



PHILLIPS • AVON • KINGFIELD • STRONG

Fall Newsletter November 2014

Maine School Administrative District #58

1401 Rangeley Road
Phillips, ME 04966
207-639-2086

Message from the Superintendent of Schools ...

Lots of important things have been happening in our schools this fall. Most of the big initiatives are a result of new Maine education legislation: the adoption of the Common Core within the Maine Learning Results and the subsequent change in the student test to the Smarter Balanced Assessment, the teacher evaluation system, and the planning for proficiency based education (PBE). Parents will be noticing significant shifts in the educational process as the months and years go by.

We have been gathering information on a district-wide preschool program. Alternative configurations of days have been reviewed and informational meetings about these preschool programs have been held at all elementary schools.

We have recently completed a program review of mathematics education in MSAD #58. This has been completed as our first step to clarify specific areas for improvement and the subsequent focus for teacher professional development.

Beginning in the late summer, a team of teachers and administrators spent many days reviewing grade level, school and district data from student tests and other records. This review guided us in writing three district-wide academic goals. These goals will now be used for all district planning. The goals are available for viewing on our website. www.msad58.org.

Board meetings are typically the third Thursday of the month, and increase in frequency as budget season comes in January. The next meetings are November 20 in Kingfield, December 18 in Strong and January 22 in Phillips. All meetings start at 6:30PM.

As always, please call me should you have questions on any district issues.

Sincerely,
Dr. Erica Brouillet
ebrouillet@msad58.org
639-2086



MSAD#58 Teachers Receive Professional Development on State of Maine Learning Results/Common Core Mathematics Curriculum. October 23 and 24, 2014.

Learning mathematics has changed significantly since the State of Maine Department of Education has adopted the Common Core as part of the Maine Learning Results. The learning standards of the Common Core are those from which all public educators in Maine must derive student learning objectives, and thus, classroom instruction.

Many parents are seeing a change in the homework children are bringing home. That is because the Common Core emphasizes somewhat different cognitive skills: devoting less time to memorization and performing procedures and more time to demonstrate understanding of concepts and process.

Key shifts from the old standards to Common Core mathematics standards include a **focus on fewer topics**. Rather than covering many different unrelated topics quickly, fewer standards allow teachers to have students gain a deeper understanding of not only content but the processes needed to solve all kinds of related problems.

- In grades K-2, students learn concepts, skills and problem solving using addition and subtraction.
- In grades 3-5, students learn concepts, skills and problem solving using multiplication and division.
- In Grade 6, students learn about ratios, proportional relationships and algebraic expressions.
- In Grade 7, students learn about proportional relationships and arithmetic of rational numbers.
- In Grade 8, students learn linear algebra and functions.

The Common Core is careful to **link topics and vocabulary across the grades** to “extend previous understanding”. These topics and problem solving techniques increase with difficulty by grade level. Learners commonly practice problem solving skills as teachers try to frame lessons upon concepts that relate to everyday situations in a student’s life. This change in the delivery of curriculum brings normally abstract mathematics concepts into concrete real life situations. In the end, our students will be more able to **apply these skills** outside of the classroom.

So, as your child brings home work from mathematics class you will see some changes. Please contact your child’s teacher at any time to get your questions answered. Remember, this is a huge change for the teachers as well, and as our students learn, so do our teachers.

MSAD #58 continues its commitment to the learners of the district, both students and teachers. As college and career requirements change, MSAD #58 teachers are working to keep up with the latest instructional practices which will enable our students to become productive citizens of our community and country. Continued professional development has already been scheduled up to the end of June 2015.

For more on the Common Core mathematics curriculum you may go to: [http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-mathematics/solving skills and communication skills](http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-mathematics/solving-skills-and-communication-skills).

(Mathematics PD, pictured left to right: Dawn Maceda, Chee Rothschild, Tracy McKenzie, Christi Mitman, Felecia Pease, mathematics Consultant Nancy McLaughlin, Debbie Knapp, Tami Bredeau)

Mt. Abram Students of the Month!!!!

Brandon Haines was October's Student of the Month.



Gavin Haggan was September's Student of the Month.



Annual Bike and Walk to School Event!!!

Madi Faraday once again orchestrated the **Annual Bike & Walk to School Event**. Many KES staff members were involved to ensure it went off without a hitch! Bus drivers helped deliver students to the Town Park. Several teachers met the students at the park and walked and biked with them back to school. When they arrived, they were enthusiastically greeted by teachers. Students identified what they did by placing their names on paper bikes and shoes to display on the bulletin board in the gym. The cafeteria staff provided healthy snacks and water. What a fantastic way to start a day of learning! Holding signs are Callahan Towle and Mia Luce.



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KES Ball Wall Group!

Nykola Dentico and a group of Middle School students, known as the **Ball Wall Group**, have embarked on a project that they hope will make all students happy. This group identified that the *Ball Wall* was in bad shape. All ages love *The Wall*, so instead of removing it, they decided to build another one. The group submitted a letter to the SRCT (Sugarloaf Region Charitable Trust) and received grant money for materials. The wall has been removed and the frame has been refurbished. Dates have been set to construct the new wall. Thank you SRCT and Jordan Lumber for making this project possible. The much appreciated snacks and coffee for the volunteers were provided by the Parent Volunteer Group that was organized by Tracy Butler. Parents and community members that helped: Ray Poulin, Todd Towle, Kim Jordan, Jim Hupper, Nick Ramharther, Mike Dentico, and John Pare. Students of the Ball Wall Group are Trevor Phelps, Troy Hupper, Alice Cockerham, Zek Coolong, Nick Poulin, Hailey Fenwick, Jonathan Jordan, River Horn, Brandon Hemingway and India Coolong. Absent from this picture is Finn Towle.



What is Proficiency-Based Education?

Proficiency-based education refers to any system of academic instruction, assessment, grading and reporting that is based on students demonstrating mastery of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn before they progress to the next lesson, get promoted to the next grade level or receive a diploma.

In Maine, academic expectations and “proficiency” definitions for public-school courses, learning experiences, content areas and grade levels are outlined in the [Maine Learning Results](#) which includes the [Guiding Principles](#), expectations for cross-disciplinary skills and life-long learning, and eight sets of content-area standards, including the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics.

The general goal of proficiency-based education is to ensure that students acquire the knowledge and skills that are deemed to be essential to success in school, higher education, careers and adult life. If students struggle to meet minimum expected standards, they receive additional instruction, practice time and academic support to help them achieve proficiency, but they do not progress in their education until expected standards are met.

National PTA provides information on the Common Core to parents!

The **national PTA website** is a good resource for parents on the Common Core... check it out—

Parent guides to student success include information on,

- Key items children should be learning in English language arts and mathematics in each grade, once Common Core Standards are fully implemented.
- Activities that parents can do at home to support their child's learning.
- Methods for helping parents build stronger relationships with their child's teacher.
- Tips for planning for college and career (high school only). Check out this website:

<http://www.pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583>

Phillips Elementary Has a Safe Halloween!!



The Halloween Parade at the Phillips Elementary has been a Phillips tradition for 38 years. Students in Kindergarten through 4th grade participate. Between families walking in the parade with students and siblings and family and friends standing on the sides admiring the parade there are at least 100 people in attendance. On the walking route, candy is given out by the Phillips Public Library Librarian, Shadagee Senior Apartment residents, and the Skowhegan Savings Bank employees. The Parade is the prelude to the CARE PTO Halloween Party held on the same evening. The PTO has been hosting a Halloween Party for the last nine years. We have Halloween games to play, spooky music in the background, light refreshments, and buckets of candy and prizes at each table.

The children are given a Trick-or-Treat Bag when they enter the party and can Trick-or-Treat as they play the games. We have held Costume Parades with ribbons and Haunted Houses too. This is a safe and fun way for the children to enjoy Halloween and have friends see their costumes. The party is free to the Community.

Phillips School gets new Climbing Rope



PES K-4 students posing with their new climbing rope (compliments of the Phillips Care/PTO) and pull up bar! Bear Rollins hanging on tight to the rope and Lachlan Marble is trying out the pull up bar.

Animation Studio

Students in Strong and Phillips Middle Schools have taken on an impressive challenge: to write, animate, color and voice their own animated movie. What Disney and other studios accomplish over the course of years, with a staff of hundreds, our students plan to do in a single elective class that meets weekly. While these movies will probably be of a more modest length than feature films, its still an enormous undertaking.

The first thing these students had to learn wasn't something technical or specific to the animation process; but rather, how to collaborate to an extremely intense degree. Early exercises involved rapidly trading drawings with neighbors and other groups, so that every piece was worked on by nearly everyone in the room. The students have quickly come to understand that they are making a single work (the film), and that no part of it can really be separated into something that belongs to just one person. It is a big change from the way they are used to thinking about art, and with new perspectives come (hopefully) fresh ideas.

Currently these two groups are in the middle of a process called "story-boarding", where each moment of the film is drawn, in a simple way, on a separate card. These cards are then assembled on a board, which lets students "see" the story in visual form, before any of the actual frame-by-frame animation happens. These relatively brief films have already generated hundreds of such drawings, and will doubtless see hundreds more before the process is complete. Now is the time where they will add, subtract and change scenes, adjust dialogue, decide on the angles and movements of the "camera", and truly "direct" the film they are composing. They finish this process by creating a kind of film-strip with these drawings, called an animatic, which denotes the exact timing of the film and becomes the blueprint for everything that comes after.

Like any animation studio, these students have a deadline and milestones to hit along the way. They've already had to navigate the tension of staying on schedule versus satisfying one's creative vision, and it is a unique and valuable experience. They still have a good portion of this challenge in front of them, but that means energy is still high and possibilities are wide open. If all goes according to plan, they will be inviting all of you to a film festival in June, and showing you something you've never seen middle school students make before. Mr. Masterman

Strong Elementary PTO Halloween Dance!



The Strong P.T.O. sponsored a Halloween dance for students in grades K - 4 on Friday, October 31. Approximately 30 children moved around the dance floor and wore off some energy to spooky tunes before going out to trick or treat. Admission to the dance was a donated item for a Thanksgiving basket being given away by the P.T.O.