Student Dedicated Every Day, Student Driven in Every Way
Hello Ozark School District community and thank you for reading our annual school magazine, Tiger Tribune. Let me start by formally introducing myself as superintendent of the District. If I haven’t met you in person yet, I hope to soon. While I am new to this role, I have worked for the District since 1999 and have been in public education for 23 years. The Tiger Tribune, however, is not about me. It’s about sharing the stories of our students, our staff and our schools.

Ozark continues to be one of the top school districts in the state of Missouri. Our culture of connectedness is second to none. Each challenge we face brings us closer together and that is why Ozark has become a leader in public education.

We continue to strive for excellence in academic achievement and performance and will never forget to let our students know how much we care. When students feel connected to their teachers, they thrive academically. As we build those relationships, we can shape their direction for the future. Every student has a story, and we’re helping them write it, one page at a time.

I am honored to be an Ozark Tiger and superintendent of such an amazing school district. I am proud of the many things our students and staff are doing on a daily basis — some of which are taken for granted. Let me take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone — students, staff, school board, parents and the community — for your support of the Ozark School District. I look forward to working with you all on our continuing journey.

Helping every student write their story — one page at a time.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Expenses by category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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* Indicates bond projects included in expenses

Revenue by source

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<td>County</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Salaries and benefits represent 84% of total operating expenses. Operating funds exclude debt service and capital projects funds.

SUBMISSIONS

Ozark Tigers

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Chris Bauman, Ed.D.

Karen Scott, Ed.D.

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School Police: Mark Deeds, 582-5900

Transportation: Dean Wake, 582-4736

Main Switchboard: 582-5900

DISTRICT WEBSITE

Find everything you need to know about the District: lunch menus, calendars, important documents and more.

www.ozarktigers.org

DISTRICT APP

Live streaming and archived videos of sporting and other District events.

www.citylinktv.com/ozark-tigers

PARENT PORTAL

Access your child’s attendance, lunch account and discipline information. Contact your child’s school with a current email address and download the Student 360 App.

E-NEWS

Weekly newsletter with the latest updates such as upcoming events and student accomplishments, delivered directly to your email inbox. Sign up at www.ozarktigers.org/enews.
Growth is a magical word that can mean many different things to a community. For Ozark School District, the term growth is part of the everyday vocabulary and embedded in all operations. “We must look toward the future in order to serve our students today,” said Ozark Superintendent Chris Bauman. “Planning doesn’t happen overnight and we need to ensure our facilities and services are in place as soon as students need them so we can continue to be a leader in education.”

Over the last five years, Ozark School District has seen a growth of 429 students in kindergarten through 12th grade. To put that number into perspective, the graduating class of 2018 was 411 students. That means the District must continue looking toward the horizon, ensuring it is prepared for the future. “By analyzing past and current growth, we can anticipate our next steps,” Assistant Superintendent of Operations Curtis Chesick said. The District commissioned a demographic study in late 2017 showing the expected growth over the next 10 years. The study analyzed past, present and projected residential growth within the Ozark community to estimate future student populations. Over the next decade, Ozark School District is projected to increase by more than 1,400 students. To help plan for that growth, the District began a series of community long range planning meetings this fall to establish priorities for future facility and service needs.

“We schools belong to the Ozark community and their vision of class size, grade configurations, and services guide our future,” Chesick said. As the long range planning meetings wrap up in early 2019, District administration will take recommendations from the community and school district staff to the School Board to update the existing long range plan. The District will then create plans for the next building projects and bond issue, which could appear on the ballot for voters as early as April, 2020. “In every decision, we ask ourselves ‘is this what is best for our students’ and planning for our future is no exception,” Bauman said. For more information on the current long range planning meetings, visit www.ozarktigers.org/longrangeplan.


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Seasonings • Rubs
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Chutney • Salsa

Specialty Items
Duck • Alligator • Elk
Venison • Seafood
Produce Pasta • Soup Mixes

Also Local

Also Local

Key Demographic Study Points for the Next 10 Years:
• 800+ new homes
• 1,400+ new students
• 7,000+ total enrollment

We must look toward the future in order to serve our students today. Planning doesn’t happen overnight and we need to ensure our facilities and services are in place as soon as students need them so we can continue to be a leader in education.

CHRIS BAUMAN
OZARK SUPERINTENDENT
**Learning in the Great Outdoors**

When the sun is out and the temperatures are nice, it’s not uncommon to see students traipsing behind the Ozark West Elementary School along the creek, looking for crawdads and frogs or trying to identify different types of plants. It’s not recess time. Instead, the space is an outdoor classroom that allows students to learn about the great outdoors through hands-on experiences.

“I love seeing the outdoor classroom being used. It’s a great resource, plus, it’s a nice change of scenery,” Principal Sharon Underwood said. “It has allowed students and teachers to be involved in real-life conversations as well as different kinds of hands-on learning opportunities.”

This year, Ozark Elementary Gifted Teacher Stefanie McKoy has been taking students to visit the creek regularly as part of a Global Awareness and Conservation Unit.

“The creek has provided a unique opportunity to allow students to explore Ozark’s natural beauty,” McKoy said. “This has provided an authentic example of how ecosystems work, how human interactions influence nature, and why simple steps now will continue to protect the environment. Students have been able to be immersed in learning and be inspired to set actionable goals to protect our globe for future generations starting in our own backyard.”

*Assistant Principal Jared Lotz*

*Students hunt for animals in the outdoor classroom.*
OZARK SCHOOL DISTRICT

STUDENTS

GRADUATION RATE

96.2%

MAP ASSESSMENT

PROFICIENT/ADVANCED SCORES 3RD-12TH GRADE

- 72.2% English
- 71.1% Science
- 64.4% Math
- 69.6% Social Studies

PROFICIENT ADVANCED SCORES

OZARK SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHS GRADUATES

- 411 Graduates
- 74% Attended a 2/4 Year College/University
- 53 Students Received OSHA or ASE Certifications
- 73% Qualified for Diploma & DIPLOMA &

DIPLOMA &

- Received $4.9 Million in Scholarships
- 17 IB Diploma Graduates
- 23 Earned the Missouri Seal of Biliteracy; 3 of those Earned the Distinguished Seal

ACT

20.2 Composite

A+ PROGRAM

53% Graduates Qualified for A+ Scholarship

READING RECOVERY

77% Students At or Above Reading Level

OZARK SCHOOL DISTRICT

DIPLOMA &

96.2%

OZARK SCHOOL DISTRICT

DISTRICT

TOTAL STUDENTS

5,709

95.1%

$8,570 Average Attendance

Spent per Student

TRANSPORTATION

STATE BUS INSPECTION SCORE

100%

SCHOOL LUNCH

33% Free/Reduced Lunch Eligibility

ANNUAL SCORECARD

98.9%

2ND Central Ozark Conference

TOP 20 State of Missouri

2,723 Average Lunches Served Daily

EMPLOYEES

- 864 Employees
- 68% Certified Staff have Advanced Degrees
- Average Teacher Salary is $48,327
- Average Years of Experience per Teacher is 13.4

SCHOOL LUNCH

TECHNOLOGY

1:1 Grades 1-12

Spent per Student

66 Buses Transport

3,900 Students Daily Totaling

712K Annual Miles

821 Students Daily Totaling

712K Annual Miles

17 IB Diploma Graduates

23 Earned the Missouri Seal of Biliteracy; 3 of those Earned the Distinguished Seal

226 Students whose native language is not English

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712K Annual Miles

17 IB Diploma Graduates

23 Earned the Missouri Seal of Biliteracy; 3 of those Earned the Distinguished Seal

226 Students whose native language is not English

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has not released official data for the 2017-18 school year. Updated data will be posted when available.
Ozark resident Jessie East knows the importance of early intervention when it comes to a child’s emotional needs and brain development—she’s witnessed it firsthand through her son, Alex. Through participation in Parents as Teachers, East said the in-home teacher guided the family toward Tiger Paw Early Childhood Center after noticing Alex exhibited some special needs.

“I was amazed to learn about the Tiger Paw structure in that they have so many comprehensive services in one building,” East said. “They are set up to really serve the whole child and to provide support and guidance for the parents and caregivers. In the short amount of time Alex has been attending Tiger Paw, we have seen tremendous progress, not only in the areas where he has demonstrated need, but in other areas as well. He’s being provided with opportunities to develop self-confidence and learn new skills.”

Tiger Paw Early Childhood Center, located in the brick building next to the Ozark School District Office on Fourth Avenue, is home to Ozark’s youngest learners. Walking through the doors, you would never know the building houses five different programs, each interwoven to create the Early Childhood Center. The structure of integrating multiple programs is vitally important for early childhood.

“We ensure that we meet each student at their level of need and development by weaving multiple programs together,” Tiger Paw Early Childhood Center Director Laura Eakins said. “This integrated structure provides students every opportunity to reach the common goal of being ready for kindergarten.”

The Value of Early Childhood Education.

The Power of Early Intervention

Recognizing learning deficiencies and intervening early has powerful effects on student achievement. It’s much easier for students to “catch-up” when they are just beginning rather than having to learn later on.

“Research shows investing in children early on has a large return on investment and cost savings in terms of services and interventions in the long run,” said Jeff Simpson, executive director of special services. In addition to early academic and cognitive interventions, early childhood education helps children improve their social and emotional skills, language skills and adaptive skills, which ultimately helps to better prepare them for kindergarten.

“The curriculum used across all programs at Tiger Paw provides children with a strong foundation in language and literacy within a play-based learning environment,” Eakins said.

Research indicates that children learn best in an environment that allows children to play, explore and discover. Children learn naturally through playing with others. For this reason, peer models are integrated into classrooms to enhance the learning environment by providing valuable language and social skills. Play is an important part of a preschool program and in every child’s day.

Thankfully, Missouri understands the importance of early childhood education and has created a funding source for preschool classes for students who qualify based on income and need. Tiger Paw took

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Did you know representatives from Ozark School District, Ozark Chamber of Commerce and City of Ozark meet quarterly? The group, called Partnership in Progress, discusses ways to come together and promote a stronger, healthier community.

Ozark School District is proud to be a part of Partnership in Progress.

The Challenge Ahead

As the need for quality early childhood programs increase, so does the need for space. Tiger Paw is currently at capacity with a waiting list of more than 80 children for the 3-year-old preschool classroom and 90+ children for the 4-year-old preschool class.

“The need to expand Tiger Paw programs is a great problem to have,” Simpson said. “It highlights the quality of these programs and shows our community values early childhood education.”

Looking to the future, Tiger Paw and Ozark School District are investigating creative ways to meet the needs of the growing Ozark community and our earliest learners — like Alex.

“As a parent I want to do everything I can to make sure this program is sustainable and can be expanded in the ways it needs to be in order to meet the needs of our ever-growing community,” East said. “When there is something wrong with your child, it’s hard to think about anything else. It becomes the most important thing in your life, and I don’t know what we would’ve done without the support of the program. I’m truly grateful for it.”

Tiger Paw student Skylar Johnson.
WILL PICKERING WALKS AROUND JILL WIDELE'S FIFTH-GRADE CLASSROOM AT OZARK NORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. WHEN A STUDENT HAS A QUESTION, THE HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR PULLS UP A SEAT AND HELPS SIMPLIFY THE LESSON. HE THEN SHARES A SMILE OR A HIGH-FIVE WITH THE FIFTH-GRADE TUTORING WAS NEVER SOMETHING PICKERING THOUGHT HE WOULD ENJOY, BUT IT WAS A REQUIREMENT FOR THE A+ SCHOLARSHIP. SO HE STEPPED OUT OF HIS COMFORT ZONE AND TRIED SOMETHING NEW.

“I+ was an opportunity for me because it has a scholarship for free college, and I might need that in my future,” Pickering said. “I decided to take it my junior year and I really loved it.”

A+ PROVIDED PICKERING, WHO IS NOW AN OZARK HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE, WITH TWO YEARS OF TUITION TO A MISSOURI COMMUNITY OR TECHNICAL COLLEGE, SO IT FALLS RIGHT IN LINE OZARK’S DIPLOMA & PROGRAM.

“IN Ozark, we plan for graduate success,” Assistant Superintendent Dr. Craig Carson said. “Nothing pleases us more than for a student to leave our high school and follow their passions and their interests to get whatever comes next in their life, and then settle back down in our community.”

The goal of Diploma & which completed its inaugural year in 2018, is for all Ozark graduates to walk across the stage to receive their diploma and a foot forward in the world, whether that be in college, the workforce or the military. To qualify for Diploma & students must complete their Individual Career and Academic Planning (ICAP) and one of seven advanced options: college credit, job experience, advanced industry credentials, A+ Scholarship, military advanced enlistment, Missouri Seal of Biliteracy, or vocational rehabilitation. In 2018, 73 percent of Ozark’s 411 graduates received the Diploma & designation.

“We have many paths that students can take at the high-school level,” Carson said. “Diploma & is our answer to helping students figure out their path and for parents to understand this concept.”

ICAP, which starts the end of eighth grade, is the first step of Ozark’s Diploma & program.

“The main purpose of the ICAP is to make sure students and parents have all the information in order to make the best possible decision for their educational future,” said Amber Manning, DHS senior counselor.

Through ICAP, which continues each year through graduation, students and parents meet with advisory teachers to start planning how to achieve future goals.

“If a student is going to college, we want to make sure they pick classes that get them ready for college. If they are going into the military, we want to make sure they know about ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) testing or all the options for enlistment. If they are going straight into a job, we want to make sure they know about the fundamental skills needed in the workplace,” said Leigh Jennings, DHS junior counselor.

Advanced Option 1: College Credit
At Ozark, students can obtain college credit through Fast Track classes at Ozarks Technical Community College; dual credit options through Missouri State University; articulated credits through OTC, Advanced Placement; or International Baccalaureate classes.

“It really does help our students get further in their education,” Carson said. “We have over 30 different courses for students to really personalize their learning so they can follow their interests and get college credit.”

Advanced Option 2: Job Experience
Another way to graduate with a diploma and a foot forward is to gain valuable job experiences. Students can gain on-the-job experience exploring possible career options while learning skills in areas including agriculture, automotive, child development, construction trades, Cooperative Career Education, GO CAPS programs, marketing, ProStart, and work study.

For some students, participating in one of these programs confirms the dreams they want to pursue, or introduces them to an interest they never knew they had.

Advanced Option 3: Advanced Industry Credentials
In order to qualify for the Advanced Industry Credentials option in Diploma & a student must earn a certification in one of the following: AutoTech, Construction Trades, ProStart, PC Tech or Networking. Students can also earn their National Career Readiness Certification with the Work Keys exams, showing they have the fundamental skills needed in the workplace.

“Students really do leave with a foot forward into an industry when they, through our courses, get enough training to obtain an advanced industry credential,” Carson said.

Advanced Option 4: A+ Scholarship
There are many benefits for students who complete the A+ program. They are able to attend a Missouri community or technical college tuition-free for two years. But the program, OHS A+ Coordinator Casey Carpenter said, is about so much more.

“Yes, ultimately the A+ program is about students and the opportunity to continue their education, but a lot of it is not about them. It’s about giving back and having the opportunity to serve,” Carpenter said. “A lot of them walk out really amazed at how much they actually gain from that time.”

The “time” Carpenter is referring to is the required 50 hours of tutoring, which is spread out across all grade levels in the District.

Advanced Option 5: Military Advanced Enlistment
Students who participate in the Ozark JROTC program for at least three years and decide to pursue a career in the military will get a foot forward through Military Advanced Enlistment. Upon successful completion of initial entry trainings, cadets enter their military branch as an E3, which is two pay grades above a basic private.

“It puts them early on at the same grade that it will take their peers a year to reach. So it gives them some early recognition for the skills that they brought,” said Maj. Danny Caizier, OHS senior Army instructor. “Furthermore, I think the more lasting benefit of JROTC is that we really do teach them some responsibility, some accountability.”

Ozark student Mackenzie Vesting shows off brownies and blueberry muffins ProStart students baked.

Wides’ fifth-grade classroom at Ozark North Elementary School. WILL PICKERING HELPS OZARK MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT LIAM DRENNICK. PICKERING GRADUATED FROM OZARK HIGH SCHOOL IN 2018 WITH THE A+ SCHOLARSHIP.
Advanced Option 6: Missouri Seal of Biliteracy

Offered through the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Missouri Seal of Biliteracy is awarded to high school students in districts with a DESE-approved program who have demonstrated achievement in English, a Language Other Than English (LOTE) and sociocultural competence, according to the DESE website. Ozark was one of 35 school districts in the state to offer the Seal of Biliteracy to 2018 graduating seniors. Twenty-three Ozark students earned the Seal, and three of those earned the Distinguished Seal.

There are two avenues to the Seal of Biliteracy: coming into the District with another language; or, more commonly, an English speaker who learns another language well enough to qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy.

"Not only do students earn college credit or future job recognition, but it’s also recognizing that we live in a global society and that possessing a language in addition to English is important," said Ozark’s Executive Director of Secondary Learning Melia Franklin, who also served on the state committee to implement the program in Missouri.

Some universities recognize the Seal and give students college credit, and some Missouri companies also use the Seal for hiring practices.

Advanced Option 7: Vocational Rehabilitation / Transitional Success Plan

Vocational Rehabilitation is for students who want to work but have a disability that prevents them from keeping or advancing in a job. The program specializes in employment and training services that can assist students in becoming employed, such as job shadowing, job coaching and mock interviews.

A Schoolwide Initiative

While Diploma & may sound like a program for graduating seniors, it is anything but. In order to be successful, it must be infused at every level of Ozark School District. "A concept like Diploma & doesn’t just start in eighth grade. It’s really built on this firm foundation of preschool through elementary and then on to middle school and junior high," Carson said. "It requires every one of our staff members to look at curriculum and really help students gain the foundation so they have the skills they need; they have the mathematical computation skills; they have the ability to communicate. And with those skills they move into these opportunities — all the different pathways they can choose to become successful in life."
Finley River School Helps Struggling Students Succeed.

Director Frances Gooden said there are a lot of special things about Finley River School such as the family atmosphere, the project-based curriculum and the fact that it doesn’t assign homework. It is those changes from the traditional high school setting that give FRS students the opportunity to thrive and graduate.

“The kids have to be here. Often their attendance is poor at the high school,” Gooden said. “The kids have to be here because we do all the work in class. But by being here, they become successful.”

Gooden said misconceptions about FRS include that it is an easy diploma, a totally online program, and a school for students with behavior issues.

“When people hear ‘alternative school’ they usually say something like, ‘Oh, so you teach the bad kids?’ My response is always, ‘No, I teach the fun kids,’” FRS teacher Kate Stine said. “Our students are bright, resourceful, resilient and a whole lot of fun. I love teaching at Finley because it allows me the opportunity to be a part of offering students a second chance at graduating.”

Students who attend Finley River School, however, may struggle. They may be working full time to help pay bills at home. They may not have strong family support. They may be in foster care. They may be battling depression, anxiety or a variety of home-life concerns.

“At Finley, we build in the space to teach the whole child, including those reasons why they are struggling,” Stine said. “When we do that, we find that these students excel academically and, most of the time, personally as well.”

Gooden said students choose to apply to FRS and then administrators must choose to accept them.

Being a small school with three teachers, one secretary and an average of 35 students each year, Gooden said FRS is tight-knit, which is vital for the success of the students.

“The kids here want to graduate. They want to do well in school, but for various reasons have been unsuccessful in a traditional classroom,” Gooden said. “We are academic, we just don’t use the traditional methods of teaching. We use methods that bring the kids’ interests in and get the kids involved with the learning. If you go into a classroom, there is usually more student input than teacher. The teachers lead the discussion, but the students are the ones who continue the discussion. And when the kids walk across that stage at graduation, they have learned the same curriculum as the other graduates. They’ve just done it differently.”

As you walk through the door, the sights, sounds and aromas of a restaurant consume you as the host leads you to your seat. The waiter takes your order and you can see the cooks preparing your food.

As you wait, you hear laughter from nearby tables. “They are so adorable” and “they are doing such a great job — so professional” seem to be central themes of the conversation.

It is the hustle and bustle of a restaurant — but it’s no ordinary restaurant. Each spring, second graders at Ozark East Elementary open a makeshift hot dog restaurant in the gymnasium for their parents and the community.

The restaurant is the culmination of an economics unit, where students learn about spending, saving and loans from local bankers, about restaurant management from a former McDonald’s franchise owner, and about goods and services through various books. Teacher Stacia Yerby said the hands-on experience helps bring those lessons to life.

“I love how excited it gets the kids about learning,” Yerby said about the restaurant. “They are very intrinsically motivated to learn their parts and lines. It’s hands-on and makes their learning real-world. It just connects to every part of their learning.”

Finley River School graduates snap a photo with their teachers, from left, Kate Stine, Ryan McClain and Jeanette Middleton.
Teaching Life Skills.

The Ozark Middle School classroom is abuzz with students talking about how to collect space junk, what types of sports could be played on a spaceship, and how to reflect water in space.

“Maybe when we make a colony on Mars, they can have satellites that go out and gather the water and bring it back to the colony,” seventh-grader Daniel Laney said.

The idea behind Laney’s team came from the movie “WALL-E,” where the characters collect ice from space, bring it on the ship and turn it into water.

The middle school teams are tasked with identifying a physical or social problem faced during a long-duration space exploration. Once students choose the problem, they are challenged to develop a solution as well as design, build, and program a robot.

“We have to think about problems in the real world and then try to solve them,” Laney said. “They could be good ideas or they could be bad ideas that we learn from and improve for next year.”

And this thought process is exactly what teachers Chelsie Floyd and Kyndal Monsanto hope the students learn from participating in the OMS Robotics Club.

“Last year our team made it to state. We didn’t have a high score on the robot, but we got an award for gracious professionalism.”

While the club may be called OMS Robotics, Monsanto and Floyd said it’s about so much more.

“They work hard for this. Once they build their robot, they program it. Then they are working on a real-life problem. The challenge allows the kids to think like scientists and engineers,” Floyd said. “Not only do the kids learn how to work together as a team from start to finish on a single project, but they learn how to be professional about it.”

Discovery: We explore new skills and ideas.

Innovation: We use creativity and persistence to solve problems.

Impact: We apply what we learn to improve our world.

Inclusion: We respect each other and embrace our differences.

Teamwork: We are stronger when we work together.

Fun: We enjoy and celebrate what we do.

Sixth- and seventh-grade students must tryout for Robotics Club, which is held daily during study hall time. After a lot of hard work in the classroom, students attend the FIRST LEGO League competition where they compete as teams against each other and other schools. Of the five teams that competed in November, two advanced to the state competition.

“Our purpose is to have a positive impact on our students,” Floyd said. “Our robotics students are interested in doing well in school and have an interest in attending college.”

FIRST LEGO League, which is a program developed to engage children with science and technology, incorporates six core values: discovery, innovation, impact, inclusion, teamwork and fun.

Floyd and Monsanto said they hope students learn to include these core values in their everyday lives.

“It teaches students that friendly competition and mutual gain are not separate goals, and that helping one another is the foundation of teamwork,” Monsanto said. “We really enjoy the atmosphere that is created from the core values and the FIRST LEGO League. It gives our kids a great opportunity to branch out, get out of their comfort zone and share ideas with community members. It’s amazing watching a child create an actual invention, then put it to use.”

Seventh-grader Maddox Rallis is considering career paths including chemical engineering and forensic science. He said Robotics Club is teaching him skills he needs for his future.

“It’s helps you learn a lot — it’s not all about robotics. You have to work with core values and with your team,” Maddox said. “Last year our team made it to state. We didn’t have a high score on the robot, but we got an award for gracious professionalism.”

The middle school teams are tasked with identifying a physical or social problem faced during a long-duration space exploration. Once students choose the problem, they are challenged to develop a solution as well as design, build, and program a robot.

“We have to think about problems in the real world and then try to solve them,” Laney said. “They could be good ideas or they could be bad ideas that we learn from and improve for next year.”

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Learning is Happening Everywhere

At Ozark Junior High School, students are often found in the hallways, quietly working on computers, collaborating, shooting a video or simply reading.

“We are proudly working with the Ozark Chamber and the Ozark School District under “Partners In Progress” meeting once a quarter to keep up to date on expansions and needs for all entities. Please join us!”

Family Matters

Drifting through the hallways at North Elementary are little voices singing very loudly. With a big smile, Principal Karen Hood said by the end of the school year, all students at North will know the song about the Seven Habits of Healthy Kids.

“Each month we are teaching the habit and a character trait,” Hood said. “It’s just amazing what they are doing.”

North Elementary students gather monthly for PBIS — Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports — Family Meetings. While PBIS isn’t new to North, the family meetings are. Designed to bring the school closer together, each “family” includes at least one class from each grade level.

“The purpose is to coordinate between kindergarten and fifth grade to give them opportunities to get together in a smaller setting and learn the habit of the month,” Hood said. “They do it in their own creative way. Each family has their own handshake, song, cheer or chant.”

During the family meetings, teachers also celebrate positive office referrals, something Hood said she hopes will encourage positive behaviors.

“It is showing students who are modeling that habit in a smaller setting,” Hood said. “It’s been really exciting to see how that will spread with that kind of recognition.”

The October habit — begin with the end in mind — is about setting goals. During the family meeting, fifth graders helped kindergartners set some goals for the school year.
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