

# A View from the Principal's Office

February 21, 2022

I hope that you are all well. I am not sharing any new news when I say that this year has been unique - as we have followed the state's shifting guidance and maintained transparency within our community you have received many emails from me. My hope is that this will be a celebratory View... as there have been so many great things that have occurred in our school. In addition, I want to forecast from our current reality.

Among our students' successes are the fact that 10 of our students have art on display at the AVA Gallery's "Best of the Upper Valley High School" Art Exhibition, there is still time to get to AVA and check out these student artists, the exhibit runs through Feb. 25th. On Friday the 11th we were treated to this year's One-Act Play, *This is a Test*. The cast included high school and elementary school students and even a high school teacher - all of whom did a great job in the performance. Our first semester Exhibition Night was another testament to our students' creativity and commitment to their personalized learning. In addition to these groups of students I want to share with you a very prestigious honor that was recently earned by senior Olivia Merrill.

Olivia is being honored as one of the leading pre-college research scientists in the United States of America and as a Fellow in the 2022 Class of the American Junior Academy of Science. She is one of just two Vermont high schoolers, and one of 155 students nationally, receiving this prestigious honor. In addition, Olivia has been given the opportunity to publish an abstract of her research with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (the largest scientific organization in the world) and present her research at the annual American Junior Academy of Science/American Association for the Advancement of Science conference. Her research into the cutting edge biological field of epigenetics determined that a type of intermittent fasting permanently alters the way fat storage genes are expressed in future generations in nematodes. Congratulations Olivia.

Amidst these honors and commendations, I am aware that there continues to be some trepidation brought about by COVID. While I cannot speak with the authority of a medical expert, I do believe that our school has continued to work our way well through the latest variant of this pandemic. I share this because our school has not had to shut down, we have worked with our families to ensure that everyone is aware of the number of cases, we have reported daily when students *could* have come in contact with someone who tested positive in their classes, we have distributed test kits, and provided guidance to our students, their families, and our staff. Our school nurse, Ms. Felicia Hayes, has worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic; her calm demeanor and fantastic efforts have supported all of us and helped keep us safe.

There is no doubt that this pandemic and our times have forced us to reconsider learning in our school. The building blocks of our school were laid over 130 years ago.. Our current reality includes the need to educate students who come to us traumatized at levels never before seen, during a 100-year pandemic, at a time of significant social upheaval that includes the vital and long-overdue focus on creating *equitable and anti-racist* schools. This reality will shape the work that we engage in moving forward. Recently I was able to participate in a powerful professional development opportunity sponsored by the New England Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges (NEASC), our accrediting body. The focus of the training was planning for the development of Hartford High School's *Vision of a Graduate*. This two-day training, that we participated in remotely because of the pandemic, brought an understanding of the impact of the development of this document in our time. It is clear that our graduates' needs are very different today than at any time in our history, this will undoubtedly be reflected in the *Vision of a Graduate*. We are looking forward to partnering with our staff, students, and community to create this document.

I sincerely hope that you remain well and look forward to spring. Thanks for reading.

Nelson Fogg

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