

The MSAD #15 Connection

Victoria Burns, Superintendent

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Happy New Year



The New Year Brings Challenges and Opportunities! As detailed in this newsletter, the New Year brings no “good” financial news from the State of Maine for our District. As Superintendent of Schools, however, I am focused on the strengths of MSAD #15 that will enable us to continue providing the education our children deserve. Hard times require creative solutions, and we have a history of tackling difficult problems and emerging with improved opportunities for our students.

In order to meet the upcoming challenges, MSAD #15 will keep its “eye” on our students’ futures. Although future state funding will be reduced to 2005-2006 levels, it is not an option to provide an education for the past. Our students must graduate with the 21st century skills needed to be the productive workers of the future.

How will MSAD #15 maintain its academic excellence with declining funding? Students, Staff and Community Members can help!

1. Prioritize Our Outcomes for Every Student

In order to effectively use every penny available to the District, we must prioritize our student outcomes. The School Board is asking for input on MSAD #15’s Vision. Principals have been asking three questions to parents and local businesses throughout the year: **What do you think makes a great school?**

What skills will students need for the 21st century?

What are your hopes for the students of Gray/New Gloucester?

The responses to these questions will be summarized and presented at a community forum in the Spring. The results will be prioritized by the group participants, and the School Board will use this information as a guide to lead the way for future decisions and choices for programs. Specific dates and times will be forthcoming; please come!

2. Learn About the Reinventing School Coalition

The School Board monitors the District’s student achievement scores and creates

goals to assure that all students engage in school and meet the State of Maine Learning Results. Even though our student achievement scores on the Maine Educational Assessments have steadily risen over the past three years, and MSAD #15 is above the State average, a portion of our students are being left behind and some students are not challenged to their potential. In order to make progress toward the District’s goals, MSAD #15 took advantage of the State’s research on schools that transformed themselves to insure that all students meet approved learning standards. The Department of Education recommended the **Reinventing Schools Coalition** as an organizational design model with a proven track record of raising student achievement in schools across the United States. This year MSAD #15 became partners with the State of Maine and the **Reinventing Schools Coalition (RISC)**. MSAD #15 is one of two implementation sites in the State of Maine that is actively studying how to become a school district where every student masters the

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The 2009 Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) showed another year of positive academic growth for students in MSAD #15. At Dunn School 76% of students are meeting or exceeding standards in reading and 69% are meeting or exceeding in mathematics. On average, 80% of students at GNG Middle School are meeting or exceeding in reading, 61% are meeting or exceeding in

Student Achievement Continues to Rise in MSAD #15

Mathematics as measured by MEA, and at GNGHS, 53% are meeting or exceeding in reading and 47% are meeting or exceeding in mathematics as measured by the SAT. In all grade levels students in MSAD #15 have outscored the state average. We are pleased with the performance of our students.

Student performance on the MEA’s has been steadily increasing over the past three years especially at the 3-8 levels. We attribute this

increase to a clear focus on reading and mathematics as well as a cohesive instructional program for students. In recent years the community has supported our schools in the purchase of curriculum

materials for both subject areas. Each school has established goals as part of their school improvement plans to continue with reading and math as priorities for all students.

	MSAD 15 Read % Proficient	State Read % Proficient	MSAD 15 Math % Proficient	State Math % Proficient
Dunn	76%	68%	69%	67%
MS	80%	73%	61%	55%
HS	53%	49%	47%	42%

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curriculum at his/her own pace with the constant support and instruction from the teacher. This is a four or five year implementation process. A *Council for Continuous Improvement* was established by the Board to oversee this important curriculum and instruction work. Julie Ricardi, Beth Sutherland, Andrea Norwood, Jeff Bagdon, and Anita Campbell are the parents and community members serving on this Council. For more information on **RISC**, please visit the District's web page at www.msad15.org.

Caring and Sharing

MSAD #15 students and staff participated in a variety of community service activities throughout December. Dunn School students supported the Bruce Roberts Fund through a "penny" fundraiser. Middle School students prepared gift baskets for families in need and donated toys to the Portland Battered Women's Shelter. High School students collected Coats for Kids and donated a car full of toys to the Barbara Bush Children's Hospital. We are proud of their generous hearts!



H1N1 Update

On December 15th, MSAD #15 completed its final H1N1 high school clinic. Due to the unavailability of vaccine, the high school was unable to complete the vaccinations as scheduled in November. Eighty-eight students received the H1N1 vaccine on December 15th, and we thank these students for their patience. The H1N1 vaccine clinics are now complete except for the booster clinics which are scheduled in January for elementary students. Students under 10 years of age are eligible to receive a second "booster"

vaccination for the H1N1 flu. Older children do not need the booster shot. Parents of elementary students will receive notification when the second clinic is scheduled. MSAD #15 could not have conducted the clinics without untold hours of work from our school nurses, parents, and community members. *Patriot Parents* provided snacks and activities for the students and the local fire and rescue volunteers were on site to support our efforts! I want to personally thank our school nurses, staff and

community volunteers who contributed their time and talent to protect the health of our children:

Agnes Stansfield	Louise Knapp
Jane Barton	Kathleen Bouchard
Lori Larrivee	Pam Schiliching
Kathleen Potter	Michelle Lefebvre
Judy Martell	Sara Bruce
Alicia Griffin	
Mike Barter, Gray Fire and Rescue	
Mary Rich, New Gloucester Fire and Rescue.	

Budget News

As you know, the State of Maine is experiencing financial difficulty this year and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Due to a reduction in State subsidy for education, MSAD #15 was informed that our current 2009-2010 school budget will lose \$458,048 in State money. In December, the Finance Chair of the School Board, Sandy MacDonald, administrators, representatives from the Gray New Gloucester's Teacher Association, and representatives from the Educational Support Association met to brainstorm ways to meet the 2009-2010 subsidy reduction as well as projected reductions for 2010-2011. Thanks to everyone's efforts and ideas, MSAD #15 was able to meet the \$458,048 subsidy reduction for this year without directly impacting our students' instruction.

MSAD #15 will have a difficult time, however, creating future budgets that do not directly impact student programming and class size. In 2010-2011, we expect to lose at least another \$458,000 in addition to this year's reduction, and for the foreseeable future, the State's share of school subsidy will decline. It is vital, therefore, that the School Board gets a wide range of feedback and opinions on the District's priorities. Difficult choices will be made over the next two to three years, and we want to continue to provide the best education possible for our students. Here are some ways you can help:

Sign-up to volunteer for the Budget Advisory Committee. The Budget Advisory Committee is an independent committee overseen by the School Board's Finance Committee. Its job is to review the administration's budget proposal, ask questions, and provide final recommendations to the School Board for the 2010-2011 school budget. Two parents have already come forward to serve on the Budget Advisory Committee. We need two more representatives from the town of Gray and two more representatives from the town of New Gloucester. In order to serve on this Committee, you must be available for Budget Workshops including the first Saturday in March, and weekly evenings in March and April. If you are interested in being a part of this important work, please contact the Superintendent's Office at 207-657-3335.

Come to Budget Workshops

There is no doubt in my mind, regardless of funding, MSAD #15 will continue its full transformation to a student-centered place where all students are engaged in their learning and graduate career, college and citizenship ready. We have all of the important pieces in place for success-the students, staff and you!