

New Principal on Campus

By: Ishan Bhatt

Taking up the reins as Orange High School Principal from the previous principal Katie Philips, Jamie Hogue brings a wealth of experience to OHS and is excited to work with students and staff throughout the 2023-2024 school year.

Hogue began his professional journey serving as an English teacher at Twinsburg High School. After 9 years of dedicated service, Mr. Hogue soon moved to Streetsboro High School where he became the Assistant Principal. This position he maintained for just shy of 2 years before he ascended to Streetsboro's Principal.

"I love teaching, and I didn't know that I wanted to leave teaching, but I did see becoming a principal as an opportunity to improve the experience for students and to improve the experience that teachers were able to provide for their students ... [I wanted to] help teachers out in the sense that they'd be able to provide the best experience possible for students," Hogue stated.

This change would kick-off an almost decade-long period where Hogue would acquire valuable experiences as a principal. During this time, he served as principal of Streetsboro High School for 6 years, Independence High School, and, finally, Orange starting in July of 2023.

"Sitting in a chair now after being in two other districts as a principal ... I have a better picture of the overall concept of the district," Hogue States. "When I see something that doesn't make sense, I look for the reasons why ... is this something that doesn't make sense on this level, but the big picture does make sense and that's why it has to exist? Or is it something that we can change and if we do, maybe we have to change something on another level or outside the building for this to make sense here?"

His understanding of all the factors surrounding the decisions he makes as principal is a testament to the merits of his experiences, recognizing that his decisions at OHS affect those at "brady and moreland" as well as "the jobs people have at central office." This experience, which has improved his aptitude as a principal greatly, is a key reason why he is such an asset for the districts.

Hogue's familiarity with education doesn't only come from his career experience but also from the variety of school systems he's encountered throughout his life. Hogue was educated in a Catholic school for primary and middle school before attending a public high school. In addition to his own personal education, Hogue's 3 children were also educated in a public school for their primary and middle school educations, but moved to a Boarding School in New Jersey for High School.

"I like to try and take what I think each school did well for kids and try to incorporate those Each of those schools had things that really helped incorporate student voices ... so I try to take - cherry pick if you will - the best things I saw from each different place that I've been and try to bring them with me just as ideas," Hogue states

From all of these schools, he emphasizes the different ways they approached giving students voices as he saw "the more students feel like they have a say in what goes on at their school in what goes on at their school, that's when you start to have that sense of community; that's when you start to have school spirit, authentic spirit."

This guiding principle of recognizing the importance of student voice is something he wants to implement at Orange and has influenced Hogue's opinions on many school policies, such as the school's decision to ban students from taking backpacks in between classes at the beginning of this school year.

"When we make rules for a school I think it's very important for those rules to be made by the people that make up that community. So staff. I know here when the rule was changed there was a huge push amongst the staff for the rule. So it's important to me that the rules we have are rules that reflect the desires, the beliefs of the people that the rules govern--so that would be students and staff," Hogue Comments.

At the same time, Hogue recognizes the student plight of carrying papers and books between classes, continuing "I'd categorize [taking trappers and tote bags between classes] as a compromise which demonstrates the idea that it's tough for a kid to take everything they need to all their classes without some form of bag or trapper or anything."

While backpacks were a huge change for students, the first floor renovations were perhaps even greater. The first half of the 6.1 Million dollar renovation plan finished over this summer, coming complete with a completely refurbished first floor. Mr. Hogue expressed his gratitude and amazement of the contractors working on the renovation, stating "I'll tell you the first floor renovations went really well, the construction company we worked with did a great job and I'm very appreciative. They were here virtually every day all summer long. And they probably did 5 months of work in 2 and a half months so we'd be ready for the beginning of school."

Aside from the continued renovations on the second floor, Hogue has also had other plans for the school. In regards to how he plans to help Orange students who are academically struggling, he states,

"I think we have great resources ... but we can always improve ... The resources that may be the same from year to year, but the needs may change because the students change. So adapting those resources to fit the needs of the individual students is a challenge. So we can always improve on what we are doing with students who are struggling, but we have great resources and great teachers that help"

Hogue applies the mindset that "good things can always be improved" to other areas like the school's spirit and community, areas that the school's last principal, Phillips, was determined to improve:

"To me, the school seems very cohesive; it seems like we have a good sense of community and belonging already ... [but] we can always improve that ... if you convince kids that it's in their best interest to work hard at achieving their maximum potential and preparing them for life outside high school and you do it together, that sense of community and that school spirit comes along with it. So that artificial idea, if we have pep rallies, that's not going to improve school spirit. What really improves school spirit is kids working hard next to each other and having those similar experiences with each other that are difficult but at times rewarding."

However, Hogue recognizes that "I'm also the first person to say I'm the last person to ask. While I'm the newest person, so my opinion may be objective, I'm still trying to become a part of the community."

In his freetime, you might find Hogue spending time with his family, doing exercises like biking or yoga, or popping into english classes, which he believes is one of his favorite things to do as principal.

"I think an English classroom is the classroom that I enjoy observing the most because I think you can get a lot out of kids if you're reading literature together and talking about it in the right ways. So I'm excited just to watch our English teachers and watch the experience our students get to have in their classes. It's the fun part of being principal of such a good school, I get to be a little bit of a student when I visit the classrooms, and learn right along with the kids and the teacher and partake in that experience a little bit."

The one thing you won't find him doing is smoking as he's "Not a tobacco guy, not much of a smoker. I don't like smoke and I don't like tobacco, neither one."

I'm sure I speak for the entire student body when I say welcome Orange, Mr. Hogue!