

Letter from Our Principal

Welcome to Okatie Elementary School! The past year, 2018-19, was another “owlsome” year in the nest! Beta Club created the first ever school newspaper written by students. Fishing Club was started by Mr. Roberts; the members met at Sergeant Jasper Park to demonstrate their casting and catching abilities. Lastly, grades 3-5 piloted the Live School online behavior tracking program to increase positive recognition and rewards.

We continue to rank in the top 100 elementary schools in SC! We are currently ranked 95th out of 624 schools for 2018 according to School Digger. In addition, Bree Lauffer, Corey Patel, Jacqui German and Megan DeWeese received an Innovative Teacher Grant to start composting leftover lunch food to be used in the school garden as fertilizer. We placed first in the school district for Plaid About Reading. Two students received perfect scores in the Continental Math League, Emily Chiafolo and Kaden Claffy; two students were district winners for character awards, Maggie Maine and Ben McCullough; and two students won local Tutor Doctor’s Writing Challenge, McKenzie Merck and Isabella Walker. Parents Rhett and Jenni Livingston generously donated 41 Jacob’s Kits, so that now, every classroom has one. We are very proud, honored and humbled by our accomplishments and know that we could not do it without the support, effort and collaboration between home, school and community.

Parents, there are so many opportunities for you to become involved, including joining the Parent Teacher Organization led by Ellen Andreoletti and co-chair Jenn Parrott. PTO is responsible for our fundraisers, WINGS celebrations, field trip scholarships, uniforms and a multitude of family fun activities. The PTO, with parent support, raised over \$20,000.00 again this year! The board has decided to set aside \$8,000.00 from this year to add to profits for the next two years with plans to add additional playground equipment. We are very thankful for our “owlsome” PTO.

Parents are also encouraged to participate in the School Improvement Council chaired by Kira Swiger. The SIC is primarily responsible for monitoring progress of the Five-Year School Renewal Plan. This year, the SIC will help monitor the school safety plan, TSI (Targeted Support and Improvement) Plan and Live School. They will also help us monitor implementation of the state standards as well as our “Learning through Leadership” goals.

Special congratulations are extended to Amanda Hogshead, fourth grade teacher, our 2018-2019 Teacher of the Year; Kari Dollar, Kindergarten Paraprofessional, our Support Staff of the Year AND District Support Staff of the Year; and Nohemi Rodriquez, our Volunteer of the Year! All three are “owlstanding” members of the Okatie family.

At the start of the new school year, we will welcome new staff members. Jennifer Farmer, who took the past two years to be a stay-at-home mom, will join first grade. Teil Huggins and Taylor Cleland, former student teachers at OES will join second grade and Valencia King, also one of last year’s student teachers will join the fourth-grade team. One program will be transferred to us from Bluffton Elementary, an Early Childhood Special Education program with teacher, Kendra Dibble, from Shelburne, Vermont and paraprofessional,

Trina Mike, transferring to us from Bluffton Elementary. All are enthusiastic and eager to meet you!

This year in our yearly run/walk challenge, we are making two virtual stops. First, we will head to San Martin de los Andes, Argentina for the North Face Challenge and then on to Tokyo, Japan for the Summer Olympics. The roundtrip distance between Okatie, Argentina and Japan is 23,188 miles! Boys and girls walk each morning before school on the track or in the gym. Students are also required to walk around the track before playing during recess. They are expected to complete at least fifteen minutes of physical activity for homework. Start logging those miles, boys and girls. "Healthy habits that start young stay with you for life!"

Students in grades 3-5 will participate in the fourth year of the Connect to Learn Program. Students will be allowed to take laptops home after Back to School Night once their technology fee is paid and a contract signed.

Responsible learners arrive on time for instruction, complete their homework and classwork, follow procedures and stay in school all day!

Respectful learners treat themselves and others with respect. They share and help when needed, and they do the right thing even when no one is looking!

We continue to "Spread Our Wings and Learn New Things." I look forward to another exciting year at OES and want to thank you in advance for your support.

Yours in Education,

Jamie Pinckney, Principal