Thankful

Many times we talk about how grateful we are for our teachers and our families within the Opelika City Schools. Earlier this year, ten of our teachers traveled to Washington, D.C. for a conference. As they were walking back to their hotel from lunch, a car jumped the curb and landed on top of two of them, Ginger Weygand and Kathy Stanley. Following multiple surgeries, physical therapy, and an unending amount of support from family and friends, we are happy to report that both of the injured teachers and the eight that traveled with them are doing well. It was an event that they could not have predicted or prepared for, but we are thankful to our team of ten teachers who took such good care of each other during the accident and all of the days that followed. During interviews with the media following the accident, both Ginger Weygand and Kathy Stanley expressed how thankful they were for all of the strangers who rushed to the scene of the accident to help. “We will never be able to personally thank them for picking up that car. I hope they know how grateful we are,” said Weygand and Stanley. When asked about how they felt about the accident, Weygand stated that she “didn’t know why her life was spared, but God must have a special plan.” Stanley also said “God saw fit for both of us to be here for a reason. I don’t know what His plan is, but I’m waiting for it. And I’m just blessed to be here.”

As a school system, we are extremely thankful that our teachers are back home safely and ready to begin the new school year. We continue to be aware that life can change in an instant. Pictured front row: Gayle Holladay, Ginger Weygand, Kathy Stanley, Cindy Poteet. Second row: Krista Pigg, Kathy Brown, Ryan McDonald, Katie Murray, Amy Bass, and Dana Daniel.

First Day of School is August 6, 2018
(Full Day)

Meet Your Teacher Day is August 2, 2018
(K through 5th grade)
7:30-10:00 a.m. and 1:00-2:00 p.m.

OMS Schedule pick up is August 2, 2018
10:00 a.m. for 6th graders
(Orientation and Schedule Pick-Up) and
1:00 p.m. for 7th and 8th graders
(Schedule Pick-Up)

OHS Freshman Orientation is July 31, 2018
Message from the Superintendent

Dear OCS students and families,

I hope you have all had a fun and relaxing summer. The faculty and staff of the Opelika City Schools have been hard at work preparing for the 2018-19 school year. Preparations have included major construction work at Morris Avenue Intermediate School to replace the HVAC units and all of the cabinetry in the classrooms. In addition, ClearTouch panels have been installed in every classroom. The Opelika City Schools currently have 157 ClearTouch panels and 4356 Chromebooks in use throughout the system. Chromebooks will be distributed in each intermediate school this fall so that instead of going to computer labs, all students have a Chromebook in class. We will also continue our technology professional development for teachers to incorporate the newest technological instructional approaches.

There has been a considerable amount of discussion locally and nationally about school safety. It is important for you as parents and community members to know that school safety is continually discussed and plans are updated often in the Opelika City Schools. Over the summer, many meetings have taken place with our administrators, board members, and city officials to ensure that we are taking the necessary steps to keep your children safe. Obviously, it is important that we know our students and their behaviors, but it is equally important that you as parents know the behaviors of your children and their friends so that if there is a situation that just doesn’t seem right, it can be reported. We want to be able to look out for each other to provide the safest environment for all of our children.

Even though the tax renewal was in February 2018, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the citizens of Opelika for supporting the renewal. The funds generated from this renewal are vitally important to so many programs that make our schools outstanding. We truly appreciate your support!

I look forward to a great school year!

Sincerely,

Mark Neighbors, Superintendent
Tipi Miller appointed to Opelika City Schools Board of Education

In February 2018, Tipi Miller was appointed to the Opelika City Schools Board of Education (BOE) by the Opelika City Council. She attended her first BOE meeting on March 29, 2018. Mrs. Miller currently serves as the Executive Director of Keep Opelika Beautiful. She was previously employed as Business Development Director and Membership Director for the Opelika Chamber of Commerce. Her community involvement includes being a member of the Opelika Rotary Club, a graduate of Leadership Lee County and a member of the inaugural class of Opelika’s Twenty Under Forty. Mrs. Miller is also the recipient of the 2017 Opelika Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Service Award.

“We are excited to have Mrs. Miller as our newest board member. She has been involved in our schools most importantly as a parent, and also for many years through her position with Keep Opelika Beautiful,” stated Dr. Mark Neighbors, OCS Superintendent. “We look forward to her perspective and continued involvement as a board member.”

Mrs. Miller and her husband Wes are the proud parents of three children Colt, Annie, and Branch.

Opelika City Schools Board of Education honors 2018 Retirees


2018 Open House Dates

Opelika High School
August 6, 6:00 p.m.

Morris Avenue Intermediate School
August 14, 5:30 p.m. (3rd grade only)
August 16, 5:30 p.m. (4th and 5th grade)

Opelika Middle School
August 21, 6:00 p.m.

Jeter Primary School
August 23, 5:30 p.m.-Kindergarten
6:00 p.m.-1st grade; 6:30 p.m.-2nd grade

Opelika Learning Center
August 23, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Southview Primary School
August 28, 5:30 p.m.-Kindergarten
6:00 p.m.-1st grade; 6:30 p.m.-2nd grade

Carver Primary School
August 30, 6:00 p.m.

West Forest Intermediate School
September 13, 6:00 p.m.

Northside Intermediate School
September 17, 6:00 p.m.
OPELICA CITY SCHOOLS
2018-19 School Calendar

August 2, 2018  Meet Your Teacher (grades K-5)
August 6, 2018  First Day of School (full day)
September 3, 2018  Labor Day Holiday
October 15-16, 2018  Fall Break
October 17, 2018  Professional Day (students do not attend)
November 12, 2018  Veteran's Day Holiday
November 19-23, 2018  Thanksgiving Holidays
December 20, 2018  1/2 day for students
Dec. 21, 2018-Jan. 3, 2019  Christmas and New Year’s Holidays
January 4, 2019  Professional Day (students do not attend)
January 7, 2019  Students return
January 21, 2019  Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
February 18, 2019  President’s Day Holiday
March 18-22, 2019  Spring Break
(School dismisses March 15, 2019 and reopens March 25, 2019)
April 5, 2019  Professional Day (students do not attend)
May 23, 2019  Last Day of School (1/2 day for students)
May 24, 2019  Opelika High School Graduation

*If a school day is missed due to bad weather, students will attend school February 18 or April 5.

Opelika High School Delayed Start
For the 2018-19 school year, OHS will have delayed start times on the following dates: 9/4/18, 11/13/18, 1/22/19, 2/19/19 and 3/11/19. Buses will run at normal times for those students needing transportation. Otherwise, students may report to school at 10:00 a.m. on the above dates. The call-in bell will be at 9:55 a.m.

School Supply Lists are available on the OCS website www.opelikaschools.org

Student Registration Information

Items needed for student registration:
- Birth Certificate
- State of Alabama Blue Certificate of Immunization
- Child’s Social Security Card
- Photo ID
- Two Current Proofs of Residency (gas, water, or electric bills accepted)
- Custodial Documentation (if applicable)
- Proof of Grade

For additional information regarding student registration, contact the Board of Education Office 334-745-9700.

SCHOOL DAY HOURS:

Primary Schools  7:40 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Intermediate Schools  7:45 a.m. - 2:50 p.m.
Opelika Middle School  7:50 a.m. - 3:24 p.m.
Opelika High School  7:55 a.m. - 3:25 p.m.
Opelika Learning Center  8:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m.
Board of Education Office  7:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.

OCS Meal Prices

Primary, Intermediate and OMS:  Breakfast $1.00    Lunch $1.75
Opelika High School:  Breakfast $1.00   Lunch $2.00
Visitors (All Schools):  Breakfast $1.75   Lunch $3.25

Extended Day is offered for students in grades K-8 who need after school care.

$40 per week for first child
$20 per week for additional child in the same immediate family.

For more information or to register, contact your child’s school.
Members of the Opelika High School Philanthropy 101 program presented a total of $7200 in monetary donations to six local non-profit organizations at the fourth annual presentation and luncheon at OHS on June 21, 2018. Ten students gave presentations on selected non-profits and presented each group with a check. Recipients included: Exodus Ranch, Miracle League, Storybook Farm, Big House Foundation, Opelika Grows, and JeanDean RIF. The three week program, for rising seniors at OHS, introduces students to the principles of philanthropy and brings those principles to life through classroom learning and hands-on experiences. The program is sponsored by the W. James Samford, Jr. Foundation. Philanthropy 101 Members pictured (l-r): Ms. Stacy Guyton-OHS Philanthropy Instructor, Gus Bell, Caroline Hawkins, Jah Williams, Ayrika Harris, Lucinda Samford Cannon-W. James Samford, Jr. Foundation, Ethan Lindsey, Montel Norman, Ishan Patel, Makai Gagliano, Celeste Frazier, Martavia Burditte, Mr. Don Shirley-OHS Philanthropy Instructor.

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Congratulations to Opelika High School senior Tiffany Boutdy for winning 2nd Place in the 2018 State Superintendent’s Visual Arts Exhibit (Grades 11-12). Miss Boutdy and other state winners were honored at an awards luncheon in Montgomery sponsored by the Alabama State Department of Education and the Alabama Arts License Tag Committee. Pictured (l-r): Betty Peters-Alabama State Board of Education member, Jeff Conway-OHS Art Instructor, Tiffany Boutdy, and Dr. Ed Richardson-Interim Alabama State Superintendent of Education. photo credit: Charles Creel

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2018-19 Character Traits

August           Leadership
September     Cooperation
October         Integrity
November      Thankfulness
December      Compassion
January         Innovation
February        Tolerance
March           Courage
April              Tenacity
May               Perseverance
June               Confidence
July               Determination

INVITING YOU TO BE YOUR BEST
AUGUST 2018

PAGE 5
Opelika Middle School receives Safe School Initiative Award of Excellence

On April 3, 2018, Attorney General Steve Marshall presented Opelika Middle School with the Attorney General’s Safe School Initiative Award of Excellence for Alabama State Board of Education District 2. This was the second year in a row that the award was presented to OMS. Schools were selected as winners for 2017 from seven Alabama State School Board of Education districts, as well as private schools for three regions of the state. “In these times, we are all intensely aware of the serious responsibility our schools carry for the safekeeping of our children,” said Attorney General Marshall. “Recent events have been heartbreaking reminders that we must remain vigilant and committed to provide the best protections possible in Alabama’s schools. I am pleased to carry on this important tradition of the Attorney General’s Office, to recognize schools throughout our state for dedication and excellence in keeping students safe. Each day that parents leave their children at school, they are entrusting what they hold most precious into the care of schoolteachers, principals, school resource officers and other staff. With these awards, we honor those who have achieved particularly high standards and set examples that others may follow. We are grateful for their service and commitment to protecting the children of Alabama.” In presenting the award, Attorney General Marshall said, “The Attorney General’s Office is proud that Opelika Middle School was selected as one of the 10 winning schools in Alabama for 2017. In making this decision, judges noted many things that distinguished Opelika Middle School: excellent procedures for making sure all students are accounted for following a drill or actual emergency; outstanding use of traditional and social media to keep parents and community leaders informed, and local collaboration that allows advanced law enforcement tactical teams to train within the school building.” “Safety is always of the utmost importance for our school,” said Principal Keith York. “We have a diligent faculty and staff that work hard each day to create a safe and positive learning environment. We are honored to be recognized again by the Attorney General with the Alabama Safe Schools Award.”

Pictured (l-r) in group photo: Matthew Kendrick-OMS Assistant Principal; Officer Brian Hipp-OPD Resource Officer, Mr. Dozier Smith T-Opelika City Council; Officer Kyle Burdette-OPD Resource Officer; Mr. Steven Marshall-Attorney General; Mr. Keith York-Opelika Middle School Principal; Chief John McEachern-Opelika Police Department; Officer Shayna Hodges-OPD Resource Officer; and Dr. Mark Neighbors-Opelika City Schools Superintendent.
For detailed performance dates and times, please refer to the Opelika High Theatre Society Facebook page or the OCS website. For corporate sponsor information, contact Revel Gholston, Theatre Director, 334-745-9715.
Congratulations to Jamie Lowe on being selected as a Ron Brown Scholar! Lowe was awarded the scholarship in late March 2018. Following an extensive application process, Lowe was selected as a finalist and was invited to Washington, D.C. for the program's selection weekend. The weekend involved multiple interviews and a formal dinner. In March 2018, Lowe was named one of the twenty-eight national recipients, and the only recipient from Alabama.

The Ron Brown Scholar Program (RBSP) honors the legacy of Ronald H. Brown through a selective scholarship program that advances higher education for community-minded and intellectually gifted African Americans. RBSP competitively awards Ron Brown Scholars four-year $40,000 scholarships to the most talented and economically-challenged high school seniors who demonstrate a keen interest in public service, community engagement, business entrepreneurship and global citizenship – the four pillars of the late Ronald H. Brown’s mission to uplift people of all races, cultures and ethnicities – especially our disadvantaged youth. Congratulations Jamie!
CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to our outstanding students for their achievements this year! Just a few of the groups and their accomplishments include: The OMS 6th grade Amazing Shake winners—Caden Blair and Patrick Seymore (1st Runner Up), The OHS Lady Dawgs making it to the AHSAA Basketball Final Four and then being honored at the Opelika City Council meeting, Avery Massey for designing the winning “artwork dress” for Ms. Abby Kuhn at Northside Intermediate School, The OHS VIBE for being named Most Outstanding Jazz Group at the Lakeland, FL Jazz Fest, the O’mazing Shake winners and lead Ambassador Zayne Lackey at OMS who will now serve as the 2018-19 Ambassadors, O.G.R.E. (Opelika’s Greatest Robotics Engineers) for having an amazing season and competing at the Rocket City Regional in Huntsville, AL, Carver Primary School for being named the “Top OCS School” in fundraising in Lee County Relay for Life, and to the 2018 AHSAA athletic sportsmanship winners.
proven to be a valuable asset to our students and community over his career. His experience in developing players at the high school level, his unique understanding of our community’s baseball tradition, and his ability to connect with our athletes is consistent with the expectations of Opelika baseball. We look forward to our program’s continued athletic and academic excellence under his leadership,” stated Dr. Farrell Seymore, OHS Principal.

Blatt has been the assistant baseball coach since 2013 and has been in charge of strength and conditioning for both the baseball and football programs for many years. He has also served as an assistant varsity football coach since 2016. OHS Athletic Director Mike Pugh added, “Coach Blatt is a very hard working, high energy coach that is going to be very successful for many years to come. I am very excited to have him as our head baseball coach and look forward to working with him.”

Coach Blatt graduated from Opelika High School in 2008, earned his Bachelor of Science in Physical Education from Auburn University in 2013, and his Masters of Education in Physical Education from Auburn University in 2014. He and his wife Kristin attend First Baptist Church Opelika.

Mike Pugh named new Athletic Director at Opelika High School

Mike Pugh, former Opelika High School head basketball coach and most recently Huntington College head basketball coach, was named the new athletic director at Opelika High School in May 2018. Pugh spent ten years as the men’s head basketball coach at Huntington College before retiring in June of 2016. Prior to that, he was the head basketball coach at Opelika High School for seven years. He also spent many years as the head basketball coach and athletic director at Enterprise Community College. “We are extremely excited to have Mike back in our program as the athletic director. We think he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position,” commented Mark Neighbors, Opelika City Schools Superintendent.

Pugh has been retired for the last year and is looking forward to starting in the new position at OHS. “You miss the kids and the relationships,” stated Pugh. “I can’t wait to get started at Opelika as the new athletic director. I hope that my 40 years of coaching experience will help the coaches and students continue to be successful.”

In his forty years of coaching, Mike Pugh has coached a number of sports including basketball, football, baseball, golf, and track. Mike and his wife Suzanne have five children and eight grandchildren.

NATIONAL SIGNING DAY AT OHS

Deandre Butler-Jacksonville State University-Football

Jamias Presley-Jacksonville State University-Football

Justin Lewis-University of Massachusetts-Football

Callahan Saggus-University of West Alabama-Football

Zach Blatt named new Head Baseball Coach at Opelika High School

Zach Blatt, current assistant baseball coach at Opelika High School and former member of the Auburn University baseball team, has been named the new head baseball coach at OHS. “Opelika High School welcomes Coach Zach Blatt as our new head varsity baseball coach. Coach Blatt has
INVITING YOU TO BE YOUR BEST

THE INVITATION AUGUST 2018

SCHOLARSHIP SIGNINGS AT OHS

Jackson Reynolds-Texas A&M University-Baseball

Jared Bartlett-Enterprise State Community College-Baseball

Savannah Karl-Auburn University Montgomery-Cross Country

Shakerra Forbes-Lawson State Community College-Cross Country

Alexis Browning-Lawson State Community College-Basketball

Anita Payne-Pensacola State College-Basketball

Kayla Phatsadavong-Faulkner University-Soccer

Cassidy Thomas-LaGrange College-Basketball

Imani Debrow-Jacksonville State University-Track

Nikera Durr-Pratt Community College-Track

Tori Baker-University of South Alabama-Cheerleading

CJ Jordan-Kennesaw State University-Track

GO DAWGS!
Erik Speakman named Head Football Coach at Opelika High School

In February 2018, Erik Speakman was named the new head football coach at Opelika High School. Erik had been serving as the OHS Athletic Director and current Defensive Coordinator. “Opelika High School is honored to have Erik Speakman as its new head football coach. I have worked with Coach Speakman for the past seven years and know that Opelika is blessed to have him lead our young people. Erik is a student-centered, family man who will lead with purpose and integrity,” said Opelika High School Principal, Dr. Farrell Seymore.

Coach Speakman has served as Athletic Director since March 2017 and Defensive Coordinator since 2011. He has been a coach in the OHS program since 2000 coaching quarterbacks and the secondary prior to being the defensive coordinator. Coach Speakman has been a featured speaker at coaching clinics across the southeast and was named the Alabama Football Coaches Association (ALFCA) Assistant Coach of the Year in 2014. “The board and I are confident in Erik’s leadership and in his ability to develop young men of character through our football program,” stated Dr. Mark Neighbors, OCS Superintendent.

Coach Speakman graduated from Auburn University in 1998 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Math and received his Masters of Education Administration in 2001. He and his wife Drew Parrent Speakman have five children Bryce, Sara Kate, Hollins, Griffin, and Shep. The Speakmans are members of First United Methodist Church of Opelika.