



ADVOCATE

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The newsletter of the
Owen J. Roberts School District
Fall 2022



National Merit Scholarship Program Honors OJR High School Seniors

This fall, three Owen J. Roberts (OJR) High School seniors were recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as semifinalists in the 68th annual National Merit Scholarship Program, and five seniors were named Commended Students.

Established in 1955, the National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships featuring more than 1.5 million student entrants each year. To enter the program, students must complete the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) during their junior year.

National Merit Semifinalists are among the highest-scoring entrants in Pennsylvania and are counted among less than one percent of all U.S. high school seniors. Each semifinalist has experienced a unique journey to this distinction and is already thinking about their next steps.

Maxwell Dulay is a proud second generation National Merit Semifinalist, as his mom was a previous recipient of the distinction. Maxwell intends to focus on data science as he pursues a bachelor's degree and possibly a master's degree from a four-year university.

Sarah Ewing plans to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Sciences, and then move onto Law School so she can practice environmental law. Sarah credits her mom's upbringing on a dairy farm in Wisconsin and her Advanced Placement science courses at OJR High School as inspirations for intended area of study.

Vaishnavi Komera loves analyzing information and is considering math and psychology as her areas

of study after graduating from high school and attending a four-year university. Vaishnavi credits her teachers at OJR High School as influences for shaping her interest in math.



OJR's National Merit Commended Students are also in exclusive company. Representing five of only 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation, Commended Students placed among the top 5% of all 1.5 million students who entered the 2023 Merit Program.

Lillian Blatz, a dual citizen of the U.S. and Germany, plans to study dentistry at a German university after graduating high school. Lillian credits her AP biology classes as the inspiration to pursue a science-related career.

Eliana Crew plans to study engineering and mathematics in college after OJR High School's course offerings provided an opportunity to engage in challenging projects and piqued her interest in problem solving.

Olivia Kerr's AP science classes have inspired her to pursue a bachelor's degree and possibly a master's degree in biology while in college, before she plans

to pursue a career in genetic counseling.

Grace Lewiski wants to explore studies in either neuroscience or health science after taking courses at OJR high school. Grace hopes to one day pursue a career in medical research.

Kalliope Mullen has committed to play lacrosse at Haverford College and is planning to major in mathematics. Kalliope enjoys math challenges and problem solving, and she intends to pursue a career as an actuary.

Three types of National Merit Scholarships will be offered in the spring of 2023. Every Finalist will compete for one of 2,500 National Merit \$2,500 Scholarships that will be awarded on a state-representational basis. National Merit Scholarship winners will be announced in four stages taking place from April through July 2023. These scholarship recipients will join nearly 368,000 other distinguished young people who have earned the Merit Scholar title.



East Vincent Hosts Parent University

East Vincent held its Parent University on Wednesday, September 28. The event provides parents with additional information about important subject areas related to their child's education.

For example, many parents and guardians want to learn about sight word instruction, components of Everyday Math, Google Classroom or student emotional regulation. Parent University provides an excellent opportunity for parents to learn about these topics and much more. East Vincent held its Parent University on Wednesday, September 28. The event provides parents with additional information about important subject areas related to their child's education. For example, many parents and guardians want to learn about sight word instruction, components of Everyday Math, Google Classroom or student emotional regulation. Parent University provides an excellent opportunity for parents to learn about these topics and much more.



Tradition, Innovation at North Coventry

Students and staff at North Coventry kick started the new school year with a welcome assembly on the back field on Opening Day. Returning and new students met their teachers behind the school where they had the opportunity to reconnect with friends and past teachers.

As students gathered, they heard a welcome message from the school's new principal, Mrs. Esposito, including reminders of the Wally Wildcat Way. As the assembly ended, students entered the building, ready for the year ahead with hopes that the 2022-23 year would look and feel normal.

One noticeable change at North Coventry is the addition of a book vending machine. Through a generous grant coordinated by Mrs. Kellie Bean, Instructional Support Teacher, a vending machine was added to the lobby of the school. Instead of dispensing candy or snacks, this vending machine offers books!

The machine is unique in that it

doesn't take money, rather it takes gold coins. Coins can be earned in a variety of ways from following the Wildcat Way to demonstrating welcoming behaviors to all students.

The first group of students to use the machine were students who had completed their summer reading and submitted the reading log to their teachers. These students were each rewarded a gold coin recognizing their hard work while school was out. The enthusiasm of these students as the ribbon surrounding the vending machine was first cut was palpable.

As October begins everyone at North Coventry has settled into a routine and is looking forward to past fall traditions that are making a return such as Halloween parades and parties, PTO Craft Night and the Winter Wonderland.

East Coventry Develops Leaders

Students in grades 5 and 6 at East Coventry Elementary school have a chance to demonstrate their leadership skills as part of the student council. Students interested in being part of the council run for election and are voted upon by their peers.

Led by sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Shawna Smith-Wentzel, the student council conducts service projects such as Pennies for Patients and a sock drive for homeless individuals. Last year's sock drive resulted in over 1,100 pairs of donated socks! In addition, the group provides input on important topics like school lunch choices and makes suggestions to administration.

East Coventry is fortunate to have students who are dedicated to serve such an important leadership role.

The East Coventry Elementary Special Education Department delivers interventions and services to students with a variety of needs. Supporting students from kindergarten through grade 6, the team delivers learning support, emotional support, speech and

language services, and social skills. Services and support are delivered in the classroom as well as the special education setting. East Coventry provides emotional support to students from all of the elementary schools in the District.

In addition, the team of special education teachers work closely with the staff and families of identified students to decide the interventions that best meet each of the students' individual needs.



OJR High School Celebrates Friendship, Music

Owen J. Roberts High School hosted the Best Buddies Match Party event to help connect students. The program fosters peer-to-peer friendships that grow and develop outside of classroom settings and help to enhance the school experience for all student participants.

On Saturday, Oct. 1st we held the 51st annual OJR Band Cavalcade in our stadium. Despite the weather that day, the event was nicely attended and featured performances from eleven bands,

along with a mass-band performance at the end featuring all eleven bands on the field performing together in a 1000-member ensemble.



Wildcat Walk-a-Thon Returns to West Vincent

West Vincent Elementary School saw the return of its annual Wildcat Walk-a-Thon on Tuesday, October 18th. Over \$30,000 was raised to support the school! This exciting event is organized by the PTA and culminated in a fun walk for all of the students. After the walk, the students and staff were led by a rousing "We Are West Vincent" cheer by the West Vincent Wildcats' Number One Fan, Dr. Detweiler!

The money raised by the Walk-a-Thon helps to support so many activities for the students including field trips, assemblies, and much more. Also, new playground equipment was recently installed, which significantly increased the amount of play space at the school. All of these things are made possible by events like the Walk-a-Thon!

A new tradition has begun at West Vincent Elementary School to celebrate the staff... the West Vincent Shout Out Chain! Staff members are honored with the Shout Out Chain to highlight their amazing accomplishments such as being a positive support for their peers, going above and beyond for students, and much more. At a faculty meeting in September, Ashley Hineman, our Academic Coach and creator of the Shout Out Chain, honored Jen Snow as the first recipient of the award.

We are thankful to Ashley for creating a new way to celebrate the staff and also to Jen for her amazing dedication to her Kindergarten students. Mrs. Snow

always comes to school brimming with positivity and her students grow in leaps and bounds during their all-important first year of school! Thank you Ashley and congrats Jen!



OJR Middle School Teacher Wins Marathon

This past September, 7th grade Social Studies teacher, Zach Hoagland, participated in the Akron Marathon. This was his 19th marathon and the third time he has competed in Akron, finishing 2nd and 3rd in his previous two. However, this time around, Mr. Hoagland crossed the finish line in first place! He finished the 26.2 mile race in a time of 2:25:57. That is right around 5:35 per mile. Congratulations, Mr. Hoagland! Quite impressive indeed.



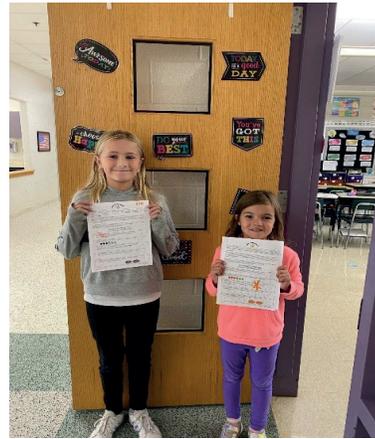
Math In Action & More at French Creek

French Creek students are excited to begin our year-long, student friendly, math competition through "Math In Action Challenge." The challenge is designed to give elementary students opportunities to sharpen their mathematical problem-solving skills. Throughout the challenges, students will strengthen their math fundamentals, critical thinking, and problem solving skills while improving their confidence in math. Students are encouraged to solve problems by drawing a picture, making a model, organizing a list, looking for patterns, working backwards, and/or guessing-and-checking.

Students will have the opportunity to work on a total of 15 challenge sets throughout the school year. Each challenge presents 10 to 18 problems ordered by level of difficulty which enables students from various grades to participate. This is a great opportunity for families to work together while enjoying math through fun and engaging discussions. We encourage parents and siblings to get involved in this interesting math competition!

French Creek Academic Coach, Mrs. Danielle Rapp, and 5th Grade Teacher, Mr. Craig LaBarbera, recently launched an exciting new opportunity for 6th grade students: a French Creek Morning News show! Episodes include the Pledge of Allegiance, daily announcements, lunch choices for the day, and staff spotlights as well as school-wide and PTA events.

Throughout the year, we hope to expand the production by encouraging other 6th grade students to join the news team in roles such as editors, photographers, and script writers. Students are excited to take part in learning new skills such as public speaking, professionalism, and engagement. We look forward to our students becoming active in promoting our French Creek school community.



OJR Recognitions

Thank you to The Cope Company Salt and OJR graduate Amanda Duffy for making this generous donation to the OJR Education Foundation. This will directly benefit OJR students and teachers.

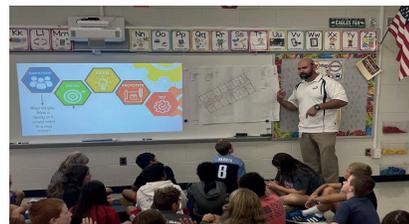


Owen J. Roberts High School's NJROTC were honored to present the colors at the Steven Rodriguez 9/11 Memorial Ride held on Sept 17, 2022 at the King of Prussia 9/11 Memorial. Most of those in attendance were US Military Veterans and First Responders who all praised the presentation. This Color Guard was presented by Naval Junior ROTC Cadet Savanna Aker, Cadet Anthony Gargano, Cadet Maria Alicea and Cadet Markus Horvath.



"The actions of these cadets demonstrated a fine example of professionalism and patriotism representing the success of both the NJROTC program and Owen J Roberts High School," said Kevin Rodriguez, US Navy Veteran.

The Facilities Department recently provided Iuan/massonite backboards for the LEGO walls at OJR's schools, along with a treasure trove of old blueprints that teachers incorporated into the introductory engineering lesson for students!



Congratulations to Owen J. Roberts Middle School and art teachers Mrs. Fake and Mrs. McGinnis for being named a Pennsylvania Art Education Association Outstanding Visual Arts Community. We love it when our outstanding teachers are recognized for the impact they have on our community's students.



Congratulations to the OJR High School Language Department for receiving the Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association Golden Globe Award. They have been a recipient of the award since 2013.

Meet the North Coventry Special Education Team

This year North Coventry welcomes four new teachers to our special education team. With so many new faces, here is a quick spotlight for each of them.

Mrs. Jessie Cates: Mrs. Cates supports students in grades three and four. Though she is new to North Coventry, she is not new to education. Of her eight previous years teaching, four were in general education and four in special education. Mrs. Cates taught third and fourth grade in New York City prior to teaching sixth and seventh grade special education science at Leonardo Da Vinci IS 61. After that, she moved to Colorado where she was a K-6 learning specialist for 3 years. Upon moving back to Pennsylvania, Mrs. Cates taught at Collegium Charter School before joining the OJR family this summer. Mrs. Cates went to Molloy College on Long Island, NY for undergrad and grad school. Before getting into teaching, she was a nanny and a babysitter. "Working with kids is all I have ever wanted to do!"

Mr. Axel Lopez: Mr. Lopez is a first year teacher joining the NC family after graduating last spring from West Chester University. He supports students in kindergarten, first and second grades. When asked about his decision to get into education, Mr. Lopez responded, "I got into education because when I reflect on my successes and accomplishments I ask myself, who helped me get here? The answer is always pretty much the same. A teacher! The knowledge and support I've received from teachers throughout my schooling experience has given me opportunities to be a more independent and successful person. My hope is that I can do the same for my students."



Mrs. Samantha Curran: Mrs. Curran joined the North Coventry family this year having previously taught at Agnes Irwin School in Villanova where she taught second grade. Mrs. Curran also taught second grade learning support second and sixth grade science/social studies. All told, she has been in education for seven years. Mrs. Curran attended Lock Haven University for her undergraduate degree and completed her Special Education degree at West Chester University. She has always loved learning from others and teaching swim lessons when she was older. "Being able to teach and coach others has been a dream!"

Mrs. Rebecca Sharrer: Mrs. Sharrer is new to North Coventry this year, supporting sixth grade students, although she has been a learning support teacher within the Owen J. Roberts School District for the past 17 years working at East Vincent Elementary School. She attended Bloomsburg University where she earned a degree in elementary and special Education, as well as a concentration in Mathematics. Mrs. Sharrer also has her Master's Degree in Special Education from Penn State Great Valley. Mrs. Sharrer currently lives in Collegeville with her husband and 3 children; an 8-year-old boy in third grade, a 6-year-old girl in first grade, and their youngest, a 22-month-old boy. When asked about what prompted her to be a teacher, Mrs. Sharrer responded, "I always knew growing up that I wanted to be a teacher. My mom was a kindergarten teacher for over 20 years. I am so lucky that her passion for teaching and learning was something I picked up at a young age. Watching my students grow throughout the school year is just one of the many things I love about my job!"

Ms. Robin Allen: Mrs. Allen has been teaching for 25 years with 9 of those years in early intervention through the CCIU. She has taught all grades, K-6, in the Owen J Roberts School District. She went to Moore College of Art Design and then continued on at Cabrini College for a Master's in education. Most recently Mrs. Allen has been continuing her education towards a second masters in social emotional learning at Neumann University. She loves working with children and appreciates the opportunity to watch them grow personally and academically.



Superintendent's Notebook

As we share this fall 2022 issue of OJR's Advocate, it amazes me that we are already two months into the school year. This year marks not only my 28th as an educator, it is also my second year with Owen J. Roberts. It almost goes without saying that we faced a lot of unique challenges in my first year as superintendent as a result of the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, I cannot recall a time where I was ever as optimistic about a school year as I am right now.

Our community has continuously risen to meet any challenge we've faced, and this year I am confident that we will now be able to focus our attention on the important responsibilities of teaching, learning and meeting the social and emotional needs of our students.

These are exciting times for our school district. Last year, we engaged in a series of Listening Sessions that have helped guide the development of strategies that enable us to continue to prioritize support for our classrooms and ensure the ongoing academic success of our students. But we're not stopping there.

Moving forward we will continue to engage our community about important topics ranging from school start times to special education. We're going to continue to make resources available so everyone in the community has a chance to better understand the direction we're taking. We're also focused on revamping our communication tools such as our website and social media channels.

One of my favorite aspects of being OJR's superintendent is the opportunity to meet with members of our school communities. Every week I make it my mission to visit our 7 schools and meet with our teachers, staff and students. I consider it a privilege to help our children learn and grow. From the moment I step on one of our campuses, I see examples of the warmth and dedication OJR teachers, staff and administrators have toward our children.

I cannot express enough of my gratitude to the entire OJR team for all your hard work to create great learning environments for our students. I'm inspired by what I see in our classrooms and I appreciate your partnership on behalf of children.

As we head into the holiday season, I invite all of you to visit our campuses and experience the many wonderful activities enjoyed by students. From athletic events to performing arts, and from academic competitions to social gatherings, every family and every student is welcome.

I thank you once again for your continued support of OJR and our students. Wishing all of you a warm and safe holiday season, as well as a happy new year. Owen J. All The Way!

Sincerely,

Dr. Will Stout
Superintendent



Owen J. Roberts School District

Inspiring Each Student for Success Today and Greatness Tomorrow

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