Oyster River Cooperative
School District
SAU No. 5
Superintendent James Morse
36 Coe Drive
Durham, NH 03824

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oyster River Students Get Taste of Locally Grown Food through Harvest of the Month Program

Oyster River Cooperative School District is working with the New Hampshire Farm to School to feature locally grown foods in schools' lunch menus. (Courtesy Photo Oyster River Cooperative School District)

DURHAM -- Students in the Oyster River Cooperative School District who buy lunch are getting a taste of the farm to table experience through a harvest of the month program. Each week, the district's lunch menu features locally grown produce and vegetables from the New Hampshire Farm to School in Durham.
Director of Child Nutrition Doris Demers implemented the program at Oyster River last year. Through fun menu items, it works to promote seasonal eating, healthy diets and the local economy.

"We've found that this is a perfect way for students to try something that's grown in their own state and has great nutritional value," Demers said. "The program also encourages students to taste new foods and expand their palate."

In September, New Hampshire Farm to School provided Oyster River with broccoli and cauliflower, in November it was sweet potatoes, February had rutabaga and beets and March continued with beets and Brussels sprouts. To keep things new and exciting, Lori Buckley, nutrition manager at Mast Way Elementary School, introduced a new recipe: beet hummus.

The pink spread caught the attention of everyone in the lunch line, and kindergarten students earned a sticker if they could make a suggestion as to what turned the hummus the bright color. Older students were awarded a sticker if they tried the new food. They even had the beets roasted and realized the great flavors they added to a meal.

This month, students will be treated to locally grown carrots, featured in a raisin salad, cut and cooked as crunchy sticks and baked with a variety of seasoning.

Learn more about harvest of the month [here](#).

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Oyster River Cooperative
School District
SAU No. 5
Superintendent James Morse
36 Coe Drive
Durham, NH 03824

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, March 26, 2018

Oyster River Middle School Robotics Team
Heads to World Championship

Left to right: seventh grade student Kelly Zang, eighth grade students Andrew Kelly and Vincent Xiao and seventh grade student Michael O’Laughlin earned three awards at the New Hampshire/Vermont VEX IQ Challenge. (Courtesy Photo Oyster River Cooperative School District)
DURHAM -- Principal Jay Richards is pleased to announce that one of Oyster River Middle School's VEX IQ robotics teams will be heading to the World Championship next month.

Over the winter, a team of four middle school students -- seventh graders Kelly Zang and Michael O'Laughlin and eighth graders Andrew Kelly and Vincent Xiao -- competed at the New Hampshire and Vermont state round of the VEX IQ Challenge at Manchester Community College. Their performance solidified them as one of two teams to qualify for the World Championship.

This year's competition, titled the VEX IQ Ringmaster, required students to design and build a robot that would earn the highest number of points by mastering sophisticated driving and programming commands.

To succeed in minute-long challenges, a robot had to be able to pick up and place colored rings in certain areas and on post-like structures on a 4-foot by 8-foot playing field, and use its arms to release a bonus tray full of additional rings. The more difficult the task, the more points the team earned.

Oyster River Middle School robotics teams first competed at the district level, with three moving onto the state level. There, Zang, O'Laughlin, Kelly and Xiao won the teamwork championship award, robot design award and the robot skills award, securing them a spot at the World Championship.

The team of four will head to the World Championship in Louisville, Kentucky on April 29-May 1 where they'll represent the Oyster River Cooperative School District and New Hampshire.

"This is a special group of kids who have tackled a number of challenges throughout this process, which is what has made them successful," Robotics Coach John Silverio said. "On top of being extremely intelligent and talented, each of these students has a certain skill set that complements the other, like engineering and programming. The World Championship is going to be a tough competition, but the students have quite a robot and are excited to show off what they can do."

Silverio, along with Oyster River Middle School Robotic Coach Jason Duff, re-launched the robotics program in 2014. This is the first year students have worked with VEX IQ robots.
In order to travel to Kentucky for the competition, the robotics team is fundraising to help offset some of the costs.

Residents who wish to make a donation to the robotics team can do so through the team's GoFundme page here.

About the Oyster River Cooperative School District:
New Hampshire SAU 5, the Oyster River Cooperative School District serves 2,100 students in Durham, Lee and Madbury. It is one of the oldest cooperative districts in the state. The Oyster River Cooperative School District has a long history of providing excellent educational opportunities for its students. The District is committed to and supportive of quality education. This commitment and support have helped the district recruit and maintain an excellent teaching staff and outstanding administrative leadership team.

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Eighth grade student Vincent Xiao and seventh grade student Kelly Zang work on their VEX IQ robot to prepare for the upcoming World Championship next month. (Courtesy Photo Oyster River Cooperative School District)

To succeed in the competition, the VEX IQ robot must be able to pick up and place colored rings in certain areas and on post-like structures, and release a bonus tray full of more rings. (Courtesy Photo Oyster River Cooperative School District)

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A message from the Oyster River Cooperative School District
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, Dec. 4, 2017

Media Contact: John Guilfoil
Phone: 617-993-0003
Email: john@jgpr.net

Oyster River Fifth Grade Students Learn about the Importance of Nutrition through Cooking Classes

DURHAM – Principal Jay Richard is pleased to announce that Oyster River Middle School has started a new cooking and nutrition program for its fifth graders.
Led by Oyster River Cooperative School District’s Director of Child Nutrition, Doris Demers and her intern, UNH student Alyssa Lemire, fifth grade students have started to participate in weekly cooking classes that promote healthy eating.

Each class focuses on the New Hampshire Harvest of the Month, a program introduced this year by New Hampshire Farm to School in Durham to promote seasonal eating, healthy diets and the local economy.

The idea for the new cooking program was developed last year when Principal Richards and Demers recognized the need for students to learn the basics of cooking, food safety and nutrition.

“We’re grateful that our students have the opportunity to participate in these classes,” Principal Richard said. “It’s great to see learning go beyond the traditional classroom setting and into the kitchen to help teach students the importance of nutrition and diet.”

Classes typically last around an hour and students are split up into small groups to complete a recipe together. Based on the recipe, students are given jobs such as chopping, measuring or mixing. With each cooking class, Demers and Lemire teach lessons around food and knife safety, kitchen sanitation, cooking techniques and healthy eating habits.

“The students have been loving the cooking classes,” Demers said. “One of my favorite memories was watching a child who insisted he didn’t eat vegetables go up for his second helping of the Broccoli and Cauliflower Ribbon Salad that he made that day. It’s so fun to receive emails from students and parents who have brought the class recipes home to try out with family.”

To accommodate the 172 fifth graders of Oyster River Middle School, Demers and Lemire rotate small groups throughout the program. They meet with one group three times a month before moving onto another group the next month.

For more information about the cooking classes, please visit Oyster River’s Child Nutrition Facebook page. To learn more about New Hampshire’s Harvest of the Month, please visit the website.
A message from the Oyster River Cooperative School District
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, Nov. 20, 2017

Media Contact: John Guilfoil
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Elementary Schools in Oyster River District to Hold Coding with Cocoa Event for Students

DURHAM -- Principals David Goldsmith and Carrie Vaich are pleased to announce that Moharimet and Mast Way Elementary Schools will be hosting a coding event next month for students who are interested in learning more about computer science.

WHEN/WHERE:
Dec. 5 from 7:45-8:45 a.m. at Moharimet Elementary School, 11 Lee Road, Madbury
Dec. 8 7:45-8:45 a.m. Mast Way Elementary School, 23 Mast Road, Lee

WHAT:
The elementary schools’ Coding with Cocoa event is part of Computer Science Education Week, which is held every year in honor of the birthday of Admiral Gracy Murray Hopper -- the pioneer of computing -- on Dec. 9.

This year, Computer Science Education Week will be held Dec. 4-10. As part of this celebration, schools throughout the world host Hour of Code events to offer a one-hour introduction to computer science, with a focus on helping students learn the basics of coding, to help broaden interest in the field.

At Moharimet and Mast Way Elementary Schools, students in kindergarten through fourth grade will invited into the buildings an hour before classes start to participate in several coding activities and exercises designed to give participants a range of skills in computer science. Students will be provided with complimentary cocoa as they work.
“An Hour of Code has become an international event and we’re pleased to be joining our peers across the globe to promote an interest in coding and computer science,” Principal Goldsmith said. “Students will gain valuable skills that they can continue to build upon throughout their time in the district.”

“This is just one of many great activities Mast Way and Moharimet Schools will be offering to students throughout December and into January,” Principal Vaich said. “We encourage students to come by, have some hot chocolate and learn a little about coding!”

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**A message from the Oyster River Cooperative School District**

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John Guilfoil Public Relations LLC  
8 Prospect St  
Georgetown, MA 01833  
617-993-0003
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, Oct. 12, 2017

Media Contact: John Guilfoil
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Email: john@igpr.net

Oyster River Cooperative School District to Host Community Forum on Diversity

DURHAM -- Superintendent James Morse is pleased to announce that the Oyster River Cooperative School District will host a Community Forum on Diversity later this month.

The forum will approach the issue of diversity from numerous perspectives, giving community members a chance to self-reflect on diversity in all of its forms. The event on Oct. 25 will begin with a community supper from 5-6:30 p.m., with the forum set to follow at 7 p.m.

"This forum will give us a chance to take an introspective look at how our community can better appreciate and understand our differences and one another," Superintendent Morse said. "Our core values require us to respond fully and directly to instances of intolerance, and I look forward to bringing parents, community members and staff together to discuss these issues and chart a shared path forward."
A distinguished panel of Oyster River parents, University of New Hampshire students and a representative from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will discuss inclusiveness and sensitivity to differences with regard to race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and physical disability.

The panel will be moderated by New Hampshire Disproportionate Minority Contact Director Andrew Smith, who has been working with Oyster River staff members to conduct diversity and inclusion training.

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**A message from the Oyster River Cooperative School District**

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--- Forwarded message ---
From: John Guilfoil <john@igpr.net>
Date: Tue, Sep 26, 2017 at 2:33 PM
Subject: Oyster River Partners with UNH Thompson School to Receive Fresh Veggies for Students
To: jessica@igpr.net

Display problems? Open this email in your web browser.

Oyster River Cooperative
School District
SAU No. 5
Superintendent James Morse
36 Coe Drive
Durham, NH 03824

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2017

Media Contact: John Guilfoil
Phone: 617-993-0003
Email: john@igpr.net
Oyster River Partners with UNH Thompson School to Receive Fresh Veggies for Students

DURHAM -- Superintendent Dr. James Morse is pleased to announce that Oyster River Cooperative School District is working with the University of New Hampshire’s horticultural program to provide students with fresh, local vegetables every week.

Beginning this month, the UNH Thompson School of Applied Science, under the leadership of Horticulture Facility Manager Jonathan Ebba, began supplying Oyster River with hydroponically grown greenhouse vegetables.

Doris Demers, Child Nutrition Coordinator for Oyster River, who is always looking for way to buy local and bring fresh options to students, partnered with Ebba in the spring to increase their local vegetable selections.

“I’ve always felt strongly about buying local because everyone knows fresh is the best and the longer a vegetable is off the plant, the more nutrients it loses,” Demers said. “Because we’re in New Hampshire, the growing season is short and there are a few things available. But now that we’re working with Jonathan and the Thompson school, we’re able to get homegrown veggies year round.”

Although still in the first few weeks of the partnership, Oyster River is already seeing the fruits of the Thompson’s School’s labor, receiving 90 heads of lettuce and more than 40 pounds of other vegetables at the start of this week.

In the coming months, as production of the greenhouse crops increases, the Thompson School will provide Oyster River with 35 pounds of tomatoes, 85 cucumbers, 65 green peppers and 120 heads of lettuce (Romaine and Buttercrunch) a week. They’ll also include more unique items, depending on what’s available, including baby bok choy, kale and micro greens.

QUOTE FROM JONATHAN HERE

Since incorporating fresh foods -- which includes local meat, poultry, fish baked goods, fruit in addition to a hearty supply of vegetables -- into the district’s meal plans in 2012
when Demers started at Oyster River, she has noticed a dramatic increase in the number of students who eat school meals.

Today, Oyster River prepares more than 200 lunches a day, compared with approximately 70 five years ago. The middle and high schools, along with the two elementary schools all have salad bars stocked with the fresh local greens and students often request items like salmon and brussels sprouts instead of chicken nuggets and pizza.

"I think kids recognize that quality of fresh, local foods and are interested in exploring their options in ways that they never were before," Demers said. "Our goal is that students will continue these healthy eating habits throughout their time at Oyster River and beyond.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2017

Oyster River Cooperative School District to Conduct Training on Diversity and Inclusion with Andrew C. Smith

New Hampshire Disproportionate Minority Contact Coordinator working directly with District
DURHAM -- Oyster River Cooperative School District Superintendent James Morse reports that the district is working with Andrew C. Smith, the state's Disproportionate Minority Contact Coordinator, to conduct employee training on diversity and inclusion for the upcoming school year.

The goal is to have 100 percent of all district faculty, staff, and administrators participate in the valuable sessions conducted by Smith.

Smith has been the New Hampshire State DMC Coordinator since 2011. He has 25 years of experience as an Independent Management Consultant specializing in Diversity and Inclusion, Leadership Development, Change Management and Cultural Transformation. He also works with high level clients including the Department of Homeland Security, Amtrak, and the St. Louis Police Department.

"Andrew Smith brings years of experience and expertise to bear. The state relies on him as a resource on diversity and inclusion, and we are very fortunate to have him in our schools, working directly with our staff," Superintendent Morse said.

"In times of stress and crisis, Americans have always worked together based on freedom, equality, justice and humanity," Smith said. "This is one of those times and we will prevail again."

Two incidents at the start of the school year caused Superintendent Morse to reexamine the district's approach to multicultural diversity and respect for others. The school district is also planning a multicultural forum and is conducting a review of its curriculum, policies and procedures regarding how members of the community treat each other. The district is also consulting with the NAACP to assist in improving the district's approach to diversity. The goal of the forum is to improve the district's approach to diversity.

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Superintendent James Morse
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2017

Media Contact: John Guilfoil
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Oyster River Cooperative School District Responds to Incidents of Racism
Elementary School Student Assaulted on Bus, Inappropriate Comments Made at Middle School
DURHAM -- Oyster River Cooperative School District Superintendent James Morse reports that the school district is responding strongly after an elementary school student was a victim of a racial incident on a school bus at the start of the school year.

On Friday, Sept. 1, while on the afternoon bus, it was reported that a male student was taunted by another boy using racial comments. The aggressor allegedly made racist comments about the victim and made unwanted physical contact.

The incident was reported to the school principal who immediately began an investigation. Disciplinary measures have been taken, and the incident was referred to the Durham Police Department to conduct its own investigation of the facts and circumstances.

In addition, racial jokes were reported at the middle school. The issue was reported to the principal who conducted an investigation and implemented appropriate disciplinary action.

"These issues have given me significant pause," Superintendent Morse said. "There is no room for racism, sexism, homophobia, or antisemitism in our schools. Incidents like this cannot simply be fixed with punishments. We need to look at how we treat each other and how we expect others to treat us as members of the same human community."

Superintendent Morse has been in contact with the NAACP, the University of New Hampshire Office of Community, Equity and Diversity and the State of New Hampshire's Office of Disproportionate Minority Contact for guidance on how to move forward from these incidents and prevent similar such acts from occurring.

A multicultural forum is being planned, which will be emceed by Andrew C. Smith, the Coordinator of State of New Hampshire's Office of Disproportionate Minority Contact. Details will be released as they become finalized, and all are welcome.

The school district is also reviewing its policies on discrimination and student conduct and will implement changes as necessary. Superintendent Morse will also announce additional programs and events on culture, diversity, and respect throughout the school year.

"In the interest of transparency, we are bringing this information forward now to let the community know that these incidents did occur, and we are responding directly, and we
are now taking actions to address the root cause of these types of acts," Superintendent Morse said. "The health, safety, and well-being of our students comes first. There is no place for intolerance in Oyster River."

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A message from the Oyster River Cooperative School District