

METHUEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



SUPERINTENDENT'S MONTHLY REPORT

MARCH, 2016

UPCOMING DISTRICT-WIDE DATES

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>
<i>PLEASE SEE SCHOOL UPDATES BELOW FOR HAPPENINGS IN THEIR SCHOOLS</i>			
March 2		Kindergarten Registration	CGS School
March 3 - <i>NEW DATE</i>		Kindergarten Registration	Tenney Grammar School
March 4		Early Release Day K-12	
March 15	6:30 pm	District Wide PTO Midwinter Mtg.	MHS Cafe
March 17	7-9 pm	SEPAC Monthly Mtg.	CGS Auditorium
March 18		Early Release – Parent Conferences K-8 (HS has a full day)	
March 18	5-9 pm	Family Skate Night	MHS Ice Rink
March 23	6-7 pm	AppleSauce & AppleSeed Local Launch Night	Nevins Library
March 25	CLOSED	Good Friday – All Administration and School Bldg.	
March 28	6:30 pm	School Committee Workshop	Central Admin. Bldg.
March 30	6-7:30 pm	MPS Autism Resource Center Community Awareness & Informational W/S	Nevins Library
March 31	6:00 pm	District Wide Edible Art Night	MHS Cafe

METHUEN HIGH SCHOOL – SCHOOL, CLUB AND ACTIVITY UPDATES

Submitted by Mr. Richard Barden, Principal

The month of March is always very busy at Methuen High School. While continuing to deliver high-quality instruction to every student, we also focus our attention on preparing all tenth grade students for the upcoming MCAS ELA test. Student performance on this high-stakes assessment is tremendously important. We aim to prepare students so that their test results reflect their hard work and the excellent education our district has provided.

This month, I would like to **HI-LIGHT** the visit of four prominent women: **State Representative Linda Dean Campbell, Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, State Representative Diana DiZoglio, and U.S. Attorney Carmen Ortiz.** We are honored that our high school has been selected to host these respected officials. Our students will certainly benefit from interactions with these successful community leaders.

JROTC: MAP: This month continues the MAP competitions that started back in January. Unfortunately as of yet the competitions have been postponed due to weather. Fortunately February

27 is the first official MAP competition in Revere. All of the teams participating, Marksman, Academic and PT are excited that they will be able to compete face-to-face as compared to competing with calculated scores at their own school, which are then sent to the overseers of the normal competitions.

Soup Kitchen: In addition to the start of "official" MAP competitions, this month continues the ever growing service learning project for the Ranger Battalion, this being, the Soup Kitchen. Jesse Taveras, who is the senior cadet in charge of leading the organization of this event, is very excited with how the project has been proceeding. One of the main points of this project is to help out the community of people in the Methuen-Lawrence area. Along with this, another important point is that LET VI and IV (Staff and Seniors) cadets have been leading the younger LET I-III cadets in effectively accomplishing the project, which as of yet has achieved much praise locally.

The Battalion: As this month draws to a close, all of whom are in the Ranger Battalion are getting excited for next month's events, which includes the Military Ball (Friday, March 4, 2016), an annual event where cadets can bring a date to a dance which is held at the Wyndham Hotel in Andover. In addition to this, cadets eagerly await the continuation of the service learning project and the many opportunities which will be presented to them in these last upcoming months of the school year

The Strategy Games Club: Continues to meet weekly to play Tabletop and Roleplaying games. They have gained many new members this year but are open to new ones as long as there are enough chairs!

Books and Bagels: The Books and Bagels Club has been meeting monthly to discuss some great books! Here are the most recent books they have read:

The Knife of Never Letting Go by Patrick Ness

Beautiful Creatures by Kami Garcia

Graceling by Kristen Cashore

These books have started some very lively discussions during the meetings!

Mock Trial: Has successfully completed an undefeated season in their region and has advanced to the round of 32 of the statewide Mock Trial tournament.

Competing as part of the Massachusetts Bar Association's High School Mock Trial Program tournament, the team, comprised of 23 students, will participate in a single-elimination round on March 6, 2016 in Worcester. If they win, they will advance again to compete in the round of 16 match that afternoon.

Key Club: The Key Club made valentine's for pediatric patients at Holy Family for Valentine's Day as our February project. It was a fun and rewarding time for all involved.

National Honor Society: NHS is doing a group service activity on March 14. They are working with an organization called Jumpstart to create literacy kits for pre-schools in Lawrence.

Sophomore Class: The Sophomore Class officers will be having a Fundraiser at Fuddrucker's Friday, March 11th to raise money for the class of 2018. Help support the class of 2018 by stopping buy to support their fundraising needs.

Drama Club: Auditions for the spring play "Narnia" (The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe) were held in February. Once again the drama club enjoyed an outstanding turnout with over 50 kids auditioning for the play. Approximately 20 kids also registered to be involved with the stage crew and/or be trained on lights/sound. Training for crew positions in lighting, audio, set building and costumes will be done simultaneously with play rehearsals which will start in late February. "Narnia" will be performed on May 5, 6 & 7. In between "Shrek" and "Narnia", the Drama Club met weekly for "IMPROV" where over 40 students came to participate in games and Improv activities that foster skills in acting, public speaking, presentation and group work. The Improv group was a great success and we are currently trying to find a way to incorporate it into the drama program.

The Blue & White: The staff just published their 3rd issue of the year and began working on issue 4 (to be published in April). The Blue & White will attend the Greater Boston High School Journalism Night on March 3rd hosted by Suffolk University. The students have a chance to listen to and meet Sports Illustrated writer, Ian Thomson. Members of the Blue & White will also attend "Journalism Night at the Red Sox" on April 12th where they will have a chance to meet a number of Boston sportswriters.

The Interact Club: The Interact Club continues to volunteer at Cor Unum in Lawrence and has several dates secured for April and May. We are also going to the Nevin's Nursing Home every month to host activities with the senior citizens. Our plans for March, April, and May include an arts/crafts activity, spa day, and games day. On May 14th, we will also be joining a club from Essex Aggie to have a senior prom fashion show that showcases styles from over the decades. The club also is looking into a toy drive for a children's hospital.

Other News

Massachusetts Institute for College and Career Readiness Research Project (MICCR)

The Massachusetts Institute for College and Career Readiness constitutes a partnership between gateway cities, researchers at various institutions of higher education, and private educational researchers from the Rennie Center in Boston. Methuen has been selected for this partnership and has been conducting work to improve the targeted interventions offered to students. Interventions have been formalized using data and a sequence of interventions has been developed to best meet the needs of students as they prepare for MCAS. Clear criteria has been developed using standardized measures to inform the referral process for the targeted interventions and for exiting students when they have achieved the goals outlined for each intervention.

The spring convening of the Massachusetts Institute for College and Career Readiness will be conducted from March 15 - 17. A brief description of each day is included below:

March 15 - Methuen will present its research project to legislators at the State House on March 15 and field questions regarding the work conducted to date. Data regarding the targeted interventions at Methuen High School will be provided along with descriptions of each targeted intervention and the process by which students are selected and evaluated. The overarching goal of improving MCAS scores will be outlined as well.

March 16 - Representatives from the larger MICCR team, including the researcher from the University of Wisconsin assigned to the Methuen team, will meet to discuss the research project and plan for the next year of work, including the administration of a college and career readiness and

social and emotional learning assessment tool to be used to gauge the baseline for Methuen High School.

March 17 - The Methuen MICCR team will attend training in Boston to support the continued research and implementation of the developed targeted interventions.

Scholarship Info Drop-in Session (3/3)

The guidance department is hosting the Scholarship Info Session on March 3. Parents and students are encouraged to attend the session to learn about the various scholarship opportunities available. Counseling staff will be on hand to answer questions and instruct parents and students on how to access to Naviance online scholarship database, how to fill out scholarship applications, and to provide tips for making the scholarship application process more manageable.

Grade 11 College Planning Presentation (3/3)

The guidance department will be holding an event on March 3 to assist parents of junior students with understanding and preparing for the college search and application process. A question and answer period will follow the event.

PHEONX Program (3/12)

College students from across Massachusetts will be holding sessions at Methuen High School where you can learn more about different majors. Saturday, March 12, 2016, 10 am - 1 pm at Methuen High School

MARCH EVENTS:

- MCAS ELA Retest, Composition Sessions A and B - Wednesday, March 2nd
- MCAS ELA Retest, Reading Comprehension Sessions 1 and 2 - Thursday, March 3rd
- College Planning Presentation for Parents of Grade 11 Students - Thursday, March 3rd
- Scholarship Info Session for Parents of Grade 12 Students - Thursday, March 3rd
- MCAS ELA Retest, Reading Comprehension Session 3 - Friday, March 4th
- JROTC Military Ball - Friday, March 4th
- MCAS Mathematics Retest, Session 1 - Monday, March 7th
- MCAS Mathematics Retest, Session 2 - Tuesday, March 8th
- **State Representative Linda Dean Campbell - Ways and Means Meeting - Tuesday, March 8th**
- Methuen Scholarship Foundation Telethon - Tuesday, March 8th and Wednesday, March 9th
- Connections - Wednesday, March 9th
- **Congresswoman Niki Tsongas Visit to MHS - Thursday, March 10th**
- Winter Athletic Awards Night - Thursday, March 10th
- Post-High School Educational Outreach Network (PHEONX) - Saturday, March 12th
- Massachusetts Institute for College Career Readiness (MICCR) - Tuesday, March 15th-17th
- MHS Lip Sync Battle - Thursday, March 17th
- MCAS ELA Grade 10 Test, Composition Sessions A and B - Tuesday, March 22nd
- MCAS ELA Grade 10 Test, Reading Comprehension Sessions 1 and 2 - Wednesday, March 23rd
- MCAS ELA Grade 10 Test, Reading Comprehension Session 3 - Thursday, March 24th
- Connections - Tuesday, March 29th
- **State Representative Diana DiZoglio - Young Women's Career Day - Thursday, March 31st**

COMING IN APRIL:

- Student Government Day at the State House - Friday, April 1, 2016
- MHS Choir Coffee House Performance - Saturday, April 2, 2016
- **U.S. Attorney Carmen Ortiz Visit to MHS - Wednesday, April 6, 2016**
- Third Quarter Ends - Friday, April 8, 2016
- Junior Prom at DiBurro's in Haverhill - Friday, April 8, 2016
- Connections - Monday, April 11, 2016
- MEFA Seminar: Paying the College Bill - Monday, April 11, 2016
- District Band Jamboree - Wednesday, April 13, 2016
- Spring Recess - Schools Closed - Monday, April 18, 2016, through Friday, April 22, 2016
- Connections - Friday, April 29, 2016
- MHS Grounds & Holy Family Hospital Trail Cleanup - Saturday, April 30, 2016
- MHS Spring Band Concert - Saturday, April 30, 2016

A complete list of MHS athletic events can be viewed by selecting the link [Athletics Calendar](#) on the MHS webpage.

COMPREHENSIVE GRAMMAR SCHOOL UPDATES

Submitted by Mr. Christopher Reeve, Principal

LOWER

- Kindergarten registration will be held on Wednesday March 2nd, during the school day, and from 6:00- 8:00 that evening.
- We are excited to have a new enrichment program this year! On March 3rd, students in grades 3 and 4 will participate in the "Feats of Memory" program. As the program promotes: "Often, all the brain needs is a hint. If the students can remember the first syllable, part of the word, or concept by using a picture, the natural memory will fill in the rest!" We are pleased to have this program prior to our MCAS testing season.
- It is time to show those pearly whites! All grades, preK-4, will have homeroom/class pictures taken on Tuesday, March 8th.
- The Continental Math League meet for grades 2-4 will take place on March 10th. The students have been preparing for this event, and are eager to show their magnificent math skills!
- On March 11th, our second graders will attend the play, "Caps for Sale" at the Children's Theater in Boston. This field trip will compliment classroom literature studies. We are thankful to have received funding for this opportunity through the Methuen Cultural Council.

UPPER

- March 1: Hands on History Enrichment Program
- March 3: Feats of Memory for Grades 5 and 6
- March 8: Class Picture Day
- March 16: Upper School Report Cards sent home
- March 29: ELA MCAS testing begins

We are pleased to welcome Jason Ramalho as our new Physical Education teacher for the CGS Upper School. Jason will be replacing Dennis Egan, who we wish all the best to in his retirement.

MARSH GRAMMAR SCHOOL UPDATES

Submitted by Mr. Stephen Sierpina, Principal

LOWER

- Primary voting day (March 1st) was busy but went smoothly, thanks to our attentive staff, SRO Dave Gardner and the additional police officers assigned to the Marsh.

- Read Across America was held at the Marsh on Wednesday morning, March 2nd, for Kindergarten through Grade 5. Lisa Simonian of the PTO did a great job coordinating this opportunity for community members to come in and read to the students.
- Kindergarten registration was held on March 3rd (day and night)—this was rescheduled from March 1st to accommodate primary voting.
- Trimester 2 ended on March 4th, and report cards will be sent home on March 16, 2016. Teachers are in the process of setting up parent conferences for March 18th.
- On March 4th, the Lower School students celebrated raising over \$20,000 for the American Heart Association through the annual Jump Rope for Heart by giving “pies in the eyes” to Supervising Principal Sierpina and Associate Principal Lamoureux.
- PTO is sponsoring a Jigsaw Jamboree on March 11th in the cafeterias. Teams compete to finish a 550-piece puzzle in one hour, and prizes are awarded to the top 3 finishers. This is always a fun (and highly competitive) event for adults and students.
- Several Grade 3 teachers created a “Could You Run A Marathon?” unit which includes math skills (measurement and fractions), Social Studies (maps, Massachusetts history and tradition), and some literacy activities. The students are going to try to walk 26 miles before the race day by regularly walking 1/6 of a mile laps inside the building, and concurrently learn about the history of the race and map out how far they have gone. The students are really enjoying the unit, getting exercise and improving their math skills—hopefully will also have 26 miles of walking under their belts by April 18th!
- We are in the process of finalizing the dates for the ELA MCAS testing at the end of the month. Grades 3 and 4 are preparing the students with test-taking skills and practice tests.

UPPER

- At the Marsh Upper School, we ended February with professional learning walks with all ELA teachers. On Friday, February 26th, we hosted our consultant from the Teaching and Learning Alliance (TLA), as she facilitated professional discussions among ELA teachers who observed one another teaching throughout the day. We plan on continuing this practice in order to support all teachers in a professional learning community.
- Term 2 ends on March 4th and report cards go home on March 16th. Parent conferences will be held on Friday, March 18th. Wednesday, March 16th is also the day of our National Junior Honor Society induction ceremony. Also on March 4th, student council will host a 7th and 8th grade school dance in the gymnasium between 6-8pm. March 4th is a professional development day where teachers will gather evidence to submit for their evaluation. Educators will be asked to submit this evidence in the beginning of April.

TENNEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL UPDATES

Submitted by Ms. Mary Beth Donovan, Principal

Welcome March! Great things are happening at the Tenney this month: We are celebrating our:

- **Winning Writers:** For the 11th consecutive year, Tenney students are making a name in the Letters About Literature Writing Contest sponsored by the Massachusetts Center for the Book. The contest invites students to write to the author of a work that changed the way the students look at the world. This year, 3,000 students across the state entered the contest. The following Tenney students were named semifinalists:

Grade 8: **Jasmine Haller-Geyer, Erin Herdegen, Dominic Touma, Paulina Encarnacion, Glenkate Aquino, Gage Jalbert and Neriah Sullivan**

Grade 7: **Emily Keegan, Jasmin Ley, Leann Martinez, Jack McDermott, Chloe Raymond and David Fay.**

- **Laci Swift**, a seventh grader has been named one of the five finalists for her competition level and will be honored at State House ceremonies March 15. We are also proud of the teachers who helped students publish their work and send their words into the world: **Christopher Slipp, Margaret McCarty, Sarah Calla and Thomas Mullings**.
- **Readers:** To mark the birthday of Dr. Seuss, our kindergarten, first and second grade teams planned a special Seussical week that included dressing up, special activities and lots of reading.
- **Words:** The Tenney Word Part-y initiative continues as staff, students and families celebrate a prefix or suffix with activities each week.
- **Positive Behavior:** Our building-based PBIS team hosted a breakfast for staff to gather more ideas about how to best support our students. That was followed by back-from-vacation assemblies for upper and lower schools. Teachers and students performed together to show their understanding of Tenney R.O.C.K.S and teachers shared stories about their students' good deeds and efforts. These staff members organized the success: **Jeanine Peluso, Robert Rodriguez, Marcia Mucci, Holly Gray, Ed Shields, Robert Connolly, Meg McCarty, Kathy Bodenrader, Charlene Bleem, Ann Marie Erhler, Dawn McDonald, Jessica Leal, Deb Tilton, Jacqui McLaughlin, Carol Liccardi, Gail Rodgers, Dawn Millward, Amanda Goyette, Danielle Abdallah, Kate Ryan, Courtney Petzold, Cara Maloney and Stephanie Aliotta**,
- **Days Together:** To mark the 100th day of school many classes had special events. For example, our kindergarten hosted a "museum walk" and students toured classrooms to see collections of 100 items brought in by peers.
- **Family Engagement:** Our Upper and Lower School entries now feature the word *Welcome* in many of the languages spoken by our students. Family Bingo Night is set for March 10 and our first grade team is planning a literacy celebration.
- **Veterans:** The Peer Leaders are creating a Wall of Heroes, saluting past and current Tenney family members who have served or are active duty military.

COMING UP:

Day Light Savings: March 13 - turns those clocks ahead

March 14: Book Fair Begins

March 16: Class Picture Day

March 18: PARENT Conferences and Early Dismissal

March 29: MCAS ELA Testing Begins

We look forward to longer, sunnier days outside and plenty of sunshine inside the Tenney. Please follow us on Twitter Tenney Grammar@MPS_Tenney

TIMONY GRAMMAR SCHOOL UPDATES

Submitted by Mr. Timothy Miller, Principal

Hoops for Hearts: Upper School students joined the fight against heart disease by participating in our annual community awareness campaign, Hoops for Hearts. Student who volunteered to participate after school helped to promote physical activity, heart healthy living and community service.

Read Across America: Read Across America is one of our favorite annual events! This year we are honored to have 42 community members visit grade level classrooms. Our students look forward to our guest readers, who choose a story that is dear to them, and narrate it. Children of all ages enjoy being read to and this event is a wonder way to promote literacy in our community.

Family Math Nights: Family Math Nights were held for all grades K-8. The feedback received from students, parents and staff was tremendous! Families participated in challenging activities and math

games which were facilitated by school staff. A great time was had by all and we look forward to planning this event for our families again next year.

Sweetheart Dance: The Timony was proud to present its first Sweetheart Dance for all girls in grades K-8. Our Timony “sweethearts” had an opportunity to be escorted by someone very special in their family. Our girls enjoyed walking the red carpet, dancing with their families and making lasting memories in our photo booths. The response was overwhelming as we had over 400 attendees who danced the night away!

Teacher of the Year: The Timony Grammar School is excited to acknowledge and celebrate Ms. Melissa Fernandes as this year’s Teacher of the Year. Ms. Fernandes is our school psychologist and guidance counselor for grades PK, K and Gr. 1. She demonstrates commitment, sound judgment and expertise in the areas of intervention planning, assessment and counseling support for the youngest children in our school.

SADD UPDATE

Over 100 SADD students from the Timony, CGS, High School and Marsh attended the field trip to skateland.

High School: 20 members of the high school SADD group attended the Skateland field trip on February 26th. Additionally, students have been preparing for their last field trip plan as well as the end of the year celebration.

CGS: 37 members of the CGS groups attended the Skateland field trip and had a wonderful time. At our last meeting, Detectives Aaron Little and Tracy Noonan visited and spoke to the students about their jobs and had an open discussion about making good decisions.

Tenney: SADD Tenney will be gearing up for March's KickButts Day and beginning talk about fundraising for Relay for Life in conjunction with Girls on the Run. We have also been working with a local charity, Debbie's Treasure Chest to supply Tenney students with school supplies if they cannot afford them.

Timony:

February Meeting date: **February 4**

March Meeting dates: **March 10, 24**

Skateland event: **February 26**

February:

- Discussed how we will recognize ‘Kick Butts’ day (March 16, 2016). Some ideas included ‘I am not a replacement’ campaign and ‘Airing out big tobacco’s dirty laundry’
- Made and displayed posters for Skateland
- Held Skateland event. 10 students from the Timony attended. District wide, the Skateland event was well attended.

March:

- March agenda will include ‘Kick Butts’ recognition activities.

Marsh: We had a ball at Skateland too! I am so glad we went.

Besides having about 35 students attend the Skateland trip, I have a group coming to a Student Council sponsored dance at the Marsh on Friday night from 6-8. At this point, I am trying to provide opportunities for safe, healthy gatherings. I want students to see they can have good, wholesome fun without making destructive, unsafe decisions.

Superintendent's Inclement Weather Letter

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.