



To: Superintendent Chamberlin and School Board Members

From: Chris Sousa

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chris Sousa', written over the printed name.

Re: HSD School Board report

Date: January 26, 2011

Service is an integral part of Hopkinton Middle High School. It is ingrained in our clubs, our academics, and our athletics. It comes in many different forms, all with the understanding that “the sum is greater than its parts” and through service to others everyone benefits. The advantages of service learning go deeper than the collegiality, knowledge, and exercise you get by volunteering. Committing yourself to give to others is a character and spirit building journey that benefits both the providers and the receivers. Some of the ways in which we support a commitment to service follow.

There are many opportunities within our extra-curricular programs for students to be involved in community service. A program run by Nini Allen, called “Senior to Senior”, matches up senior students to senior citizens and organizes times to meet, eat lunch, and generally share time. The relationships that the students form with their community partners are meaningful and often continue after graduation. Our Peer Outreach group works hard several times a year to raise funds for students and families in need, particularly when tragedy occurs; they are the one of the first groups to respond with concern and help. Both of our student councils take the idea of service to others to heart. There are many examples of the work they do to support students and local families, however one event that brings both groups joy and appreciation is the gift giving they do at holiday time. Each group spends time fundraising, shopping, and organizing gift giving to support families in need. Reaching out and helping those in our community takes on a broader perspective for our Interact club. While taking care of the daily recycling, working the “Ikiderod”, and the “Contoocook Carry” are part of what this groups members do, they are very excited to be traveling to Honduras this year to assist a community with repairs to their school and a variety of other needs. This rewarding experience not only enriches the communities they travel to, but our own as well.

Service is a key player in how we ensure student learning. While our National and World Language Honor Society students seek out service opportunities in all parts of our community, many of them work numerous hours to tutor other students in all grades. This connection to their fellow students has broad sweeping advantages both in the areas of academics and personal growth. This year we also have three high school students who are being trained in the “Friends” program. This program, based out of Concord, teaches students mentoring skills so they can return and work in their own communities. These three students hope to be mentors to younger students in our elementary schools. Events in our school such as “Step Up Day” would be very difficult to organize and run if it were not for the many volunteers who not only participate during the day, but take on leadership roles in organizing the event as well. This spirit is so prevalent, that the middle school career fair scheduled for this Friday, January 28, has several high school students coming in during their day off to assist in the event.

The nurturing spirit that drives our students to assist others and give back what was given to them is also ingrained in our athletic programs. This is evident in our “Buddy Field Hockey” program and our “Biddy Basketball” program. These athletes work with younger students to assist them in acquiring the skills, a love of the game, and to make connections with older students all on their own time. The Biddy Basketball program is in its 14th year; so many of the high school students who are volunteering to participate were involved when they were in kindergarten. Members of our Nordic Ski team volunteer to work with younger students and community members each Friday in the “Bill Koch” ski program. Our Varsity Field Hockey athletes assist in our “Salute to 7th grade” orientation, and many of the baseball and softball players umpire and assist in the younger community programs. Our Special Olympians are partnered with students who volunteer time but get back so much more in return.

The spirit of service and giving is clear in our school and community. Our school has been recognized recently for its giving spirit in our “Hoops for Hunger” drive, sponsored by the NHIAA. This drive, while hosted at our basketball games, is funded by community members and sheds some light on the supporting nature that surrounds our school. Service is an integral part of the Hopkinton educational community and it helps us put learning into action and pay it forward.

Some upcoming events (for more information please check out our calendar on our website):

- February 2 - Math Meet at Merrimack
- February 4 - Middle School Winter Semi Formal
- February 10 - Poetry Out Loud
- February 16 - Math Meet at Souhegan High School
- February 17 & 18 - Early Release Days
- February 21 - Mar 2 - Spanish Trip
- February 23 - Mar 3 - Honduras Trip
- February 22 - 7th Grade Honor Roll Breakfast
- February 23 - 8th Grade Honor Roll Breakfast
- February 24 - Winter Carnival Days
- February 28 - Winter Recess Begins