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RITON VOICE

Triton High School

Triton's Student-Produced Newspaper

November 5, 2021

Triton Transitions: Transgender Students Speak About School Atmosphere

By Emilia Joyce
Staff Writer

When you walk into Triton High School, do you feel accepted or rejected? It is very important that when you enter a school that it feels like a safe space. Sullivan McLellan, a transgender junior at Triton, feels both supported and misunderstood by students and teachers.

"Teachers have been great," said McLellan. "Students don't really know I guess." Triton has had many transgender students. McLellan is a one who has recently transitioned, and he offered stories to help others. This topic is especially important to members of the Triton staff, including Mr. Patrick Kelley and Ms. Margaret Flaherty who both want students to feel supported and safe. They also want students to feel they can talk to them and feel comfortable here at Triton.

A transgender person's chosen name means a lot to them, as it is often one of the first things that they do to transition. When he was going through his transition,

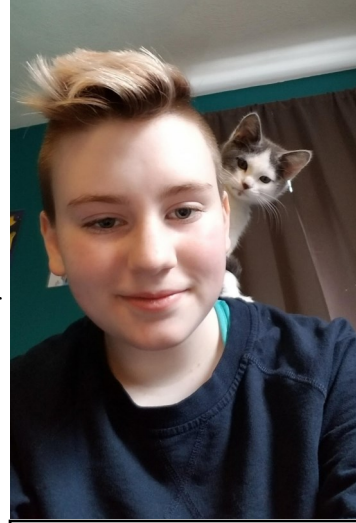
McLellan wanted to try out different names. "I actually saw a TikTok where the person, saying that he had tried this name and he didn't really like how it felt when he got called that and so he looked for others," said McLellan. "I was like 'Maybe I should do that' and then I spent five or six months going through names." McLellan goes to a group for LGBTQ+ youth called NAGLY which stands for North Shore Alliance for GLBTQ+ Youth. He enjoys the support they provide and encourages students to go. NAGLY has locations in both Newburyport and Salem.

Kelley conducted research to make Triton as transgender-friendly as possible. "Usually we would start that conversation with the student about what their parents' knowledge and acceptance is," said Kelley about the first step in a transition at Triton. The next step would be to go to guidance and find the form called "Change of Student Information Form Name and Gender Change Request." Triton used a lot of questions on the form

from the Boston Public Schools. "As a significantly larger district, Boston Public Schools comes in contact with this type of thing more frequently," said Kelley, adding that it's essential students feel comfortable at Triton.

Flaherty has heard many stories as the gender literature teacher at Triton. She has had many different experiences with students and teachers over the years regarding transgender students. Flaherty has started within the past five years to ask students which pronouns they prefer during the "getting to know you" part of the year.

"I've only had students thank me," said Flaherty, "and let me know that from

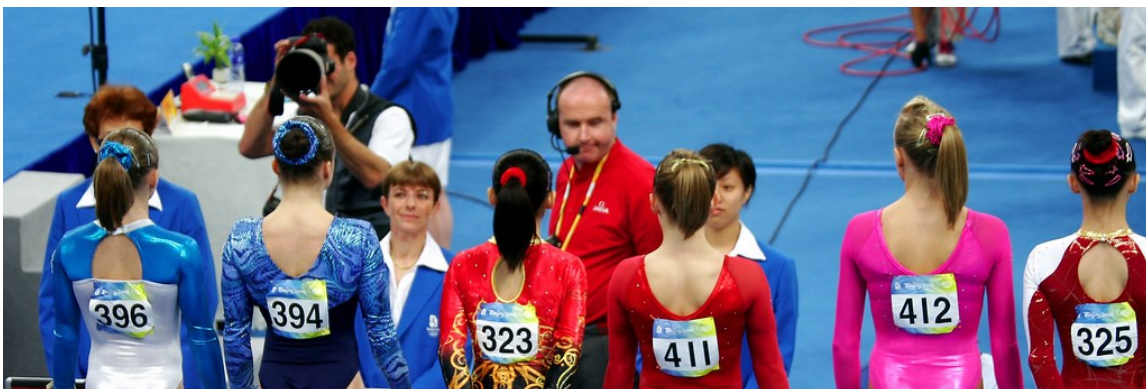


Triton student Sullivan McLellan (McLellan photo).

the first day they knew they were in a safe space." Some of the stories that Flaherty has heard about transgender students at Triton and their experiences are shocking.

"Students have come to me with stories," said Flaherty, "where a teacher would refuse to call them by their chosen name and will only dead-name them." This is a huge issue that is trying to be prevented at Triton.

"A few years ago in GSA we did a thing where students were able to change their name in Aspen from their dead-name to their new name," said Woodward. GSA is going to try to accomplish more this year to benefit transgender students. "We are trying to make more gender neutral bathrooms that everyone can know about," she added.



"Women line up for gymnastics" by bryangeek is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Faces of USA Gymnastics Share Their Voices After Larry Nassar Case, Top Athletes Feel Betrayed

By Olivia Bateman
Staff Writer

Senior Isabella Savino's gym requires sexual assault prevention classes for coaches and far more restrictions than just a few years ago: no riding in the same car as a coach, no private lessons without another adult around, and no doctors or trainers present without another person nearby.

This is all because of the sexual assault cases that have rocked USA Gymnastics and affected gymnasts across the country.

"Those people have a name. It gives the case more publicity," Savino said.

Gymnasts Simone Biles, McKayla Maroney, Maggie Nichols, and Aly Raisman came forward on September 15th, 2021 about a case that was opened in 2016. These individuals are some of the most well-known gymnasts in the world. *NPR* reports that Larry Nassar was their team doctor and was accused of sexual assault many times by multiple gymnasts since 1992. The case against him finally went to court in 2016 when he was charged with three counts of sexual abuse. It came out that there were hundreds of gymnasts he had taken advantage of. These influential gymnasts didn't come forward at the time due to fear and shame, but now their stories are being heard all over the world.

Savino, a student at Triton, is also a competitive gymnast. In an interview, Savino explained how the case affected her gym and how USA Gymnastics (USAG) has changed. Savino says gymnasts and coaches no longer want to associate themselves with USAG, which was the organization Larry Nassar was associated with, and that USAG is close to going bankrupt. The community is trying to rebrand with the National Association of Gymnastics (NAG) to assure that none of the people who employed, were friendly or financially involved with Nassar have control.

Triton Gender In Literature teacher Ms. Margaret Flaherty explained her own feelings about the case. She said it unfortunately takes a mass of people to stand up before they are heard. This is shown in media in the Me Too movement where thousands of celebrities told their stories of abuse, but also on a small scale at schools worldwide.

"I couldn't name ten gymnasts, but I can name Simone Biles. And so I think it puts a face and a name to a greater group of people," said Flaherty. Flaherty hopes that our Triton students are heard, understood and not taken advantage of based on athletics. Student athletes all over the world are taken advantage of and these brave girls are standing up for a larger crowd than they know.

"If there ever was a silver lining to it, it allows for justice to prevail at the end," said Athletic Director Mr. Tim Alberts. Alberts is in charge of all athletics at Triton and he says he keeps a close eye on these things in the media to stay updated and aware. Alberts said he is passionate about keeping our students safe with our own safety protocols: no trainers alone with students, no riding in a car with a coach and a recently added rule is referees have to send in their criminal record histories before they can officiate at Triton.

When asked what the plan of action is here at Triton for if a student came forward about assault, he explained the procedure. "I would listen to as much as the student would give, and certainly escalate it to our administration team," said Alberts. Whether that's Mr. Kelley, assistant principals, school nurse or (the) school resource officer. We work as a team and first make sure the student is safe and then get more answers through interviews and make a determination through that."

Bathroom Bouncers

Triton Attempts to Curb Bathroom Abuse

By Channing Marengi, Staff Writer

Smoke clouds, stolen soap dispensers, and half-eaten school lunches create a disgusting scene in the bathrooms here in the high school. The blue-walled rooms have received a lot of attention lately as they have caused many problems. For the last few years, Triton has been trying to think of new ways to prevent the wrongful use of the bathrooms.

Teachers have now been asked if any of them would be willing to be paid twenty dollars an hour to stand outside the bathrooms to watch those who go in, but so far no one has volunteered.

High school students have been manipulating the bathrooms and using them for vaping sessions with friends and pulling off so-called "devious licks." Devious licks are part of a viral 2021 TikTok trend in which students post videos of themselves stealing, vandalizing, or showing off items they stole primarily from their schools, typically from bathrooms. The bathroom issue has not stopped there as there have been open bottles of alcohol found in the trash. Scott Brennan was asked about what will happen next.

"Yes... eventually (we) will have a teacher monitor for each period," said Brennan.

As eating, drinking and vaping continue in the bathroom, many students feel uncomfortable to even step foot in there.

"I should be able to walk into the bathroom and not be afraid to get caught due to being guilty by association," said freshman Emerson Marengi.

In some instances, the girls bathroom has been more problematic than the boys, students say. Both are sometimes problematic, though, since there has been urine found on the floor of the bathrooms.

The instances of vaping have also gotten worse. Teens have found any way possible to use the bathrooms as a smoke room. Many hide in the stalls in order to avoid teachers who come in. Students also have apparently been drinking alcohol in the bathroom and throwing away the empties into the school's trash. These antics have become a problem that more and more students are getting involved in.

More people have been gathering in pods of 10-12 people to eat lunch in the restrooms as well. The remains of the food are being flushed down the toilet and clogging the septic. The school has had to contact the plumbing company more than once this school year to flush out the system. More money has been put into that this year than anything else.

Mr. Kelley has shared his concerns with the bathroom.

"We are in talks of putting doors on the bathrooms in order to minimize the usage of the bathrooms so we can lock them when we need to," said Kelley.

In the past two weeks each grade has been spoken to about how to treat the school with respect. In the girls' bathroom on the second floor, girls toilet-papered the stalls. Toilet paper was strung throughout the openings and through the cracks to create a decoration above the toilets.

"What has been going on has been ridiculous, the bathroom should be a place where you should have the most privacy but because of those who don't know how to properly use them, we as students have to have a teacher standing outside of it," said senior Maddie Hillick.

Students and teachers have shared a lot of their anger about the bathroom not being used to its true purpose. It has caused many disruptions throughout the school.

Triton is hoping to fix the problems that have been going on and hopes for a better usage of the bathrooms for the rest of the year.

Triton Regional School District is committed to maintaining a learning environment free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation, disability, or any other factor as defined

Triton Middle and High Schools were last renovated in the early 2000s. Since then, due to tight budgets and few major fixes, they have fallen into disrepair. *Triton Voice* examines potential solutions in what has become...

A BUILDING NEED

The School Committee has asked Triton's member towns of Newbury, Rowley, and Salisbury to decide by November 18 which method they would prefer to fund repairs and renovations to the middle and high school.

"What we're asking the town is whether they want to do all of these repairs over time, and largely at their own expense because the state wouldn't help, or submit a proposal to the state that might get their support and pay 50+% of the total cost of a pro-

ject," Triton Superintendent Brian Forget wrote in a statement to the *Triton Voice*.

If the towns opt to send in a proposal to the state, the soonest they would hear back is December, 2022. The next step would be to pay about \$1 million to study if it would be best to renovate, rebuild, or build at a different site, and other possibilities and considerations. Once a decision is made as to what direction to proceed — likely at least 2024 — building could begin.

GROUND

Steps, Railings, Walks Need Repair

By Griffin White, Staff Writer

The grounds at Triton suffer from many problems, from cracks in pavement to crumbling curbs and concrete, to broken railings and walkways. However, the schools began looking at repairs back in 2019 that may fix those issues, albeit at a rather large cost.

Triton's grounds have many issues, some that can put the safety of students at risk, and some that just make the school look less appealing from an aesthetic point of view. Despite the facilities and roof issues being more prevalent, problems with the grounds still degrade the overall quality of Triton as a school. In a recent report on the needs of Triton Middle and High Schools, an engineering company noted that the school needs to:

- Replace bituminous paving and curbs at parking areas and walkways \$1,248,000
 - Replace granite curbs \$2,730
 - Replace concrete paving at sidewalks and courtyards \$638,118
 - Replace cast-in-place concrete stairs at parking areas \$16,250
 - Replace compactor dolly pad \$10,238
 - Replace galvanized steel handrails at parking areas \$8,125
 - Replace chain link fencing \$60,938
 - Repair canopies at middle school and gym entrances \$182,975
 - Repair masonry at entry pylon \$65,000
 - Replace site furnishing \$32,500
 - Replace drainage structures \$487,500
 - Total for grounds work: \$2,989,587
- The renovation project will, in total, cost \$61,581,271.

Staff members at Triton have been noticing these issues, and believe repairs are necessary.

"It would be nice to get the sidewalks and asphalt repaved," said Dr. Adam Lothrop, a science teacher at Triton, "and get some of the fixtures replaced."

The proposed renovation project is similar to the recent Pine Grove Elementary School changes. The project mainly tackles replacing parts of the school that have major flaws, an example being the roof which has to be completely replaced.

The recent building study did not propose a whole new school building, like the building project to construct a new Pentucket High School. The project's cost back when it was first proposed was about \$50 million, however due to prices of materials changing, and the COVID-19 pandemic, the cost has now gone up to over \$61 million. Although the current cost is known, how long until the money is collected is not.

"It definitely has to have work done," said Nick Hubbard-Brucher, a Triton junior, after being asked about his opinions on the grounds.

Hubbard-Brucher went on to describe how Triton was aesthetically ugly from an outside view. All of the issues might not seem to stand out that much, but after really looking at pictures and thinking about it, people start to realize just how the issues stack up and make the school's quality worse.

"We have made repairs, and they're still ongoing on some of the concrete for safety reasons," said Mr. Christopher Walsh, manager of the grounds and facilities at Triton.

Despite all of the uncertainty about when the project itself will happen, if there are any major safety concerns, immediate action may need to be taken to make repairs if possible.

ROOF

HVAC, Covering Need Replacement

By David Pugh, Staff Writer

Sixty-one million dollars is the amount of money required to do all of the renovations needed for Triton High School, according to a recent study. The roof and envelope of the building have only seen one renovation since the school's opening, 50 years ago. Leaks have been plaguing the school, and faculty and students have long been affected by them. A renovation was done in 1999, and while the roof has been repaired, it has only been Band-Aid solutions.

A report was published about all that needs to be found in the school, and the roof was one of the

most urgent issues. The roof, as well as windows, and the utilities on the roof are in need of replacement.

This report, published by Habeeb & Associates in December 2019, concluded that the renovation of the roof and building envelope alone would amount to \$13.7 million. The building envelope is the part of the building that separates the inside of the building from the outside elements — essentially the walls and roof. The repairs needed are broken into four "scopes." Scope one is defined as "immediately necessary/critical," whereas scope four is less critical but in violation of current codes.

When asked what his biggest concern is, Mr. Christopher Walsh, Triton District facilities manager, immediately said the roof, which is categorized as scope one.

The main concern about the roof is the membrane, which needs to be completely replaced and is coming up in some places. This has caused major leaks in the school, including the brown, rusty water that is leaking down the middle school gym wall and covering it in a thick slime.

Nine HVAC units on the roof are also responsible for heating and cooling the school. Walsh described these HVAC units as "end of life." Additionally, the brick masonry of the outside building walls are mildewed and are covered in lichen. Many of the exterior doors need replacement due to rusting and leaking. In addition to age issues, wind blowing across the salt marsh and other weather.

(Habeeb & Associates courtesy photos).



BUILDING

Leaks, Damages, & Systems Need Upgrades

By Sam Mollineaux, Staff Writer

Triton High School's ceilings are damaged by water, sagging down and stained. The middle school gym walls are covered in residue. The bathrooms and locker rooms are in poor condition. The utilities are nearing the end of their life expectancies. To find out how these issues will

be fixed in a proposed \$61,581,271 project, the *Triton Voice* sat down with Mr. Christopher Walsh, Triton's Manager of Facilities and Grounds.

Walsh has been working in the Triton Regional School District for 25 years. He started as the head custodian at Newbury Elementary in 1996, before moving up to Triton in 2001. He said that the project is based around the Comprehensive Facility Report, an analysis of the building and grounds. The document was first published by Habeeb & Associates, an architectural firm, in December of 2019. It has been updated twice, in June and September of this year. The revisions adjusted the estimated price of the project due to increased construction costs and material shortages during the last year. The project was originally about \$55,000,000 in 2019; that number is now estimated to be \$61,581,271 in total.

The parts of the project involving utilities is estimated to cost \$24,364,475. This includes mechanical, electrical, fire protection, and plumbing-related repairs. Walsh says that utilities would mostly be upgraded (although some require replacement) during the proposed project. The reason that many parts do not require total replacement yet is due to their importance. Utilities are, as Walsh says, "mission critical". The school cannot wait for a project like this when a pipe bursts or light breaks, so they are repaired as necessary when a problem arises.

Triton currently has three boilers, all of which were purchased in 1999. One was replaced in 2009, but the Comprehensive Facility Report says that the units are nearing the end of their life expectancies. Most of the electrical distribution equipment dates back to the original 1970 building, so the project would include an overhaul of that system as well. Many other systems will be replaced or upgraded, such as the fire alarms that the school has had since 1999 and the interior lighting that was installed in 2013.

Something that students will have a more physical relationship with is the upgrades proposed to the building interior. These upgrades are estimated to cost \$10,323,198. One of the most notable changes would be an upgrade to the ceiling tiles. These would be more moisture resistant than the current ones which will reduce sagging and deterioration. Other changes include new toilets, along with renovations to the floors and walls in the bathrooms, locker room renovations, and new kitchen equipment.

When asked about what he deems to be the most necessary renovation, Mr. Patrick Kelley, Triton's principal, said, "it would be a new roof, windows, and doors. That would drastically help the space." His long term hope for the school building is a comfortable space that invites people to learn.

Junior Parker Burns said he would like the project to "clean all the goo off the walls in the gym, or to fix the leaks."

Senior John Sayles would like "cleaned filters for the water bubblers."

Regarding time, Walsh said, "it's an unknown." Working with three separate town governments can make the project tricky; "it's up to them," he said.

However, even with issues caused by the pandemic and material shortages, Walsh says that Habeeb & Associates has done an excellent job. "It's a total project, well planned out," he said. While the project has been hampered by the pandemic, there is no doubt that it will be exciting for Triton when it happens.



Images of roads, sidewalks, and concrete failing on Triton grounds; deterioration and pooling on the roof; one of the aging boilers