Merrimack High School
Annual Report
2021-2022 School Year

Many significant accomplishments highlighted our 2021-2022 school year. The new Vision of a Graduate, prepared for our decennial NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) re-accreditation, served as our guide to prepare our students to be outstanding citizens and creative and critical thinkers. We were pleased to start the year with a normal school schedule after two years of pandemic disruption.

Although attendance was still affected by COVID-19 protocols, the daily attendance rate for the 2021-2022 school year averaged an impressive 94%. Merrimack High School graduated 278 students; 63% of whom continued their education after high school in a four-year institution, with 11% attending a two-year college or seeking other post-secondary education, 20% going directly into a career, and 3% joining the military, leaving 3% undecided.

Our students had many impressive academic achievements. One hundred and two (102) students took 150 Advanced Placement (AP) exams in 16 subjects. Seventy-six percent (76%) of these exams scored a 3 or higher. Students received the following AP Scholar Awards: thirteen students received the AP Scholar Award, four received the AP Scholar with Honor Award, and six received the AP Scholar with Distinction Award.

Seventy-six (76) local scholarships were awarded to MHS Seniors on Awards Night, totaling $146,780.00. Merrimack honored 160 New Hampshire Scholars in the class of 2022, totaling 57.6% percent of the class. The National Honor Society inducted 43 new members for the 2021-2022 school year. Seventeen seniors were presented with the Presidential Award for Academic Excellence.

Our co-curricular activities were able to resume in full force. The Granite State Challenge team finished second in the televised tournament. The FIRST Robotics Team made it to the national level and performed admirably. The Theatre Department gave us impressive in-person productions both in the fall and the spring. SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) presented the Junior Impact program before prom, and Mock Crash before graduation. New clubs were formed, including Students for Student Advocacy and the MHS Dance Club. The MHS Film Arts department had their 5th annual film festival in May, and What's Up Merrimack completed its successful third season. The National Art Honor Society's 17 members helped beautify the relaxation room with a mural. The Interact Club volunteered at the Reeds Ferry Elementary School Fall Fest, helped with the Turkey Trot, and organized the Giving Tree. Too many other clubs to mention enhanced our school environment in a multitude of ways, from organizing charitable donations, to promoting student health and well-being, to the pure fun of our field day.

Eighteen (18) Merrimack High School musicians participated in the All-State Band, Jazz Band, Orchestra, Treble Choir, and Mixed Choir groups. Gavin Kurdek was recognized as having been selected in all four years of his high school career, and four more of our students were recognized with having the highest audition scores in the state: Akira McDowell for flute, Jenny Epstein for alto saxophone, Chase Rheault for both snare drum and timpani, and Nadia Herold for alto voice. Merrimack had the highest number of recognitions in the state. Music students also participated in Large Group and Solo and Ensemble contests, as well as giving us beautiful music during football games, parades, concerts, and graduation.

The 2021-2022 athletic year saw a slight increase in participation with 762 athletes competing in 21 sports among 50 teams. As we further separate from the COVID-19 pandemic, more students are coming back to athletics – although the increase is much greater in the boys' programs. We continue to struggle fielding multiple levels in girls' sports.

We had some outstanding team and individual performances highlighted by our girls' swim team becoming Division 1 State Runner-Up.

Thirty (30) seniors were recognized as scholar-athletes by the NHIAA (New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association). These student-athletes lettered in at least two varsity sports and had a cumulative grade point average of B+ or higher.

The No Bell Award for the 2021-2022 school year was presented to Kyle Harvell, science teacher. Technical Education teacher Michael Valinski was awarded the Merrimack Lions Club Teacher Grant. We welcomed new teachers Cheryle Burke, Breanna Goodrich-Bundy, Victoria Hamilton, Kristen Hrubowchak, Sarah Leland, Kyle Masson, John Mullen, Nicholas Pierce, Molly Ryan, Emily Sousa, and Brent Whitney, and new counselors Brielle Lapiana and Leah Sutherland. Educators Eileen Banfield, Patricia Cunningham, Paul Drone, Marcy Pope, and Assistant Principal Peter Bergeron retired at the end of the year.

The year concluded with a return to a traditional graduation ceremony on a beautiful morning, with parents, other family, and friends able to attend without restrictions. The ceremony included inspiring words from Valedictorian Kaelie Newell, Salutatorian Ajay George, and Class President Jordan Jacoby, as well as seeing Gavin Clark receive his commission into the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, a tremendous accomplishment. Other class officers included Vice-President Julia Bell, Secretary Jillian Dinneen, and Treasurer Madison Kantor, and we recognized the rest of the Top Ten students: Andrea Bartus, Hannah DeKarski, Ariel DiVietro, Gavin Kurdek, Muriel Lubelczyk, Jackson Nguyen, Meaghan Shepard, Alyssa Velez, and Tzipora Yellin.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen Claire, Principal