



TEACHING AND LEARNING

Parent Newsletter



Dear Parents/Guardians,

It is hard to believe that the first quarter is already over this school year. We have had a great start to the 2019-2020 school year!

There are many new initiatives taking place throughout the district. Our elementary STEM coaches are focusing on lower elementary this year. Students are loving our new science program.

At the middle level, we have implemented three new classes. Discovering Solutions Through Engineering and Technology (DSET6) was added to the grade 6 rotation. Seventh grade added Designing Solutions Through Engineering and Technology (DSET7) as a student option, in addition to revising the previous Life Management elective to Civic Life. Eighth grade added Forensics as an option for students.

The high school revises courses regularly. For the 2020-2021 school year, there will be more opportunities for students to earn college credit and career and technical training. In addition, the high school will be offering a "flex schedule" which will allow students to essentially start their day later in the morning and go a little later in the afternoon. Be sure the check out all of the high school scheduling opportunities as we prepare for the 2020-2021 school year. Information will be found on the Lake Orion Community Schools' website. There will also be a communication coming directly from the high school.

It is important that we continue to bring our students the opportunities and education that is relevant for the world they will enter.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support of our Lake Orion Community Schools. I wish you a safe and joyful holiday season.

Sincerely,
Heidi Mercer

Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

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DATA AND ASSESSMENT

Melissa Butki, Data Specialist/Instructional Coach

Computer Adaptive Tests (CAT): How do they work and what do they tell us?

Think about the yearly standardized assessments you took in school. If you were a high achieving student, chances are you did very well on these assessments and received high scores. Maybe you struggled on these assessments and received low scores. Either way, you were given little information from these fixed-form tests. Those assessments may have compared you to your peers or communicated if you had reached a predetermined “proficiency” cut off, but they did not give an accurate picture of what *you* knew, what *you* didn't know, and what instruction *you* needed.

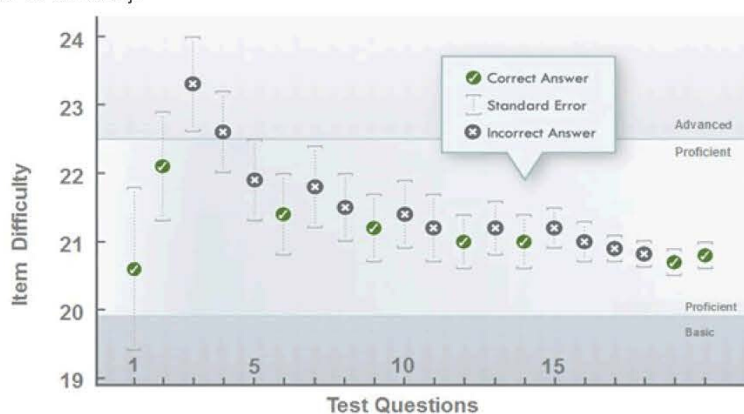
Fortunately, many schools have begun using a different form of assessment that is more useful for students at every ability level: computerized adaptive testing. This type of assessment is also utilized at the state level for Reading and Math in grades 3-7.

What does it mean to be computer adaptive?

Computer adaptive tests (CAT) adjust to each student's learning level, providing a unique set of test questions based on their responses to previous questions. As the student responds to questions, the test responds to the student, adjusting up or down in difficulty.

How does it work?

The sample item progression shown here illustrates how item difficulty is adapted for a student over the length of a 20-item test. The student responds to the first two items correctly. The third item, which is more difficult, is presented and responded to incorrectly. This causes a slight drop in the ability estimate, and the fourth item therefore becomes easier. This process continues until all 20 items are administered. The standard error of measurement (an indicator for measurement precision) shrinks as the test proceeds. Toward the end of the test, at approximately item 10, the test taker's ability estimate starts to stabilize.



What are the advantages of CAT?

- Adaptive tests have been found to be as accurate as fixed-form tests that are twice as long. This enables the assessment to have fewer questions and to take less time while still providing good information about student achievement.
- Adaptive tests drawing from large item pools can provide much more information, and more precise information, than fixed-form tests do about both students who are struggling and students who are excelling.
- Because they are administered on a computer, adaptive tests provide immediate feedback to students and teachers. These instantaneous results help ensure that test data can be used to adjust instruction.

(Kingsbury & Houser, 1998; Thissen & Mislevy, 2000)

Adaptive assessments are becoming more prevalent in school districts and will most likely increase as providers develop adaptive assessments that reflect State Standards and use benchmarks to predict success on state assessments. Along with other data points, the results of these adaptive assessments help educators make more accurate and meaningful decisions on programming and individualized instruction for their students.

Kingsbury, G. (2014). The Potential of Adaptive Assessment. *Educational Leadership*, 71(6), doi:

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar14/vol71/num06/The-Potential-of-Adaptive-Assessment.aspx>



DIVERSITY

Michelle Cureton, Diversity and Equity Coordinator

Native American Heritage Month, American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month, Indigenous People Month

In November, we will highlight and celebrate the contributions, history (often hidden stories) and cultures of Natives. Representatives from the American Indian Health and Family Services of Detroit will be visiting the high school to educate and highlight Native culture and history. We are hopeful that our students will learn authentic and meaningful information that will stick with them. I am hopeful that educators can highlight the contributions and existence of Native people NOW and in the past.

Please check out the following links for more information on the best ways to celebrate Native American history and culture in Detroit:

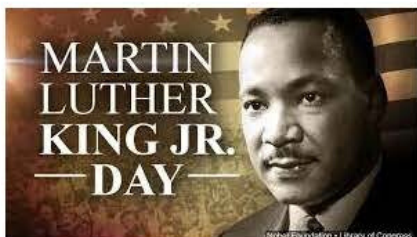
<https://detroit.cbslocal.com/top-lists/best-ways-to-celebrate-native-american-history-and-culture-in-detroit/> (an older site but lists various museums) AND

<http://www.pbs.org/specials/native-american-heritage-month/>

Fun Cultural Opportunities: <https://mailchi.mp/6d03d054825c/an-aanm-halloween?e=e8bdc1d7fe> and <https://detroit.cbslocal.com/top-lists/best-ways-to-celebrate-native-american-history-and-culture-in-detroit/>



SAVE THE DATE:



On January 20, 2020, Lake Orion High School will host a Martin Luther King Community Celebration in the auditorium at 6:30 p.m. See the LOCS website for updates and more information on this event.

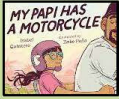




ELA

Beth Bruce, Kelly Day & Kate DiMeo, Instructional Coaches

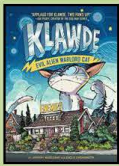
From our bookshelf to yours...



My Papi Has a Motorcycle
By Isabel Quintero
Level: K-2 picture book



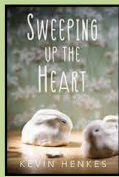
Fun in Flower series
By Jane Atkinson
Level: KLM



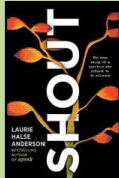
Klawde series
By Johnny Mariano
Level: NOPQ



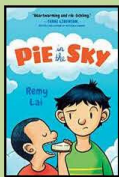
Going Wild series
By Lisa McMann
Level: RST



Sweeping Up the Heart
By Kevin Henkes
Level: UVW



Shout
By Laurie Halse Anderson
Level: XYZ (with mature themes)



Pie in the Sky
By Remy Lai
Level: Middle grade (graphic novel)



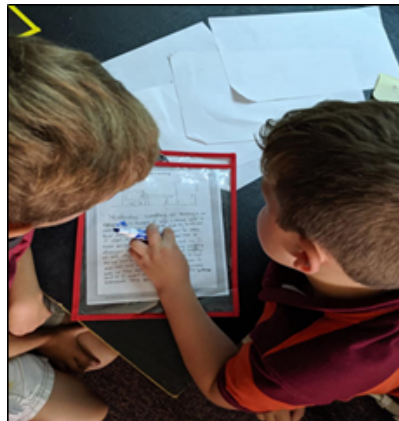
Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda
By Becky Albertali
Level: High School

Growing into Second-Grade Phonics

Second-grade teachers are in full swing with the newly adopted Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) phonics program. This curriculum is built on decades of research and practice. It is highly engaging and centered around the storyline of Gus the Dragon (the class mascot). This program supports the reading and writing units, and teachers are already noticing the transfer of skills. LOCS has now adopted the TCRWP phonics curriculum across grades K-2.

"The new TCRWP phonics program we have adapted has quickly become one of my favorite teaching parts of my day," said Brandy Lucia, second-grade teacher at Webber.

"I love the clear teaching points and Rug Clubs. I think the tasks are meaningful, carefully planned out, and they allow me to easily track each child's growth," Lucia added. "Phonics has become so much more than just word sorting. The most exciting thing I've noticed, is the carry over into reading and writing. Students (myself included) are engaged and excited to take on their daily phonics journey."



Phonics



ENGLISH LEARNER DEPARTMENT

Jen Howe, EL District Coordinator

Who are our English Learners?

This year, Lake Orion Community Schools is servicing 257 English Learners. Lake Orion High School and Learning Options have 37 English Learners, the middle schools have 42, and the elementary schools have 178. Our English Learners and their families speak 32 languages other than English. 45% of our English Learners speak Spanish, 8.5% speak Portuguese, and 5% speak Hmong.

How do we support English Learners?

Lake Orion Community Schools offers a variety of assistance to provide ELs with the support necessary to develop their English proficiency and academic language. Some supports include:

- Individual and small group instruction that aims at developing fluency and literacy in English
- A structured research-based program of teaching the English language through science, math, social studies, and language arts
- Use of students' home languages (through bilingual dictionaries or online translators) as needed to assist students in understanding and acquiring new concepts in subject areas like math, science, and social studies
- Opportunities to be included in all district interventions, enrichment, and accelerated programs
- A summer school program

Who are our English Learner teachers?

English Learners are supported by six EL teachers and one EL Teacher's Aide. If your child is an English Learner, please feel free to reach out to your child's EL teacher at any time.

Staff Member	Buildings
Samina Ata, EL Teacher	Orion Oaks, Webber
Kelli Graul, EL Teacher	Blanche Sims, Oakview, Scripps, Waldon
Pamela Haines, EL Teacher	Paint Creek, Webber
Annmarie Lo, EL Teacher	Lake Orion High School, Learning Options
Melissa Ostertag, EL Teacher	Carpenter, Stadium Drive
Emily Robinson, EL Teacher	Scripps
Darlene Day Hudson, EL Teacher's Aide	Orion Oaks, Stadium Drive

How can we support you?

We are excited to partner with you and your child. Please let us know how we can best support and involve you.

Check out the Orion Township Public Library

Lake Orion's own public library has a great selection of bilingual books for children through adults. Additionally, an ELL Conversation Group meets each Wednesday from 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. Find out more at: <https://orionlibrary.org/>





FROM THE TEACHING & LEARNING OFFICE



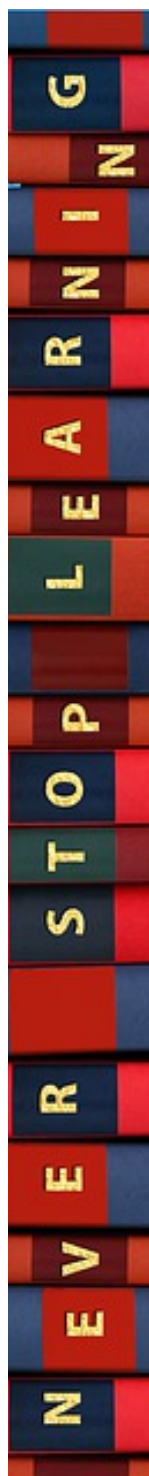
Parent University

Lake Orion Community Schools has offered several Parent University events so far this year, which included Literacy Make and Take, Strategies and Supports for the Distracted Student, Fact Fluency, Technology and Your Child, Coping Skills and Conflict Management for the Elementary Student, etc. These events have been well attended by the community. There are several events still remaining for the 2019-2020 school year. See below for topics and dates. Thank you so much to all of the parents who have taken time out of their busy schedule to attend these events. If you have a Parent University event idea for next school year, please email **Kerri Anderson at kerri.anderson@lok12.org**.

Events Remaining for the 2019-2020 School Year

Topic	Grade Levels	Date	Location
What science courses should my high school student take? 6:30-7:30 p.m. Is my child on the right math track? 7:35-8:35 p.m.	7-8 6-7	December 3	LOHS KIVA
Restorative Practices - 6:30-8:00 p.m.	K-12	December 12	Oakview Middle School
Oh Snap – 6:30-7:30 p.m. *	K-2	January 14	Stadium Drive
Career Readiness - 6:30-8:00 p.m.	K-12	January 29	LOHS KIVA
PSAT for middle school students - 6:30-7:30 p.m.	6-8	February 26	Waldon Middle School
College prep (include SAT, anxiety associated with college prep, leaving home for college and career selection) - 6:30-7:30 p.m.	9-12	March 4	LOHS KIVA
May I be Happy Movie along with Mindfulness - 6:30-8:15 p.m.	K-12	April 21	LOHS KIVA
Kindergarten Readiness (importance of fine motor skills/gross motor skills and prepping for kindergarten) - 6:30-7:30 p.m. *	DK-K	June 3	Carpenter Elementary

Events with a * will have child care provided





MATH DEPARTMENT

Brent Cubitt and Emilie Schiff, Instructional Coaches

Parent's Beliefs about Math Change Their Children's Achievement

By Jo Boaler

We now know that the messages we give students can change their performance dramatically, and that students need to know that the adults in their lives believe in them. Researchers are learning that students' ideas about their ability and potential are extremely important, much more than previously understood. As well as the messages we give students about their potential, brain research is now showing that messages students pick up from their parents about math and their parents' relationships with math can also change students' math learning and achievement. To read the full article, <https://www.youcubed.org/resources/parents-beliefs-math-change-childrens-achievement/>

In an important study, researchers found that when mothers told their daughters they were not good at math in school, their daughter's achievement declined almost immediately (Eccles & Jacobs, 1986).

In a new study neuroscientists Erin Maloney and colleagues found that parents' math anxiety reduced their children's learning of math across grades 1 and 2, but only if parents helped their children on math homework (Maloney, Ramirez, Gunderson, Levine, & Beilock, 2015) If they did not help them on homework, the parents' math anxiety did not detract from their children's learning.

The parents' math knowledge did not turn out to have any impact, only their level of math anxiety.

Both studies, again, communicate the importance of the messages students receive, as it was not math knowledge that harmed the students' performance but the parents' anxiety. We do not know what parents with math anxiety say to their children but it is likely they communicate the negative messages we know to be harmful, such as "math is hard" or "I was never good at math in school." It is critical that when parents interact with children about math they communicate positive messages, saying that math is exciting and it is an open subject that anyone can learn with hard work, that it is not about being "smart" or not and that math is all around us in the world.

Teachers and parents need to replace sympathetic messages such as "Don't worry, math isn't your thing" with positive messages such as "You can do this, I believe in you, math is an open, beautiful subject that is all about effort and hard work."

References: Beilock, L. S., Gunderson, E. A., Ramirez, G., & Levine, S. C. (2009). Female teachers' math anxiety affects girls' math achievement. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107(5), 1860–1863.

Boaler, J. (2015). *Mathematical Mindsets: Unleashing Students' Potential Through Creative Math, Inspiring Messages and Innovative Teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Eccles, J., & Jacobs, J. (1986). Social forces shape math attitudes and performance. *Signs*, 11(2), 367–380.

Maloney, E. A., Ramirez, G., Gunderson, E. A., Levine, S. C., & Beilock, S. L. (2015). Intergenerational effects of parents' math anxiety on children's math achievement and anxiety. *Psychological Science*, 0956797615592630.





THE SCIENCE OF MINDFULNESS

Stephanie Harris, District Mindfulness Instructor & Oakview Art Teacher

The demands on today's students have increased significantly in recent years creating an environment that is more stressful than ever to navigate, while at the same time trying to grow and develop a sense of self. Due to anxiety, trauma, digital distraction, and feelings of isolation, our students need a way to effectively calm and regulate their anxious nervous systems. Mindfulness is to the brain as exercise and proper nutrition is to the body. A regular practice of mindfulness can help decrease stress and anxiety, while strengthening resilience and emotional regulation, for both students and staff, in an educational setting.

There is currently over 30 plus years of mindfulness research and neuroscience among adults, with new studies and data, regarding both adults and youth, emerging at a rapid rate. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction was utilized by Jon Kabat-Zinn in the 1970's as a way to combat stress and anxiety, manage chronic pain, and cultivate overall well-being in hospital settings and clinics. This secular-based form of mindfulness then found its way into the mental health world, in the form of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, to treat people with chronic depression, setting the stage for the use of mindfulness with children and adolescents. Today, mindfulness is taking root in educational settings across the United States and the world.

The most recent trending articles, from the New York Times, have been following England's recent decision to adopt mindfulness as a new school subject. In up to 370 schools, students will start to practice mindfulness as a part of a study to improve youth mental health (Proulx, 2019). The goal is to see what strategies work best for students under increasing stress. The study will run through 2021 and is the largest of its kind. Flint area schools and the surrounding area have implemented a large-scale mindfulness effort as one of its main interventions to the Flint Water Crisis due to its positive impact on the prefrontal cortex that exposure to lead-contaminated water can damage (Bullock, 2016). These are just a few examples of how science is offering up data to support the impact of mindfulness on the brain and nervous system.

In our area, many school districts are currently experimenting with mindfulness practices to address the way our minds and bodies are dealing with toxic and chronic stress. Not only are the school systems addressing the students' needs but the staffs' as well. Oakland University offers many professional development opportunities as well as an Ed. Specialist degree with an emphasis on mindfulness. The Crim foundation holds regular workshops in basic mindfulness and mindful movement. MC4ME, out of Ann Arbor, holds regular mindfulness, half day retreats for educators and, our own district of Lake Orion, is offering a staff Mindfulness for Personal Well-being course beginning mid-November. The impact of mindfulness on the mind, body, and behavior is so immediate that it is likely this trend in self-care will only increase in the near future benefiting both students, staff, and community alike.

Schools in England
Introduce a New Subject: Mindfulness, Iliana Magra,
The New York Times, Feb. 2019

Should Schools Teach Mindfulness?,
Natalie Proulx, The New York Times, Feb. 2019

The Lead Crisis in Flint: Where Mindfulness and Public Health Meet, B. Grace Bullock PhD, mindful,
Sept. 2016.

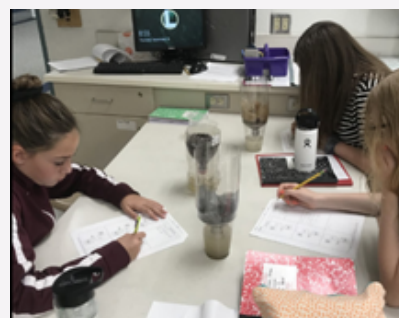
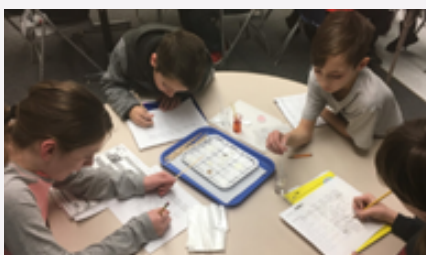




SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Amy Bohm, Andrea Brook, Jamie Kimber, Pam Moreman, Instructional Coaches

Science education in Lake Orion has transformed over the past couple of years. Science used to be students receiving information from their teachers or a guided experiment or demonstration. Today, we are growing scientists using three-dimensional science standards to teach our students to think and act like real scientists. Each expectation or standard we have for our students includes Science and Engineering Practices (the tools of a scientists), Disciplinary Core Ideas (content or the topics to figure out), and Cross Cutting Concepts (the lens through which a scientist approaches their work that spans across all disciplines of science such as patterns or cause and effect). How are we growing scientists across K-12? Students begin planning and conducting investigations in kindergarten. An important aspect of this science and engineering practice is to plan how data will be collected so it can later be analyzed and interpreted. This sounds like a lot for our students in the primary grades, but they are already scientists and up to the task. The progression seen from kindergarten through high school is quite extensive, but here is a glimpse at how Lake Orion Scientists are conducting investigations and collecting data. In kindergarten, students made a plan to collect data about the weather to help them look at patterns to assist in knowing what to wear to school. Students in fourth grade conduct an investigation to determine if the height of a ramp effects the distance an object rolling down it will travel. Fifth grade students conduct investigations to determine if substances, when combined, have a chemical reaction based on the properties and how they do or do not change. Middle school students investigate water run-off and infiltration of different types of land (concrete, forest) and materials (sand, soil, gravel). Students at the high school level investigate populations of pesticide resistant and non-resistant aphids over time. This is a very small glimpse of what our scientists are figuring out, but as one can see, the questions and topics that we investigate grow increasingly more sophisticated as our students progress through the grades. The foundation is being built as early as kindergarten as our youngest scientists begin planning and conducting investigations for the first time.





SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Julie Gutman, Special Education Director

The Lake Orion Special Education Department provides an array of programs and services to meet all students' individualized needs. It is our pleasure to work with families to collaboratively ensure an appropriate education for all. The key component to our success is our students, staff, and parents. I encourage you to work with the school your child attends so that together we can make a difference.

STEPS TO TAKE IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD MAY NEED SPECIALIZED PROGRAMMING OR SUSPECT A DISABILITY:

- Meet with your child's teacher or counselor. Share your concerns and ideas. Develop a plan for working together.
- Share information you have from outside sources. School personnel welcome input from family doctors, tutors, private therapists, etc.
- Talk with the principal. Often he/she can work with parents and teachers to come up with helpful new strategies or mobilize additional resources. You may wish to request a Student Support Team meeting involving one or more of your child's teachers.
- Contact the Special Education Office if you have specific questions about evaluations or programming under IDEA or Section 504 at 248.693.5430.
- Questions about services for preschool aged children may also be addressed at the Special Education Office.



District-Wide Resource: Learning Ally

Lake Orion Community Schools has partnered with Learning Ally to support students in grades 3rd -12th who could benefit from audio books to support their reading. Learning Ally is the largest library of human-read audiobooks, including literature, popular fiction and curriculum-aligned titles giving every student equitable access to grade-level content. The audio books can be accessed from a smartphone, iPad/tablet, or computer and students can have up to ten books on their personal bookshelf. The books include word highlighting to allow readers to follow along while listening to a human voice, increasing engagement, memory and comprehension. If your child is eligible for this resource, their teacher will send home information explaining the option of how to access (download the reading app) from home. Lake Orion Community Schools embraces innovation as we educate our students for the challenges of today and tomorrow!

To Learn more visit: <https://learningally.org>

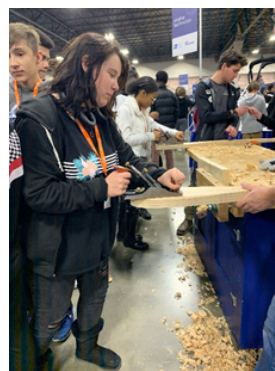


TECHNOLOGY & CAREER READINESS

Craig Schoon, Instructional Technology Coach & Rosa Everitt, Career Readiness, HS

Students Explore Careers!

As Lake Orion continues to give students opportunities in being Career Ready, Tony Palmeri, AP of LOHS, Rosa Everitt, K-12 Career Readiness/CTE Coordinator, and Kristin Sliwinski, Learning Options Coordinator felt it very important to offer a one of a kind hands on experience for our students. On November 8th, students from both LOHS and Learning Options participated in the 2nd Annual MiCareer Quest Expo at the Suburban Collection Showcase. Students in grades 10-12 were introduced to the most in-demand jobs in advanced manufacturing, construction, health sciences, and information technology from various community colleges, universities, and technical schools and companies around Southeast Michigan. Students spent approximately 20 minutes in each of the four areas and engaged in various hands-on, interactive activities to highlight the skills needed to pursue these career opportunities. As a result of this field trip, students were exposed to the possibilities of different career choices and the paths necessary to take them there.



New Partnership with LOHS CTE and OCC

This past fall Lake Orion High School's CTE instructors, signed off and articulated a total of 9 programs with Oakland Community College. The articulation agreements are based on the following CTE programs; Automotive Technology, Mechanical CAD, Engineering, Interior Design, Business Management, Marketing, Accounting, Computer Programming, and Cybersecurity. These new agreements will provide our students with the opportunity to waive degree related programs upon successful completion of our programs with a B or better. We are very excited to be able to provide our students with this amazing opportunity. Special thanks to Steve Kimball, Julia Dalrymple, Sarah Hemsall, Don Frohm, Jen Ohlrich, Nick Schultz, and Sharon Spencer for making it all happen!





BOND UPDATE

Heidi Mercer, Asst. Superintendent of Teaching and Learning



Planning and design committees continue to meet every other week. This committee work is expected to be completed in December with the bond projects then going to bid for construction.

Phase 1 construction projects will begin in the spring of 2020.

Please regularly check out our website bond link, <https://www.lakeorionschools.org/district/bond-implementation>, to stay updated on all bond work. Information is updated the same day as committees meet.

Soon information will be coming to the community regarding touring the Phase 1 sites and seeing, in detail, the plan for each building. Stay tuned.





Print and Digital Resources for Lake Orion Students

Digital Resources

Bookflix

An online literacy resource that pairs classic video storybooks with related nonfiction eBooks from Scholastic to build a love of reading and learning.

Learning Express Library

LearningExpress Library features online tutorials, practice tests, and eBooks to help patrons of all ages.

Novelist K8+

A book database and readers advisory tool for fiction titles that are popular with young readers as well as titles to use in the classroom.

Pebble Go/Pebble Go Next

PreK -6 databases for reading and research, including database options for Animals, Earth and Space, and Biographies.

Tumblebooks

An online collection of animated, talking picture books which teach kids the joy of reading in a format they'll love.

Truflix

An online resource that pairs True Books with various media content to help students hone literacy and inquiry skills and build knowledge.

Download eBooks with:



For a full list of youth digital resources, follow this link:

<https://orionlibrary.org/youth/student-resources/>

For a full list of teen digital resources, follow this link:

<https://orionlibrary.org/teens/homework-database-help/>

Print Collections

Wonderbooks/VOX books

This collection of audio enabled books that play audio and ask reading comprehension questions includes fiction and non fiction in picture book, early reader, and chapter book format.

Lit Fit Kits

Book and supplemental material kits aimed at collaborating with the current Read By Grade Three law.

Large Print

Collection of popular juvenile fiction titles with larger print, aimed at an easier reading experience for reluctant readers and readers with low vision and/or learning disabilities.

Honors Collection

Collection of books found on teacher and classroom lists for various LOCS honors classes. This collection is for middle and high school students.

Test Prep Collection

Assortment of prep material for high school AP classes and college entrance exams, including the SAT and ACT exams.

Text Books

Collection of current text books used in LOCS middle and high school classes.



ThinkLink



The Lake Orion Education Foundation is growing and now looking for help from community members. The LOEF's goals are to support LOCS students and staff by expanding opportunities. There are a number of key initiatives this year: supporting Olweus, the Bully Prevention Program; the Student of the Month program, honoring students for kind character and Olweus ideals; the Fourth Grade Recognition program, for students who made a positive contribution to the classroom and/or community; and the annual scholarship given to the LOEF Outstanding Senior for academic, leadership, and citizenship achievements. Anthony Ianni, the first Division I basketball player with autism, will be speaking at each of our elementary schools this fall and winter to share his message of acceptance, visits supported by the LOEF.

Any community member interested in helping the LOEF can email LOEDFoundation@gmail.com.