

# Mt. Blue High School Board Update 1.24.23

Submitted by: **Monique Poulin, Principal**



## Staffing Update!

We are pleased to welcome our new Adaptive Skills teacher, Laurel Dingley, Educational Technician, Joline Libby, and five student teachers to MBHS/MBC this spring! They include Miranda Clarke-Social Studies, Allison Emery-Social Studies, Heather Janson-Math, Brooke Martin-English and Paige Polley-English. With two staff members leaving their positions mid-year, we are fortunate to have Allison Emery filling in for Adrienne Davis, and Jake Roberts (one of our science teachers returning from his National Guard assignment in Poland this spring) taking the place of Jordan McMullen. We are also pleased to have Brooke Martin working as a long term substitute for a teacher on maternity leave. We welcome all new staff and appreciate all of our mentor teachers as well as our partnership with UMF!

## Inaugural Classes!

MBHS Hall of Fame-Two contributors, two coaches, five individuals and one team were acknowledged at our first Hall of Fame ceremony on 1/7/23. Many thanks to all involved in making the event a success. Cyndi Pratt will be sure to share more details in her next report. Unified Basketball-Planning for our first Unified Basketball season is underway! Makayla Wilson, special educator at MBHS, will coach a team of 20 students in a six game season. We hope that you will join us to support our student-athletes! Stay tuned for more information from John Jones and Cyndi Pratt.



## Music at Mt. Blue High School!

The Music Department has had a very successful and exciting first semester with several school performances in December, as well as individual performances from our various ensembles. The Mt. Blue Voices is an after school chorus of 14 members that meets once a week. They had a wonderful joint concert with the University of Farmington Chorus in early December at Nordica Hall. The students are now preparing music for March concerts as well as a coffee shop night at the end of the year. The Mt. Blue High School Jazz Band has doubled in size from what it was last year with a full rhythm section as well as five horn players. They are playing a variety of styles of music, including swing, rock, and mambo. The Jazz Band had a very successful performance at the MBHS/MBMS combined winter band and chorus concert and has just started working on some new pieces for Band-a-Rama in March. The Mt. Blue Orchestra performed at our first "live" assembly since 2020. It was wonderful for our full school to enjoy the piece, Overture, and to celebrate our student award recipients with music performed by their peers. The Franklin County Fiddlers held their "Home for the Holidays" concert on 12/22 with performers spanning the classes of 2005 to 2029! They raised \$1140 for the Farmington Ecumenical Heating Fund. In addition, the Fiddlers were once again given the honor of performing at the Gubernatorial Inauguration. It was a great opportunity to see how our Maine government works. The students were perfect citizens and representatives from our school. This year, the music department has also added an Intro to Piano Course. A piano lab has been set up in the music wing to accommodate the class. In addition to learning how to play the piano, students also learn guitar and music theory.



## Theater at Mt. Blue High School!

The Mt. Blue Theatre Company has begun its season with the iconic favorite, *The Curious Savage*. This is the eighth version of this show, and it was, as usual, a success! While in rehearsals for our fall play, students were able to take part in a workshop and watch a Shakespeare production, performed by the Theater at Monmouth and sponsored by Arts Farmington. The actors from Monmouth worked with Mt. Blue thespians teaching them a theater game and working on the use of language in a Shakespearean play. Next up, students and teachers are working on the one act play festival. Student-written and directed, the high school show is called "One and Done" by Finch Webster. This show will also be part of the Maine Drama Festival in early March. The faculty of Mt. Blue is working on "The Thirty-nine Steps. Even More Abridged". The teachers will be directed by sophomore Rhett Sexton-Burchfield and will perform in conjunction with the high school play and the middle school show ("Fifteen Reasons Not to be in a Play" directed by Kat Zachary) on March 18. Finally, this year students from both the high school and middle school will be able to participate in the Broadway musical *Beauty and the Beast* which will be performed in early May.



## December Traditions!

Our Jobs for Maine's Graduates Program and the Future Business Leaders of America both were involved in supporting our local families with food and gifts this holiday season. We appreciate their perennial commitment to assisting our larger community! Also, with the December break on the horizon, the Culinary Arts Program at Foster CTE Center catered a full campus Winter Celebration. The sweet and savory options were incredible, and the event was well attended. We thank the Culinary Arts students and their instructor, Sean Minear, for their part in appreciating our MBC staff for their commitment to students and each other during the first half of the school year.



## BARR at Mt. Blue High School - Update, January 2023

BARR (Building Assets, Reducing Risks) is in its fourth year at Mt. Blue High School. Focused on 9th grade students, BARR is designed to support the social, emotional and academic growth of students through purposefully building positive relationships, closely monitoring progress and quickly responding to struggles. Students are assigned to a team of teachers who meet weekly to design and implement students goals and associated interventions as well as celebrate successes. Additionally, students participate in weekly pro-social activities (I-Time) facilitated by BARR team teachers. BARR implementation at MBHS began in the fall of 2019 with training and support from the BARR Center provided through grant funds. While COVID clearly impacted the ease of implementation, noteworthy positive student outcomes have proven that the efforts of the BARR team members have indeed been worthwhile. Since implementing BARR, 9th graders have the lowest course failure rate at MBHS including a reduction from 27% in 2021 to 11% in 2022. Additionally, 9th graders experienced a significant increase in school attendance with a drop in chronic absenteeism in the first semester (missing 10% or more days of school) dropping 20 percentage points from 2022 to the first semester of 2023. Planning for strengthening BARR implementation for 2023/2024 is in progress with four focus areas: expand the diversity and effectiveness of interventions, refine teacher schedules to better align with student teaming, increase communication and engagement with parents and families, and increase awareness of the program.

The effort to make BARR work every week is significant for all team members. Please pass on a thank you to the following:

Mady Brod, Roger Bolduc, Matt Founier, Kerry Schlosser, Cheree O'Donnell (Blue Team)

Jeff Howatt, Tyler Brown, Patti Millette, Jordan McMullen, Frank Giampietro (Gold Team)

Officer Matt Brann, Joel Smith, Todd Demmons, Galen Dalrymple, Anna Peterson, Jake Turner, Vicky Gerstenberger, Jessie Gray (Risk Review Team)

Greg Henderson (BARR Coordinator)



\*Many thanks to Ethan Wright, Steve Muise, Debby Muise, Darlene Yeaton-Nelson and Greg Henderson for their contributions.