



The Pond Street Press

Happy Thanksgiving!

A Publication of Cohasset Middle School Students

Fall 2019 Issue

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School News

Welcome, Mr. Mills! By Noah C. McDowall



Mr. John Mills joined Cohasset Middle School as principal this fall. This is the first time Cohasset Middle School has had its own principal. Previously, the High School and Middle School were one school with a single principal.

Mr. Mills has been invested in the business of education for the span of 24 years, and within administration for 13. His main objective, as it relates to Cohasset Middle School, is promoting our school to its fullest potential, and helping it to be established or recognized as “...The best middle school in the Commonwealth.” Seeking to accomplish this, he is attempting to incorporate student views through working more closely with the Student Council, incorporating teachers opinions, and taking parents views into account as well.

Mr. Mills, when asked what he regrets so far this year, he stipulated that, although it is important to acknowledge mistakes and to be transparent, he is unaware of any major mistakes. In the advent that he does make a mistake, he will incorporate this same philosophy and be up front and acknowledge it. When asked what he would say to someone who disagrees with what he has done so far as principal, he responded that he would sit down with them to explain the rationale behind his decision, attempt to understand why they disagree, and establish a greater level of understanding of each others' views.

In summary, Mr. Mills is attempting to incorporate the entirety of the views of many different stakeholders, make sure all parties are aware of his rational, and guarantee the potential of Cohasset Middle School is fully realized.

Is There a Doctor in the House? Yes, there is...

By Jackson Stonehouse



Dr. Salas is the new Assistant Principal for Cohasset Middle School. Prior to coming to CMS, Dr. Salas worked as Assistant Principal at Mattacheese Middle School in Yarmouth. Prior to becoming Assistant Principal, Dr. Salas was a school counselor. Dr. Salas was asked what brought her to her new position at Cohasset Middle School and she answered, “I went to the interview and was impressed by the interviewing team who said great things about the school.” At CMS, Dr. Salas hopes to “help students have an amazing middle school experience.” Outside of school she loves to spend time with her husband and two children. They love hiking and skiing in New Hampshire.

CMS Elects Student Council for 2019-2020

By Ollie Buckley

The new Cohasset Middle School Student Council was elected in September. Students voted for the 6th, 7th and 8th graders they felt were the best representatives of the school and who could make student concerns known to the administration.

The Student Council started in 1996 and has been growing ever since. Mrs. Gordon has been the advisor since 2002.

In Student Council, students who want to run get given a sheet that you need a certain number of signatures to qualify to run. The qualified candidates are given a week to make campaign posters. Then, the students are given a Google form to vote for someone. Mrs. Gordon releases the winners at the end of the day.

This year's president is Noah Simone. Noah signed up with the motive that it will be fun and he wanted to try something new. Once he won and reality set in, he realized it was everything he expected. Noah remarked, "CMS has a pretty solid foundation and there is nothing to change, so instead we can add."

Student Council is planning something big, but it's top secret. Stay tuned to find out what they're up to.

President	Vice President	Treasurer	Representative at Large
Noah Simone	Leila Omran	Will Wildfire	Grace Moser
Grade 7 Class	Representatives	Grade 6 Class	Representatives
J.P. Giglio Nathan Askjaer	Finn Yemini Evan Welsh	Padraig Foley Mary Cate Donohue	Johnny Appleton Conor Thornton

Student Council Update from Vice President Leila Omran

The Student Council has been quite busy throughout the month of October. We kicked off the month with a celebratory themed Food Drive that took place from October 3rd to the 10th. Thanks to Mrs. Ryan's homeroom along with our other student donors, we were able to give Cohasset Food Pantry a sweet treat!

On October 16th the Student Council organized a school-wide spirit day. Students were encouraged to wear pink in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. During Utility, every student wrote a kind and encouraging message in colorful cards to be given to patients at Dana-Farber Cancer Center in Weymouth.

Most recently, students enjoyed themselves at the Halloween Dance on October 25th. The Student Council looks forward to future spirit days and events!

The Halloween Dance

By Toby Benotti

The Halloween dance was held on Friday, October 25 and it was very well attended by most of the middle school. Students danced the night away in the cafeteria from 7-9 PM. The cafeteria was transformed with black lights, disco lights and Halloween decorations. Mrs. Duggan took pictures in a photo booth.

Many students and teachers dressed up in costumes. Madame Sanges was Ruth Bader Ginsburg and the other teachers were Hydroflasks! A DJ played music. The most popular dance song was “Turn Down for What” by DJ Snake and Lil Jon. Bowls of candy and waters were served. Students had a great time with their friends and more friendships were made.

Student Council representatives at the Halloween Dance. (Photo Credit: Mrs. Gordon)



New System for Checking Grades Launched

By Royce Bleakie

This year at Cohasset Middle School we have been introduced to a new grading system, ASPEN. Aspen is a system much different than Ipass. Ipass was a system devoted to grading, but Aspen is much more.

Aspen is a system friendly to all. It allows teachers to email students and make them aware an assignment is due. It also allows teachers to give extra credit points, unlike Ipass. Aspen allows students to view their grades, classes, and weights, and allows parents or guardians to use this system on their students' accounts.

Middle School French Teacher, Madame Sanges said, “I am not used to Aspen just yet, but I love the fact that I can email parents.”

Mrs. Swartz, Middle School Art, agrees and added, “My grades can be more detailed in Aspen. For example, I can grade colors, shapes, lines and textures.”

Students aren't 100 percent sure about Aspen just yet. Seventh grader Finn Yemini said “Aspen is an enjoyable system, and is better than IPass.”



Ultimately, students at Cohasset Middle School just want to see their grades and assignments that are due which Aspen allows.

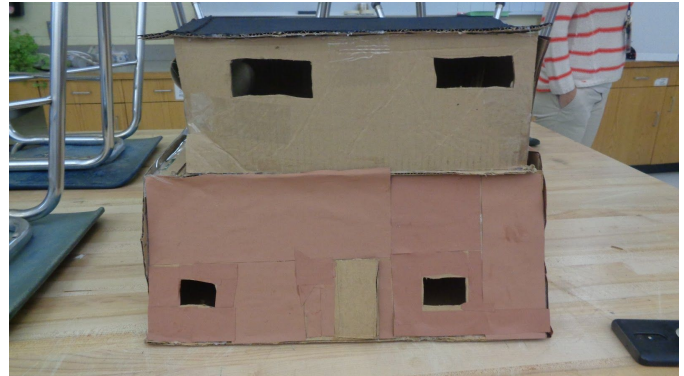
Hurricane Proof Houses in STEM

By Toby Benotti

In STEM class, middle schoolers built models of hurricane proof houses that would sustain a hurricane in Texas. Mrs. Lantier directed students to plan on a budget of \$100,000 when designing their houses.

Students did research on sea levels and the properties of a hurricane and, if possible, designed houses that could survive a hurricane with magnitudes from 1-5. The houses would be set in Texas on land near the ocean and have high sea levels. The houses had to comply with typical design standards and would include a kitchen, bathrooms, bedrooms and a living room.

After everyone was finished with the houses, the students went outside and used a leaf blower to mimic a level 5 hurricane to see if their houses could withstand it. Many of the student-designed houses survived! When everyone was done, students voted for the winning house for design and how well it withstood the wind.



Sixth Graders Swing Into Camp Wing

By Jackson Stonehouse

The Cohasset Middle School sixth grade students attended Camp Wing in Duxbury Massachusetts on September 11, 2019. The vast majority of the sixth grade were very impressed by Camp Wing's friendly staff members. Students spent the day doing various activities such as canoeing, high wires, team building activities in the woods, team building games on the basketball court, rock walls and a dance party. The activities in the woods were the best rated by the students. At lunch the students thoroughly enjoyed the unexpected dance party, but did not enjoy the food. When the sixth grade departed from Camp Wing at

4:30 P.M everyone was tired and sad that the next day would be just another average school day. (In Photo -

Sixth Grader Brooke Figueiredo tries to join her team on a platform in a team building challenge at Camp Wing.)

CMS Green Team

By Ryan Perrone, Green Team Special Correspondent



The CMS Green Team is made up of many students from different grades trying to teach their peers how to properly throw lunch items away. We also do projects to raise money for the Green Team.

The Sixth Grade Green Team meets in the Learning Commons during Utility Block on Wednesdays. It is important that students join the Green Team because we do many important projects such as organizing the trash and the recycling bin, and if no one joins than we can't get these important things done to save the Earth.

According to Michael Shannon, a sixth grader, "I joined the Green Team for many reasons! I wanted to help make our world better. Our oceans are very polluted, and we need to help! By joining the green team, we can help make the world green

again!"

Sixth grader Reeve Day explained why she joined the Green Team. "I joined the Green Team to make the world better. I feel that with all the plastic in the ocean, we need to do something to help. In our school, we have many plastic bottles and objects that we need to get rid of. The Green Team is a great opportunity and I love to be a part of it!"

Sixth grader Jocelyn Smith described why she likes being on the team, "We are not a team because we work together, we are a team because we work together to save the Earth."

"I joined because I have seen how bad the lunch room is when kids throw pizza crust in the compost and dirty trays in the recycling bin. Also, the ocean can't afford to put any more plastic put into it, and we need to stop," added Farrah Jackson.

If you want to join the CMS Green Team, it is never to late. Go to the Learning Commons during Utility on Wednesdays.

Teacher Teaming

By Brenna Kane

This year the Cohasset Middle School experienced a change. Each teacher is teaching one grade instead of teaching multiple grades. This has changed many staff members schedule and teaching, one being 7th grade ELA teacher Ms. Duggan.

She said, "It allows me to see my colleagues and other teachers more."

Teachers can communicate with others which can benefit them and their classes in many ways. Another benefit teachers also have is changing their curriculum.

Ms. Duggan added, "It allows me to focus on strengthening one curriculum instead of going back and forth between grades."

Many teachers at CMS can agree that the stress of coming up with curriculum and making sure everyone in the class understands the topic has decreased. You may remember the *Hidden Figures* project from last year done in the 7th grade. It is confirmed that this year's 7th grade will also be doing the project with Ms. Jewell and Ms.Duggan. With

teacher teaming, there will be more opportunities for more fun-based learning activities with other classes. This is a way that teacher teaming benefits students. Students can also exhibit better learning from stronger curriculums which can help students succeed in all subjects.

Overall, we can conclude that teacher teaming has helped all of us. Teachers can focus and cover every important topic in the classroom.



Anti-Bullying Assembly

By Toby Benotti

On October 3rd, the entire school (grades 6-12) attended an anti-bullying assembly in the gym. X-Game athletes performed extreme tricks on ramps and on the floor and students cheered them on. Students loved the stunts, but didn't feel that the topic of bullying was addressed enough.

The emcee from the U.S. Marines and the Anti-Defamation League did speak about bullying a couple of times, but most of the show was the bike tricks. He

explained the four types of bullying: psychological, cyber, verbal and physical and encouraged CMS and CHS students to avoid all types and to speak up if you witness bullying.

The Arts at CMHS

Jazz Band

By Ollie Buckley and Jacob Sasso



Jazz Band is an after-school activity that allows kids to play a variety of jazz music pieces. The band started in 2016 and has seen a massive increase students. The 2016 band started out with a handful of students and this year has the most kids it ever has, 25!

Jazz Band is a relaxed, chill place where you can come in and learn the basics of the Jazz genre. Mr.

Bleier runs the band. He wants students to know that it is never too late to join, all instruments are welcome, and to just go see Mr. Bleier if you're interested.

They meet every Thursday after school from 2:10-2:50. If you play an instrument outside of school like the piano or the drumset, you are welcome to play that also.



Don't Miss the Middle School Play!



What: Alice in Wonderland

When: Thursday 11/14 and
Friday 11/15

Time: 7 PM

Where: CMHS Auditorium

Starring: Maddie Clark as
Alice

Tickets: \$10

Tickets sold at lunch and at the door.

Editorials

The Backpack Issue An Article “Through the Eyes of a Student” By Max Fernald



Last year, many of us former 6th graders complained to administration about the policy that required us to leave their backpacks in our lockers and carry around all of our materials. We were told that in the next year, we would be free to carry around our backpacks like the grade in front of us. But on the third of September, 2019, we were told that the use of backpacks was banned for all grades...I hope to clarify all issues about the backpack policy, why there is a policy in the first place and the pros and cons of the apparent policy.

First of all, the “what”. The Cohasset Middle School policy on backpacks used to be that only 6th graders cannot bring them to class. And I believe the year before that there was no policy. This year, as I said, it is banned for all grades. Some of the more relaxed teachers do let you bring your bags to class, but most do not.

The backpack problem began in 6th grade of 2018. As I have already stated, we were told that in seventh grade there would not be a backpack policy. The 7th and 8th graders were free to bring their backpacks last year, so we assumed we would be too. There might have been flying pigs in that fantasy. The faculty might have thought or been told that this would be the future policy, so I don't blame them. In fact, I will try to put as little as blame on anyone. I just want to show my point and why it's better, but first I will continue to tell why there is a policy. I have heard that this policy is for safety. Apparently it's a hazard because backpacks line the aisle between the desks. Almost everyone who brings a backpack to class puts it under his or her desk. So if that's a safety hazard, let's get rid of the desks. And if we do that, out with the chairs! If you don't want backpacks in the aisle, make a rule about it. That's much more reasonable than banning backpacks in the class all together. Just say you're not supposed to put your bag in the aisles.

I am dedicated to this project, so I have done my research. Currently, the latest online student handbook is the one from 2017 to 2018*. I have read it and from what I can see, there are no backpack policies. But in the locker section of the Handbook, there are some rules which I have copied below:

Disciplinary action will be taken against those who damage lockers. Students are responsible for the contents of any locker assigned to them. To help ensure safety, security, and cleanliness, a student should;

1. not share his/her locker
2. keep his/her locker locked and not give the combination to anyone else
3. always make sure the locker door is completely shut when not in use
4. not leave money or expensive valuables in the locker; and
5. keep the locker neat and clean.

Take a close look at the locker rules. The backpack policy may make students break some of them. For one, many kids have to ask a friend, who is better at lockers, to help them open the locks. Two, many kids leave their lockers open so they can save time. Most importantly, if our backpacks are in our lockers, than that's a valuable item, especially if it has your electronic device or phone in it. The latest accessible handbook almost tells students to bring their bags to class. If we were to bring our backpacks to class, we would not break the locker policy.

*I'm writing this in late October, and a 2019-2020 student-parent handbook has been uploaded, yet there is no mention of a backpack policy.

I have interviewed Dr. Salas, the Middle School Assistant Principal, who I would call the main advocate of the new backpack rules. She said that the main concern was the carrying weight of the backpacks. But if the faculty were worried about students having to carry too much weight, that's really not the administrators business. It is the students and their guardians decision to make. I know faculty is supposed to keep you safe, but this is not their decision. Students and parents know their limits and strengths, not the faculty. And it's not like the students are going on a 4-hour hike with their backpacks. At the very most, they're carrying their backpacks for a total of 27 minutes with large breaks in between. But I would estimate that 15 minutes is a more reasonable number. Even if this is a problem, then why are we forced to take them to school? That takes much, much longer. I have to walk around 5 minutes straight to my bus stop, and some people have to walk all the way to school. Seventh grader, William Elwell, says sometimes it takes him ten minutes to walk to school, when the school is concerned about three minutes intervals in the hall. When people get off the bus, it takes maybe 3-5 minutes to get into the middle school. So if the faculty is really are concerned about the "heavy backpacks" then maybe try a different approach, such as reducing the required material.

One of Dr. Salas's other points is that it's important to learn how to plan your day out and develop organizational skills. And I just have one response. No. This "planning ahead" causes us to carry so much more. Let's say that before lunch I packed for my last periods, which are two and three, which is band and then math. I would have to pack my binder, laptop, agenda, music folder,

pencil case, math binder, math book, math workbook and maybe my water bottle, but I will not include that in the measurements. That is a lot, 7.5 inches to be precise. This is way too much to carry. I'm carrying more than half my backpack. It's really counterproductive because a backpack is a safe way of carrying my materials while if I try to balance a 7 and a half inch tall stack of material (not including my water bottle) it's not safe and it is so much more practical to store them in my bag. Back to the water bottles; students have to stay hydrated. . It's hard enough to carry a 7.5 inch stack, without having to juggle a 9.5 inch tall water bottle.

It's much more practical to carry your backpack on your back with all your stuff than carrying it with your arms like hunter gatherers. It's just not safe. Carrying my materials on my back is far safer than holding them in front of me. Can I pass through someone's materials like a ghost? No, no I can't. Our hand held stacks of materials aren't transparent. It's also dangerous to carry our expensive electronic devices when a simple slip or stumble could cause you to fumble your laptop and smash its screen. And if someone dropped even a pencil case, they would have to try to pick it up, still holding their materials in their arms. This would definitely crowd the halls, possibly causing a safety hazard. Wouldn't it be so much easier to carry something around in your nice and safe backpack?

I hope I have provided enough evidence to prove this current rule to be counterproductive. It's not safe for the students and their materials. And the current accessible handbook rules say have no enforceable backpack policy. Also the majority of the students, if not all of the students, want this rule to be repealed. I believe that we should all listen to them. After all, this year's motto is "Through the eyes of the students."

Please take this short survey about backpacks

~ ~ ~

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfPsbcmz8TQqfO-DwzhkmKkJpnexmhHORQVPeWcc21l8Wd8oQ/viewfor>



Sign Up for the Cohasset Middle School Newspaper!

POSITIONS:

- **Reporters** - to hunt down stories
- **Editors** - to edit stories and write opinion columns
- **Photographers** - to capture what's happening around school
- **Graphic Designers/Artists** - to layout the stories and photographs
- **Freelance Writers** - to submit stories at any time

Come to **Room 234** on **Tuesdays** and **Thursdays!**

Can't make the meetings but want to participate?

See Mrs. Melia in Room 234 during Utility Block or email dmelia@cohassetk12.org.

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Faculty Advisor: Mrs. Melia

Senior Editors:

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Editorial Page Editors:

Max Fernald, Noah McDowall

Staff Reporters - Toby Benotti, Royce Bleakie, Oliver Buckley, Max Fernald, Reggie Lanier, Brenna Kane, Will Griffin, Noah McDowall, Lucas Stefan, Jackson Stonehouse

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