

THE MAINE APPRISE

A Publication of the Maine Principals' Association

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From the President ...

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

Insights on Accreditation

My school recently hosted a visitation committee from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges - better known to most high school folks as "NEASC." Over the years I have had numerous conversations with other school leaders about all the aspects of accreditation including the standards, process, costs, and overall value.

Most of us look or looked at the self-study phase with trepidation. It took a lot of time, work, and organization. We participated in a pilot program to do all of our self-study digitally through their portal. I definitely give this a positive plug. It made providing evidence much easier and allowed us to provide traditional assessments and non-traditional assessments alike. However, like most of you, we were also dealing with implementing a new evaluation system and trying to get our heads around transitioning to awarding diplomas based on proficiency. We had long conversations about whether we should continue being accredited. Eventually we came to the decision to continue. Overall I am glad we did.

Having never been through the process before it is more than fair to say that there was significant stress regarding the upcoming visit. Were these people going to recognize all the good work going on? Were they going to agree with the findings of our self-study? What would it be like to have 12 strangers in our building for three and a half days?

In the end our stress was alleviated. We were happy to have 12 experienced educators come to our school being led by an effective and experienced chair and assistant chair. This committee delved into most aspects of our school ranging from looking at our heating and ventilation systems to reviewing curricular documents. They spent lots of time in classrooms and talking with parents, students, teachers, and school board members. At the end of the visit, the committee commended the school on some things they felt we are doing well while it was highlighting some areas we need to keep improving ~ not intimidating at all.

In the end, the self-study was difficult, time consuming, and a lot of work. The visit was expensive. Overall though, we had a group of totally unbiased educational professionals look at our school and give us meaningful feedback to frame our work going forward. I certainly can't argue with that kind of philosophy.

Note to Non-Members

Non-members are receiving *The Maine Apprise* in October, November, and December compliments of the Maine Principals' Association. Member benefits are described on our website at <http://www.mpa.cc/professional-division/membership-and-dues.html>. If you would like to receive this newsletter and other member benefits, please contact Patty at the MPA office at 207-622-0217, ext. 30 or at mpa@mpa.cc to join your professional association!



We encourage you to patronize the following hotels and resorts which generously donated getaways for two that were drawn at the MPA Fall Conference:

- * DoubleTree by Hilton, Portland
- * Sugarloaf
- * Village By the Sea

Samoset Resort (Evaluation)—Tim Reynolds, Assistant Headmaster, Washington Academy, East Machias

Do You Know an Outstanding Elementary or Middle Level/High School Principal?

The Maine Principals' Association, in cooperation with the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals invites you to nominate an outstanding elementary or middle level/high school principal for consideration as *Maine's 2017 Principals of the Year*.

The successful candidates will represent Maine at the 2017 National Principals' Programs that will be held in the fall of 2017 in Washington, D.C.

The Maine Principals' Association will honor our state's 2017 Principals of the Year at an awards banquet during the 2017 MPA Spring Conference at the Samoset.

Elementary National Distinguished Principal of the Year ~ [Click Here](#).

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Recognition Counts

Take advantage of the numerous opportunities for you to nominate an exemplary member of our educational community in Maine. Commit a few moments to shine your light on excellence.

Larry LaBrie Award for Outstanding Contributions to the MPA Interscholastic Division

Do you know an outstanding contributor to the Interscholastic Division of the MPA as a building administrator, athletic administrator, or other person (i.e. site/meet director, coach, official, media, etc.)? Each year the MPA honors up to three recipients to be honored with the Larry LaBrie Award at the Spring Conference Awards Banquet.

[Click Here](#).

Dr. Phyllis Deringis Service to Maine Youth Award

Do you know an outstanding adult volunteer who is making a difference for students in your school, your district, or possibly beyond? Each year the MPA honors up to two awardees with the Dr. Phyllis Deringis Service to Maine Youth Award at the Spring Conference Awards Banquet. [Click Here](#).

2017 Secretary of the Year Award

We all have them – the incredible people who know every student and parent in the school ~ the people who help keep the districts in order and organized ~ those who greet our students and communities and set the positive tone in our schools and districts - our AMAZING secretaries/administrative assistants. You can recognize their hard work and dedication by nominating them for the 2017 Secretary of the Year! All nominees will be considered for this honorable recognition. The Secretaries will be publically announced at the Secretaries Conferences in April and then they will be honored at the MPA Spring Conference on April 27 at the Samoset Resort. [Click Here](#).

For more information please contact Tammy McNear at 622-0217, ext. 22 or tmcnear@mpa.cc. Deadline for nominations and completed applications (as required) is December 16, 2016.

Professional Offerings

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

'8-Part Webinar Series'

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

2016: December 1 and 13

2017: January 17, February 15, March 7, March 21, April 11,
and May 9

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.

PR Tips for PRincipals

Parents of elementary students typically find *school newsletters* to be important communication vehicles. Here are some tips for sprucing up the writing in your publication.

- ✓ **Write from people to people,** not institution to institution. Use personal pronouns where they apply. It's "our" school and "our" children.
- ✓ **Write in an conversational tone.** Try reading it out loud. If you can't do it without twisting your tongue or running out of breath, rewrite it.
- ✓ **Keep sentences short and uncomplicated.** Limit the use of words longer than three syllables.
- ✓ **Use active verbs.** Passive writing is dull. And, readers often interpret a sentence beginning "It is hoped that ..." as the principal trying to duck responsibility.
- ✓ **Write headlines, not titles.** Headlines should have verbs and show action.
- ✓ **Focus on kids.** What are they learning? Who is teaching them? And how?
—National School Public Relations Association,
PRincipal Communicator,
November 2016.

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.

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CALL THE MPA HELP LINE 207-622-0217

We are here to help you and answer questions!

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41 = Gerry Durgin	

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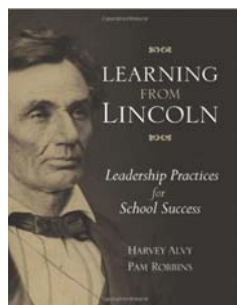
Professional Reading Suggestions

Qualities of Effective Principals (2008) by James H. Stronge, Holly B. Richard, and Nancy Catano. "What does it take to be a good school principal? No two principals work in exactly the same way, but research shows that effective principals do focus on a core set of factors that are critical to fostering success for all students. In *Qualities of Effective Principals*, James H. Stronge, Holly B. Richard, and Nancy Catano delineate these factors and show principals how to successfully balance the needs and priorities of their school and continuously develop and refine their leadership skills. Throughout the book, the authors provide readers with helpful tools and extensive research that will help them to:

- * Develop a blueprint for sustained school leadership;
- * Create an effective school climate for learning;
- * Select, support, and retain high-quality teachers and staff;
- * Assess instructional high quality;
- * Build a foundation for organizational management;
- * Create, maintain, and strengthen community relationships;
- * Make contributions to the professional educational community; and
- * Define their critical role in student achievement.

This book also includes practical skills checklists, quality indicators and red flags for effective leadership, and an extensive annotated bibliography. *Qualities of Effective Principals* is an excellent resource for both experienced and new principals committed to developing and leading strong schools that help all students succeed."

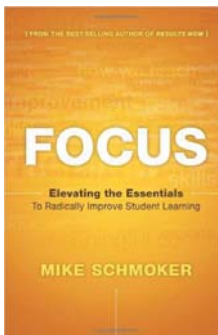
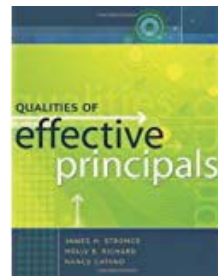
Learning from Lincoln: Leadership Practices for School Success (2010) by Harvey Alvy and Pam Robbins. "What can 21st century educators learn from the example of a 19th century president? In this intriguing and insightful book, Harvey Alvy and Pam Robbins show how the legacy of Abraham Lincoln can guide today's education leaders--principals, teachers, superintendents, and others--as they tackle large-scale challenges, such as closing the achievement gap, and everyday issues, such as communicating with constituents. The authors identify 10 qualities, attributes, and skills that help to explain Lincoln's effectiveness, despite seemingly insurmountable odds."



Focus: Elevating the Essentials to Radically Improve Student Learning (2011) by Mike Schmoker. "Bestselling author Mike Schmoker describes a plan for radically improving student learning that is built on three core elements: a focused and coherent curriculum (what we teach); clear, prioritized lessons (how we teach); and purposeful reading and writing, or authentic literacy.

With this "less is more" philosophy, educators can help students learn content at a deeper level, develop greater critical thinking skills, and discover more clearly how content-area concepts affect their lives and the world around them.

Both a call to action and a blueprint for creating more effective classrooms, *Focus: Elevating the Essentials for Radically Improved Student Learning* will challenge your assumptions about schooling and show how educators who have embraced this approach quickly achieved spectacular results."



DATES TO CELEBRATE

- * **December 1**
 - Rosa Parks Day
Recognizing an important event in the civil rights movement
- * **December 3**
 - International Day for Persons with Disabilities
- * **December 4**
 - World Wildlife Conservation Day
 - National Cookie Day
- * **December 7**
 - International Civil Aviation Day
- * **December 9**
 - Lost and Found Day
- * **December 10**
 - Human Rights Day
Anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948
- * **December 15**
 - Bill of Rights Day
The first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution were ratified on this day in 1791.
- * **December 17**
 - Anniversary of the Wright Brothers' Flight
- * **December 21**
 - First Day of Winter
- * **December 24**
 - Hanukkah begins
- * **December 25**
 - Christmas
- * **December 26**
 - Boxing Day
Celebrated in Canada
- * **December 26 - January 1**
 - Kwanzaa

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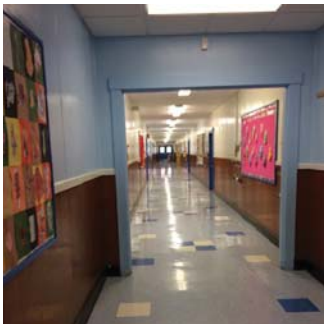
Featured Regions!

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 December *Apprise* features the Northeast Region. Next month we will feature the Andy Valley 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!

Eddington Elementary School

Eddington Elementary School is a small pre-K to grade 1 school in Eddington, Maine. 121 students are taught by seven classroom teachers, three special education teachers, one Reading Recovery teacher, four part-time fine arts teachers, and three educational technicians.

According to principal Don Spencer, "RSU 63 is known for its small, family feel. It offers small class sizes, a safe and nurturing environment, a close-knit community of teachers, staff and administrators, frequent and effective parent-teacher communication, and a strong local community support. In short, a place where the saying 'It takes a village to raise a child,' rings true here."



Last year the RSU reconfigured and created a pre-K – 1 school and a 2-4 school (Holden Elementary). Mr. Spencer is the proud principal of both schools. Typically combining schools, staff, and cultures is a difficult endeavor; however walking through the halls of this beautiful, rural school, one would never know this happened so recently. The staff now have planning time and some classes have combined to team-teach in order to best meet the needs of all students.

One of the highlights of the school, and one incredibly powerful way for Mr. Spencer to stay connected with the students, are the weekly assemblies. The staff and students celebrate and recognize students that continue to make great choices. During these assemblies, 1st grade students are proud to wear their "Swag Tags." This is a chain with different medallions on them that the students earn for doing good deeds and being successful in school. They are very proud of their Swag Tags! Also during the assemblies, different students are selected to keep the "Eaglet" on their desks for the whole week. "Eddie the Eagle" is the mascot at Eddington Elementary and each week a classroom gets to have Eddie stay in their room. Mr. Spencer then spends extra time in that classroom, reads to the students, and has fun with them as well.



There are a lot of hands on activities, especially in the pre-K room where they are growing vegetables for the Harvest Luncheon, as well as, to use as science experiments throughout the year. The first grade students are busy with the "care of their classroom pets," and kindergarten students enjoy observing the hatching and then caring for baby chicks in the spring.

The community is incredibly supportive of this amazing little school. Each month they average 30 parents who attend the Parent Teacher Group, or PTG. "They do a lot for our kids and teachers. If there is a need, the PTG will find a way to fundraise and meet the needs of the school," says Mr. Spencer.

If you want to see an elementary school that lives the motto: "The kids are our focus," then I strongly encourage you to visit Eddington Elementary.

Contact:

Eddington Elementary School, 440 Main Road, Eddington, ME 04428 ~ 207-843-6010

Principal: Don Spencer dspencer@sad63.org



Leonard Middle School

Leonard Middle School (LMS) is a grades 6-8 school in Old Town, Maine. The 311 students are taught by 25 teachers, one school counselor, one nurse, and 10 educational technicians. They have a 17.7% special education population and a 50% free and reduced lunch rate.

"We is greater than me," is the mantra and mission of Leonard Middle School. Principal Jennifer Cyr gives credit to this mantra to Assistant Principal Dana Maxim. "We are a team: administrators and the teachers. Together we make this place great!" This is also the way of life at this magnificent middle school in central Maine. While I was visiting, I had the distinct pleasure of meeting with 6th graders Hunter and Naomi; 7th graders Mariah, Devon, and Aidan; and 8th graders Mercedes, Abbie, Ellie, and Cassie. When asked what makes their school amazing, they couldn't stop naming the activities and clubs that the students participate in: "Our music program is incredible!" "We have band, jazz band, jazz ensembles, brass players, and a lot of chorus groups." "We get to go on music field trips to perform around the state!"



The students also talked about the Civil Rights Group and O.B.S. (Operating Break Stereotypes.) These groups meet on a regular basis to break down the walls of stereotypes and accepting everyone for who they are; regardless of race, color, or educational ability. O.B.S. actually works with students from neighboring towns to break down the stereotypes that the community has about students in those other towns.

The students also participate in Student Council, Rush (a group that raises money for cancer research), Gardening, Builders Club, and STEM.

The group that I met with love their teachers and administrators. "They are really nice and make learning fun!"

Recently one major change for the staff and students of Leonard Middle School was the full implementation of the BARR (Building Assets, Reducing Risks) Program. According to principal Jennifer Cyr, "This by far has been the hardest work in our (entire staff) educational careers, however, our school is benefitting greatly! We have shifted how we spend our money on staff, we are creative on where we place additional academic support, and parents are hearing more from the school. We are working hard and really breaking down the barriers of the past."

If you want to see a school who truly embraces the meaning of shared leadership, I highly encourage you to visit Leonard Middle School and see for yourself just how truly special this school is!

Content Information:

Leonard Middle School, 156 Oak Street, Old Town, ME 04468 ~ 207-827-3900

Principal: Jennifer Cyr jennifer.cyr@rsu34.org

Assistant Principal: Dana Maxim dana.maxim@rsu34.org



Penquis Valley School



Penquis Valley School is a grades 5-12 school in Milo, Maine. They have 421 students who are taught by 76 teachers and 12 educational technicians. They have a 61% free and reduced lunch rate and a 23% special education population.

When walking through the halls of Penquis Valley School, you can feel the “Patriot Pride” and rich history of this school. In speaking with principal Jeremy Bousquet, you can see the different changes that have taken place throughout the years. All of the changes have made to best meet the needs of the students. Over the past few years, almost every teacher moved into a different classroom in order to create specific learning suites: special education, administrative, and each of the content areas each have their own specific area, etc. This allows for the teachers to have common planning time to talk about the kids and get them the specific interventions they may need in a timely manner.

After this school year began, teachers approached Mr. Bousquet about the schedule. Students’ needs weren’t being met in the most effective way so as a team they went back to the drawing board and changed the historic 5-block waterfall schedule to a 6-block day. This allows for students to participate in all core academic areas every day and allows them to fully participate in extracurricular classes such as art and music appreciation.

To give an example of how teachers have gone above and beyond with classroom instruction, one only needs to look at the language program. In addition to the “typical” foreign language, Penquis Valley also offers a full American Sign Language immersion program for both the middle and high school students. Classes also introduce language from the basis of looking at the cultural history. For those who are interested in music but do not play an instrument or sing, they can join the music appreciation class – again, whatever works best for students, the staff does whatever it takes to help the students be successful.



Meeting the students’ needs is a priority at Penquis Valley. In the high school wing, there is a “Guided Learning Program” that targets specific students’ needs and matches them up with a classroom teacher to provide the additional support they need. In the middle level wing, students have a Response to Intervention (RtI) block every day. During this time the students either receive targeted interventions or receive enrichment opportunities.

Beyond the physical changes in the building that are taking place at the school – the culture is changing with the times as well. Change can be and is difficult at times, however the changes at Penquis Valley are supported by the staff and community. As Mr. Bousquet states, “When you come to Penquis Valley School, you want to stay here.” Many of the teachers and staff who are now currently working at the school were once students. “We believe in the school, in the staff,

and in the students.”

If you want to see a school who embraces change to best meet students’ needs, I highly encourage you to contact the administrators and visit this wonderful school!

Contact Information:

Penquis Valley School, 48 Penquis Drive, Milo, ME 04463 ~ 207-943-7346

Principal: Jeremy Bousquet jbousquet@msad41.us

Assistant Principal: Mike Rollins mrollins@msad41.us

MPA PHOTO ALBUM



MPA Fall Conference

November 17-18, 2016

