

# Warsaw Middle School

*From the Principal:*

*January, 2012*

Welcome to 2012 and the mid-year point. It is hard to believe that it was 5 months ago that we were packed in the gym for Open House welcoming everyone to the 2011 – 2012 school year. On that opening day I stated that WMS has two goals, expectations really, for every student: Academic Excellence and Respectful and Responsible Citizenship. While I look around and see examples of the latter daily, I am concerned that nearly one-third of our school population is either failing or at risk of failing one or more courses at this progress report for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter ranking period. As such, I am urging parents to stay involved in their children's educational process and to take an active role in supporting their children, regardless of their academic standing. Below are some tips reprinted from "Parents still make the difference!" Please also remember that on Tuesdays, WMS offers the Learning Center and a late bus for any student who needs academic help, and on Thursdays there is a late bus so that students can stay with their teachers for content specific help. Together, we can make a difference. Have your child stay for the help if s/he is at risk of failing a course. Let's see to it that no student is failing when report cards go home on February 1<sup>st</sup>.

**~ Kristen Gilbert, Principal**

## **Mid-year is the perfect time to check in with teachers**

The school year is already almost half over. How is your child doing so far? This is an ideal time to communicate with his/her teachers. Try email first, unless there are serious concerns. Here are some things to find out:

- How is your child handling the curriculum so far?
- What are his/her strengths?
- What are the areas in which s/he needs improvement?
- What part of each class does s/he most enjoy?
- Does s/he have difficulty with any part of each class?
- Are there behavior concerns? If so, what?
- Does s/he pay attention in class?
- Has s/he been turning in homework consistently?
- Is s/he missing any assignments?
- Are there any social problems that should be noted?
- What can you do, as a parent, to help your child?

Remember that your involvement in your child's education remains as important as ever. This is true even if it seems that your child does not want you to be involved. Do not listen to your child's protests that "No one else's parents email the teacher," or "You don't have to go to that parents' meeting." Much research shows that children have fewer problems, and more success in school and beyond, when parents are involved.

Parents: Please visit the district Web site at [www.msad53.org](http://www.msad53.org) to take our Title I Program Survey!

You can also find the lunch calendar, sports schedule, and more!

**From the Nurse:** In January I will be doing the required vision testing on the 5th and 7th graders. If there is a discrepancy with their test, I will be sending a letter home to parents requesting that their child follow up with an eye doctor. Please have your eye doctor's office send me your child's results so that his teachers and I can make sure that they are able to function at their best in school.

**Important Dates to Remember:**

**January** 13: Civil Rights Dance  
 16: No School, Martin Luther King, Jr. observed  
 27: End of Q2  
 31: ½ Day Inservice dismissal at 12:35PM

**February** 1: Reports cards home  
 3-4: KV Honors Festival  
 8: ½ Day Inservice dismissal at 12:35PM

**Peanut Alert:** As you may know, we have some students with a life-threatening allergy to nuts. We recognize that peanut butter is a staple for many families and peanut residue is hard to avoid as peanuts are found in several products. As such we would like to ask that parents and guardians avoid sending peanut products to school as much as possible. As we cannot guarantee a nut free school, we have designated nut free zones where it makes sense to do so in the school. We ask that you speak to your children about being respectful of not eating nut products in these zones.

**Winter in Maine does not mean we  
 "stay indoors" for 4 months!**

You can't change the weather, so dress for it and get out there. Sample a sport or activity you've always wanted to try. With so many to choose from, there's bound to be a cold weather pastime that brings a smile to your face. And here's the bonus— you'll get the satisfaction of knowing you're staying active and healthy during a time of year when many people are settling in for a long winter's nap.

There is plenty to do outside and kids enjoy the freedom and fresh air that outdoor play offers. Be sure to fit some time in every day and especially on weekends to get outside!

Try any of these activities:

- Shoveling contests (after a fresh snow fall!)
- Snow man making, Snow angels, Snow forts
- Sledding, Snow shoeing, X country skiing, downhill skiing
- Skating
- Ice fishing

Middle School kids are always hungry, but help them watch what they eat!

Here are some snack ideas:

- Fresh fruit
- Low fat popcorn
- Granola bars
- Bagels with low fat cream cheese
- Fig Newton's
- Soft pretzels
- Cereal bars
- Carrot and celery sticks
- Goldfish
- Graham crackers
- Baked chips or pretzels
- Water
- String cheese
- Trail mix
- Dried fruit

**5<sup>TH</sup> & 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE TEAMS:**

The **Longstreet/Saucier** team has been integrating math, language arts, and social studies in an "Age of Exploration" unit. The students have been using Fakebook to chart and journal their progress as an explorer from Europe to the New World. In science class the students will add to this project by charting the weather patterns that they have witnessed throughout their trip. The science piece will take place after winter break. Currently in science the students are studying the Solar System and Universe. We are integrating current events into this unit and have explored the Kepler 22b planet, which has the proper temperature and location to possibly have life. We also are tracking the GRAIL mission around the moon, which is studying the geographical features of the moon to learn more about its history.

The **Hammond/Cianchette** fifth and sixth grade students have been working on retelling Cinderella stories. The fifth graders are setting the tale in Maine and will combine the writing into a picture book format. The sixth grade chose their own place to set the tale, some New York City, some Venice, even Disney World. Both groups are focusing on setting pieces and the essential parts of the plot. The groups are studying ancient Rome in Social Studies and are creating projects and reports on a specific topic related to Rome. Projects are presented in class and used to teach their peers about their topic. The classes made ornaments to take home and share and are gathering donations for charities. The fifth grade is collecting for the homeless shelter in Waterville and the sixth grade is collecting to donate to Kiva, a group that provides microloans to people in very poor countries to start businesses, support farming, and build or create job opportunities. In math students are working hard with their Saxon lessons. In science we are studying landforms and finding famous landforms around the world.

**Rollins/Brown:** In science, we are learning about Sound and Light. Students have already learned about the different types of waves, how we hear sound, and how we see light. Ask them to explain it to you! We are on lesson 43 in our math books. Students have math homework everyday except for Friday. Make sure your child is completing their lessons every night! In Social Studies, we studied the Puritans of Massachusetts and made a graham cracker colonial New England village. We also read some traditional holiday season poetry. Coming up, we are going to be learning about the Age of Exploration. Students will be creating a Podcast on an explorer.

The **Woodbury-Dorman Team** has been working very hard the last several weeks. In Language Arts, the students have been learning the elements of a short story by reading holiday short stories that show the true meaning of the season. In addition, they wrote persuasive letters to a loved one requesting a special gift that was not a material object. In addition, they composed holiday stories. In Science, the students finished a study of Antarctica and selected a project to show their learning and understanding of this continent. They also started a study of different biomes.

**REMINDER**

Learning Center – every Tuesday Staffed with at least 2 certified teachers.

Late Bus – every Tuesday and Thursday at 4PM. Must sign up with their teacher.

**7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Teams:**

The **Hutt/Bolduc** team has been working on an integrated unit centered around families. Each student has been researching information concerning many different aspects of their families. Students have created a family tree going back to great grandparents, they have researched a genetic disorder that has affected their family, and planned an interview with a family member two generations their elder. In social studies students have learned about immigration to the United States and US history during the time period in which their interviewee was coming of age. In math and science students have been focusing on the probability of inheriting certain genetic traits. After break we will continue to research family history and students will create a family yearbook and a one-minute montage video encompassing all the work they have completed throughout the unit. Our goal is for this unit to provide students with an opportunity to understand and appreciate their family history.

The **GLU team** students have been working on final projects using iMovie and animation-ish, software purchased with ING grant money awarded to Mrs. Littlefield and Mrs. Stevens this summer. The movies show the understanding of a how a stimulus-response happens and then takes a closer look inside the body at the passing of an impulse from nerve cell to nerve cell. The students have just wowed us! Students are currently finishing *Eva*, a novel that takes place in the future and connects to their learning of the nervous system in science. Mrs. Graham's 8<sup>th</sup> graders enjoyed the viewing of *The Christmas Carol* in Lewiston, connecting to their classroom work. Seventh graders just finished writing and sharing holiday stories. All students should continue to work nightly on Assistments and Moby Math, online math programs!

The **Campbell/Jacques/Newhouse** team has had a busy late fall/early winter. The social studies classes are studying the fundamentals of economics and are participating in a stock market game to learn this method of investment. In Mrs. Newhouse's science class, students have been studying scientific classification and binomial nomenclature. Students have created their own species of animal in order to create a species with strong survival skills. In Mr. Campbell's science class, students have been learning the different systems in human anatomy and how they work together in order to further understand the complexities of the human body.

Math classes are working on a developing understanding of algebraic reasoning. Eighth graders are beginning to explore the formulas for calculating the volume (capacity) of containers. Seventh grade students are exploring negative numbers. Did you know that -5 is less than -3?

In ELA with Mr. Jacques, the 7th grade has been exploring the elements of fiction (plot structures, narrative styles, aspects of setting and point of view) through the medium of short stories. Students have been structurally analyzing these stories using these elements of fiction in an effort to prepare for lit circle work (3-4 books being read in class, 5-6 students per book). In the 8th grade, students in the 112 homeroom will be finishing up their work on Shakespeare and moving towards a social/economic reading of S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*. The students in the 119 homeroom will be finishing their work on *The Outsiders* and moving into literature circles of their own. All students will also be working with punctuation and grammar.

## Allied Arts News...

The Allied Arts Program at Warsaw provides students with education in a broad spectrum of subjects. Students rotate through four allied arts classes each year, plus physical education. Fifth and sixth graders also have general music, and library skills or digital citizenship. Each month we will feature a part of the allied arts curricula.

**Guidance:** Seventh graders have been learning about town government and business. They have created some creative and interesting business projects, such as restaurants, amusement parks, stores, and car dealerships!

**Theater Arts:** As part of their Historical Theatre unit, seventh grade students this quarter are reading and learning about plays and playwrights from the Elizabethan time period. They are also studying and applying stage and TV makeup as part of their Technical Theatre unit.

**Health:** Sixth grade students are currently working on a disease unit. Each student has been assigned a specific disease to research and create a presentation on.

In eighth grade students are finishing up a unit on sexual harassment and violence prevention. Students have been working on role-plays in which sexual harassment occurs, and what they can do to stop it, as well as prevent it from happening.

**Library Skills:** Grade five students are working with Destiny, the online library catalog, and learning how to locate library books. They will also be learning how to use some of the MARVEL databases.

**Art:** Sixth graders having art this term are learning about drawing three dimensional forms and perspective. They are applying their learning by designing a home using characteristics of the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Eighth graders are learning about the beginnings of abstract art through the work of artists like Claude Monet, Vincent Van Gogh and Pablo Picasso. They have researched an artist, will reproduce the artist's style of painting and share their learning on a poster.

**Physical Education:** All classes in physical education will be working on volleyball in January.

**Robotics Report:** On Saturday December 10<sup>th</sup>, 62 teams of aspiring scientists and engineers, all middle school students from across the state, converged on the Augusta Civic Center. It was the 12<sup>th</sup> annual gathering and this years theme was "Food Factor", the safe collection, transportation and preparation of the food we eat. Warsaw Middle School sent two teams with a total of eleven students. The teams took with them their LEGO ® Mindstorm robots programmed to compete in a variety of tasks and an excitement that had been building for months. As rookie teams, we made two respectable showings. More importantly we came away with a commitment to compete again, building on what we learned about team building, problem solving and professionalism.

FIRST®LEGO League represents a partnership between LEGO and FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), a non-profit organization founded in 1989. FIRST's mission is to inspire interest in science and engineering among today's youth. Our teams this year were sponsored by: Time Warner Cable, Maine Robotics, CIANBRO, the Warsaw PTO and other anonymous donors. For more information on summer camps, up coming events and other robotic leagues go to [www.mainerobotics.org](http://www.mainerobotics.org).