Purple Up!

April is the Month of the Military Child

The Okaloosa County School District is proud to serve the families of Military Service Members stationed at four different bases located in Okaloosa County. We are well aware of the sacrifice not only of the parents who are serving, but especially of their children, the students enrolled in our schools. We believe it is important to honor these sacrifices by participating in Purple Up! for Military Kids Day. We salute the 5,600+ students in our schools who are dependents of our active duty military personnel.
Purple Up!
April is the Month of the Military Child, Cont.

Bluewater Elementary School

Bluewater Elementary military dependent students worked with their Military Family Life Counselor to create this banner. “Each student painted a portion and you can see them on the circle. Through discussion, they created what they feel like is their ‘military life cycle.’”
-Amy Klugh, Principal
Bluewater Elementary

Spirit Week at Eglin Elementary

Red, White, & Blue Day

“The Month of the Military Child is one of our favorite times of the year as we get to celebrate our military kids. During spirit week, we promoted our military branches, and each student created a family shield about the good aspects of military life. We wear purple every Friday in April and our staff shirt reads, ‘Like a dandelion, military children bloom everywhere the winds carry them’, which truly represents our students.”
-Dennis Semac, Principal
Eglin Elementary
Update on the 2021-2022 School Year
from Superintendent Chambers

We are approaching the end of the what has likely been the most challenging school year we have ever faced. The COVID pandemic that closed down our school buildings last March continued to impact education during the current school year. Schools were open for business but greatly adjusted the ways in which students learned, participated in extracurricular activities, ate lunch, walked to and from class, and rode school buses. Staff developed rigorous protocols for cleaning and social distancing. Teachers, who typically go above and beyond for their students in a normal year, took their commitment to a new level this year in an effort to keep their students safe.

As a result of the steps taken this year, approximately 96% of our students have remained COVID-free the entire year. And, at one point in November, the Department of Health reported that the vast majority of positive student cases that had occurred were the result of exposure outside of the school building.

The purpose of this letter is to provide parents with information on how our school district plans to operate next fall. Our plans are based on information provided by the Department of Education regarding funding and the progress of vaccination efforts in our area.

• At this time, we expect our school buildings to be fully open for business, and we are planning for normal school operations. This, of course, could change depending on circumstances.

• The mySchool Online (MSO) program will not be an available option next fall. This year, the Florida Department of Education provided full funding for Okaloosa County’s MSO program just like they did for virtual programs in counties throughout Florida during the pandemic. That funding is not being provided in 2021-2022.

• We invite and encourage MSO parents to contact their child’s school if they have not already done so to make sure that they have a schedule for next fall. At the middle and high school level, course selections are occurring now. At the elementary level, schools will be creating teacher classes soon.

• As for the format of summer activities such as summer school, athletics, band, etc., students and parents will hear from their schools and coaches after we return from spring break.

Okaloosa County’s high academic standing in the state has been maintained over the years through the commitment of its teachers to provide outstanding face-to-face instruction to their students, and there is simply no replacement for that. Currently, almost 90% of our students are in our school buildings benefiting from that interaction, and we look forward to having everyone back in the fall. Online learning is not optimal for the vast majority of our students, and this is especially true at the elementary level.

As was the case before the pandemic, Okaloosa Online will remain a virtual option for students in our district. Parents can learn more about this virtual program under the Schools tab on our website, www.okaloosaschools.com.

Respectfully,

Marcus Chambers
Commissioner Corcoran Issues Emergency Order 21-EO-02

An Emergency Order issued through the Department of Education directly impacts graduating seniors, state end of course exams, and third graders in Okaloosa County.

**Seniors** - Solely for students who are expected to graduate in the spring of 2021, the district has been given the authority for this year only, to waive the required state assessments for graduation for those students who have not yet passed them. Those assessments are the Grade 10 English Language Arts (ELA) assessment and Algebra I End of Course Exam. Please note that seniors expected to graduate in the spring of 2021 still must meet all other graduation requirements including having a minimum grade point average of 2.0 and earning all course credits required by Florida statute. Contact your student’s school for more information. All other students are still required to pass these assessments as a graduation requirement.

**State End of Course Exams (Middle School Civics, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology I, US History)** – Florida statute requires State End of Course Exams to count 30% of the student’s course grade. The state EOCs will still be administered this year. However, these exams will only count 30% of the student’s course grade in the event the EOC increases their overall grade. Otherwise the student’s grade will consist of classroom grades and assessments. For all students other than seniors, a passing score on the Algebra I EOC will still be required for graduation purposes.

**Third Grade** – Florida statute requires a third grade student to earn at least a Level 2 on the 3rd Grade state reading assessment to be promoted to grade four. The district has been given the authority for this year only to waive this promotion requirement. For this year, third grade students in Okaloosa County will be required to have a passing grade of A-D in reading or a passing score on the i-Ready assessment in order to be promoted. Contact your student’s school for more information.
Early Registration

Kindergarten and New Student Registration for 2021-2022

The Okaloosa County School District began early registration for the 2021-22 school year on March 8. This registration is for children new to the school district, including those entering kindergarten. Florida law provides that any child who will be five on or before September 1st is eligible for kindergarten that school year.

Registration may be initiated online at www.okaloosaschools.com/schools/2021/registration-portal or at any time during the regular school day at your child’s zoned school.

To complete the registration process, parents/guardians must have:
- Proof of the child’s age (birth certificate)
- Florida certificate of immunization
- Social Security card
- School physical dated no later than 12 months before the first day of school
- Proof of residency

Parents/guardians may obtain further information by calling your child’s zoned school or Curriculum and Instruction at 850-833-4208.
Covid-19 Update

The COVID-Dashboard has been updated to show student and staff positive cases through April 3rd, which is the latest information available from the State Department of Health. It can be viewed on our website, www.okaloosaschools.com, under the following graphic.

All Floridians are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine as prescribed by the FDA. Any individual who is not 18 years of age or older by the day of their vaccination appointment must be accompanied by a parent/guardian to the vaccination clinic.

OCSD is working with the Okaloosa Department of Health to provide a vaccination clinic site at Niceville High School on the bus ramp on the dates listed below. Check the Department of Health website for appointment times.

Two-Shot Vaccines:
April 14 and May 5
April 26 and May 17
May 6 and May 27

DOH Sets Vaccination Clinic Dates at Niceville High School

The COVID-Dashboard has been updated to show student and staff positive cases through April 3rd, which is the latest information available from the State Department of Health. It can be viewed on our website, www.okaloosaschools.com, under the following graphic.

For Summer VPK enrollment, parents/guardians must have:
• Proof of Florida residency
• All registration documents listed above for school registration

The Summer VPK site will be Elliott Point Elementary (South area), enrollment permitting. Parents must provide transportation for Summer VPK students. Further information for Summer VPK enrollment may be obtained by calling the Early Learning Coalition Program at 850-833-3627 or Ms. Debbie Haan at 850-689-7211.
Kayleb Wagner

Baker, Florida is a close-knit community that loves their school. This year, they supported their football team as they chased and won a state title. On that team is a special young man that has overcome obstacles to become an integral part of the Baker Gators Football team as a Sophomore. He was recently nominated for and won the FHSAA Rodger Dearing Spirit of Sport Award. Here is his story!

In the Classroom

Parent Survey

We Need Your Input!

The parent survey is still open, and we would love to hear from you. Your feedback will help your child’s school continue to improve. Thank you!!
Okaloosa County Archers Have a Successful Season

Shalimar Elementary
Shalimar’s Archery team just won their third consecutive State Championship and they are proud to have the top 3 female archers in the state as well as the #2 male archer!

Top 3 female archers in state:  
Georgia Pierce #1  
Brylynn Mathie #2  
Alexis Harris #3

#2 male archer in the state:  
Travonte Whitfield

Destin Middle
The Marlins placed 2nd at the State Tournament and are proud to have the State’s 1st place female Archer- Haley LaCross and the state’s 1st place Max Score Female Archer- Karissa Linton in the middle school division!

Choctawhatchee High
The Choctaw Archery Team placed 2nd in the State Tournament! Top individuals were Peri Finkel, 2nd, Ava Pierce, 3rd, and Aris Braxton, 4th in the High School Division.
Support the Arts!

Our High School Theatre Departments are busy with their Spring Productions! Take some time to relax and enjoy the show while supporting our talented students!

Half Cent Sales Tax Update
Citizens’ Oversight Committee

A Citizens’ Oversight Committee was established by the School Board to review the progress of projects approved under the Half Cent Sales Tax and to ensure funds are expended as outlined in each school’s project list. The next meeting of the group is Tuesday, April 27th at 4:00 pm in the Niceville Administrative Complex. Significant work is already underway in the area of school safety, roofing, and planning and design for construction projects at existing school sites. For more information about meeting times, contact Jan Crawford at 833-5895 or Steve Horton at 689-7117.