



UPDATE

May 29, 2020

Important Calendar Dates:

- **June 5th** - Tiger Day and Yearbook - just seniors will pick up gifts and their yearbook.
- **June 9th** - Budget Vote - Absentee ballots must be received at the District Office by 5:00 p.m. This is a strictly confidential process.
- **June 16th at 6:00 p.m.** - Wheeler, 6th Grade Celebration Drive-Thru, sponsored by the PTO.
- **June 17th** - this is the **tentative** date we are planning on the last day of school/distance learning. Emphasis on tentative, because the NYS Education Department and school districts have not received clarification from Governor Cuomo's Executive Order closing schools to the end of the academic year. June 17, 2020 meets NYSED 180-day requirement and contractual obligations.
- **June 19th** - 7-11th graders will get their yearbook and Tiger Day gifts delivered by bus and staff.
- **June 26th** - Graduation Ceremony Date
- **Wheeler School Materials** - we are currently working on a schedule for pickups that should occur toward the end of June.



2020 ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION

REMINDER: Ballots Due to District Office by June 9th at 5 pm

This notice is sent pursuant to New York Governor Executive Order No. 202.26 to provide information regarding the Onondaga Central School District's (the "School District") 2020 Annual Meeting and General Election.

Date of the Election: June 9, 2020 (via absentee ballot only by 5:00 PM);

Definition of Qualified Voter: A person shall be entitled to vote in the School District's 2020 Annual Meeting and Election, who is:

1. A citizen of the United States;
2. Eighteen years of age;

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3. A resident within the School District for a period of thirty days preceding June 9, 2020; and
 4. No person shall have the right to register for or vote who would not be qualified to register for or vote at an election in accordance with the provisions of section 5-106 of the Election Law.

Absentee Ballot: In accordance with Executive Order 202.26, absentee ballots will be mailed by the District. At least one (1) absentee ballot will be provided per household. If a household requires additional absentee ballots, please contact the District Clerk at 315-552-5001 or email jwoody@ocs.cnyric.org

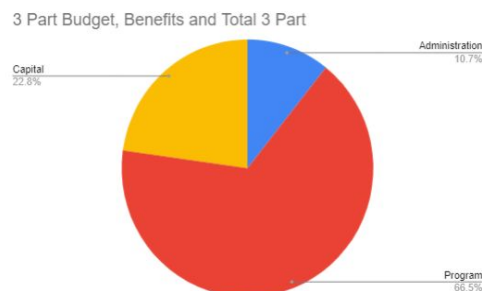
Absentee Ballot Questions and Answers:

1. **I did not request an absentee ballot. Why did I receive one in the mail?** This year, the Governor's Executive Order requires the District to send an absentee ballot and postage paid return envelope to all qualified voters. Because of the Executive Order, all qualified voters are treated as though they applied for a ballot for the reason of "temporary illness," regarding concerns about a contraction of COVID-19.
2. **How did the School District create its list of qualified voters?** We used the District's previous voter records, the Onondaga County Voter Registry, the Tax Roll Property Owner Report list, and Schooltool database to generate a list of qualified voters. In an attempt to reach voters that would not fall into these categories, the District sent the postcard notice with information as to how to request a ballot if someone is a qualified voter, and have publicized this on our website.
3. **How is the School District protecting my confidentiality if I sign and address the absentee ballot envelope?** Your vote will remain anonymous. During the opening of ballots, the signed ballot envelope will be used to verify the ballot was returned by someone to whom it was properly issued. The envelope will then be opened and the absentee ballot inside will be removed, still folded, and will be separated from the signed ballot envelope. Before ballots are counted, they will all be placed in one central receptacle, mixed up, and drawn out at random as they are unfolded and counted.
4. **The instructions on the absentee ballot instruct the voter to sign the envelope attesting to a declaration which includes a statement that the voter is unable to appear to vote in person "because of the reason stated on my application heretofore submitted . . ."**
Since I did not request the ballot, should I sign the envelope? Yes. A ballot cannot be counted if this statement is not signed. The language on the envelope is the required language under the New York Education Law. The Executive Order did not waive this language requirement and therefore it must remain on the envelope despite the unique circumstances of the all-absentee ballot election. This year, because of the Executive Order, all qualified voters are treated as though they applied for a ballot for the reason of "temporary illness," regarding concerns about a contraction of COVID-19.
5. **I received an absentee ballot addressed to someone that doesn't live at my address. Can I complete the ballot even though it wasn't addressed to me?** No. If this situation applies to you, please contact the District Clerk at 315-552-5001 or email jwoody@ocs.cnyric.org to confirm you are a qualified voter and to be added to the District's list. If a ballot is received by the District from an individual who is not on its list of qualified voters, it cannot be counted.

Budget Information:

On June 9, 2020, Onondaga Central School District residents will have an opportunity to vote on a \$22,599,385 proposed budget for the 2020-2021 school year budget. The budget calls for a 2.4% increase in spending from the 2019-2020 school year and carries a 1.5% tax levy increase. The \$522,234 increase in the general fund budget is mostly due to increases for contractual obligations and resources to maintain our educational programs and health insurance expenses.

	3 Part Budget	Benefits	Total 3 Part
Administration	\$1,923,932	\$463,344	\$2,387,276
Program	\$11,944,588	\$3,938,428	\$15,883,016
Capital	\$4,097,420	\$231,672	\$4,329,092
	\$17,965,940	4,633,445	22,599,385



*More 2020-2021 Budget information is continued below.



OCS Graduation Planning

Graduation planning has not been easy this spring; living, working and running a school are far from normal under the pandemic issues and social distancing protocols set forth by the State and Governor Cuomo's Executive Orders. Our Graduation Committee has been meeting with Senior Class Leadership to work out plans that comply with Executive Orders. The Graduation Committee has developed a survey for senior's preferred choice for graduation. This year, regardless of the ceremony choice, we are also producing a virtual graduation film to air on television on channel CW6 (CNY Central). This film would show our student speeches and would also honor each individual student.

In planning graduation, our School District must consider the guidance document published by Onondaga County based on New York State's guidelines regarding social distancing and large group gatherings. One popular option for graduation is the football stadium venue, and it does not meet the guidelines from Onondaga County and State social distancing and phase openings for the time.

Moving forward, we would like to get some input from the students on what kind of alternate graduation ceremony seniors prefer. Seniors were given a survey to answer such questions to determine their preference ranking the choices. Options for ranking are below:

- Drive-Through Ceremony: The Graduate and their immediate family members who are living at the same home together will arrive to receive diplomas at the high school campus. They would drive through campus to a ceremony set up near the cafeteria entrance. We would announce the Graduate's name and college or career choice. The Graduate would leave the family car and pick up their diploma while wearing their cap and gown. They could pose for a picture while receiving their diploma and then return to their car.
- At Home Graduation: We drive a professionally decorated mobile stage to the Graduate's home. We would announce the Graduate's name and college or career choice. The Graduate would walk onto the stage wearing their cap and gown to receive their diploma and pose for a picture.
- No Ceremony: There will be no formal ceremony. The Graduate can pick up their diploma in the Main Office of the High School or have it mailed to their home. The virtual ceremony will still air on the CW6 as described above. The virtual ceremony will also be permanently available online for families and friends to view.
- Postponing the Graduation Ceremony: The ceremony would be postponed until July or August with the hope that larger social gatherings would be recommended by New York State and Onondaga County.
 - *Note: This option is not a guarantee that government rules for social gatherings will change by July or August. It also creates possible conflicts for Graduates that are pursuing college, technical training programs, jobs, or the military.*

High School Summer School Distance Learning

I am sure you are aware of the Governor's announcement that summer school will be delivered remotely. If your high school student needs summer school for credit recovery, I want to assure you that our counselors and school administrators are planning and designing meaningful programming for students. They are working on logistics and an update will be provided within the next few weeks. We have NOT received any information or news on options for summer school for enrichments programs; if such a program becomes available, we will let you as soon as we have the information.



Onondaga High School Is One of the Top in the Country

I am happy to report that **Onondaga Senior High School** was voted America's Best High School in 2020 by U.S. News & World Report. What an outstanding accomplishment! Congratulations to our administrators, teachers, students, parents and community! Your hard work, and support for the school makes this possible.

It's official!: **Onondaga Senior High School** is a 2020 Best High School, based on rankings that the U.S. News & World Report published this morning.

Here is your school's updated U.S. News profile page, with its new National, metro-area, and school-district rankings:

<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-york/districts/onondaga-central-school-district/onondaga-senior-high-school-13943>.

By earning a national ranking in the top 40%, **Onondaga Senior High School** achieved status as a U.S. News Best High School. Only "Best" high schools may use an official U.S. News Best High Schools badge. Hundreds of award-winning schools have displayed these badges to enhance school spirit and to maintain attendance levels that are often crucial to obtaining adequate state funding.

About Best High Schools 2020

U.S. News [2020 Best High Schools](#) numerically ranked nearly 18,000 schools nationwide this year.

The Best High Schools rankings, available online only, are produced in conjunction with RTI International, a global research firm. U.S. News doesn't collect data directly from high schools – all data comes directly from official third-party sources. U.S. News receives AP and IB data directly from the College Board and International Baccalaureate, respectively, for use in the rankings. The state assessment data and

graduation rates are from each state, and other data comes from the U.S. Department of Education Common Core of Data.

For more information on how the U.S. News evaluates public high schools, please see the [methodology](#) and visit the [Morse Code](#) blog.

***BUDGET VOTE:**

The Governor's Executive Orders during the Pandemic State of Emergency has left us with many decisions needing to happen rapidly. Our usual budget development process and communications have been changed greatly, due to social distancing. We have important information to share with you for the remainder of the school year regarding the School District Election and Budget Vote. Below is our first **NOTICE - ONONDAGA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 2020 ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION.**

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Absentee Ballot: In accordance with Executive Order 202.26, absentee ballots will be mailed by the District. One absentee ballot will be mailed to each registered poll voter in the School District. If you do not receive your absentee ballot by 5/26/2020 or have additional qualified voters in your household, please contact Jennifer Woody, District Clerk at 315-552-5001, or email jwoody@ocs.cnyric.org. Reminder all absentee ballots need to be returned to the District Office on June 9, 2020, by 5:00 p.m.

Should you have any further questions, please feel free to reach out to us. Thank you, your vote is important to our Community.



Food Service - Delivery & Donations:

For your planning purposes and the announcement of schools not returning to regular schedules this year, we are putting in place the food distribution schedule for the remainder of May 2020 through June 2020. Please see below for more detailed information:

1. June 1, 2020 - Five days of meals (covers 6/2, 6/3, 6/4, 6/5, 6/8)
2. June 8, 2020 - Five days of meals (covers 6/9, 6/10, 6/11, 6/12, 6/15)
3. June 15, 2020 - Five days of meals (covers 6/16, 6/17, 6/18, 6/19, 6/22)
4. June 22, 2020 - Five days of meals (covers 6/23, 6/24, 6/25, 6/26, 6/29)
5. June 29, 2020 - To Be Determined

As a reminder, anyone in the district who is in need, that currently does not receive meals, can sign up on our district webpage or [click here](#). Meals for those signed up will be delivered every Monday morning with 5 days of breakfasts and lunches for each student.

Along with providing meals to the students, the district has also set up a pantry to provide for families in the community. If anyone would like to donate, we are currently collecting food at the district office from 8 am-12 pm daily. Please contact Jennifer Woody, Business Administrator, at jwoody@ocs.cnyric.org with any questions you may have.

Please continue to stay strong and reach out to us should you have any questions or concerns.

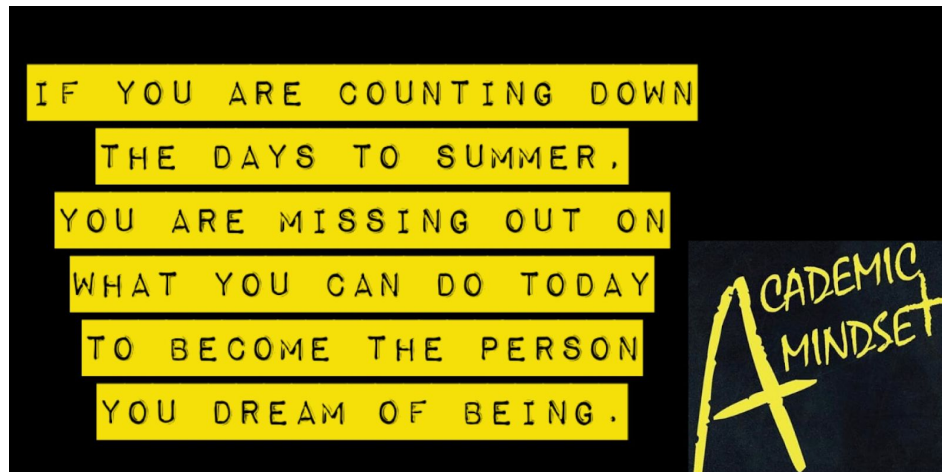
OUTDOOR CLASSROOM AT Rockwell ES

Construction resumed this spring with better weather for construction and asphalt plants opening up. Fortunately for us, school construction is considered essential work in NYS by Governor Cuomo's Executive Orders. Many thanks go out to Assemblywoman Hunter for making this possible for the Onondaga CSD. Without her support providing a grant for the Outdoor Classroom, it would not have been possible. We will continue to keep you posted on progress along with the grand opening coming in the next few weeks.



TIGER TV:

Mrs. Paterson and her students have provided the link to this week's announcements on [Tiger TV](#) located on the [school webpage](#). The clips I get from you guys really help to make it special. Please continue to help push it out to students.
<http://www.onondagacsd.org/districtpage.cfm?pageid=1718>



All of us at the Onondaga Central School District appreciate your patience, understanding and generosity during these unpredictable times. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Rob Price

Superintendent