



## Otto-Eldred School District

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### Otto-Eldred Elementary School

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Nichole M. Garthwaite, Principal

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### Otto-Eldred Junior Senior High School

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Kaci L. Daniels, Principal

Colleen E. Storer, School Counselor

May 27, 2022

Otto-Eldred Community,

This time of year is always busy, but this year has had a few extra twists. Our sights are set on graduation for the Class of 2022 last day of school for students on June 4. Below is a summary of what is planned and what is expected as we look forward to the 2022-23 school year.

- We want to extend a HUGE Thank You to Jack Bell and the Eldred Water Authority for their responsiveness to water system issues in Eldred this past week. Maintaining a municipal water system is complicated and time consuming. Regulations control most aspects of this service which "tie your hands" in less-than-ideal circumstances. Our elementary was able to operate this week due to his and his team's efforts. We are hoping to get through the rest of the school year without further delays or cancellations.
- Summer programming will start the week of June 20<sup>th</sup>. Summer School lists are generated, and Summer Camp sign ups have been finalized. Our staff has prepared several fantastic activities for students to provide worthwhile extended learning opportunities. District staff will be in contact with families regarding any changes or requested transportation. Summer lunch will be served at both buildings during the weeks of summer school (June 20-July 21).
- With the tragic events that unfolded this week in Texas, all schools are reviewing safety plans and protocols. Our rural environment at Otto-Eldred complicates some planning efforts, especially without access to a local police force. Ensuring our exterior doors are secure and functioning, seamless communication and ongoing training are all part of our planning. We are pursuing additional technologies to aide in communication with first responders and will continue to coordinate with local municipalities to help support any level of school resource officer staffing. Our entire area is pursuing additional supports for mental health needs, however, finding and maintaining staffing is a major obstacle. Supporting mental health, securing physical plant and appropriate funding are at the forefront of our efforts.
- Our high school heating and ventilation upgrades began this month. Most areas of the high school will see new ventilation units, all installed with ionizing technology. Through a USDA grant, three sets of teleconferencing units will be installed. These will provide O-E the ability to share courses with other local districts and allow our high school students access to courses we are unable to offer. Most work will be done through the rear cafeteria parking lot. Access to most of the building will be limited this summer.

- Our elementary roof project will begin in June. This roof replacement will update the original roof from the 1990's building expansion. The rear parking lot area will be closed during the summer to allow for staging of roof work and materials. Summer programs will not be impacted by this work.
- Payment for both projects will be completed through proceeds from a bond sale. Our board and district staff have worked to establish revenue available to pay for this project without impact on our local community. Revenue to pay for old debt will pay for the new debt in a few years. Until then, funding has been identified to pay the extra debt cost. When complete, both buildings will be up to date with as much energy efficiency as possible. Our high school will see a much more consistent and comfortable learning environment, all year long.
- The 2022-23 school district budget will be finalized at the June school board meeting. Even with the new debt service to pay for our building projects, expenses increased only 1%. Unfortunately, we are still bound by limited revenues, most of which are determined at the State and Federal level. We are hopeful to see some increases, especially in the area of school safety. When the state finalizes their budget, we will have confirmed revenue figures.
- Administration is working through a few processes to identify and select candidates for open positions. With a few retirements, a new Life Skills Support classroom and a few staff members pursuing new opportunities, June will be busy with interviews. Our goal is to always maintain appropriate programming and classroom-level supports to be sure our students have every opportunity to grow and succeed.

After two years of focus on COVID, our hope is to focus on the growth of our students and opportunities. Our Agriculture Education program is off to a great start! Our high school students have access to more CTC and dual enrollment programs than ever before! Our elementary staff have successfully implemented a new language arts program and will be doing the same with math next year! Our aim is to help students reach their potential. We can do that with great staff and creative uses of resources. Until appropriate funding is provided, Otto-Eldred will be forced to continually make difficult decisions. This budget cycle, we were able to post-pone a decision to move to just one section at an elementary grade level. We will continue to be focused on opportunity but also balance what we can afford. Judgement on the School Fair Funding case will hopefully be announced this summer and will provide all students in Pennsylvania a victory through fair and equitable funding.

We have many great resources in our community. I look forward to seeing the growth and development in our students as well as in our municipalities. It is a privilege to work and raise a family in such a supportive community.

Sincerely,



Matthew D. Splain  
Superintendent

MDS/ss