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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, Feb. 22, 2019

Media Contact: John Guilfoil
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Oyster River Middle and High Schools Offer Students Fresh, Local Milk

Oyster River Middle School Chef and Cafeteria Manager Michael Bondi and Oyster River Cooperative School District Child Nutrition Director Doris Demers drink glasses of milk from Contoocook Creamery at the school’s new refrigerator dispenser. (Photo Courtesy Oyster River Cooperative School District)
DURHAM – Superintendent James Morse is pleased to announce that, as of last week, students at Oyster River Middle and High Schools are the first in the state to be drinking local, fresh milk from public school cafeterias.

The two schools transitioned from offering students milk in cartons to milk from Cantoocook Creamery, a local dairy producer in Hopkinton, New Hampshire, on Wednesday, Feb. 13.

The change to providing local milk at the schools was made possible by a partnership between the district's Child Nutrition Program and the creamery. For the past six years, the Child Nutrition Program has offered local foods to Oyster River students, including apples, beef, fish, root vegetables, greens, tomatoes and squash.

"We have a reputation for buying local and in the past when I looked into local milk there was either none available that was pasteurized and homogenized or the price was much too high," said Doris Demers, Child Nutrition Director for Oyster River Cooperative School District. "I really didn't think it would ever be possible. Cantoocook's price came in much lower than I expected and very close to our state bid price. I was thrilled to have this option become a reality."

National School Lunch and Breakfast program regulations mandate that the fat content in flavored milk sold in cafeterias cannot be above one percent. Cantoocook originally only offered flavored whole milk, which is usually four percent milk-fat, but produced a one percent low-fat milk to meet the needs of Oyster River Middle and High Schools.

Cantoocook Creamery also donated a refrigerated dispenser to each school's cafeteria so that students can pour their own eight ounce cups of milk. The Child Nutrition Program also purchased reusable cups and dishwasher racks for the milk, as the cafeterias previously offered milk in cartons and didn't have cups available. In all, the cups and dishwasher racks cost the Child Nutrition Program $572.

"Students seem to really enjoy having access to fresh, local milk at school, and it's been wonderful to see their excitement over a healthier alternative that supports a local business," Demers said. "Exposing our students to healthier lifestyle choices and supporting good habits is at the heart of everything we do through the Child Nutrition Program."
For now, Oyster River Cooperative School District elementary schools will continue to serve their milk in cartons.

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**Oyster River Middle and High Schools began offering fresh, local milk to students during the school day on Wednesday, Feb. 13. (Photo Courtesy Oyster River Cooperative School District.)**

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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, Feb. 8, 2019

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Oyster River Educator Named Middle School Principal of the Year by New Hampshire Association of School Principals

DURHAM –Superintendent James Morse is pleased to announce that Oyster River Middle School Principal Jay Richard has been named the Middle School Principal of the Year by the New Hampshire Association of School Principals (NHASP).

Richard was nominated for the award by Oyster River Assistant Superintendent Todd Allen.

"He has been so committed to middle school education for his whole career," Assistant Superintendent Allen said. "He's just a really good, honest guy who really cares about his kids. He's always doing what he can to make kid's experiences at the middle school better. That really stands out."

Richard has worked at Oyster River Cooperative School District for 20 years, and has been the principal at Oyster River Middle for the past 10 years. He began his career in the district as a special education teacher, and also worked as an assistant principal for five years.

In his nomination application on Richard's behalf, Assistant Superintendent Allen highlighted the principal's contributions the Oyster River Middle School math and advisory programs, as well as his support of after school activities.

Richard collaborated with the math department at Oyster River to lower the requirements students must meet to take Algebra in the eighth grade, and created a voluntary summer math enrichment program to support students looking to strengthen
their math skills. In summer 2018, more than 200 students participated in the voluntary math program. As a result of these initiatives, Oyster River Middle has consistently seen 95 percent of students have met the competencies of the Algebra I course and are able to start high school with math credit.

He also supported changes to the advisory program at the school to put students in small groups with one teacher during advisory periods. The advisory groups develop close relationships among the students and their advisory teacher, and together they participate in volunteer, fundraising, and school spirit events.

In an effort to foster a welcoming environment for all students at Oyster River Middle, Richard has also fostered a thriving array of after school activities for students to participate in, often run by parent and community volunteers. A few examples of student groups he has supported include the ski club, chess club, bridge club, MindCraft club, Robotics club, and the outing club.

"It's wonderful to see Jay recognized by the New Hampshire Association of School Principals for his efforts to make Oyster River Middle School a welcoming environment for students to flourish and grow as they explore their interests," Superintendent Morse said.

The New Hampshire Association of School Principals will honor Richard, as well as Salem High School Principal Tracy Collyer, Riddle Brook School Principal Molly McCarthy, and Windham High School Assistant Principal Matthew Malila, at its first Leadership Academy from June 26 to June 28 at the Omni Mt. Washington Resort in Bretton Woods.

The four educators will also be recognized at the New Hampshire Excellence in Education Awards Celebration, also known as the EDies awards, on June 8 at the DoubleTree Hilton Manchester Downtown Hotel in Manchester.

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A message from the Oyster River Cooperative School District
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, Feb. 8, 2019

Media Contact: John Guilfoil
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Oyster River Students Honored by Scholastic Writing Awards

Several Oyster River Middle School students have been recognized for their original writing submissions to the 2019 Scholastic Writing Awards. Back row, left to right: Tyler Nelson, Marcus Anderson, Justin Partis, Michael O’Laughlin, Henry Hagen, Annika Baumgardt, Madelyn Marthouse, Julia Kinsey, Paige Burt. Front row, left to right: Elsie Paxton, Ava Gruner, Elizabeth Walent, Dillon Crockett, Kelly Zhang, Amelia Nott, Zoe Selig, Mary Jeong, Libby Davidson. (Photo Courtesy of Oyster River Cooperative School District)

DURHAM – Superintendent James Morse is pleased to announce that several eighth grade students at Oyster River Middle School have been recognized by the 2019 Scholastic Writing Awards.

The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards annually recognize middle and high school students from across the United States for their exceptional art and writing work, and offers students the opportunity to have their submissions publicly displayed and published.

In the state of New Hampshire, 750 submissions were entered into the Scholastic Writing Awards by middle and high school students. Of those, 76 submissions were awarded Gold Keys, 158 submissions received Silver Keys, and 105 Honorable Mentions were given statewide.
Submissions to the Scholastic Writing Awards are judged on their originality, technical skill, and the emergence of a personal voice or vision.

"Oyster River students have represented the district very well in the Scholastic Writing Awards, year after year," Superintendent Morse said. "The poems, personal essays, short stories, and other works submitted this year reflect their hard work and talent for writing. It's a pleasure to see their submissions recognized."

At Oyster River Middle School, eight students were awarded Gold Keys for their work, eight students received Silver Keys, and seven students were given Honorable Mentions.

Gold Key recipients at Oyster River Middle include Annika Baumgardt for her poem "taste the rainbow," Dillon Crockett for his personal essay "Floating," Ava Gruner for her personal essay "Taken by the Wind," Henry Hagen for his personal essay "Home is a Place with a Purple Fence," Julia Kinsey for her poem "The Children of War," Sophie Meyer for her poem "Tallying the Daily Dead," Amelia Nott for her short story "When the Light Shines," and Elsie Paxton for her poem "Your Words."

“When I found out I won a gold key, I was really proud of myself,” said Dillon Crockett, an eighth grade student. "The fact that something that I wrote was recognized was really important to me.”

“I wrote down what I was feeling and what I remembered feeling," said Ava Gruner, an eighth grade student, about her Gold Key winning personal essay. "While I was revising my memoir, I took out unnecessary dialogue that made it less dramatic, and I tried to make whoever was listening infer what I was feeling."

“I was surprised when I won a gold key just because I never thought I would write something that other people would actually recognize and understand what I was trying to say," she added. "I was pretty happy to see what I wrote getting recognized because I put so much emotion into it."

Silver Keys were awarded to Annika Baumgardt for her poem "Ordinary Eyes," Libby Davidson for her personal essay "I Live to Be Me," Sabrina Golden for her flash fiction piece "The Unanswered Questions That Never Stopped Hurting," Madelyn Marthouse for her personal essay "I Didn't Even Get to Say Goodbye" and her poem "Some Will Never See Home Again," Sophie Meyer for her personal essay "How to Say Goodbye,"
Tyler Nelson for the poem "Twinkle Twinkle," Amelia Nott for her science fiction/fantasy piece "A Spill of Ink," and Elizabeth Walent for her poem "The (not so) Perfect World."

"I actually wrote both of my poems in a three day period," said Annika Baumgardt, an eighth grade student who was awarded both a Gold and a Silver Key. "I never really liked writing poetry, and writing in general wasn’t really my strong suit, but I was really in a creative mood when I started writing and I was surprised that I came up with something I was proud of. This was really the first time I’ve taken poetry writing seriously, and now I’m more open to writing other poems."

Several students were also given Honorable Mentions, including Marcus Anderson for his flash fiction piece "Kamikaze," Paige Burt for her poem "The World Needs to Make a Change," Mary Jeong for her personal essay "White Cat on Daisy Drive," Michael O'Laughlin for his personal essay "Wedding Band," Justin Partis for his personal essay "When Calm Peaks" and his poem "Storm," Zoe Selig for her poem "Refugees, Not Enemies," and Kelly Zhang for her critical essay "You'll Get Run Over, Honey."

Students that were recognized in the 2019 Scholastic Writing Awards will be honored in an Awards Ceremony at Plymouth State University this May. Winning submissions will also be published in "Middle High School Voices," an anthology of award winning writing by New Hampshire middle and high school students.

The 2019 Scholastic Writing Awards and "Middle High School Voices" was sponsored locally by the National Writing Project in New Hampshire.
Oyster River Cooperative
School District
SAU No. 5
Superintendent James Morse
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, Jan. 25, 2019

*Media Advisory*
Oyster River to Host Robotics Competition this Weekend

Media Contact: John Guilfoil
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Nine groups of Oyster River Middle School students built robots this year and competed against groups from other schools in VEX IQ Robotics Competitions. The school will hold its first VEX IQ robotics competition this Sunday, Jan. 27. (Courtesy photo Oyster River Cooperative School District)

DURHAM – Principal Jay Richard is pleased to announce that Oyster River Middle School will host its first VEX IQ robotics event this Sunday.

Approximately 45 students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades at Oyster River Middle School take part in VEX IQ robotics, and are coached after school by teachers John Silverio and Jason Duff.

VEX IQ Robotics is a robotics building program that teaches students STEM concepts through the act of building and programming a robot.

Students who joined the VEX IQ Robotics club at Oyster River Middle School this fall started working on their robots in late September. Four out of the middle school's nine teams have qualified this year for the state tournament on Feb. 17 at Manchester Community College. Two to five students are in each team.

Last year, one Oyster River Middle School team won the New Hampshire/Vermont state championship VEX IQ Robotics competition in multiple categories. The same team also participated in the World VEX IQ event in April 2018 in Louisville, Kentucky.

On Sunday, Jan. 27, Oyster River Middle School is hosting its first annual VEX IQ Next Level Tournament from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The tournament is the last qualifying event for New Hampshire teams, and 32 groups from across the state have signed up to compete.

Students will face a variety of challenges in the competition. Individual teams will have one minute to score as many points as possible on the 'challenge table.' Points can be scored by maneuvering a robot to move hubs on the table and stacking them in two scoring zones. Teams can also earn points by directing their robot to complete the round with a particular action, such as parking their robot under a bar or hanging from it. Points will also be added to the 'skills' score if a team programs their robot to score points autonomously.
Teams will also participate in pairs to score as many points as possible in one minute teamwork challenges during the tournament, ending in a 'step ladder' competition where the two teams with the highest scores will advance to the state tournament.

Engineering judges will also evaluate teams based on robot design and performance. Two awards, one for design and another for overall excellence, will be awarded at the competition. Teams that are given either award will qualify for the state tournament. Teams will also be assessed by their engineering knowledge and design, as well as an engineering log that tracks their process for building a robot and their engineering design stages.


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A message from the Oyster River Cooperative School District
Big step coming for new Oyster River Middle School

By Casey Conley
news@fosters.com
Posted Feb 3, 2019 at 4:27 PM
Updated Feb 3, 2019 at 4:27 PM

DURHAM — The proposal for a new middle school in the Oyster River Cooperative School District won't be on the ballot until next year. But this week's deliberative session will set the stage for a ballot vote in March of this year that will send a strong signal about voters' intent for the $46 million project.

That's because the $45.9 million school district budget coming before voters on March 12 includes $800,000 for pre-construction costs associated with building the new school. Oyster River has already spent about $180,000 toward the project.

School Board Chair Tom Newkirk acknowledged spending $800,000 would effectively commit the district in a particular direction.

"You really have to have a plan for people to vote on," he said Friday by way of explaining the pre-construction costs. "You have to have solid numbers, you have to have land and a site you know you can build on, so you have to invest money to get a plan."

Residents who attend Tuesday's 7 p.m. deliberative session at Oyster River High School on the proposed budget for the 2019-20 school year will get a first look at middle school concept plans, and they could make amendments to what voters will see on the March ballot. Superintendent Jim Morse acknowledges the final design will change but said the initial drawings "give the community a sense where we're going."
There are roughly 665 students at Oyster River Cooperative Middle School, which takes students from Durham, Lee and Madbury. The existing school dates to 1937 and has been added onto four times. The result, Morse said, is a poorly laid out space with inefficient heating, small classrooms, non-functioning windows and other challenges.

The current middle school proposal calls for a 122,000-square-foot school built with three or four stories near the existing building. District officials are planning for a “green” structure that could take advantage of geothermal heating and cooling. Conservative projections show the new building could more than halve utility costs.

“The building has served the community very well, but it is 82 years old and no longer serves the academic needs of the children,” Morse said in a recent interview, noting that maintenance, upkeep and energy costs are high for the current building.

“The building has to be replaced,” he added. “You can’t add onto it any more, you can’t renovate it any more. The building has outlived its useful life by 30 years.”

Tax impacts from the new school have not yet been calculated. But Newkirk said the district has focused on “clearing the deck” of capital spending needs in recent years and would no longer need to set aside money for those purposes in future budgets. He also noted the bond on the high school will be retired in a few years. Both would minimize the effect on taxpayers, he said.

Although the deliberative session will include a presentation on the high school, it also will focus on the spending plan proposed for the 2019-2020 school year. The proposal increases by 3.5 percent over the existing budget and would have a similar impact on the school portion of local property taxes, Morse said.

The budget envisions adding a fourth counselor at Oyster River High School, where the student population has grown from 660 five years ago to a projected 850 students next year. The district also hopes to add an assistant special education director position at Moharimet and Mast Way elementary schools. Similar positions already exist.
at the middle and high schools, Morse said.

The major capital item on the 2019-20 budget calls for an $855,320 safety entrance project at Moharimet School similar to the one recently completed at Mast Way. The state has offered $100,000 toward the project.

Final voting on the proposed budget and other warrant articles will take place March 12.
Thanks,
Mark

Mark C. Milliken
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Oyster River marks School Counseling Week

DURHAM — Superintendent Morse said the Oyster River Cooperative School District has recognized the support, resources, and programming school counselors provide to students for National School Counseling Week.

Sponsored by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), National School Counseling Week begins Monday, Feb. 4, and ends Friday, Feb. 8.

"Oyster River is fortunate to have school counselors who place students at the center of all decisions," Morse said. "It's not about the district or the school, it's the child and the child's needs. Oyster River counselors know success in school means addressing all aspects of the child, from mental health and wellness to academics."

Oyster River Cooperative School District has made it a priority over the last decade to create a comprehensive K-12 counseling program. In July 2016, counseling and administration staff underwent a crisis response training and have also worked to improve the crisis response process in the district.

"National School Counseling Week recognizes school counselors who implement comprehensive school counseling programs, a vital part of the educational process for all students as they meet the challenges of the 21st century," said Heather Machanoff, K-12 Counseling Director.

The district has also adopted CASEL standards for Social Emotional Learning, which seek to support student self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision making, and relationship skills in the classroom, at school, at home, and in the community.

According to Machanoff, counseling staff at Oyster River have also been able to use resources including the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey to implement targeted programming and interventions for students.

At the elementary school, teachers are currently testing a Social Emotional Learning Curriculum, which includes initiatives such as the Open Circle program in Kindergarten through grade four. Oyster River Middle School is also developing an advisory program, and last year Oyster River High School delivered a 'Bringing in the Bystander' training to address sexual harassment. The district also held a student-led community mental health forum in November, and HAVEN programming has extended to include grades five through eight in addition to Kindergarten through grade four.

"Focusing our school and broader community on mental health was brought to the forefront with the adoption of a 2015 school board goal surrounding mental health," Machanoff said. "The work began with a number of community based events, and the focus has shifted to a more programmatic approach. Our mental health team including school counselors and school psychologists evaluate programming to support our students while building skills."

"Our programming and approach is evolving as a result of the changing needs of our students and families," she added.
Gibb bound for USM

Oyster River High School senior Cassidy Gibb recently signed her National Letter of Intent to attend and play volleyball at the University of Southern Maine. Pictured, from left, are Cassandra Sweatt (ORHS volleyball coach), Gibb, Sean Stewart (Great Bay Volleyball Club coach), Andy Lathrop (ORHS AD). (COURTESY)

Hinman bound for Tiffin

Dover High School senior Sara Hinman