

PTSA prepares for Graduation

Pam Burke, PTSA President • Pam.a.burke@gmail.com

OHS MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide equal access to all curricula by forming a partnership with families, by communicating our expectations clearly and often, and utilizing the resources of FCPS in challenging all of Oakton's students to achieve their academic and personal best.

OHS VISION STATEMENT

We agree that all students should have access to a rigorous educational experience, and we are dedicated to helping students achieve the individual goals that will strengthen their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development. We understand that in order to lead youth, we must be willing to model a passion for lifelong learning and personal growth and development.

The end of another school is fast approaching, and what a year it has been! Congratulations to our graduating seniors and their parents. I hope you are leaving Oakton with, at the very least, some good memories of your time here. I wish you only the very best as you move on to the future adventures of your lives. Good luck!

The PTSA and Academic Boosters has had another successful year thanks to your becoming members and providing the funding for our activities to benefit the school community. An updated directory was available to families at our Back-to-School Nights. We were able to show our appreciation to our staff and teachers at a Welcome Back breakfast in August and a luncheon in May. We were able to help fund various clubs, activities and teacher enrichment opportunities. We are able to pay the license fee for software in the College/Career Center and to also assist the Center by hosting the receptions for the Academic Letter ceremony in the fall and the Senior Awards Night in May. Academic Boosters is especially proud of our Cougar Commendation Breakfasts. These are held three times a year to honor students commended by their teachers for Exceptional Contribution, Academic Achievement, Volunteerism and Leadership. We were able to host the documentary "Race to Nowhere" for students and parents and also a special viewing for our teachers and staff. Our parent Substance Abuse Awareness program was very informative.

Our two programs relating to graduation are very special to the PTSA. Baccalaureate is a dignified and thought-provoking way to begin the graduation celebration festivities. It will be held Saturday, June 11 at 5:00 at the Cedar Run Community Church. This is a non-denominational event and all students and their families are encouraged to participate.

Our second program, the All Night Graduation party, is a fun and safe way to celebrate graduation. It is held graduation night, June 20-

21 from 10 pm to 5 am. It is a wonderful event where the entire class can come together one last time. There have been many Keep In Touch notices about this event and how desperate we are for volunteers to make this happen. The PTSA has always considered this so important for the safety of our students, that we make this happen. Unfortunately, this may be shortened this year because of the many volunteer spots that need to be filled. Please go to www.signup-genius.com/go/ohsall to see what needs are still unmet. It is critical that parents of all grades help. Senior parents need to be sure this happens for their children. Parents of other classes need to come and participate in all the fun to see what this is all about so they can plan this for their children. Please consider being the chair for this event. Key committee chairs this year are the parents of seniors and will be moving on.

It is bittersweet that I am writing this last newsletter article as your PTSA President. I was happy to serve in this position for the past three years. Throughout my past 7 years at Oakton, I have met so many wonderful people who have worked so hard for our school and students. I am thankful to all of these. The parents who have especially helped me during my time as President are too numerous to mention. I am afraid to start listing names for fear of forgetting someone. You know who you are and I truly thank you. I am happy to be going back to my Oakton 'roots' and be very involved in Academic Boosters.

Kirsten Rucker is our new PTSA President and comes to this position as the parent of two Oakton graduates, one Oakton junior and two Oakton freshmen. I have known Kirsten for many years and her talents, commitment, knowledge and dedication to education will be an asset to Oakton High School. We are all fortunate to have her in this role.

Again, congratulations to our graduates and their parents. I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable summer.

Find it all @ your OHS
Library - It's Time
to Resolve Library
Obligations

All student library obligations for lost and overdue books and printing fines should be resolved well before the end of the school year. Please ask your student to check with library staff if he or she is unsure of his or her account status.

OPUS On Sale

The 2011 edition of Opus, Oakton's award-winning literature and arts magazine, will be available for purchase upon its release on June 6. The 2011 edition of Opus titled "Think Up" promises to be one of the best yet and features an exceptional selection of OHS students' outstanding works of art and writing, some of which already have won regional, state, and national awards. The 2011 Opus will make a great gift to family and friends, especially if your favorite OHS student is published or on the magazine staff. To purchase your copy, send or drop off an envelope with \$8 (cash or check to OHS Opus) to Susan Sullivan, the Opus adviser.



A bright future is ahead for the Class of 2011

John A. Banbury, Principal • john.banbury@fcps.edu

Dear Parents, The end of the school year is in sight, and I want to take this opportunity to thank you as well as our faculty and staff, and, particularly, our wonderful Oakton High School students for all their effort in making this year another very successful one. By the time you read this final 2010-2011 PTSA Newsletter, we will have completed AP and SOL testing and will be headed into final exams. In addition, I want to remind you that there are numerous events taking place in June, so please take a moment to review the Oakton website and plan to attend our many programs, awards ceremonies, and concerts.

“[The class of 2011] have excelled academically, in the arts, on the courts and fields, and, most importantly, they have become outstanding young adults who have an opportunity to make a difference in the world.”

We are continuing this month with the fourth in our series on "Everything You Always Wanted To Know" about each of the various departments at Oakton High School. This month will highlight the Oakton English Department brought to you by Mrs. Colleen Eddy, the English Department Chair. We will resume our series in the fall. Finally, I would like to congratulate the class of 2011 and let them know how very

proud we are of all their accomplishments. They have excelled academically, in the arts, on the courts and fields, and, most importantly, they have become outstanding young adults who have an opportunity to make a difference in the world. We wish them every success!

REMINDER: From the School Health Room

All medications must be picked up by 10 am on June 21, 2011. Any medications that remain will be discarded starting at dismissal time. In an effort to increase our 'green' practices/ raise our environmental consciousness, please make every effort to pick up your child's medicine. Medicines may be retrieved in 3 ways.

1. By a Parent or Guardian
2. Student may pick up non-prescription medicine with parent written note or email permission. [Please email to Denise.Lutz@fcps.edu]
3. Students that have a physician authorization to carry a medication may retrieve the backup medicines in the health room [no note or email required].

Wishing you a safe and healthy summer-
Tracey Paterno-Hardy RN, PHN
Denise Lutz, SHA

Theatre Department prepares for Cappies

We are so thrilled with the success of our recent production of *Oklahoma!*. None of it would have been possible without the help from the Drama Boosters and the support from our administration and fellow teachers who continue to be such fans of the students who perform on the stage, behind the scenes and in the orchestra pit.

We finished up the season with a field trip to the Kennedy Center to see Stephen Sondheim's *Follies*. The students had a great time at the show and enjoyed meeting members of the cast at the stage door after the performance.

We are now preparing to return to the Kennedy Center on June 12th to celebrate our nine nominations by the CAPPIES association. Our critic's team has been recognized as well as Chris Papas for graduating critic and Adrienne Picciotto for returning critic. Performances in our production of *Oklahoma!* have also been recognized: Henry Ragan for lead male vocalist, Kit Mahoney for female dancer, Sarah Smith for choreography, Esther Work-

man for comic actress in a musical, Kevin Sol for comic actor in a musical and our stage crew for their wonderful work backstage.

Congratulations to Chris Papas for receiving the theatre arts department award for his four years of service in our department both on stage and off. He has starred in productions, directed a one-act, assisted me in production work and led our CAPPIES critics to team nominations for the past two years. He has left very big shoes to fill as he heads off to the College of William & Mary where I know he will be very successful.

As we finish up the year we are already planning our season for the 2011-2012 school year. We are reading plays and listening to musical scores trying to find the next great productions to put on our stage.

Thank you for supporting our department and being such devoted members of the audience. We look forward to next year and all the new creativity it will bring.

Have a safe and inspired summer.

Vanessa

AP Japanese, Advanced Japanese 12th, and Japanese 5 wrap up a successful year

The students in the combined class worked very hard and achieved many successes in the spring of 2011.

In April at the 2011 Modern Foreign Language Tournament (MFLT), two students, Ashleigh Oberg-Porter and Katherine Murphy participated in MFLT and both of them won first place. Ashleigh recited a Japanese

poem, entitled "To Live" and won the first place in AP Prose and Poetry and Katie recited a poem, "Morning Relay" and won the first place in Japanese 5 and above.

In May at the 2011 MAATJ Haiku Contest, Melisa Katz, a student in AP Japanese class, won the 2nd place in the contest. The theme of her Haiku was scattered cherry blossom.

Nine students in AP Japanese Language and Culture course took the AP Japanese exam. Judging from what the students said, I think they did well.

It was certainly a pleasure working with these excellent students. I wish them continued success in future. I am grateful for the support received from the parents. Have a nice summer!!

Yoko Thakur, Japanese teacher

Oakton crew breaks records

It's been a record-making year for Oakton crew. Our rowers have experienced the joy of victory as well as the pain of defeat in weather that would challenge the U.S. Postal Service.

The season highlights include:

- The Women's Lightweight 4 taking home a gold medal at the Virginia Scholastic Rowing Associations State Championship.
- Six Oakton Crew boats racing at the Stotesbury Cup Regatta in Philadelphia, the largest high school regatta in the world. The Women's Lightweight 4 and the Men's First 8 advanced to semi-finals.
- Racing four Oakton Crew boats at the Scholastic Rowing Association of America National Championships. The Men's First 8, the Women's First 4, and the Women's Lightweight 4 all made it to semi-finals, making this year the first time more than one Oakton boat made it to semi-finals at Nationals.
- Closing the season at the Canadian Secondary Schools Championship Regatta in Ontario, Canada.

We are looking forward to the 2012 season as many of our top rowers are returning and we have several strong novice rowers advancing to varsity making for an even stronger team next year.

Everything You Always Wanted To Know About the English Department

The teachers of the Oakton High School English Department foster the academic and personal growth of Oakton students through the study of composition, literature, language, speech, and media. As the department chair for English, I am proud to represent a faculty of twenty-seven innovative, talented teachers who are dedicated to rigorous and relevant instruction. Over the last few years, we have collaboratively refined our traditional programs and developed a variety of innovative programs to prepare students for literacy in the twenty-first century. As a result, your children are benefiting from instruction that not only meets their needs but also stretches their minds and enriches their lives.

Who We Are:

When I make a new acquaintance and reveal that I am an English teacher, I often hear a response such as, "Oh dear! Now I have to watch my every word! Don't judge my grammar!" While the stereotype of a persnickety grammarian may visit your nightmares, Oakton English teachers offer a delightful contrast: we are a vivacious, compassionate, and collaborative

bunch who delights in the many successes of our students. Grade-level teams of teachers plan together weekly to design and analyze assessments, devise new approaches to instruction, and share best practices. The chart below introduces you to our teachers by collaborative teams.

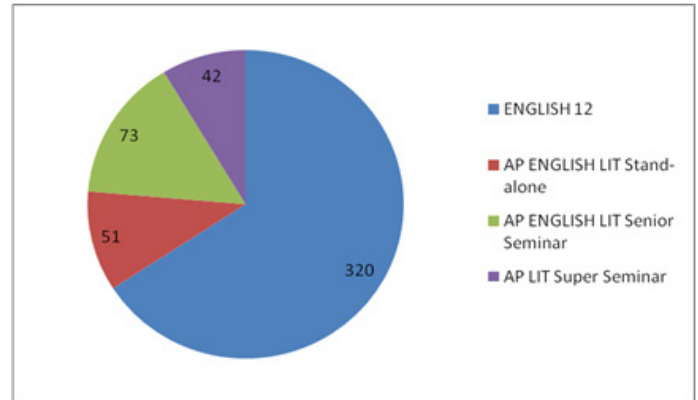
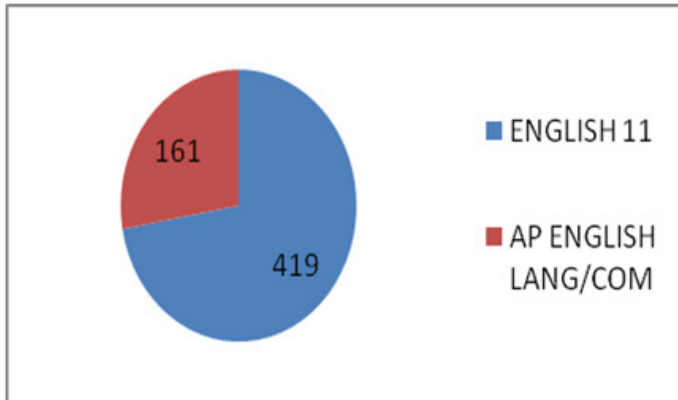
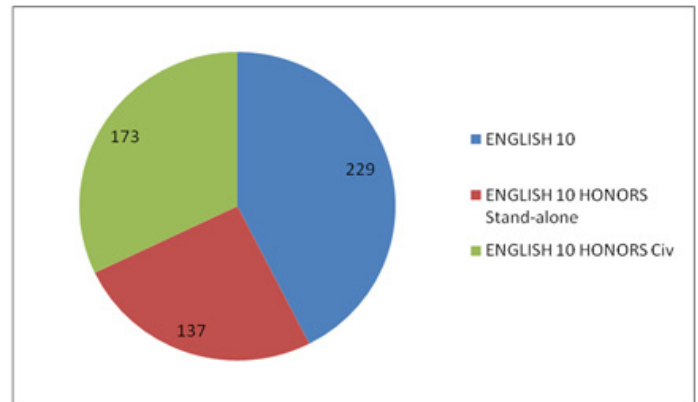
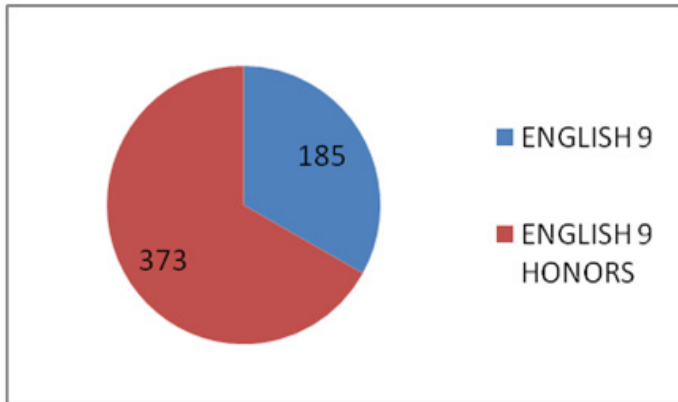
9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade
Katherine Hovanec, team leader Jay Stratoudakis Everett Flowers David Brooks Elizabeth Dean Jason Rowley Susan Hall Margaret Moran	Juliette Tesser, team leader David Brooks Susan Sullivan Colleen Eddy Steve Glick Sara Licklider Valerie Robinson Karyn Kowalski	Elizabeth Dean, team leader Katie Baxter Beth Blankenship Janine D'amura Joan Nedelman Sara Licklider Karyn Kowalski Erich Heckel
12 th Grade	Literacies	Oakton Media Group
Kelly Tatian, team leader Cara Burke Mariette Heavey Jordana Rozenman Sidney Dillon Paula Steele	Jay Stratoudakis Janine D'amura Juliette Tesser Jason Rowley Nancy Jackonis	Susan Sullivan Lauren Luna Jordana Rozenman

What we do:

Oakton students must study English for all four years of high school. At the ninth and tenth grades, we offer regular and honors courses; at the eleventh and twelfth grades, we offer regular and Advanced Placement Courses. The charts below show current student enrollment by grade level in regular versus honors and Advanced Placement classes.

Notice in the graphs on the next page that there are different options for English class at each grade level. Ninth graders choose between regular and honors. Beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, ninth graders can enroll in Regular English 9, English 9 Honors as part of World Civilizations I (teamed with honors history), or

English 9 Honors stand-alone. At the tenth grade level, the options are similar: regular, honors teamed with AP World History, or honors stand-alone. By the eleventh grade year, students can choose Regular English 11 or a college-level course entitled AP Language and Composition, which is a rigorous and enlightening study of the art of persuasion. The twelfth grade year provides four options: Regular English 12, AP Literature stand-alone, AP Literature combined with AP Government (known as Senior Seminar), or AP Literature combined with AP Government and AP Comparative Government (known affectionately as the Trifecta or Super Seminar).



What we do (cont.) :

The above charts also reveal that the number of students enrolled in advanced English courses decreases from ninth to twelfth grade. We would like to mitigate that trend and perhaps even reverse it. By senior year our students are prepared to enter postsecondary education. Why not gain exposure to college-level coursework before leaving the structured environment of high school? As you discern the right path for your student, I encourage you to consider the benefits of AP coursework in English: exposure to college-level texts, advanced writing strategies, enrichment in critical thinking skills, and college credit for courses that are often general education requirements in college. In order to succeed in an AP English course, students must commit to reading and writing regularly at home and contributing frequently to class discussion. We are ready and willing to shepherd students who might not possess a natural

proclivity for literature or composition but who do have a hunger to prepare for the rigors of college.

In addition to our core offerings, the English Department features several electives including support in literacy (Developmental Reading, Developing Literacies, and Expanding Literacies), education in media (Journalism, Photojournalism, Broadcast Journalism, Literary Magazine), and enrichment in composition (Creative Writing and Oakton Writing Center). Our publications—including our newsmagazine Oakton Outlook, our yearbook Paragon, and our literary magazine Opus—earn regional and national honors every year. If your child has an emerging interest in creative writing or journalism, I encourage him or her to enroll in an introductory course such as Creative Writing 1 or Journalism 1 in the coming year.

Where We are Going:

The characteristic that I most admire about the English Department is our appetite for progress. While much of our innovation takes place in day-to-day interactions among colleagues and students, I would like to highlight two ongoing, revolutionary programs that are currently benefitting your children: the Oakton Writing Center and our Humanities Initiative.

In the winter of 2010, we opened the Oakton Writing Center (OWC) under the leadership of Beth Blankenship and Elizabeth Dean. The OWC, which is featured in another article of this newsletter, allows students to engage with a community of learners in a way that we have never before experienced at Oakton High School. Highly trained student tutors provide free, daily, one-on-one tutoring sessions during Cougar Time, lunch, and after school on Wednesdays. The OWC has an open door—no appointments needed and no preconditions. Those who visit the OWC range from struggling to skillful writers; all visitors benefit from meaningful discussion with a qualified and patient peer. Meanwhile, the tutors hone their own writing skills through daily instruction in Advanced Composition. Several FCPS high schools now feature writing centers, and I am proud to say that ours is one of the best.

Oakton High School has offered interdisciplinary programs such as World Civilizations and Senior Seminar for many years. However, the integration of social studies and English offered in these courses has been limited to honors and AP students. Last year, English and social studies teachers identified this disparity and articulated a vision to provide all students with the advantage of interdisciplinary learning. To some degree, this type of instruction naturally takes place within classrooms regardless of the course title. But we have decided to pursue a more intentional and holistic approach to learning by aligning coursework in

English and social studies with the following objectives in mind for twenty-first century learners:

- To create better readers, writers, and thinkers who can research, consider, and articulate complex ideas
- To reveal the interrelation of all knowledge through joint investigation of cultural and historical contexts
- To reinforce the transferability of skills such as writing and speaking from one discipline to another
- To foster a context for deeper and more thoughtful inquiry
- To broaden students' worldviews, creating inspired and capable citizens
- To model scholarly investigation, which transcends the artificial boundaries of curricula
- To eliminate unnecessary redundancies in curricula and workload

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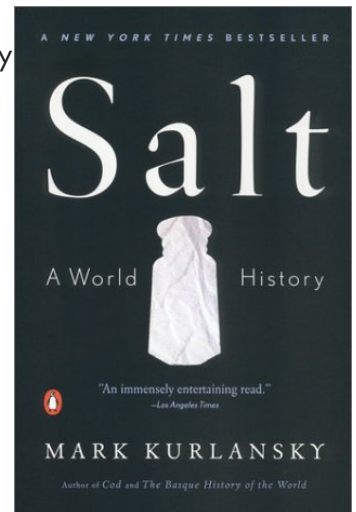
- To improve pass and pass-advanced rates on SOLs and to increase AP enrollment
- To cultivate a greater sense of community, cooperation, and accountability at Oakton among students and teachers

In the 2010-2011 school year, English teachers re-paced their curricula in literature to correspond chronologically or thematically with the pace of related courses in social studies. Several interdisciplinary teams have designed common assessments that integrate cross-curricular skills and content. This restructuring has been labor-intensive, and it is certainly still a work in progress. As a result, your students are learning to think more deeply, read more closely, and write more skillfully. For example, the overall pass-advanced rate on our recent Writing SOL increased from last year's 56 percent to 65 percent, a nine percent gain in one year. I believe that we will continue to see such gains as we strive toward our goal of meaningful, interdisciplinary teaching and learning.

What You Can Do:

Encourage your child to read. Books, magazines, newspapers—whether online or in-hand, fiction or non-fiction—provide avenues for intellectual and emotional growth. Many students struggle to finish reading assigned texts, not because they do not know how to read, but because they have not developed the endurance to sustain their own interest. As Sir Richard Steele said, “Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.”

This summer, I invite you to join our community of readers as all of Oakton High School students and faculty read Mark Kurlansky’s *Salt: A World History*. An outgrowth of our vision for interdisciplinary learning and the hard work of Ms. Hovanec, this summer assignment calls on all disciplines in its investigation of one of our most common commodities. Teachers across disciplines will incorporate *Salt* in their classrooms as we begin the 2011-2012 school year in an effort to model a broader vision for scholarly inquiry. Please share in our endeavor: read in the same room as your child; discuss the book at the dinner table; argue about your interpretations. You can borrow the book from the public library, purchase the book at a discount online through AKJ Books (<http://www.akjbookclub.net/oahisc.html>), or find it at a local bookstore. Below are the assigned chapters by grade level. Please visit the Oakton HS website in mid-June for more details.



- Freshmen: Intro + Chapters 1-6 (118 pages)
- Sophomores: Intro + Chapters 1-11 (213 pages)
- Juniors: Intro + Chapters 12-26 (262 pages)
- Seniors: Intro + Chapters 12-26 (262 pages).

Conclusion:

Please feel free to contact me at Colleen.Eddy@fcps.edu if you desire further information about our English programs at Oakton High School. I am grateful to be part of your community, and I look forward to many more years of PTSA collaboration.

Colleen Eddy
English Department Chair

4.Oakton Writing Center Option

During the last four days of school (June 14th-16th), students have the opportunity to attend the classes they will be taking next year in a program titled “4.Oakton.” Throughout these days, the Oakton Writing Center is offering, for the first time, a unique symposium allowing students to explore the writing expectations in college with tips and tricks to better prepare students for college. The Writing in College

Symposium will feature professors from various colleges and universities, including George Mason, American, George Washington, Marymount, and NOVA. These professors will provide presentations on the requirements of college level writing.

The Oakton Writing Center
Bailey Bauman and Briana Stewart

Calendar

6/11	Baccalaureate 5 pm-Cedar Run Community Church
6/20	Graduation 9:30 am - Congratulations, Seniors!!
6/21	Last Day of School
7/25-7/30	VA Private Colleges Week
8/2	Mandatory Fall Sports Drop-In Registration
8/22-8/24	AP Summer Institute