

THE MAINE APPRISE

A Publication of the Maine Principals' Association

Volume XXV, Number 8

April 2017



From the President ...

**Dan Welch, Principal, Boothbay Region High School
and
President of the MPA**

If you have been keeping up with current events, you know that the first rendition of the federal budget has been made public. You may also be aware that in this budget there are no funds to support Title II of ESSA. Funding for this area is critical to recruit, sustain, and train quality educators. It is common knowledge that the role of the school leader has dramatically changed over the years, so too has the number of teachers aspiring to move into administration. I hear all over the state that many schools are frustrated that there are not larger pools of applicants for leadership positions. I have had conversations with many teachers who demonstrate leadership potential to encourage them to look into coursework to become an administrator. More times than not, they chuckle and inform me that they in no way want to do my job. A lack of funding to help support our school leaders will no doubt continue the stagnation of the perpetuation of our profession. As we all know, school leaders have a significant impact on their schools' success.

According to Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) "Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school," they further contend, "to date we have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership." We all know how hard being an educational leader is, but also know how important they are for the success of our students. States and school districts need support to ensure they have qualified professionals in leadership positions. As the Maine Principals' Association's vision states, "Maine students deserve great schools. Great schools deserve great leaders."

Our national associations for elementary and secondary school leaders oppose the cutting of these funds and have extensive information on their websites. Through the NASSP Advocacy site you can send a message to your district's congressional leaders. Please consider taking a moment to have your voice heard on this important issue.

Planning to Retire?

If you are or know about a principal, assistant principal, or career and technology center director who is planning to retire this year, please notify Patty at the MPA by April 7 (pnewman@mpa.cc). The association will honor its retiring members at the annual MPA Awards Banquet that will be held on April 27, as part of the Spring Conference at the Samoset.

MPA SPRING CONFERENCE

THE IFFACTOR:
Why Everything You Know
About Success in Education
Could Be Wrong

April 27-28
Samoset, Rockport

Keynote Presentations:

Thursday, April 27 and Friday, April 28—**Dan Waldschmidt.**

Thursday Sessions Include:

- * **Continue the Conversation with Dan Waldschmidt (K-12 Levels)**
- * **What is Professionalism (K-12 Levels)**
- * **Seven Deadly Sins of Administrators (K-12 Levels)**
- * **How to Create A Successful Leadership Team - and Why it is Critical to Moving Forward As a Staff (K-12 Levels)**
- * **How Committed is Your School to Equity? A Whole-School Collaborative Assessment and Readiness Tool**

Friday Sessions Include:

- * **The Role of the Principal in Building A Strong School Culture (K-12 Levels)**
- * **Efficient and Effective Staff Meetings: How to Make the Most of What Professional Development Time You Do Have (K-12 Level)**
- * **Technology 101: The Basics of Using Social Media Effectively**

Click [HERE](#) To Register.

Interested in Becoming a Mentor for a New Principal or A.P.?

The MPA is proud to offer mentor/coaching for new principals and assistant principals in our state. The program, now in its 11th year, has one principal working with mentor/coaches in the year two cohort and ten new administrators working with mentor/coaches in the year one cohort.

The MPA will offer Mentor/Coach Orientation and Training on May 12. Give consideration to joining the cadre of trained mentor/coaches who are giving back to the profession by working closely with our newest colleagues. Click [HERE](#) for Mentor/Coach Brochure/Application and Click [HERE](#) for Protégé Brochure/Application.

NFHS State Advisor Position Available

If interested, please contact Holly Couturier at hcouturier@mpa.cc



July 9-11, 2017
Philadelphia, PA

Join us for this first-ever joint conference for pre-K through grade 12 school leaders.

Don't miss this groundbreaking event!

This conference will give you an unprecedented opportunity to engage in authentic conversations with a large pool of your peers—giving you fresh solutions and connections that will last long after the conference. Unlike any conference before it, the National Principals Conference will inspire school leaders like you to understand and value your peers' expertise and worth. Also, it will give you an opportunity to build transition bridges and fully prepare students for success in school and beyond to college and careers.



START PLANNING
YOUR FUTURE

EARN YOUR MSSED ONLINE

Online specializations include:

- Adult Education & Training
- Catholic School Leadership
- Health Care Educator
- School Educator (K-12)
- School Leadership

sjcme.edu/Apprise • 800-752-4723

1912 SAINT JOSEPH'S COLLEGE
Educating for life.

Professional Offerings

**"Improving Climate and Culture in Maine Schools:
How to Retain Your Best Educators"**

"Webinar Series"

ALL sessions run from
3:15-4:15 p.m.

NOW ON DEMAND!

Professional Development;
Managing Student Council;
Instructional Practices

Click [HERE](#) to Register.

MPA 2017 Spring Conference

**"THE IF FACTOR:
Why Everything You Know
About Success in Education
Could Be Wrong"**

with Keynote Speaker
Dan Waldschmidt

April 27-28, 2017
Samoset Resort

Click [HERE](#) to Register.

Assistant Executive Director Opening

Position Summary: 1.) To play an integral part in the promotion and management of the co-curricular activity programs in Maine's member high schools; 2.) To provide positive educational experiences through participation in co-curricular activities which will contribute to the development of well-rounded citizens; and 3.) To participate in the Professional Division mission to support educational leaders.

Click [HERE](#) for more information and an application.

Education Leaders Experience (ELE)

The Education Leaders Experience (ELE) program is administered by Educate Maine in partnership with Unum and the Maine Principals' Association. The ELE program: 1) Offers established educational leaders a unique experiential learning opportunity; 2) Is designed to build strong relationships between educational leaders and partners; 3) Creates a collaborative support network of leaders statewide; and 4) Provides exclusive access to key community and business leaders who provide insight on how we can prepare Maine students to participate productively in the Maine economy. Participants will join 25 colleagues from across Maine selected for their leadership skills, talents, and life experiences. All share a core commitment to helping Maine kids reach their full potential. The *ELE Zeta Class* will be eligible for contact hours (not CEUs) as well as graduate level credits.

To Apply for the *ELE Zeta Class*, please click [HERE](#) to complete the application.

Delta Class Calendar:

- Opening Retreat: Sugarloaf (Early August)
- Session 1: Aroostook County (October 12-13)
- Session 2: The Jackson Laboratory and UMO (November 9)
- Session 3: TBD (January 12)
- Session 4: Maine State House – Mock Legislative Day, Augusta (February 9)
- Session 5: Unum and Maine Medical, Portland (April 13)
- Project Presentations: Thomas College, Waterville (May 4)
- Closing Retreat: Moosehead Lake, Rockwood (June 25-26)

WANTED

Fall Conference Proposals

November 16-17, 2017 ~ Double Tree, South Portland

Consider such timely topics as:

Poverty ~ Effective Communication ~ Data-driven Decision-making ~ Professional Learning Communities ~ Leading and Sustaining Change ~ Implementing the Common Core ~ Trauma ~ Proficiency-based Reports ~ Proficiency-based Education ~ Supervision/Evaluation of Staff ~ Technology: Implications and Practices ~ Wellness for Administrators ~ School Culture and Climate ~ Hot and Timely Topics Related to the Conference Theme

Consider collaborating with district and regional colleagues, teachers, and/or students to design and present a session.

Click [HERE](#) to download the Concurrent Session Request for Proposal (RFP). Due: June 2, 2017

The Maine Apprise is published 10 times a year, September to June, by the Maine Principals' Association.

The Apprise welcomes articles from its members and other representatives of the education community. Please submit them to the editor by the first day of the month preceding publication.

The material published in this newsletter does not necessarily reflect the opinion or views of the Maine Principals' Association.

For advertising or subscription rates, please write or call the address below.

Maine Principals' Association
50 Industrial Drive, Augusta, Maine 04330
Telephone: (207) 622-0217
Website: <http://www.mpa.cc>
Daniel Welch, Boothbay Region High School,
President
Maggie Allen, Windsor Elementary School,
President-elect
Richard Durost, Executive Director
Michael Burnham, Assistant Director
Holly Couturier Editor/Assistant Director
Gerald Durgin, Assistant Director

PR Tips for PRincipals

A principal's **style of leadership and communication** is the key to effective school communication. Public relations maxims can help you explain the rules of the game to your staff. Here are a few to keep in mind:

- * People techniques (relationships) beat paper just about every time.
- * Perception is reality. (The objective is to make them the same.)
- * First graders like surprises, principals and superintendents don't.
- * An invitation to everyone is an invitation to no one.
- * The best way to eat crow is fast.
- * You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can never fool the kids.
- * If behavior gets us into trouble, words are not going to get us out of it.

—**National School Public
Relations Association,
PRincipal Communicator,
March 2017.**

Follow us on Twitter!

Dick Durost—@DurostMPA

Holly Couturier—@HDCouturier

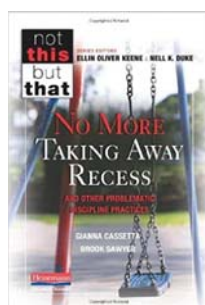
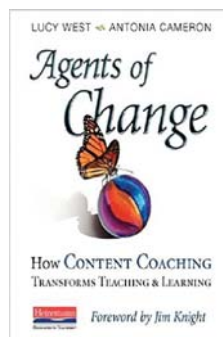
"LIKE US" ON FACEBOOK!

Click on the link below to go to our
Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Maine-Principals-Association-Professional-Division/1703592959867688>

Professional Reading Suggestions

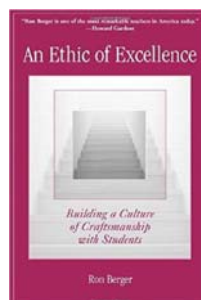
Agents of Change: How Content Coaching Transforms Teaching and Learning. By: L. West and A. Cameron. “How can teacher leaders cultivate an adult learning environment that will upgrade teaching capacity system-wide, and ultimately improve student learning in every classroom? Lucy West and Toni Cameron turn decades of experience designing and implementing coaching initiatives into a practical resource for transforming school culture and inspiring true learning at every level. *Agents of Change* provides coaches, administrators, and teacher leaders with specific techniques, tools, and strategies for working with individual classroom teachers to plan and co-teach lessons, reflect on them afterwards, and find evidence of student learning. Lucy and Toni argue that when we infuse rich learning conversations into the professional discourse via coaching, study lessons, and regular meeting times for professionals to work collaboratively, we’re able to examine what it takes on a day to day basis to reach every student in our classrooms. The transformative potential of content coaching to improve both teacher and student learning on a school-wide level has never been more clear.”



No More Taking Away Recess and Other Problematic Discipline Practices. By: G. Cassetta and B. Sawyer. “Frustrated by ongoing difficult student behavior? You’re not alone: classroom management issues are a leading cause of teacher burnout. But there is a solution. *No More Taking Away Recess and Other Problematic Discipline Practices* shows how to promote good behavior, address interruptions, and keep everyone moving forward. “Management and control are not the same,” write teacher and school leader Gianna Cassetta and noted researcher Brook Sawyer. If trying harder to exert control is sapping your energy, watch as they show how to transition away from the roles of disciplinarian or goody dispenser

and toward an integrated, professionally satisfying model for classroom management. You’ll find everything you need to get going, including: 1) the rationale for abandoning rewards and consequence tactics; 2) research on more developmentally appropriate and efficient management; 3) a plan that integrates instruction and management to decrease interruptions; 4) specific strategies for addressing misbehavior and refocusing on learning goals; and 5) ways to analyze problematic behaviors and help students connect and stay motivated. Ease your frustration with classroom management and return dozens of hours lost each year to addressing problematic behaviors. Take a page from *No More Taking Away Recess and Other Problematic Discipline Practices* and turn your classroom into a community that helps students become their best selves and helps you rediscover the joy of teaching.”

An Ethic of Excellence: Building a Culture of Craftsmanship with Students. By: R. Berger. “Drawing from his own remarkable experience as a veteran classroom teacher (still in the classroom), Ron Berger gives us a vision of educational reform that transcends standards, curriculum, and instructional strategies. He argues for a paradigm shift - a schoolwide embrace of an “ethic of excellence.” A master carpenter as well as a gifted teacher, Berger is guided by a craftsman’s passion for quality, describing what’s possible when teachers, students, and parents commit to nothing less than the best. But Berger’s not just idealistic, he’s realistic - he tells exactly how this can be done, from the blackboard to the blacktop to the school boardroom.”



Observances

- * **April 1-30**
 - National Autism Awareness Month
 - Elebrate Diversity Month
- * **April 2**
 - International Children's Book Day
Inspiring the love of reading
- * **April 3-7**
 - National Blue Ribbon Week
Preventing child abuse
- * **April 5**
 - Paraprofessionals Day
- * **April 7**
 - World Health Day
- * **April 10-14**
 - National Library Week
- * **April 11**
 - Passover
- * **April 14**
 - Good Friday
- * **April 15**
 - Jackie Robinson Day
- * **April 16**
 - Easter
- * **April 17-21**
 - Safe Kids Week
- * **April 22**
 - Earth Day
- * **April 26**
 - Administrative Professionals/ Secretaries Day
- * **April 27**
 - Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day
- * **April 28**
 - National Arbor Day

Text, Tweet, or Take Time Off: Increasingly, principals decide between social media and family

By Jody Capelluti and Anita Stewart McCafferty

February 1, 2017

Grace, a high school principal, had some difficult choices to make when she arrived home at 6:00 p.m. one recent Tuesday after spending 11 hours at work. She could spend time playing with her children before they went to bed, or spend time with her husband before calling it a night. Or, she could start responding to the 52 emails and texts she didn't get a chance to address while at school.

Grace knew she had 24 hours to respond to parent and community inquiries, but she always felt the pressure to respond sooner. Although she had a positive reputation in the community, she wanted to be viewed as a responsive and technologically savvy principal. She also felt pressure knowing a couple other principals in the district were tech superstars.

But Grace knew being a parent was important as well. The time she did not spend with her children could not be put aside and retrieved at a later date. They needed a mom in real time, not a Skype mom. It was a personal and professional dilemma.

Grace knew what she should do—spend time with her children. She also understood that those who were waiting for her response did not care if she spent time with her children. She also realized that if there was a critical email or text that she did not respond to that night, the superintendent would not be happy. She only cared that Grace responded ASAP. That was the cold reality of the "new access."

While everyone agrees that technology has impacted the principal's work in many ways, most of the discussion has centered on the benefits. Faster and better ways to communicate information to parents and almost instant access to school staff and administrators are all seen as positive by the public and school boards.

But there is a dark side to this new technology and improved communication that few are discussing. That unspoken question is: When does a principal's day end?

Moving to the Shadows

How many hours out of 24 should one be available to respond to work-related issues, either in person or through the use of technology? Is a 24-hour response time calculated in 24 clock hours or is it 24 "typical" daytime work hours? There is a big difference. When is the principal not on the clock, and who decides that?

According to the results of a survey we conducted, principals told us that their work-life balance has been considerably compromised as a result of their increased use of technology and social media to communicate with various stakeholders. Overwhelmingly, though, principals acknowledged the varied benefits such as increased connectedness to school, increased parent engagement, and increased stakeholder satisfaction.

Downside to Technology

However, these benefits come with considerable costs to the principal. When one says "yes" to one thing, one says "no" to something else. That something else might be time with your family and friends, your health, or professional development. It also might be less visibility in classrooms and fewer formative classroom observations.

One of the unwritten promises of using technology is that it will make our work lives easier, more efficient, and more effective. However, less than 5 percent of respondents indicated that the use of technology and social media had even slightly decreased their workload, while nearly half of respondents indicated that technology had either increased or significantly increased their workload. In fact, two-thirds of respondents indicated that they are available to their stakeholders seven days a week, with only a quarter of respondents reporting that they limited their access to five days per week.

When asked how many hours they as principals used technology to communicate with their stakeholders from 5:00 p.m. on Friday evenings to 7:00 a.m. on Monday mornings, the responses ranged from less than one hour to 24/7, with the average respondent admitting to six to eight hours. The vast majority of respondents spoke at length of losing their struggle to limit the negative impacts of 24/7/365 accessibility.

Principals shared how technology has consumed their lives, often wreaking havoc on their home lives—leaving little room for family or personal time. They noted that even at family gatherings, on vacation, or on dates, they find themselves checking their work emails and social media feeds. These school leaders spoke candidly of how the lines of work and home life had blurred—for many even disappeared—making it "difficult to walk away from it and just enjoy life."

When Is the Job Done?

To reduce the problem to simple terms, the question becomes how much time does a principal need to spend working at the job to be successful? Principals sincerely want to project the attitude that they will do whatever it takes to get things done. Complicating this quandary is the fact there are usually expectations from the superintendent, school board, teachers, and students that you need to "work until the job is done," but rarely do you find the definition of "until the job is done."

When is the job done? The real answer is "never." However, some new (and some veteran) administrators do not know that yet. We found the positive benefits that have resulted from increased communication with all the stakeholder groups have placed a new and serious strain on principals' ability to "leave work" when they are not physically at work. The definition of

(Continued on Page 6)



THE MINDFULNESS CHALLENGE

Each day of this challenge introduces a new exercise that will help you live mindfully. As you add new ways to be more mindful each day, continue to perform the previous days' activities as well. By the end of the week, you'll have seven opportunities to be mindful throughout your day.

						
DAY 1 Before you get out of bed, take one minute to lie in stillness. Notice your breath and simply feel what it's like to be alive.	DAY 2 On your commute to work or school, tune into your surroundings. What do you notice that you don't usually pay attention to? See, smell and hear everything around you.	DAY 3 Carry a bottle of water with you, and every time you take a sip, tune into your body. Notice any sensations in your body and the texture of your breath.	DAY 4 Before you eat lunch, take a moment think about what's on your plate. Then with each bite, savor the flavors and textures. If possible, turn off all distractions around you, like your phone or TV.	DAY 5 Find a quiet spot where you can sit comfortably. Either with eyes open or closed, start counting your breath. Each inhale-exhale combination counts as one. Count all the way to 10, and if possible, repeat. Pull your mind back to your breath every time it wanders.	DAY 6 Bring mindfulness to a daily chore, like washing the dishes. Instead of letting your mind wander as you clean, pay attention to your breath and the water running over your hands. As silly as this might sound, focus solely on doing the dishes.	DAY 7 As you lie in bed, notice the sensations in your body. Take a few minutes to be grateful for your day, thinking specifically of one thing you're thankful for.



<https://www.mindful.sodero.com/challenge/live-mindfully>

National Math Coaching Conference

The NATIONAL MATH COACHING CONFERENCE
Making the "Cultural Shift" to Math Coaching in Maine

Thursday, June 1, 2017
from 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

at the University of Maine at Farmington

Key Note Speaker – Antonia Cameron
Co-author of
Agents of Change: How Content Coaching Transforms Teaching and Learning

Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Text, Tweet, or Take Time Off ... (Continued from page 5)

what it means to be at work has been redefined. It seems as if the principal is always at work. And the one constant driving this tension is that all the constituencies listed above want the principal to be there when they need them. But this expectation for the role of the principal is not sustainable.

So, how does the principal glean the benefits of increased use of social media as an effective communicative tool while ensuring that the role of building principal is sustainable? The answer, as principals told us, is to define the boundaries between home and work. Unless this is defined and made public, the delineation of the principal's role—the current model of the building leader as we have known it—is in danger of becoming extinct.

So, what can specifically be done? Principals did make some recommendations. See their suggestions.

Beyond these recommendations from principals, we also advocate that school boards and superintendents assist principals in limiting 24/7 access of stakeholders by clearly establishing and supporting guidelines and expectations for a healthy work-life balance. Without these defined boundaries, principals will find themselves choosing between family and work or possibly considering another career. And that is not a choice wise superintendents would want successful principals to make.

Jody Capelluti is a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Southern Maine in Portland, ME. He was the principal of a National School of Excellence and currently works as a coach to principals in schools attempting significant change initiatives.

Anita Stewart McCafferty is an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Southern Maine and co-director of Southern Maine Partnership. She was a middle school principal and presently works with aspiring and current administrators.

Balancing Family and Social Media Responsibilities Principals recommend:

- Self-impose limits on use of technology and social media.
- Choose one or two social media outlets to use consistently and purposefully in communicating with external stakeholders.
- Allocate human resources to assist with effectively using, monitoring, and managing social media messaging.
- Celebrate the benefits of social media by sharing resources, ideas, and strategies with staff gleaned from one's professional learning network.
- Remember the importance of face-to-face communication.

<https://nassp.org/news-and-resources/publications/principal-leadership/principal-leadership-archives/principal-leadership-volume-17-2016-17/principal-leadership-february-2017>

Featured Regions!

Each month, the *Apprise* is going to feature at least three schools from each of the eight regions in Maine. There are many great things going on in our schools that people don't know about, and it's time THEY ARE spotlighted! The April *Apprise* features the Aroostook Region. Next month we will feature the Mid-Coast Region. If you would like to have your school spotlighted, please send Holly Couturier an e-mail stating your interest and at least one great thing about your school. She will contact you and make arrangements for an hour long visit. During her visit, she will not only speak to you and take a picture of you and the school, she would also like to talk to students in your school and get their perspective of "What makes their school and principal great?" Enjoy!



CARIBOU MIDDLE SCHOOL

Caribou Middle School is a grades 6-8 school in Caribou, Maine, which houses 250 students who are taught by 22 teachers and five educational technicians. They have a 48% free and reduced lunch rate and a 15% special education population.

Walking through the halls of Caribou Middle School, you can feel the rich history of the 1926 building. Despite its age, the building

is in exceptional condition. The motto on the school sign "Where the past and present mold the future" rings true. From the old gym in the basement, or the "pit," as they affectionately call it, is still in great condition. Over time, the population of Caribou has declined and so the staff of CMS has adjusted with the change. Instead of teams of teachers staying at one grade level, all of the teachers teach their particular content to all three grades. "This has allowed us to have flexible schedules and really meet the individual needs of the students," says Principal Lee Caron.



This is appreciated by the students. I had the pleasure of speaking with 8th grade students: Madison, Morgan, Riley, and Cory. When asked what makes their school amazing, the students spoke to the change in schedule, "In ELA and Math we can switch between teachers. They each teach the same thing, but explain it differently so we can learn more. We have really good teachers, they help us all. We also have a double block for ELA and math. This gives us more time to work on the learning targets." They then went on to fully describe how they use rubrics in these classes to see where they are with their learning, and what they need to do to improve.



They also described their daily "Seminar" class. At the beginning of the year, the teachers wrote up descriptions of what they were going to teach for 30-minutes each day for a period of three weeks. The students had the opportunity to have their voice heard and chose which of the seminars they would attend for the school year. "We get to experience stuff that we wouldn't

get to in a normal class. For example, I'm in a Gaming Seminar right now and I'm learning about math, reading, and writing," explained one of the students.

In addition to a strong academic program CMS also offers a wide array of interscholastic, industrial arts, and musical opportunities for students. According to Mr. Caron, "Caribou Middle has a show choir that competes at the state level – it's very strong."

If you want to walk into the past but experience a very creative, progressive educational setting, I highly suggest you visit Caribou Middle School.

Contact:

Caribou Middle School, 21 Glenn Street, Caribou, ME 04736 • 207-493-4240

Principal: Lee Caron ~ E-mail: Leland_caron@rsu39.org



Hodgdon Middle/High School

Hodgdon Middle / High School is a grades 7-12 school in Hodgdon, Maine. They have 209 students who are taught by 15 teachers and eight educational technicians. They have a 60% free and reduced lunch rate and a 14% special education population.

This is the first year that the middle school has been a part of what was once Hodgdon High School. Located across the street from the elementary school, many students and staff were shared among the two buildings in order for students to access high quality instruction. The travel between the two buildings caused a loss of instructional time for the teachers and a loss of learning time for the students. “The move made sense,” said Principal Mary Harbison, “Now we can move students within the school to better meet their needs.” The students who have met their grade’s standards have the opportunity to join the class above them for ELA and/or math.

For example, 8th grade students who have mastered the 8th grade standards have the chance to join a freshmen ELA or math class. This is significantly easier now they are in the same building.



According to Ms. Harbison, a significant reason for the students’ success is due to the Focused Learning Group that takes place for 35-minutes every day between the first and second blocks. There is a Google Doc that is shared with the entire staff and student body of Hodgdon Middle/High School. This document has the name of all of the students and the days of the week. Teachers have the ability to write in their name beside the day of the week that they would like to have specific students see them for additional support or get them caught up with information if they were out a day. If students do not have to report to a staff person, they are part of a study hall.



Because the staff work closely together, if there is a need for a student to see more than one staff person on a given day, the staff work out a plan that will best meet the needs of the student. “This process is free of charge and helps us when having conversations with students and with parents. It is also great documentation for tracking students who need additional support,” says Ms. Harbison.

If you want to see a school that has been creative in meeting their Response to Intervention (RtI) needs, I highly suggest you contact Ms. Harbison at Hodgdon Middle/High School and set up a visit. You’ll be glad you did.



Contact Information:

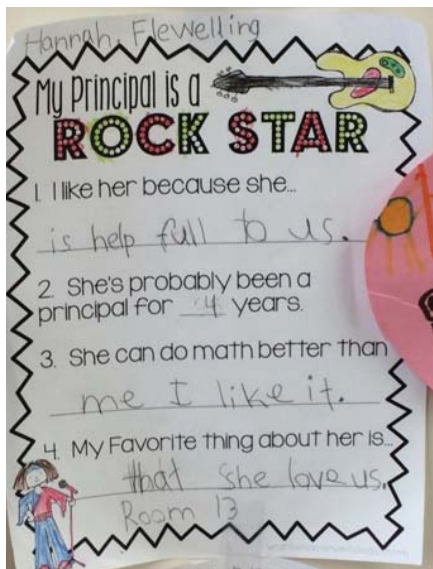
Hodgdon Middle / High School,
174 Hodgdon Mills Road, Hodgdon, ME 04730 • 207-532-2413
Principal: Mary Harbison ~ E-mail: maryharbison@msad70.org

Houlton Elementary School

Houlton Elementary School is a pre-kindergarten through grade two school located in Houlton, Maine. 422 students are taught by 28 teachers and 23 educational technicians. They have a 86% free and reduced lunch rate (although they qualify to have 100% of the students receive free lunch daily), a 16% special education population, and a 12% Native American population. They are able to offer all-day kindergarten and there are five sessions of half day Pre-K that is conducted five days per week.



According to Principal Candy Crane and Literacy Interventionist, Sally Cole, Houlton Elementary School was a recipient of the Reading First Initiative approximately ten years ago. "We had amazing professional development through the Reading First Initiative. That and with the support from LeAnn Larsen at the Maine Department of Education, our reading scores have tremendously improved!"



At the beginning of the school year, Mrs. Cole developed a schedule that focused on literacy (90 minutes) and math blocks (60-90 minutes), as well as, dedicated times for specials. Because of this master schedule for all staff, Response to Intervention (RtI) time could be created. The students eligible for intervention are identified based on assessment data acquired multiple times throughout the year. The students identified for intervention receive 2-3 times the instruction geared toward their specific skill and concept needs.

"We are very proud of our RtI program. All of the staff use student data to drive their instruction. Student intervention plans are created at our data meetings. The groupings of students are flexible based on student progress and assessment results. Data meetings are conducted several times during the year for the purpose of monitoring student progress and identifying other students in need of intervention. These meetings result in the regrouping of students dependent on their changing needs. But the great work starts with the classroom teachers who provide Tier I intervention in the classrooms. Eligible students who require Tier II intervention receive those services

through a push in and pull out model. The goal of the staff is to insure that the kids have the skills they need before they move on.

The district also has a goal to improve writing and attendance in all of the schools. According to Ms. Crane, attendance is now at 94%. She noted that it can be really challenging to address attendance in the early elementary grades (Pre-K to 2) due to so many childhood illnesses. She noted that her building contained "very strong, dedicated leaders who work together in order to insure that we don't miss any kids."

If you are at an early elementary level and you want to see a Response to Intervention model that works for pre-k through grade two, Houlton Elementary is a school to visit!



Contact Information:

Houlton Elementary School, 60 South Street, Houlton, ME 04730 • 207-532-2285

Principal: Candy Crane ~ E-Mail: candy.crane@rsu29.org



Southern Aroostook Community School

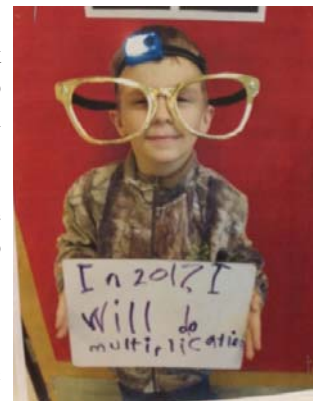
Southern Aroostook Community School is a pre-kindergarten through grade twelve school in Dyer Brook, Maine. 345 students are taught by 70 teachers and 30 educational technicians. They have an 80% free and reduced lunch rate and a 20% special education population.

Although there are some staff who continue to be shared between Katahdin High School and Southern Aroostook Community School, this is the first year that both schools each have their own building administrator. "This works out so much better," says Principal Jon Porter, "Both deserve to have a building leader in their respective building at all times."

The school was built in 1976, the school district opted to combine the elementary and secondary schools into one community school. This has not stopped the quality education that the students have access to. "We hire our secondary teachers as 7-12 teachers. This allows the teachers to work with students for multiple years. They know what each of the students need in order for them to be successful." The staff at Southern Aroostook do not allow the fact that they are a small rural school in northern Maine hinder the access or quality education that all deserve.

The school has partnered with the Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP) in order to provide pre-kindergarten to all of the students. The partnership divides the cost of the program in order to offer a quality pre-k curriculum that is affordable to the local community.

RSU 50 shares a librarian between Southern Aroostook and Katahdin. Southern Aroostook has a library tech who works with all of the pre-k through grade 12 students and provides them specific STEM opportunities in the form of centers throughout the library. These opportunities continue to promote the content that is being learned in the classroom and extends learning in exciting and different ways. "Our library tech is outstanding!" says Mr. Porter.



The students in high school are given the option of taking college-level classes both in person at the school or online. The students in the Bridges Program are graduating high school with 30-36 college credits.

"It's incredible to watch how the older students look out for the younger students in the school," boasted Mr. Porter, "We are like one large family. Everyone looks

out for everyone else. It's really nice to see. You don't see this in every school."

If you want to see a community school that looks at each of the individual needs for all of their students, Southern Aroostook Community School a place that needs to be visited!

Contact Information:

Southern Aroostook Community School, 922 Dyer Brook Road, Dyer Brook, ME 04747 • 207-757-8206

Principal: Jon Porter ~ Assistant Principal/ Athletic Director: Daniel Ross

E-mail: jporter203@rsu50.org

