

MAROA FORSYTH

Home of the Trojans



Building a Better World One Student at a Time



DISTRICT NEWSLETTER- January 2013

Security Procedures

In light of the events in Connecticut, I thought I would provide a quick summary of the security procedures that we have in place throughout the District.

First off it should be noted that all three buildings have crisis plans that are reviewed annually. This annual review includes local law enforcement and emergency personnel from both Maroa and Forsyth. This review is also attended by a Board of Education Member as required by law. The revised and updated plans are distributed to the teachers and staff the first day of school.

The plans are reviewed with the staff in each building. There are several (at least 3) drills that are completed each year in each building. One of these drills must include law enforcement. We take the information received from these drills and make any additional modifications to the procedures that may be warranted.

As for building precautions, all buildings in the District have an entry system that requires you to be "buzzed" in after being identified by office personnel. The High School and Grade School have an entry system that requires all visitors to proceed through the office prior to having access to the

rest of the school building. The Middle School facility does not allow for this, but it is expected that all visitors report to the office after being identified. All exterior doors throughout the facilities are locked the entire day, with all access being required through the main entries. (Honestly, we have had issues with doors being left/propped opened. This continues to be a point of emphasis.) All buildings have a camera system that allows for monitoring from a central location.

All classrooms have the ability to be locked and all are equipped with a telephone that allows for communication both internally and externally. There is also a public address system in each building that allows for mass communication. As for communicating with the parents, community, and media, there are procedures in place. The District also has a mass notification system that can use email, phone, and text messages to disseminate information.

We are always looking for ways to improve our safety and security but want it to be known the District does have procedures in place to minimize the possibility of an event occurring or to minimize the severity of such an event.

NOTE: This informational piece was presented in a way so the integrity of the Security/Crisis plans is not compromised.

Inclement Weather Procedures

As we approach the winter season there is always the potential for the need to cancel or delay school due to the inclement weather. The decision to cancel or delay school is never an easy one and one that is not taken lightly. Student safety is our top priority and will always be the basis for our decisions. However, if we feel we are able to safely transport the students, school will be in session. In the event that school must be delayed or canceled, every attempt is made to make the decision by 6:15 on the morning in question. The District will use the *SchoolReach* phone and email notification system to inform students and their parents. The delay or cancellation information is also available through numerous media outlets. You may listen to radio stations: WSOY, Y-103, 95Q, WDKR, WEJT, and WHOW. Cancellations and delays will also be reported to the three major television stations in the area as well. Those being: WAND, WCIA, and WICS.

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Maroa Forsyth CUSD #2



Curriculum and Assessment

As the district aligns curriculum and instruction to the new Common Core Standards for English/Language Arts and Mathematics the MAP test is supporting our efforts. The midyear assessments for students in 2nd through 9th grade are taking place in December and January. This winter's assessment includes enhanced item types that better measure some of the more complex Common Core Standards. This provides insight into how students may respond to the new State assessment when it is fully implemented beginning with the 2014-2015 school year. Some benefit may be recognized this year, according to the Illinois State Board of Education, "Approximately twenty percent (20%) of the operational items on the Reading and Mathematics ISATs were written to Common Core Standards and will be included as part of students' scores/results for the 2013 ISAT."

Each MAP assessment averages 30-40 minutes to complete, however, they are not timed. This is a relatively short amount of time for the amount of individualized and school level data obtained. The assessments are taken using a computer. The screen displays one test question at a time. The student selects an answer using the keyboard or mouse. The difficulty of the test adjusts based on how the student performs on each question. The test is built specifically for them. Students are not expected to know the answer to every question. They are instructed to use their best test-taking skills. For the mathematics assessment the program provides a calculator when it is permitted. Student may choose not to use it. Test results are shown at the end of the test and aggregate scores for classes and grades are available within a few days.

The information gained from the assessments allows the district to see how we are progressing toward the implementation

of the new Common Core Standards, as well as student progress toward attaining the new standards. During the transition there will be fluctuations in results as NWEA, the test developer, makes adjustments that follow the most current information regarding the PARCC assessment and as the Maroa Forsyth CUSD #2 curriculum is converted to the Common Core. It is an exciting and challenging endeavor to implement and assess new standards. The new alignment acknowledges the gap that previously existed between ISAT performance and PSAE. When the transition is complete the curriculum and assessments

The new assessment is being developed by a 26 state consortium [Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers \(PARCC\)](http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes). Information and samples of test items are available from PARCC at <http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes> and the Illinois State Board of Education: http://www.isbe.net/comm_on_core/default.htm

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Maroa Forsyth High School



Principal's Message

The students have reported that they really, really, like the long holiday break! Imagine that! I hope each of you were able to spend some time with your family, watch some good basketball or wrestling, and relax a bit.

Like the middle school and grade school, our gym underwent a lighting transformation over the break. I'm sure you will notice the difference as soon as you step into the event entry. Not only are the lights much brighter, they are much more energy efficient.

School Improvement

Our students continue to work in their Focused Learning groups. The enrichment groups' areas of focus this session are Wellness and Conservation. The RTI groups are continuing their work on academic fundamentals, while the Research groups are getting prepared for their bridge competition at Bradley University coming up in February.

In addition to the Focused Learning, we will work out a schedule in the coming weeks for our juniors to receive ACT/PSAE test preparatory work.

Athletics

Though the break may have been relaxing for some, our winter athletes and their

entourage of faithful followers were more than busy.

Our wrestlers are continuing a fantastic season by winning our own Bomber Classic 16-team invitational and Prairie Central's Hawk Classic 16-team invitational over the break. Our girls' basketball team won the Riverton 16-team invitational and finished second in the Macon County tournament. While our boys' basketball team went 3-2 our first year in Vandalia's Holiday tournament and then beat Tolono Unity and Blue Ridge on back to back nights to wrap up our break. All of our coaches have commented that they've seen some real growth from their athletes and teams and expect to do good things in the conference race and post-season play.

Other News

Congratulations to our "People of the Month" for December!: Sophomore, Jairon Ritter- Student of the Month, Sr. Drew Ascherman- Male Athlete of the Month, So. Bailey Mason- Female Athlete of the Month, and Mrs. Kelly Ritter-Volunteer of the Month. Each of these individuals will receive a \$25 gift certificate to Applebee's. Jairon will also receive a Student of the Month t-shirt provided by Jostens.



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Maroa Forsyth Middle School



Principal's Message

I hope everyone had a great winter break and a Happy New Year. While we were on break a couple of facility improvements were made at the middle school. High efficiency lighting was placed in the gym which will help with energy cost and makes the gym much brighter. Also, new door handles were placed on the classroom doors which provide more security for the classrooms.

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 \$4600. The 8th grade won the competition by bringing in over \$1700. All funds raised are donated to the Maroa Christmas Project who provides meals and gifts for local residents in need during the holidays.

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 24th and the Unit Spelling Bee will be held on January 31st. Students can also sign up for the Math Counts team which will compete at Millikin in a math competition with area schools in February. Finally, 7th and 8th graders can sign up for the Scholastic Bowl team which will also begin later this month

I wanted to remind everyone that ISAT testing will start on March 4th and end on March 11th. 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.

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

PBIS News

The PBIS 2nd quarter goal was to have less than 35 discipline referrals. I am very pleased to report we met our goal and only had 30 discipline referrals during the 2nd quarter. As a reward for a great quarter, all middle school students had the opportunity to participate in celebration activities during the last day of school before break. Our goal for 3rd quarter will be to have 30 or less referrals.

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 bullying, gum, cell phones, hallway and locker behavior, and quality of work. Hopefully the students will be more successful in these areas during second semester.

Students also get an opportunity to participate in a reward if they meet their monthly objective. The monthly objective for November was to not receive any homework or discipline referrals. All students who met their objective received a snack during class. Students who did not receive a referral during December and displayed effort on the MAP, will receive a reward this month.

Athletic News

Both the 7th and 8th grade boys' basketball teams are having very successful seasons. 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 21st. The 8th grade will play their regional at Heyworth the week of January 28th.

The volleyball team opened their season this week with three games. We will be hosting the 7th and 8th grade GAB Volleyball Classic on January 19th. This tournament will be played in the high school and starts at 8:30 am.

Track practices will begin the week of March 4th. 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

17th-Basketball/Spirit 8th Grade night
19th-7th and 8th Grade Volleyball Classic @ HS
21st-No School
22nd-SchoBo practice begins
31st-Unit Spelling Bee

February

1st- Mid-Term
16th-Math Counts competition
18th-No School
19th-Volleyball 8th Grade Night
21st-2:03 Dismissal/Parent Teacher Conferences 4:30-8:00
27th-2:03 Dismissal/Parent Teacher Conferences 4:30-8:00

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Maroa Forsyth Grade School



Principal's Message

Hopefully, everyone is refreshed and relaxed ready to start the second semester. The school year is half over. We have a lot going on right now and a lot more coming up in the next couple months.

The students in third, fourth, and fifth grades will begin preparing for the ISAT exams that are administered in March across Illinois. This year these tests are changing. As the United States' schools change to meet the Common Core State Standards the ISAT is being changed to match these standards. You will receive your child's individual report next year at the fall parent-teacher conference.

Students in second, third, fourth, and fifth grades will be taking the MAP test in mid-January. We will have the results ready to be distributed at parent-teacher conferences this February. It is important to compare your child's fall and winter scores. We use these results to determine if your child is making adequate progress here at school.

Thank you to everyone who supported our McTeacher Night. This night was a huge success. We raised over \$800 dollars for our school. It was great getting a chance to visit with so many families.

PBIS News

As we begin the second semester we take some time to review the expectations for all of our "Hot Spots". This reminds students of the expectations for each of these areas. Encourage children to keep working for Trojan Treasures. We have several students who have turned in a lot!

From the Nurse

Mrs. Sally Letterly, our school nurse, would like to remind parents of a few items. First, please make sure that your child eats breakfast in the morning. Students come down to her office in the morning complaining of stomachaches because they are hungry. Children need breakfast to be able to concentrate. Some classes don't eat until 12:30, so it is a long morning if they are hungry.

If your child has a fever please keep them home from school. Students should not return to school until they have been fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medicine. If you child is exhibiting a fever of over 100 degrees you will be contacted to pick your child up from school.

Drop-off/Pick-up Reminder

This is a good time to remind everyone about arrival and dismissal procedures. If you chose to drop off and pick up your children we want you to remember the safety rules we have in place. Mr. Peasley will be outside in the mornings and afternoon to assist in arrival and dismissal.

Before and after school if you would like to exit your car and walk your student to or from school please make sure you park in the lot and walk through the crosswalk. If you want to stay in your car and have the students meet you in car line please stay in the right lane and have your child enter or exit your car when you get near the crosswalk. Please do not pull in front of the crosswalk. The daycare bus parks past the crosswalk and if other cars pull through it blocks the rest of parents from being able to exit our lot.

Thank you for following these safety procedures. These rules are in place for the safety of children and parents alike. If you would like to discuss these procedures please contact the office.

Important Dates

January 11 Report Cards out
January 14 Community Club Meeting (6:30)
January 14 School Board Meeting (7:00)

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