

Warsaw Middle School Newsletter
January, 2010

Happy New Year to all Warsaw parents, students, and staff!

Brrrrr!

The weather outside is frightful and, as I write this newsletter, we are expecting two feet of snow and sub-zero temperatures. We remind students and parents to dress warmly with coats, hats, and mittens. Students must dress for the weather, so please make certain that your children are warm as they leave for school. If there is a family with a Warsaw student in need of the above, please contact us at Warsaw.

Holiday Concert:

I hope that you all were able to join us for the December Holiday Concert, as it was a great way to ignite the Holiday Spirit!

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 Ms. Weinstein and her programs that the student participants in the music program include more than half the student body. Great job, students and Marisa!

Students of the Month:

Although most Warsaw parents are aware of our Student of the Month presentations, we have quite a few students new to us this year. How does a student get to be a Warsaw Student of the Month at Warsaw? Each academic team selects a student whose academics and attitude merit recognition from the school. We are proud to recognize Warsaw students whose efforts and behaviors stand out. One student is selected from each academic team each month.

Students of the Month eat lunch with Mr. Kane and me, have their pictures displayed outside the office on the Student of the Month bulletin board, and receive a discount coupon from Richie's Pizza and Dysart's Travel Stop, as well as free admission to the next dance or game night. We are proud of these students and want their scholarship and citizenship to be rewarded.

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.

Congratulations, to all fourteen students!

Statewide Assessment Tests: Changes for Maine Schools

The era of statewide testing for Maine students has changed in two significant ways. For twenty years the statewide testing has been the Maine Education Assessment Test and for those same twenty years the tests were given in March. This fall for schools across the state the NECAP tests replaced the MEA and October became the new testing month for most tests.

Between May 10 and May 21, 2010, Warsaw students will be tested in Science, using the MEA Science tests. What these changes will mean for the 2010-2011 school year are as yet somewhat unclear, but it appears the NECAP Tests are here to stay!

Bright Futures:

www.maine.gov/education/ml/index.html

As a long-time Maine middle school teacher and administrator, I was thrilled when in October the Maine Department of Education published and endorsed ***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 that worked on the document included university professors, middle school principals, teachers, and consultants. Several school board members and a Superintendent of Schools also served on the Commission. The importance of this commission and the report that reflects their work validates what many middle level educators have been saying for decades: The middle level student, varying in age from 11-15, has unique needs that are different from younger and older students. The growth of these years is physical, intellectual, emotional, and social.

Warsaw Middle School educators have recognized the unique needs of young adolescents for more than ten years, and many of the unique programs and approaches that Warsaw has in place have resulted from an understanding of the middle school student's developmental needs.

What are some of these programs and approaches? Small teams that stay with their students for two years; an emphasis on differentiated instruction and hands-on activities; adults who understand the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social changes and challenges that our students face; service-learning; interdisciplinary and integrative curricula and approaches; exploration of life-long learning opportunities through computer technology, the arts, physical education, and communication. The interpersonal connection between educators and students is crucial for this age as well.

Please explore the web site above, stop in for a copy of Bright Futures, and/or chat with one of us at Warsaw about your thoughts and questions regarding Bright Futures for all middle school students.

The web site above will allow you to access the Bright Futures Document online.

Please contact me for more information about Bright Futures or anything else on your mind!

Sandy Nevens, Principal
Warsaw Middle School