

Old Town High School

"Where Students are Challenged to Learn and Supported to Succeed."

School Board Report –September 2017

OPENING

We had a very solid opening to the school year. Our Freshman class, 140 strong, arrived on Wednesday, August 30th. They were with us for a half day, and this gave them an opportunity to learn their schedule, get used to the building, meet our staff and then do some of the little things like navigating the lunch line and opening their lockers. While these seem like minor things, they can be the cause of great anxiety for students in a typical school day with upperclassmen in the hallway. This day allowed our newest students to feel comfortable doing those little things and have the building to themselves. This is by far the most important transition activity that we do for our grade 9 students.

ATHLETICS

The fall sports season started way back on August 21st for our student-athletes, and the season is now nearly a month old. With the exception of the golf team, which is still unbeaten as I write this, no other team is pulling away from the competition, but all teams have a respectable record at this point in the season.

This is the first season in a while that the 'Scheduling Gods' have not been able to accommodate our request for a home football game on the Friday evening of Riverfest. They receive requests from every school, for homecomings or other similar annual events at each school. While they try to make it all fit for everyone, they cannot possibly guarantee it, and we have made some adjustments. We will have a home girls' soccer game on the Friday night of Riverfest, and we will have our Homecoming/Spirit Week activities run a little bit later than normal.

I have known since last spring that the schedule was going to play out this way, and I immediately contacted the Riverfest Committee to make sure that they were aware and understood.

There are still plenty of opportunities to catch a home contest in any of our sports – please refer to the Upcoming Events section at the bottom of this report for a list of home contests over the next three weeks. A complete schedule of games can be found on our web-site at this link:

<https://sites.google.com/a/rsu34.k12.me.us/old-town-high-school/athletics/schedules-2>

GUIDANCE NEWS

Our Guidance department is together for their 2nd year, and both counselors, who were brand-new last year, seem to be settling in quicker this year after a year under their belt.

They were busy with scheduling changes in the first couple of weeks, and that period of time went very well this year. As a department, they are teaching "Success 101" this year, which is a class that guidance and our administration has developed over the last several years. We target students who are unsure of their plan after OTHS, and need help with the college search process, the application process, and the financial aid process. There are guest speakers, including OTHS alumni, field trips to area colleges, and a great deal of discussion and support for students as they embark on considering their next steps following that walk across the stage in MacKenzie Gymnasium to receive a handshake and a diploma from Mr. Walker.

On Tuesday, September 19th, we will host our annual Senior Parent College Night. The Guidance staff will talk with senior parents about the application process. Myla Tappan from the Finance Authority of Maine will be in attendance to talk about the financial aid process. This evening is great for all parents, but especially those who have not been through the process before.

We will take juniors and seniors to the U-Maine College Fair on Tuesday, September 26th.

We will offer the PSAT for all students in grades 9 thru 11 on October 11th. This will mark the first time that we have given the PSAT to freshmen.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

We have been planning for our Alternative Education program since the budget successfully passed last spring. As you know from the August School Board meeting, Bryan Murphy expressed interest in the teaching position and we chose him to lead this program. He has a passion for these students, and he has successfully started two separate programs from the ground up and that experience is important to get things off the ground quickly.

We have developed a series of documents and processes to admit students into the program. By talking with other teachers/schools in the area who have a similar program, we have been able to take the best of what is out there to 'borrow' and adjust to what makes sense for our school and our students. The program has been really well received by OTHS staff, as most seem to recognize a real need for something different for some of our students. We are very excited about our start with this program. I will continue to update you on our progress as the year rolls on.

OPEN HOUSE

On Wednesday, September 12th, we held our annual Open House. We had a very good turnout, and a particularly strong turnout from parents & families of our freshmen students. We began their evening a bit earlier, as we had them attend an informational session on our 1:1 laptop program. While we had a captive audience, we also talked for a bit about proficiency-based diplomas and our 'Building Assets, Reducing Risks' program. In general, it was a great night for parents of all students to attend, meet their child's teachers and ask any early questions that they may have as the school year gets rolling.

JOBS FOR MAINE'S GRADUATES

We are very fortunate to have two JMG specialists at OTHS this year. Courtney Withee will teach the JMG core curriculum to students, and Amy Dow will be our Career Center/MELMAC specialist. Both are great young ladies with a lot of energy, they will be great additions to our school, and will be able to offer a great deal for our students. I will make sure that they come to a future meeting to share more about their roles with you.

OTHS HALL-OF-FAME

Just as a quick update on our Hall-of-Fame ceremony date, we are going to hold that this year during the winter sports season as opposed to the fall. We have been talking about trying that change for a couple of years, and this coming year in particular, we are inducting three former basketball players (Matt Arsenault, Denise Treadwell-Smith, and Katie Bergeron) – so it seems to be a good fit for the winter season. We will hold the ceremony in the late afternoon, and then re-introduce the inductees at halftime of a home game that evening. The other inductees this year are Moira Vereault and Hilary Maxim. We are just waiting on a finalized winter sports schedule to choose a date.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Tuesday, September 19	Senior Parent – College Night – OTHS Café – 5:30pm
Tuesday, September 19	Field Hockey vs. Hermon – 3:30pm
Wednesday, September 20	Golf – Home Meet – 4pm
Friday, September 22	Football vs. Stearns – 7pm
Saturday, September 23	Cross Country – Home Meet – 1pm
Tuesday, September 26	Boys' Soccer vs. MCI – 3:30pm
Thursday, September 28	Boys' Soccer vs. Ellsworth – 6:30pm
Thursday, September 28	Field Hockey vs. John Bapst – 4pm
Friday, September 29	Girls' Soccer vs. Ellsworth – 6:30pm
Friday, September 29	Football @ Houlton – 7pm
Monday, October 2	JV Football vs. Houlton – 4pm
Friday, October 6	Football vs. MCI – 7pm
Friday, October 6	1 st Quarter Progress Reports
Friday, October 6	LifeTouch Picture Day

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH – ‘SEPTEMBER 2017’

Grade 9 – Riley Tibbits

Grade 10 – Emily Spencer

Grade 11 – Dante Crenshaw

Grade 12 – Scott Duff

Staff of the Month – Carol Quimby

Enrollment (as of September 18, 2017)

Grade 12	131
Grade 11	122
Grade 10	131
Grade 9	140
TOTAL	524
UTC Enrollment	56

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott W. Gordon

Scott Gordon

Principal