

Anxiety - keep on trying me

by Tylie Walker

I am expected to come to school every day, even when I am mentally or physically exhausted. But being mentally drained can make learning just as difficult as being physically sick. Schools excuse absences for illness, so I believe students should be allowed a mental health day when they truly need one. Allowing one mental health day per quarter could help prevent burnout and improve learning.

After talking with others, I found that opinions were mixed. Some, like our superintendent, Dr. Gene Russel, believe school should prepare students for the real world, where adults can't always take time off. Others, including students, Vincent Crane and Nate Tophoj, strongly support mental health days. Nate explained that if your mental health isn't good, you won't do well in school, which defeats the purpose of being there.

OHS student, Kolston Kiewatt, and principal Mr. John O'Neil shared a more balanced view, agreeing mental health days can be helpful but should be limited to prevent abuse.

Teachers also had different opinions. Some felt students don't need mental health days, while others believed a day off could prevent more missed school later.

Mental health days aren't about skipping school for fun. To me, they are about having time to reset when life feels overwhelming. With limits, such as one excused absence per quarter, schools could support students without encouraging

misuse. When I feel mentally healthy, I am more focused, engaged, and able to learn.

Mental health should be treated just as seriously as physical health. Allowing one mental health day per quarter would show students that schools care about our wellbeing and understand the pressure we face. Supporting mental health doesn't remove responsibility. It helps students become stronger, more focused, and more successful.

John Pohlson takes a new role as head girls' basketball coach

by Tenlie Flansburg

This year John Pohlson stepped into the role of head coach for the OHS girls basketball team. After Coy Gager did not return, players were uncertain but quickly welcomed Pohlson's appointment. A Personal Finance and Geometry teacher at OHS, Pohlson also serves as head coach for the boys golf team and brings a strong sports background and coaching intellect to the program.

Pohlson's practice philosophy emphasizes conditioning through play. "Playing your way into shape" allows players to develop skills, defense, offense, transition play, and court awareness simultaneously.

"I really enjoy girls basketball. It has been a fun challenge for me to take on, and it has really helped me grow into a better coach," Pohlson

said. He is an avid student of the game - reading sports books, watching videos, and researching coaching methods regularly. Over the summer he worked with youth, high school athletes, and adults to help them improve, an experience that has informed his coaching across sports. "I have learned more about helping kids and coaching all sports as a result," he added.

Although accepting the girls' head coaching job came with some nerves - especially because it happened after summer ball and he hadn't seen many players in that setting - Pohlson said he's grateful for the opportunity. "This position has definitely impacted my life. It has been cool to learn new things and have to lead and manage a group. It has been great getting to work with the girls, and they made the transition easy for me," he said. He acknowledged coaching's challenges: "Coaching is difficult, it requires you to manage a lot of things, not just specifically basketball, but at the end of the day, it is worth it to be able to watch your players grow and develop!"

Following a strong season, Pohlson has accepted a new job down east and will no longer coach the girls team. Players and staff were surprised but supportive, grateful for his leadership during the 2025-26 season and wishing him the best in his next role.

Live streaming in the classroom

by Aiden Dundas