

METHUEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



SUPERINTENDENT'S MONTHLY REPORT

DECEMBER, 2015

UPCOMING DISTRICT-WIDE DATES

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>
24 th -Jan. 1 st		Winter break schools closed thru January 1 st	
January 3 rd	10:30	Inauguration	MHS Auditorium
January 11 th	6:30	School Committee Re-Organization Mtg.	MHS Media Center
January 11 th	6:40 (approx)	School Committee Business Mtg.	MHS Media Center

METHUEN HIGH SCHOOL – SCHOOL, CLUB AND ACTIVITY UPDATES

Submitted by Mr. Richard Barden, Principal

Community Service: Dozens of Methuen High School Juniors and Seniors donated their time to help make the Methuen Festival of Trees a great success once again this holiday season.

Methuen High School Upcoming Dates

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>
December 6	9:00am	MHS Band Performance Disney Epcot Center	Orlando, Florida
December 8	6:00pm	Opiate Awareness Presentation By MPS Wellness	MHS Auditorium
December 16	7:00pm	MHS Choir Concert	Methuen Organ Hall
December 19	5:00pm	MHS Chorus Winter Stroll	City of Methuen

COMPREHENSIVE GRAMMAR SCHOOL UPDATES

Submitted by Mr. Christopher Reeve, Principal

LOWER SCHOOL

- The **Continental Math League** meet for grades 4-8 is on December 3rd. Students have been working collaboratively to perfect their problem solving strategies.
- The CGS annual **Penguin Patch** holiday shop is in full swing! Students are purchasing inexpensive gifts for loved ones. This is a great life experience for our students, where they can explore the concept of money and making change. Our wonderful PTO has been a big help!
- The CGS proudly displayed our “Snow Place Like the CGS” at the **Santa Parade**. The PTO, staff and students enjoyed the special day. We were proud to bring some “snow” to the event.
- The CGS **Pancake Breakfast** will take place on Saturday, December 5th from 8:00- 12:00 in our cafeteria. The CGS 5-8 chorus will be singing holiday favorites. We hear that there may be a surprise guest from the North Pole! Please join us.
- **Report cards** will be issued on December 9th. Parent conferences will be held on December 10th and 11th. We look forward to discussing student progress with parents.

Our **Scholastic Book Fair** fundraiser will begin on December 9th. Parent Night is on December 10th. The fundraiser concludes on December 16th.

UPPER SCHOOL

We are celebrating a very busy December. Here are some of the exciting happenings for the holiday season:

- Shopping at our very own CGS Penguin Patch Gift Store
- Holiday Breakfast on December 5
- The Book Fair from December 9-16
- The Band Concert on December 15
- Continental Math League Meets
- Academic Bowl
- 8th Grade Calendar Fundraiser

Wishing everyone a peaceful and joy filled season!

MARSH GRAMMAR SCHOOL UPDATES

Submitted by Mr. Stephen Sierpina, Principal

Lower School

On November 24th, the third grade students took a trip back in time to Plymouth Plantation. In an effort to make the day more authentic, students and teachers dressed in 17th century garb and carried simple snacks to school in baskets and pails. The teachers and parent volunteers helped the students to engage in crafts, such as cross stitching. The children also played games including marbles, hopscotch and hoop and stick races. One of the favorite activities of the day was when the children boarded the “Mayflower III”, taking on identities of the original passengers and seeing for themselves how difficult the journey to America must have been. It was truly a memorable, educational and enjoyable day for all those involved.

Marsh PTO held a Bingo night on November 24th, which was well attended. The annual Holiday Store was open on Friday, December 4th from 6:00-8:30pm. In addition to the store, there was cookie decorating with Mrs. Claus, a cake walk, and a visit from Santa himself! Teachers and parents volunteered to wrap presents and help where they were needed.

Report cards will be sent home on December 9, with parent conferences on December 10 and 11. Lower School typically has more than 90% of parents coming in to meet with their child’s teacher sometime during this week to discuss student progress.

On December 23rd, Lower School will conduct their second annual food drive to benefit Lazarus House, which serves individuals living in poverty to become self-sufficient members of the community. The homerooms compete for most food items donated, which are delivered by members of PTO. Last year we were able to collect more than 1,200 items, and we hope to exceed that number this year. The Food Drive is paired with our Sing-A-Long of seasonal tunes led by the students and teachers.

Upper School

At the Marsh Upper School, we are already pushing forward into term 2. Report cards were sent home with students on December 9th and parent conferences took place on December 10th and 11th. We continue to hold Gold Slip Drawings at the end of each week. Students have won prizes for doing well throughout the school day. Prizes include donated tickets to venues such as Altitude Trampoline Park, and donated Marsh T-shirts from the Marsh Grammar School PTO.

Recent events at the Marsh Upper School that have taken place in November and December include the 5th grade Wax Museum presentations on November 18th, 19th, and 20th, the Marsh Variety Show on November 19th, the Grades 5 and 6 Chorus and Band Holiday Concert on December 4th and the Grades 7 and 8 Chorus and Band Holiday Concert on December 8th.

Happy Holidays from the students and staff at the Marsh Grammar School!

TENNEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL UPDATES

Submitted by Ms. Mary Beth Donovan, Principal

The Tenney celebrates the holiday season. Consider:

- **1,400** people attended our Second Annual Light the Night Dec. 3. We illuminated the tall tree out front, gave away close to **1,200** books to young guests (all books were donated by staff in a drive led by **Katie Collins**) and everyone had a chance to visit classrooms.
- **40** full Turkey Dinners were put together by staff and students to help out some Tenney families and neighbors in need. Our guidance department organized the effort
- **200** Tenney family, staff and friends attended the Nov. 20 UMass Lowell-Notre Dame hockey game. Tenney folks were there to cheer on the Tenney Chorus, directed by **Holly Gray**, as it performed the Star Spangled Banner to open the game.
- **135** students and staff marched in the Santa Parades. They Tenney had two floats
- **2** assemblies - one for lower and one for upper - recognized students who demonstrated integrity and showed great growth on MCAS scores. One of the highlights included the fifth grade describing what they are thankful for being part of the Tenney in 14 different languages. About **200 parents** attended the daytime assemblies.

Tenney teachers are using grants to support learning opportunities:

- Seventh graders will visit the Museum of Science for free on Dec. 17, thanks to the efforts of **Marcia Mucci**, art teacher. Ms. Mucci secured a loan that allows students to tour the ancient wing as they study the history of that civilization.
- Eighth graders are spending two days this month at Quarrybrook Outdoor Learning Center a private non-profit organization dedicated to providing learning experiences in nature. They will take their classroom lessons about types of energy and how energy transfers outdoors using hands-on-inquiry based learning experiences. Teacher **Doug Patten** received the grant.

Our students achieved much this month:

- About 30 of our Our Girls on the Run and Girls on Track participated in their first 5k in Dedham, MA Dec. 6
- Our sixth grade students hosted a hobby fair on Dec. 2. Students got to show off their interest in a variety of areas, like painting, skateboarding and performing. Parents and family attended.
- Students got a bigger and inside picture of our world when EarthView, a giant globe came to the Tenney.
- Our Chorus Concert was well attended.

Coming up:

- Band concert, Dec. 17, 7 pm

Teachers are teaching teachers:

Our staff continues with its efforts to share best practice and good ideas:

- SEA **Carrie Ingrassia** hosted an afternoon movie and discussion. About 20 staff members stayed after hours to watch, *The Big Picture*, a movie about reading disabilities.

At recent staff meetings, teachers have shared ideas with staff. Lower School Inclusion teacher **Katie Collins** talked about a parent resource book she is creating, the fifth grade team shared their parent involvement survey results and **Doug Patten** demonstrated a quick and fun assessment ap.

TIMONY GRAMMAR SCHOOL UPDATES

Submitted by Mr. Timothy Miller, Principal

- The Timony PTO created a dramatic Dragon Float” for the Santa parade. The students were dressed in sports gear to reflect the football theme.
- Our young artists in grade K-4 have their work on display at Central Office.
- The Timony has a beautifully decorated tree with a “SOAR” Theme at the Festival of Trees.
- The Band and Chorus will be performing at the Winter Concert.
- The Timony PTO will sponsor “Holiday Shop” the week of the 14th.
- The Timony will host the annual event an “Evening with Santa” on 12/17/15. This is a fundraiser to support the PBIS initiatives. Families will have the opportunity to have a photo with Santa, make a craft, and enjoy a snack.
- The Timony Staff is working hard rolling out components of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS).
- Parent teacher conferences were held on December 10th and 11th.

SADD UPDATE

MHS

The Lawrence/Methuen Community Coalition “Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force” will be sponsoring “The Sticker Shock Campaign” which aims to reach those individuals over age 21 that legally purchase alcohol and provide it to a minor. Our SADD students accompanied by an adult will visit the local retail liquor stores and place the stickers on multi-packs of beer, wine, We are proud to showcase our students as cooperating partners in this effort to address underage drinking.

CGS

Our students have been working on recruiting and creating an informational collage for all students about drug prevention.

They are also in the process of planning their third drug free event to the Stoneham Zoo Holiday Lights in late December. Special thanks to the Kannan Family for their generous donation to offset the transportation costs.

MARSH

The Marsh invited a recovering addict to speak to the Marsh SADD program last week. Her visit initiated a lot of conversations with students that following week. This was a great resource for our kids. Next up Officer Gunther, he will address the SADD program also.

TENNEY

We had a fun time meeting other SADD members from the district and making ornaments to adorn the SADD Respect Yourself; Protect Yourself Tree donated to the Festival of Trees.

This month, Tenney SADD will collaborate with Girls on Track and a local organization started by Tenney Alumni-Debbie's Treasure Chest. The plan is to collect as many school supplies and toiletries for local families in need (and include some as inventory for some of our own students struggling to purchase these on their own). For each item we collect, SADD and GOT will place one snowflake on a bulletin board display. There will be a quote added "Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but just look what they can do when they stick together". The intent is

to collect as many items resulting in lots of snowflakes that will cover the entire board (hopefully not a predictor of the season to come).

Some of the SADD members are student leaders for Debbie's Treasure Chest and will be in charge of organizing pick up and distribution.

Tenney SADD will also start organizing January's "Shine a Light on Mental Health" to educate students and families about mental health issues, depression, bullying, cyberbullying and suicide.

Stay tuned a new line of SADD merchandise is in the works. Hopefully we will begin seeing items like water bottles, backpacks, headbands and the like added to our already popular hoodies and t-shirts!

TIMONY

November meetings:

- Reinforced conduct and expectations of members
- Removed Red Ribbons from Timony glass corridor.
- Attended district- wide social networking evening at the Tenney to make ornaments for the Festival of Trees and to brainstorm ideas for activities.
- Marched in the Methuen Santa parade.

December meetings:

- Students voted on student leaders to help organize events and maintain bulletin board.
- Discussed possible 'committees' that will highlight students' talents and interests.
- Planned a 7th and 8th grade holiday door decorating event for December 17th meeting focusing on positive messages and safety during the holiday season.
- Discussed the possibility of working with lower school students to spread positive and safety messages, specifically the 'rock the belt' campaign.

The following letter went home with all students AND is posted on the website:

Now that October is upon us, winter storms are common New England occurrences. Snow, ice, and extreme cold pose special problems for the school system and our goal of getting seven thousand youngsters to school safely. The decision to close school is a great responsibility and rests with the superintendent. Conversely, the decision to send a youngster to school is a grave responsibility that rests with parents and guardians. As in all matters concerning the schooling of your children, we remain partners and are mutually supportive of each other's efforts.

During severe weather conditions, I monitor the situation beginning in the early morning hours. I am in contact with state police, public works, superintendents in neighboring communities, and the Methuen Public Schools facilities manager who organizes sanding and much of our plowing.

Based upon all the information that is collected, a decision is made to close school, delay the opening or remain open. This is done no later than 5:00 a.m. All cancellations are carried on the major Boston television and radio stations as well as WCCM and the School System's Cable Station, Channel 99 for Comcast and Channel 31, Verizon and on the Methuen Public Schools Website www.methuen.k12.ma.us.

We understand that a "delay or a no school" day is a challenge for working families. Many parents have a predetermined plan they put into place on snow days to lessen confusion when school is actually cancelled. We also understand that some parents are anxious about sending their

youngsters to school when the weather is not good and there is school. We ask that you call and notify the school if you choose to keep your child at home when school is in session.

I hope that this information is useful and I urge you to inform your schools of any special procedures your family may have in place and to be aware of possible delays or cancellations when winter storms are forecast.

Let's all work together to remain informed and have a safe and healthy winter season.