FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY

How are You Showing Kindness This Season?

This February, we want to celebrate the ways our families and students are spreading kindness in their homes, schools, and communities!

We invite you to share your stories of acts of kindness—big or small. Did your child help a neighbor shovel snow? Write a nice note? Did your family participate in a local food drive? Maybe someone in your community showed kindness to you, and you'd like to share how it inspired you.

Here is how to Participate:

Write a short description (2–3 sentences) about an act of kindness you or your child were involved in.

Send us a picture (optional) of your family in action or the impact of your kind gesture.

Submit your story throughout February to **hernandezm@oasd.org** Please list school your child attends.

We'll feature a selection of these heartwarming stories in our upcoming newsletter(s) to inspire others to spread kindness, too!

① PARENT UNIVERSITY

Details Coming in March 2025!

Parent University: Empowering Families for Success!
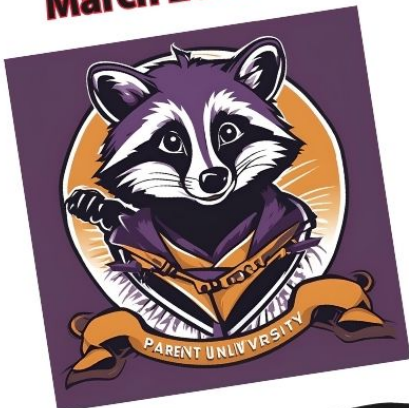
Who: PreK-12 grade Parents (Guardians)
When: Spring 2025
Topics:
1. Online Platforms - How to navigate school registration, skyward, canvas, seesaw, etc... all things technology!
2. Academics - What should students know at specific grade levels? How is your child fairing in this regard?
3. Communication tools

WORK IN PROGRESS

Oconomowoc Food Pantry proves food items to anyone in need residing within the Oconomowoc Area School District or who has an Oconomowoc mailing address. Photo ID and dated proof of current address is required upon every visit.

- They provide food items to Anyone in need residing within the Oconomowoc area School District or has an Oconomowoc mailing address.
- Service Visits are Two times per month

PANTRY HOURS

Tuesday and Thursday
1:30-2:30 / 6:30-7:30 pm
Saturday
9:30-10:30 am
PO Box 832
Oconomowoc WI, 53066

③ ATTENDANCE MATTERS

ATTENDANCE
in the early grades

Many of our youngest students miss 10 percent of the school year—about 18 days a year or just two days every month. Chronic absenteeism in kindergarten, and even preK, can predict lower test scores, poor attendance and retention in later grades, especially if the problem persists for more than a year. Do you know how many young children are chronically absent in your school or community?

Attendance Works
Advancing Student Success by Reducing Chronic Absence
www.attendanceworks.org

Who Is Affected

Kindergarten and 1st grade classes often have absenteeism rates as high as those in high school. Many of these absences are excused, but they still add up to lost time in the classroom.

1 in 10 kids
in kindergarten and 1st grade are chronically absent. In some schools, it's as high as 1 in 4.1

2 in 10
low-income kids miss too much school. They're also more likely to suffer academically.1

2.5 in 10
homeless kids are chronically absent.2

4 in 10
transient kids miss too much school when families move.2

[1] Chang, Hedy; Romero, Mariajose, Present, Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades, National Center for Children in Poverty: NY: NY, September 2008.
[2] Chronic Absence in Utah, Utah Education Policy Center at the University of Utah, 2012.

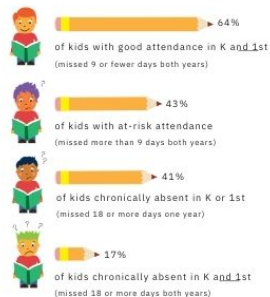To download a copy of this infographic, please visit www.attendanceworks.org.

Why It Matters

If children don't show up for school regularly, they miss out on fundamental reading and math skills and the chance to build a habit of good attendance that will carry them into college and careers.

Preliminary data from a California study found that children who were chronically absent in kindergarten and 1st grade were far less likely to read proficiently at the end of 3rd grade.

Who Can Read on Grade Level After 3rd Grade?3

→ **64%**
of kids with good attendance in K and 1st
(missed 9 or fewer days both years)

→ **43%**
of kids with at-risk attendance
(missed more than 9 days both years)

→ **41%**
of kids chronically absent in K or 1st
(missed 18 or more days one year)

→ **17%**
of kids chronically absent in K and 1st
(missed 18 or more days both years)

[3] Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Association with Student Characteristics, School Readiness and Third Grade Outcomes, Applied Survey Research. May 2011.

What We Can Do

Engage Families
Many parents and students don't realize how quickly early absences can add up to academic trouble. Community members and teachers can educate families and build a culture of attendance through early outreach, incentives and attention to data.

Fix Transportation
The lack of a reliable car, or simply missing the school bus, can mean some students don't make it to class. Schools, transit agencies and community partners can organize car pools, supply bus passes or find other ways to get kids to school.

Address Health Needs
Health concerns, particularly asthma and dental problems, are among the leading reasons students miss school in the early grades. Schools and medical professionals can work together to give children and families health care and advice.

Track the Right Data
Schools too often overlook chronic absence because they track average attendance or unexcused absences, not how many kids miss too many days for any reason. Attendance Works has free data-tracking tools.

These are a few steps that communities and schools can take. How do you think you can help?

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