



Old Town High School
School Board Report
June, 2019

Scholarship Night

Scholarship Night went very well for the Class of 2019, as those going on to post-secondary educational opportunities earned over \$1.22 million in funds – combining local awards with those awarded by schools. We had 19 students earning Honors or Honors & STEM diplomas, which is a very healthy number. The whole ceremony went well, despite a 30-second still unexplained loss of lights and microphone on the stage. I suppose it could have been the ghosts of Old Town High School playing with me, as it happened at exactly the time that I was about to say my daughter's name.

Graduation

Graduation for the Class of 2019 also went extremely well. A “surprise” visit by US Senator Susan Collins to honor and recognize Emma Hargreaves and Mike May added to the excitement of the evening. This was a really fun class to work with as they were on-time each day, behaved very well as seemed to enjoy each other's company as they worked through the preparations that we had for them during graduation week.

Spring Sports

Our spring sports came to a rather abrupt end during graduation week. Our baseball team lost 4-2 in the quarterfinals to Brewer in a 14-inning nail-biter. Our softball team fell to perennial arch-rival Hermon in the semi-finals the day after graduation. Our track team had a great season, with our girls finishing 3rd in the PVC & 5th in the state meet. Our boys' finished 4th in the PVC & 10th in the state meet.

We had a healthy number of individuals who performed well at the state meet. Emma Hargreaves won the state championship in both the shot put and the discus. Trey Dorr won the 100 meter and the 4x 100-meter team of Tre Dorr, Elijah Veilleux, Nicholas Letourneau and Zach Fostun sprinted to the gold medal. In addition, Izzy

Trefts set the pace with a state record in the 1600-meter race walk and Gracie Sanborn fosbury flopped her way to a state championship in the high jump.

Attendance Procedure

Beginning this fall, we returned to an in-house attendance policy in hopes to curb all absences, but specifically unexcused absences. We asked parents/guardians to not only call our attendance hotline if their son or daughter was going to miss a day of school, but we also requested that they send a written note upon their student's return to school. In addition, in order for the absence to be excused, it had to meet one of the five criteria outlined in state law. (illness, professional appointment, a family emergency, a pre-approved family trip or an observed religious holiday) On top of that, if a student had an absence which remained "unexcused" – (the absence did not meet one of the five criteria above, or there was no note) – any homework, quiz or test given on that day would not receive credit.

Unfortunately, Infinite Campus does not separate data reports for unexcused absences vs. excused absences easily, the program looks at all absences equally in terms of totals. Therefore, there is no real data to support whether or not the number of unexcused absences for this year actually decreased. Anecdotally, asking parents/guardians to take the extra step of sending a note seems to be the correct thing to do in order to place the emphasis on the importance of making certain that students miss school only when necessary. Our intent is to stay the course with this procedure and keep the focus on creating a culture within our community that attendance every day is vital to student success.

In terms of contacting parents for absences, the teachers are and should be the first line of defense. They will notice a student absent from their class long before I will when I pull a daily or weekly attendance report at the end of the day or on a Friday afternoon. When the teacher does not have an impact through parent contact, our guidance counselors reach out to parents/students and then in extreme cases, our administrators get involved through phone calls and letters. Our guidance and administrative staff meet every Wednesday afternoon to talk about students who are not thriving as they should and attendance is always a topic.

The summer months are typically a time where I collect student data and attendance is always a part of that effort. I would be happy to share my findings around attendance (and other areas) with you in my August board report.

OTHS Students taking College Classes

During this past year, we had several students who took one or more college classes, earning dual credit. Students took classes from either University of Maine, Husson University or Eastern Maine Community College. Here is how they fared:

A's	47
B's	15
C's	2
Other	5

If we look at just Husson University and the fall semester of University of Maine, students earned 204 college credits, for a total savings of \$105, 510 to local families. That is very impressive.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Gordon

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Principal