



January/February, 2024

# Orchard Park Schools January/February Update

[Click to learn about how we are maximizing the potential of all students.](#)

## Upcoming Events

Parent Information Series Continues with Screens and Teens on March 6, 2024

# PARENT INFORMATION SERIES



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Visit [www.opschools.org](http://www.opschools.org)  
to pre-register for this  
free virtual presentation  
or [click here](#)

## Screens and Teens - Helping Our Children Create Healthy Tech Boundaries

- Dr. Jill Walsh, a sociology professor at Boston University will go through practical and valuable parameters that we can establish to help set our children up for success in navigating their technology.

### Dr. Walsh will communicate information about:

- Popular platforms and the opportunities and challenges they create for our children.
- Key themes presented to students so that parents and guardians are on the same page.
- Conversation starters for engaging with teens around technology and practical tips that can be readily incorporated into family routines.

Dr. Walsh will provide a research-based approach, and her goal is to provide practical and easily accessible guidelines and conversation starters that families can use at home.



MARCH 6, 2024  
7 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.

There has always been a debate about screen time in our children's lives, but what are the best practices in 2024? Dr. Jill Walsh, a sociology professor at Boston University, will present practical and valuable parameters to help set our children up for success in navigating their technology. The virtual presentation to parents and community members will take place on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, at 7 p.m.

**Register Here for Screens and Teens - Helping Create Healthy Tech Boundaries**

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Annual STEAM Expo 

ORCHARD PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL PRESENTS THE

# STEAM EXPO

3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL

**JOIN US**

FOR A NIGHT OF EXHIBITS  
AND HANDS ON ACTIVITIES  
IN ART, SCIENCE, AND  
TECHNOLOGY!

**SAVE  
THE DATE**

THURSDAY MARCH 7th, 2024  
ORCHARD PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

The Orchard Park Middle School will host its third annual STEAM Expo on Thursday, March 7, 2024.

Students, alumni, teachers, and community members will be actively engaging attendees in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math activities. Teachers involved in the STEAM Expo are expecting over 40 scientific projects, ranging from properties of matter, a functional hoverboard, taste testing for rats (and more!) – all to be presented by over 50 students in grades 6-8.

The OPMS Robotics Club will give attendees an opportunity to drive student-built competition robots. The district-wide Art Department, the Orchard Park Visual Arts Boosters, and district-wide Technology and Math teachers will all be providing hands-on STEAM activities such as flying drones, 3d printing, VR race cars, kite making, spinning tops, and more. The Science Department will be running an immersive planetarium experience for all attendees.

Local businesses will be attending to share insight of how STEAM relates to their industry, along with interactive displays. Businesses joining our efforts include, but are not limited to: Astronics, BluTusk, Erie County Bomb Squad, Gordon Jones & Associates, Mathnasium, Turner Construction and more!

All in attendance will have a chance to partake in many hands-on activities, stop by the PTO sponsored Scholastic Book Fair and even grab a bite to eat at the food truck. The night will conclude with live student-created cardboard boat races.



# February Recess

February 19, 2024 - February 23, 2024

## What's Happening in Our Buildings!

### Orchard Park High School

Educational Outreach Club Assembles Care Packages for  
Family Solutions Center





Students in the Orchard Park High School Educational Outreach Club recently partnered with Dignity Grows, a program of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, to assemble feminine care packages to benefit the Orchard Park Family Solutions Center.

Dignity Grows provides individuals in need with essential personal hygiene products so they can attend school, work, and participate in community life without interruption. According to Dignity Grows, "Human dignity should not be considered a luxury, yet more than 30% of menstruators in the U.S. suffer from period poverty, lacking financial resources to purchase basic feminine hygiene necessities." Dignity Grows raises funds to purchase supplies and mobilizes volunteers to organize, assemble, and distribute free, discreet reusable zipper-top totes filled with menstrual products as well as a month's supply of soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, and shaving products.

Club advisors Rachel Adel and Kathleen Holtermann brought the idea of partnering with Dignity Grows to the Educational Outreach Club and students were enthusiastic about getting involved to support this worthwhile cause. On Wednesday, February 7, 2024, members of Dignity Grows brought supplies to OPHS and the students were able to assemble more than 200 feminine care packages to be donated to the Orchard Park Family Solutions Center.

The Educational Outreach Club is committed to "lending a helping hand at home and in the global community."

## SABAH



Students in Mrs. Funigiello's class at Eggert Elementary and Mrs. Grossman's class at Orchard Park High School, participate in SABAH on Fridays. This program safely pushes students out of their comfort zone to work on a skill that develops their independence, their confidence, and their self-esteem in a unique way. The Varsity Hockey players have gotten in on the action and have been volunteering to accompany the students to SABAH each week. Members of the hockey team alternate and two players from the team join the students each week to assist. Mrs. Funigiello states, " *Their kindness, patience, and care for my class, as well as Mrs. Grossman's is invaluable!*"

## Seniors Sign National Letters of Intent

Five Orchard Park High School seniors signed their letters of intent to continue their sports at the collegiate level earlier in February. We couldn't be prouder of these athletes for their hard work and dedication.





### *Congratulations:*

**Ella S.** who will be running cross country and track at Cortland. 🏃‍♀️

**Tony C.** who will be playing Baseball at Erie Community College. ⚾️

**Hazel V.** who will be playing lacrosse at Buffalo State University. 🏑

**Grace M.** who will be playing field hockey at Hobart and William Smith. 🏒 ✓

**Garrett S.** who will be playing golf at Mercyhurst University. 🏌️♂️

## Orchard Park Middle School



### OPCSD Names Middle School Principal

On February 13, 2024, Orchard Park Central School District Superintendent, David Lilleck recommended to the Board of Education that Mary Kathryn Graham be named the Orchard Park Middle School Principal. The Board of Education unanimously approved the recommendation, and Mrs. Graham is set to assume the middle school principalship on April 1, 2024.

Following a thorough interview process involving parents, community members, and staff, Mrs. Graham emerged as the resounding choice to assume the position of the Orchard Park

Middle School Principal. Superintendent Lilleck is looking forward to Mrs. Graham joining the District. He states, "Her experience in leading a middle school in Virginia, combined with her middle school teaching experience, is a great combination to bring to OPMS. We are excited to have her join our amazing team and to see the great things she will do for our students and adults."

Mrs. Graham has already been actively serving in an educational leader role. Most recently she served as the Gainesville Middle School Principal in Virginia for three years. Prior to that, she was an assistant principal. She also taught eighth-grade math for several years. Mrs. Graham is eagerly anticipating beginning her new position and states, " I am thrilled to return to Western New York and embark on this exciting journey as the Principal of Orchard Park Middle School. I am eager to collaborate with students, staff, and parents to cultivate an inclusive and innovative learning environment where every student can thrive. Coupled with the dedicated team at Orchard Park Middle School, I am confident that together, we will inspire academic excellence and personal growth in our students, ensuring their success both inside and outside the classroom.

Mrs. Graham will join Orchard Park Middle School assistant principals Mrs. Jaimie Knight and Mrs. Katelyn Welker, who, along with the faculty and staff at Orchard Park Middle School will continue the district's work to maximize the potential of all students.

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## OPMS Student Wins Essay Contest

In January, OPMS student Sofia K. won an essay contest through the Veterans of Foreign War. Commander Jim Wier of the Lancaster VFW came to the Orchard Park Middle School to present Sofia with her award and a \$100 check. Sofia's essay will continue on to the regional level of competition next. Congratulations Sofia!





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## OPMS Library Offers Blind Date with a Book Program 📖



The Orchard Park Middle School held their annual Blind Date With a Book program this year, which encourages students to check out a book without knowing the title or the book cover and try to discover a book they may have not considered before. Readers are able to read the description of a covered book and make a selection that feels like a great "match" to what they are interested in. Once they check out the book, they can unwrap it and dive right in! Students love seeing if there are any great matches out there for them.

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## Eggert Elementary

### Eggert Students Performed "The Aristocats, Kids" 🐈

Students at Eggert Elementary performed "The Aristocats, Kids" on Monday, February 12, and Tuesday, February 13, 2024.





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## Kindergarten Valentine's Day Performance at Eggert



Kindergarten students at Eggert Elementary have spent the last several weeks preparing to wow their families with their Valentine's Day performance. Students have been working in their classrooms and with Elementary Music teacher, Mrs. Filsinger to practice the songs and hand motions! The practice paid off and students gave a great performance!

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## Ellicott Elementary



Ellicott Elementary has been celebrating acts of kindness this month. Physical Education teacher, Mr. Benning recorded a read-aloud of *A Spot of Kindness* that was played in all the classrooms at Ellicott. After hearing the book and discussing acts of kindness in their classrooms, Ellicott students worked to spread kindness all over the school. When they were "spotted" being kind they earned a spot on the kindness wall. Ellicott's school-wide goal was to fill the word KIND up with spots by the February break. Ellicott students have already met their goal and are expected to surpass it!



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## Ellicott Elementary Students Performed "Finding Nemo, Kids" 🐠

Ellicott Elementary performed "Finding Nemo, Kids" on Tuesday, February 6, and Wednesday, February 7, 2024.





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# South Davis Elementary

## South Davis Kindergarten Students Had a Ball on the 100th Day of School 100

Kindergarten students at South Davis Elementary had a ball on Wednesday, February 14, when Valentine's Day fell on the 100th day of school! Students participated in fun activities, including making necklaces with 100 beads and counting them out by 10s, creating Valentine hearts by tearing paper using their pinching fingers to build dexterity and filling a paper gumball machine with 100 painted gumballs. How exciting, holding two celebrations in one day!



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## South Davis Students Performed "Annie, Kids"

South Davis Elementary performed "Annie, Kids" at South Davis Elementary on Wednesday, February 14, and Thursday, February 15, 2024.





# Windom Elementary

## Windom Wax Museum



Third-grade students at Windom Elementary created their very own wax museum on February 13. The students prepared for this event by picking a person to study, choosing a biography to read, and then dressing up like their subject on the day of the event. Once museum visitors tapped the students on the shoulder they would begin sharing the important facts they learned about their subject's life.



# Windom Students Celebrate the Lunar New Year 🐲



Students in Library learned all about Lunar New Year celebrations, 2024 being the year of the Dragon and a little about their own zodiac sign. Students were introduced to traditional colors, clothing, food and different ways cultures around the world celebrate this holiday. Students then made hats, wristbands or paper lanterns to celebrate the year of the Dragon.

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## Windom Students Performed "Aladdin, Kids" 🧞

Students at Windom Elementary performed "Aladdin, Kids" on Thursday, February 8, and Friday, February 9, 2024.





# District Updates

## 2024-2025 School Calendar Adopted

The Board of Education approved the 2024-2025 School Calendar at the February 13, 2024, Board of Education meeting. Please click the image below to access the District Calendar.

### ORCHARD PARK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 2024-25 School Calendar

AUGUST 2024		FEBRUARY 2025							
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
				1 2 3					1
4	5	6	7	8 9 10	2	3	4	5	6 7 8
11	12	13	14	15 16 17	9	10	11	12	13 14 15
18	19	20	21	22 23 24	16	17 18	19	20	21 22
25	26	27	28 29	30 31	23	24 25	26	27	28

8/28-8/29 Conference Day - No Students

2/14 Pre-K & Elementary Half Day  
2/14 Middle School Half Day  
2/14 High School Early Dismissal  
2/17-2/21 No School - Winter Break

  

SEPTEMBER 2024		MARCH 2025							
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5 6 7	2	3	4	5	6 7 1/8
8	9	10	11	12 13 14	9	10	11	12	13 14 15
15	16	17	18	19 20 21	16	17	18	19	20 21 22
22	23	24	25	26 27 28	23	24	25	26	27 28 29
29	30				30	31			

9/2 No School - Labor Day  
9/3 Conference Day - No Students  
9/4 First Student Day

3/7 Conference Day - No Students  
3/14 High School Early Dismissal

  

OCTOBER 2024		APRIL 2025							
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
				1 2 3 4 5					1 2 3 4 5
6	7	8	9	10 11 12	6	7	8	9	10 11 12
13	14	15	16	17 18 19	13	14	15	16	17 18 19
20	21	22	23	24 25 26	20	21	22	23	24 25 26
27	28	29	30	31	27	28	29	30	

10/4 F - 12 Dismiss 15 Minutes Early  
10/11 Pre-K & Elementary Half Day  
10/11 Middle School Half Day  
10/11 High School Early Dismissal  
10/14 No School - Indigenous People Day

4/11 High School Early Dismissal  
4/14-4/21 No School - Spring Break

  

NOVEMBER 2024		MAY 2025							
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
				1 2					1 2 3
3	4	5	6	7 8 9	4	5	6	7	8 9 10
10	11	12	13	14 15 16	11	12	13	14	15 16 17
17	18	19	20	21 22 23	18	19	20	21	22 23 24
24	25	26	27	28 29 30	25	26	27	28	29 30 31

11/11 No School - Veterans Day  
11/15 Pre-K & Elementary Half Day  
11/15 Middle School Half Day  
11/15 High School Early Dismissal  
11/27-11/29 No School - Thanksgiving

5/23 Pre-K & Elementary Half Day  
5/23 Middle School Half Day  
5/23 High School Early Dismissal  
5/26 No School - Memorial Day

  

DECEMBER 2024		JUNE 2025							
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5 6 7	1	2	3	4	5 6 7
8	9	10	11	12 13 14	8	9	10	11	12 13 14
15	16	17	18	19 20 21	15	16	17	18	19 20 21
22	23	24	25	26 27 28	22	23	24	25	26 27 28
29	30	31			29	30			

12/5 Pre-K & Elementary Half Day  
12/5 Middle School Half Day  
12/6 Pre-K & Elementary Half Day  
12/6 Middle School Half Day  
12/6 High School Early Dismissal  
12/23-12/31 No School - Winter Break

6/18 \*Last Elementary Student Day  
6/4 & 6/10 Regents Exams  
6/17-27 Regents Exams  
6/19 No School - Juneteenth  
6/24 Last Middle School Student Day  
6/27 Last Teacher Day

  

JANUARY 2025				
M	T	W	TH	F
				1 2 3 4
5	6	7	8	9 10 11
12	13	14	15	16 17 18
19	20	21	22	23 24 25
26	27	28	29	30 31

1/1-1/3 No School - Winter Break  
1/20 No School - MLK Jr. Day  
1/21-1/24 HS Regents Exam Week  
1/29 No School - Lunar New Year

186  
\*Last scheduled elementary student day contingent upon snow days used.

BOE Adoption: 02/13/24  
180/183/186  
students

Pre-K Half Day Dismissal @ 11 am  
Elem Half Day Dismissal @ 11:30 am  
MS Half Day Dismissal @ 10:30 am  
HS Early Dismissal @ 12:45 pm

## ZeroEyes

The Orchard Park Central School District has recently launched ZeroEyes to proactively bolster District security. Over the last decade, the Orchard Park Central School District has worked diligently to enhance its safety protocols. The District continually researches the latest available software, hardware, and safety practices available. ZeroEyes is an AI-based gun detection video

analytics platform. They are the only platform to hold the US Department of Homeland Security SAFETY Act Designation.

In early February, the detection and intelligent situational awareness platform began serving and assisting in the protection of Orchard Park students, staff, and visitors. ZeroEyes will complement the schools' existing layered security measures, which include secure vestibules, visitor screenings, access control, a single point of entry, School Resource Officers (SROs), and more.



ZeroEyes' AI gun detection and intelligent situational awareness software integrates with the District's security systems. If a firearm is identified, images will instantly be shared with the ZeroEyes Operations Center (ZOC), staffed 24/7/365 by specially trained U.S. military and law enforcement veterans. If these experts determine that the threat is valid, they will dispatch alerts and actionable intelligence to local law enforcement and the school security team in as fast as 3 to 5 seconds from detection.

"At ZeroEyes, we strive to offer the least intrusive approach to addressing gun-related violence to preserve the traditional school atmosphere that children deserve," said Mike Lahiff, CEO and co-founder of ZeroEyes. "We are proud to support Orchard Park Central School District's proactive measures to ensure the well-being and safety of its students and staff."

"The ZeroEyes team understands the District's dedication to keeping students safe while ensuring a warm and welcoming environment," said David Lilleck, Superintendent of Orchard Park Central School District. "With ZeroEyes, we can focus on maximizing the full potential of each student, knowing that their safety is in good hands."

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## OP Athletics Seeking Nominations for Hall of Fame

The Orchard Park Central School District Athletic Department is seeking nominations for the 2024 Hall of Fame class.

Selected recipients will be inducted at a ceremony during Homecoming 2024. The nominees will take part in the 2024 Homecoming parade and be recognized during half-time at the Homecoming football game.

If you feel there is an athlete, coach, or member of the support staff personnel you would like to nominate please do so by May 1, 2024. Visit [www.opschools.org/athletics](http://www.opschools.org/athletics), click the "Hall of Fame" tab and you can either submit your nomination there online or you can print it out and send it in to the Athletics Office. For any questions regarding a nomination, please call the Athletics Office at 209-6208.



Those nominated will be reviewed for current good standing within their respective community and then asked to complete a more detailed resume to be returned for further consideration. Each

resume returned will be considered for five years.

If you have any additional questions please do not hesitate to contact the Orchard Park Central School District Athletic Office at 209-6208.

## Helpful Links

**Parent Portal**  

**Virtual Backpack** 

**Menus**    

**My School Bucks** 

**Calendar** 

**Free and Reduced Meals/Milk**  



**Orchard Park Central School District**

Maximizing the potential of every student, every day.



Contact