

MAROA FORSYTH

Home of the Trojans



Building a Better World One Student at a Time



DISTRICT NEWSLETTER- January 2012

Superintendent Comments

Welcome Back! I hope everyone found some time to rest and relax over the Holiday Break. The Maroa Forsyth School District is looking forward to an exciting 2012.

State Testing

Each spring the State of Illinois requires students in third through eighth grade to complete the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT). This test is one means used to compare the performance of the students of Maroa Forsyth to students across the state. Students in grades three through eight are required to complete tests in the area of language arts and reading. Students in fourth and seventh grade are required to take an additional test in the area of science.

This year's testing is scheduled to be completed during the first part of March (March 5 – March 16). Students will receive individual reports on their performance in the fall. The School and District performance will be reported on the school report card that is released in October of each year.

As part of the state testing program, the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) is given to all juniors. This test is composed of the ACT and the Work Keys testing program. The ACT test focuses on the college readiness of the students while the Work Keys focuses on job readiness. The results of the two tests are combined to create the overall PSAE score. This test will be given on April 24 and April 25 to the 11th grade class.

Historically, the Maroa Forsyth School District has performed well on these assessments. This would not be possible if it were not for the support we receive from the students and parents. As we approach these dates we ask for your support in preparing your students for the testing process.

Some test prep tips include:

- Get a good night's rest and eat a healthy breakfast.
- See that your child arrives at school on time and is relaxed.
- Comfort counts. Dress in layers for added comfort.
- Remind your child not to get stuck on any one item.
- Encourage your child to check answers for accuracy if time permits.

Maroa Forsyth Facilities Update

The Maroa Forsyth School District is in the process of several improvements to the facilities available to the students of Maroa Forsyth. The District has completed an energy audit of the high school and is exploring a number of efficiency upgrades to this facility. With the nature of this work, the majority of improvements will have to take place during the summer of 2012. We have also begun work to address the tripping hazard in high school cafeterium. This project should be completed in the next couple of weeks. You might have noticed the work has begun on the greenhouse just to the west of the existing high school facility. The athletic field improvements are underway as well. In order to keep the community aware of the progress that is being made, the District has set up a website, complete with pictures, of the progress. This site will be updated every couple of weeks throughout the construction process. This website can be found at:

<http://www.mfschools.org/unit/Field/index.htm>

Please check back regularly for project updates.

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Maroa Forsyth CUSD #2



EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT

On April 24th and 25th tenth grade students will take the Prairie State Achievement Exam. Day one of testing is the ACT. Prior to taking the ACT Maroa Forsyth students take the EXPLORE test in December of their 8th grade year and the PLAN test in October of their 10th grade year. The EXPLORE test contains an interest inventory and content area questions. Students learn about areas of interest that may impact their career options. The content area appraises areas of strength and areas to consider for improvement that can lead to making appropriate course selections in high school. The PLAN test provides a mid point check for academic progress toward post high school education, training, and work. Both tests provide estimates for the subsequent test, allowing students time to make adjustments in their academic preparation.

Students will receive their EXPLORE and PLAN results at school. They should compare their performance with the test benchmark and their future goals.

The ACT Web site contains current testing information and useful tools. There are sample questions for EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT; parent information; a World of Work Map of Career Choices; student blog and a look up for college ACT score requirements for colleges and universities at

<http://www.actstudent.org/scores/s/codes.html>

ACT Online Prep

The Illinois State Board of Education has entered into an agreement with ACT to provide ACT Online Prep to public high schools this year at no cost to the school. The purpose is to allow all students access to this resource. It may be used on almost any computer with Internet access.

Students can take practice tests, with real ACT questions, and write essays for the optional Act Writing Test (the PSAE/ACT will not contain the writing test this year) real-time scoring provides immediate feedback. ACT Online Prep also provides a preliminary diagnostic test, a comprehensive content review for each of the ACT's four required tests, and a personalized study path to help students focus their preparation time.

Tenth grade students received a log in and password as part of their PSAE preparation. To tour the site or login visit

<http://www.actonlineprep.com>

The Student User Guide pages are available on the Maroa Forsyth High School Web site on the Guidance page. Online students may access the Student User Guide by clicking the help button located on every page of the program except the main menu. The button is

located in the side menu on the left, just above the Main Menu and Quit buttons. If anyone needs assistance or additional information please contact the school.

ACCESS Assessment for English Language Learners

School districts in Illinois are required to annually assess English Language Learners (ELL) or Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in grades K-12. Students are identified through a home language survey completed at registration.

The assessment, called the ACCESS test, covers listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. It measures social and instructional English as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies in all four domains.

All students identified as ELL or LEP participate in testing annually until they receive an overall composite proficiency level of 4.8 and composite literacy (reading and writing), proficiency level of 4.2.

The assessment will be given between January 9 and February 10. Results will be provided to parents when the school receives them.



Maroa Forsyth High School



Principal's Message

The holiday break is good for many things: A break from studies, good food, time with family and friends, time to sleep, and this year, time to get your car washed. As you probably know, the construction process on our new track and football field in conjunction with an unanticipated wind direction caused a cloud of lime to blow towards our school and parking lot just prior to the break. Many of the cars parked in our lot left that day with a film of lime on them. We made arrangements with the contractor and CJ's Car Care of Decatur to take care of the cars that had the lime deposits. Students were issued coupons to be used at CJ's for lime removal and a car wash. These coupons will expire on January 15th, 2012, so please be sure to redeem them before then.

Before we left for the holiday break our girls' basketball team hosted their annual Coaches vs. Cancer night to help raise funds for the American Cancer Society and to promote awareness. Coach Finck and the girls wanted to thank all of those that helped make the night successful.



Our Trojanettes dance team has also established a tradition the last few years with their Christmas dance performance.



This performance is a nice break for the girls as now they begin their rigorous competition schedule.

KEVINKROWS.com
SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY

Upcoming Activities

February is one of our busiest and best months. We are fortunate to have two very active leadership chapters in our building that our planning events during this time, FCCLA & FFA. Both of these organizations host their "National" weeks during February. FCCLA will be presenting an anti-texting and driving campaign during their national week beginning February 12th. Along with public service announcements and smaller activities, students will be asked to sign a pledge to not text while driving. Students who sign the pledge will be given a thumb ring that reminds them of their pledge.

Our FFA chapter will be recognizing national FFA week the week of February 20th. Mrs. Crouch stated that this year's focus will be on farm safety. Mrs. Sharleen Scheibly, class of '49, owns farm land west of Maroa and made her career as a nurse anesthetist. She is a member of the Carle Development Foundation and is currently working with Mrs. Crouch, Macon County Farm Bureau, ADM, and several others to make this year's FFA week a big success for our students and community.

School Improvement

February 1st will be an 11:30 dismissal for school improvement. Faculty will meet at Forsyth Grade in the afternoon to continue working on the school improvement plan for the 2012-2013.

Important Dates

Freshmen Scheduling Night will be Wednesday, January 25th at 6:00 in the cafetorium for 2012 freshmen.

Other News

Robert "Robo" Kreps, class of '06, was honored at the boys' basketball game on 1/5/11. Robo is MFHS's all-time leading scorer in basketball and UIC's 7th all-time leading scorer. He is now playing professionally in the country of Georgia.

"Genius without education is like silver in the mine."

Benjamin Franklin

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Maroa Forsyth Middle School



Principal's Message

I hope everyone had a great winter break and a Happy New Year. Before we left for break, the middle school held a class competition to see who could raise the most money for charity. The "Jam the Jars" competition was sponsored by the Student Council and as a school we raised over \$5100. The 8th grade won the competition by bringing in over \$2300. All funds raised are donated to the Maroa Christmas Project who provides meals and gifts for local residents in need during the holidays.

As we begin the second semester I wanted to remind everyone that ISAT testing will start on March 5th and end on March 12th. Please make every effort to have your students in attendance on these days. If you know your student is going to be absent during this time, please contact the middle school office as soon as possible.

During January we will start a few academic activities the students can get involved in. First will be our Spelling Bee. The students will have their grade level competitions on January 11th and the Unit Spelling Bee will be held on January 24th. Later in the month we will be fielding our first ever Math Counts team. This team will compete in at Millikin in a math competition with area schools in February. Finally, the Scholastic Bowl season will also begin later this month. If your student is interested in participating in Math Counts or Scholastic Bowl, make sure they sign up!!

If you have questions or concerns feel free to email me at stewartb@mfschools.org or call me at 794-5115

PBIS News

Congratulations to all three grade levels for achieving their monthly objective for November/December. All three grade levels had less than 5 referrals for missing homework and were rewarded with a class period of games. The monthly objective for the month of January for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade is 3 or less referrals for inappropriate behavior or language.

During the students first week back, they received a refresher on some issues that need to be improved upon during second semester. The refreshers covered tardies, recess behavior, hallway and locker behavior, and quality of work. Hopefully the students will be more successful in these areas during second semester.

Unfortunately, we did not meet our school wide goal for second quarter of having 45 or less referrals. Our goal for third quarter will stay the same and hopefully we can achieve it. If the student body achieves their goal they will earn a 3rd quarter celebration.

Athletic News

Both the 7th and 8th grade boy's basketball teams are having very successful seasons. Currently the 7th graders are 14-2 while the 8th graders are 12-4. Both teams will begin regional play later this month. The 7th graders will play their regional at Downs Tri-

Valley during the week of January 23rd. The 8th grade will play their regional at Bloomington Holy Trinity the week of January 30th.

The volleyball team opened their season earlier this month and we would like to welcome Coach Megan Donnelly to our coaching staff. We will be hosting the 7th and 8th grade GAB Volleyball Classic on January 21st. This tournament will be played in the high school and starts at 8:30 am.

It will not be long before track season starts. The first track practices will be the week of March 12th. Remember, anyone wanting to participate in track must have a current physical on file in the middle school office. We will be announcing after 7th and 8th grade sign-ups if 6th graders will be allowed to participate.

Important Dates

January

6th-Eighth Grade Career Fair
11th-First home volleyball game
16th-No School
21st-7th and 8th Grade Volleyball Classic @ HS
24th-Unit Spelling Bee
25th-Freshman Orientation @ HS
31st-Scholastic Bowl practice begins

February

1st-11:30 Dismissal
3rd-Mid-Term
16th-2:03 Dismissal/Parent Teacher Conferences 4:30-8:00
17th-No School/Parent Teacher Conferences 8:00-12:00
18th-Math Counts competition
20th-No School
23rd-Volleyball 8th Grade Night

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Maroa Forsyth Grade School



Principal's Message

I can't believe we are already into the second semester. This school year is flying past and the students are working hard! I couldn't be prouder of our students and teachers on the learning and growth that takes place.

We have just completed our second round of MAP tests. All students take these tests in second through ninth grade. The results of these tests will be sent home with students. If you have any questions on how to interpret these results or how we use these assessments please call me.

We have some students to recognize for getting their artwork selected to be in the Young Artists' Showcase 2012. The Decatur Area Arts Council and Gallery 510 sponsor this art show. Students in grades 5-8 are eligible to submit entries to be reviewed. The students from MFGS who had work selected are Cassidy London, Brookelyn Doran, Isabel Barth, Colleen Richards, Joshua Fawley, and Jillian Hubbard. I would also like to thank Mrs. Cowgill for working with the students to get work submitted.

The Community Club is starting to make their plans for next year. The Community Club does many things throughout the school year to assist our students and teachers. They need volunteers to be on their board for next year. If you are interested in becoming involved with the Community Club, please contact Amy Flock,

president of the Community Club.

The students in 3rd-5th grade are starting to get prepared for the ISAT. These tests will begin the week of March 4th. Results from the ISAT will be sent home in the fall of next school year.

Have a great January and hope for an early spring!

PBIS News

As we start the second half of the school year, we are very pleased with the success with P.B.I.S. (positive behavioral interventions and supports) this year. Our goal for November/December was to improve morning behavior in both the cafeteria for 4th and 5th graders and in the gym for K-3rd graders. We set a goal as a school to receive 250 class Trojan Treasures and were able to achieve that goal!! Students celebrated this achievement by watching a movie during their lunch hour.

We also celebrated the end of the quarter with a movie day on December 16th. The classrooms enjoyed watching a movie and snacking on popcorn provided by Community Club.

As a team we decided our goal for the month of January would be to focus on homework/classroom work completion. Classrooms can earn a "snowball" for each day they have 100% completion on homework. We are shooting for 16 "snowballs" or 80% for the month. Please encourage your student to fill out their agenda book to help meet our goal for the month of January.

Reading Strategies

The reading strategy for December was Visualization. Visualization is simply the movie or picture in your mind of what is happening in the text. Visualization is an important comprehension strategy for both fiction and non-fiction texts.

The reading strategy for January is Determining the Main Idea. The ability to determine the main idea of a piece of text is essential to understanding the text. Students are learning to differentiate between the main idea and the supporting details. This skill will assist students in all areas of their schooling as they are beginning to research topics and present their findings.

As we continue to discuss the reading strategies artifacts from the grades are being displayed outside of the cafeteria. If you get a chance to visit the school please stop and take a look at this bulletin board.

Important Dates

- January 16-Martin Luther King Jr. Day (no school)
- February 1-11:40 dismissal
- February 3-3rd quarter Mid-terms out
- February 16-Parent/teacher conferences (2:13 dismissal)
- February 17-Parent/teacher conferences
- February 20-Presidents' Day (no school)

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