

Olympia CUSD 16  
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Kevin Frazier, President  
Carolyn Hansen, Vice President  
Steve Matter, Secretary  
Lynn Cross  
Shawn Hohulin  
Doug Maris  
Mary Springer

# OLYMPIA CUSD 16 WINTER NEWSLETTER 2021

Winter 2021

## New Athletic Conference 2022-2023

Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, Olympia High School will begin competing in the Sangamo Conference, which includes the following schools: Illini Central, New Berlin, Athens, Petersburg PORTA, Maroa-Forsyth, Auburn, Riverton, Pleasant Plains, Williamsville, and Pittsfield (for football only). The average travel distance to these schools is 1 mile less than our current travel distance in the Illini Prairie Conference.

The Sangamo Conference only requires each team to play its conference foes one time per season, which allows us to continue to schedule games against our traditional rivals from the Illini Prairie Conference, and allows us more flexibility in our schedule than we currently have.

When we join the Sangamo Conference, we will be the largest school, with regards to enrollment, in the conference. The conference has a rich history of success at the state level and we are excited to be able to add to the success of the conference.



## Academic Growth & Achievement 2020-2021

National experts made projections last summer regarding the learning loss of students given the remote learning that occurred March - May, 2020. After students returned this fall, it became apparent that the learning loss wasn't as bad as experts had projected. In fact, based on national data, students lost very little ground in English Language Arts but a larger drop was seen in Math scores around the country. Olympia did see more grade levels (K-8) meet the winter benchmark scores in reading than in math. We are offering after school interventions to students that need additional support.

**Our seniors SAT scores were the highest we have seen since we have been giving the SAT.** The District mean score was a 1022 and the College Board readiness benchmark is 1010. Congrats to the Class of 2021!

## KEY DATES

March 5 - No Student Attendance  
April 2 - No School (Board Holiday)  
April 5 - No School (PT Conf Waiver Day)  
April 26 - No School  
May 5 - Early Release Day  
May 23 - OHS Graduation  
May 24 - OMS Promotion  
May 27 - Last Day of School; ½ Day

## Fall OHS Cross Country Celebrations

**Boys Cross Country** - Our boys cross country team secured the Regional Championship for the third year in a row and the Sectional Championship for the 2nd year in a row! The team was led by seniors Charlie Kistner (school record holder) and Logan Wheeler and juniors, Owen Dare, Carter Phillips, Lucas Lawless, Anthony Ragland and Alec Pfeffer.

**Girls Cross Country** - Our girls team placed third at the Regional Meet and secured 2nd Place at Sectionals. Leading the way for the girls were Savannah Beavers (2nd place finish) and individual medalist Abby Litwiller. Rachel Andris, Maddie Litwiller, Chrystal Cornwell, Cam Lawson and Emily Litwiller contributed to the 2nd place finish.

**Congratulations to Coach Mike Neisler on his retirement!** Coach Neisler has led Olympia Cross Country teams for 31 years! He was part of 9 regional titles, 6 sectional titles and has qualified for the State meet 24 times. He has brought home 3 state trophies in 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and 2019-2020. Thank you Coach Neisler for all you have done for the program and for our student athletes!

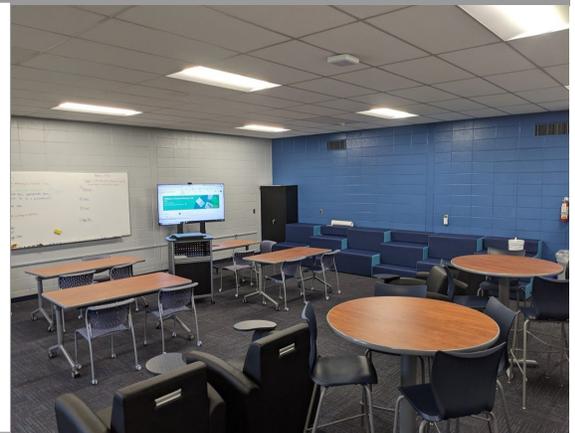
# Olympia South Addition & Renovation

Olympia started a facilities study during the 2018 -2019 school year. After soliciting input from parents, community members, and students, the Board of Education prioritized facility upgrades for the District. The first priority for the District was the Olympia South facility in Atlanta. Due to growth and diverse needs at South, additional space is a necessity. Olympia has worked closely with the City of Atlanta to coordinate municipal work that needs to be done and that will ultimately benefit both the residents of Atlanta and the school district. Groundbreaking will be in March, 2021. Interior upgrades, including restrooms in the Kindergarten and Pre K classrooms, will begin this summer as part of Phase I. A new gymnasium will also be added in Phase I. Phase II includes converting the current gymnasium into flexible learning space, redesigning the main office area, creating a new staff work area and an additional classroom for small groups or interventions. The Olympia South project is scheduled to be complete by Fall, 2022.



## Additional Facilities Upgrades

One of the priorities of the facility study was simply updated rooms and furniture that reflects the type of learning we now know is best for our students. We started our room makeovers at OHS and selected a business classroom to overhaul. New light, furniture, paint and flooring transformed this space. We will begin to tackle a few classrooms each summer so that updates are able to happen throughout OHMS as much of the space (and some furniture) is close to 50 years old. The middle and high school science classrooms will be refreshed this summer.



*The District will send a newsletter each Winter and Summer to residents. To learn more about all the exciting educational activities happening inside our schools, visit [www.olympia.org](http://www.olympia.org). You can also follow the news on Facebook and Twitter. Find your building accounts @ [bit.ly/ConnectWithOly](https://bit.ly/ConnectWithOly)*

# Get to Know Your School Board Candidates

We have five candidates running for four open board seats in the April 6, 2021 School Board Election: Shawn Hohulin (Minier) Doug Maris (Atlanta), Steve Matter (Covell-write in candidate), Mary Springer (Hopedale) and new board candidate, Justin Dietrich (Minier). Each board candidate was asked to answer some questions to help the community to better familiarize themselves with each candidate.

*What talents, skills and insights would you bring to the Board?*

**Shawn:** As a Christian, father and veterinarian the skills I bring are my faith, love and background in science and higher education.

**Doug:** I hope to utilize the skills of listening, synthesizing and strategic thinking.

**Steve:** Open-minded and willing to work with others to improve the education of our kids.

**Mary:** In addition to being a parent, I am a local 4-H leader. I encourage youth to hone skills such as responsibility and leadership. I have degrees in communication and education.

**Justin:** I like helping to solve problems and issues that may arise. As an educator, I will bring some insight from my experience as a teacher and coach.



*Why did you decide to run for the school board?*

**Shawn:** Shortly after the Sandy Hook shootings, I was asked to consider running for the school board. I was interested so I ran.

**Doug:** To support Dr. Laura O'Donnell and provide governance continuity during her ongoing transition to leading our district.

**Steve:** I want to be a voice in the Olympia community and to help with the educational process.

**Mary:** A board member needed to be seated in 2019 when a seat became vacant. I was asked to consider joining the board and I accepted. For the past two years I have tried to learn as much as possible as it relates to the Olympia school district. Currently I am serving on the Ed-Tech and Equity Committee.

**Justin:** So that I can be a part of the conversations and decisions that will be made over the next few years. As a father of two boys who will be attending in the district, and as a community member, I believe I'll be able to bring a perspective that will be helpful for young families who live in the district.

*What are the two most important issues facing the Olympia District?*

**Shawn:** Continuous decrease in state funding and the challenges related to being a geographically large district.

**Doug:** Understanding, impacting and responding to social determinants of a healthy education; recruiting, cultivating, and retaining exceptional teachers who inspire students.

**Steve:** Funding & enrollment decline

**Mary:** School safety is always a concern; addressing student learning gaps

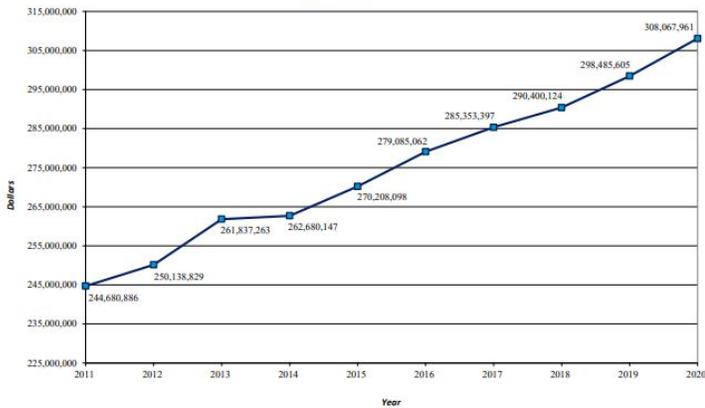
**Justin:** Preparation of our graduates for success after high school; addressing challenges we face due to being a small, rural district.

# District Financial Updates

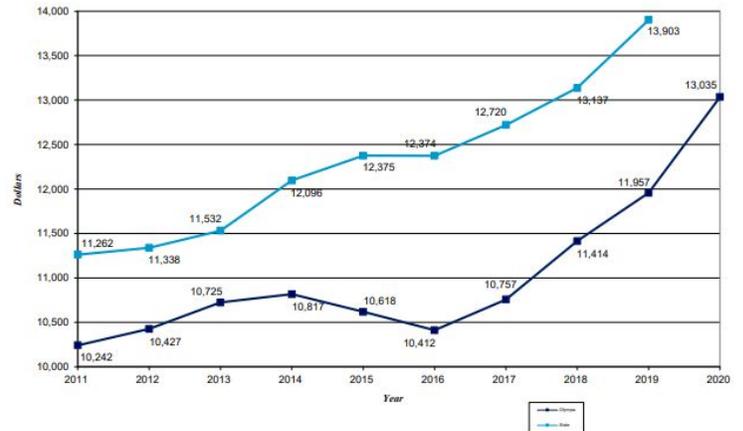
Annually, school districts around the state receive a Financial Profile Designation. The state assigns a designation based on multiple financial indicators. Olympia has consistently scored in one of the top two categories. The district scored in the second highest category which is known as Financial Review based on the 2020 audit results. We would like to thank the Board of Education for being responsible stewards of the district's finances.

In December, the school board approved the Tax Levy, which sets the property tax rate for the upcoming year. The Olympia School Board approved keeping the tax rate flat for the taxpayers, which has been the case since 2016. Although there has been some significant COVID related expenses this year, the district has been able to offset those costs through the federal CARES grant funds. Additional revenue will also be generated this year as our equalized assessed property value within the district continues to go up. Most of this EAV increase is due to increased value of farmland. See image below of our EAV rates over the past few years. You can also see below Olympia's operating expenses per pupil as compared to the state average. This data was shared as part of the annual district audit.

**Olympia Community Unit School District No. 16**  
Assessed Value



**Olympia Community Unit School District No. 16**  
Comparative Estimated Operating Expense Per Pupil



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