

Board Report from Warsaw Middle School

Sandy Nevens, Principal

December 28, 2009

Students of the Month for November *:

Tyler Peppard, Austin Finland, Kayla Fletcher. Ryanne Bane, Lindsey Eldredge, Sierra Goodridge, and Aspen Bryson

Students of the Month for December*:

Karissa Ballard, Kevin Belgard, Christopher Rines, Gregory Vigue, Kristen Jalbert, Dillon Fitts, and Dakota Patterson.

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

Holiday Concert:

Music, Band, and Chorus Teacher Marisa Weinstein again orchestrated a terrific Holiday Concert on Wednesday, December 16th. The gym was packed with parents, students, and staff. Over 500 people attended. The program included several versions of Jingle Bells. It is a tribute to Marisa Weinstein and her programs that the student participants in the music program include more than half the student body. Great job, students and Marisa!

Math with Meghan:

Meghan Southworth has continued to work with 5-8 math teachers in a variety of ways. She continues to facilitate a course on Connected Math that includes participants reading and discussing The Differentiated Classroom. Meghan has also been observing teachers in the classroom after which she gives the teacher feedback on the class. Meghan is a Consultant from the Maine Math and Science Alliance.

Math Work:

Skills Blocks continue to offer math focus for students in grades 7 and 8 two days per week and math and reading for grades 5 and 6 four days per week. In order to communicate with one another in regard to the Skills Blocks and other curriculum issues in math, we have found time to get 5-8 math teachers together to discuss key issues that include **inclusion, differentiation, and heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping**, as well as curriculum-specific issues around these three focus topics. Kudos to Anne Miller for getting this ball rolling and to teacher participants for engaging in meaningful conversation and discussion around these issues of teaching and learning.

MEA's in Science: As we know, NECAP Testing is the State of Maine's primary Testing source as of this past October. Science was not assessed in the fall NECAP testing, and that is the reason for the May MEA Testing in science. It's May for MEA's in science!

CIPS Plan Update:

First, I apologize to the Board for missing the last Board Meeting as I was out sick that day and was not at the meeting to share the 2009-2010 CIPS Plan with the Board. If there remain any questions that need to be answered during the January 4 Board Meeting, I would be happy to do so. I am pleased with the work we at Warsaw have undertaken to improve student learning and student assessment, and I believe that the CIPS Plan for 2009-2010 continues the work we have

undertaken in the past year and offers more opportunities to improve student learning and Best Middle School Practices.

CIPS Data Team:

The CIPS Data Team will be meeting this month for the first official meeting and will explore in more detail the mission of the Data Team and the steps to fulfill that mission.

Perspective on Small Teaming and Fish Groups:

I was reading an article in a newspaper last week which focused on a middle school about the size of Warsaw that was experiencing conflict about a student dress code issue that seemed to have sparked some controversy in the school and greater community. I thought about how the same issue might have been handled at Warsaw, and I concluded that many similar issues are resolved here before they become school-wide issues through Fish Teams and Academic teams where teachers have strong relationships with their students that in meaningful conversation and resolution.

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

At the November Board Meeting I presented each Board Member with a copy of the Maine DOE's recommendations for Best Practices in Meeting the needs of our middle school students. If you have not already done so, you may wish to look closely at these Best Practices. We as a school are doing so. In fact, the CIPS Plan that the Board received at the last Board Meeting includes funding for Consultants Jill Spencer and Chris Toy to work with our school to address our needs and strengths through a self-assessment of our own strengths and areas in need of improvement in each of the twelve Core Practices.

I will keep the Board informed as to the progress and timeline for this work. Please contact me with any questions regarding *Bright Futures* and / or the focus of our work with Chris Toy and Jill Spencer.

Speaking of Best Practices...

Students involved in school activities are most likely to be successful socially, emotionally, academically, and physically. More than half of our students sang and/or played an instrument at the concert. Of these same students most are involved in sports, school clubs, and other activities.

Horse Latitudes:

The stretch between January and March can seem flat and slow as the weather gets colder and the days *seem* longer as we look longingly toward spring and being outdoors, but it can be a really productive time as well. In the next two months we plan to focus on curriculum growth for this year and next and to continue our focus on how to best meet the needs of our students academically and interpersonally. This work will include Bright Futures, our CIPS Plan, and continued math and literacy focus through Skills Blocks, grade specific meetings, and staff meetings.

Happy New Year!

Sandy Nevens, Principal

