November 9, 2006

Dear High School Parents and Guardians,

The end of October closed with a number of school-wide initiatives and events. We once again held our "Raising Aspirations Day" in which all freshmen attended Thomas College, all sophomores and juniors were administered the PSAT's, and all sophomores participated in our "Sophomore Awareness" program held at Camp Ketcha in Scarborough. Though these activities can result in time out of the regular classroom, they are each critical components to our total educational experience. The school administration and members of the staff, however, do review and assess the significance of each program and make modifications and changes for the following year.

Dr. Michael Kramer was our guest speaker on October 18. Parent turnout was small but participation in the discussions was good. It was recommended that the high school should invite Dr. Kramer back and, again, promote the program and topics to be covered. Regardless of the small numbers, I believe that it is our obligation as a high school to strive in initiating dialogue between parents and the school.

The high school completed the NWEA testing of all freshman and sophomores in reading, language arts, and math. This information will give teachers an indication of their students' current strengths and weaknesses and also baseline data to compare progress towards the close of the year with further testing in late spring.

Members of the Student Council, Interact Club, and National Honor Society hosted the Halloween Senior Citizen Dinner on Thursday, October 26. Students prepared and served a spaghetti and meatball dinner with salad and dessert for approximately forty citizens from Old Orchard Beach. Everyone enjoyed the meal and looked forward to the next one, which will be scheduled in the spring. My thanks and appreciation go out to the students and advisors Craig Pendergrass, Erin Quale, and Maura Price.

The Interact Club was also busy at the *Barbara Bush Wing* at Maine Medical Center last week. Eight students participated in a pumpkin painting activity at the hospital on October 26 for the children. Then on October 30, eight other students brought "treats" to the young patients. The hospital restricted the number of students who could take part in each event, or many more of our students would have been involved. My thanks go to Ms. Quale and the members of Interact, who have given their time for such good causes.

Eight students are currently enrolled in the York County Regional Fine Arts Program hosted at Biddeford High School. These students are participating in programs that include sculpture, dance, theater, and vocal music. Students are transported to and from Old Orchard Beach High School to attend the ten (10) sessions, over the course of the school year. Five sessions are held during each semester. Guidance counselor Angela Devoid has taken on the role as the coordinator for Old Orchard Beach. My thanks to her for taking on this added responsibility.

The high school parent-teacher conferences are coming up this month. We hope to have very good parent participation, especially with our parent portal now in place for easy parent access to up-to-date student grades. Along with student's current grade status, topics that parents should expect teachers to address will include:

- Your son or daughter's daily preparation for class
- Daily attendance and tardiness
- An assessment of daily participation, or lack of
- The quality of work that is submitted on a regular basis
- Daily " in class" effort

Congratulations go to the Marching Band and Band Driector Mark Manduca for winning its 2nd consecutive gold medal at the finals in Biddeford on Saturday, November 4th. Led by Drum Major Malory Peterson, the band gave its finest performance of the season and delighted the large crowd. This is OOB's 3rd gold medal in the seven years of the medal scoring system.

The high school will be formally inviting our graduates from the class of 2006 to a breakfast at the high school on Tuesday, November 21. The purpose for this invitation will be to have them talk to our seniors about their first semester experiences in a college environment. They will also be able to share with members of the high school staff valuable information pertaining to how well we helped prepare them for college. I envision this to become an annual event. Feel free to drop in on the 21st.

In attempting to keep parents better informed about what is going on in the various academic departments, different courses will be highlighted in each letter entitled "From the Classroom" This month the science department offers you an example on the following page of an ***Advanced Biology*** class which extended beyond the classroom walls.

On behalf of the high school staff, I would like to wish you all a safe and happy Thanksgiving.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rick DiFusco, Principal

Advanced Biology Expands Beyond the Classroom: An Exploration of the Intertidal Rocky Coast of Maine

Submitted by Ms. Maura Price

Last week this class went on an intertidal adventure to examine how and why certain species live in certain areas of the intertidal area and not in other areas. The purpose of the lab was to gather first-hand data to support the concepts students had been studying in class. Twelve students accompanied Ms. Price to Kettle Cove in Cape Elizabeth on a chilly, but sunny Thursday morning. Low tide was at 8:30 am, so the entire tidal shore was exposed for examination. The lab procedure asked students to visually determine the location of the "splash zone", "upper zone", "middle zone" and "lower zone". Students then used marked quadrants to count organism population samples within each zone and record their data. Working in three small groups, students recorded data on each zone for both consumers (animals) and producers (algae), being careful to disturb the organisms as little as possible while still collecting all the necessary data.

The intertidal zone is a particularly interesting and effective way to study ecology because it is known as an *ecological microcosm*, meaning that it is a small, representative system that demonstrates almost all of the general principles of ecology. Students have been learning that in general, organisms in the intertidal reside in specific areas or zones, rather than throughout the entire area. The reason for this is the interaction between abiotic (nonliving) and biotic (living) factors. For example, barnacles primarily reside in the upper intertidal because they would dry out too much in the splash zone. Also, they would be eaten by predatory snails if they lived in the middle zone.

Back at school, students graphed their data so that they could easily view the trends in organisms throughout the four zones. Each group is using these graphs to develop generalizations about their data that support what they have learned in class. They are currently working on a lab conclusion paper that asks them first to describe what they know about concept (how zonation works in the intertidal), and then give specific evidence from their lab that supports their description of the concept. Students will continue to use this model for writing lab conclusions throughout the year.