

OLENTANGY SCHOOLS

WINTER 2022

ALUMNI CONNECTION

OLENTANGY GROWS TO FOURTH LARGEST IN STATE



This year Olentangy Schools welcomed 22,573 students into our schools to kick off the 2021-2022 school year. From brand new kindergartners entering the classroom for the first time, to high school seniors beginning their last year, the continual growth in student enrollment has propelled Olentangy Schools to the fourth largest K-12 school district in Ohio.

“A primary benefit of Olentangy Schools becoming the fourth largest district in the state, is the representation Olentangy will have on the Ohio School Board Association. With board member Mrs. Mindy Patrick as Olentangy’s representative, we will have a stronger influence on the direction the OSBA takes on academic and legislative education issues,” shared Superintendent Mark T. Raiff.

The District’s facilities committee relies on enrollment projections in forecasting student population growth and planning the buildings necessary for educating all of Olentangy’s students. The District’s sixth middle school, located in Delaware County south of Berlin High School along Piatt Road, is funded through the spring 2020 bond issue. Jeff Gordon, Director of Business Management and Facilities, reports that construction is currently progressing on schedule. “The Robertson Construction team is completing the building envelope (walls and roofing), which will enclose the building and allow crews to continue to work through the winter,” shared Mr. Gordon.

See OLENTANGY GROWS Page 2

OLENTANGY SCHOOLS GETS PANDEMIC RELIEF FUNDS

When Governor DeWine signed HB 169 into law in December, \$20 million in federal funding was earmarked for Olentangy Schools. Funding from the American Rescue Plan Act equates to approximately 4.16 mills in operational funding. Olentangy Schools is developing a spending plan for these funds in accordance with applicable guidelines.

RECONNECT AT YOUR CLASS REUNION!

Holding a class reunion? Make sure to register the reunion to be shared through the Olentangy Alumni Association by sending the reunion details to alumni@olentangyef.org. We will feature class reunions on our Olentangy Alumni Association social media sites, webpage and in the Alumni Connection!



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT
Mark T. Raiff

Dear Olentangy Schools Alumni,

At the beginning of this school year, Olentangy Schools became the fourth largest school district in the state of Ohio based on student enrollment in kindergarten through grade 12. It is incredible to think that a little over 30 years ago, the entire district fit into one building – what is now Shanahan Middle School.

In this quarterly newsletter, we share information on the District’s current enrollment growth, the development of the district’s sixth middle school, and some recent success Olentangy Schools has had in receiving crucial state funding thanks to our local representatives.

Our newly formed Alumni Association has provided a wonderful outlet to connect, update and utilize the vast knowledge and talents of our Olentangy alums. We continue to be proud and impressed by the incredible accomplishments of our Olentangy graduates, and welcome opportunities to engage you with our school communities.

Currently, all four of our Olentangy high schools offer a year-long business class in entrepreneurship where students design business models that tackle

See DEAR ALUMNI Page 3

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: MICHAEL PAPPAS

What schools did you attend at Olentangy, and when did you graduate?

I attended Olentangy Middle School and Olentangy High School, and graduated in the class of 2000.

What staff members had an impact on you during your time at Olentangy?

I looked up to Mr. (Brad) Henry, Coach (Chris) Kelly, Coach (Ed) Terwilliger, and Mr. (Rick) Sedlacek. They always pushed me to work harder, did not accept mediocrity, and encouraged me to pursue my goals.

What experiences contributed to your career path?

I was in the DECA program, the business course where we had to create business plans and present them at different competitions. We also ran the “Wigwam,” which really sparked my entrepreneurial path. It was fun to be able to be creative and think of different ways to promote, operate, and drive a business.

Can you give us a summary of your life since Olentangy?

After Olentangy, I graduated from Ohio University and then jumped into my family business, Tommy’s Diner in downtown Columbus. I learned how to run the business from my parents and applied what I learned in school to improve the customer experience at Tommy’s. In 2014, my brother and I opened a restaurant in downtown Powell called Kraft House No. 5, which we operated for 4 years before selling. We moved to the Olentangy area so that our kids could have a great education and they currently attend Walnut Creek Elementary.

Share with us about your restaurant, Tommy’s Diner.

Tommy’s Diner has been in business since 1989 at 914 W Broad St in downtown Columbus. We specialize in breakfast and lunch fare and are known for homemade, rotating daily specials. The menu is a traditional diner menu with all of the favorites including sandwiches, gyros, burgers, entrees, and every breakfast combo imaginable. Tommy’s is a melting pot of diverse people and cultures that come together and break bread. My personal favorite spot in the diner is at our counter and hearing the conversations/friendships that take place. Some of my best education has come from working in the restaurant while in high school and college, and I’ll always be an advocate of teenagers working in the service industry.

What is your favorite part of running a restaurant and working in the hospitality industry?

My favorite part of working in the diner is the people. I spend most of my days in the dining room, so I’ve had the opportunity to meet some very interesting people over the last 22 years.

What is the greatest challenge of being a business owner/owning a restaurant?

Tommy’s Diner has always had a strong team, but in the post-covid world, finding new staff has been by far the biggest challenge. Our business has continued to grow, but growing our team to meet the demand has been difficult. Also, the supply chain issues make it hard to stock your restaurant with everything you need. Some weeks you’ll have product, other weeks you may not - it’s a week-to-week situation that hasn’t gotten better. But if you believe in what you’re doing and treat your people well, all challenges will seem small.



The Pappas Family at a recent Bengals game.

What have the past two years been like as a business owner, and any advice/lessons you can pass along?

The past two years have been tough, especially when we were shut down because of Covid. As a business owner/leader, you must refocus and find a way to do business despite the challenges. We’ve had more things thrown at us the last 2 years than I ever could’ve imagined but am proud to say that we’ve continued to grow. Being in business for 33 years has established a strong and loyal customer base. Starting a business just for the money is the worst thing you can do. Start a business because you believe in what you’re selling/offering, you’re proud of what you’re selling, and you know that what you’re selling will make a positive impact.

OLENTANGY GROWS

FROM PAGE 1

“We are very fortunate that our construction partners prepared for long material lead times and are not facing supply chain delays,” said Mr. Gordon.

The sixth middle school will add 46 classrooms and space for up to 1,000 students in grades 6-8. It is projected to open for the 2023-2024 school year, in time to prevent a deficit in middle school classroom space across the District. The time line for opening the 17th elementary school also funded in the spring 2020 bond issue, has been extended to the 2025-2026 school year.

In their annual report to the Board of Education on October 2021, the Facilities Committee projected a need for the 18th and 19th elementary schools in 2027 and 2030, respectively. Current enrollment projections do not reflect a demand for another Olentangy middle school or high school in the next 10 years.



Aerial photograph of the sixth middle school taken on December 13, 2021.



ALUMNI PROFESSIONAL ACCOLADES

CLASS OF 1996

Jennifer Winter

OHS, is a mom to one, and bonus mom to three and bonus Grandma of 7. She works at Born Again Landscaping, and a team mom to the Central Ohio Dynamites 14u Fastpitch team.

CLASS OF 1998

Lori (Ruff) Zaye

OHS, lives in the Olentangy area with her husband, Patrick, and has 4 children Lydia, (22), Harrison, (21), Noah (13), and Peyton (10). She has worked in the Treasurer's Office for Olentangy Schools for 16 years, and just completed her 11th year coaching the 8th grade Volleyball team at Shanahan Middle.

CLASS OF 2004

Mindi Westlake Slagle

OHS, is a mom and registered nurse.

CLASS OF 2009

Chelcie Beadnell (Ratinaud)

LHS, serves Union County, OH as the first full-time Mobility Manager. In 2 years, she has secured over \$800,000 in grant funding for mobility/transportation initiatives.

Christopher DeGroot

OHS, joined the Navy, and has been deployed 4 times as an active duty sailor.

CLASS OF 2012

Christopher Wilson

OHS, is in his second year owning a woodworking business and works as a project manager for Wright Patterson Air force Base.

CLASS OF 2015

Stephanie DePauw

OOHS, is the band director at Bryan City Schools and recently marched in the Rose Parade in a band of band directors.

CLASS OF 2017

Nina Sheppard

OHS, graduated from Otterbein in 2021 and teaches at Orange Middle School.

Submit accolades & milestones to: [OLENTANGY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWS](#)



The mission of the Olentangy Education Foundation (OEF) is to enhance the educational experience for Olentangy Schools.

The foundation does this through a variety of programs, with the primary focus on providing classroom grants for innovative programs and learning opportunities that fall outside school budgets.

The foundation recently initiated a new program, called the Representative Staffing Experience, which provides mentorship and experiences in Olentangy Schools to preservice teachers within underrepresented groups. The goal of the program is to increase the diversity of the applicant pool, so that the staff of Olentangy Schools is representative of the community that it serves.

For more information on these initiatives, or how to get involved, visit the OEF website:

olentangyeducationfoundation.org

DEAR ALUMNI

FROM PAGE 1

real-world problems. INCubator consistently recruits mentors and guest speakers to present on topics of expertise, and we welcome the involvement of our alumni as mentors to our students. Contact Kristin_Bourdage@olsd.us with questions or to express interest.

The partnership between schools and their alumni network is invaluable. Please share your accolades and invite other alumni into this association, and we will continue to explore ways to highlight and use your talents.

Proud to serve as Superintendent,

Mark T. Raiff

LET'S STAY IN TOUCH



facebook.com/OlentangyAlumni



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www.olentangyeducationfoundation.org/alumni



alumni@olentangyef.org



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