



February 1, 2010 Issue No. 13

From the Desk of Ms. Peterson, Superintendent

Iowa Department of Education Site Visit:

Our Department of Education Site Visit is scheduled for February 9-11. We have already found that our preparation for this visit is beneficial in helping us re-focus our attention on school improvement. I am sure that the Department of Education's Visit will result in additional assistance in helping MStM be the best school we can be. The Site Visit Schedule is located at the end of this newsletter.

Iowa Core Curriculum:

As I have written in previous newsletters, the Iowa Core Curriculum provides local school districts a guide for delivering instructional content that is challenging and meaningful to students. The curriculum identifies the essential skills and concepts for literacy, science, math and social studies, as well as 21st century learning skills (civic literacy, financial literacy, technology literacy, health literacy, and employability).

Our Iowa Core Curriculum Leadership Team consists of Josh Moser, Brenda Halverson, Melissa Schad, Sara Kuhns, Christy Holloway, Chuck Hilsabeck, Tom Wood, Mike Crozier and me. This team has been going to training for the past two years in regard to learning how to implement the Iowa Core into our MStM School System. Our teachers have also worked this past summer aligning our curriculum with the Essential Skills and Concepts of the Iowa Core. If you go to our school's website and click on the Curriculum Link on the left side of the Home Page, you will be able to see our updated curriculum. This is a work in progress. We do not have it fully completed. I hope to have our teachers continue working on each of their areas this coming summer.

Missed School Days Because of Weather:

As you know, we have now missed 7 days of school because of the inclement weather. The last day of school for students is scheduled to be June 4th. I plan to work with the School Board and our Staff to look at some other options to make up these days instead of just adding them to the end of our calendar. We will inform everyone about any changes we make as soon as possible.

From the Desk of Mr. Crozier

The month of February brings the ITBS/ITEDS to us. We will be taking these tests beginning February 1st and finishing on February 5th. All 7th through 11th graders will participate in these tests. We will be testing in the mornings, so it is important that your child be present and on time on these days. These tests are important to our school district. It is one measure of our success, according to the state and federal governments. We will be doing several activities in our Advisor/Advisee program to help prepare our students. Listed below are some things that you can do to help your children do their best on the ITBS/ITED tests.

Also, this year the seniors will be taking the Work Keys Employability test during the ITBS/ITED testing time. These tests will give them a gauge of their readiness to enter the work force. These tests will also give the district an evaluation of how we are preparing our students to enter the work force.

How to Prepare for Standardized Tests...

REST: Children should get a good night's sleep before taking the test! Keep their routine. By getting "plenty of sleep" actually means maintaining normal bedtime hours rather than going to bed much earlier than usual.

EAT: A good breakfast on the morning that your student takes the test is important. Test-taking activities require a lot of energy. The intent is not to have a big breakfast, if your student usually has a slice of toast and a glass of juice, but keeping a normal routine schedule is ideal.

Listen: Ask your child to listen carefully to the directions the teacher gives and to follow them exactly. If they do not understand what to do, they should ask to have the teacher repeat the directions or explain them again.

Dress: Have your child dress in layers—kids do better on tests if they don't have to think about how hot or cold they are.

Try: Do their best. They are not expected to know the answer to every question. Some of the questions may seem difficult, but they should keep trying and not give up. Don't be too anxious. Say, "This test is important. I know you will try hard and do your best." Your confidence will be contagious.

Maintain: Keep up regular study habits and not cram for this test. It covers more school work than can be learned in a few extra hours.

Relax: Students who are calm and sure of themselves do better.

Test Day: Give these tips: Skip a question and move on if you don't know the answer.

You can always come back to it later. Maybe you will be ready to answer that question then. Check your answers carefully. Make sure the number of your answer correspond to the numbers of the questions on the test.

Results from these tests will be made available sometime in the spring. If you have any questions regarding the test or test results, feel free to contact myself or Mr. Folkerts, the secondary counselor.

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

The FAFSA (Free Applications for Federal Student Aid) can now be filled out! It is strongly recommended that you apply for financial aid, even if you don't think you will qualify for financial assistance this year or in years to come.

There are two more ACT test dates scheduled for the remainder of this school year, April 10th and June 12th, 2010. ACT Registration packets and practice tests can be picked up in my office.

Begin to research scholarships. Keep an ongoing file of scholarships and financial aid information (i.e., criteria, amounts, contact persons, and deadlines). Check out WWW.collegeplanning.org for free scholarship searches. Don't forget to check out our web site for available scholarships. We keep a hard copy of all the scholarships for on the web site in the guidance office. Stop by and look through the scholarship book to see if there is anything of interest to you.

The following colleges have been scheduled to visit our school:

January 19- Ashford University

January 27- Iowa Central Community College

February 2- DMACC

February 16- Indian Hills Community College

Northwest Missouri State- TBA

Did you know that students with a 3.75 GPA or higher can qualify for a full tuition scholarship at AIB College of Business? They offer both Applied Science Degrees (the typical 2 year degree) and Bachelor of Science Degrees (the typical 4 year degree).

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

Schedule of upcoming events:

Junior High Vocal Festival, Tuesday February 23 @ 7pm

Variety Show, Friday March 5 @ 7pm

Spring Concert for PK, K and 1st grade, Tuesday April 6 @ 7pm

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

TAG NEWS: Both junior high and high school TAG students have participated recently in counseling sessions with Mr. Folkerts, Mrs. Pribil, and Mrs. Sowder. More sessions will follow that will focus on specific issues related to talent and giftedness.

This winter high student TAG students have been preparing for the spring ACT and the Pride of Iowa Academic Bowl in Creston with practice sessions. The ACT sessions mimic the real test since the students use materials prepared by the ACT organization itself.

Friday, January 22, was the start of the second semester Enrichment Cluster that meets on Fridays during seminar time. The topic of focus is conservation of rainforests and the oceans. Eleven junior high TAG students will be participating in a variety of activities that include scholarly research, hands-on activities, debate, public speaking, and a specialized field trip to the Blank Park Zoo in April.

Eighth graders Eddy Kraber and Anthony Rudich continue to progress on their National History Day contest piece and recently went to the Dunn Library at Simpson College with Mrs. Sowder to take advantage of specialized databases and sources. The two will be making an exhibit with very detailed criteria for the spring contest.

From the Desk of Ms. Skellenger Media Specialist

Library News:

The New Year has brought some changes to the library, as we now have several volunteers to help out during the weekdays. The volunteers will be available to help students find and checkout books on Monday – Thursday in the afternoons. Mrs. Shutt will be in on Mondays, Mrs. Dahmen will be available on Wednesdays, and Mrs. Sweet is available on

Thursday and occasional Tuesday afternoons. Their help is highly appreciated.

In other news, the elementary classes have been busy in library. For example, the third grade is finishing up their fairy tale unit by writing new versions of the old classics. This group of students is very creative and the stories are turning out great. The kindergarten classes have finished their biography unit and have worked together to write a biography of their own. Fifth grade just started a project on author's purpose. They will be creating three items - one to entertain, one to inform, and one to persuade. So far, what they have been working on is turning out great.

All elementary classes have been doing a wonderful job in library this school year and I'm sure it will continue throughout the rest of the year.

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

After School Shouldn't Be An Afterthought

After-school programs and activities can be wonderfully enriching, providing children with opportunities to stretch their minds, exercise their bodies, learn teamwork, and build social skills. Today's range of available activities is greater than ever—from computer classes to cheerleading clinics, music lessons to Scout troops, art and dance to football and soccer. Here are some important things to consider when enrolling your children in after-school programs:

Whose idea is it?

Try to make sure that your child has at least some interest in the club, sport, or lesson you're signing him or her up for.

What if you want them to attend and they don't want to?

Incentives can work wonders. Together, set two goals. The first is yours: spell out the activity you want them to participate in, the amount of time you want them to devote, and the attitude you want them to have about it. The second is theirs: by following your rules and achieving the goals you set for them, decide on the special privilege or reward they can earn.

How intense is it?

Some after-school gymnastics programs are a great excuse for children to burn off energy and learn a few new skills. Others are totally focused on training the next Olympian. Find the program that really fits what you and your child are looking for.

Can it help your child academically, athletically, or socially?

All children have areas of strength and areas where they need some enrichment or encouragement. After-school programs can help with both! Choose one activity that lets your child expand on his or her strengths, and try to find another one that offers a challenge. For example, enroll an athletic child in a basketball league and in the library reading club, or sign up a shy youngster in Scouts as well as an art or music class.

What kind of commitment are they looking for?

Your 10-year-old may have just what the coach or instructor has always dreamed of—amazing flexibility, artistic talent, a perfect butterfly, or a 90-m.p.h. serve. But be wary of programs that expect your child to commit to four days a week or more. Children still need time to do their schoolwork, sleep 10 hours a night, and to “chill.”

Have you heard good feedback from other parents and children?

The best after-school programs get great reviews from children and their parents. If just the parents are raving about a program, your children may be sorry you signed them up. If

just the children are crazy about it, it may be too lax or too expensive to meet your needs.

Are you over scheduling?

Unstructured playtime is very important for children. It's a great time for them to use their imaginations, "veg out," or just have fun. Be sure that you don't take their childhood away from them by filling every after-school hour with "enriching" activities. While there are many things to consider when contemplating after-school programs, remember also that anything you do is better than the all too- common alternative—letting your children decide, every day, what they want to do after school. Too many children today fritter away their childhoods watching television or playing computer/video games. Whatever after-school program you choose, help your children see that life is not a spectator sport.

**From the Desk of
Mrs. Meier and Mrs. O'Mara
Third Grade**

We are excited to have a new reading/language series from MacMillan/McGraw-Hill. The stories have centered on various themes such as the current unit called "Determination". We have enjoyed leveled readers, reader's theater, a play in December, and a variety of genres in the first semester. You may have noticed that our spelling and language lessons are integrated with our stories and share a common thread.



Multiplication has finally been introduced! Everyone is really excited and is learning facts for timed tests. Keep the enthusiasm going and practice flash cards nightly. Before multiplication we focused on telling time. Most of the students can tell time accurately to the minute. We will be having ITBS in February, so it would be helpful to review previous skills at home such as two and three digit addition and subtraction, telling time, and rounding.



In science we have been studying ecosystems, and in social studies we have been talking about early communities. Much of first semester was spent exploring Native American cultures. We are currently talking about early settlers in Jamestown.



Looking ahead, we have the Valentine parties coming up in February. Please have your child design a box for his/her valentines at home. We will send home a list of student names at the beginning of February.



Hopefully the months ahead will be less snowy! We are certainly looking forward to spring and warmer weather!



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



The Iowa Test of Basic Skills will be administered to students in grades 3-6 from February 1-11. The tests will be taken in two weeks rather than one so that students have only one or two tests a day.

Some ways to help your child prepare for the tests are:

- Go to bed on time
- Have two #2 pencils ready to go
- Eat a good breakfast
- Solve family/friend problems before the testing date
- Talk to your child about any concerns they may have about the tests

MStM will be doing Pennies for Patients again this year during the week of February 15-19. This program ties into our Caring pillar. Each classroom will get a container to fill with loose change and the top three classes that raise the most money will earn prizes. All of the money goes toward The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.



MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
DECEMBER 14, 2009

The Board of Directors of the Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District met in regular session, pursuant to law, on December 17, 2009. This meeting was scheduled for Monday, December 14, 2009 and was rescheduled for Thursday, December 17, 2009 due to the school closing because of weather.

Members Present:

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

Members Absent:

Scott Anderson, President

I. Welcome

Bunch called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.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

Gibson motioned to approve the consent items seconded by Harper. Roll call: 3 ayes.

III. Celebrations

Dave Shutt arrived at 5:10 p.m.

IV. Public Comments

Missy Perry – 13224 60th Avenue, Prole, IA 50229 – Special Education Transportation Contracts.

V. Old Business

A. Reports

- 1) Facilities Report
- 2) MStM Music Booster Minutes
- 3) MStM Athletic Booster Minutes
- 4) MStM PTO Minutes

B. Presentations

- 1) Superintendent's Report – Supt. Peterson
- 2) Principal's Report –Tom Wood and Mike Crozier

VI. New Business

A. Discuss Bank Relocation Jill Gavin

B. Approve At Risk/ Modified Allowable Growth Application Supt. Peterson

Gibson motioned to approve the At Risk/Modified Allowable Growth application to allow funding for our At Risk program for the 2010-2011 school year seconded by Shutt. Roll call: 4 ayes.

C. Approve Participation in IA Drug and Alcohol Testing Program Supt. Peterson

Gibson motioned to approve the Iowa Drug and Alcohol Testing Program for the 2010 school year seconded by Shutt. Roll call: 4 ayes.

D. Discuss/Approve moving the Preschool Fund into the General Fund Supt. Peterson

Shutt motioned to approve moving the Preschool Fund into the General Fund effective January 1, 2010 seconded by Harper. Roll call: 4 ayes.

E. Discuss/Approve Projects from Board Facilities Committee
Supt. Peterson

Shutt motioned to approve the following recommendations provided to the Board from Supt. Peterson during the Facilities Report, requesting bids on projects more than \$10,000 and not going over the \$85, 000 projection of costs seconded by Harper. Roll call: 4 ayes.

- Permanent fencing for the St. Marys baseball field
- Emergency roadway behind school
- Repair asphalt in parking lot
- Improve lighting at football field
- Football concession stand – cabinets and counters – working with the Athletic Boosters
- Improve Softball Press box/concession stand

F. Vote District #8 IASB Board Member
Supt. Peterson

Harper motioned to approve the nomination for a three year term on the IASB Board of Directors commencing January 2010 to Steve Hoch, Centerville Community School seconded by Shutt. Roll call: 4 ayes.

G. Discuss/Approve Fundraising Policy 504.5
Supt. Peterson

The Board agreed to table this policy for the January meeting.

H. Discuss/Approve Search and Seizure Policy 502.8
Supt. Peterson

Gibson motioned to approve the revised Search and Seizure policy 502.8 seconded by Shutt. Roll call: 4 ayes.

I. Approve Early Graduation Request
Supt. Peterson

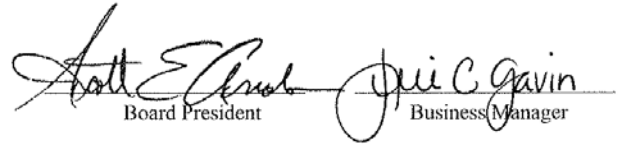
Shutt motioned to approve Kelli Sherwood to graduate early seconded by Gibson. Roll call: 4 ayes.

J. Confirm – Next Meeting Dates
01/05/09 – Agenda subcommittee by e-mail
01/06/09 – 5:30 p.m. Agenda Meeting / Board Goals Workshop
01/11/09 – 5:30 p.m. Board Meeting

VII. Adjournment

Shutt motioned to adjourn the meeting seconded by Gibson. Roll call: 4 ayes. Time: 6:50 p.m.

APPROVED


Board President Business Manager

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

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 which are located in Martensdale. You may also view it on the mstm.us website.

Questions or concerns may be addressed to:

*Mrs. Tomlinson
Martensdale-St.Marys
Superintendent's Office
390 Burlington
Martensdale, Iowa
641/764-2466*

Martensdale-St. Marys School District Site Visit Schedule

Day 1 - Tuesday February 9, 2010

| Time | Teams | Event/Activity | Participant | Location |
|---------------|-------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| 8:00 - 10:00 | A/B/C | Team Orientation/Document Review | Team Members | ICN Room #221 |
| 10:00 - 11:15 | A/B/C | District Overview | District Administrative Team: Jean Peterson, Supt.; Mike Crozier, Secondary Principal; Tom Wood, Elementary Principal | HS Media Center Room # 225 |
| 11:15 - 12:30 | A/B/C | Lunch | Food Prepared by the FCS Classes | FCS Room # 221 |
| 12:30-1:30 | A | High School Students | Mix of HS Students | HS Media Center Room # 225 |
| | B | Junior High Students | Mix of JH Students | Elementary Music Room # 135 |
| | C | PreK - 12 Instructional Support Staff | Jen Parrott, Jessica Hart, Sue Nickum, Cheryl Wilson, Marlene Meier, Cindi Hinkle, Heather Gibson, Herm Lenze, Lisa Connor, Lori Hager | Elementary Computer Lab Room # 116 |

| | | | | |
|-------------|------------|--|---|------------------------------------|
| 1:30 - 1:45 | A/B/C | Individual Team Dialogue/Break | Team Members | ICN Room # 221 |
| 1:45 - 3:00 | A | PreK - 12 Learning Support Staff (Gifted and Talented, At-Risk, School Nurse) | Ron Peterson; At-Risk, Randy Folkerts; HS Counselor, Jen Pribil; Elem. Counselor, Alene Kirvin; School Nurse | Mr. Peterson's Room # 226A |
| | B | PreK-12 Learning Support Staff (Guidance, Media, Technology, Title I) | Amanda Skellenger; Media/Elem. TAG, Amy Sowder; HS TAG, Brenda Halverson; Title I, Jodi Noga; Title I, Tom Wood; Technology | Elementary Music Room # 135 |
| | C | PreK-12 Special Education Teachers | Don Hatcher, Christy Holloway, Mike McAlexander, Shirley Blair, Amy DeWard, Kate Dykstra | Elementary Computer Lab Room # 116 |
| 3:00 - 3:30 | A/B/C | Individual Team Dialogue/Break | Team Members | Stay in Interview Rooms |
| | Mix of ABC | Career and Technical Teachers | Vivian Butcher, Alison Condon, Jayne Sherwood, Alene Kirvin | FCS Room # 221 |

| | | | | |
|-------------|------------|---|---|------------------------------------|
| 3:30 - 4:45 | Mix of ABC | PreK-12 Teachers | Sara Franey, Josh Moser, Amanda Pelzer, Jed Alexander, Jan Devore, Kim Burns, Don Newbury, Steve Goodale, Justin Herrick, Brian Spanhut | HS Media Center Room # 225 |
| 4:45 - 5:00 | A/B/C | Team Meeting (as needed) | Team Members | ICN Room #211 |
| 5:00 - 6:15 | A | School Board | Scott Anderson, President; Nicole Bunch, Vice President; Amy Harper, Dave Shutt, Wade Gibson | Superintendent's Office Room # 510 |
| | B | Community Partners and Advisory Committee Members | | HS Media Center Room # 225 |
| | C | PreK-12 Parents/Guardians | | FCS Room # 221 |

Martensdale-St. Marys School District Site Visit Schedule

Day 2 - Wednesday February 10, 2010

| Time | Teams | Event/Activity | Participant | Location |
|---------------|--------------|--|---|------------------------------------|
| 8:00 - 10:00 | A/B/C | Team Dialogue/Document Review | Team Members | ICN Room # 211 |
| 10:00 - 10:45 | Mix | Document Review | Team Members | ICN Room # 211 |
| | Mix | Document Review | Team Members | ICN Room # 211 |
| | Mix of A/B/C | PreK-12 Non-Instructional Support Staff (secretaries, nurse, custodians, bus drivers, food services) | Christy Henderson, Teri Harding, Karen Tomlinson, Jim Lynch, Brenda Depauw, Joe Gavin, Kerry Gegner, Brian Sweet, Lorretta Bell | Elementary Computer Lab Room # 116 |
| 10:45 - 11:30 | Mix | Tour Grades PK-12 | Team Members | Led by Principals |
| 11:30 - 12:00 | A/B/C | Lunch | Team Members | Cafeteria |
| 12:00 - 1:15 | Mix of A/B/C | Special Ed and Collaborative General Ed Teachers | Amy DeWard, Amanda Pelzer, Tish O'Mara, Mike McAlexander, Chuck Hilsabeck, Josh Moser, Christy Holloway, Jodi Noga | Mr. McAlexander's Room #223 |
| | Mix of A/B/C | Curriculum Director | Jean Peterson | Superintendent's Office # 510 |
| | Mix of A/B/C | PreK-12 Building Principals | Tom Wood (PreK-6) Mike Crozier (7-12) | AEA Room # 225 |
| 1:15 - 5:30 | A/B/C | Statement Writing/Report Development | Team Members | ICN Room # 211 |

Martensdale-St. Marys School District Site Visit Schedule

Day 3 - Thursday February 11, 2010

| Time | Teams | Event/Activity | Participant | Location |
|-------------|-------|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 8:00 - 3:30 | A/B/C | Team Dialogue, Completion of Draft Report, Consensus Building, and Working Lunch | Team Members | ICN Room #211 |
| 3:00 - 3:15 | Team | Visit with Superintendent about possible non-compliance issues | Julie Melcher & Jean Peterson | Superintendent,s Office Room # 510 |
| 3:30 - 4:00 | A/B/C | Site Visit Highlights | Open to the Community | HS Media Center Room # 225 |