

# ACCESS

# Oakton

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June 2012

## Letter from the President

KirstenRucker,PTSAPresident•[kkunklerrucker@verizon.net](mailto:kkunklerrucker@verizon.net)

### MISSION STATEMENT:

Through a culture of collaboration, continuous improvement, accountability, and community involvement, Oakton High School

### VISION STATEMENT:

Living, Learning, Leading. Oakton High School will prepare all students for productive and ethical living, life-long learning, and innovative and responsible leadership.

**A**s this year draws to a close, the PTSA would like to congratulate the graduating seniors and the families, friends, teachers and administrators that stood behind them in their efforts. We wish our seniors wonderful experiences as they launch into the next phase of their lives. We hope that your Oakton High School experience has given you the tools to help you with whatever you choose to pursue. The best to you all!

A big thank you to all of the PTSA members who funded a wide range of activities and support efforts for this community and to any volunteers who supported PTSA initiatives, booster activities and other school and classroom efforts throughout this school year. Your dedication sends a message to your students and to the staff and administration that you care deeply about this community and the success of its members. Thank you!

Congratulations to Emma Wilcox, this year's recipient of the PTSA's Antonelli Briceno Scholarship in memory of Sandra Lee Eisenach. If you are the parent of a rising senior, please consider applying for this scholarship in the coming year.

I would like to offer special thanks to Pam Burke both for her support and for her exceptional continued work as the chair of the Academic Boosters which provides vital support to many different arenas of our academic community. Thanks, too, to our Membership and Volunteer chairs, Suzanne Brandt and Sue Weaver, and to our newsletter editor, Marcia Pickett. They will be continuing in their roles in the coming year.

We welcome Cheri Turner as our new PTSA secretary and Brian Evans as our new webmaster. Cheri replaces Diane Garfield and Brian replaces Sharon Mulreany, both who have been responsive and dedicated volunteers. Thank you Diane and Sharon. Mary Anne Reed and Susan Bartosic will continue in their roles as PTSA Vice President and Treasurer, respectively. Mary Anne will also take on the coordination of our evenings with Dr. Ciardi. Thank you to Kathy Aquilina for her dedication to bringing Dr. Ciardi in for our parent community this past school year. Please offer your appreciation to these individuals when you see them.

As a reminder, still to come are the PTSA's two programs relating to graduation; baccalaureate and the All Night Graduation Party. The baccalaureate is a special way to celebrate this milestone in our children's lives. We have some inspiring student, teacher and guest speakers on the agenda as well as some brilliant student musicians from the Class of 2012. All will offer us time to reflect on this transition. The baccalaureate will be held Saturday, June 17 at 7:00 pm at St. John Neumann Catholic Church, 11900 Lawyers Rd. in Reston. This event is for

all students regardless of religious affiliation and will last approximately one hour with a short reception afterwards. Please contact Carol Byrne if you would like to help with this event at [carol.byrne@crsoftwarellc.com](mailto:carol.byrne@crsoftwarellc.com).

Our All Night Graduation event is a fun, safe way to celebrate Graduation. It is held Graduation night, June 19 from 11 pm to June 20, 5 am. There have been many Keep In Touch notices about this event. We still need volunteers to make this happen. The PTSA has always considered this so important for the safety of our students and so we always have had a large body of dedicated volunteers who make this happen. Please go to [www.signupgenius.com/go/ohsall](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/ohsall) to see what needs are still unmet. It is critical that parents of all grades help. It is an awesome evening and the students are not the only ones who will have fun!! Enormous thanks to Patti Howell for her leadership and to her amazing group of volunteers. We are thankful to have Liane Carlstrom MacDowell already committed to chairing this event for the 2013 graduating class.

Please note that you will be receiving the PTSA packet for the 2012-13 school year in August. We need volunteers on Tuesday, June 12 at 9 am in the OHS library to help prepare the packets for mailing.

We are making additional efforts towards becoming a "greener" organization. We plan to offer PTSA membership payments online as well as the OHS Directory. This move to less paper will both help the environment and ultimately make our volunteers' efforts less cumbersome. Thank you in advance for your efforts during this transition. We still will offer paper options in the coming year, so if you are more comfortable filling out forms by hand and writing checks, you are certainly welcomed to do so. We appreciate your support greatly!!

Again, huge congratulations to our graduates and their parents; I wish you all a safe summer and we welcome all of you and your input at our PTSA meetings in the coming year.

Best regards,

Kirsten Rucker

PTSA President



## Letter from the Principal: New Classes Next Year

John A. Banbury, Principal • [john.banbury@fcps.edu](mailto:john.banbury@fcps.edu)

June 2012

Dear Oakton parents, teachers and students,

The conclusion of the 2011-2012 school year offers many causes for celebration! Our graduating class of 2012 set a new standard of excellence for Oakton High School, and I am sure you are likewise proud of their many accomplishments. Most recently, the Washington Post ranked Oakton High School first among county schools and tenth in the D.C. Metro area in its Challenge Index, which is a direct result of our extraordinarily high rate of enrollment in AP coursework and a tribute to the motivation and maturity of Oakton students, particularly the class of 2012.

Under the leadership of the class of 2012, Oakton athletic teams won twenty district championships, five regional championships, and three state championships in the last two years alone. Our performing arts ensembles have once again earned Oakton the prestigious reputation of Blue Ribbon School from the Virginia Music Educators Association. In addition, over the last two years, VHSL deemed our yearbook and literary magazine as Trophy Class publications. Truly, the list of our co-curricular and extra-curricular achievements could run on and on to consume the remainder of this letter. Graduates, congratulations on an impressive tenure and an enduring legacy at Oakton High School. We will miss you, but remember that you will always be an Oakton Cougar. As you move on to postsecondary pursuits, I anticipate even greater successes.

Likewise, Oakton faculty is achieving ever higher feats. In May, the county school board awarded a team of ten Oakton teachers the FCPS Excellence Award for Growth in honor of their interdisciplinary collaboration for our Freshman Program. The recipients (Dean, Flowers, Hovanec, Blankenship, Fernandez, Murphy, Martin, Fowler, Hunter, and Patterson) received a certificate from the school board and our superintendent along with \$500 each. Such interdisciplinary, student-centered collaboration in the name of 21st century learning has become an exemplar for all of FCPS.

In addition, the Virginia General Assembly recognized Dr. Cheryl Newton for her 28 years of service to Oakton High School's marching band, concert band, and various music classes, officially naming our band room as "The Dr. Cheryl Newton Band Room" in honor of her local, state,

and national influence. Dr. Newton plans to retire this year, and it is honestly difficult to imagine Oakton High School without her. Dr. Newton, thank you for choosing to spend your career at Oakton; we will remember you for the many honors that you garnered for our school but more so for the commitment and love that you invested in our students.

As we look forward to 2012-2013, there are exciting changes to anticipate. In particular, our daily schedule will change to allow for a full four blocks per day, resulting in an eight-period rotation rather than seven periods. The additional period will accommodate an extended Cougar Time every-other day (rather than every day), allowing students to visit two classes, along with a new feature: student advisories. The purpose of student advisories is three-fold: to build connections, to build community, and to build communication. In a large school such as Oakton, especially amidst a fast-paced culture of achievement and rigor, students are prone to feeling lost and disconnected. Student advisories will afford students a home base where they can learn about school events, connect with their advisors, build mentor/mentee relationships with peers, and practice vital life skills. Essentially, student advisories will strengthen interpersonal relationships at Oakton High School with the end goal of supporting each and every student throughout his or her high school experience.

In the meantime, summer is here! I do hope that you and your family enjoy a restful break from the routine of the school year. Our summer reading this year, decided collectively by teachers, students, and parents, offers a choice between two books: *The Geeks Shall Inherit the Earth*, by Alexandra Robbins, and *The Outliers*, by Malcolm Gladwell. Elsewhere in this newsletter you can find details about the summer assignment. I hope you enjoy the reading, and I am looking forward to the conversations that the books will elicit around the topic of success in and beyond high school.

Best wishes for relaxation, fun, and family time over the summer!

Sincerely,

Dr. John Banbury

## Thank you for another successful Academic Boosters school year!

To sum up our year.....

- We held 3 Cougar Commendation Breakfasts this school year. These honor students who have been nominated by their teachers for their contributions and efforts in Academics, Volunteerism, Leadership and Exceptional Contribution. This is one of my favorite programs at Oakton. Many students don't know why they have been acknowledged and that means they are contributing with no expectation of recognition. They are just working hard to make their class and time at Oakton better.
- We provided over 2700 bottles of water and snacks to students taking Advanced Placement tests over two weeks in May.
- We provide funding for clubs and groups not covered under any other booster organization such as Model UN, Rocketry and Robotics, Debate and more. We offer additional monetary support to teachers to attend conferences and programs to enhance learning at Oakton.
- We provide and serve the food at the Academic Letter Award program in the fall and at the Senior Academic Awards Night in May.

We are a part of the PTSA but have our own budget and funds. Thank you for your support. Thank you too, to the parents who help make our programs a success by helping serve food and shop for our snacks.

Congratulations to our graduating seniors and good luck in your future endeavors. Have an enjoyable and safe summer. See you in September.

Pam Burke  
Academic Booster Chair

### Congratulations Oakton Madrigals

Congratulations to the Oakton Madrigals for being selected to perform at the Virginia Music Educators Association (VMEA) Conference this coming November! This is a real honor for our singers to represent some of the best choral singing that Virginia has to offer.

Directors from across the Commonwealth of Virginia submit applications in order to be selected for one of the featured performance sessions at the Conference. The application requires an audition recording that must include two songs from the current school year and two songs from the previous school year. A panel of choral experts carefully reviews all of the submissions and selects those

they feel most demonstrate musical excellence. Four choirs from various parts of the state were chosen to perform at the Conference. I am proud to say that the Oakton Madrigals were their top pick!

The Madrigals will travel to Hot Springs, VA in mid-November (expected performance date Thursday, November 15th) to perform at the VMEA Conference which will be held at The Homestead. The ensemble will present a 30-minute performance segment featuring a diverse program of choral literature. It is sure to be both an exciting educational opportunity and challenge for all.

## Counselor's Corner

The big news this month is the School Counseling Department has earned The Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) certification from the American School Counseling Association. This national certification marks the culmination of over a year's effort to bring the school counseling program into alignment with the model set out by the nation's leading experts. Oakton becomes one of less than 500 K-12 school counseling programs nationwide to attain this credential.

Schedules for next year are a big topic right now and requests have been entered for scheduling. The deadline for changes was extended to June 15 to offer as much flexibility as possible. A copy of the student's requests has been mailed home to allow parents to verify that their student's selections are correct. As the summer progresses, schedules will be developed to include period and class assignments for students to use in September. Requests for specific teachers are typically ineffective. With the volume of students at Oakton, the computer schedules the students and there is little control over who the computer will assign. By the end of the run, classes are balanced and near capacity so changes are not possible.

For students interested in summer school, information is available at: [www.fcps.edu/is/summer/hs.shtml](http://www.fcps.edu/is/summer/hs.shtml). Counselors can help with the registration process. Please check before signing up for a course outside the county. They must be pre-approved to get credit from FCPS. Counselors encourage families to get their students involved in the community, camps, travel or other activities that will enrich their year. Please remember to look for AP and Honors summer reading assignments. Oakton provides assignments in the summer to keep student sharp and have them ready to hit the ground running at the start of the new school year. Rising seniors can get started on their Senior Profile found under student services on Oakton's web-site. This informational survey is required by counselors to write effective letters of recommendation. Please see the site for more information. They should be narrowing their search to a reasonable list of schools over the summer as well.

Counselor's last day is June 26th, but as always we are happy to help with anything we can until then. We wish everyone a happy and safe summer and will be back 2 weeks before school opens to make it the best opening possible

News from Theatre Arts  
[www.oaktondrama.org](http://www.oaktondrama.org)

What an amazing second half of the year we had in the theatre arts department!!!! Our drama 2 class performed an edited version of The Taming of the Shrew at the Folger Shakespeare Student Festival to rave reviews. We received some fun awards at the end of the day. "Dynamic Duo" went to Eric South and Emilia Brennan. "Commitment to Character" awards were given to Raphy Ortiz and Maddy DeFreece. Savannah Hemmig and Christine Cox received the "Grand Opening" award. And the "Sassy Servants" award was bestowed upon Ellis Heijst, Holly Irwin, Rosemary Yang, Mackenzie Springer, Rita Regelbrugge, Stephanie Greene, and Lauren Frautschi. We rolled right into our production of FOOTLOOSE the MUSICAL which held record audiences all three nights of performances. The students worked hard since winter break, and I think I can speak for the cast, crew and orchestra pit when I say THANK YOU to everyone

who came out and supported the shows. Especially to the parents and boosters who did so much behind the scenes and in the lobby to make the event the smooth success that it was. I couldn't have been more pleased and proud of the outcome! We have recently learned that Aidan Smith was nominated for a CAPPIE award for Lead Actor in a musical. Sarah Smith was also nominated for her fantastic choreography and once again our CAPPIES Critic team is nominated for their outstanding work. Awards will be held on June 10th at the Kennedy Center. No rest for the weary! We kicked off the 4th quarter with our 4th annual Cougar Dinner Theatre presented by our theatre 2, 3 and 4 classes. Murder in the Knife Room, The Bequest, The Little Princess and Almost Maine were wonderfully received. The chili cook-off in the lobby sponsored by our boosters was just as popular as the productions on the stage. The revival of our popular production of THE 39 STEPS with proceeds going towards our KT Smith scholarship was a

huge success. Thank you to the Smith family who donated the inaugural amount of \$1,000. We had some excellent candidates who applied and in the end our panel was torn between two exceptional choices, so we are excited to announce that the scholarship will be split between Allie Berube who is going to Syracuse University and Marina Fondin who will attend the School of Visual Arts in NYC. We wrap up the year with the faculty department awards. I am proud to announce that Trenton Robbins was the recipient of our theatre arts award. Trenton has been a dedicated actor and techie throughout high-school. He is a member of our improvisation team and understands the importance of "family" within our department. I wish everyone a safe and relaxing summer. I hope you take time to enjoy some local theatre and come back to our auditorium next year ready to be a part of our new season.

Vanessa Gelinas

## 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 as soon as possible. Please ask your student to check with Ms. Cappel or Ms. Boccetti if he is unsure of his account status.

### Library Resources Available Online

Online library resources will be available to students over the summer. Required passwords are available in the @Oakton HS Library Blackboard course under the "Online Databases" button. Databases are web-based collections that support curriculum and are purchased by the library. They have been filtered and evaluated by publishers, editors, and authors.

### Books Are Brain Candy

Looking for a good book? Browse ReadersLink on the Fairfax County Public Library website @ <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/reading/> or Indie Bestseller Lists @ <http://www.indiebound.org/indie-bestsellers> to locate your next favorite book.

### All Fairfax Reads

The Submission by Amy Waldman was chosen for the ninth season of the "one book, one community" project. Every resident of Fairfax County is invited to participate. On September 27 Amy Waldman will appear at Fall for the Book at George Mason University. More information is available @ <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/events/allfxreads/>.

## OPUS 2012 IS HERE

Opus 2012 – is here after a year of hard work and planning! Oakton's award-winning Literary & Arts Magazine—will be available in June. This year's quality magazine features superb art and writing from current OHS students and faculty. Share the work with family and friends! Opus 2012 includes the top student art and writing selected in national, state, and local competitions as well as student-produced design and layout that will contend for national awards. Your copy will be delivered for \$8 cash or check made to Opus 2012. Send order to Susan Sullivan, Opus Adviser, [stsullivan@fcps.edu](mailto:stsullivan@fcps.edu).

## Special Thank You

On behalf of the Oakton PTSA I would like to thank the Oakton Media group for helping me produce the Online Access Newsletters this school year. A special thank you to Lauren Luna for her leadership and to Cole Neuffer and Christina Lee for their diligent work putting each newsletter together.

- Marcia Pickett

# OHS Summer Reading 2012: The Outliers or The Greeks Shall Inherit the Earth

**W**hat defines success? Is success determined by popularity? By academic or athletic accomplishments? By innovation, integrity, or personal satisfaction? Through Oakton High School's summer reading selections for 2012, students will reflect on their own mindsets, talents, choices, and ambitions as they investigate what two writers believe are the keys to successful living.

Through a community-wide vote, teachers, students and parents selected two books as their top choices for this year's summer reading: **The Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell and The Geeks Shall Inherit the Earth by Alexandra Robbins\***. Please choose ONE (or both!) of these books and acquire a copy through your local library, bookstore, or online vendor. Read actively by taking notes in the margins or on your paper so that you will be able to recall and discuss what you have read when you arrive at Oakton in September. Here are some ideas to prompt your annotation of the book:

- Connect—How can you personally connect to an example or argument in a particular passage?
- Predict—Think ahead. What are the implications of the anecdote or example in a particular passage or chapter?
- Visualize and Respond—What images does the author conjure in your mind? Why does he or she choose that image?
- Question and Clarify—What confuses you or

does not seem to make sense? Can you clarify later?

- Summarize—What are the main ideas in each chapter and in the book as a whole?
- Analyze—How does the author construct his or her argument? What key details and stylistic features comprise the argument?
- Evaluate—What is your opinion of the author's perspective? Is it thoroughly logical? Is it realistic?

Ultimately, the book that you choose should help you to reflect personally: how do you define success in high school and beyond? Compare or contrast your own understanding of success with the perspectives of Gladwell and/or Robbins. Your reactions and notes will contribute to school-wide discussions at the beginning of September.

If you have any questions about Oakton's all-school reading assignment, you may contact Colleen Eddy, English Department Chair, at [CAEddy@fcps.edu](mailto:CAEddy@fcps.edu). Students enrolled in AP courses should check the Oakton website for additional assignments.

\*Important note: The Geeks Shall Inherit the Earth follows the lives of several high school students and incorporates potentially offensive language and behaviors that are unfortunately present at the high school level. Parents, please assist your child in making the best choice of summer reading for his or her individual needs.

## Cougar Calendar

**June 10** – Athletic Boosters 5K run & 1K fun run

**June 12** – PTSA assemble summer packets, 9 am in the OHS library, all volunteers welcome!

**June 15** – Last day of school – Early dismissal

**June 17** – Baccalaureate Ceremony, 7:00 pm St John Neumann Catholic Church, Reston

**June 19** – Graduation, 7:30 pm George Mason Patriot Center

**June 19** – All night grad party 11 pm – 5 am, OHS

## Writing Center Tutors Travel to a National Convention in Pennsylvania

On March 31st, 2012, eight tutors from the Oakton Writing Center of Oakton High School in Vienna, Virginia, attended the 23rd Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association (MAWCA): Writing Centers as Change Agents conference at Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. The purpose of this event was to give tutors and educators from across the nation the opportunity to collaborate with other high school and college tutors, teachers, college professors, and writing enthusiasts. It was a rewarding experience for Oakton's writing center tutors as they were able to share ideas and practices with representatives from other writing centers.

Lorelei Christie, Briana Stewart, Priya Ganesh, Skyler Roth, and Katie Croote were able to showcase their knowledge and experience with tutoring, exchange strategies, and discuss ideas with other participants of the convention. Each tutor had the opportunity to participate in a variety of sessions delivered by college professors, other high school tutors, and advisors. The sessions the tutors visited focused on various topics, such as different techniques tutors can use to manage marginalized writers and ways to incorporate literature as an aspect of tutoring. Each tutor presented on a variety of topics.

Katie Croote's Do Writing Centers Affect More than Just the People that they Tutor? was a session detailing the effects of tutoring on more than just tutored students.

Lorelei Christie's Experiences with Collaboration and the Change We See was a roundtable discus-

sion focused on collaboration in writing centers and gave participants the opportunity to share personal anecdotes.

Priya Ganesh and Briana Stewart's "Write" Right discussed how writing centers and tutoring can change all aspects of a school.

Skyler Roth's How we Measure the Changes We Provoke explored different methods writing centers could utilize to measure change in tutored students.

One highlight of attending the conference was the opportunity to meet professors and teachers with diverse backgrounds who all shared a similar passion for writing, including a teacher from Kenya who wanted to establish a writing center in a Kenyan college. Skyler Roth and Lorelei Christie were able to share Oakton's experience with setting up a writing center and the challenges they encountered with the Kenyan teacher. Christie's goal for the future is to visit Kenya and assist with the development of a high school writing center which she believes would be a positive influence for Kenyan students and provide educational value for the schools in that area.

Another highlight of Oakton's journey to the MAWCA conference occurred when Beth Blankenship was honored with the High School and Community College Leaders Award. The Oakton tutors thoroughly enjoyed their time in Shippensburg, engaging in thought-provoking conversation with other writing enthusiasts and sharing their perspectives on effective tutoring techniques.

### DRIVE SMART

DRIVE SMART Virginia has just launched a project in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Health to reach out to Virginia's young drivers about the dangers of distracted driving. As part of this project, we are asking teens to pledge to drive distraction free. We would appreciate your help in spreading the word about this pledge. If teen drivers sign the pledge by August 30, 2012, they will be entered into a drawing to win a free iPad! Please direct your students to the following link: <http://drivesmartva.org/teen/distractionfree>

Please note that this is a separate pledge from our original Distracted Driving Awareness Month pledge.

Thank you for your support!

Kristin Smolenski  
DRIVE SMART Virginia  
Special Projects Manager  
276-206-6963

## REMINDER: From the School Health Room

All medications must be picked up by 11:30 am on June 15, 2012. 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

## 2012 FALL SPORTS

2012 Fall sports tryouts are Aug. 1 for Golf and Aug. 6 for Field Hockey, Football, Volleyball, Cross Country and Cheerleading. (Dance Team tryouts were held in April.) All athletes must be there for the tryouts. There will be a walk-in registration from 5:00-6:00 on Wed., Aug. 1st for fall sports at which time we will verify that all athletes have completed all forms and requirements. This is for athletes only.

Look for a Summer Newsletter with more details in early July at **www.oaktonathletics.org**. Click on Files and Links.

All athletes must have a physical done after May 1, 2012 AND it must be recorded on the official 4-page VHSL form (**go to www.oaktonathletics.org** and click on Files and Links to download the form.) The physical will be valid for all three seasons. It should be turned into the Activities Office as soon as you have it done. Make a copy for your

records and mail it to OHS Activities, 2900 Sutton Road, Vienna, VA 22181. Do not hand physicals to the coaches. Students will not be able to do preseason conditioning, weight training or try out without this form AND without an FCPS emergency care information form for the coach.

Also, all athletes AND one parent must complete an on-line concussion component every year.

Go to **http://www.fcps.edu/supt/activities/atp/first.htm** to access the link. The database has been cleared out from last year.

All Rising Freshmen and new athletes should check out the team pages on **www.oaktonathletics.org** for information about pre-season conditioning and tryouts. Email the coaches and ask to be put on their email distribution lists.