



OKEMOS HIGH SCHOOL

Bi-Monthly Newsletter for the Okemos High School Community

IMPORTANT DATES

**NO SCHOOL
FEBRUARY 20TH**

WINTERFEST WEEK

FEB. 21: WEAR GRAY

FEB. 22: WACKY PATTERN

FEB. 23: LOOK-A-LIKE

FEB. 24: EXTRA DAY

WINTERFEST DANCE

FEBRUARY 25TH

EARLY RELEASE MARCH 8TH

IMPORTANT LINKS

click these:

[DISTRICT CALENDAR](#)

[PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK](#)

[PARENT GROUP](#)

[PARENT GROUP BYLAWS](#)

NEXT MEETING: APR. 14, 2023



FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear OHS Community,

Let's be honest. It's been a rough couple of weeks since our last newsletter. My statement to students regarding the events at MSU is on page two of this newsletter.

It's important to stress, through all of this, that I believe that education is secondary. That may sound odd coming from a principal, but it's true. My students' sense of safety, emotional health, and sense of belonging have been priorities for us this week. I'll focus on being an instructional leader soon enough. For now, I just want to be there for your kids and provide them with a sense of stability, safety, and to the extent possible, comfort. As always, I am very proud of our students, our staff, and our school. Take care, Reach out if you need anything,

~Dr. Kemsley

CONTACT INFO

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Principal

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION



FROM THE DESK OF DR. KEMSLEY

Statement regarding the events of 2/13

Students, I cannot believe we find ourselves in this type of situation again. As you may know, the MSU campus was the site of a mass shooting on Monday and there were multiple casualties. The suspect was located and is now dead. This was an intense and scary experience for many people within our community, especially for those with connections to MSU. Michigan State University is in our back yard and such an integral part of our lives. The mass shooting there is horrendous. We want you to know that we understand many of you have ties to MSU, whether it be family or friends that attend there, your parents or family members may work there.

I want you to know that this is **not normal**. Last night's mass shooting and the acts of last week are outrageous. In all of my years in education (and I am pretty old) I haven't experienced a string of events like this, ever. We do understand that many of you are frustrated by the lack of change and the constant feeling of being unsafe. We support you in that frustration. **You have every right to feel furious, confused, worn down, numb, or just plain sad.** As we navigate through today and future days, please keep in mind that our schools are very safe places. Please know that every adult in this school cares about your safety and well-being. I know you've heard this before, I just wanted to say it again.

Also, please know that we understand that a Google Form and a couple of dogs (no matter how cute CeCe and Willow are) are not going to solve all of our issues. You know that and we know that. They are tools at our disposal. We are all doing our best; me, you, your teachers, everyone! Let's be a little extra kind today. We certainly all deserve it.

I have a good feeling your teachers will give you time today to process your feelings and talk to one another about these latest events. Keep an extra watchful eye on your classmates and reach out to those you think need support. It's times like these (and last week, too) when we get to show our true spirit. **We know you will make us all proud.**

I am always around if you need anything or would like to talk.

-Dr. Kemsley

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

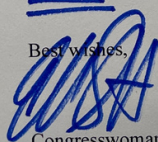
Mr. Keith Miller
Special Education Teacher, Okemos High School
2800 Jolly Road
Okemos, MI 48910

Mr. Miller,

There are certain moments in life that take your breath away, and I have no doubt that the moment multiple police officers rushed into your classroom with guns drawn was one of them. It is truly every teacher's worst nightmare, and I can tell you that having been the representative for Oxford at the time of the school shooting there, reports of a possible shooting in Okemos had the same effect on me. First and foremost, I am so incredibly grateful that this incident turned out to be a false alarm, and that no one was physically injured. And I am deeply thankful for the swift actions of law enforcement working hand in glove with teachers like you to safely evacuate everyone from the building.

That said, I know these events are deeply triggering and traumatic for all involved, and I wanted you to know that you and your students are in my thoughts. You're also in my actions, as I refuse to accept this state of heightened fear and anxiety as our "new normal." I will keep pushing for real change for gun safety, and for anything and everything else we must do to keep our kids safe. You and your students deserve nothing less. Thank you for your calm, steady leadership and for all you do.

Best wishes,



Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin

I'm so impressed by you!

Dear OHS Community,

You may not know this, but the swatting call actually named Mr. Keith Miller's classroom as the point where there was trouble. As you can imagine, our first responder entered his room expecting the worst.

Mr. Miller and his team worked very thoughtfully to help his students regain a sense of normalcy and to make them feel comfortable. We know he would never do it himself, so we wanted YOU to see this commendation from Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin.

Good job, Miller!

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

My name is Aanchal Jain, and I am an Okemos High School Class of 2022 graduate. I am currently a first-year student at the University of Michigan majoring in Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology. I had the privilege of being a part of the OHS Science Research program during my sophomore and junior years of high school, which prepared me well for my future research endeavors. In the second year of the research program, I had the opportunity to join the Arnosti Laboratory at Michigan State University as a high school research assistant, working on a computational biology project.

I am pleased to share that the research I worked on at the Arnosti Lab has been published in *Molecular Biology and Evolution*. The project is on the C-terminal Binding Protein and how the protein has evolved over time across many lineages. I specifically focused on two subsets of organisms and performed amino acid sequence analysis and comparative alignments for these species. If you are interested in reading more, the paper is linked [here](#). I would like to thank Ms. Facione and all of the teachers in the OHS Science Department for fostering my passion for science and providing the opportunity to be a part of a research lab in high school. I would also like to thank my research mentors Dr. David Arnosti and Ana-Maria Raicu for allowing me to help on this project. I am forever grateful for the research program and my supportive peers in the class!



COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

NHS Information

Please see below for important NHS dates:

- **February 17th** - NHS Blood Drive - Event for students and staff only. Takes place during school day. Members must participate in some way (options will be discussed at 2/7 meeting)
- **February 24th** - NHS Applications due to the main office. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
- Those who applied will be notified if they are accepted into NHS by the end of March via email
- **April 12th** - Senior Recognition Ceremony - Mandatory Event - Medals for Graduation Received - 6pm, OHS Auditorium, Light Refreshments served after in Commons
- **April 19th** - New Member Induction / Junior Recognition Ceremony - Mandatory Event - 6pm, OHS Auditorium, Light Refreshments served after in Commons
- **June 7th** - Mandatory Active Member Meeting in OHS Auditorium @7:15am - 36 hours due for those who have been an active member all school year. Those inducted on April 26th must also attend.
- Questions should be emailed to nhs.okemos@okemosk12.net

BOARD POLICY INFORMATION

The Board of Education conducts ongoing reviews of existing and proposed new policies as they relate to current educational practice. It is the practice of the board to give all policies, new or changed, a first reading at a public meeting, with final action taken no sooner than one month from the date of first reading.

New or changed policies are posted to [this page](#) on the OPS website following first reading.

Comments or concerns may be emailed to the Board of Education (board@okemosk12.net) prior to the "Date to be Adopted."

FROM THE OFFICE OF DR. SLEE

Students may see things on social media and/or on the news that are disturbing, and things in their own lives may be difficult to cope with. Please let them know that adults are here to support them while they process the tough stuff. We have many highly trained people throughout the district - counselors, social workers, and school psychologists - who can provide support to students who need to process emotions and find understanding.

Resources that may be helpful:

- This NPR article has some tips for talking to kids when the news is scary.
- If a student has experienced a traumatic event, this resource from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network describes how they may act depending on their age.

Okemos Public Schools has partnered with Child and Family Charities to provide a **mental health clinic** within Okemos High School. This opportunity is made possible because of the Expanding, Enhancing Emotional Health (E3) grant through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Adolescent Health Center Division. The clinic will provide on-site comprehensive mental health services from mild to moderate severity of need. There will be a full-time therapist at the OHS clinic five days a week and will be able to serve all OPS youth ages 5 to 21 years. Contact the principal if you have questions or need a referral!

IMPORTANT COUNSELING INFORMATION

Scheduling for the 2023-2024 School Year will begin in late February. [Detailed information](#) is listed under the Counseling Tab of the OHS website under Academic Resources.

The U of M Society of Women Engineers GREAT Day 2023 will be held on March 19, 2023. More information can be found [here](#). If registering, please fill out [this form](#).

Grand Canyon University will be visiting during lunch on Thursday, February 23.

[Click here](#) to check out a list of available scholarships.