

Board Report from Warsaw Middle School
Sandy Nevens, Principal

We will be working even harder this school year to communicate with parents about school life, academic focus and events, student and staff activities, and information for all of the Warsaw Community. We will strive to have more frequent newsletters and notices of any special events. Coming up in November will be our Parent-Teacher Conferences, a great opportunity for parents to meet with teachers to discuss student progress. Students (and teachers) are already hard at work on the Student Portfolios that will be shared with parents in the spring.

Students of the Month for September:

(One student is selected from each academic team each month)

Ryan Englehart, Ashley Alton, Mitchell Hallee, Alexis Caldwell, Jessica Smith, Destiny Duke, Emily Richmond.

Math Team: Results Are In! First Math Meet October 28, 2009

The Warsaw Middle school Math Team traveled to the China Conference Center for the first Math Meet of the 2009-2010 school year. Our team did quite well today as seventh grade student Josie Bradshaw tied for First Place in the individual. Warsaw's Team 1 came in Fourth Place in the team round. Team 1 includes Cassie Miller, Katie Hughes, Katie George, and Jose Bradshaw. Great job to all of Warsaw's Math Team members for a great start!

Honoring One of Warsaw's Own:

Last year we lost Teresa Kane when her life was cut short by cancer. The Warsaw and MSAD 53 Community had found ways to commemorate Terri Kane's life and impact on us all through a scholarship fund, a community garden, and many personal letters and testimonials. Mrs. Kane's impact also was felt beyond our community as she was a valued middle level educator whose commitment to, compassion for, and expertise in educating middle school students have long been recognized by the National Middle School Association (NMSA), the New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS), the Maine Association for Middle Level Education (MAMLE), and the Middle Level Education Institute (MLEI). Terri Kane presented at events presented by all of the above organizations and she served on the NELMS Board of Directors. Because of Terri's impact as a Maine Middle Level Educator, both MAMLE and the MLEI Directors and members wanted to honor Mrs. Kane in a way that focused on her impact on middle level students and educators.

At the Thursday, October 22, 2009, Luncheon at the MAMLE Conference, it was announced that annually an exemplary Maine Middle Level Educator would be honored as the Teresa Poulin Kane Visiting Consultant to the Middle Level Education Institute in Waterville. The educator so honored annually will be a consultant at the MLEI Summer Institute at Thomas College. The announcement of the Teresa Poulin Kane Visiting Consultant for the 2010 MLEI named our own

Sharon Littlefield as the first to receive the honor. Dewey Kane was invited to the luncheon and presentation in his wife's honor which made the presentation of the award to Terri's teaching partner and friend Mrs. Littlefield all the more meaningful. Congratulations to Sherry Littlefield for this personal and professional honor.

A Recap of the NECAP's

As we are all aware this fall marked a change in the state-wide testing that Maine has utilized since the 1980's. MEA's are no more, and NECAP's are our new focus on measuring student progress through a state-wide test. There were some significant changes in when the tests are given, of course, and there were new guidelines in some areas, but in terms of measuring student learning, we are not feeling Culture Shock in moving from MEA's to NECAP's. Teachers and students worked diligently through the first month and a half of school to ensure that our students are prepared for this new statewide assessment test.

Student Portfolios:

Students at Warsaw all compile a student portfolio during each of their four years at Warsaw. During the Student-led Conferences in the spring, Warsaw students will review their portfolios of their work to their parents in their Fish Home Rooms. This annual event is one I look forward to every year, and the faculty agreed that we needed to spend some time as a staff reviewing the Student Portfolio, the FISH Notebook that included activities and portfolio guidelines.

On Monday, October 19th the staff met in the library after school to focus on student portfolios, to review the process of collecting student work in the portfolios, and to ensure that new and veteran teachers would be on the same page in student portfolios.

MAMLE at Sugarloaf

Give and Take: Warsaw Hits the Road:

On Thursday and Friday, October 21 and 22, four Warsaw teachers and two administrators traveled to Sugarloaf for the annual Maine Association for Middle Level Education (MAMLE) Fall Conference. *Lori Stevens, Anna Peterson, Richard Woodbury, and Sherry Littlefield* all made presentations on Thursday and/or Friday at the MAMLE Fall Conference. *Anne Miller* and I also presented during the two day conference.

Presentation 1: FISH Groups at Warsaw

. *Lori Stevens* and *Anna Peterson* presented to a group of more than 20 teachers in a presentation on Warsaw's FISH Groups. Our advisory program that includes Sustained Silent Reading once a week, Fish activities twice a week, and exercise twice a week is recognized, even nationally, for its focus on student relationships and well-being. The session was well-attended and many of the teachers attending were impressed by the depth and breadth of the advisory program we Call Fish Groups.

Thursday Presentation

Presentation 2: *Read Aloud for All in FISH Groups*

Richard Woodbury presented to a packed room on the Read Aloud that involved all Warsaw students and teachers last year. The book that we all read, The Revealers, focused on bullying in a middle school and we read it during FISH times in the morning. After the book was read school-wide, FISH groups all did a culminating activity focused on the book and the theme of bullying. This year we are reading Three Cups of Tea, a book that details how a man who was saved by members of a remote in the Himalayas after he nearly died from the climb and the elements. The kindness of the villagers spurred the author to return from America to help start a school in the village. That “exchange” also led to the founding of a non-profit organization to build more schools in the Middle East. At Warsaw we have begun a penny drive that will be contributed to the program to help fund the Pennies for Schools Program.

Thursday Presentation

Presentation 3: Professional Learning Groups: A District-Wide Journey

Anne Miller presented on our district’s commitment to Professional Learning Groups that include administrators and teachers. Anne reviewed the District’s journey to PLG’s, how the specific PLG’s came about, and the work already accomplished (and what still lies ahead.) The breadth and depth of our PLG’s is a major commitment for MSAD 53 educators.

Thursday Presentation

Presentation 4: *Note Share, Porta Portals, Pod Casts, Digital Stories, and More...*

Lori Stevens and *Sherri Littlefield* wowed the crowd at Sugarloaf with our Laptop Technology prowess as they showed their audience how well acclimated to the laptops and innovative technologies available on the laptops our staff and students are. Our active use of Note Share, for example, is clearly ahead of the pack. This program enables teachers and students to create digital notebooks on their laptops that can be utilized for a variety of educational purposes: to create projects on any subject that could include web sites and other links to expand the focus of students. Our Note Share FISH Program includes annual school-wide activities every year, suggested activities, the FISH schedule for each year, etc.

Warsaw is one of several middle schools in Maine that takes the lead in using technology in our teaching, and Lori Stevens not only acts as a resource and mentor for staff, but she at times works in the classrooms presenting and co-teaching Digital Story-Telling, Note Share, and more.

Friday Presentation

Presentation 5: Skills Blocks at Warsaw Middle School: Addressing Math and Literacy Needs within the Middle School Environment

Sandy Nevens

I presented a Power Point and discussion of the Skills Blocks that Warsaw implemented last year for grades 5 and 6. Included in the presentation were the rationale for the Blocks in response to our need to improve math skills, the decisions we made in terms of grouping, determining which skills to focus on, and curriculum. We then discussed what went well in our first year of Skills Blocks, what we determined needed work, and how we have improved and expanded the Skills Blocks for the 2009-2010 school year.

Friday Presentation

Bright Futures: Maine DOE Recognizes the Importance of Middle Level Education

For more than twenty years Maine's Middle Level Educators at the University and Middle School levels have lobbied for affirmation of the unique academic and developmental needs of young adolescents that call for educational practices and institutions that meet those needs. At the MAMLE Conference there was a focus on the Fall 2009 publication of "*Bright Futures: A Framework of Twelve Core Practices for Maine Middle Grades Schools Developing Full Academic, Personal, and Social Potential for Maine Young Adolescents*."

The Commission Included University Professors Superintendents of Schools, Classroom Teachers, etc: twenty-eight Maine Educators who worked with the DOE for many years to bring this document and the commitment of our Maine Department of Education to the recommendations and beliefs that are included in the document.

I have brought a copy of *Bright Futures* for each of you here tonight, and each staff member at Warsaw will receive a copy as well. I have also brought copies of *Middle Link*, the newsletter from MAMLE that includes several articles of interest regarding middle schools.