

METHUEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



SUPERINTENDENT'S MONTHLY REPORT

DECEMBER, 2014

DISTRICT-WIDE UPCOMING DATES

December 24, 2014-January 2, 2015 - Winter Recess / School Resumes - January 5, 2015

MHS UPCOMING DATES

December 4	6:45 p.m.	Fall Athletic Awards Night	MHS Cafe & Auditorium
December 17	7:00 p.m.	Winter Choral Concert	Methuen Memorial Music Hall
January 9&10, 2015	7:30 p.m.	Senior Class Play	High School Auditorium

METHUEN HIGH SCHOOL – SCHOOL, CLUB AND ACTIVITY UPDATES

Submitted by Mr. James Giuca, Principal

The **Guidance Department** held a MEFA Financial Aid Night on November 12 in the high school auditorium and cafe. Simultaneous presentations were given in English and Spanish. The presentation covered how to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and other topics related to college financial planning.

The **Multicultural Club** has begun to planning some fundraisers, elected the executive board, and are kicking off national presentations with a huge lecture on Tajikistan this month.

The **Senior Class** had a fun filled November with a trip to New York City to see the play Wicked and a pep rally that featured a turkey toss, potato sack race, tug of war and turkey toss. The seniors wore their class color black with spirit and won the event outright over the juniors showing their Ranger Pride.

The **Books & Bagels** holiday fundraiser was a huge success. They sold a total of 245 items. The largest seller for the second year in a row was Mileika Jamie.

The **History Honor Society** is completing its 4th annual voter registration drive this month. Registration numbers look like they are trending upwards from last year. Next meeting it will be determined what winter fundraiser and volunteer opportunities the club will engage in next.

The **Mock Trial** has received the case, assigned roles and has begun writing examination and cross-examinations. They have also met with attorney Michael Leedberg in preparation for the competition.

The **Art Honor Society** spent the early fall sculpting creative hands to decorate a tree for the Festival of Trees. Members chose to create hands for the tree since most art is made with our hands. Currently, Art Honor Society members are painting wooden spoons as part of the Project Bread fundraiser. They will also create snowflake ornaments. The sale of the snowflakes will be donated to research cancer treatment. The snowflakes are part of an ongoing, national fundraiser for cancer research and treatment. Each year, members also create a few holiday ornaments as a fundraiser.

The **National Honor Society** inducted 55 new members on November 25. They are working on planning caroling at a nursing home in December and are participating in the Adopt-A-Family program.

The **JROTC** had 80 cadets march in Methuen's annual Veteran's Day Parade. The Drill Team attended its last competition this month at Brockton High School. The Cadets competed in Regulation (the marching of a platoon), Inspection, and Color Guard. The Ranger Battalion received 2nd place in Regulation for the day, 3rd place in Color Guard for the day, and 3rd place in Regulation for the season. The team and their commanders are all very pleased with the outcome of the drill season.

In **Photo Club** this month, their shooting themes were: 'Close-up (Macro) Photography' and 'Thanksgiving'. Students used both their own cameras and the photography department equipment to shoot a variety of images examples related to their interpretation of these themes.

COMPREHENSIVE GRAMMAR SCHOOL UPDATES

Submitted by Mr. Christopher Reeve, Principal

CGS Lower School Happenings:

- The Continental Math League meet for grades 4-8 is on December 5th. Students have been working hard to problem solve and practice their skills.
- Grade 4 has been visiting the Lowell Mills as an extension to their immigration studies. The children have been exposed to a variety of primary sources and artifacts.
- Our annual Penguin Patch holiday store is in full swing! Students are purchasing inexpensive gifts for loved ones. Our wonderful PTO has been a big help!
- The CGS proudly displayed our Buddy's Rockin' Christmas Float at the Santa Parade. The PTO, staff and students enjoyed the special day.
- The Firefighter Phil program, which focuses on Fire Safety, presented to our students on November 25th. We are continuing our safety conversations with a school wide ALICE presentation on December 4th.

CGS Upper School Happenings:

- CGS Grade 8 Celebration Week Calendar Fundraiser – November 24th until January 23rd.
- Chorus Concert is taking place on December 2nd.
- The CGS Band will be performing a concert on December 18th.
- Powder Puff Game will be on December 23rd.
- This month we will have the Student of the Month & Character Award Celebration.

MARSH GRAMMAR SCHOOL UPDATES

Submitted by Mr. Stephen Sierpina, Principal

Lower School

- Several Lower School classes had “celebrations” as they concluded their first writing units in the Lucy Calkins writing program (as suggested in the curriculum guides). This provided the students with an opportunity to share their work with other students and/or adults, and celebrate themselves as successful writers. The celebrations included sharing within and between grade levels, as well as inviting parents and staff into the classroom. The students were very excited to receive comments on their work, and the teachers and school administration are pleased with the progress that students have made in the short time that the Lucy Calkins writing program has been in place.
- The annual Marsh Turkey Trot for all grade 4 students was held on Friday, November 21, 2014, at 9:30 a.m. Although chilly, there were many parents in attendance and all runners/walkers were cheered on to the finish line. Some of the 4th grade teachers and the guidance counselor also ran the course with their students.
- Kindergarten classes had Grandparents Day on Tuesday, November 25th. Grandparents came into the cafeteria and shared a snack with their grandchild, then went to their classrooms for additional activities or presentations. It was a nice way for the students to extend the home-school connection before the Thanksgiving holiday.
- Following the 5th/6th Chorus and 6th grade Band holiday concert, Marsh PTO will hold their annual Holiday Store on Friday, December 5th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Children can come and shop for gifts for less than \$1 and have them wrapped by teachers and staff. There will be a Cake Walk, decorating cookies with Mrs. Claus and a visit from Santa himself!
- Teachers and students are preparing for report card conferences with parents on December 11 and 12.
- The Media Center will hold a Scholastic Book Fair the second week of December and will be open during parent conferences.
- Kindergarten classes will be making gingerbread houses in early December (classrooms have different days and times). This Marsh tradition is always fun to watch and the final products are usually very creative! The students are busy bringing in supplies to make the houses, such as empty milk cartons and tubs of frosting! There are various curriculum connections that the teachers include in their instruction for writing and math that support this activity.
- Marsh Lower School Holiday Sign-A-Long will be held on Tuesday, December 23rd in the auditorium (two sessions). This year, the marsh Staff is holding a food drive and encouraging students to bring in one canned/boxed food product to donate to Lazarus House. We will display all the donations at the Sing-A-Long so that the students can see the results of their generosity.

Upper School

- November was very busy in the Upper School and December is packed, as well.
- Fifth grade ELA/SS teachers had their students research an explorer and present to parents/guests in a ‘wax museum’ format.
- Eighth graders, led by Mrs. Veilleux, performed the play, *Crumpled Classics*, as a fundraiser for their year-end events.
- Peer Leaders collected over \$550 to provide Thanksgiving dinner for many of our families in need.
- Student Council and SADD members, as well as many other Marsh students, marched in the Methuen Santa Parade.

- The 7th and 8th grade combined band and chorus concert is December 4th.
- The 5th and 6th grade chorus, combined with the 6th grade band, will perform prior to the PTO Holiday Store on December 5th.
- The next Academic Bowl match is December 9th. Good luck to our team—the *Know-It-Alls*.

TENNEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL UPDATES

Submitted by Ms. Mary Beth Donovan, Interim Principal

Tenney staff and students continued its mission to strengthen relationships with family to improve this month with these events:

- Light Up the Night on Dec. 2, attracted 1,000 members of the Tenney family. To celebrate the holidays and the bright futures of our students, we illuminated the giant fir tree in the Upper School entrance. Teachers donated books so every child who attended could get some new reading material and more than 800 books were distributed. The PTO supplied hot chocolate and cookies, Tenney students provided music and other assistance. After the ceremonies - ending with the traditional Tenney cheer - families were invited inside to tour the classrooms to admire student work.
- Parents are being invited into the classroom to learn how to support their children. For example, the eighth grade team recently hosted a seminar on how to access their website and learn more about their children's academic requirements. Parents learned to use Chrome Books to navigate the site. All other grades are planning similar events.
- This year, the Million Step Challenge is extended to Tenney families. In the past, students and staff supported each other in the effort to take one million steps by late May and chart progress. Families are now invited to take part in the effort to be healthy. Health Teacher Liz Fulks is coordinating.

The Tenney staff and students also continued in the effort to be active participants in our community. In the last month, we

- **Created** 31 complete turkey dinners to deliver mainly to Tenney families who needed a little support. This is an annual tradition at the school organized by our guidance department.
- **Participated** in the Methuen Santa Parade. This was our biggest entry yet. Twenty-five staff members and 70 students participated. We were proud to have two floats in the parade.
- **Helped** stuff stockings for soldiers. Families donated an assortment of items for our local veterans. The Peer Leaders lead this activity.
- **Kicked** off our Giving Tree project. The staff works to provide some holiday cheer to families in need.

In an additional effort to improve instruction and student learning we will move into Phase 2 of our Peer Observation initiative. After taking part in peer learning walks, teachers will be able to collaborate with each other to observe lessons and talk about teaching.

TIMONY GRAMMAR SCHOOL UPDATES

Submitted by Mr. Timothy Miller, Principal

This month at the Donald P. Timony is an exciting time. We have been very busy working toward successful completion of our Improvement Goals. We feel very positive about the progress being made with our pilot math program in grades 1 and 2 and our pilot ELA program in grade 4. The students in those classrooms are showing great progress and we will continue to work hard to keep moving forward.

We have also had some very successful family and community engagement (FACE) activities. Our PBIS team hosted a new Family Bingo Night, the seventh grade team had an Academic Night for parents where they discussed how they could help their students succeed, and our Kindergarten team recently hosted a “Frozen” Dance for families.

SADD UPDATE

District-Wide News: We worked with the Tenney, Timony and CGS to create all ornaments and decorations for the SADD Christmas tree themed “Peace, Love and Drug-Free.” Decorations were 1970’s themed with vibrant colors, peace signs, etc. Students had a fun night at the Tenney making these decorations and socializing with other members in the district. Representatives from all schools were asked to come help Ms. Rubino create the tree and the results were a wonderful 100 percent student-decorated tree.

In addition, students from all schools were represented at the Santa Parade, chanting and cheering and reminding the crowd to “stay drug free.” A fun time was had by all.

High School: Students took part in all holiday festivities and are planning on two field trips; one to go bowling and another to laser tag and laser craze. Students at the last meeting (the core group) discussed drug abuse and use among their peers with Ms. Rubino.

CGS: In addition to the holiday festivities, students had a long and detailed discussion of peer pressure, drug use and abuse and bullying in their schools. They had a very mature and honest discussion with Ms. Rubino and discussed their efforts to make the school a better place. Students will be planning a laser craze field trip and Pizza dinner outing.

Marsh: Students marched in the Santa Parade, but separate from the SADD group. 30 members of SADD represented with t shirts and marched with the Marsh school group. Students attended a school play and were supervised by Mrs. Zrocket. In addition, students are planning a bowling trip (possibly with the High School group).

Tenney: Students met once this month to order SADD gear (clothing, etc) to represent throughout their school. Pre-planning of a “Parent’s Night” is in the works.

Timony: The SADD calendar recommends several activities during the month of January. One such activity focuses on Martin Luther King’s call for service to raise awareness about “Life’s most urgent and persistent question: What are you doing for others?” One suggested activity is to plan a community fitness event. The Timony students in conjunction with the Tenney, Marsh, CGS and MHS will plan a roller skating event at Skateland open to 7th through 12th grade students in the district. Plans will be laid out in December and we will hopefully secure a January date. The Timony students will make posters to encourage 7th and 8th grade students to join us for a positive and healthy event. In conjunction with the MLK day of service theme, we will highlight the six pillars of character and make a display to add to our SADD bulletin board. In addition, information will be disseminated regarding an art contest to honor the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and Dr. King’s call to service.