

## 2022-2023 School Tour (30-45 mins max.)

BEGIN -

Welcome to **Oak Park and River Forest High School!**

- History: Founded in 1873. Construction of the “north” end of the current school building, facing Ontario Street, began in 1905, first classes were held there in September 1907.
- Student body: Approximately 3,400 students. The Class of 2022 had 856 graduates.
- School colors: Orange and navy blue
- Mascot: Siberian Husky (Huskie). In Oct. 2019, the Huskie was named HEMMY, short for Hemingway, via an all-student vote. Writer Ernest Hemingway was a 1917 OPRFHS graduate.

### Welcome Center/Main Entrance

- One of three entrances for students, and is the main entrance for visitors.
- Campus safety staff are based here.
- Renovated in the summer of 2021 as a part of Imagine Project 1\*.
- Updates improved sightlines and traffic flow, and made the entire space larger and more welcoming for students, families, and visitors.
- The new digital screen showcases school news, student and faculty achievements, and info on clubs, activities, and athletics.
- The relocated **Attendance Office (1135)** provides direct, controlled access for students.

*\*Imagine Project 1 included the renovation/construction of 76 general education classrooms, learning spaces for the Special Education TEAM (Transitional Education with Access to the Mainstream) program, the student commons, a student resource center, the South Cafeteria, all-gender restrooms, and more.*

### Student Commons & Book of Knowledge

- Ontario Street used to be a through street, separating the academic wing from the PE/athletics wing. There was an underground tunnel which connected the two sides, so that students and faculty didn't have to walk outside during the winter.
- The Student Center, now known as the **Student Commons**, was added more than 50 years ago. Prior to the recent Imagine Project 1 renovations, that was the last time a major facilities improvement was made.
- The **Student Commons** as it exists today was also renovated as a part of Imagine Project 1. It is now a multi-use hub where students can collaborate, study, socialize, and access essential services.

- Featured prominently in the center of the **Student Commons** is the **Book of Knowledge**. The limestone sculpture is from the exterior of the school's original 1907 entrance on Ontario St. It was partially demolished and stored in pieces in the school's basement until it was discovered by Superintendent Dr. Greg Johnson a couple of years ago. It is now featured with a glass-etched crest.

### **Tradition of Excellence Wall**

- Tradition of Excellence honorees are alumni who have made outstanding contributions to society through their personal and professional pursuits.
- Notable honorees include: Ernest Hemingway, Dan Castellaneta (Voice of Homer Simpson), Jeff Mauro (The Sandwich King), Marjorie Vincent (Miss America 1991)
- The display was a gift from the Huskie Booster Club for the new Student Commons.

### **Student Activities Center**

- It serves as the nerve center for 90+ school clubs and activities.
- Some of our clubs and activities include. Anime Club, Debate, Hip Hop Club, Model UN, and Spoken Word. Students who can't find a club that fits their interests may start one. They need a faculty or staff sponsor and will have a one-year pilot period to show that they can garner enough student interest to make the club official.

### **Bronze Crest**

- This is our original school crest, designed in 1908 by Lee Watson, who taught at the high school from 1907 - 1944. It is engraved with "ta'garista," which is Greek for "the best." Our school motto, which was adopted in 1908, is "Those Things That Are Best."
- As part of a three-year, student-led branding project, which was completed at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, the crest was refined to feature more defined lines and to include the school's official colors. The refined version is what you see displayed with the **Book of Knowledge**.

### **Bookstore (1337)**

- The Bookstore provides all curriculum materials and sells a variety of other things, including calculators, PE uniforms, Ventra student replacement cards, and miscellaneous school supplies.

## **North Cafeteria/South Cafeteria**

- We offer a modified closed campus during our three lunch periods. Only juniors/seniors who meet certain attendance, academic, and behavior standards can leave for lunch. They must also have parent permission.
- The **South Cafeteria**, the larger of our two student cafeterias, is for freshmen and sophomores. Juniors and seniors who stay on campus eat in the **North Cafeteria**.
- Majority of the upperclassmen do stay on campus, especially during the winter months.
- The **South Cafeteria** was renovated as part of Imagine Project 1. Improved traffic flow reduces crowding, a variety of seating options allows students to decide how and whether to socialize during lunch, improved acoustics reduce noise levels, while a new sound system makes the space much more functional for meetings and presentations. Doors lead outside to the mall area, which holds additional seating.

## **Field House**

- Our **Field House** was built in 1927 and was one of the first of its kind in the nation.
- In the case of bad weather, the Field House is what we use for our graduation ceremony.
- The stadium, where graduation occurs during good weather, was completely renovated in 2002. The renovation preserved historic features from 1927.
- OPRFHS had a long-standing tradition of girls wearing white dresses and boys wearing black suits for graduation. In 2016, all students, regardless of gender identity, were able to wear black or white, including pantsuits. In Oct. of 2018, in an effort to promote equity for all students, the Board of Education approved the switch to caps and gowns, beginning with the class of 2019.
- We have two original pools, first built in 1928, and multiple gyms.
- The proposed Imagine Project 2 would focus on building a new PE and athletics wing on the southeast corner of the building. This would not include the Field House.
- This replacement wing would address significant issues of capacity, configuration, and condition, and includes: PE classrooms, PE and athletics offices, PE equipment storage, a conference room, all-gender locker rooms for gender non-conforming students, an ADA-compliant elevator, a multi-purpose/dance gym, larger, flexible, multi-use gyms that can serve as a competition space, a weight room, an expanded treatment room for athletic trainers, boys locker rooms, a student commons, and a 25x40-yard pool with a spectator balcony. More information about Imagine Project 2 can be found on our website, [www.oprfhs.org](http://www.oprfhs.org).

Walk up to the third floor **Student Resource Center**

**Athletics facts** (While walking)

- We currently offer 30 competitive sports, including baseball, football, soccer, lacrosse, track, water polo, wrestling.
- More than half of our students participate in a competitive sport each year.
- We're ranked third in the state for IHSA state team titles.
- State championships date as far back as 1907 for Boys' Track and as recently as **2017 for softball.**

**Library/Student Resource Center (3rd floor)**

- Relocated and renovated as a part of Imagine Project 1.
- Its new central, secure location allows us to extend after-school hours and increase student access.
- Two enclosed classrooms and multiple breakout spaces have improved functionality for instruction, student projects, faculty and staff curriculum-planning meetings, and drop-in students seeking quiet spaces.
- The beautiful, well lit space appeals to students; nearly every chair is full throughout the day, especially during lunch.
- We have two full-time librarians. In addition to teaching research skills, the librarians provide booktalks to support independent reading, and they also sponsor a student book club.

**Learning Stairs**

- Provides overflow space for quiet study.
- Can accommodate two classes for instruction and presentations.
- Allows easy access between two floors of the Student Resource Center.

**Elevator (take down to 2nd floor SRC) - Need to scan keycard for access**

- Previously there was no elevator on this side of the building. This new ADA-compliant elevator serves both floors of the SRC, plus the South Cafeteria and the new basement below it.

**Makerspace & Tutoring Center/Student Resource Center (2nd floor)**

- Relocated and renovated as a part of Imagine Project 1. Its new central, secure location allows us to extend after-school hours and increase student access.

- Its relocation freed up space to become 13 general classrooms, two science labs, four teacher offices, and more.
- The **Tutoring Center** is open before, during, and after school, and is staffed by educators and community volunteers in core content areas.
- The **Makerspace** is a hands-on learning lab. The unstructured space encourages students to experiment, create, design, build, get messy, and be curious. Staff and faculty members from our Educational Technology department oversee this area.
- Technology is an important component of the curriculum at OPRFHS. Since 2016, every student has been given a Chromebook that they can use during the school day and at home. Seniors may purchase their Chromebooks at the end of the year for a nominal fee.
- The **Student Helpdesk** is also located here. Tech support staff members are available for any issues which may arise with Chromebooks, including troubleshooting programming issues and replacing lost chargers.

### **Student Balcony**

- The expansion over Student Commons creates additional space for students to collaborate, study, and socialize in the heart of the school.
- It also accommodates classes and meetings.
- We often have student art displayed here and occasionally, we host shows/installations by professional artists here.

### **Counseling areas**

- These rooms house counselors, deans, and social workers who work together to provide academic and social/emotional counseling and support for all of our students.
- They make up PSS (Pupil Support Services) Teams, which includes a counselor, social worker, and dean. Counselors support students academically, social workers support their mental and social/emotional health, and deans handle any behavioral issues.
- Each student is placed within a team as a freshman.
- Currently have 15 counselors, 5 social workers, and 5 deans.

### **Admin Offices**

- District 200 is a one-school, one-building district. This is the office of the superintendent, Dr. Greg Johnson. This is his second year as superintendent and his seventh year with the district.

- Our Board of Education meets in this boardroom. Board meetings are held in person and are also streamed live via Zoom and on our YouTube page.

Begin walking *back* to **Testing Center**

**Academics information** (While walking)

- We offer more than 200 academic courses. Beginning this year, all incoming freshmen will be placed in the same level courses, rather than being separated into College Prep (regular) or Honors. This change is an effort to eliminate academic disparities as it relates to race, and give all students access to rigorous curriculum and the opportunity to earn Honors credit.
- Our graduation rate is 94 percent and 90 percent of each graduating class goes on to college or into formal technical training.
- We also have a consistently high number of National Merit Scholarship and Achievement winners in comparison to our peer schools throughout Illinois.
- We outperform state and national averages on ACT and SAT tests, and approximately 70 percent of our students who take Advanced Placement exams earn scores sufficient for college credit.

**Testing Center**

- Open before, during, and after school to students who have missed classroom tests.
- How it works: A teacher will drop off the test in the testing center, and leave instructions and a time frame for the student and proctor. At that time, the student may visit the testing center at their convenience within the time frame and complete the test.
- This west corridor also contains our Staff Cafeteria.

Begin walking *back* to **Nurse's Office**

**Additional information** (While walking)

- Math and science classrooms are mostly found on the first and second floors. Our Driver's Ed classrooms, with simulators, are also on the second floor.
- The first floor includes our auto shop, woodworking, and special education areas.
- We also have an on-site daycare center on the first floor, for infants through preschool age children, which many faculty members use. It is run by the River Forest Community Center.

**Nurse's Office**

- We have 2 full-time nurses on staff.

Walk upstairs to **Hemingway (3355)** and **Latin (3353)** classrooms

- We are now traveling back in time a bit, to the original OPRFHS from 1907-1908. These are two of the coolest classrooms in the school.
- Show Hemingway classroom (F Key) - This room used to be known as the Oxford or

Club Room and was used by the Burke and Lincoln Society Debate Teams. Ernest Hemingway, a 1917 OPRF grad, was a part of the Burke Society, so when the room was restored, it was renamed in his honor.

- Show Latin Room (F Key) - This room was known as the Classics classroom. Some original details include murals by famed British artist John Flaxman. Latin is taught in this room.

#### Walk to **main stairwell**

- Main stairwell offers access to all four floors.
- Talk about **passing periods** (5 minutes, countdown on digital clocks throughout the school, and a warning bell one minute prior) and **lockers** (Each student is assigned a locker. Time management skills are important when utilizing lockers as you may not have time to get back to it between each class.)
- Our third and fourth floors contain most of our core academic classrooms, including English and our Foreign Languages.

#### **Digital Signage System**

- This TV is one of 20 strategically placed monitors throughout the school, which are all a part of our Digital Signage System, which launched in Fall 2018.
- Like the TV in the Welcome Center, they showcase school news, student and faculty achievements, and info on clubs, activities, and athletics.

#### **Foreign Languages hall**

- We offer four years of Mandarin, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Latin, and Japanese.
- Most of these languages also have a club associated with them as well.

#### **TV and recording studio**

- Our TV studio completes three student-produced shows every week, including Newscene, a show all about what is happening at OPRFHS.
- Students learn video filming and editing, and also learn to produce music and performance CDs and DVDs, and feature films.

#### **Art corridor**

- This is our visual arts area.
- We have classes in pottery, jewelry making and metalworking, painting, drawing, graphic design and more.

- Mosaic mural -- Completed in 2015, with the help of students. Mr. Van Duinen is a nationally known mosaic artist and you can find his work all over Chicago.

Walk up to **fourth floor** to **Kettlestrings (4187)**

- Our fourth floor includes our fashion construction classes and culinary programs. We have a food lab, a commercial kitchen and small restaurant, The Kettlestrings Café, named after one of Oak Park's founding families.
- In the spring, students in the culinary arts program whip up gourmet-quality food and serve it here in this mini-restaurant.

Walk to **main stairwell**. Walk down to **second floor**.

**Registrar's Office**

- The registrar handles registration and enrollment, student records and transcripts, and residency requirements.
- Registrar office hours - 8 a.m.-11 a.m., 12:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

**Studio (2105)**

- This hallway houses some of our fine arts classes, including our vocal performance classes.
- Studio is a black-box theater for small, intimate, student-directed productions. There are four productions per year and students must audition to direct the year before.

Walk down to **first floor**

- This is our music corridor, featuring our band and orchestra rooms, and practice rooms.
- Roughly a third of the student body participate in band, orchestra, choir, and theater classes.

**Auditorium**

- The **Auditorium** seats up to 1,700 and features state-of-the-art tech equipment. Each year, we put on a minimum of nine theatrical productions, incl. a major winter musical, and dance, instrumental, and vocal performances.

**Little Theatre**

- The **Little Theatre** has 325 seats and is where we stage non-musical theater productions.
- Both the **Little Theatre** and the **Auditorium** are used often by community organizations.

END in **Student Commons**

*For out-of-district visitors interested in Athletics ... No access to the Athletic Dept. (includes tours, meeting coaches and staff) can be granted until you are enrolled as a student. The best place to begin would be to contact the Registrar ([registrar@oprfs.org](mailto:registrar@oprfs.org)).*