



OYSTER RIVER COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dr. James C. Morse, Sr.

Volume 2 | Issue 5 | January 2021

SUPERINTENDENT NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff and Students,

It is an understatement how proud I am of our community of learners. Despite the challenges of 2020, here we are in 2021 with hope of a vaccine on the horizon. It is hard not to continue to acknowledge how challenging 2020 has been for families, students, and the school system. We continue to appreciate your collaboration, and support as we turn the corner into 2021 and I hope that this newsletter finds you all healthy.

Our message as we enter 2021 and return from remote learning is that we all play a role in keeping each other safe and healthy. The holidays posed a strong challenge for our schools and pandemic fatigue was evident. Since the pandemic started, we have asked parents to review the [standard screening protocol](#) every day before sending their children to school. Our faculty and staff are required to do so as well.

We want to keep our schools open, and we want to increase in person learning opportunities for students. In order to do so, we have to work together so we do not put students and staff at risk. If staff exposure continues, then we cannot stay open or run a school if they are in quarantine.

We began having problems with community spread around Halloween which was evident with COVID-19 numbers having increased in Durham and Strafford County. It seemed every day I was sending notices home to notify you of a closure to a program or class due to "presumed positive" or "confirmed positive" cases. In nearly every instance, closure was due to community spread.

Although some of these instances could not be avoided, we need a firm commitment to each other. When children are sent to school with cold or flu like symptoms, our nurses immediately must start our protocol → Call you at home. → Send the child home. Our school nurses do not have COVID-19 testing available to them so they must assume that any cold or flu-like symptoms could be COVID-19.

(cont. on pg 2)

[NEW COVID-19 DASHBOARD](#)

[ORCSD PRE-ENTRY SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE](#)

We all play a role in keeping each other safe and healthy!



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**COMMITTED TO LEARNING
TOGETHER- Safely!**

Sadly, many of these cases in the last few months have resulted in children or family members testing positive for COVID-19, forcing the shut-down of a class or a program. The holidays were especially problematic; it is so hard not to see one's extended family or friends during the holiday season.

Pandemic fatigue is real. It is human nature to let our guard down as the pandemic continues month after month. Seemingly innocent interactions have been key reasons why we've had to move to remote learning. It is imperative that you pledge to each other to make decisions that can help us bring more students back to the schools.

There are many real-life stories where Oyster River families or staff were unknowingly exposed to COVID. Once these cases reached our schools and our classrooms, it resulted in a program or classroom closure; therefore it is imperative you review each of the questions on the Pre-Entry Screening Questionnaire every single day.

[Click here to see questionnaire.](#)

As the nurses discussed in the [recent school board meeting](#), we need your full transparency as we conduct our own contact tracing since DHHS is no longer timely in providing support. In August, we would hear from them within 48 hours, today it can take a week or more. The burden of this work is now on district nurses. If they suspect exposure, they ask staff members or families to quarantine and get tested. Testing now takes more time than it did in the fall, and the results of those tests often take days.

Everything we do, every decision we make, is to keep our students, staff, and families as safe as possible during this pandemic. This is our sacred duty. We recognize the inconvenience, the burden, and the stress that this places on families and staff. We need everyone to be diligent in following health and safety guidelines.

HOW TO GET THE LATEST INFORMATION:

ORCS D continues to provide updates to our plan on our website, found at:



[https://orcsd.org/student_services/health_and_wellness/COVID-19.](https://orcsd.org/student_services/health_and_wellness/COVID-19)

We will be communicating via our website instead of sending letters each time we have an exposure or confirmed/presumed case.

School Nurses and Administrators will continue to contact anyone who has been exposed; this will not change. If any student or staff member is at risk or if a class or program is closed, you will still be notified directly.

The website now includes a [DASHBOARD](#) that will be updated with student and staff counts for positive cases, and those in quarantine by building. The website will also include the weekly metric adopted by the school board that is being used as a tool in our weekly review by our District Governance Committee.

Our school nursing department sent out a letter this week in preparation for the return to in person learning and included all necessary links. I am including their letter below as an additional reminder.

Students who need additional assistance

Every school principal is committed to help students who are struggling with remote learning. From September through December hundreds of children have come to their schools for additional help. If your son or daughter is having difficulty, please contact your school principal. If your student has an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and is experiencing challenges with services, please contact your school's Assistant Director of Student Services.

Mast Way: Principal Misty Lowe, mlope@orcsd.org

Moharimet: Principal David Goldsmith, dgoldsmith@orcsd.org

Mast Way and Moharimet Assistant Director of Student Services: Brian Ryan bryan@orcsd.org

OR Middle School: Principal Jay Richard, jrichard@orcsd.org

ORMS Assistant Director of Student Services: Andrea Biniszkievicz, abiniszkievicz@orcsd.org

OR High School: Principal Suzanne Filippone, sfilippone@orcsd.org

ORHS Assistant Director of Student Services: Melissa Jean, mjean@orcsd.org

PEP Coordinator: Laurie Grant, lgrant@orcsd.org

Director of Student Services: Catherine Plourde, cplourde@orcsd.org

From the School Counseling Department

[*Change Directions Campaign.docx*](#)

Assistant Superintendent Report

FALL 2020 SAT DATA	AVERAGE SCORE		% PROFICIENT	
	ORHS	STATE	ORHS	STATE
MATH TEST	566	509	67	43
EVIDENCE-BASED READING AND WRITING TEST	578	516	86	65
OVERALL	1144	1040	70	42

The disruptions to school created by the pandemic have caused many to raise concern about the academic achievement of our students. These are legitimate questions to raise. Regardless of whether a student is learning in-person or virtually the pandemic has impacted the experience. To maintain safe 6-foot social distancing at school it has been necessary to reduce class sizes. Smaller class sizes force a reduction in student-teacher contact time. Less contact time means less instruction for students. This simple fact cannot be ignored and could impact directly student achievement.

One key measure the ORCSD uses to measure academic achievement is the SAT. Most of us are familiar with the SAT as it has been widely administered to college bound students since the 1950s. In 2016 the State of New Hampshire adopted the SAT as our state assessment. The state administration of the SAT is supposed to occur for all 11th graders in the spring but was unable to happen in 2020 due to the COVID shutdown starting in March. To make up for this New Hampshire administered the SAT to all 12th graders this fall.

The Fall NH SAT results were made available to us earlier this month and are shown in the chart below. Coincidentally our average score in Fall 2020 was identical to Spring 2019 which was pre-pandemic. As usual our students compared extremely well to state averages. It should be noted that the SAT is a test geared at measuring achievement levels of students through 11th grade. In a normal year our students would have had the SAT in early April, so it is not surprising that we see little or no impact of the pandemic on our data, other than a slightly lower participation rate this fall due to individual COVID concerns related to it being an in-person test.



Hybrid Models Approved by the ORCSD School Board

Elementary Hybrid Program

The Moharimet and Mast Way programs will start up again on January 19, 2021 as they were before the holidays. This allowed 14 days between New Year's Day and the restart of the elementary program, hopefully mitigating the possibility of community spread of COVID into the schools as it did from October through December.

ORMS Hybrid Plan

The proposed middle school plan will start January 26, 2021 IF COVID numbers allow.
{[Pending School Board Approval](#)}

The Board approved a one day per week in school model for Grades 6- 8 but, did not change the Grade 5 model. The ORCSD School Board approved this plan at their December 16th meeting for POSSIBLE implementation on January 26, 2021 depending on COVID cases in our area. Parents will still have the choice of sending their children to school or keeping them entirely remote. Any hybrid plan has both pluses and minuses. The upside of this plan is that every student can have in-school contact with their teacher if their parent so chooses. The downside of this plan is that every student will experience an asynchronous day, meaning less contact with their teacher.

Principal Richard has placed both World Language and Music on asynchronous days to help mitigate this situation, and the teaching staff will be working on other ways to improve asynchronous time for students.

Principal Richard is meeting with parents to explain the new program via teams and has produced a power point to help parents understand this new hybrid model. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact Principal Richard at jrichard@orcsc.org.

[Learn More Here](#)

ORHS Hybrid Plan

The proposed high school plan will start February 1, 2021 IF COVID numbers allow.
{[Pending School Board Approval](#)}

Oyster River High School Principal Suzanne Filippone presented a plan to have 50% of high school students return to school at one time. She proposed a morning/afternoon alternate day model. The proposed new schedule recognizes the complexities of the schedules and balances the needs of families who wish their children to come to school with those who prefer remote classes. Unlike K-8, when students enter high school, they have a "choice" as to which classes they wish to take, as students move beyond 9th grade, choice becomes an even greater factor. The result is a very complex schedule in which students mix together in both age and grade level.

High school students will have the choice of coming to school 2 days per week, in the afternoon and going to their scheduled classes or staying remote and going to their scheduled classes in the morning. Both groups will see their teachers, be able to interact, ask questions and begin their assignments.

Both groups will have asynchronous time without their teachers to complete multi-day assignments. The advantage to this model is continued direct contact to one's teachers and no change in the master schedule. The disadvantage to this model is increased asynchronous time.

[Learn More Here](#)

Transportation & School Nutrition

Our bus drivers continue to transport children. We are limiting the number of students per bus to no more than 27. Children are sitting by the slightly open windows, wearing face masks. We have had to quarantine drivers and students due to COVID, even with these protocols in place. So far, we have been able to continue bus service. When drivers are out, runs are adjusted, sometimes with very little notice. This also adds to the frustration families feel when routes have to be adjusted. This will continue to be the case as it is inevitable that COVID creates a driver shortage. For additional information, please contact Transportation Director, Lisa Huppe at lhuppe@orcsd.org

The school nutrition program continues to serve families throughout the district. If you wish lunch or breakfast for your child(ren), please contact School Nutrition Director, Doris Demers ddemers@orcsd.org.

All student meals are free at this time until further notice.

Lunch Menus - Oyster River Cooperative School District (orcsd.org)

We want to make your life easier! Order for everyone in your household!

If you wish to order an extra FREE meal for a younger sibling not in school, put your student's name and add the siblings name. If you would like to order for yourself, put a child's name followed by "Parent" and we will charge your child's account the adult meal price of \$2.00 for Breakfast and \$4.50 for lunch.

Please check account balances at <https://family.titank12.com> to assure your child does not have a negative balance. No funds are needed at this time unless you are purchasing adult meals. Remember, SendMoneyToSchool is no longer being used, all balances were transferred last August. You must create a Titan account to view balances or add funds for parent meals at <https://family.TitanK12.com>.

DELIBERATIVE SESSION

Deliberative Session is scheduled for Tuesday, February 2, 2021 at Oyster River High School. There will be some changes due to COVID in order to keep everyone as safe as possible. Attendees are expected to wear masks and honor 6' distancing. Only 90 seats will be available in the ORHS auditorium so the high school gymnasium will also be set up with audio and video as an overflow room.

By state law no one can be disenfranchised from Deliberative session so the Music room behind the stage will be equipped with audio and video and set up for those who choose not to wear a mask. A separate entrance in front of the building will be open for those without masks.

All attendees will be asked the standard COVID related questions to enter either the auditorium or gymnasium. Hand sanitizer will be available as you enter any of the spaces reserved for Deliberative session.

IMPORTANT LINKS

1. ORCSD COVID QUESTIONNAIRE

<https://www.orcsd.org/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=15098306>

2. ORCSD Health Procedures

<https://orcsd.org/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=15098304>

3. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for COVID-19 from the NH DHHS

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/covid-19-faq.pdf>

4. NH DHHS Self-Isolation Guide

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/self-isolation-covid.pdf>

5. NH DHHS Self-Quarantine Guide

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/self-quarantine-covid.pdf>



If the SAU can be of service, please contact:

Superintendent ~ Dr. Jim Morse at jmorse@orcsd.org

Assistant Superintendent ~ Todd Allen at tallen@orcsd.org

Director of Student Services ~ Catherine Plourde at cplourde@orcsd.org

Business Administrator ~ Susan Caswell at scaswell@orcsd.org