child specifically what you expect her to do, and help move her in that direction.
- ◆ If necessary, remove the child from the immediate situation, but keep him with you.
- ◆ Allow time for “letting off steam” in appropriate ways i.e. running, jumping, screaming into a pillow.
- ◆ Discuss feelings and rules after she is calmer.
- ◆ Involve the child in deciding when it is time to return to the previous activity.
- ◆ Help him return to the setting and be more successful.
- ◆ If she repeats the behavior, remove her from the situation again.





# Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow!



I love snow, and I even love snow storms! I so enjoy the beauty of the snow and the fun that results indoors and outdoors. I encourage students to play outdoors in the winter and in the snow. HOWEVER, we are very clear about this being an activity that is for home. Students are given clear and frequent directions that snow should not be touched with hands from the time they leave the front door of home until they walk back through that door after school. This means the route to school or the route to the bus stop and back home is not a place for snow play. There are days we are able to have outdoor recess in the winter, but snow play is not an option.

You may be thinking I am a snow curmudgeon, so please read on to understand why this is a standard expectation in most schools.

Students who play in snow get covered in snow, and when they come indoors, the snow melts. Students whose clothes are wet are nearly always distraught or distracted by wet clothes. This disruption to the school day, or to your work day when new clothes are necessary, is prevented by students avoiding the snow.

Then there are snowball fights, which can be a great deal of fun, but not in connection to the school day! In addition to student injuries from ice balls or the danger in running around at the bus stop to avoid snow balls, this type of play often escalates to anger and the accompanying aggressive choices. All of these things result in students missing instruction.

Like every school day, our main responsibilities are to keep kids safe and to provide an environment in which instruction is maximized. We are not fun-busters, we are simply avoiding disruption to instruction.

-Mary Kay Scharf

## Mark Your Calendars!

- |              |       |  |
|--------------|-------|--|
| <b>March</b> | 1     | 6:30 PTO Meeting   |
|              | 5-16  | ISAT Testing   |
|              |       | <i>(Please refrain from making appointments for your child during this 2 week period.)</i> |
|              | 15    | 4:00-8:30 Barnes & Noble Book Fair   |
|              | 16    | End of 3rd Grading Period  |
|              | 23    | 12:05 Dismissal  |
|              | 23    | Report Cards Sent Home   |
|              | 26-30 | Spring Break   |
| <b>April</b> | 2     | School Resumes   |
|              | 4     | Spring Picture Day   |
|              | 6     | Non Attendance Day   |
|              | 19    | Kindergarten Registration Day  |
|              |       | <i>Call (309) 662-4302 to schedule your appointment.</i>                                   |
|              | 30    | No School –School Improvement Day  |



**Oakland School**  
**Multicultural Fair**  
"We all Smile in the Same Language"

**Thursday, February 23rd**  
**6:00-7:30**

Please join us for an evening of free:

- Food
- Crafts
- Games
- Entertainment and Dancing
- Displays and information

Please join us on this special night to celebrate the diversity here at Oakland School. If you would be willing to assist in any way or share some information about your culture, please contact Molly Uhlen (uhlenm@district87.org) or Corey Mattson (mattsonc@district87.org)

## "Season's Readings" Successes

Our first annual "Season's Readings" event was wildly popular! During the month of December 2011, over 3,300 books were loaned to Oakland's students and staff. Students returned with heart-warming stories of reading with family members and friends, and many asked if they could "keep borrowing 5 books" at a time! Several parent volunteers, our library assistant Mrs. Redd, as well as the support of teachers and Dr. Scharf were critical in the success of this undertaking. We sincerely hope you and your family had an opportunity to read together during the busy holiday season and enjoyed participating. Finally, we have one last statistic to share: As of today, only 21 books borrowed before winter break are still yet to be returned...would you ask your child if s/he has a missing book? Thank you for your help and support!

Do you have a suggestion or story to share related to our first "Season's Readings" event? Please contact Mrs. Amy Oberts at [oberts@district87.org](mailto:oberts@district87.org).



### ON DISPLAY

We invite you to visit Oakland's Library Media Center to view the collage of over 150 "presents" created by students and their families during "Season's Readings." The tag line of the display is, "**Books are gifts that can be opened again and again!**" The collage extends to the library's doors and around the circulation desk.

## Barnes & Noble Book Fair

**SAVE THE DATE!**

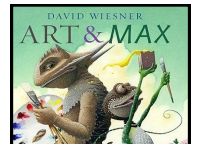
**MASTER** *the Art of*  
**READING**

**Barnes & Noble Book Fair**

**Thursday, March 15, 2012**

logo from <http://bit.ly/artofreading>

Our next book fair will take place on Thursday, March 15 at Barnes & Noble. Fun read-alouds such as Tom Lichtenheld's *Bridget's Beret* and David Weisner's *Art and Max* will be shared, along with several other titles. Award-winning books will be available and the results of the several book elections will be announced. Student artwork will be on display in the café, along with famous masterpieces that have a "reading twist!" Parents will leave with information about tips to promote reading at home, kids can select fun picks for spring vacation, and every penny spent will help support Oakland's Library Media Center.



## Book Election News

By the end of February, students in kindergarten through third grade will have experienced at least 15 award-nominated books during their visits to the Library Media Center. These books come from the state-wide **Monarch Award** nominee list. Fourth grade students have independently enjoyed books from their state-wide **Bluestem Award** list, and some of the nominees have been presented on the library's new "eShelf" using the SMART Board™ or read aloud by classroom teachers. Throughout the year, fifth grade students have independently read at least three chapter books from their respective **Rebecca Caudill** list. We are proud to have every child at Oakland School participate in next month's "**Illinois Readers' Choice**" elections. Ask your child which nominee s/he is considering voting for, and look for the school results in next month's newsletter. "*Oakland Owls choose to read...and read to choose!*"



## Congratulations to our Honor Roll Students!



### High Honor Roll

*High Honor Roll Students are 4th or 5th graders who have maintained straight As during the second nine week grading period.*

Connie C.	Cole L. D.	Joshua E.	Aarya J.	Elaina K.	Molly M.	West R.
Dalton A.	Erin B.	Kendra C.	Gagan K.	Zoey C.	Jake H.	Robby P.
Jackson S.	Noele B.	Avery C.	C.J. D.	Alexa H.	Clarissa M.	Lydia M.
Noah S.	Sierra W.	Makenzie W.	Kameron W.	J.D. A.	Nick D.	Zoe H.
Maria L.	Grace M.	Ashley O.	Noah P.	Macy R.	Daisy S.	Katharine S.
Cassie A.	Blake B.	Brooke G.	Connor J.	Hannah J.	Skyler M.	Julius O.
			Brady S.	Tish Y.		

### Honor Roll

*Honor Roll Students are 4th or 5th graders who have received As and/or Bs during the second nine week grading period.*



Simon F.	Jonathan G.	Dakari G.	Jacob H.	Allison H.	Nolan K.	Kelsey P.	Ujwala R.
Tyler R.	Danielle S.	Surah A.	Nicholas C.	Jake G.	Jonas H.	Madelin K.	Paul M.
Hailey P.	Alex P.	Payton R.	Carly R.	Daetwon T.	Radha W.	Hailey A.	Cole T. D.
Daivon D.	Autumn F.	Ryan G.	Matthew H.	Grishma R.	La'Vareon C.	Logan C.	Sebatian G.
Jamie H.	Luis M.	Jack P.	Braden P.	Donathon P.	Destiny R.	Taylor R.	Hannah W.
Xzavier C.	Mirza C.	Sarah C.	Drew C.	Sean K.	Alex M.	Molly N.	Derek O.
Jeremy P.	Shelby S.	Daja S.	Leah A.	Jadiamond B.	Sean B.	Tobias B.	Megan D.
Dylan F.	Kayla H.	Brianna I.	Eli I.	Mackenzie K.	Shawn P.	Alanna S.	Evelyn S.



**SAVE THE  
DATE!**

## Parent Expo 2012

Saturday, February 18th  
8:30 am - 4:15 pm



Trinity Lutheran Church  
801 S. Madison St.  
Bloomington

Watch for more information to come home soon!

# February 2012

If you would like to receive the newsletter via email, please email Martha at [fritcherm@district87.org](mailto:fritcherm@district87.org)



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 8:15 Student Council Meeting	2 6:30 PTO Meeting	3	4
5	6 Father/Daughter Dance Reservation Due Today	7	8	9 7:00-9:00 Father/Daughter Dance	10 NO SCHOOL Parent/Teacher Conferences	11
<b>Parent-Teacher Conference Week</b>						
12	13	14 2:30 Valentine's Room Parties 	15 8:15 Student Council Meeting	16	17	18 SIT Conference at Heartland  Parent Expo at Trinity Lutheran Church
19	20 NO SCHOOL <b>PRESIDENTS DAY</b>	21	22	23 6:00-7:30 Multicultural Fair	24	25
26 	27 5:00-8:00 pm PTO Dining Out at Famous Dave's <i>Why not take the night off from cooking AND help the PTO!</i>	28	29	