

MAROA FORSYTH

Home of the Trojans



Building a Better World One Student at a Time



DISTRICT NEWSLETTER- September 2011

Superintendent Comments

The 2011-2012 school year is off to a great start! The freshmen are learning their way around the high school, the sixth graders have mastered their locker combinations and the kindergartners are getting into their daily routine.

For only the second time in the last twenty years, enrollment decreased slightly in the district. District wide we currently have 1133 students enrolled, which is down from 1185 students enrolled in 2010. The breakdown is as follows:

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
High School	346	310
Middle School	259	279
Grade School	580	544

The most significant factor identified that contributed to this decrease is the fact that our kindergarten class of 2011 is significantly smaller than our graduating class of 2010.

I would like to note this is the smallest the high school has been in quite some time. The smaller enrollment appears to be only temporary when one looks at the classes that are scheduled to move through the system in the coming years.

On a related note, the middle school is larger than it has ever been.

The exact affect the enrollment changes will have on

our classification in the IHSA and IESA has yet to be determined.

District Newsletter Returns

The Maroa Forsyth School District is proud to offer a District newsletter once again. The District ceased the publication of the original newsletter in May of 2005 due to our ability to publish additional information in a timelier and a more cost effective manner on the District and Building Websites. As a result of public requests, we have elected to publish bi-monthly newsletter once again. The newsletter will be presented on the district's website with a link sent to all parents via the *SchoolReach* email system. Printed copies will be available in the office of each building. I would encourage all residents to continue to use the District and Building Websites for additional and more up to date information.

School Board News

The Maroa Forsyth School Board would like to invite the residents of the Maroa Forsyth Community to the monthly school board meetings. The monthly meeting is scheduled for the second Monday of each month at 7:00 in the High School Library.

We also would invite you to explore the School Board webpage. This page contains the meeting, agendas, and minutes, as well as many other important pieces of information. The School Board portion of the District's website can be found at:

www.mfschools.org/unit/board/index.htm

Building Updates

The Maroa Forsyth Middle School went though extensive changes and upgrades over the past summer. The most revealing change was the replacement of all windows in the building. These upgraded windows provide increased insulation ratings, increased natural light access, and the improved aesthetics for the 1928 facility. In addition to the windows the majority of exterior doors were replaced, allowing for a safer, more secure facility. There were several other smaller, less visible improvements made to the middle school as well as the District's other two facilities. We invite you to take a look at all of our facilities. Maroa Forsyth prides itself on the ability to provide quality education in quality facilities. If there is a concern or suggestion for improving our facilities, please, do not hesitate to call.

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Maroa Forsyth CUSD #2



New Assessment

This year we will be using the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) assessment as part of our assessment practices. MAP tests are unique in that they are computerized adaptive tests that adjust to a child's performance level. MAP tests allow us to administer shorter tests, use less class time and still receive detailed, accurate information about your child's academic growth.

In the coming weeks, all children in 2nd-9th grade will take tests to determine their instructional needs in the areas of reading, language usage, and mathematics. Although the tests are not timed, it usually takes about 50 minutes to complete each MAP test. You and your child's classroom teacher will receive powerful information to monitor your child's academic growth throughout the school year and from year to year.

Following each testing period, you will receive a report showing your child's scores. The testing occurs 3 times during the school year: fall, winter, and spring. For more information, download the *Parent Toolkit* at <http://www.nwea.org/support/article/930/parent-toolkit> or contact the school.

RTI News

To better accommodate the learning needs of all students, Maroa Forsyth CUSD #2 has adopted a

school wide approach called Response to Intervention or RTI. RTI is a flexible problem-solving model in which schools provide timely assistance to students and match that help to each learner's level of need. Schools that use RTI organize their school services in to three levels or Tiers. All students participate in Tier I, universal support. It is composed of the district curriculum and differentiated classroom instructional practices. If that help is not sufficient, they are next provided with Tier II, individualized assistance. Students with significant school delays who do not respond to Tier I and Tier II may be eligible for Tier III, intensive support.

Tier I: Supports are those academic and behavioral strategies that all teachers routinely use at the first sign that a student is having problems in their classrooms. As examples of Tier I supports, instructors may change their method of instruction, provide a child additional individual help or check the child's homework each day.

Tier II: If the student continues to fall significantly behind peers despite classroom supports, the teacher will refer the child to the Student Success Team (SST). The SST analyzes student data and contact's the student's parents to collect detailed information about the child's academic levels, study and learning habits, and general

classroom behaviors. With the information, the team and teacher identify possible reasons why a student is experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties and put together a practical, research-based, classroom-friendly intervention plan to address difficulties. The plan is tailored to the student's specific learning needs. The classroom teacher may carry out the intervention plan alone. Or other staff, may help the teacher to put the plan into place.

While the Intervention plan is in action, the SST meets regularly to assess progress. Information about the student's progress is shared with the parent (s) and classroom teacher. If the data collected show that the student is not achieving his or her expected goals for improvement, the SST and classroom teacher meet again to revise the intervention plan.

Tier III: If the Intervention team finds after trying several individualized intervention plans that a student still has not made significant progress, the school may refer the student for a formal evaluation process. The support may include outside resources and/or services available through Special Education.

If you have concerns about your child's academic performance or would like to know more about RTI process please contact the school.



Maroa Forsyth High School



Principal's Message

Welcome back!! We have had an outstanding start to the school year. MFHS would like to welcome two new members to our faculty; Ms. Stephanie Ramsey and Ms. Samantha Quinlan. Ms. Ramsey comes to us from Rockford East High School and will be teaching Reading 1, Adv. English II, and English IV. Ms. Quinlan is a recent graduate of SIU-C and will be teaching all levels of Spanish and is also serving as our yearbook sponsor.

We encourage you to keep up to date with our daily operations. One great way to stay updated is by visiting our website daily and looking at our daily announcements at <http://www.mfschools.org/user/hsanoun/>. Another way to keep up to date is to follow me on Twitter. Simply go to Twitter.com, sign up for a Twitter account and then either do a search for Scott Adreon or click the Twitter icon on MFHS's homepage.

The faculty and staff are very happy with the behavior of our students thus far this year. I have been in the freshmen/sophomore hallway each day and am very pleased with how respectful the students are and how clean they keep their hallway.

Mr. Adreon

"Children have to be educated, but they have also to be left to educate themselves. ~Abbé Dimnet, *Art of Thinking*, 1928

School Improvement

For the 2011-2012 school year, the faculty and administration will continue to work on two primary school improvement initiatives: *Formative Assessment & Academic Vocabulary*.

Formative Assessment

Traditionally, when someone hears the term assessment, they think of summative assessments. Summative assessments are typically tests, quizzes, projects, etc. that conclude the end of a unit for which grades are given. *Formative assessment* can be defined as "A planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence of students' status is used by teachers to adjust their on-going instructional procedures or by students to adjust their current learning tactics." Notice that true Formative Assessment has two parts, teachers adjusting their instruction and students adjusting their learning tactics.

The phrase *teaching adjustments* is easily understood, but the phrase *learning tactics* may need further clarification. Learning tactics are strategies that students utilize to help them understand key terms and concepts. For example, some students utilize *power notes*, some students *chunk*, some utilize *concept maps*, while others might *highlight text and/or utilize sticky notes*, etc. The objective is the same; be aware of and implement the strategy that best helps me (the student) learn the content being

taught. Therefore, it is important that students realize which tactics are effective for them.

Many of our students have already taken an online survey that helps identify them as a visual learner, an auditory learner, and/or a kinesthetic learner. This information is being gathered by the faculty and shared collaboratively in an effort to promote a better understanding of our learners and their needs.

We believe that the teachers' and students' experience and understanding of formative assessment will greatly improve student learning. If you would like any clarification on formative assessment or our school improvement goals for the 2011-2012 school year, please don't hesitate to contact Mr. Adreon.



Important Dates

Sept. 16-

Rachel's Challenge Assembly
Sept. 26-30th

HOMECOMING WEEK

Mon. Super Hero Day

Tues. Nerd Day

Wed. Jersey Day- Powder Puff
Game at 7:00

Thurs. Blue & Gold Day

Fri. Class Color Day- Assembly
at 1:00, parade at 3:00,

game vs. A-O at 7:00

Sat. -Homecoming Dance 8:00

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Maroa Forsyth Middle School



Principal's Message

The school year is off to a great start and all the students are settling into their routines. We are very pleased to welcome two new members of the middle school staff for the 2011-2012 school year, Kelsey Gosch and Jon Kidd. Mrs. Gosch is our new resource teacher and Mr. Kidd is our new Tech Lit teacher.

This newsletter will be sent out bi-monthly to help improve communication between school and home. However; the best way to stay up to date with what is happening at the middle school is by checking our webpage at

www.mfschools.org/middle.

When viewing our webpage make sure you visit our teachers websites by going to the staff tab. Here you will be able to view assignments, notes, PowerPoint, and more.

We are looking forward to a great year and if you have questions or concerns feel free to email me at stewartb@mfschools.org or call me at 794-5115.

PBIS News

Maroa Forsyth Middle School is proud to be a PBIS school. PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Interventions & Support. Our PBIS mission statement is "Establishing successful students by setting high expectations and reinforcing positive behaviors". To start the school year all students were taught the rules and expectation of MFMS on "Basic Training" day. Through out the school year we will reinforce our rules and expectations by giving out "Star

Student" awards as well as "Star Bucks". The students will be able to redeem their "Star Bucks" at different times throughout the year for rewards.

Every quarter the PBIS team will establish an objective for the students work towards. For the month of September the class objectives are:

- 6th-Coming to class prepared
- 7th-Following the dress code
- 8th-Following the dress code

Each grade will be given a discipline infraction limit they cannot go over. For example, for the month of September the 6th grade can not have more than 5 discipline infractions for not being prepared and the 7th and 8th graders cannot have more than 3 discipline infractions for not following the dress code. If a grade meets their objective they will receive a class reward.

The PBIS team will also establish a school wide goal every quarter. First quarters goal is to have 45 or less discipline infractions. This number is based off the number of infractions for the first quarter in the 2010-11 school year. If the entire school meets its goal, we will have an end of the quarter celebration for all students.

Athletic News

It is hard to believe but the softball and baseball seasons are coming to an end. The softball team will play in their regional on September 7th and the baseball team will begin regional play September 14th.

Both the Spirit Squad and Girl's Basketball began

practice earlier this month. The basketball team will open their season by hosting the GAB Round Robin Tournament the week of September 19th. The Spirit Squad will perform for the first time on September 29th.

The boy's basketball team will begin their season the week of October 17th. Tryouts will be held on the 17th, 18th, and 19th. The boys first game will be on November 3rd at home vs. Heyworth.

If you would like more information about MFMS athletics and activities please visit the "Activities" tab on the middle school webpage. Here you will be able to view and print game schedules, practice schedules, and rosters.

Important Dates

September

- 2nd-No School
- 5th-No School
- 14th-11:30 Dismissal
- 16th-Midterm
- 19th-MAP Testing begins
- 30th-Homecoming 2:03 Dismissal

October

- 6th-Parent/Teacher Conferences 4:30-8:00 pm 2:03 dismissal
- 7th-Parent/Teacher Conferences 8:00 am-12:00-No School
- 10th-No School Columbus Day
- 14th-End of 1st Quarter
- 21st-Report Cards sent home

November

- 2nd-11:30 Dismissal
- 11th-Veterans Day assembly
- 11th and 12th MS Musical 7:00
- 18th-2nd Quarter Midterm
- 23rd-2:03 Dismissal
- 24th-25th-No School

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Maroa Forsyth Grade School



Principal's Message

The 2011-2012 school year is starting off great at MFGS. The students are already into the routines and are working very hard.

There are many exciting things going on this year in the classes. Mrs. Holmes, Mrs. Rose, and Mrs. Holthaus are piloting a new phonics program. We will evaluate this program throughout the school year to see if this will improve the reading of our students. This phonics program teaches students word attack skills through coding. The fifth grade has recently overhauled its reading curriculum as well. Students will work more with the student selected books and materials. The fourth grade has been learning this way for a few years, and now it is spreading up to the fifth grade teachers.

This year we put up an additional bulletin board leading into our cafeteria. This bulletin board is for the Reading Strategy of the Month. For August and September we are displaying work done in classes on how students select books not just at their interest level, but also at their reading level. Some of the class work that is already displayed here discusses looking at the table of contents, pictures, and reading a few paragraphs or pages to determine if the vocabulary is too difficult.

Hopefully, you will get a chance to stop by and see the great things going on at MFGS!

PBIS News

Another school year has begun, as has P.B.I.S (positive behavioral interventions and supports)! The entire school has successfully completed our Trojan Training, which is the teaching and modeling of our expectations here at Maroa-Forsyth Grade School. All students are escorted to stations, where they are given a lesson on appropriate behaviors. We have also posted visual reminders in every area.

This year, we are adding something new. We will be setting school-wide goals based on the previous year's data. During the 2010-2011 school year we had an increase in the amount of bus referrals. As a team, we agree that this is the area to focus on for the month of September 2011. Our goal is to decrease the number of bus referrals by 25%. When this goal is met, we will have a mini celebration. A chart will be posted in the hallways, so that the students can monitor the success throughout the month. The team will set new goals for each month, based on the data.

As a parent/guardian, please encourage the importance of appropriate bus expectations. These three expectations will be posted at the front of every bus: Stay in Seat---Inside Voices---Feet Behind Seat. Please review these with your students to help meet our goal for the month of September!

Drop Off & Pick Up Safety

Student safety is the highest priority District Wide. To make before and after school safer, please make sure you are following the procedures for our building. If you wish to drop off or pick up your student, please stay in the drop-off/pick-up lane closest to the building in front of the school. From this lane it is safe for your child to get in or out of the car. There will be a staff member in front of the building both before and after school to make sure everyone is dropping off or picking up children safely. If you would like to walk your children into the building, please park your car in the lot and assist them through the crosswalk into the building.

Important Dates

September 11-MAP testing begins grades 2-5
September 15-Picture Day
September 16-Mid-terms sent home
September 30-2:13 dismissal
October 6-2:13 dismissal
October 6-P/T conferences 4:30-8:00 pm
October 7-P/T conferences 8:00 am-12:00 pm
October 10-Columbus Day (no school)
October 14-PBIS Celebration all grades
October 14-End of First Quarter
October 21-Report Cards sent home

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