



## Fun & Games at School

This month, on the reading front at OSA, we've been playing memory games to improve students' reading skills. The content and difficulty of the games vary across grade levels, but they all follow the same general pattern of laying out cards, facedown, in a grid. Players take turns flipping the cards over searching for a match. When a match is found, the player gets to keep those cards in a pile. Once all the cards have been collected, the player with the most pairs wins the round.



So why memory games? Because they offer a multitude of benefits for our students. First and most obviously, they're a great way to have fun while learning. With our youngest students, we use cards depicting, for example, letters of the alphabet, and other themes include CVC words, sight words, words with a particular digraph or consonant blend, and even nonsense words for our older students. Since our reading services are offered one-on-one or in small groups, students play against their teacher—you might be surprised at how competitive the students get!

Secondly, as memory games teach reading skills and increase visual recognition, they simultaneously lengthen attention span and strengthen the ability to focus. As a student's concentration improves, we add more cards to the game and we also extend the time allotment—from, say, 5 minutes to 10 or 15 minutes. Furthermore, concentration exercises like this boost memory as a whole; with repetition and practice, readers are able to transfer knowledge from their short-term memory to their long-term memory.

Finally, there's a strategic planning component to memory games: Eventually, players learn to plan their moves. Should they purposely reveal a card to their opponent? How do they want to plot their course for the most efficient or clever victory? All of the skills imparted as we "play cards" at school carry over into, home, work, and life.



## A Magical Season on Campus

As we prepare for holiday celebrations and new year resolutions, our OSA family has many achievements to be proud of. To see the look on a student's face when they read their first book is a truly indescribable feeling—it's like the joy of wishes coming true on Christmas morning! The credit of that moment belongs first and foremost to the student, who didn't give up despite years of trying, then also to each family and staff member who tirelessly applied research-based strategy after strategy until eventually uncovering what would work for that student.

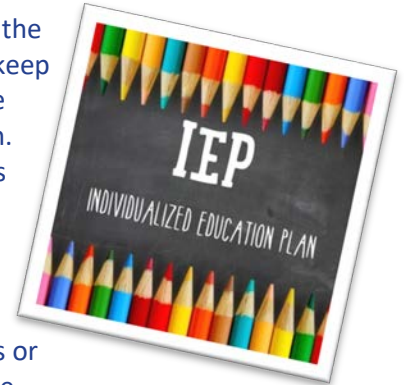
We aim to capture that sense of fulfillment and team effort in our classrooms every day, where this time of year, you'll see messages from elves encouraging students on skills they're working to master, messages like "Remember ... you can do hard things" (inspired by Amanda Houston). Students in Ms. Logan's class tested every pink pen they could find to determine if the notes left by their classroom elf were written in the school! Other students are busy supporting their peers, reminding them of their behavior contracts when they're contemplating a choice that could derail them from their goals.

The magic of the season continues on the middle school floor, where students can be found with their noses in a book every Tuesday and Thursday morning at 11:00, when it's time to "Drop Everything and Read." They're currently calculating unit pricing and engaging in intense sessions of multiplication Jenga. Elsewhere, our high school students are baking cupcakes and serving them at team meetings, completing community service toward their senior projects, and applying their artistic talents to our project-based learning activities. We continue to marvel at how they support one another and use their voices to improve our school community.

Going into the new year, we're committed to furthering the work we've been doing. We will consistently add new skills, focusing on challenging the brain rather than just completing tasks. We're teaching our students to embrace this challenge and that their possibilities are literally endless when they adopt this mindset. Happy holidays to all and thank you for your dedication to student achievement. The gift of learning is one that we impart every day and one that will last a lifetime.

## DEMYSTIFYING THE IEP PROCESS

Regardless of what holiday you celebrate this time of year, the season universally speaks to the sentiments of human kindness, compassion, generosity, and understanding. In an effort to keep the holiday spirit of giving alive all year long, we'd like to take this opportunity to deliver the gift of knowledge to new teachers and parents of students who qualify for special education. The IEP process applicable to these students is often seen as complex and multifaceted. This can be overwhelming to parents and new teachers alike ... but it doesn't need to be! So beginning with this issue of "The Wave," we'll include a link to a downloadable resource directly related to the IEP process. We'll make an effort to select helpful information conveyed in everyday language that can benefit all. Here's this month's offering to access whenever it's convenient for you: **SMART Goals Understood**. If you ever have any questions or would like further clarity about IEPs, you can email Karen Hitte, our IEP Coordinator, anytime ([khitte@oceanstateacademy.com](mailto:khitte@oceanstateacademy.com)), and she'd be happy to provide you with parent-friendly articles and publications that are particularly relevant and applicable.



## Go, Dragons, Go!

Congratulations to our latest Dragons of the Month—those students who stand out academically and behaviorally and therefore deserve a shout-out. This month we honor: Shiloh Steinhauer, Kayden Davis, Eliya White, Janiyus Jones, Robert Trowell, Andrew Newson, and Lamar Baker.





# COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays can be a difficult time for students and families, so we wanted to provide a list of community resources for anyone who could use a little assistance. (Note that program details are subject to change at any time, but current info is included below.) For additional support, please feel free to call the school during regular hours to speak to your student's social worker.



### Hasbro Children's Holiday Hope Fund

*Offering support to children and families during Christmastime*  
800-255-5516

### Rhode Island Center Assisting Those in Need

*Offering a Christmas gift program (which may include hygiene items and small holiday toys), a Santa's Workshop service, and the Second Cents Consignment store, along with a soup kitchen and pantry*  
2075 Matunuck Schoolhouse Rd.  
Charlestown, RI 02813  
401-364-9412

### Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center

*Offering free holiday food baskets for families in need*  
20 Marcus Wheatland Blvd.  
Newport, RI 02840  
401-846-4828

### Tap-In

*Offering families free and confidential referrals to holiday programs across the state*  
281 County Rd.  
Barrington, RI 02806  
401-247-1444

### Salvation Army

*Offering holiday gift program, job program information, and other forms of assistance*  
386 Broad St.  
Providence, RI 02907  
401-831-1119

### Salvation Army

*Offering social services that include holiday gifts/ clothing for children and programs that help with bills, rent, medications, etc.*  
102 High St.  
Pawtucket, RI 02860  
401-723-9533

### Salvation Army

*Offering holiday food baskets and an Angel Tree*  
51 Memorial Blvd.  
Newport, RI 02840  
401-846-3234

### Providence Rescue Mission

*Offering specialty programs throughout the holidays, including a Christmas Toy Ministry*  
627 Cranston St.  
Providence, RI 02907  
401-274-8861

### Salvatore Mancini Resource and Activity Center

*Offering year-round holiday meals*  
2 Atlantic Blvd.  
North Providence, RI 02911  
401-231-0742

### Community Action Program

*Offering various supports, such as help with heating bills, the Adopt a Family toy program, and parent access services*

- East Bay  
100 Bullocks Point Ave.  
Riverside, RI 02915  
401-437-1008
- CCAP  
311 Doric Ave.  
Cranston, RI 02910  
401-467-9610
- Tri-Town Community Action Agency  
1126 Hartford Ave.  
Johnston, RI 02919  
401-351-2750

### Bristol Good Neighbors

*Offering a food pantry and soup kitchen for hot holiday meals*  
55 Turner Ave.  
Riverside, RI 02915

### Kids Link

*A 24/7 behavioral health triage service and referral network offering mental health services and treatment referrals for children/youth in need*  
1011 Veterans Memorial Pkwy.  
East Providence, RI 02915  
855-543-5465

