



OLD TOWN HIGH SCHOOL

School Board Report - November 2021

Scott Gordon, Principal

Student Mental Health

Last month, one of our board members asked for a summary of what we are doing to attempt to remedy student mental health. Currently, we have (2) Pathways counselors who work with a caseload of students on a weekly/monthly basis depending on needs. We take referrals through our Student Services office. We also have a substance abuse counselor who has been with us for several years and she sees a caseload of students one time per week. These students are typically referred to this counselor through our Student Services office.

All of our administrators and guidance staff take drop-in student conversations on a daily basis and I can tell you that there has been an uptick in those over the course of the last two years. While we are not trained counselors per se, it does send the message to our students that we are here for them and willing to listen. When those conversations get to a certain level, we turn those over to someone with more training - (Pathways or substance - mentioned above). In a best case scenario, they just need an ear to listen, to let them know that they are going to be ok and that what they are experiencing is a normal part of growing up.

Last week, one of our Pathways counselors did an after school training for our staff to help them identify and work with students who have difficulty with anxiety.

As always, we are constantly on the lookout for any way to help our students through this most unusual time in their educational careers.

NEASC Accreditation

Earlier this fall, I wrote an email to the New Association of Schools and Colleges to request a one-year hiatus in embarking on Old Town High School's accreditation process. While the process has become a bit more streamlined and there are schools going through the process right now, I really felt like we would not be putting our best foot forward in proceeding with accreditation at this time. NEASC wrote back to me and granted a one-year waiver without penalty. We will officially begin the process next fall, which will allow us in the spring of this year to put together a solid plan with some members of our staff. I will share more with you as we move through the remainder of this school year.

Pooled Testing #'s

As of today, we currently have 330 students and staff in pooled testing on Monday of each week. Information on pooled testing, including a link for signing up, has been sent out in our parent email each week. We also have shared it on all of our social media platforms. We have tried really hard to get the word out and to make sure that everyone understands the benefits.

Winter Sports

Winter sports will begin on Monday, November 22nd. We did reach out to our parents to inform them that students who wished to participate in a winter sport would need to be involved in pooled testing. We had a handful of folks who asked questions, but nobody seemed to have any serious concerns with that change. Again, our motivation is to help protect all of our winter sports seasons and have our student-athletes and those who sit in classes next to them have that extra layer of protection. We greatly appreciate your support with this initiative. I am really surprised that more area schools are not taking this approach.

Winter sports schedules have been set and can be found on our website.

Fall Sports to the finish line

Our fall sports season came to a close last Saturday, when our field hockey team lost 1-0 to Leavitt Area HS. They took us on a thrilling ride through the playoffs, which included a Class B North Championship game win over Lawrence High School earlier in the week. Our field hockey team has enjoyed great success over the last decade, but have not advanced this far since winning the Eastern Maine Championship back in 1988. To date, we still have not won a state championship in field hockey. This group of girls had a tremendous season and have a lot to be proud of.

Enrollment

Grade 9 -	131
Grade 10 -	130
Grade 11 -	132
Grade 12 -	131
TOTAL -	524

Thanks so much for all of your on-going support and have a great month!



Principal, OTHS