

# The High School View

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## Teaching evolves as online

BY HARDY EVILLE AND RUBY REIMANN

In March, the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) shut its doors and switched to online schooling as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. This fall, students continue to attend school remotely. Much has changed, however, since the spring.

Teachers and administrators were faced with a variety of challenges last spring due to the swift transition into online learning. State guidelines were evolving, schedules were disrupted, and the extent to which all students had access to technology and Wi-Fi was, for a time, unclear.

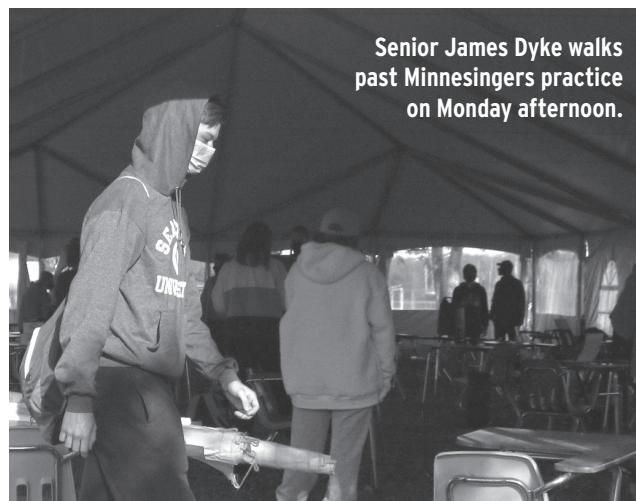
When school re-opened this year, principal Sara Dingley was focused on coherency. She said, "When it became increasingly clear that the fall would be similar [to the spring], there was a lot of work put in to hammering

out those details so we could move forward with more of a coherent plan."

Teachers, parents, and school committee members came together and used feedback from student focus groups to devise a fall plan that would result in more streamlined communication, better resources for teaching and learning online, and more ways to support struggling students.

Part of this plan was the introduction of limited in-person attendance, mainly for English Language Learner (ELL) classes, students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and classes that require hands-on work. One hundred students are invited each day to access support on campus, while still attending classes via Zoom. While only 30 to 50 students on average are scheduling themselves to come in right now, Ms. Dingley says that number is increasing.

In addition to limited opportunities for in-person learning, students also have each class three times a week, an increase from once



Senior James Dyke walks past Minnesingers practice on Monday afternoon.

PHOTO BY MAX POTTER

a week in the spring.

"It was hard to see students once a week," said history teacher Leigh Fairchild-Coppoletti. "It was hard to have a sense of how they were doing, not just in terms of their class-

work, but with their overall well-being. I felt too disconnected from my students."

"I think there really is a greater degree of normalcy with [the new schedule]," she said. "Being able to see classes routinely makes a huge difference."

Teachers have also found new ways to teach and engage students online since the spring.

"I'm in my sixteenth year of teaching now, and all of a sudden I just felt like a new

teacher again," said Spanish teacher Justine DeOliveira.

Teachers spent time over the summer learning how to better teach online. For example, the use of Zoom's breakout room feature has now become an integral part of lessons: teachers can pose questions and break the class into small groups for discussion. In language classes, students can be paired up in a breakout room to converse in the language they are learning.

While many are concerned with the amount of time now spent on screens, teachers interviewed felt that the benefits of Zoom outweighed extended screen time. Ms. Fairchild-Coppoletti was able to use Zoom over the summer to engage students in a film screening.

"There's something really terrific about being able to watch a film together and then talk about it immediately afterwards," she said, as opposed to watching clips in one class session and coming back to discuss the next day.

For language classes, Zoom is vastly superior to socially distancing in person.

"Is it too much screen time? Probably, yes," said Ms. DeOliveira. "But I'm not sure there's another way. If we were to be in person, the students would have to be six feet apart, facing the same direction, wearing masks."

If everything goes as planned, that reality is just around the corner. The upcoming hybrid learning plan involves students coming into the building once or twice a week for live instruction. When not in the building, students would do outside work assigned by teachers and there would be a day of remote check-ins, and Zoom lectures as well. For the most part, teachers are excited about these new developments.

"[Teachers] are looking forward to the in-person opportunities because they believe they have even more tools in their tool box than they used to have to engage students," said Ms. Dingley. **HSV**

## Food Basket volunteers serve food and community

BY CHLOE COMBRA AND BROOKE CROCKER

Last April, students from the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) teamed up with the Good Shepherd Parish to serve pre-packaged food to the Island community through The Food Baskets of MV program. Ever since, the student volunteers have been dedicating their Saturday mornings to helping the community, both for the benefit of others during this difficult time and for themselves as well.

Junior Alison Custer said, "I just love being involved in the community in any way. Especially since quarantine started. I was craving contact with people, safely. It's just nice to work with people in

a community program and help out in some way."

The program, which has been up and running for two years now, is intended to help anyone with food insecurity and is funded by a collaboration between Good Shepherd Parish's outreach organization and the Greater Boston Food Bank.

Prior to Covid-19, the program ran similarly to a grocery store where people were able to come in, choose their food items, and leave. Since lockdown was enacted it has now become a pre-packaged drive through where drivers line up to receive their choice of food in order to limit the spread of the virus.

"We're outside, we're under a tent, and everybody is wearing masks, so I personally feel very safe," said Alison.

"There's lots of space to be spread out and you come in contact with people a little bit [when you are] putting food in

their cars, but masks are required."

Junior Ingrid Moore began volunteering in June.



Junior Jessie Dlabaj directs food packaging at The Food Baskets of MV last Saturday.

PHOTO BY PARKER BRADLEE

She said, "We're here to help as many people as we can, people who can't help themselves—we're just trying to keep them going."

Due to the drive-thru nature of the distribution process, social distancing

guidelines are easier to adhere to, and people are able to receive aid more privately. "The people that can't get their own food [are] sometimes embarrassed by that," said Ingrid. "Coming here, it's discreet."

Sophomore Mark Clemente volunteers with his dad, who was already involved with the food disposal aspect of the program. "My dad has a big truck, so we throw [the broken down boxes] in and it's pretty fun."

While many of the volunteers involved in the program are affiliated with the Good Shepherd Parish, Food Baskets of MV welcomes any and all volunteers and those in need.

"[We're here] to provide food for anybody on the Island with need," said program director Janay Dlabaj. "Anybody. We have to take a little bit of information from people, but it's open to anybody." **HSV**

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