

# OEF NEWS

Fall 2018



Holocaust storyteller - Judy Sima

## ESCAPE TO FREEDOM



Storyteller Judy Sima

The Okemos Education Foundation is dedicated to supporting excellence in the Okemos Public Schools. Excellence means outstanding academics. Excellence means innovative programs. Excellence also means helping students to better understand our world and to become solid citizens.

There are a number of examples of grants made and funds expended by the foundation that have had as their purpose bringing to life experiences that assist students to grasp real life issues that affect all of us and will affect them throughout their lives. In 2016 the foundation brought to Okemos individuals who were a part of the Emmet Till tragedy that helped spark the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s. In this way history was made real. It was, in a way, brought to life. Recently in 2018 the foundation made a grant that tackled another piece of history “**Escape to Freedom**”.

# ESCAPE TO FREEDOM

*continued...*



Chippewa students had the chance to learn WWII history through a moving personal story, as told by Michigan resident and professional storyteller, Judy Sima. Ms. Sima shared the personal experience of her parents who escaped Nazi Germany and moved to the United States in 1941, as well as the story of her grandparents and uncle, who perished in Auschwitz.

Chippewa Librarian, Cyndi Webster, and 8th grade Language Arts teacher, Kelly Cesar, received an OEF grant to help to cover costs to bring Ms. Sima to Chippewa. In their grant application the educators state “8th graders do a unit on the Holocaust every year. While they read a novel or nonfiction title about the Holocaust, having a person who has direct knowledge sharing her and her mother’s experience is a powerful and emotive way to bring that time period to life. Students get to experience, through storytelling, a powerful medium which is not just for younger ages.”

Listening to Ms. Sima’s personal experiences was an impactful experience for the students, as they show in their thank you notes to Ms. Sima:

*“Thank you for coming to speak at our school. You told the suspenseful story of your grandma. It really shared what one would have faced as a Jew in Nazi Germany.”*

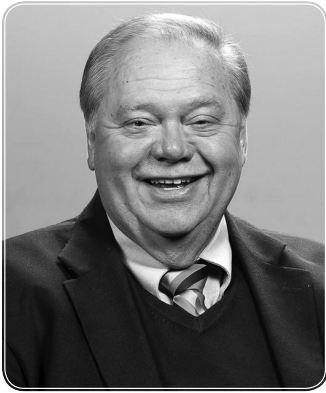
*“Dear Mrs. Sima, Thank you for sharing your mother’s story with us. I thought it was unique because it was in person and not a documentary. I am sorry for the loss of your uncle and grandparents. I am very happy that your mother and father made it to America. Someday I’ll go to Germany and see places with multiple perspectives.”*

*“I want to thank you for taking some time out of your day to visit our school and teaching us about your mother’s amazing story. Your presentation gave valuable insight that I otherwise wouldn’t have known.”*

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**OEF donors made these experiences possible. Please donate today to help the OEF fund more innovative educational opportunities for Okemos students.**

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# The Okemos Education Foundation Needs Your Support

From the desk of OEF Board Chair, **Ron Styka**

On November 15, 2018, the 22nd annual Okemos Education Foundation Awards Banquet was held at the Kellogg Center of MSU. About 250 parents, educators, community leaders and others attended the event, which has as its purpose the celebration of excellence in the Okemos Public Schools.

The Okemos Education Foundation—your Foundation—is all about excellence. It is dedicated to promoting, supporting, and recognizing excellence in the Okemos Public Schools. And, this year’s banquet was all about recognizing the excellence demonstrated by nine individuals, who are an important part of the Okemos Public Schools’ community.

Many years ago, Dr. Dan Wertz, who was serving as superintendent of the district and was one of the founders of the foundation, told me that the quality of education found in the Okemos School District came not just from outstanding educators, dedicated support staff, and professional administrators, but from parents, community members, and students themselves. This is reflected in the mission statement of the district: “Together . . . educating with excellence, inspiring learners for life.” The Okemos Education Foundation is dedicated to those same values. In awarding excellence among the staff and recognizing an outstanding alumnus, the foundation brought together the entire community to celebrate these values.

As occurs every year, attendees were treated to short videos highlighting the accomplishments of the award recipients. We also heard a keynote address by beloved superintendent Dr. Catherine Ash, who came back to manage the District, during the search for a

new superintendent. An inspiring leader, her words made a deep impression on those in attendance and helped make them ready to assist Okemos to continue down the path to excellence.

The Okemos Education Foundation could not host this event without the support of business, professional, and community sponsors who were listed in the dinner’s program and are listed on foundation’s website.

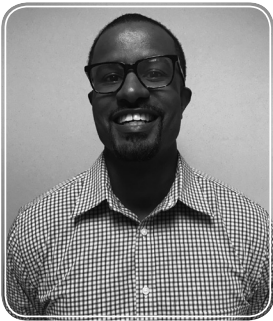
The foundation, however, is much more than an annual dinner, where awards are given to individual educators and support personnel. The foundation provides assistance to the classroom for programs and educational tools that help make Okemos the outstanding district that it continues to be. Hundreds of contributors, giving anywhere from \$25 to \$1000 (or sometimes more), have provided the foundation with resources that have allowed it to have spent over \$1,000,000 in support of excellence since its inception in 1984.

Please reflect on how you can provide assistance to the foundation. As you make your year-end contributions, please remember the Okemos Education Foundation. Your gifts will help support excellence in the classroom and throughout the Okemos District. They will help the District “educate with excellence” and “inspire learners for life.” Join us in being part of the Okemos “together.” The children of the Okemos community will be your legacy.

# 2018 Okemos Education Foundation Award Recipients

The OEF is pleased to announce the recipients of this year's awards for excellence, given to educators, support staff, community volunteers, and distinguished alumni who have made a significant impact on the Okemos school community. The awards were presented on November 15, 2018 at the Kellogg Center, MSU.

Learn more at [www.oefsite.org/2018banquet](http://www.oefsite.org/2018banquet).



**Ashley Abrams**, OHS Social Worker  
*Commitment to Excellence Award Recipient*

**Ashley** comes from a family background that has a history in mental health work. He became interested in helping others at a young age and decided to explore that as a profession during his Freshman year in college.

His work in the school system as a clinician began out of graduate school in the Detroit Public schools at the high school level. After that he moved back to the area and was an in home behavioral therapist in the Lansing area as well as working in Okemos public schools for the past 8 years. Ashley feels as if he's been blessed to be able to work with the teenage population as well as an amazing faculty and staff at Okemos. From coaching basketball to helping youth through volunteer work He has always been passionate about helping young people. Ashley spent his undergraduate years at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama and finished his graduate degree work at Wayne State University.

In his spare time He enjoys spending time with his family and friends, attending sporting events, playing golf, working out, and traveling nationally to places of interest.



**Michelle Beck**, Cornell Resource Teacher  
*Commitment to Excellence Award Recipient*

**Michelle** began as an intern in Okemos and is now in her 15th year of teaching for the district. She is a special education teacher at Cornell Elementary. Michelle has been a part of many committees throughout her teaching career including the School Improvement Team and Behavior Team. What she loves most about working in Okemos is the endless support from parents, co-workers and administrators.

She received her bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University in special education – Fire Up Chips! She also has her master's degree in elementary reading and literacy. She lives in Williamston with her husband, Jeremy and has two children, Emma (12) and Gavin (10).



**Adam Clements**, Hiawatha 4th Grade Teacher  
*Commitment to Excellence Award Recipient*

**Adam** is from Midland, Michigan, where he proudly attended public school. The foundational experiences of learning, self-discovery, and creativity, cultivated by brilliant and dedicated teachers, set his standard for excellence and sparked his passion for educating young people. He received both his Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education and Master of Arts in Teaching and Curriculum from Michigan State University and completed part of his Master's coursework in Cape Town, South Africa.

Adam teaches fourth grade at Hiawatha Elementary School. Known to his students as “Mr. C.,” he is inspired by the hardworking, friendly, and joyful atmosphere he and his students create in Room 430. This classroom family's kindness amazes Adam and drives his commitment to teaching.

Any glimmer of “Okemos excellence” others may see in Adam he attributes to the teamwork and friendship of his colleagues. They are his dream team and his therapy bench. His Hiawatha family works together to create the best possible learning opportunities for all their students.



**Sheri Gums**, Kinawa 6th Grade Math/Social Studies Teacher  
*Commitment to Excellence Award Recipient*

**Sheri** teaches 6th grade at Kinawa. This is her 15th year teaching for Okemos Public Schools. Sheri earned her bachelor degree from Central Michigan University, with a major in Mathematics and a minor in Geography. She also specialized in middle level education and earned her Middle Level Endorsement.

Sheri has spent all 15 of her teaching years working as a 6th grade teacher. She is passionate about making sure middle level students are taught using age and developmentally appropriate practices as well as ensuring that all students who enter her classroom are cared for and are safe to be themselves. She has also worked hard at revamping the TASK program and using a research-based organizational system with students who enter the program. Sheri absolutely loves this age group and is very thankful she is able to teach in such an amazing district with wonderful students and colleagues.

Sheri currently resides in Okemos with her husband Kevin and two daughters, Mackenzie and Kaylyn.



**Amanda Medina**, Kinawa Montessori Teacher  
Commitment to Excellence Award Recipient

**Amanda** is a 5th and 6th grade teacher in the Montessori program at Kinawa. She began her teaching career thirteen years ago at Kinawa as a 6th grade social studies teacher, after graduating from MSU. Amanda completed her Montessori training at the Michigan Montessori Teacher Training Center in Rochester, MI in 2008, before moving to Edgewood where she taught in a 4th and 5th grade classroom. She has since moved to the 5th-6th grade Montessori program where she teaches today. Amanda feels lucky to spend her days with curious little learners, and her dynamic teaching partner (and co-award recipient), Leslie Wertz.

Amanda became interested in the Montessori philosophy during college and truly believes in Dr. Montessori's sentiment that "Peace is what every human being is craving for, and it can be brought about by humanity through the child." When she is not at school, Amanda enjoys camping, reading, and spending time with her husband and three children.



**Leslie Wertz**, Kinawa Montessori Teacher  
Commitment to Excellence Award Recipient

**Leslie** is a 5th and 6th grade Montessori guide at Okemos Public Montessori at Kinawa. A proud graduate of Okemos High School, Leslie majored in mathematics and earned her teaching certificate from the University of Michigan. After graduation, Leslie and her husband, Nathan, settled in Mt. Pleasant where Leslie taught math at Shepherd Middle School. Moving home to Okemos for these high school sweethearts gave Leslie the opportunity to stay home for ten years with their three children; Dominic (14), Malia (12), and Lydia (8). Visiting potential kindergarten classrooms for her son, led Leslie to Okemos Public Montessori where her view of education and respect for the capability and curiosity of the child were transformed.

Leslie's greatest joy comes from her family. A close second would be the opportunity to observe, guide, and inspire students alongside her teaching partner and close friend, Amanda Medina. They know that the only way to truly make a difference is to establish community, set the stage, model concrete learning, support, and then carefully analyze and observe the magic that happens within the child.



**Lisa Bowen**, Kinawa Administrative Assistant  
Special Recognition Award Recipient

**Lisa** started her career in education at Ingham ISD Thorburn Center in 1977. She came to Okemos Public Schools in 1989 and have been here every since. Her first position was at Cornell working with Marge Clay. Later she transferred to Chippewa to work with Tom Tweedy and now she works at Kinawa with Steve Stierley. She is entering her 41st year in education.

*"I absolutely adore children and wanted to be in an environment that allowed me to have an impact on "teaching" kids. I am not a teacher but I love my role in the Principal's office which enables me to put on my "mom hat" and help kids who are struggling or just need a listening ear.*

Being a part of the Okemos Public Schools has been an absolute gift and she is extremely grateful for the opportunity to work in a community and district that values education and the well being of children. She is so proud to say that she has been with Okemos Public Schools for 29 of her 41 year career.



**Martha Hentz**, OEF Volunteer  
Dean Bolton Volunteer Service Award Recipient

**Martha** relocated to Okemos in 2008 along with her husband, Chris, and their two sons, Evan and Phill. She has enjoyed working on various volunteer projects in the district, including the Hiawatha Science Fair and the Okemos Music Patrons Spaghetti Dinner, has served on the PTO boards of both Hiawatha and Kinawa, and served four years on the Okemos District Parent Council.

Martha joined the OEF Board in 2013 and served as Board Chair from 2014-2018. She continues to advocate for public school funding through her role as Coordinator of the Michigan Education Foundation, a network of Michigan K-12 public school foundations.

Martha received an undergraduate degree from Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania and a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Washington in Seattle. She is grateful to her family for their support of her many volunteer projects and to the faculty, staff, and administrative team of the Okemos Public Schools for providing an exceptional education to all Okemos students, including her two sons who are now OHS students.



**Kerry Byrnes**, Class of 1963  
Distinguished Alumni Award Recipient

**Kerry** earned a B.A. in sociology (1967) and M.A. in communication (1968) from Michigan State University, and he pursued a career focused on reducing poverty in the developing world. On earning a Ph.D. in sociology (1975) from Iowa State University, he joined the International Fertilizer Development Center, working in the Agro-Economic Division to design research to identify incentives to motivate small-scale farmers in the developing countries to use fertilizers to increase their crop yields and income. In the Outreach Division, he developed, implemented, and evaluated fertilizer training programs conducted at headquarters and in various African and Asian countries. From 1984-1989 he was a consultant to various clients—World Bank (to assess Bank experience with Water Users Associations to improve irrigated rice yields in Pakistan); U.S. Agency for International Development (e.g., to assess USAID experience with Farming Systems Research and Extension Projects worldwide); and several consulting firms (e.g., The Pakistan Forestry Planning & Development Project).

Just prior to retiring, USAID honored Byrnes with the Administrator's Outstanding Career Achievement Award for exemplary contributions in agricultural development and TCB in Latin America and the Caribbean. Byrnes' 40+ year career providing technical leadership to development initiatives in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean contributed in no small way to the efforts of development agencies to strengthen the human resource, organizational, and institutional capacities of developing countries to more effectively address challenges to climate-smart agriculture, trade-led economic growth, rural poverty reduction, and sustainable development.

# GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

## Life Saving Lessons at Kinawa

**Did you ever think 5th and 6th graders could learn how to save lives at school?**

Due to a partnership between the OEF and the Kinawa Parent Group, Kinawa students had the opportunity to learn First Aid and CPR skills this year as part of a special exploratory class. Teacher Sheree Jungwirth is a licensed CPR instructor who created the class to allow 5th and 6th graders the opportunity to learn valuable lifesaving skills, including CPR and the use of an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) device. Students completed the American Red Cross Adult/Child/Infant CPR/First Aid/AED course during the class and had their new skills tested through both practical and written exams.

Meridian Township paramedics visited the class at the end of the session. Paramedics demonstrated their equipment and role-played what would happen during a real emergency. Students started CPR using an AED

device, then saw exactly what the paramedics would do when they arrive on the scene. “Early CPR is critical to a patient’s survival,” says Lieutenant Jeff Rommeck. “Chest compressions are important because they move blood around the patient’s core, delivering oxygen to the heart, lungs, kidneys, and brain.”

Paramedics also talked to the students about the information that a paramedic would need to know from them during an emergency situation and warned them about some aspects they might not have considered. “You may hear bones breaking or smell burning hair. That happens sometimes; just keep going until we get there to take over.”

This experience will hopefully give students the confidence to put their lifesaving skills to use, should they ever be faced with an emergency. “You are helping your community,” Lieutenant Rommeck told the students, “and you’re helping the fire department.”



*Paramedics demonstrating CPR and First Aid skills to Kinawa students*

## Electrophysiology: Active learning at OHS

Did you know that it's possible to control another person's movement with your brain?

OHS Biology teachers set out to show their students that this is indeed a reality.

OHS teacher Colleen Palmer requested an OEF grant to purchase three Human to Human Electrophysiology devices, equipment which allows users to see (and feel) how the human brain transmits messages through our neurons and give their students an active learning experience in the study of neuroscience.

Our brains constantly send electrical impulses to our neurons, telling them to perform everyday functions such as squeezing our hands or raising our arms.



*OHS science teacher Kelly Carrier and some of his AP Biology students using the equipment.*



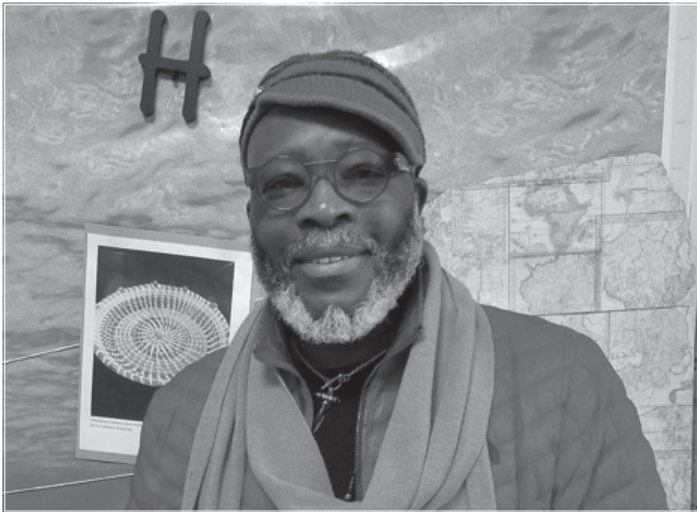
When hooked up to this new equipment, the brain's electrical impulses are detected, then amplified and transmitted to another person, causing that second person's arm to rise or fist to squeeze. Students were able to experience having their arm be controlled by the brain of their peer, making a memorable impression about the functionality of our neurons. Most students laughed during the experience. "This feels so weird!" was a common exclamation. A few disliked the sensation, but all left the lesson with a much clearer understanding of how our neurons, brain, and muscles work together.

Learn more about the projects and programs made possible by OEF funding at [www.oefsite.org/grants](http://www.oefsite.org/grants)

# GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

continued...

## Learning African American History through Art



Visual Artist Leroy Campbell

Visual artist, Leroy Campbell, visited Okemos High School to share his work and inspire students to be true to their authentic selves by finding their passions, being honest with themselves and others, and by nurturing connections with various people in their lives.

Campbell, a self-taught artist with a unique and easily-recognizable style, weaves history and affirmations into his boldly colorful, beautiful work. Learn more at [www.leroycampbelloriginals.com](http://www.leroycampbelloriginals.com)

The Okemos Education Foundation provided funding for Artist Leroy Campbell's visit through the OEF Micro Grant program.

## 2017-18 OEF TRUSTEES



**Back row:** Aly Boggs-Smitley, Karen Brown, Pratin Trivedi, Bidhan Redey  
**Middle row:** Lynne Thatcher, Sue Hallman, Shruti Nandani, Ron Styka  
**Front row:** Christena Simila, Donna Kregelka, Marna Wilson, Deborah Baughman  
*Not pictured:* Matthew Koehlex, Jennifer Hall-Berman, Sarah Wohlford, and Dr. Catherine Ash

How OEF donations are spent on our students...

**OEF Approved Funding:  
 2017-2018: \$70,621**

Approved Funding by Subject Area\*

Club Support:	\$43,115
Language Arts:	\$ 7,200
Other/Bldg.	
Improvements:	\$ 3,670
Commitment to	
Excellence Awards:	\$ 5,000
Fine Arts:	\$ 250
Math:	\$ 250
Physical Education:	\$ 665
Science:	\$ 6,375
Social Studies:	\$ 1,856
Special Education:	\$ 2,240

\*OEF funding varies each year, based on grant requests received by faculty and the generosity of OEF donors.



# A Commitment of Together

by **John Hood**, Superintendent- Elect

*“Alone We Can Do So Little.  
Together We Can Do So Much.”  
- Helen Keller*

As a twenty-three year public school employee for the Okemos schools, I have firsthand experience of the remarkable and unique connection between our schools and community. When I was a middle school teacher and drama director, collaboration was always only a request away, with the call for support being answered in every imaginable manner.

While serving as the principal of four of our schools, I witnessed the drive of tireless volunteers which resulted in remarkable additions and enormous value added for students and staff. You assisted the schools with academic support, volunteered in classrooms, provided extracurricular clubs, planned school auctions and carnivals, made anonymous donations, and so much more. And as remarkable as each of these experiences have been, it is even more remarkable just how common they are across Okemos, replicated by parents, guardians, and community members in every one of our schools, a multitude of departments, in so many different forms, with astonishing regularity.

From parent teacher groups to parent councils, from booster groups/patrons to the Okemos Education Foundation, and well beyond - our community demonstrates that our commitment of “togetherness” is truly the foundation of the Okemos Public Schools. Our district mission statement reinforces this notion in a very intentional manner as it prominently and powerfully states, “Together, educating with excellence, inspiring learners for life.” As a public school it is our mission to promote the welfare of all students in our community, and doing so together is the Okemos recipe for powerful, lasting results.

Okemos certainly has much to celebrate, but there is also much more we can do to solidify that our “together” indeed includes all.



As superintendent, I will work diligently to maintain and grow our “togetherness,” both strengthening bonds and advocating for change where needed. Implementation of the district’s equity plan will be a primary goal with continual focus on the identification of strengths and areas of need, implementing actionable strategies, and measuring our impact. If we are to truly commit to educating with excellence, this is indeed critical and urgent work. We will work to overcome challenges along the way, but it is the right work.

As valued members of the Okemos schools family, I welcome and invite you to assist in our collective journey in any way that you can - whether it is volunteering your time in a classroom or on a committee, taking the time to provide feedback about our successes and challenges, or supporting organizations like our parent groups, booster groups, and/or the Okemos Educational Foundation- as each action strengthens our core, our community, and our schools, making a genuine difference in the lives of our children.

I am truly excited to partner with you on this journey.

Together we will do so much.

# 2017-2018 OEF DONORS

(7/1/17 through 6/30/18)



The Okemos Education Foundation relies on financial donations in order to fulfill its mission. Thank you to our 2017-2018 Partners in Education for supporting Okemos students!

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# A Standing Ovation

by **Dr. Catherine J. Ash**, Interim Superintendent

As many of you know, effective July, 2017, I WAS retired. Not just retired, but HAPPILY retired! As I look back, I remember exactly how all of that changed. It was a warm, sunny day at the end of June, 2018 and I'm sitting in my Adirondack chair, reading a good book, when my cell phone rings. A familiar name appears on the screen, so I answer in anticipation of a little friendly banter. Instead, I was offered an opportunity that I just couldn't pass up, to rejoin all of you within the Okemos Public Schools community. My role would be "interim" superintendent. I genuinely appreciated that it sounded relevant, familiar and temporary.

While I was excited about returning to the district, I did have a bit of a dilemma. Upon my departure in 2017, I had made several commitments or promises.

## Never again...

- *will I obsess, lose sleep, have an upset stomach and/or break out in hives over the self-imposed pressure of delivering a speech in public!*
- *will anyone ever have to listen to me whine and lament over public speaking!*
- *will I have to obsess and worry about snow days, getting up at 4:30 a.m. to begin the decision making process and then call 5,000 homes and leave a message!*
- *will I have to wear a suit!*

I am usually a woman of my word. However, since my return, I have had to dust off my suits and dress appropriately. I have given two public speeches, whining and lamenting to anyone who would listen. Finally, on November 26th, it snowed heavily and we had "poor travel conditions throughout the district" resulting in a snow day message. So, not only did I fail miserably at retirement, I also broke a few of my promises along the way.

My original commitment to retirement and to "never again" behaviors just didn't matter. I was willing to accept responsibility for the misleading statements because I was being given the opportunity to rejoin the "together . . . educating with excellence". I really cannot capture the specialness of this place called Okemos or the magnitude of the positive impact that each of you has on the experience of our children. The inspirational book *Wonder*, written by R.J. Palacio (2012) caused me to reflect about this special place, our important work and the impact we have on not just the educational experiences, but really the life experiences of our children.

*Wonder* is about a young boy, Auggie Pullman who was born with a severe facial difference that prevented him from going to a public school until the 5th grade. He wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid, but some of his new classmates can't get past his extraordinary face. As the community struggles with differences and inclusion, creating challenging and emotional times, Auggie thrives because there were people in his life that illustrated and embraced the true nature of empathy, compassion, acceptance, inclusion, friendship, and ultimately kindness within and throughout a school community.

I believe this is exactly what makes Okemos Public Schools a special place. We do this "together" and you are an integral part of the "we" and the "together". We share a belief, a value, a passion and a commitment to enhancing the lives of children, ensuring they feel valued, loved and respected, promoting and ensuring their success now and into their futures. Whether you are a teacher, administrator, support staff, parent or guardian, student, board member, volunteer and/or Okemos Education Foundation donor, you are making a genuine and lasting difference in the lives of many.

R.J. Palacio puts it this way, "The things we do outlast our mortality." He continues, "It's what you've done with your time, how you've chosen to spend your days, and whom you've touched this year. That, to me, is the greatest measure of success." Using Auggie's voice he proclaims, "I think there should be a rule that everyone in the world should get a standing ovation at least once in their lives."

Based on this measure, you are a success! Through your actions, how you are spending your time is positively touching lives. You are valued and appreciated for who you are and all that you do. Like Auggie, I believe YOU deserve a standing ovation!

Thank you for the opportunity to rejoin all of you on this journey towards equity, inclusion and excellence, even if it was only for a brief time. I am confident you will continue spending your time positively touching the lives of our children and each other. After all, that's what defines this special place called Okemos.

Palacio, A.J. (2012). *Wonder*. New York: Random House.

# Ballot Proposal: May 7, 2019

This information was provided by Dr Ash & is included as a courtesy to the Okemos Public Schools.

Since October, 2017, the Okemos Public Schools has been engaging in an extensive and collaborative process to assess the current technology, security, facility and transportation needs throughout the district. In February of 2018, the superintendent presented a recommendation to the Board of Education that reflected the analysis and vision of the Technology, Security, Capital Outlay and Transportation Committee. The recommendation to the board included:

- **Capital Outlay** - Promote capital outlay purchases that will allow/promote flexible learning environments.
- **Personal Learning Devices** - Continue with district-provided personal learning devices for all K-12 students.
- **Transportation** - Purchase a total of thirteen (13) buses. This includes adding two (2) buses to our fleet and replacing eleven (11) buses over five years.
- **Air Conditioning** - Add air conditioning to locations where it doesn't currently exist. (Includes: Okemos Public Montessori at Central, Cornell Elementary, Hiawatha Elementary, Edgewood Early Childhood Center, Chippewa 7-8 School's fine arts wing and science area)
- **Purchases and Upgrades** - Purchase technology, security, capital outlay and other facility upgrades/renovations\* that represent areas of critical need.

*\*Note: Some of the critical facility upgrades/renovations were identified by the district's Leadership Council and presented to the Board in October, 2018.*

In October, 2018, the superintendent presented a recommendation to the Board of Education that reflected the further analysis and vision of the Facility Use/Site Committee (Part 2). The recommendation to the board included:

- **Elementary Capacity\*** - Add four classrooms and one specials classroom to Bennett Woods Elementary School to address elementary capacity issues.

*\*Note: Okemos Public Schools does not need to add a K-4 school to accommodate enrollments. Adding classrooms at an existing school, with minimal redistricting, allows the district to efficiently and effectively react to current enrollment trends over time.*

### District Focus 2021 and Beyond

Should enrollments continue to increase significantly over time, it is recommended that the district engage in a systematic, comprehensive, transparent and inclusive process that includes:

- Data collection - enrollment trends, neighborhood composition (children), other
- Review of research - educational programming and impacts

- Consider the following in the comprehensive analysis (not in priority order):
  - *Grade level configurations*
  - *Build a new school - Powell Rd. property; Wardcliff property*
  - *Reopen Wardcliff*
  - *Re-purpose Edgewood*
  - *Add additional classrooms to existing buildings*
  - *Make additional renovations to existing buildings*
  - *Other*
- Develop models: assigning neighborhoods; consider various grade level configurations
- Develop positives, challenges and associated costs
- Engage in community conversations: educate and seek feedback

After considering the work of the committees, the superintendent's recommendation, public feedback and the funding required to address these critical needs, on November 26th, the Board acted to pursue \$24.9 million through a six year bond term. This initiative would not increase the current millage rate of 7 mils, but instead will extend this millage rate for an additional three (3) years. In 2024-25, the millage rate would decrease to approximately five (5) mils.

This is both exciting and critical for the educational experiences of our students. You will be hearing much more about this important ballot initiative (May 7, 2019). Detailed information can be found on the district's website [www.okemosschools.net](http://www.okemosschools.net).

<b>Level 1 = Needs (Must have critical)</b>	
<b>Facility/Site Committee (Part 2)</b>	
Elementary Capacity	<b>\$3,538,107</b>
<b>Technology/Security/Capital Outlay/Transportation Report</b>	
Technology	\$9,704,700
Capital Outlay	\$3,144,410
Security	\$537,500
Transportation, Buses (13)	\$1,214,300
Air conditioning	\$2,175,000
Other	\$370,983
	<b>\$17,146,893</b>
<b>Leadership Council Recommendations</b>	
Additional facility upgrades/renovations <i>Includes but not limited to: fine arts, physical education, common bathrooms, fire alarm systems, parking etc. . .</i>	<b>\$4,215,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$24,900,000</b>

# APPLE Awards

The following Okemos staff members were honored with an APPLE Award from 7/2017 – 6/2018

## APPLE AWARD RECIPIENTS:

Ashley Abrams  
Joanna Adams  
Phil Aho  
Katie Alexander  
Melissa Allis  
Ashley Andersen  
Kimberly Anglin  
Catherine Ash  
Katie Atkins  
Mariana Austrins  
Mike Backus  
Lee Ballor  
Jennifer Baker  
Jim Banas  
Christine Batora  
Michelle Beck  
Claire Bellamy  
Shawn Belanger  
Julie Bellinger  
Tori Benton  
Nicki Berridge  
Caity Biermann  
Erin Binkley  
Susie Black  
Deb Borton-McDonough  
Lisa Bowen  
Mary Braun  
Doreean Brazier  
Erika Bridge  
Jora Brummette  
Dean Buggia  
Janet Campbell  
Karen Canestraight  
Nita Carpenter  
Kelly Carrier  
Tim Case  
Karen Casler  
Marsha Chance  
Dave Chapman  
Joy Chase  
Stacy Christensen  
Allison Cironi  
Bob Clark  
Derm Clarkin  
Deborah Clay  
Adam Clements  
Laura Cook  
Stacy Cook  
Gary Cooper  
Missy Cosby  
Josh Coty  
Morgan Counsellor  
Jamie Coy  
Kevin Culling

Nicole Dault  
Staci Davis  
Minda Derby  
Tiffany Dixon  
Kara Dokter  
Lauren Dombek  
Elizabeth Dreja  
Meredith Dwyer  
Jennifer Eddy  
Larry Erdman  
Cindy Erickson  
Alison Evenson  
Kathleen Eyra  
Denise Facione  
Ethan Falty  
Briana Fankhauser  
Darla Ferracciolo  
Ashleigh Fesko  
Trish Finnerty  
Sybil Ford  
Molly Francis  
Rachel Freeman-Baldwin  
Sarah Fricano  
Tara Fry  
Jennifer Garmon  
Trisha Garvey  
Elizabeth Gauthier  
Kathy Gibson  
Carolina Giraldo  
Abyssa Goeckel  
Erin Gould  
Hannah Greenberg  
Brian Guggemos  
Sheri Gunns  
Erin Gutierrez  
Jose Gutierrez  
Pancy Habba  
Adrienne Hagon  
Lisa Hall  
Andrea Hallead  
Allison Hamlin  
Kathy Herbert  
Brian Harrod  
Lindsay Harrod  
Brynn Hawks  
Sally Heisler  
Hannah Henry  
Jennifer Hendrix  
Tammy Hetfield



The **Okemos Education Foundation APPLE Award** offers families a way to publicly honor Okemos staff members who have touched the lives of their students. For a \$20 donation to the Foundation, the OEF will deliver a full-color, personalized 5x7 certificate that includes the specific reason why that person is being honored. This program is a win-win: it gives a “pat on the back” to our deserving staff and also provides needed donations to the OEF to fund programs for our students. APPLE Awards are available at any time of the year and can be ordered at [www.oefsite.org](http://www.oefsite.org).

**Thank you for your support!**

Julienne Mason  
Marilyn McCarthy  
Amanda McCristal  
Margie McJames  
Heather McNeilly  
Amanda Medina  
Anita Messerschmidt  
Melissa Miller  
Julie Mittan  
Susan Mlaker  
Andy Moore  
Eric Morrison  
Don Mowry  
Marian Murembya  
Tiffany Murray  
Denise Nelson  
Erica Nishon  
Amy Olivarez  
John Olstad  
Mya Pakonen-Zubal  
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**Make a Donation** Your contribution will help to enhance the education of all Okemos students.

**Sponsor an OEF program or event** Let the OEF help you advertise your generosity as you help the OEF support Okemos students. Learn more at [www.oefsite.org/business](http://www.oefsite.org/business).

**Purchase** an Okemos Education Foundation **APPLE Award** to honor an Okemos teacher or staff member.

**Leave a Legacy** Support Okemos students with a planned gift through your will or trust.

**Attend** the annual **OEF Awards Banquet** and enjoy a memorable evening as we celebrate educational excellence in our district.

**Volunteer** your time and talents. We need help with **development/fundraising, publicity, graphic design, and website support.**

**Follow** the OEF on **Facebook** or **Twitter** and help spread the word about the OEF.

Contact OEF Chair Ron Styka at [chair@oefsite.org](mailto:chair@oefsite.org) for more information.  
**Thank you!**

Visit [www.oefsite.org](http://www.oefsite.org) to support OEF



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