

MAROA FORSYTH

Home of the Trojans



Building a Better World One Student at a Time



DISTRICT NEWSLETTER- January 2014

Welcome Back!

It's hard to believe we are already halfway through the 2013-2014 school year! I hope everyone found sometime to relax and spend time with their family and friends over winter break.

Budget Situation

As you may be aware, the District is currently facing a \$920,000 deficit in the Education Fund. This is the result of a decrease in General State Aid of over \$800,000 since 2008 as well as a reduction in Mandated Categorical Reimbursement of over \$300,000 during the same time period. That is a total decrease in revenue from the State of Illinois of over 1.1 million dollars in the past 5 years. During this time period, in an attempt to address this situation the Board has implemented budget reductions and adjustments in excess of 1.5 million dollars, many of which may have gone unnoticed. In addition, to the budget reductions, the Board has chosen to use the majority of its reserves to maintain the programs Maroa Forsyth has been accustomed to. However, after several years of using the reserves, they have been depleted. Thus, we are faced with the situation before us.

When beginning to look at the situation the Board of Education explored a number of options. As with any budget situation, the options available to address a deficit are somewhat limited: *You can reduce your expenditures or increase your revenue.* The Board of Education looked at varying combinations of increasing revenue and reducing expenditures before deciding to move forward with its current plan of action.

The current plan of action involves increasing revenue by \$225,000. This includes an increase and implementation of additional fees that are passed on to the students. It also includes an expansion of the Tort Liability levy that is part of the overall tax revenue received by the District.

The second aspect of the current plan is to increase revenue via short term borrowing. The District will issue working cash bonds in the amount of \$245,000 later this month. This District is limited on the amount of short term borrowing it may secure via state law. This amount was also chosen due to the fact there is minimal effect on the overall tax rate for the District.

The third aspect of our plan to address the deficit involves

the reduction in \$450,000 in expenses. The Board of Education and Administration realize that budget reductions are never easy. While the amount of budget reductions that need to be made has been identified, the actual items that are to be reduced have not. The Board of Education has reviewed a number of options. They received initial feedback at the December Board meeting and are looking for additional feedback prior to implementing the reductions.

The Board will be hosting a work session to review the possible budget reductions and receive additional input from the community on January 8, 2014. This meeting will take place at 7:00 at the grade school. All are encouraged to attend.

For more information on the past budget adjustments the District has made, please review the information on the following link:

<http://www.mfschools.org/unit/Unit/StateofDistrict2013.pdf>

For more information on the budget reductions being considered, please review the information on the following link:

<http://www.mfschools.org/unit/Unit/FY15budgetdiscussion.pdf>

TROJANS



Maroa Forsyth High School



Principal's Message

You will be shocked to know that our students are really looking forward to the winter break! They have been working diligently to meet the academic standards established by their teachers and have informed me that they have "earned a vacation"....I hope they are right!

The fall semester has flown by and I couldn't be happier with our students' overall behavior and attitudes. We are fortunate to have four great classes of students in the high school all at one time. It certainly makes our job easier when they come to school with good attitudes and ready to learn.

School Improvement

Focused Learning: Focused learning continues to go extremely well. Considering we are in our first session, I have been extremely pleased with the professionalism and planning of our faculty. As you recall, we added an element of choice this year which has really improved the students' perception and participation. In addition, students have produced some excellent products in the form of podcasts, blogs, web pages, etc.

Mr. Doty's focused learning group, *Sports Writing*, has produced some very good articles on a blogging site called Word Press. You can view those articles at <http://sportswritingfl.wordpress.com/>

Athletics & Activities

We are blessed with many talented students and a handful have been recognized as all-state performers.

All-State Musicians:
Chapman Schanefelt & Emilee Oliver were selected to the Honors Choir (top ensemble at State).

All-State Football: Justin Mikeworth & Jack Hockaday

Academic All-State Football: Justin Mikeworth & Arber Emroski

Winter season is already in full swing and our girls' basketball team is off to a fast start led by seniors Kennedy Flesner and Alex Berry along with junior Brenna Finck. The girls' will play in the Riverton Holiday shootout.

The boys' basketball team is still finding their basketball legs and will be participating in the Vandalia Holiday tournament.

We also sent a strong group of wrestlers to AO in hopes of duplicating last year's success.

Congrats to Coach Zelhart and the Trojan Scholastic Bowlers as they repeated as Okaw champs! We really have a strong group again this year.

Other

Our Human Rights League (HRL) will be hosting celebrating Human Rights Week January 20th-24th. The topic for this year is racial equality, and the daily themes are: Mon (MLK day), Tues ("Eracism"), Wed. "Diversity," Thurs "Dignity," and Fri. "One Tribe." There will be various awareness and educational activities throughout the week with a media presentation via school assembly during activity period on that Friday. The Hoops for Haiti game will be that Friday night.

Special People @ MFHS

Student of the Month:-Logan Broadhead
Male Athlete of the Month:Justin Mikeworth
Female Athlete of the Month:Brenna Finck
Volunteer of the Month:Jody Luttrell

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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 \$3700. The 8th grade won the competition by bringing in over \$1800. All funds raised are donated to the Maroa Christmas Project who provides meals and gifts for local residents in need during the holidays. This year MFMS has raised over \$5100 for 3 different causes.

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 and the Unit Spelling Bee over the next month. 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. The Social Studies department held their Geography Bee in December and the winners were Katerina Gorou (3rd), Austin Tilton (2nd), and Yasir Hasnain (1st).

I wanted to remind everyone that second semester parent/teacher conferences will be on February 12th and 13th. ISAT testing will start on March 3rd 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 30 discipline referrals. I am very pleased to report we met our goal and only had 25 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 25 or less referrals.

During the students first week back, the students will receive a few refreshers on some issues that need to be improved upon during second semester. Hopefully these refreshers will help the students have a great second semester.

To find out more information about PBIS please visit our website at: <https://sites.google.com/site/pbis/mfms/>

Athletic News

Both the 7th and 8th grade boys' basketball teams are having very successful seasons. MFMS will be hosting the 8th grade Okaw Conference Tournament starting on January 11th. Both teams will begin regional play later this month. The 7th graders will play their regional at Lincoln during the week of January 27th. The 8th grade will play their regional at

Monticello the week of February 3rd. MFMS will host the class 4A 8th Grade State Basketball Tournament on February 15th and 20th at the high school.

The volleyball teams will open their seasons next week with three games. We will be hosting the 7th and 8th grade GAB Volleyball Classic on January 25th. This tournament will be played in the high school and starts at 8:30 am. We will also be hosting the 7th grade regional the week of March 3rd and the 8th grade sectional on March 17th.

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

January

- 7th: Basketball/Spirit 8th Grade night
- 11th-16th: 8th Grade Okaw Tournament
- 16th: Scholastic Bowl Meeting
- 20th: No School
- 25th: 7th and 8th Grade Volleyball Classic @ HS
- 22nd-SchoBo practice begins

February

- 7th:- Mid-Term
- 15th: Math Counts competition
- 12th: 2:03 Dismissal/Parent Teacher Conferences 4:30-8:00
- 13th: 2:03 Dismissal/Parent Teacher Conferences 4:30-8:00
- 14th: 2:03 Dismissal
- 17th-No School
- 27th-Volleyball 8th Grade Night

TROJANS



Maroa Forsyth Grade School



Principal's Message

We are just about to start the second semester and we are excited to get back to school. The students will really begin a busy time of year. We are beginning to prepare for the remainder of this year and for next year as well.

The students in grades 3-5 will be preparing for the 2014 ISAT. These assessments are given throughout Illinois. Students in 3-5 will take reading and math. Students in 4th grade will also take science. The tests had two major changes last year. The first change was in the score required to get meet or exceed was drastically raised. The second change last year was 30% of the tests were based on the Common Core State Standards. This year 100% of the test will be based on the Common Core State Standards. The test will be more difficult again this year. Scores will be distributed to parents at conferences in October of 2014.

This is a good time to remind everyone of the inclement weather procedures for the Maroa-Forsyth School District. If conditions exist that make it unsafe to hold school, parents will receive a SchoolReach notification. The local media are also notified. Also, the MFGS's Facebook page will announce school closures or early dismissals as soon as decisions have been made.

Have a great start to the second semester!

Kindergarten Screening

Kindergarten screening is coming upon us quickly. The dates for kindergarten screening are February 4 & 5. Teachers will conduct these screenings, and the results will be shared with you immediately. If you have questions about your child's readiness to attend kindergarten please ask the teachers. Please call the school office to schedule an appointment if you have a child who will be 5 years of age by September 1, 2014.

Winter Conferences

Winter conferences are scheduled for February 12 & 13. Conferences will be scheduled from 4:30-7:30 both nights. School will dismiss February 12th, 13th, and 14th at 2:13. Teachers will be sending information about these conferences home with students. During the week of parent-teacher conferences the Community Club Book Fair will be open. Information regarding the Book Fair will be coming out.

Community Club

The Community Meeting for January has been cancelled. The meeting was cancelled to allow Community Club members to attend the January Board of Education meeting. The Community Club will have the regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, February 3rd.

Bus Stop Safety

Student safety is the highest priority of our school district. 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 children safely.

If you want to walk your children into the building, please park your car in the lot and assist them through the crosswalk and into the building. Unassisted students often run across the two lanes of traffic without watching for oncoming vehicles. If you have questions about the drop off or pick up procedures please come into the office.

Important Dates

- January 7-School Resumes
- January 8-Community Budget Forum
- January 20-MLK Day (No School)
- February 4-5-Kindergarten Screenings
- February 12-13-Conferences
- February 12-14-2:13 Dismissal