

**MSAD #53 Board Report: Warsaw Middle School**

April 4, 2011 Board Meeting

**Sandy Nevens, Principal**

**Students of the Month for February:**

*Hutt, Bolduc:* **Lexie LaMarre**

*Campbell, Newhouse, Jacques:* **Brandon McKenna**

*Littlefield, Ulrickson, Graham:* **Leah Carron**

*Longstreet, Saucier* **Jacob Baker**

*Dorman, Woodbury:* **Alyssa Watrous**

*Brown, Rollins:* **Sydney Morton**

*Cianchette, Hammond:* **Caroline Vigue**

**NECAP Results: Kudos and To Do's!**

I have been anxiously awaiting the results of the 2010-2011 NECAP Tests and they arrived yesterday. As the Board may remember after seeing our initial results earlier this winter, our performance in both math and reading was not as strong as we had hoped in key areas. The Results are IN, and we made AYP! I am proud of my staff and my colleagues on the A Team who have all worked hard to raise our scores, but, even more importantly, to focus our attention on teaching and learning. Without a willing and hard-working staff and the expertise of Faye, Anne, Stacy, and Mike we would have struggled as well. Now what? We work harder to reach higher goals as a school! I will work with the other members of the A Team to share with the Board the results that we received yesterday (Monday, March 28, 2011).

**PIE Night:**

Kudos to Anne Miller for organizing the Second Annual PIE Night at Warsaw! Turnout of parents, students, and teachers was strong and Hillman's pies were only a part of the attraction! Staff contributions included presentation on CIPS, Math Practices, and Strategies. Getting a jump on college preparedness (hosted by MCI) was offered for parents to peruse in two sessions, and the Warsaw Band entertained us all. I know that the Board is very much in support of events that get parents, teachers, and students together and this event once again has fit the bill. Having MCI here is also a boon as our two schools' busy schedules make those gatherings few and far between.

### **Staff Meetings:**

As many of you may be aware, as a result of our CIPS Training, we have been using Staff Meetings to focus on Data for part of each meeting. On Monday, March 28, Kayla Brown had teachers predict where their students' scores would be on the NECAP tests. This process opens the door for teachers to make predictions, explore their predictions, and then refine or revise the needs of each student after reviewing the data. Kayla, Lori Stevens, and Darlene Ulrickson are the teachers on our Data Team that have had the training from the state. Marilyn Graham and Paula Young are also members of the team that plans staff development with the data focus at Warsaw. These ladies work hard, get along well, and know what they are doing. They are upbeat, passionate, and organizations when working on data with staff and in our data Meetings.

### **Earth Day:**

The Allied Arts Team has been hard at work planning an annual all-school event. This year's Focus will be on Earth Day, with a particular focus on showing students how we can do a better job of taking care of our Earth and communities by recycling, as well as limiting our use of materials that harm the environment. On April 11 students will visit the Recycling Center in Pittsfield.

On April 14 we will have a number of activities for the whole school to participate with a focus on Earth Day and the environment. Kudos to the Allied Arts Team for the enormous amount of energy they have put into this project.

### **Warsaw's Legacy: with Apologies to Richard DuFour**

When I arrived at Warsaw almost five years ago, I knew a fair amount about the school and I had worked with several teachers at the Middle Level Education Institute and the MAMLE Conference at Sugarloaf. I knew that teachers here were committed to their students, their curriculum, and middle school Best Practices. I also was impressed that under Principal Arnold Shorey the staff had taken on low reading scores by focusing on Literacy. A Literacy Specialist was hired and the staff took on Literacy across the curriculum. We are still reaping the benefits of that school-wide response to low scores in Literacy.

And these past three years Math became a focus because our scores were low, and we realized that there were minor holes to patch and major issues to address: The Connected Math Program was and is embraced by many middle school teachers here and across the country, but for some students who struggle with reading and math, CMP can be a double whammy in terms of it being a math program that relies on reading comprehension and problem solving.

I commend my colleagues, Faye Anderson at the Elementary Schools, Anne Miller and Stacey Shorey across the district for challenging and addressing, along with our staffs, how we are teaching math and how we are teaching Literacy. I have seen the fruits of all of our labors here at Warsaw and in the elementary schools, especially (but not only) in math. We have discussed as schools the need for more fundamental math skills for all, but especially in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades as they transition to a middle school model. We have worked to better implement CMP math here at the middle school, but we have also recognized CMP's limitations, especially for students who struggle in both reading and math! Saxon Math made sense because it provides a strong foundation in math that will help students be more successful in math. CMP is still with us and I

support its continued use, but ONLY if we can ensure that all students' math needs are met and that every student can succeed. Math Literacy for all.

### **Whatever It Takes....**

Richard Dufour, an educational guru known internationally for his educational reform wrote a book called Whatever It Takes. I read this book years ago, and its content and its title define where I think Warsaw Middle school is: We will do whatever it takes to make sure that all students learn. In the past four years we have done the following:

- Hired two consultants to work directly with teachers on a long-term basis in math
- Adopted Saxon Math
- Focused on improving the use of CMP
- Provided staff development in math
- Focused on middle school best practices
- Hired a Math Interventionist to teach Algebra to students who are ready for it
- Worked on Math Curriculum
- Worked with staff in working with one another to define what our students need
- Focused on summer math and reading for all students
- Used MEA and NECAP Released Items to help us better prepare for the state test.
- Provided Staff Development to focus on specific needs in curriculum and best practices
- Reinforced our commitment to Middle School Best Practices while recognizing the need for those practices to adapt to student needs

I have never seen a staff as willing to do WHATEVER IT TAKES as Warsaw teachers are!

Whatever It Takes.... This staff will do!

Sandy Nevens, Warsaw Principal