

Octorara Area Junior/Senior High School

Octorara Area Junior & Senior High School – Grades 7-12

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September 16, 2021

Greetings Octorara Families-

First and foremost, let me say thank you for your support and understanding as we began the school year with a staggered start. We had the opportunity to meet with almost every grade level to discuss expectations for the year. Unfortunately, Hurricane Ida had other ideas for the senior class and we will be meeting with them sometime next week. As I plan to share at the next board meeting, I will admit we have some work to do when it comes to changing the climate and culture of the building. The last two years have certainly had an impact on our students. It is noticeable both in and outside of the classroom. That said, it is so wonderful to see our students in person every day again.

The purpose of this communication is to provide you with some information about some of our upcoming events and make you aware of one very important change to the district calendar. I will start with the change. Next week the Octorara Junior-Senior High School Back to School Night will be one event only. While the district calendar states there will be separate events for the Junior High and Senior High, there is only one. All parents of students in grades 7-12 are invited to attend our Back to School Night on Thursday, September 23rd. The format will also be a little different than in previous years. At 6 pm, all parents are invited to attend an informational meeting in the auditorium. Beginning at 6:30 pm, parents will be able to visit their student(s) classrooms. Rather than parents following their child's schedule and going from class to class to hear short presentations from teachers, we have planned a more informal 'meet and greet.' The purpose is to give parents a chance to meet and talk with teachers at their own pace. There will be no rush to traverse a large campus to find a classroom only to miss a presentation. Teachers will provide information about the classes they teach and will be available to answer any questions. The evening will then close at 8 pm. We encourage everyone to attend.

Another important event takes place the following week. Homecoming is back! We are extremely excited to announce that Homecoming week is full speed ahead for the Senior High. The whole week will be full of Brave Pride as we

celebrate Spirit Week. On the morning of Friday, October 1st, Octorara will welcome its newest members of the academic and athletic hall of fame. That evening we will have the Homecoming parade beginning at 6 pm on our campus followed by our varsity football game versus Columbia High School. Saturday, October 2nd brings a full slate of athletics. We will end our festivities with the Homecoming dance on Saturday night.

On October 14th and October 21st, the Junior-Senior High School will hold parent conferences. Both of these events will be held virtually. We have found there is a lot more participation when parents are able to attend conferences remotely. We want to continue this practice for at least another year. Finally, we are in the planning stages of possibly bringing Family Fun Night back at the end of October but that decision has yet to be made. We are hoping that we might be able to hold this event but as with all of these events, we will be monitoring the pandemic to make sure we can safely hold it.

In closing, let me share that while I am very aware that the political landscape has been tougher to navigate recently, I want you to know that our faculty and staff have not deviated from our focus on what matters the most...our students. We know Covid-19 still continues to have an impact on our community. We also know the mask mandate issued by the Secretary of Health has created controversy. However, it is important for me to share that our students, faculty, and staff must comply with the mandate. If you, as a parent or guardian, do not feel comfortable with the mandate as it pertains to your student(s), then I encourage you to follow the steps to be considered for a mask exemption as outlined by our Superintendent, Dr. Orner. I thank you for your continued support of Octorara Junior-Senior High School and look forward to working with you throughout the school year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan D. Propper". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jonathan D. Propper Ed.D.
Principal