

To: Dr. Mahoney  
Board of Education  
From: Heidi Deininger  
Re: Board Report  
Date: 1/11/2024



[School Improvement Plan](#) (click on this link to see most recent progress)

**Highlights:**

- Academics
  - Departments are engaged in SAT practice at all grade levels; junior high recently gave the MAP winter benchmark, so we will know how we are progressing towards our junior high academic goals.
- Climate/Culture
  - We have a Parent/Administrator forum coming up on January 25 from 5-6:00 in the OJSHS library

**Some important dates:**

Prom- Saturday April 27

8<sup>th</sup> grade recognition night: Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup> 7:00 OHS gym

Graduation on Sunday, May 19 at 1:00 PM (we moved it to a Sunday to avoid IHSA state track conflicts)

**Academics**

As we close the semester, our students experienced some positive academic gains.

***High School***

Of note, two metrics that determine our rating as a school were very strong.

*Freshmen on Track* – we ended the semester with a 92% on track rate. This is important, as our freshmen on track rate is something we pride ourselves on and an area where we have made strong gains. The nine students who failed courses at the end of first semester were immediately enrolled in credit recovery courses to, hopefully, get back on track before the end of the school year.

*Graduation Rate* – we ended the semester projecting a 99% graduation rate. At this moment, we have one student off-track towards on-time graduation.

*ThinkCerca* – Our high school students showed growth on the mid-year ThinkCerca writing benchmark. As a reminder, ThinkCerca is an online writing tool we use in grades 7-12. It provides “integrated close reading, critical thinking and writing across the curriculum” <https://info.thinkcerca.com/wac>

Below is a snapshot of overall results from the beginning of the year to the mid-year benchmark (grade levels are underneath the bar graphs):



## ***Junior High***

The junior high team is having great success with our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The following is their end of semester grade data:

89% of our 7<sup>th</sup> grade students &  
87% of our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students ended the semester passing ALL of their classes.

Our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are also utilizing the writing (ThinkCerca data is on the graph above) and math skill-building tools. Their growth is also strong.

## **Student Activities**

- The high school musical “The Music Man” is cast and will be performed March 7<sup>th</sup> to March 10<sup>th</sup>. We are grateful for the time and effort being poured into this by the directors.
- We will have the second quarter Student of the Quarter breakfast (HS students) and assembly (JH students) on January 18 (7:30) and 19 (8:00) in the OHS gym. You are welcome to join us and recognize our students for the academic and leadership achievements.

## **The Leader in Me – Teacher Spotlight- Dan Gale**

- Mr. Gale’s Hawk Huddle had a very successful supply and food drive for Miss Karly’s, a homeless shelter/transitional house in Rockford. The students contributed a large amount of clothing, coats, toiletries and food items that we will be delivering to Miss Karly’s later this month.

## **Professional Development**

- Ms. Radostits continues to support the staff through her instructional leadership. This month, she reminded her colleagues of how to submit grades for the end of first semester. She also continues to lead the Hawks Take Flight team (freshmen at risk). Ms. Rad visited Houston last week and was at the National Championship game as part of her last National Teacher of the Year duties.

- We concluded our Phoenix Transformational Leadership cohort with our first group of teacher leaders. The teachers involved were Tiffany Rufer, Gretchen Nelson, Katie Groharing, Jeff Stultz, Stephanie Mersman, Dominic Cozzi, Angela Reynolds, Ranae Taylor, Kim Radostits, Adam Albrecht, Matt Martin and the administrative team. The teachers involved reported that the experience was incredibly meaningful. Here are a few reflections/communications between team members that speak to the impact of this experience for them:
  - *One of the many ways my accountability partner has helped me grow over the years is by sending podcast suggestions my way. I was thinking on the car ride home tonight that, most recently, he sent me an episode of the Huberman Lab and during the discussion there was some talk about the impact of reflection. There were a lot of good nuggets in this part of the podcast, but the one that stuck with me was "**The purpose of reflection shouldn't be to belittle a former version of yourself, but to inform your future self.**" As I listened to all of you during this experience, I think there are a lot of situations in our past that we all wish we would have handled differently...but, that version of you did the best with the skillset that you had in the moment. Don't beat yourself up over those situations. Tomorrow, and the next day, and the next day you can and WILL be better, if you take the time to learn from those experiences.*
  - *I am so honored to have gone through this work with all of you. I have watched you grow and transform throughout the past 6 months. I feel that because of my time with you, and with your support, I have grown with you. I am so proud of all of you and know that you will continue to display transformationAL leadership. We now have the knowledge, the practice and the tools to continue to grow our leadership and impact our future vision....but the best part about it is that we have each other! I hope and encourage us all to lean on each other, ask for coaching from each other, provide supportive accountability for management to each other and lead, lead, lead. And when the going gets tough, we have to remind each other of the future vision.*
  - *It took me a couple of days, and, quite honestly, a pep talk from my accountability partner, to approach this. I wasn't sure I had any progress to speak of. Thanks for the confidence, accountability partner! My goals were to W.A.I.T. (why am I talking?) and step back and breathe before speaking my opinion and asking more questions. Funny story, I was meeting with an administrator and trying to practice this technique, and they told me to stop it and just say what is on my mind...LOL. The truth is, I've had to deal with some challenging things in one of my leadership roles and I think I've maneuvered it well. I've realized how many people depend on me to do the right thing for them so how I present myself is so important. Overall, I think I'm growing as a person and leader.*

## **Looking Ahead**

The next month will bring many exciting and important events for OJSHS.

- We will begin scheduling for the 2024-2025 school year. We start with seniors.
- We will be cheering on our OCEC friends in their basketball game (Jan 19, 10:00 AM/BHC)
- We will have our rising freshmen (current 8<sup>th</sup> graders) and their families attend an information night about high school
- Our 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers will meet to discuss and plan for the transition of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to OJSHS.
- We will have our first Portrait of a Graduate focus groups meet this month.
- We have our quarterly Parent/Administrative Advisory this month.