2022-23
Annual Report
#OconeeStrong
FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The members of the Oconee County Board of Education are honored to work collectively and individually in service to the state’s No. 1 county school district.

On the following pages, readers will note a lengthy list of honors assembled by our schools, administrators, faculty, staff, and students. While we are proud of the recognitions, we are prouder still of the daily victories on our campuses. Our schools foster a rigorous and connective learning environment, fortified by a respectful and positive culture. We are committed to excellence in each facet of a student’s educational experience.

As we embark on 2023-24, we do so excited for what lies ahead, including the opening of Dove Creek Middle. We believe with motivated students, excellent teachers, engaged parents, dedicated support staff and leaders, and strong community partners that this will be our greatest year ever.

Thanks to all of Oconee County for what you do to make our district so strong!

Sincerely,

Kim Argo, Board Chair
Amy Parrish, Board Vice Chair
Tim Burgess
Ryan Hammock
Michael Ransom

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

We, in Oconee County Schools, are pleased to provide a world-class education with a small-town feel. At the core of our efforts is the belief that we must put our students first. It is what our children deserve and what our community expects. We embrace our mission, knowing it is the only way to produce the outcomes desired for our students.

I am excited to welcome our students back to engaging and safe learning environments where they can set – and exceed – their goals. Our outstanding teachers offer singular experiences where students may thrive and excel. Leaders and support staff members are in place to assist. We are blessed to have such active parents – our most important partners – who are vital to our success. We acknowledge the roles of local law enforcement, non-profits, higher education institutions, and businesses, all of which make Oconee County a special place to call home.

Thank you for your continued support of our schools and our community. It is my honor to lead our incredible school system.

Sincerely,

Jason L. Branch, Ph.D.
The Class of 2023 was offered nearly $4 million in scholarships (excluding HOPE and the Zell Miller Scholarship) and was accepted to the following colleges and universities, along with the Army, Marines, and Navy.

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College
Adelphi University
Agnes Scott College
Albany State University
Anderson University
Andrew College
Appalachian State University
Arizona State University
Athens Technical College
Auburn University
Augusta University
Augusta University
Bennington College
Berea College
Berklee College of Music
Berry College
Brenau University
Clemson University
Coastal Carolina University
Coe College
College of Charleston
College of Coastal Georgia
Columbia University
Columbus State University
Cornell College
Cornell University
Duke University
Duquesne University
Eckerd College
Embry Riddle Aeronautical University
Emmanuel College
Emory University
Florida State University
Fort Valley University
Furman University
George Mason University
George Washington University
Georgetown University
Georgia College and State University
Georgia Gwinnett College
Georgia Highlands College
Georgia Institute of Technology
Georgia Military College
Georgia Southern University
Georgia Southwestern State University
Georgia State University
Harvard University
High Point University
Jacksonville State University
John Cabot University
Kansas State University
Kennesaw State University
LaGrange College
Lanier Technical College
Lee University
Leeds Beckett University
Liberty University
Louisiana State University
Maryville College
Mercer University
Middle Tennessee State University
Mississippi State University
Montclair State University
Mount Holyoke College
New York University
North Carolina State University
North Georgia Technical College
North Greenville University
Oglethorpe University
Ohio State University
Oxford College at Emory University
Pennsylvania State University
Pepperdine University
Piedmont University
Presbyterian College
Purdue University
Reinhardt University
Rollins College
Rutgers University
Samford University
Santa Fe College
Sarah Lawrence College
Savannah College of Art and Design
Seattle University
Seton Hall University
Snead State Community College
South Florida State College
South Georgia State College
Southern Methodist University
Southern Union State Community College
Spalding University
St. John’s University
St. Olaf College
Stetson University
Texas A&M University
Thomas Aquinas College
Toccoa Falls College
Towson University
Truett McConnell University
United States Air Force Academy
United States Military Academy of West Point
United States Naval Academy
University of Alabama
University of Alabama-Birmingham
University of Arkansas
University of California-Berkeley
University of California-Davis
University of California-Los Angeles
University of California-Merced
University of California-Riverside
University of California-Santa Barbara
University of Central Florida
University of Colorado-Boulder
University of Delaware
University of Florida
University of Georgia
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
University of Illinois-Chicago
University of Kansas
University of Kentucky
University of Maine
University of Massachusetts
University of Miami
University of Michigan
University of Mississippi
University of Missouri Kansas City
University of Montana
University of New Hampshire
University of North Carolina - Asheville
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
University of North Georgia
University of North Carolina Oconee
University of Notre Dame
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania
University of Rhode Island
University of South Carolina
University of South Carolina at Aiken
University of Southern California - Los Angeles
University of Tennessee
University of Tennessee-Chattanooga
University of the Cumberlands
University of Utah
University of Valley Forge
University of Vermont
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of West Georgia
University of Wisconsin-Madison
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Valdosta State University
Virginia Commonwealth University
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Virginia Tech
Wake Forest University
Wesleyan College
Western Carolina University
Winthrop University
Wofford College
Young Harris College
ABOUT OCONEE COUNTY SCHOOLS

#OCONEESTRONG

SCHOOLS
12 Total
+ 6 Elementary
+ 3 Middle
+ 2 High
+ 1 Primary

STUDENTS
8,547 Total
+ Gifted - 23.7%
+ Special Needs - 12.0%
+ ESOL - 3.1%
+ Native Languages - 33
+ White - 79.7%
+ Hispanic - 6.6%
+ Asian/Pacific Islander - 6.0%
+ Multiracial - 4.3%
+ Black - 3.4%

EMPLOYEES
1,130 Total Full Time
+ 722 Certified
+ 408 Support Staff

BUDGET INFORMATION
5/5 Financial Star Rating
+ Operating Budget: $105,970,180
+ Local Revenue: $48,155,657
+ State Revenue: $55,695,786

PER PUPIL EXPENDITURES
#1 Financial Efficiency
In Georgia
+ Oconee - $10,497
+ Barrow - $11,302
+ Oglethorpe - $12,260
+ Jackson - $12,842
+ Clarke - $17,007

MILLAGE RATE
One Of The Lowest
In Northeast Georgia
+ Oconee - 15.0
+ Jackson - 16.576
+ Oglethorpe - 16.65
+ Barrow - 17.881
+ Clarke - 18.8

GRADUATION RATE
Highest Rate In The State
Among Systems With 300+
Graduates
+ Oconee (2022) - 97.9%
+ Georgia - 84.1%

DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES
45.1% Of Seniors Participated
+ 1,115 courses taken by students

SAT ACHIEVEMENT
Ranked #3 County System
In Georgia
+ Oconee (2022) - 1147
+ Georgia - 1052
+ U.S. - 1028

ACT ACHIEVEMENT
Ranked #4 County System
In Georgia
+ Oconee (2022) - 23.8
+ Georgia - 21.6
+ U.S. - 19.8

POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT
Class Of 2023
+ Nearly $4 million offered in scholarships (excluding HOPE and Zell Miller)
+ Institutions of higher learning to which students were accepted - 160
+ Military Branches - 3

TRANSPORTATION
1,079,017 - Total Miles Driven
+ 985,742 - total route miles
+ 93,275 - total field trip miles
+ 5,476 - route miles daily

NUTRITION
663,782 Total Meals Served
+ 511,982 total lunches served
+ 151,800 total breakfasts served
+ 3,688 meals served daily
6 BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE
+ Dove Creek Elementary School
+ High Shoals Elementary School
+ Malcom Bridge Elementary School
+ Rocky Branch Elementary School
+ Malcom Bridge Middle School
+ North Oconee High School

1 U.S. DEPT. OF EDUCATION NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL
+ High Shoals Elementary School

1 STEAM-CERTIFIED SCHOOL
+ Rocky Branch Elementary School

1 STEM-CERTIFIED SCHOOL
+ Colham Ferry Elementary School

1 NATIONAL SCHOOL OF CHARACTER
+ Rocky Branch Elementary School

2 GREATSCHOOLS COLLEGE SUCCESS AWARDS
+ North Oconee High School
+ Oconee County High School

2 ADVANCED PLACEMENT SCHOOLS OF DISTINCTION
+ North Oconee High School
+ Oconee County High School

EXEMPLARY SCHOOL BOARD
+ One of the top designations from the Georgia School Boards Association

TOP 20 PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN GEORGIA
As ranked by Niche
District:
+ #1 Oconee County Schools

Elementary School Level:
+ #1 Dove Creek Elementary School
+ #6 Oconee County Elementary School
+ #7 Malcom Bridge Elementary School
+ #18 High Shoals Elementary School
+ #19 Rocky Branch Elementary School

Middle School Level:
+ #7 Malcom Bridge Middle School
+ #13 Oconee County Middle School

High School Level:
+ #11 North Oconee High School

1 TITLE I DISTINGUISHED SCHOOL
+ High Shoals Elementary School

SPORTS YEAR IN REVIEW
North Oconee High School:
+ 5 State Championships
+ 3 State Runners-Up
+ 3 Final Four Appearances
+ 10 Region/Area Championships
+ 29 Sports Qualified for State Playoffs
+ 6 Individual State Championships

Oconee County High School:
+ 2 State Championships
+ 5 State Runners-Up
+ 3 Final Four Appearances
+ 9 Region/Area Championships
+ 23 Sports Qualified for State Playoffs
+ 12 Individual State Championships
POINTS OF PRIDE

-Colham Ferry Elementary School

+ 5-Star School Climate Rating
+ Positive Behavior Intervention Support Operational School
+ Oconee County School District Special Education Preschool Program
+ More than $10,000 awarded in grants for literacy materials, agricultural initiatives, and math resources
+ Agricultural programming and outdoor learning spaces
+ College and Career Ready Performance Index content mastery score of 99.4
+ Student Leadership Development Program with more than 100 participants

Dr. Katherine Brown
Principal

-Dove Creek Elementary School

+ Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School of Excellence
+ 5-Star School Climate Rating
+ Positive Behavior Intervention Support Operational School
+ National Beta School of Distinction for achievement, character, leadership, and service
+ College and Career Ready Performance Index content mastery score of 90.5
+ World-class PTO and community partnerships
+ Strong emphasis on high student engagement and positive school culture
+ Wide variety of student club offerings
+ $8,500 in Walton EMC EmPOWERment grants

Dr. Grace Staniszewski
Principal
HIGH SHOALS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

OCONESCHOOLS.ORG/HSES  @HIGHSHOALS_HAWK

POINTS OF PRIDE

+ 2-time Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School of Excellence
+ Student Support Team Association of Georgia Educators Promising Practices Award Winner for Multi-Tiered System of Supports
+ 5-Star School Climate Rating
+ Positive Behavior Intervention Support Operational School
+ Title I Distinguished School
+ No. 18 public elementary school in Georgia as rated by Niche
+ College and Career Ready Performance Index content mastery score of 99.5
+ Hawk Ambassador Student Leadership Program
+ 2023 Georgia United Credit Union School Crashers Grant
+ $8,200 awarded in Walton EMC School EmPOWERment grants

Ms. Jennifer Whitaker
Principal

MALCOM BRIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

OCONESCHOOLS.ORG/MBES  @MBES_EAGLES  @MBESEAGLES

POINTS OF PRIDE

+ No. 7 public elementary school in Georgia as rated by Niche
+ College and Career Ready Performance Index content mastery score of 99.8
+ 5-Star School Climate Rating
+ Positive Behavior Intervention Support Operational School
+ Diversity Night celebrating students from 13 different nations
+ GYSTC Don Cargill STEM Scholar
+ Multiple partnerships with Malcom Bridge Middle and North Oconee High schools

Ms. Jennifer Haygood
Principal
POINTS OF PRIDE

- 5-Star School Climate Rating
- College and Career Ready Performance Index content mastery score of 97.7
- Project-based learning units for all grade levels, including second grade’s Little Chief Marketplace that generated $2,750 to benefit a local organization
- Several opportunities in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) in such areas as art, gardening, robotics, and problem solving
- Outdoor classroom spaces, gardens, and educational trail and sensory spaces
- Recipient of both the Georgia Department of Education Fine Arts Consumables and Equipment Grant (FACE) and the Health and Physical Education Equipment (HPEG) grants, along with more than $11,300 in Walton EMC EmPOWERment grants

Ms. Shelby Hilley
Principal

Ms. JENNIFER LAUGH RIDGE
Principal

POINTS OF PRIDE

- College and Career Ready Performance Index content mastery score of 94.5
- STEM classes for all students
- Several collaborations with the University of Georgia, including hydroponics and a STEM field trip to Dooley Field at Sanford Stadium
- Student Support Team Association of Georgia Educators Star Award finalist
- Individual state and regional medalists in science, math, and technology competitions
- Young Georgia Authors fifth-grade regional champion
- Extracurricular clubs, including academics, chess, music, running, art, and gardening
- Teen Oconee mentorship program
- Participant in Raise Craze, focusing on random acts of kindness
ROCKY BRANCH
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
OCONESCHOOLS.ORG/RBES  ✔️ ✔️ @RBESROCKETS

POINTS OF PRIDE

✦ No. 19 public elementary school in Georgia as rated by Niche
✦ College and Career Ready Performance Index content mastery score of 100.0
✦ National School of Character
✦ $12,000 awarded in Walton EMC EmPOWERment grants
✦ Environmental Service Learning - Monarch Butterfly Conservation, Composting, Campus Beautification
✦ GYSTC Don Cargill STEM Scholar
✦ Regional and state technology competition participation
✦ Science Olympiad Team competing at regional and state levels
✦ Outdoor learning spaces
✦ Schoolwide Career Day representing CTAE career pathways

Ms. Sara Johnson
Principal

DOVE CREEK
MIDDLE SCHOOL
OCONESCHOOLS.ORG/DCMS  ✔️ @DCMS_KNIGHTS

POINTS OF PRIDE

✦ Groundbreaking took place on Jan. 27, 2022, and the ribbon-cutting ceremony occurred on July 17, 2023
✦ Students and faculty voted on the school mascot, with “Knights” emerging as the winner
✦ Elementary and middle students making up the first classes signed a steel beam that will be on display in the main hallway
✦ 156,000 square feet and can house up to 1,000 students
✦ 60 instructional units, including classrooms, science labs, art and music rooms, a media center, and gymnasium
✦ State-of-the-art greenhouse and agriculture facility
✦ Offering all sports, activities, and clubs in Year 1

Mr. Mike Eddy
Principal
MALCOM BRIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
OCONESCHOOLS.ORG/MBMS @MALCOMBRIDGEMS

POINTS OF PRIDE
+ College and Career Ready Performance Index content mastery score of 96.2
+ 100% content mastery in sixth through eighth math and eighth social studies in Georgia Milestones
+ Beta Club recognized as a Distinguished Program
+ 4 Region sports titles
+ Blue Ribbon School of Excellence
+ $5,000 in Walton EMC EmPOWERment grants
+ Seventh- and eighth-grade chorus named Superior — the highest rating — in Large Group Performance Evaluation
+ Band was one of three statewide chosen for a feature performance at UGA and was the leader in district honor members for the fifth straight year
+ All band ensembles earned Superior ratings from the Georgia Music Educators Association for the seventh consecutive year

Ms. Kristin Harrison
Principal

OCONEE COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL
OCONESCHOOLS.ORG/OCMS @OCONEECOUNTYMS

POINTS OF PRIDE
+ College and Career Ready Performance Index content mastery score of 95.3
+ No. 13 public middle school in Georgia as rated by Niche
+ Student Support Team Association of Georgia Educators Star Award for Promising Practices
+ OCMS Student Ambassadors
+ Host site for the Greater Athens Area Relay for Life
+ Newly completed outdoor classroom sponsored by community business partners
+ AAC championships in boys and girls soccer
+ $2,300 in Walton EMC EmPOWERment grants
+ State championships in FFA Poultry Evaluation and Meats Evaluation

Mr. Matt Stephens
Principal
POINTS OF PRIDE

**NORTH OCONEE HIGH SCHOOL**

+ College and Career Ready Performance Index content mastery score of 92.9
+ No. 11 public high school in Georgia as rated by Niche
+ 5 state championships, 6 individual state championships
+ Ranked in top 5 percent of schools nationwide by U.S. News and World Report
+ Ranked in top 6 percent of public and private high schools nationwide in STEM by Newsweek
+ AP School of Distinction, AP STEM Achievement School, AP STEM School, AP Humanities Achievement School, AP Humanities School
+ Blue Ribbon School of Excellence
+ U.S. Presidential Scholar
+ 7 Governor’s Honors Program finalists and 1 GHP alternate

**OCONEE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL**

+ College and Career Ready Performance Index content mastery score of 92.9
+ 2 state championships, 12 individual state championships
+ Ranked in top 6 percent of public and private high schools nationwide in STEM by Newsweek
+ AP School of Distinction, AP STEM Achievement School, AP STEM School
+ GreatSchools College Success Award
+ 3 Governor’s Honors Program finalists and 2 GHP alternates
+ $12,500 in Walton EMC EmPOWERment grants
+ Outstanding Delegation Award at the 2023 Georgia Center for Civic Engagement Georgia United Nations Assembly Conference

Mr. Keith Carter  
Principal

Dr. Kevin Yancey  
Principal
Within each individual lies innate value, a desire to be understood, and a boundless ability to learn. In order to teach a child, I must first assume the posture of a learner. I must seek to listen before speaking, understand before being understood, and learn before instructing. I must commit myself to studying and appreciating all I can about my students — their essence, strengths, interests, experiences, and motivations. This could not be more imperative than it is with my students who have unique needs.”

Abby Bishop, Malcom Bridge Elementary School
2022-23 District Teacher of the Year
# Alumini Association

The Oconee County High Schools Alumni Association (OCHSAA) donated $1,000 to OCHS and NOHS for their Agriculture Education Programs and three $500 CTAE grants; participated in community service activities, including a Food for Kids student for one school year in honor of OCS teachers; held a Hog Mountain Bowl tailgate for fellowship opportunities; and came together for the annual Alumni Banquet, its largest fundraiser of the year, the last Saturday each June. For more information, follow OCHSAA at Facebook.com/OconeeCountyAlumni.

## Retiring Educators

**Thank you to our retirees for their lasting impact on the lives of our community’s children!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Burke</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>Brian Felker</td>
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<td>Amy Frutiger</td>
<td>Work Based Learning Coordinator</td>
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<td>Marsha Hunter</td>
<td>School Food &amp; Nutrition Assistant</td>
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<td>Primus Johnson</td>
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<td>Leslie Poole</td>
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<td>Ashley Templeton</td>
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<td>Susan Willis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wendy Yount</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>RBES</td>
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COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
THANK YOU TO OUR NUMEROUS COMMUNITY PARTNERS. WE ARE INDEED #OCONEESTRONG!

DISTRICT-LEVEL PARTNERS

Akins Ford
Athens Ford
BankSouth
Chick-fil-A Epps Bridge
Chops & Hops
Georgia United Credit Union
Grier & Co. with Georgia Home Partners Realty
Heyward Allen Toyota/Motor Company
Oconee Chamber of Commerce
Oconee State Bank
Peach State Federal Credit Union
Piedmont Athens Regional - Oconee Health Campus
Walton EMC
Zaxby’s of Watkinsville

VILLA PARENT ACADEMY
#OCONEESTRONG

FIFTH ANNUAL PARENT ACADEMY PROGRAM
Developed by the Georgia School Boards Association, VILLA (Volunteer Instructional Leadership Learning Academy) provides parents an opportunity to learn more about public schools in their local communities.

VILLA 2023 PARTICIPANTS

Colham Ferry Elementary - Erin Copelan, Forrest Holder
Dove Creek Elementary - Lauren Dinwiddie, Rebekah Walker
High Shoals Elementary - Allison Freeman, Lindsay Williams
Malcom Bridge Elementary - Jennifer Broun, Laura Farmer
Malcom Bridge Middle - Kari Girardot, Holly Hollandsworth
North Oconee High - Christy Wages, April Washburn
Oconee County Elementary - Jason Peake, Raymond Swetenburg
Oconee County High - Robin Mooney, Michael Ricks
Oconee County Middle - Tyson Browning, Stephanie Davis
Oconee County Primary - Sara Feilmeier, Kate Hankins
Rocky Branch Elementary - Chengyong Jiao, Lori Williams
1,825 students enrolled in CTAE courses

114 students participated in work-based learning

82 employers participated in work-based learning

65% of employers require post-secondary education or training
Thank you!
TO OUR SPONSORS

Follow us on social media!
@oconeecoschools