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November 11, 2026

Like water

Beverly's record breaking Sullivan flows smoothly on the pitch

By Matt Williams
» Asst. Sports Editor



BRAD SULLIVAN PHOTOS

Beverly's Connor Sullivan is adept and beating defenders on the dribble and is the first boy in school history to reach 100 career points.

The genius of Beverly High senior Connor Sullivan on the soccer pitch isn't so much that he can't be contained. It's that like water, he can adapt the shape of his game to fit whatever container the opposing side tries to throw his way.

One of the most gifted and prolific scorers in North Shore history, Sullivan recently became the first boys soccer player in Panther program history to reach 100 career points. With a goal in the Oct. 21 2-0 win over Marblehead, he pushed his career totals to 52 goals, 54 assists and 104 points.

Asked to describe what his game looks like when he's at his best, Sullivan channeled the image of water finding its most advantageous shape.

"It feels like I'm flowing. I would describe my play style as smooth on the ball as well as creative in the attacking third," Sullivan said. "I am always very confident with taking on defenders 1v1, and I love to use my pace to create attacking opportunities for myself as well as my teammates."

A First Team Eastern Mass. all-star as a junior, Sullivan is equally adept at finishing any place around the net as he is setting up teammates for tap-ins or open, booming shots from distance. His 24 assists last fall were a career-high and proved his adaptability; the more attention he got while being man-marked as a dangerous scorer, the more he worked to find ways to get the ball to another Panther.

"My field vision and creativity allow me to set up my teammates for easy goals around the net. Staying patient and having composure on the ball, and waiting for the right pass to open up, allows me to create those chances," said Sullivan. "I also have amazing chemistry with my teammates and trust them completely to put the ball in the back of the net."

Also one of the most consistent players to come through Beverly High, Sullivan has reached double digit goals in each of his four varsity seasons. He began with a 10-goal, 20-point freshman campaign, followed that up with 15 tallies and 27 points in 10h grade, and posted 36 points a year ago.

This fall, his 17 goals and 27 points in 15 games put him squarely among the North Shore's top dogs.

"Connor is a sponge, he is creative, and very coachable," said Panthers head coach Edgar de Leon. "As a captain, Connor leads with a caring and supportive voice. He understands how to support his teammates and help them improve with kind, supportive words."

Confidence in himself

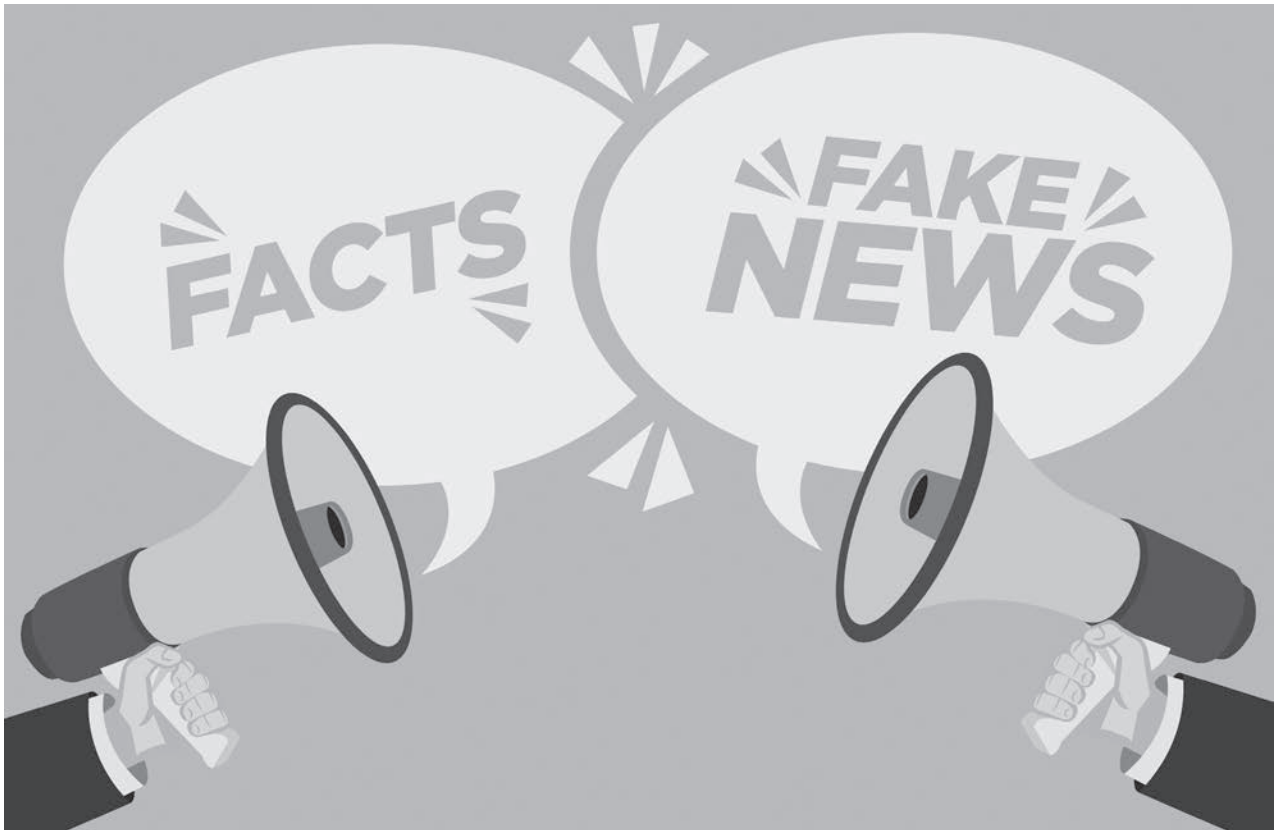
Of course, you can't become the kind of scorer Sullivan is overnight. Years of work have gone into his success, and he's grateful to the coaches at Beverly High as well as Doc Simpson, Eddie Mercy Kisakye and the staff at FC Stars, his current club team.

"Connor puts in a lot of work in the offseason playing club soccer, doing physical training, and playing high level soccer," de Leon said.

"Connor is the type of player who can take over a game, and even when partnered with top offense players like Daniel Silva and Wilson de Leon, he managed to keep pace with the elite players that have come through the Beverly Panthers program over the last four years."

Soccer remains a skill game, which is why Sullivan looks up to both Neymar and Lamine Yamal for their fearlessness and creativity on the pitch. Athletes that have success also need to be fast, strong and have a deep

SEE SULLIVAN, PAGE 4



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https://www.politifact.com/

» **FactCheck.org**, run by Annenberg Public Policy Center, performs much of the same tasks, and also let's you ask questions of the fact checkers. An example question: Did the Supreme Court rule that it is illegal to take the oath of office with anything but the Bible? (The answer is no.)
https://www.factcheck.org/

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REAL NEWS IN SCHOOLS

How the program works

Everything you need to know about Real News in Schools

Who: It involves local schools participating in the Salem News and Gloucester Daily Times Newspapers in Education program, Real News in Schools.

What: Students and faculty at these schools are granted full access to SalemNews.com and GloucesterTimes.com and receive print copies of the monthly Real News in Schools publication you are currently reading.

Where: These free digital subscriptions are accessible on all electronic devices within participating schools. The schools currently enrolled include Amesbury High School, Essex North Shore Agricultural &Technical School, Gloucester High School and Austin Prep.

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GHS students paving way in communication class

By Bobby Grady
» Staff Writer



BOBBY GRADY/Staff photos

Alice Joshi presents possible changes to Gloucester High School's website for Principal John Perella.



Norah Fogarty works on updating the school's daily announcements.

Gloucester High School students are taking the lead on communication by figuring out what their peers want to know, how to deliver it and ways to engage the whole school.

A new class, Social Media and Digital Communication, is giving four students the chance to take a look at how the school community communicates both inside and outside the building and propose changes to better serve their peers.

Theater Arts teacher Jessica Ruggles said Principal John Perella and Coordinator of School Counseling Laura Carlson came to her with the general idea for the class, and in its first semester, the students are helping create what the class can become.

"In the first week of school, the kids and I wrote the syllabus together," Ruggles said. "It was kind of fun to see the kids think about how school and grading works because it's not something kids always have the option to do."

Work for the four upperclassmen students so far has included polling the student body to see what kind of information they want shared while figuring out ways to improve communication inside the building and updating the high school's website.

"We've worked together to make changes for the student body and with the student body so we're incorporating everyone and everything into it as best we can," junior Aiden Bairstow said.

Inside the building, students have taken the information from their polls and used it to update the school's daily announcements with sports scores, team wins and holidays. They also have created slideshows to screen on the various televisions throughout the building.

"As we transitioned into October, they created this cute little Halloween duck (slide) and when we had spirit week they created spirit week points slides that we kept up and updated with which class is winning," Ruggles said.

Other ongoing work the students proposed to Perella on Thursday were updates to the school's website that included cleaning up the design, reorganizing and removing repetitive links as well as weighing whether to post daily announcements in the morning or afternoon.

"We're also going to propose bringing back a thing from last year, which was 'Mystery Singer,'" junior Alice Joshi said.

What the students are proposing instead is a "name that tune" competition where five to 20 seconds of a song will play over the school's speakers and classrooms can call in radio-style to guess the song.

Both Ruggles and Perella said the class's four students are shaping what it could be in the future. Ruggles said there have been talks about the class running the school social media accounts.

Perella said so far, "it's been a great start.

"The whole goal was to give students some voice in the building and how we present information."

Outside of student involvement, Ruggles said she plans to teach the students teamwork as well as media literacy topics such as how presentation affects how a message is received.

The four students said as they weigh post-high school plans, they don't intend on entering the communications field, but see how it could be helpful.

"I'm wondering how I could apply it to what I plan to do in the future," said junior Norah Fogarty who plans on studying psychology.

Staff Writer Bobby Grady may be contacted at 978-675-2714 or bgrady@gloucestertimes.com.

GHS seniors get new opportunity in biotech training

By Bobby Grady
» Staff Writer

Gloucester High School students will soon have the opportunity to get college equivalent training in biotechnology thanks to a new partnership with Gloucester Marine Genomics Institute's Gloucester Biotechnology Academy.

Academy Senior Director John Doyle announced a dual-enrollment program between the high school and academy during a recent Gloucester School Committee meeting. He said three to five Gloucester High seniors will enroll at the academy while still in high school beginning in January.

"Hopefully (the participating students) will graduate with a Gloucester High School certificate, a biotech certificate and a full-time job," Doyle told the committee.

At the academy, located on Blackburn Center, students go through a nine-month program which includes six months of basic training in molecular biology, bio manufacturing and cell culture, followed by a minimum paid co-op where students get additional lab experience.

"We send them out to work in Cambridge, Boston, Metro West, North Shore, we send them all over the place," Doyle said.

He said the curriculum is based on current industry workflows, needs and equipment used, which has helped graduates continue to find employment even as biotechnology hiring has slowed in recent years.

"It's exactly what you would need to work in a professional lab setting, and we continually improve on the curriculum," he said.

"Our students have 500 plus hours at the bench before they enter their co-op, and the co-op is an additional 480 to 960 hours," he continued. "To give you some frame of reference, about 1,000 hours is what you have when you come out of an undergrad with a science degree."

In addition to technical skills and improving students' understanding of biotechnology, they also learn life skills such as time management as well as professional communication and organization.

Graduates of the program have gone straight to the workforce, becoming entry-level lab technicians, and gone to college for an undergraduate degree.

Doyle said some schools and universities give Biotechnology Academy graduates credits for their work.

"And then (the academy) is all tuition free, we have a stipend that students get $1,000 a month to attend the program if they qualify financially. and we also have comprehensive wrap-around support services to help with things like food insecurity, housing insecurity and childcare vouchers," he said.

Gloucester High School Principal John Perella said at the end of last school year, his first in the district, restructuring senior year to give students more hands-on experience was one of his priorities for the school.

"The dual-enrollment programming between Gloucester Marine Genomics Institute is an excellent example of the type of opportunities we are working hard to design, collaborate on and nurture," he said in an email to the Gloucester Daily Times.

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Rockport middle/high school students recognized for excellence in STEM

By Bobby Grady
» Staff Writer

ROCKPORT —With students across the Commonwealth working to improve their science and engineering skills, only one group stood above the rest.

During the Massachusetts Project Lead the Way fall conference, an annual gathering of educators and students from across the state focused on science, technology, engineering and math learning, Rockport Middle/High School was given the student work award — a recognition of excellence.

Rockport was the sole winner of the award, chosen from about 550 schools across the state who attended the conference hosted by the Mass Learning Project and the One8 foundation, both of which work to increase applied learning in schools.

Both organizations support implementing Project Lead the Way curriculum into schools such as Rockport . The curriculum not only supports students and educators diving into science, technology, engineering and math, but it also connects them with industry experts to support student learning.

Earning Rockport the award was a variety of middle and high school student work. Rockport educators Eric Sabo and Allie Favazza said the students were evaluated by representatives from the Mass Learning Project both in the school and at other events.

Several of the events included students working on solutions to problems such as Student Solve, where students were given a real issue from a real company and were tasked with finding a solution over the course of a day via Zoom.

Favazza said two years ago her students were tasked with helping health technology company Medtronic come up with ways to make the Hugo Surgical Robot, a modular surgical platform that surgeons sit in for hours at a time, more comfortable.

"So the kids are trying to come up with ways for (the surgeons) to wear these 3-D goggles and they have all kinds of ideas," Favazza said.

Sabo said some of his students developed an app and their own artificial intelligence with PlayLab, an organization diving into how AI can be used in education.

Other ways students are connecting with industry experts is through Student Industry Connect. For this event, kids put reports on their projects together, send them to the Mass Learning Project which hands them off to experts who then supply the kids with feedback.

Last year was the first time Favazza said Rockport did this and her expectations were far exceeded.

"I think I was expecting one or two (responses) but they got feedback from like 15 people," she said.

A select group of students also get to present their work at a conference in Boston to industry experts who ask them questions and offer them feedback.

"One of my eighth-grade groups was talking about issues not a lot of teens know about like fast fashion, and this gentleman said, 'I hate fast fashion' and got all passionate about it," Favazza said. "The people who come and look at the projects kids are doing are saying things like, 'You give me faith in humanity.'"

One project that Sabo highlighted was the robotic auto golf a group of upperclassmen students worked on.

Sabo said the students had to build a robot that can hit a golf ball different distances as well as at two targets, one that lights up when struck and another that makes noise.

"You have to incorporate electrical circuitry, hydraulics, kinematics, obviously physics, but they're taking all of these skills that they learn along the way and applying to build this," he said.

"And these are all essential skills that they could certainly use when they get outside of high school," Sabo said.

Seniors Jack Trupiano, Josh Cranston and Flyn Blanchard, all members of Rockport High's highest level engineering class, said they did some work on last year's golfing robot but what's been most impactful is seeing what they've learned being applied in the real world.

All three said the exposure is shaping what they want to do after high school. Cranston said he was initially set on joining the military but now wants to study electrical engineering in college.

"It's taught me that there's more that I can do with engineering — not just for myself but if done property for the world — and that has really guided me toward engineering," Cranston said.

The three are preparing for their senior capstone projects but before that, they are building solar-powered balloons designed to traverse the world 45,000 feet in the air.

Sabo said the students are designing the balloons and working around different constraints to make them fly as far as possible.

"It has a transmitter on it so we can track it so we're really excited about that," Trupiano said, despite losing one balloon over the Pacific Ocean.

On the middle school side, Favazza said one class she teaches is app development and ninth-grader Laurie McCoy said he and his friends worked together to make train schedules a little more fun.

"I really wanted to make a game but they wanted to make a train schedule so we made trains, games and Sean," he said.

The app shows users the train schedule and a corresponding map, offers games to play while waiting or sitting on the train and a number of quotes from some of the entertainment world's most famous Seans.

McCoy and his teammates presented the project to industry professionals which Favazza said can be very impactful for middle school students.

"I think it creates buy-in for what they're doing now. Even if they can't set a life goal based on it right now, it's going to help them remember why they're here," she said.

Principal Amy Rose said when Superintendent Mark Branco joined the district about four years ago, science, technology engineering and math education was one area identified as a hole and "students were hungry for it."

"(Branco) had experiences working with Project Lead the Way in different districts and had really amazing experiences with them so we ended up applying for a grant and have been doing incremental increases to our course offerings since then," Rose said.

Between the middle and high school, students now have the opportunity to take 11 different classes as part of the curriculum.

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» Sullivan

Continued from Page 1

gas tank, which is why Sullivan spends so much energy in his fitness.

It's those two things together which set him apart from the pack.

"It is a total combination of physical fitness and ball mastery," Sullivan said. "Having the confidence to believe in myself is also very important to go out there every game and trust that I'll be able to perform helps me do what I do best on the field."

It's also no surprise that the best advice he's received about sports has to do with controlling what you can control as a player. That mantra plays a big role in his second-to-none work ethic.

"It's important to focus on what you can do in the moment for the best result. It's always in your control to work as hard as you can every game, and it's a very big focus to me to not let anyone out there on the field outwork me," Sullivan noted.

A member of the National Honor Society, Sullivan has been fielding college soccer opportunities at the Division 1 and Division 3 levels that he plans on exploring more after the high school season ends. His favorite class at BHS is Spanish, since he finds learning a new language and exploring and understanding new cultures fascinating.



Beverly's Connor Sullivan has scored double digits in goals in each of his four varsity seasons.

BRAD SULLIVAN PHOTO

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Kick it forward

Koulalis making a difference for others with his initiative

By Phil Stacey
» Executive Sports Editor

Giving back to those less fortunate is something that comes naturally to JJ Koulalis.

So does playing soccer, which the Danvers native has done — and loved — since he was 5 years old.

So when the current St. John's Prep senior captain had a chance to combine two of his favorite passions, it was as easy as burying a penalty kick into the top corner of the net over a fallen netminder.

Koulalis created Kick It Forward, a fundraiser that gathers new and gently used soccer equipment to donate to those in need, a year ago. Since then, fellow Prep soccer captains Andrew Wenzel of Peabody and Henry Barone of Hamilton have joined him in his endeavors, sharing this gear with needy children both locally and across the world.

"Soccer has given me so much, so being able to use the sport to help other kids is such a great thing," said Koulalis. "Being able to use the privilege I have to give to others is something that means a lot to me."

"I've done a lot of work with Campus Ministry at St. John's Prep since I was a freshman, and there have been a lot of opportunities to give back," added the National Honor Society member. "I came up with the idea with Kick It Forward, asked if Henry and Alex wanted to get involved during our captain's practices before this season ... and it's really taken off."

In the past year, the 17-year-old Koulalis and his mates have been able to collect over 300 pieces of soccer equipment — cleats, pinnies, goalie gear, balls, socks, jerseys, backpacks and the like — through word of mouth, emails, and the generous support of soccer families in Danvers and surrounding communities on the North Shore.

They delivered more than 150 of those items to the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Salem (which Koulalis had done work with before) this past July, going over to meet with COO Elmer Galvez to deliver them.

He then reached out to Ken Levandoski of the Gift of Soccer Foundation, a national nonprofit which has given soccer equipment to underprivileged children all over the world since 2010. Levandoski gave Koulalis the address of another nonprofit in Dallas, the Rachel K. Foundation, which support children in this country and in Kenya with special needs, cerebral palsy and epilepsy.

With Koulalis scheduled to go on a college visit to Southern Methodist University, five minutes away from the Rachel K. Foundation, going there to deliver more of his collected soccer gear was a no-brainer.

"My family and I went over and met (founder) Wilson Ondara and Agnes Kikwatu. It ended up being the coolest thing," said Koulalis.

"They were incredibly grateful, and it was a really good feeling knowing the gear we had collected was going to children in Kenya. They'll keep it in storage until next summer when it's delivered there. Wilson wants to keep in contact with me so I know where everything goes when it gets there."



COURTESY PHOTOS

St. John's Prep soccer captains JJ Koulalis (far left), Henry Barone (blue shorts) and Andrew Wenzel pose with members of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Salem and its Chief Operating Officer, Elmer Galvez, after donating more than 150 pieces of summer equipment this past July.



Danvers' JJ Koulalis, a captain for the St. John's Prep soccer team, has donated more than 300 new and gently used soccer items through his Kick It Forward fundraiser.



From left, St. John's Prep soccer captains Henry Barone, Andrew Wenzel and JJ Koulalis drop off soccer items to the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Salem this summer.

With Wenzel being a junior, Koulalis is hoping he'll carry on the Kick It Forward mission, and that future Prep soccer captains will do so as well.

The son of Stan and Lia Koulalis who has a younger sister, Samantha, who is a freshman at Bishop Fenwick High School, Koulalis is part of the Investment Club at St. John's Prep and lists statistics as his favorite class. Among the other colleges he's considering are Fairfield, Providence, UMass, Clemson and the University of South Carolina, and he's hoping to make in finance.

Koulalis said he plans on giving back no matter where his life ultimately takes him.

"Going to St. John's Prep is one of the best decisions I've ever made," said Koulalis. "The education I've gotten, the people I've met, the connections I've made ... and learning what it truly means to give back."

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A HISTORIC DAY IN BEVERLY

Local students Hazel Clemens, 16, and Alyssa Magill, 15, portray Nathaniel and Alex Jameson, characters they created who were present for the reenactment of the historic naval battle between The Hannah and HMS Nautilus in Beverly on Oct. 11.

DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN/Photo

Danvers schools mull new e-bike rules

By Caroline Enos
» Staff Writer

DANVERS — The School Committee and Superintendent Dan Bauer are considering steps to keep e-bikes off school grounds in light of the safety concerns they pose for young riders.

This could mean following other communities in banning e-bikes and e-scooters on all school campuses, some committee members said at a meeting in early October. But a specific policy isn't in the works yet as Bauer is researching what rules other districts have in place for e-bikes.

"There's safety concerns with the speed at which e-bikes can travel, as you have riders that do not have an understanding of the rules of the road," Bauer told The Salem News. "On a school campus where you have pedestrians and activities and such, there's inherent problems there with students riding e-bikes responsibly or not."

E-bikes typically travel up to 20 or 28 mph, depending on the model. But that speed limit can be bypassed through rather easy alterations or by students using the fastest type of e-bike.

With these changes, the bikes can reach 65 mph as Marblehead Cycle owner Dan Shuman told parents during a recent e-bike safety forum in Peabody.

Danvers police Sgt. Jeffrey Smith echoed similar concerns during the School Committee meeting in Danvers. He noted they are dangerous for kids under 16 to ride on the road since they do not know the rules of driving on streets. And motorized vehicles like them are not allowed on sidewalks.

In 2025, Danvers police received 56 calls regarding e-bikes and responded to seven accidents involving them, said Smith, the department's Community Policing & Juvenile Division commander.

This year, Danvers police have received 84 calls so far and responded to 25 accidents, with Smith expecting the number of calls to pass 100 by New Year's. Officers have seized 16 e-bikes since January that were illegally altered or driven dangerously.

"I'm aware (a ban on school properties) is not a total solution to the e-bike problem in town," Smith said. "I just think it's an extra step that can protect Danvers Public Schools and the community. I don't want to be taking a phone call about something terrible happening on a kid trying to get to school."

E-bikes are banned from being kept in Danvers municipal buildings because of their battery fire risks. Some communities, such as Peabody, have banned them outright from middle school grounds. In Haverhill, the city just extended a crackdown on e-bikes and scooters to include sidewalks, trails and other public spaces, in addition to school property.

The state Legislature is mulling stricter laws for children on e-bikes. But until that happens, only minimal action can be taken locally to restrict their use among the town's youngest riders.

School Committee member Gabe Lopes said that banning e-bikes on school property is something the committee needs to consider. The vehicles can reach high speeds without making much noise, he noted.

"I was going into the Smith School and had two kids buzz by me on scooters on the sidewalk," he said. "I did not know they were there until they were on top of me, which was really, really concerning."

Fellow committee member Beth Kontos is concerned that banning e-bikes outright would not be equitable for students who rely on these bikes to get to school.

"If that's what my child owns and that's how they get to school, I would think they should be able to ride it just like any bicycle to get to school. That's my opinion," Kontos said. "And then they get off the bike when they are on school property and lock it up as they would any bike."

"I agree with some of that," Smith replied. "But unfortunately, a lot of the people who are investing in these e-bikes are not exactly operating the way that I would want my child to be operating a bicycle."

Contact Caroline Enos at CEnos@northofboston.com.

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