

Oscar Smith Middle

December 2011

Parent Paws



Principal's Column

When we started this school year with our 212° goal it was to make Oscar Smith Middle a 212° school. The concept behind our theme is that at 211° water is hot but just one degree higher, at 212°, it boils and creates enough steam to power a large engine like a locomotive. Our goal is to reach one degree higher!



Linda Scott, Ed. D.
Principal

Special points of interest

- Guidance News
- Books Alive!
- Yearbook Sales
- AVID News
- Middle Years

Little did we know that we would end up reaching that goal on a national level. Our school has been named a 2012 winner of the National Breakthrough Schools program. The MetLife Foundation and the National

Association of Secondary School Principals set out to name 10 schools across the country (middle and high schools) that were making a difference for students. This puts Oscar Smith Middle in a category with only four other middle schools in the United States winning this honor.



To receive this recognition there was a review of data and other school information along with a site visit and interviews with students, staff, and community members. Our visiting team was quite impressed after spending a day with our students and staff.

There will be a principal's magazine coming out in May which will feature the winning schools. This magazine is distributed across the country and will be completely focused on what is happening within the winning schools.

We are indeed excited about this recognition. Even though we have reached at least one degree higher, we are committed to reaching even higher. Join us in setting 212° goals. Ask your child if they have received their 212° goal-setting wrist band. There is one for every child who sets his or her short term goals.



Our staff being recognized at the school board meeting.

PTA News

The PTA Reflections program has encouraged millions of students across the nation to explore their artistic talent.

Each year, the National PTA Reflections Program challenges students to create art inspired by a specific theme. This year's theme was, "Diversity Means..".

Thank you to all of the participants and winners.

In the Visual Arts category:

Merit Award– Alex Sanchez

Excellence Award– Taekion Jenkins

Outstanding Interpretation– Heidi McGrath

In the Literature category:

Successful Participation– Dasiah Boyd, Patrice Hamlin, Quentin Homes, Taizha Stith, and Chandler Wyant

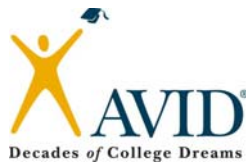
Merit Award– Tristan Council

Excellence Award– Kirsten Curran

Outstanding Interpretation– Eugene Gilchrist



AVID



AVID students are becoming more organized than ever. They are doing great on their binder checks, tutorials and notebook entries. Check out the AVID showcase so you can see some model students who have shown success in the AVID program. Also, the first AVID Parent Meeting was a success. We had several families attend and some wonderful ideas were shared to make the program more successful; we look forward to implementing some of those soon. Our sixth graders have been working very hard keeping binders updated and using WICR strategies. During Parent Day, students created 212 goals with the help of their parents. Then, the AVID students collaborated with other students on the team to help them write goals. Students also did a great job voicing their opinion during our first "Philosophical Chair" activity. Keep up the hard work 6th grade!!!! In seventh grade, students have been researching and creating power points for colleges of choice. Students are then putting their projects into movie maker and they are being aired on Tiger TV (morning announcements). They have gotten rave reviews from others about these fantastic commercials. Finally, the eighth grade students are off to a great start. Their first ARC supported their career aspirations. Each student took a Career Interest Survey and investigated their chosen career using their findings. The students then compiled the information into a Power Point to present to their peers.

The Eighth grade AVID students completed a community service project as well. Each student was asked to bring in a small gift to be placed in a shoe box. The students collected enough items to send three girls and one boy, a box full of cool goodies and gadgets. These boxes were wrapped and mailed to a country with a needy child in mind. www.samaritanpurse.org. This next nine weeks eighth grade will investigate technology and its many facets. Thanks again parents for sharing your student with us. They are a complete joy and we look forward to many more great learning experiences. Parents are an essential part of the AVID program here at OSMS. We appreciate all the parents do to support their children.

SPECIAL DELIVERY ANNOUNCEMENT ~ Please keep in mind for Valentine's Day that we will not be able to accept special deliveries for students. The delivery process is an interruption to the instructional day. Also, carrying balloons, glass vases, etc. presents a safety hazard to students riding buses.

Nationally Recognized

Did you know your child's school was nationally recognized? Only five middle schools in the country can say this! The MetLife Foundation and NASSP looked at the following criteria in determining Oscar Smith Middle School as a Breakthrough School:

- **Collaborative leadership:** professional learning communities, shared leadership, and student and staff leadership development;
- **Personalization:** attention to all students, mentoring, and school/community connections;
- **Curriculum, instruction, and assessment:** access to rigorous coursework for all students, differentiated instruction with multiple assessments, data-based decision making, and opportunities for career development.



Books Alive

HOT, HOT, HOT, STUFF!!!

Tigers, where can you explore a whole new world, eat exotic food and show off your brain skills to your family? It's all happening at BOOKS ALIVE!

Mark your calendar for **Tuesday, January 24th from 7- 8pm at OSMS**. Students will showcase what they have learned after experiencing the school-wide read-aloud book Extra Credit by Andrew Clements. It's the story of two unlikely teenage pen pals: an American girl and a boy from Afghanistan. The teens share their cultures through writing letters and create an unlikely connection. All students have heard this book read in their English classes, so be sure to ask your student all about the exciting details.

Student guests to Books Alive will receive a passport for the evening and an opportunity to win prizes. There will be a read-aloud of the endearing book, Frog and Toad. Exhibits of Afghan food, clothing, art, and animals also will be on display. In addition, students and parents will be able to engage in friendly competition with board games.

As part of the celebration of Reading month, our media center will be hosting a Scholastic Book Fair that week as well. It will be open during Books Alive for parents and students to explore and pick up some great reads.



Representatives of the Cuffee Library will be here to provide information about library cards and activities for teens.

TIGERS, YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS OUT ON THE SIZZLING SCENE – GRAB YOUR PASSPORT AND HEAD TO OSMS FOR BOOKS ALIVE HAPPENING 1-24-12!!!

Calendar of Events

December

- 19-Basketball @ IRM
- 20- Wrestling @ OSM
- 21-Last day before winter break

**DECEMBER 22 TO JANUARY 2—
WINTER BREAK (SCHOOL CLOSED)**

January

- 3-Students Return to School
- 4-Basketball @ OSM
- 5-Wrestling @ WBM
- 9-Basketball @ OSM
- 10- Wrestling @ HMS

January (continued)

- 12-Club Pictures
- 13- District Orchestra Concert
- 16-MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HOLIDAY-SCHOOL CLOSED**
- 19-Host city basketball finals
- 27-College Shirt Day
- 24-Books Alive Night @ 7:00
- 26-EARLY RELEASE DAY—END OF 2ND GRADING PERIOD**
- 27-TEACHER WORK DAY—SCHOOL CLOSED**

January (continued)

**30-STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY-
SCHOOL CLOSED**

February

- 2-Winter Athletic Awards
- 15- Spring Pictures
- 17- Honor Roll Parties



Internet Safety Tips—Part 2:



Initiate conversations with your child about their internet activity.

The best way to protect your child online is to talk to them. Research suggests that when children want important information, most rely on their parents.

Initiate conversations with your child. Even if your child is comfortable approaching you, don't wait for him/her to start the conversation. Take advantage of everyday opportunities to talk with your child about Internet Safety. A TV program featuring a child online or using a cell phone can be a perfect occasion to discuss with your child about what "to do" or "not to do" in a similar situation. News stories about Internet scams or cyberbullying are a great opening for you to start this conversation with your child about their experiences and your expectations for Internet use.

Information provided by OnGuard Online
Your Safety Net

SCA News

Student Council Association has been very busy! We have sold over 100 spirit pins as our primary fundraiser. SCA members painted and prepared the pins sold during lunches and at home games. During the month of November students participated in our "Wall of Thanksgiving." Students paid a twenty five cent donation to describe their blessings on a paper brick wall displayed in the cafeteria. We raised over \$50 for Our Families emergency homeless shelter here in South Norfolk. As we head into our holiday season we are preparing for our National Student Council initiative, RSVP: Raising Student Voice and Participation. This series of summits will provide our student body a voice for continuing to improve our school for our students, our staff, and our community.



A Message from the School Nurse

Now is the time to be alert to signs of lice infestation. Each year many people are affected with head lice. It is a health problem that can affect anyone.

The head louse is one of three types of lice that infest people. Head lice are tiny insects that make their home in human hair and feed on human blood. They multiply rapidly, laying little yellowish-white oval shaped eggs (called nits), which then glue to the base of the hair, close to the scalp. They are most often found on the hair behind the ears and at the back of the head and neck.



Anyone can get head lice – they are not a sign of being "dirty". Most people do not know they have lice until they see them, but it can cause persistent itching of the scalp in some.

Head lice have no wings and do not fly or jump, but they spread rapidly if not detected and treated properly.

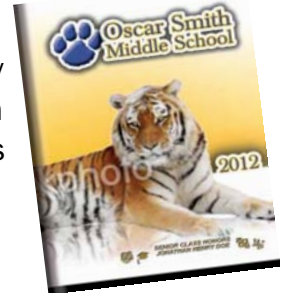
I recommend parents check their children periodically for signs of this problem and if found, please notify your school nurse as soon as possible so that an inspection of the close contacts of the student can be made; no mention of your students name will ever be disclosed. Chesapeake Public School's policy requires that a student be examined by the nurse before readmission to school and must be found to be free of nits before readmission to school.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact your child's school nurse.

Sherry Harris, RN
School Nurse

Yearbooks

Give your child the gift that lasts with a collection of middle school memories that they can look back on forever. Have your child pick up a yearbook form from Mr. Nichter in room 802 or Mrs. Jones in the media center. Yearbooks are only \$35.00. Don't miss out. Order today!



Guidance News

Please note the following dates:

Tuesday, January 3	Q2 Interim reports issued to students
Tuesday, January 17	Applications for Academies and Int'l Baccalaureate due
Thursday, February 2	Q2 report cards issued to students
Jan. – Feb. 2012	Course selection for 2012-2013 school year begins. Counselors will begin meeting with students in grades 6 & 7 to explain their course options for next year.
February 10, 2012	OSHS counselors talk to grade 8 students about scheduling for grade 9
Thursday, February 16	Elective Fair at OSHS for 8 th grade students/parents
Tuesday, March 6	SOL writing test, multiple choice, for grade 8 (make-up: Thursday & Friday, March 8-9, 2012)
Wednesday, March 7	SOL direct writing test for grade 8 (make-up: Thursday & Friday, March 8-9, 2012)



January 17-25 counselors help students in grades 7 and 8 begin and/or up-date their Academic and Career Plans (ACP). During these sessions through the physical education classes, students choose electives and core classes for next year. They will also spend some time taking values (grade 7) and skills (grade 8) inventories through the VA Wizard web site. After all the students have done so, the ACPs will be printed and sent home for parents' review and signatures. Sixth grade students will take the interest inventory through the VA Wizard web site and will receive elective choice forms for your signature. If you have any questions about the course selections or have not seen a course selection form or ACP by the end of February, please call your student's counselor at 494-7590. Counselors are Mrs. Hodges (grade 6), Mrs. Edmonds (grade 7), and Mrs. Rafal (grade 8).

If you are the parent of an eighth grade student, please make sure that your child gets a good night's sleep the two nights before the SOL English writing tests in March. The dates are listed above. If you have scheduled any doctor's appointments or other activities for those two dates, please seriously consider rescheduling them for another date. Studies have shown that students test most successfully in their normal testing environment as opposed to a "make-up" session. Also, any encouragement and positive motivation to do well on the test that you can offer will help your child be more successful. **Regarding attendance during SOL testing, please do not plan family trips or other activities or appointments that will keep students out of school the last two weeks of May and the first week of June. These are the test weeks for the spring Standards of Learning tests.**

Report cards for the second nine weeks will sent home February 2, 2012. If your child is having academic difficulties that may impact promotion to the next grade, you will receive the first of two letters that are mailed to parents after this grade report is issued. If you receive a letter, please call your grade level counselor to schedule a conference with the appropriate teachers. Students have to pass 3 of the four core (English, math, science, and social studies) classes, including math and English, and one other course to be promoted. Otherwise, they have the option of taking and passing the courses in summer school. Athletes must have a 2.0 GPA each quarter to play interscholastic sports and with the new grading scale, a C- is below a 2.0 GPA.

Any questions or concerns you may have about your child are very important to us. Please do not hesitate to contact us. The remaining interim and report card distribution dates for this year are February 2, March 19, April 19, May 18, and June 20 (this one, only, is mailed).

January 2012

Oscar Smith Middle School
Dr. Linda Scott, Principal

Middle Years

Working together for school success



Short Stops

Happy New Year!

New Year's resolutions can help your child form good habits. This year, have her think of resolutions for your family, like exercising together once a week. Then, come up with a plan, such as walking on Saturday mornings, and motivate each other to stick with it.

Internet pledge

To help protect your middle grader when he uses the Internet, consider creating a safety contract. Put rules in writing ("I will not give out personal information," "I will not talk to strangers"). Then, have him sign the pledge and post it near the computer. *Tip:* Find sample rules at www.safekids.com/contract.htm.

Promptness, please

Being at her desk when the bell rings means your child won't miss important announcements or class instruction. Suggest that she add a five-minute "cushion" to her morning so she has time to deal with the unexpected (a missing shoe, an early bus).

Worth quoting

"A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions."
Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

Just for fun

Q: A man went out in the rain without an umbrella or a hat, yet not one strand of hair got wet. How is that possible?

A: He was bald!



Friendly reading

Looking for a way to motivate your children to read regularly and enjoy books? Have them turn reading into a social event! Sharing reading with friends can improve comprehension and keep youngsters motivated to read through the middle years. Try these ideas.



Reading buddies

Your children might plan to read with friends at libraries or at one of their houses. Suggest that they each take a novel to read or share some magazines. This is also a good way to tackle books they're assigned for class. They can discuss passages they like or ask for help with parts that aren't clear.

Book clubs

Encourage your youngsters to find out whether the public library or school media center offers book clubs. Or they could start their own groups with several classmates. The students can choose a book to read and pick a date to get together and talk about it. Each member could take

several titles to the meetings so the group will have plenty to choose from.

Social networking

Online reading communities are fun places for kids to swap book recommendations and express opinions about what they read. They can rate and review books at www.goodreads.com. Using the site regularly is a good way to keep track of titles they've read, too. At www.youarewhatyouread.com, each reader can leave a "book-print"—a list of all-time favorite books. They'll also be able to see which books their friends like best, and why. 👍

Go, team!

Cheering on the home team with good sportsmanship shows class. Your child can help her school and team earn a nice reputation with these suggestions:

- Show school pride by wearing team colors on game days and to sporting events.
- Hold up signs that encourage the home team. ("Go, Hawks!") Avoid slogans or messages that put opponents down.
- Join in positive chants and cheers to spur on your team ("De-fense! De-fense!"), and don't boo the other team.
- Respect referees' and officials' calls by keeping negative thoughts to yourself. Remember that just one angry fan can turn the tide of a crowd.
- Be courteous to fans, players, and coaches of other teams if you run into them before or after a game. 👍



Middle Years

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Let's talk!

Something seems to be on your middle grader's mind, but you can't get her to open up. Or you've disagreed about a decision, but she's not interested in talking about it.

The words you choose can make a difference in whether discussions take off or end quickly.

Starters

These comments invite further conversation by showing you care about what your child has to say. They also demonstrate that you're willing to listen rather than interrupt with your own opinions or solutions. Try conversation openers such as:

- "Tell me more about that."
- "How do you feel about it?"



- "I can tell this really matters to you. Why do you think that is?"
- "What would you like to see happen?"

If your youngster knows she can talk without being judged or lectured, she will be more apt to share her feelings.

Enders

These phrases can give your middle schooler the impression you're not interested in a two-way conversation or that you don't respect her feelings. Try to avoid saying things like:

- "I'm the adult."
- "Don't argue with me."
- "You shouldn't feel that way."
- "You don't know what you're talking about."

If your child is afraid you'll criticize, she'll be more likely to keep her thoughts to herself. 👍

Fun with electives

One exciting thing about middle school is that your child gets to take electives. Here are ways he can decide which subjects to choose—and get the most out of them.

Start by scanning the course offerings together. Look for classes that match his interests (photography, poetry) or that help him explore careers (computer programming, journalism). He can ask his school counselor

about specific courses or get input from teachers on what kind of assignments he'll have.



Then, when your tween takes electives, ask him to introduce your family to what he's learning. You might take family "field trips." For example, visit an art museum if he's taking painting, or head to a local creek if he's studying environmental science. Also, you can show support by attending a school play if he's in charge of sound effects, or you might display a table that he built in shop class. 👍



Q & A

Jump right in!

Q My son waits until the last minute to start school projects. Then, he ends up stressed out and doesn't do his best. How can I help him change this?

A When it comes to projects, getting started might seem like the hardest part. But the longer your child puts it off, the tougher it can be to do a good job and finish on time.

As soon as he knows about a project, he should write the steps in his planner, making sure to allow enough time for each one. For example, to do a science project, he'll need to gather materials, set up the experiment, collect and record data, and analyze results. If he sees the steps broken down, getting started might not seem overwhelming.

Let him know that the important thing is to do something each day, no matter how small, so that he keeps moving forward. 👍



Parent to Parent

Smart spending

When my daughter Alyssa reached middle school, she started asking for money to spend on things like weekend outings and trendy jeans. These extras usually weren't in my budget, and I wanted her to learn about making good spending choices for herself.

I started giving her a small allowance so she could pay for non-necessities and get comfortable managing money. We talked about ways to be responsible with her allowance, like shopping

around for the best price and thinking carefully about each purchase. I suggested that she ask herself if she'd rather save the money for something else, if the purchase was something she could wait for, or if she could live without it altogether.

Alyssa's been getting her allowance for a month. Last Saturday, she invited a friend over instead of meeting at the mall for lunch so she could save for jeans. I'm glad she's learning to make these choices now so she'll be more prepared to manage her own budget when she's older. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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Thunder Corner

Tomorrow's Thunder® has finished the first season with the exception of the Championship game. I would like to thank the parents for assisting the program in getting your student to school early Wednesday morning for game day. The program is open for all 6th, 7th and 8th Grade Boys and Girls. Basketball game day is held on Wednesday at 7:30 a.m. before school. At the end of the ten-week season, there is a playoff and a championship game.

The program is structured so that participants must practice teamwork, discipline, responsibility and respect for others. *Tomorrow's Thunder*® has strict academic and social standards such as completing class assignments, being punctual to class, and maintaining a respectable grade average. Each week the participants receive a scorecard from each of their teachers and the results are tallied together for a weekly score. If the student does not score high enough, the Mentor for that student sits down and discusses the cause and how to improve his or her score.

Interest in the program is always high and we see the results in the academic progress and improved behavior of the students. We have a 36 player roster divided into 12 teams of both boys and girls.

Congratulations go out to the Mentor Staff for another excellent season. Their direction and guidance is an inspiration in guiding the players. The mentors are: Mr. Anderson, Mr. Clark, Mrs. Ryberg, Ms. Jankowski, Dr. Gomez, Mr. Clelland, Ms. Lipinski, Mr. Tapp, Mr. Flint, Mrs. Nichter, Ms. Teachey, and Ms. Hardesty.

Box Tops for Education

CONGRATULATIONS, WE DID IT!!!!



The goal for the year was set at \$70.00 and we made it!! To date we have submitted \$210.00 worth of Box Tops. The goal has been raised for the year to \$500.00. Are you up for the challenge? I will be submitting more box tops before December 30th. Keep sending those box tops in to your child's homeroom teacher.

It's an easy fundraiser with no money involved just a little cutting and sending them in with your child.

To see all the participating products and to register for OSM, go to www.labelsforeducation.com

Thank you everyone for your help!

Diane O'Grady
Box Tops for Education

Oscar Smith Middle School
2500 Rodgers St.
Chesapeake, VA 23324
494-7590

Principal: Dr. Scott

Assistant Principals:

Mrs. Galloway
Mrs. Byrd-King
Mrs. Wyndham
Mr. Dunbar

Guidance Counselors:

Mrs. Hodges-6th-grade &
Guidance Director
Mrs. Rafal-8th-grade
Mrs. Edmonds-7th-grade

The Chesapeake Public School System is an equal educational opportunity school system. The School Board of the city of Chesapeake also adheres to the principles of equal opportunity and, therefore, prohibits discrimination in terms and conditions of employment on the basis of race, sex, national origin, color, religion, age, or disability.

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2500 Rodgers Street
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