

BRANCHING OUT

The Maple Street School Principal's Weekly Newsletter



Dear Parents and Students:

Welcome back! I hope that you had a terrific break with your families and enjoyed the happiness and positive energy that the holiday season provides. Personally, I truly enjoy the time with my wife, as we experience the holidays through our eight year-old daughter's eyes. Her excitement on Christmas eve as we read the *Polar Express*, leave cookies and milk for Santa, and the experience the bristling excitement of a 4:45 AM wake-up call of screams of delight when Santa's gifts are discovered under our tree are the memories that will endure for me for a very long time I suspect. I hope that whatever positive experiences and memories that you and yours had over the holiday season were equally fulfilling.

January is a fast paced month in the schools. There are several events that will occur over the next few weeks that create some "ripples in the pond" of scheduling, so please take a moment to review the Dates to Remember calendar on the backside of the newsletter. Specifically, please note that January 10th is a PD day for staff and there will not be classes for students that day and plan accordingly. Additionally, please note Civil Rights Day on the 16th, as this is also a day away from school for students and staff.

On January 10th, the District Assessment Committee will be presenting a day long professional development workshop for teachers on the topic of best practices in assessment. Teachers from Harold Martin and the Middle High School will be joining MSS staff at Maple Street for the event in which faculty and presenters from the Department of Education will speak on topics such as formative assessment, 21st century grading practices, and grading itself. It will be a terrific experience for staff collaboration and will help to build skills and understanding among colleagues district-wide. Thank you for providing the teachers with this valuable time to help them learn.

On January 19th, we will be holding our Winter Concert at the HMHS auditorium at 7:00 PM. Featuring the MSS Band and Chorus, the event is always a terrific experience for the kids and the families alike. We have been listening to the kids rehearse now for many weeks, and know you will be so very proud of their hard work.

Community clubs are on the horizon again, as MSS staff and students approach the second of three sessions in the schedule. For those who may not recall, Community Clubs are activity clubs that students self-select that are small group, teacher led activities such as chess, floor hockey, art clubs, cooking clubs, poetry and much, much more. These activities are held for three to four weeks on Friday afternoons at 1:55 - 2:30 and help to build positive school climate for students and staff at all grade levels. Check out the student created video on the clubs on the school website for a first hand look at what clubs look like. Clubs start up again on January 27th and run through February 10th.

Finally, I wanted to thank all of the families for their generosity in helping to provide money to the student support fund in honor of teachers. Through the kindness of many families, we were able to help provide additional funds to support children in need in our school. Thank you for honoring your child's teachers through these wonderful gifts.

Have a great week ahead.

DATES TO REMEMBER

January / February 2012

S	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18

January Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time / Location</u>	<u>Event</u>
• January 10, 2012	All Day / NA	No School - Teacher Professional Development Day
• January 16, 2012	All Day / NA	No School - Civil Right's Day
• January 16 - 27, 2012	TBD / Computer Lab	Scheduled Winter MAP Testing Window
• January 19, 2012	7:00 PM / HMHS Audi	Winter Concert*
• January 25, 2012	All Day / NA	Progress Reports Go Home
• January 27, 2012	1:55 PM	Community Clubs Begin

*Indicates Parental Invitation