



March 1, 2010 Issue No. 14

From the Desk of Ms. Peterson, Superintendent

MStM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SITE VISIT COMMENTS OVERVIEW

A team representing the Department of Education was here on February 9-11 to do their Site Visit for the MStM School District. The Site Team gave us an overview of their findings on their last day here. Overall, we received many positive comments about our school district.

These Site Visits happen once every five years for school districts in Iowa. The Site Visit Process is set forth in the Code of Iowa and the Iowa Administrative Code. The purposes of these Site Visits are:

- ✦ To assess progress with the comprehensive school improvement plan
- ✦ To make recommendations with regard to the visit findings for the purposes of improving educational practices
- ✦ To determine that a school or school district is in compliance with the accreditation standards
- ✦ To provide a general assessment of educational practices

There are seven themes of School Improvement that address the actions that schools might be taking to continuously improve as well as to guide their Comprehensive School Improvement Plans.

The seven themes of school improvement are listed below with strength(s) and recommendation(s) from the Site Team listed as well. When we receive the completed report, each area will have more detailed strengths and recommendations listed for us to study as a school district.

1. Vision, Mission and Goals:

Strength(s): There has been a revision of the Mission Statement enhanced by the revision of the Vision and Belief Statements. The Mission Statement is listed on the website and these statements are posted throughout the school. Stakeholders could articulate how these statements work in the school district. The Career/Tech Committee also used them to suggest goals for their area.

Recommendation(s): Understanding of these statements is there. The District is encouraged to come up with an intentional communication plan to promote widespread understanding as well as responsibilities of all stakeholders for communicating and implementing these statements. The district is encouraged to use these statements to drive all decisions.

2. Leadership:

Strength(s): The school board does use a communication loop for making decisions. The School Board looks to the Quality Support Committee (MStM's School Improvement Advisory Committee) for input on aspects of the school program. There are effective evaluations in place for both teachers and administrators. Teachers indicate that their evaluations have been helpful to them.

Recommendation(s): There are no documented collaboration times in place for the secondary At Risk Coordinator, Counselor and the Building Assistance Team. Follow up activities and timelines should be documented for the secondary Building Assistance Team. There should also be documented time for the At Risk Coordinator and the two Guidance Counselors to meet on a regular basis.

3. Collaborative Relationships:

Strength(s): There are documented times for both formal and informal collaboration for staff members. There is also time given for teachers to collaborate during professional development sessions. The School Board has collaborated with other Warren County School Boards for the past three years by attending the annual joint Superintendent/Board Meetings. Board Members have attended the Iowa Association of School Boards' Fall Annual Meeting to learn from other schools too.

Recommendation(s): More time should be set for collaboration with the learning support staff. There is evidence that the elementary staff collaborates with the teacher librarian but no evidence that the secondary staff collaborates with her. There should be specific expectations in place for the secondary staff to collaborate with the teacher librarian.

4. Learning Environment:

Strength(s): There is a safe and orderly environment. The school district does have a zero tolerance for fighting & bullying/harassment. The school district is commended for its Advisor-Advisee Program at the secondary level. There are curriculum lesson plans in place for teachers to use with this program. The district is commended for having a full time nurse. The district is commended for having a DARE Program and a Character Counts Program in place as well. There has also been a significant decrease in office discipline referrals over the last three years.

Recommendation(s): Educate all staff members on cultural competence. Provide more opportunities with Diversity Activities for both staff and students. Create more of an awareness and understanding of gender, ethnicity, etc. in lesson plans. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate technology by providing more virtual field trips, Google docs., etc. into their classrooms.

5. Curriculum/Instruction:

Strength(s): There is student appreciation for their teachers and their instruction. There is evidence that technology is used in the classrooms-Smart Boards, wikis, blogs, etc. Work has begun on the Iowa Core Curriculum.

Recommendation(s): In regard to Differentiation of Instruction, students indicate that they wish there were more hands on activities done in the classroom. In regard to the Technology Curriculum, a determination of when and where the skills to be learned should exist and how these skills will be assessed.

6. Professional Development:

Strengths: The Iowa Professional Development Model's Evaluation is used to evaluate the district's Professional Development Initiatives. Both the elementary and secondary leadership teams studied the results of this evaluation. There is built in collaboration time for teachers to meet with each other. There is technology staff development for teachers this year to help them understand how to incorporate technology into their classrooms. All teachers have new lap tops to help them with this initiative.

Recommendation(s): Non-instructional staff needs more time for training in regard to bullying/harassment. All district employees need to be knowledgeable in this.

7. Monitoring/Accountability:

Strength(s): The district does hold "data days" to analyze the results of the ITBS/ITED tests. The district also analyzes other assessments – DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills), the curriculum based Science assessment, etc. to help

determine the Professional Development initiatives to study the following year.

Recommendation(s): The district is encouraged to study sub group test data in more detail to help determine strategies to assist these students so they can become more successful.

Once the complete Department of Education Report is sent to us, we will hand it out to all staff members, post it on our website and have hard copies available for any district patrons as well.

From the Desk of Mr. Crozier

Principal's Message

Hopefully the cold days of winter will be gone soon. It has been a long and hard winter for all of us. As March begins, we celebrate the successful winter sports season and look forward to the spring music concerts and the variety show.

Congratulations to Taylor Hagen, David DeLong, Robert Walker, David Walker, Allen Brown, and Trevor Simpson for qualifying for the state wrestling tournament. I have been informed that this is a school record for the number of wrestlers qualifying for the state tournament. These young men have worked hard and are great representatives of our school.

The girls' basketball team has won the Pride of Iowa Conference Championship, going undefeated in conference play. Congratulations to Coach Alexander, Coach Baker and all the girls basketball players. We are looking forward to a great run down the tournament trail.

We offer so many opportunities for our students to be involved in extracurricular activities. Eighty-two percent of our student body (7-12) participates in extracurricular activities. It gives me great joy to watch our students participate in these activities. They are gaining valuable experiences that will benefit them in life. Please come out and join us for a game, meet, or concert. The students will appreciate your support.

Upcoming events:

- ✓ Variety Show TBA Check the activities calendar on the website
- ✓ Girls State Basketball Tournament March 1-6
- ✓ Boys State Basketball Tournament March 8-13
- ✓ Parent Teacher Conferences March 8th and 11th
- ✓ March 12th No school – comp day
- ✓ We will be holding classes March 15th -19th for snow make-up days

Michael Crozier, Secondary Principal
mike_crozier@m-stmarys.k12.ia.us

Home of the Blue Devils

From the Desk of Mrs. Henderson

The junior/senior high is going green and will no longer be printing off report cards and mailing them home. Parents may access report cards through the JMC program on our website. If you do not currently have a password set up for JMC access, you can contact Christy Henderson at christy_henderson@m-stmarys.k12.ia.us or call 641-764-2486. Parents without Internet access can call and request that a copy of the report card be sent home with their student.

The second semester is off and running. It was nice to have the holiday break but it is also nice to get back into a regular routine.

From the Desk of Mr. Folkerts

As a student, you hear a lot of advice about what it takes to be successful.

- Get involved in different activities.
- Plan for the future.
- Achieve high grades.
- Challenge yourself with harder classes.
- Be responsible.
- Study hard.
- Go out and have some fun.
- Earn some money.

So how do you manage those all at the same time? The key is balance. Think of ways to work some of these ideas in with others. For example:

- **To balance classes**, take some courses that you know you can get high grades in, a couple of harder classes that will challenge you, and one or two electives that let you explore new options each year.
- **To balance activities**, get involved in different organizations that let you have some fun and give you opportunities to be a leader and work as a team.
- **To balance the present with the future**, take a part-time job that helps you earn money for the future, shows that you're responsible and gives you experience you can use later.

Success in high school leads to success later in life, whether you choose to continue your education or pursue a career. Find the balance that works for you to start achieving success now.

Recommended Courses

Which is better: Taking a class you know you'll get a high grade in or choosing one that will challenge you but won't guarantee you an A?

Good grades look great on a college or job application, but a 4.0 GPA isn't everything. Colleges look at the courses you take as well as the grades you earn. They prefer students who don't always go for the easy A. Besides, a different or more challenging course may change your outlook on life or help you determine what you want for your future. Colleges also require that you take and pass certain classes in high school. How do you know which ones you should take? You'll need to take the classes your school requires for graduation, of course. For additional planning, consider these points:

If... Then...

You already know where you want to go or what you plan to do after high school

- Use the college or program's admissions requirements as a guideline.
- If you plan to go to Iowa State University, the University of Northern Iowa or the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Iowa, use the Iowa Board of Regents Admission Index (**RAI**) at the following web site:
<http://www2.state.ia.us/regents/RAI/> as a guideline. This scoring system includes **SAT**[®] or **ACT**[®] scores, high school rank, GPA and number of high school courses completed in core subject areas.
- For electives, choose courses that reinforce your interests.
- Even if you change your mind, you'll have a good foundation.

If you're not so sure of your plans after high school

- Talk to your counselor about your career interests and what classes may fit those interests. If you decide that you might want to go to college, ask your counselor about the recommended courses.
- Since every college's admission requirements differ, you can use the **RAI** as a guideline for required courses. You'll qualify for automatic admission to Iowa's three state universities and create a good foundation for admission to most four-year colleges in Iowa.
- Once you do choose a college or course of study, be sure you find out what the admissions requirements are and change your course plan as necessary.

Challenge Yourself

Besides giving you greater confidence and a better idea of what you might like to do in life, advanced courses have additional benefits:

- Honors or [Advanced Placement](#)[®] (AP) classes are usually given more weight in the college admissions process because they demonstrate your desire to learn.
- Some high school courses may allow you to earn college credits at the same time. Ask your counselor about dual-enrollment classes.

Expand Your Horizons

You'll have the chance to choose courses that aren't required, called electives, during high school. Choose classes that fit your interests and your goals for life after high school. These classes might help you discover your true calling or get some needed experience.

From the Desk of Mrs. Gabbert-Clark, Music Department

Thank you to all who came to the 5/6 winter concert! The students had fun sharing their hard work and talents with family and friends.

Looking ahead, our youngest students, PK-K-1st grade, will present their spring concert to family and friends on Tuesday, April 6. Their concert is at 7pm, and is entitled "A Farmer's Life." This should be lots of fun, so put it on your calendar. You don't want to miss this one!

The junior high students are working on festival music which is Tuesday, February 23. One of their favorite songs is "The Rhythm of Life." This is a fast song with lots of fast lyrics! Fun!

High school student are preparing for the Variety Show. Our theme this year is "Hollywood", so there have been lots of choices for songs and skits. Currently the date is Friday, March 5, but with the weather and other events, watch for a possible date change. The school web page is great for information.

High school chorus students will be going to the Iowa High School Music Association Solo/Ensemble Festival on Saturday, April 17. This year we are going to Melcher-Dallas. In May, the high school chorus will be participating in the state IHSMA Large Group Festival which is in Oskaloosa this year. The date for this event is Friday, May 7.

On Thursday, February, 11, five singers from the high school chorus participated in the Central College Honor Choir. Singers were Emily Hutchison, Kate Cook, Josh Butcher, Daultan Gibson, and Brandon Robinson. Students sang with 200 other students from high schools around central Iowa. It was a thrill to hear them perform the Mozart "Lacrymosa", and other selections, including "Let Everything That Hath

Breath", one of the songs from All-State. Thank you for representing MStM with your talent!

Thank you to all the students who performed the National Anthem for basketball and wrestling events. Students who performed were Emily Hutchison, Taylor Johnson, Taylor Schad, Taylor Furness, Michaela McIlravy, Broc Christensen, Brandon Robinson, Kelly Houston, and Kelsie Brawdy.

From the Desk of Mr. Amfahr Social Studies Department

United States History 8: The students just completed a unit over the Westward Movement and we are now beginning our study of the Civil War Era. We are currently studying the causes of the war and we will next learn about the progression of the Civil War and the influence it has upon our country still today.

World History and Western Civilization: We just completed a unit about the great artists and scientists of the Renaissance and how it led to our modern world. Currently we are learning about the Winter Olympics and the history and culture of the major nations involved. We will participate in numerous competitions to complete our study.

Government: We reviewed the Colonial and Revolutionary Eras in our last unit and now are beginning our study of the Constitution. The students will learn about the fundamentals involving the Law of the Land and then apply it to our modern world.

Psychology: We have just finished our background study of the fundamentals of Psychology and our now about to learn about the role of biology in our behavior. The students will gain an understanding about the persistent question of nature vs. nurture in human behavior.

From the Desk of Mrs. Sowder, English Department / Yearbook Advisor

English News: Multicultural Day in English 7 is right around the corner on Friday, March 5, and Monday, March 8, where students will share two learning options related to our novel *Letters from Rifka*. The learning options include building models, preparing a fashion show, bringing in artifacts, researching ancestral recipes and childhood games. It's been long anticipated and will be a very memorable experience for all involved.

Eighth grade literature students are in the middle of their anthology projects, where they create books of approximately 20-30 pages centered around themes they have chosen. The project is quite time consuming and challenging and helps prepare students for the transition from junior high course work to high school. Their finished project will be available for viewing the last week of March.

Yearbook staffers have recently submitted their first 20 pages to the Jostens's plant and have designed a photo exhibit in the

art display case near Mrs. Davidson's room. Seniors Katie Simpson and Annika Harper, junior Shannon Snyder, and sophomore Kate Cook have also entered the Jostens's photography contest in hopes of winning photography equipment and cash prizes.

PARENTS: Please pay for yearbooks online through Jostens's web site or send in checks to Jostens's. The school is not able to accept payments for bills sent by the yearbook company. Thanks.

From the Desk of Ms. Condon **Family Consumer Science & Dance Coach**

Elementary Fun Night

The MStM Charisma Dance Team is hosting an elementary fun night Thursday, March 4th from 5:00-7:00 in the High School Gym. Our theme is "Sun, Friends and Fun". Help beat the "winter blues" by digging out your shorts, t-shirts and flip flops and joining us at the beach. It may be cold outside but we've captured summer in the gym! Join us for games, food, and prizes. Don't miss it!!!!

The Advanced Food class is hosting a meal on Friday, March 26th. We invite parents, teachers and the community to join us for a wonderful meal prepared and served by the Advanced Foods class. The cost is \$5 and space is limited. Reservations must be made by March 24th. Call the high school office or email Ms. Condon at alison_condon@m-stmarys.k12.ia.us.

From the Desk of Mrs. Sondag **Instrumental Music Department**

Several Junior High and High School band students are currently involved with honor bands in the area. High School honor bands include the Simpson College Orpheus Honor Band, Central College Honor Band, and the Pride of Iowa Conference Honor Band at Graceland College. On January 19th Cassidy Phillips, Taylor Johnson, Kayla DePauw and Jake Schrodt performed in the Simpson College Honor Band. On January 28th Katie Butcher, Abby Wetzler, and Kayla DePauw performed in the Central Honor Band.

The Junior High Honor Band at Simpson College that was scheduled for January 26th was postponed due to the weather. Students selected were Sheniya Craig, Kaitlynn Belieu and Dallas Newman. They will hopefully be able to participate at a later date once the College has set that up.

On February 23rd eight high school students are participating in the POI Honor Band at Graceland College. There are twelve schools in our conference and each contributes students to the band. They perform in an evening concert after rehearsing all day together. These students are Michaela McIlravy, Cassidy Phillips, Emily Hutchison, Katie Butcher, Kayla DePauw, Dustin Loyd, Taylor Johnson, and Jake Schrodt.

On Saturday, March 6th, seventeen Junior High band students will be performing at the SCIBA Solo/ensemble contest at the Norwalk Middle School. There are 14 solos, 6 duets and a trio performing. Students will receive written comments and a rating from a judge. All students who perform will receive a medal for the rating that they earn. The public can attend this performance. There will be results from the contest posted in the next newsletter. Good luck everyone!

High School solo/ensemble contest will be on April 17th in Melcher-Dallas and a 6th grade solo/ensemble contest will take place on May 15th in the MStM band room. Spring concerts are just around the corner as well. Junior High has their concert on April 23rd and High School on April 30th. 1A Large Group State Music Contest is in the evening on Friday, May 7th. The high school band will be working hard to earn "I" ratings this year.

From the Desk of Mr. Peterson **Athletic Director**

I want to thank everyone who helped make the winter activities season successful. The weather was tough on everyone. The event schedules changed by the day and everyone worked together to make it a success. Again --- thank you very much.

The cold, snowy winter has been very successful for many of our athletic teams. At this time, the girls' basketball team is preparing for a run at a state championship. On Tuesday, February 9th, the girls wrapped up an undefeated conference championship. The young ladies shot through the Pride of Iowa Conference with 15-0 record. Way to Go! At Ottumwa, the Blue Devils beat a very determined Harmony to qualify for their second straight Iowa High School Girls Athletic Union State Tournament. Congratulations to everyone involved. **Super Job and Good Luck!**



If you didn't attend the home basketball game on February 5th, you missed an exciting night at MStM. The night's highlights were the elementary cheerleaders performing at halftime of the girls' game and the South Central Iowa Energizers (several of the performers were MStM students) performing at halftime of the boys' game. The young people who performed in both events that night were outstanding. Thanks to everyone who made it happen.

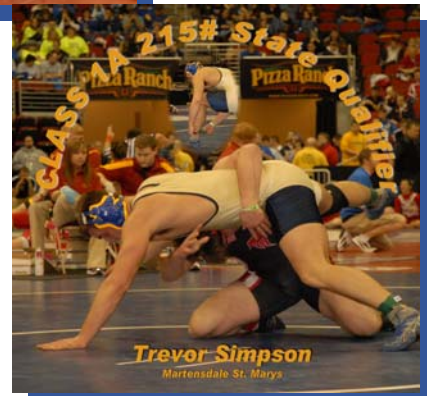
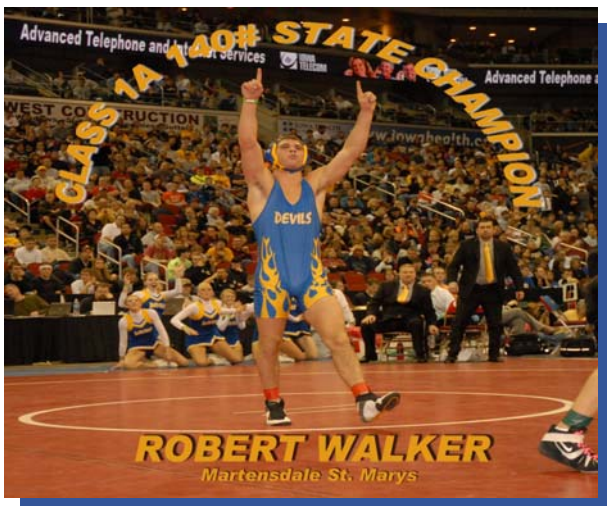
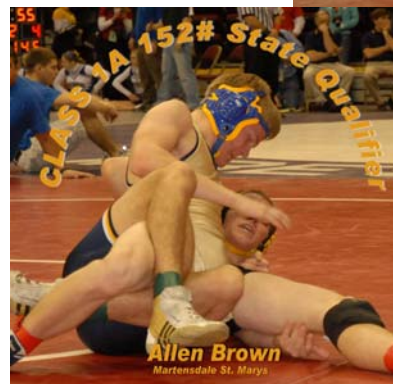
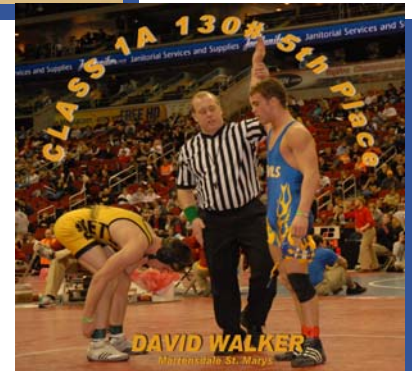
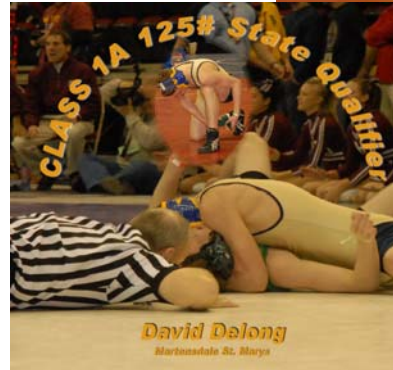


The high school boys wrestling team placed 2nd at the Pleasantville sectional and earned their second consecutive

Regional dual meet berth. The team advanced six wrestlers to the districts held in Eddyville. All six qualified for the Iowa High School Athletic Association State Championships.

The qualifiers were:

Taylor Hagen	- 112 lbs.
David DeLong	- 125 lbs.
David Walker	- 130 lbs.
Robert Walker	- 140 lbs.
Allen Brown	- 152 lbs.
Trevor Simpson	- 215 lbs.



The team has a very successful showing at the State Championships in Des Moines. The team placed 9th in the team race with three wrestlers placing in the top eight and receiving medals.

Sophomore Robert Walker won the school's second individual title capturing the Class 1A, 140 lbs., State Championship. Sophomore David Walker placed 5th at 130 lbs. Sophomore Taylor Hagen placed 7th at 112 lbs. Sophomore David DeLong scored points for the Blue Devils but fell short of placing. Senior Allen Brown and Senior Trevor Simpson represented Martensdale-St. Marys well.

What a fun weekend to be a Blue Devil fan. The community support was unreal. I know I speak for the wrestlers and their families -----THANK YOU.

As the winter season wraps up, I turn my attention to the spring activities. I am going to need everyone in the community to help our school with a very ambitious home track schedule. MStM will host six track meets this spring. The state athletic associations have selected us to host the regional/district track meet on Friday, May 14th.

The meet serves as the state qualifier for the girls and boys state meet. Obviously, the outstanding track and field facility we have was very appealing to the state athletic associations. You should be receiving a letter from me in March outlining our needs for the upcoming track and field events. It is going to be exciting to host these events but we will need your help to make it a success.

Parting Shot:

I want to take this opportunity to thank the parents, fans, and student body for the outstanding sportsmanship displayed this winter. I was very proud of our sportsmanship ratings with the athletic associations for this winter. In the area concerning fan behavior, we had two negative remarks out of a possible 276 responses from officials. That is outstanding.

Keep up the great effort to represent Martensdale-St. Marys School District in a first class manner.

MARTENSDALE ST. MARYS
MUSIC BOOSTERS SPONSOR

The Martensdale St. Marys Music Boosters would like you to become a sponsor! Your donations will help support the Pre-K -12 music programs at our school. Music Boosters help to cover costs not otherwise covered by school funds.

Music Boosters donations have helped to purchase music stands for the elementary music room, music folders for high school chorus, props for the elementary musical, and some percussion instruments for the band. But we would like to do much more.

With your help we hope to be able to work toward these goals:

Rhythm Sticks & other supplies for Elementary Music Students
Percussion instruments for the High School Band
Color Guard flags and uniform parts
Other Music Program extras

If you would like to become a Music Boosters Sponsor, please fill in the information below and send your contribution of \$20.00 or more to:

Martensdale-St. Marys Music Boosters
PO Box 350
Martensdale, IA 50160

Donation Amount \$ _____
(\$20 or more to have your name appear on the concert program)

Please print your name as you would like it to appear on the music concert programs:

(Name)

“Students who participate in music receive more academic honors and awards than non-music students. Even more impressive, music participants make for a higher percentage of A and B students than their non-music counterparts.”

From the Desk of Mr. Wood,
Elementary Principal

So Many Activities, So Little Time

It's good to keep children involved in different activities, but how do parents know how much is too much? Check out these tips on how to keep your children from being overscheduled—they might very well make your child's life, and yours, a lot less stressful.

Follow their passions.

The best activities for children give them the opportunity to learn more about something they love. To make sure they keep their passion, instead of surrendering to burnout, keep their involvement to just a day or two a week, unless they absolutely beg for more. Even then, check with them periodically to make sure they still are as eager to attend as they used to be. If not, scale back.

Get their input.

Parents are so eager to provide opportunities for their children that they sometimes forget the fun of just being a child. Step back before you sign up for an activity and ask your child to tell you what three things he or she most likes to do after school or in the summer. Then choose activities that meet their interests while also providing stimulation.

Broaden their horizons.

Although following your child's interests is important, it's also great to introduce your child to something totally new, whether it's a new sport, a musical instrument, or a group like Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts. The secret to keeping enthusiasm high is to start slowly and gauge your child's interest before committing beyond the first few sessions.

Be supportive, not critical.

No matter what your child is interested in, remember that your job as a parent is to be supportive. The point of activities is to expand your child's interests and abilities, not to make him or her a child prodigy or the next athletic superstar.

Schedule down time.

Creativity can't happen if every minute of a child's time is scheduled. Children need time to ponder, explore, and play. Make sure that when the day's over and the homework's done, there's still time for your child to be a kid.

Play the field.

When it comes to sports, specializing in one activity at such a young age is bad news. Not only do pediatricians discourage the kind of repetitive movements that come from concentrated work in one sport, but the kids who totally dedicate themselves to a single sport early often burn out later and regret not having learned several different sports early, so they have other options.

Mix it up.

Although every family and child is different, child psychologists often suggest involving a child in no more than three activities at a time: one social activity, like Boys' Club or a church group; one physical activity, like gymnastics, swimming, or basketball; and one artistic activity, such as an art class or music lessons.

Watch for these signs.

The stress of trying to keep up with too many planned activities can take a physical toll on your child. If your child is leading a very busy life, watch for signs of stress, including stomachaches and headaches, difficulty paying attention, a drop-off in interest in activities he or she used to enjoy, and increased "clinginess" with a parent or other close adult (e.g., teacher, babysitter). If you notice any of these signs, chances are your child needs to cut back on activities and de-stress.

If you have to schedule something for your child, make it family time. Children need to have meals with their parents, hear bedtime stories, share chores, and play games. While you're scheduling all their other activities to help them learn and grow, remember that what they most need to learn is that they are special and loved.

Calling All "2010-2011" Pre-School Students

If you have a child that will be 4 years of age by September 15, 2010, then please call Mrs. DePauw in the elementary office to get on the list for the 2010-2011 pre-school rosters. Tell all your friends and neighbors too, as there will be a limited number of spaces available. Thanks for your help!

From the Desk of Mrs. Davidson
Art Department

ELEMENTARY ART SHOW

Elementary students have been working diligently on artwork for the annual art show. Each of the Preschool through 6th grade classes has completed an art project centered on a book that they have read in art class. The art show will be on display in the commons area during Parent-Teacher Conferences on March 8th and 11th.

Please take time to stop and see what all of the students have been creating.

Daycare Survey

To better serve the students and parents in our community, we need your help. A daycare survey will be posted on the school website on March 1.

We ask that all parents with children who currently require some type of daycare to complete this survey. With your help and feedback, we can work together to better meet the needs of our community.

Your time to complete this short survey will be appreciated. Click on the following website:
<http://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dG15U3U5cDNRS281cFd4MkpIaEZ2Tnc6MA>

Thank you.

From the Desk of
Mrs. Burns & Mr. Spanhut's
Fifth Grade Classes

News from Mrs. Burns' Literacy Class:

The fifth and sixth graders have been busy learning the art of writing, as well as the connection between reading and writing. They have read and written about many authors, poets, and historical figures this year.

The sixth graders just finished a research unit and practiced their computer skills to locate their facts using the SQ3R method of note taking. The students evaluated their digital notes and learned how to process what they read into their own words. The biographies included quotable quotes, life lessons, and mini-movies about their subject. Students practiced using a variety of sources; including books, internet and encyclopedias.

The fifth graders have been busy studying animals through their Treasures' stories. They have been practicing their reading/writing skills through the Treasures' non-fiction books

that focus on the subject of snakes. In connection with their reading the class is enjoying a traveling corn snake named "Vanilla". Corn snakes are native to Iowa. Learning about their history helps the students understand Iowa's past. Vanilla has allowed the students the opportunity to see real-life examples of their learning. Applying their learning helps the students see the value of their reading/writing experiences.

Both the fifth and sixth graders have worked very hard this year using reading comprehension strategies and learning the importance of respecting each other as writers. They have read a variety of genre and learned to use their schema to process new information in their core subject areas. Please keep up the good work at home encouraging your child to read and write daily.

News from Mr. Spanhut's Science class:

5th grade science has been working on rocks and minerals and Earth's crust. We explored erosion using stream tables and saw the effects of flooding. We started an outdoor classroom in the fall and the students spent a lot of time documenting the types of animals we have in the timber outside of the school.

We are also getting ready to start our weather unit, where the kids will become meteorologists; I just hope they don't predict more snow! 6th grade science has also been working on the outdoor classroom, but the snow and cold have slowed us way down on that, but with thawing we anticipate going out and choosing some plants to grow for the wildlife. 6th grade will also begin their boat lab soon, they must design a boat to certain specs, and it is a fun unit.

Also a note, 5th grade will be doing their bridge building unit soon as well, so we always appreciate any toothpick donations. Thank you so much.

It is the policy of the Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices.

There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the district's Equity Coordinator.

MStM's Equity Coordinator is Mike Crozier, secondary principal. His address is MStM Community School, 390 Burlington, Martensdale, Iowa 50160. His phone number is 641-764-2686 and his email address is: mike_crozier@m-stmarys.k12.ia.us



From the Desk of Mrs. Pribil, **Counselor's Corner**



Our next Character Counts assembly will be held Friday, March 5, at 8:40 in the small gym. We will be awarding the most caring students from each classroom. The students have been raising money for Pennies for Patients this week. All of the money goes toward The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. We have been talking about what it means to be a caring person in large group guidance, and the Pennies for Patients program ties in nicely with the caring pillar.

You can do many things at home to encourage your child to develop into a caring individual:

- Listen to your child
- Let them help you fix dinner
- Spend quality time with your children individually
- Talk with them about the people he/she care about
- Volunteer or give to local charities/events
- Encourage sharing



MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

JANUARY 27, 2010

The Board of Directors of the Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District met in special session, pursuant to law, on January 27, 2010.

Members Present: Scott Anderson, President; Nicole Bunch, Vice-President; Wade Gibson, Amy Harper and Dave Shutt together with Superintendent Jean Peterson, and Business Manager Jill Gavin.

Members Absent: None

- I. Welcome
Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:15p.m.
- II. Public Comments - None
- III. New Business
 - A. Discuss/Approve Snow Days for 2009-2010

The Board discussed many options of how to make up the seven snow days that MStM has now accumulated.

In their discussion, the Board talked about the fact that their expectation is that we provide our students with 180 days of quality instruction as is required by Iowa Code. The Board did not like the idea of lengthening the school day. They thought that this was not a sound educational practice. The Board did not like the idea of going to school on Saturday as an option either. Another main concern was the lack of motivation and attention students would have in June as well.

Our MStM Board of Education understands that people might have already made plans for the Spring Break week. Teachers will be allowed to take Personal Leave or Leave without Pay during that week. Secondary students who also may have family trips scheduled during that week will be exempt from the Semester Test Expectations Policy, too.

Bunch made the motion to make up the seven days seconded by Gibson. Roll call: 5 ayes. The seven days will be made up as follows:

Day 1 – February 17 - originally was a full PD day will now be a 1:00 Dismissal – 2 hours PD

Day 2 – March 15

Day 3 – March 16

Day 4 – March 17 – will be a 1:00 Dismissal – 2 hours PD – make up for January 20 PD day.

Day 5 – March 18

Day 6 – March 19

Day 7 – May 26

May 27 & 28 will be used for additional snow days if necessary


B. Discuss/Approve St. Marys Gym for Emergency Center


Gavin discussed with the Board that she was contacted by Mike Croat and asked if the St. Marys gym would be considered as an emergency center for St. Marys and surrounding communities. The St. Marys Fire Department had the generator and the St. Marys Trustees would pay for all expenses. Croat wanted an approval from the Board before proceeding. Bunch motioned to approve the St. Marys gym for an emergency center seconded by Shutt. Roll call: 5 ayes.

IV. Adjournment

Harper motioned to adjourn the meeting seconded by Bunch. Roll call: 5 ayes. Time: 5:38 p.m.

APPROVED


Board President


Business Manager

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

JANUARY 11, 2010

The Board of Directors of the Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District met in regular session, pursuant to law, on January 11, 2010.

Members Present: Scott Anderson, President; Nicole Bunch, Vice-President; Wade Gibson, Amy Harper and Dave Shutt together with Superintendent Jean Peterson, and Business Manager Jill Gavin.

Members Absent: None

I. Welcome
Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:35p.m. and welcomed all guests.

II. Consent Items
A. Approval of Minutes.
B. Approval of Agenda
C. Approval of Bills and Secretary's Report

D. Approval of Hot Lunch and Activity Reports

Gavin provided updated information regarding the Secretary's reports and SILO payments for the 2009-2010 school year. Bunch motioned to approve the consent items seconded by Harper. Roll call: 5 ayes.

III. Celebrations
Principals Tom Wood and Mike Crozier wanted to recognize and thank the Elementary and Secondary staff for their cooperation in adjusting their schedules due to the recent staff reductions. The staff stepped up and made it work and it is much appreciated by the administration.

IV. Public Comments - None

V. Old Business
A. Reports

- 1) Facilities Report – No Report at this time.
- 2) MStM Music Booster Minutes – December 15, 2009 minutes were reviewed.
- 3) MStM Athletic Booster Minutes – No minutes – Next meeting will be held January 13, 2010.
- 4) MStM PTO Minutes – December 15, 2009 minutes were reviewed.

B. Presentations

1) Superintendent's Report – Supt. Peterson
Supt. Peterson reviewed with the Board the Board Goals for 2008-2011. The Board agreed to meet on January 20, 2010 to review, revise and update the action plan for each goal. She reviewed the MStM Vision, Mission, Beliefs and Student Learning Goals with the Board that were developed by the Quality Support Committee in the 2008-09 school year. Supt. Peterson included the questions the Board will be asked by the Department of Education Team at the February Site Visit. These questions will also be discussed at the workshop on January 20, 2010. Supt. Peterson informed the Board about the Warren County Superintendent/Board meeting being held on January 27, 2010 in Carlisle. The Board Members will contact Supt. Peterson if they will be attending. Supt. Peterson discussed the information for the Race to the Top and the Iowa Core Curriculum Workshop in February and March.

2) Principal's Report –Tom Wood and Mike Crozier
Wood introduced Jen Pribil, Elementary Guidance Counselor who presented to the Board her guidance lessons and career awareness goals for grades K-6 that covered what the kids want to be when they grow up to the older classes connecting the dots between what they learn in school and the real world. The Board thanked her for her presentation.

Wood reviewed with the Board the December/January Classroom Sweeps and compared the results to November's results. Wood reviewed with the Board the Elementary Associate Assignments due to the recent staff reductions. Wood would like to recognize the efforts of Amy DeWaard, Jodi Noga, and Kate Dykstra for being a huge part of putting the reassignments together and making it work.

Crozier introduced Randy Folkerts, Secondary Guidance Counselor who presented to the Board the Senior Work Keys Presentation which will become a new assessment for those students who will be entering into the workforce from high school. It is also an assessment that will benefit students who go to college as it tests them on skills employers expect to see of their workforce. The Board thanked him for his presentation.

Crozier reviewed with the Board the Secondary Associate Assignments due to the recent staff reductions and wanted to thank the staff again for being so willing to make it work. Crozier announced the December Students of the Month.

- 7th Grade – Claire Snyder
- 8th Grade – Philip Hand
- 9th Grade – Liz DeLong
- 10th Grade – Daniel DeLong
- 11th Grade – KateLynn Miller
- 12th Grade – Kati Gehringer

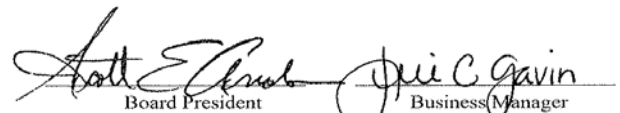
VI. New Business

- A. Approve 2nd Reading - Fundraising Policy 504.5
Supt. Peterson
Shutt motioned to approve the Fundraising Policy 504.5 seconded by Bunch. Roll call: 5 ayes.
- B. Approve Early Retirement Request
Supt. Peterson
Bunch motioned to approve the early retirement request from Robert Sondag seconded by Harper. Roll call: 5 ayes.
- C. Discuss/Approve the Participation of the Race to the Top
Supt. Peterson
Shutt motioned to not approve the participation of the Race to the Top without further clarification seconded by Bunch. Roll call: 5 ayes.
- D. Confirm – Next Meeting Dates
02/03/09 – Agenda subcommittee by e-mail
02/04/09 – 5:30 p.m. Agenda Meeting
02/08/09 – 6:00 p.m. Board Meeting

VII. Adjournment

Bunch motioned to adjourn the meeting seconded by Shutt. Roll call: 5 ayes. Time: 6:50 p.m.

APPROVED



Board President Business Manager

The Martensdale-St.Marys District Newsletter is published by the end of the preceding month.

The newsletter is available for pickup in the Superintendent's office, Jiffy station and the Roadside Inn. All of which are located in Martensdale. You may also view it on the mstn.us website.

Questions or concerns may be addressed to:

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