



OLD TOWN HIGH SCHOOL

School Board Report - October 2020
Scott Gordon, Principal

PSATs

On Wednesday, October 14th, 91 students took the PSAT at Old Town High School. The PSAT is a practice opportunity for the SAT. The overwhelming data (and common sense) tell us that the more opportunities that a student has to take the test, the better they eventually score on the SAT, which is still given in the spring of a student's junior year. This offering of the PSAT was taken by 17 students in grade 9, 38 students in grade 10 and 36 students in grade 11. The PSAT was paid for by our MELMAC grant. Our teaching staff proctored the test, and they were scheduled in a way where they did not need to postpone their regular Wednesday class meetings with students. Due to limited spacing, students were asked to sign up prior to testing using a google form. Transportation was offered to those who needed it and two students were transported home.



38 students take the PSAT in the cafeteria at Old Town High School.

Threading the Needle

One of the biggest challenges this fall has been what I refer to as 'threading the needle.' By that I mean finding that groove where most of your students are comfortable with the both the pace and the level of rigor that we are able to provide in a setting

where we see students in person for two days and then see them only virtually for three others. I am consistently impressed by not only the volume of work, but more importantly the creativity that our teachers have shown in an attempt to meet our students' needs. The task is far from easy and many teachers report that it is like being a first year teacher all over again. All of the "normal" routines that they became accustomed to have either gone away or have had to be re-created to fit this teaching/learning environment. In the end, I share the hope that many others in education have as well; that we will come out of this whole ordeal better off, with a more refined virtual modality for teaching and communicating with our students and a more technologically savvy school staff as a whole.

We have paid close attention to what the experts are touting as best practices around online teaching and learning. Some of the recommendations that our teachers have placed a priority on are: clear expectations for students, providing as much feedback as possible, recording lessons and making those readily available, utilizing both synchronous and asynchronous learning, having office hours for struggling students to get support and enhancing communication to students and parents.

With regard to communication, I attached a newsletter for Algebra 2 Honors that Jennifer Dunham sent to her students and parents. It is extremely well done and is just one example of the extra effort being made to help students find success.

JROTC

On Tuesday, October 6th, our JROTC Coyote Battalion transferred student leadership to our new Battalion Commander, Garrett Engstrom in their Assumption of Command ceremony. Garrett is a senior and a 4-year JROTC cadet. He is a fantastic student and is already a natural leader in the hallways and on the athletic fields of OTHS. Last spring, he was the state winner for the prestigious Legion of Valor award, which is awarded annually to an outstanding 2nd or 3rd year cadet who shows exceptional achievement of scholastic excellence in military and academic subjects. The nomination process is national and the award is given on average to one cadet in every 4,000. To our knowledge, this is the first time that an OTHS cadet has earned this honor. Garrett is busy preparing an application for West Point, where he hopes to attend in the fall of 2021.

In the early morning hours of Friday, October 2nd, 13 JROTC cadets joined a handful of OT staff in the Coyote version of the Mogadishu Mile on the track at Victory Field. This exercise was designed to commemorate the 27th anniversary of Operation Gothic Serpent, more commonly known as "Blackhawk Down."

The pics below:

On the left - our 13 JROTC cadets who participated.

On the right - Garrett Engstrom, Mike May and Steve Szewc



Fall Sports Update

So far, so good with regard to fall sports at Old Town High School. There are certainly some sacrifices that all have made in order to make this fall season happen, but the most important thing is that our students have had a chance to participate in the sport/activity that they enjoy. They have been able to reap the benefits of all that those activities can offer them beyond just a won/loss record. Football has happened, but without pads and minimal contact in what is essentially the backyard two-hand touch version of the game. All officials and players are in masks for the entire game and players on the sidelines are spaced out with cones. In boys'/girls' soccer the game has made some modifications around the timing of the play and corner kicks in addition to all players being in masks. Field hockey has also made some modifications around how the ball is played, especially when players come together to play a loose ball. Golf and cross country have essentially been played as normal, with the exception of cross country meets that start in waves as opposed to everyone at the starting line at once. The other major change has been the lack of fans at Victory Field. This change mirrors what is being done at most other venues across the region. We moved our "senior games" to honor our senior athletes early in the season, just in case an outbreak forced the cancellation of the remainder of our schedule. While our parents and community supporters did not like this change any more than we did, they have grown

accustomed to it and for the most part have been cooperative and respectful. Our athletic director, Jeremy Bousquet has done an amazing job of making sure that each contest, regardless of sport and regardless of level (JV/Varsity) has had livestream coverage for people to enjoy - literally all over the world. The potential exists for our games to reach a broader audience than ever before.

I have a list of upcoming contests at the end of this report - including the typical links to tune in and view a game.

Watching out for our Full Remote learners

As you can see from the numbers below, we have 96 students who have made the decision to do all of their learning from home with no days of in-person instruction. Between our school counselors, administration and a couple other people, we have divided that list up and we are checking in on them at least weekly. Sometimes they simply need to vent, sometimes they need material physically delivered to them (which we do) and other times they need us to be the liaison between them and a teacher. Most importantly, we want them to know that we are here and we care about their success.

COVID Council

Our OTHS “Covid Council” met on Thursday, October 1st. We received some good feedback, mostly positive about how things were going so far. There were a few issues brought up, mostly around very specific student issues that we were already aware of and dealing with or that had been resolved already. We are meeting again on Thursday, November 5th.

Upcoming Athletic Events

Thursday	October 15	Boys Soccer	vs. John Bapst	6:00
Friday	October 16	Football	@ Foxcroft	6:00
Friday	October 16	Cross Country	@ Bangor	4:00
Monday	October 19	Girls Soccer	vs. PVHS	4:00
Tuesday	October 20	Girls Soccer JV	vs. Orono	3:30
Tuesday	October 20	Boys Soccer JV	vs. Orono	5:30
Wednesday	October 21	Field Hockey	@ John Bapst	3:30
Wednesday	October 21	Football	@ Hampden	6:00
Thursday	October 22	Field Hockey	vs. Orono	3:30
Thursday	October 22	Girls Soccer	@ Orono	3:30 / 5:00
Friday	October 23	Boys Soccer	@ Orono	3:30 / 5:00

Friday	October 23	Football	vs. Brewer	6:00
Friday	October 23	Cross Country JV	@ Hampden	TBA
Monday	October 26	Girls Soccer	@ Bangor	4:00 / 6:00
Monday	October 26	Boys Soccer	vs. Bangor	4:00 / 6:00
Tuesday	October 27	Field Hockey	vs. John Bapst	3:30
Wednesday	October 28	Girls Soccer	@ Orono	3:30
Wednesday	October 28	Boys Soccer	@ Orono	5:00
Wednesday	October 28	Football	vs. Orono	6:00
Friday	October 30	Football	vs. Bucksport	6:00
Saturday	October 31	Cross Country	North Regional Meet	TBA
Tuesday	November 3	Football	vs. Hermon	6:00
Thursday	November 5	Football	@ Bangor	6:00
Saturday	November 7	Cross Country State Meet	@ Belfast	TBA

By the Numbers

<u>Total Enrollment</u>	543
Grade 9	133
Grade 10	137
Grade 11	129
Grade 12	144
Monday/Tuesday Cohort	219
Thursday/Friday Cohort	195
All Remote	96 (17.6%) [+2% from last month]
Always In (Self-Contained)	18
UTC Students (Monday/Friday)	35

As always, if you have any questions or concerns - please feel free to drop me an email.

Sincerely,



Principal