



M.S.A.D. No.75 mainegateways.org

Learning Showcase coming December 15

We are very excited to announce that our Learning Showcase is now taking the digital stage at M.S.A.D. No. 75.

On December 15 you will be able to see evidence of learning in all our schools. Whether it's second graders rehearsing for their Contra dance in a wonderful team-teaching construct of music and PE, or a middle school nutrition unit in which students demonstrate their knowledge of sugar, fat, and salt content in common snacks, there is something for everyone.

The Learning Showcase features a full spectrum of educational opportunities and takes you behind the scenes to experience the instructional process. Most of all, these digital products provide evidence of learning. We invite you to see what we mean by 'Show what you know.'

Click on www.mainegateways.org for our December newsletter and find out about the opportunities all learners have to reach their potential.

-Darren J. Akerman
GT Coordinator

As we approach budget planning for 2010-2011, we are looking for any suggestion you might have that will allow us to continue to provide an education that will meet the needs of all students.

Revenue Curtailment and Beyond

We have received official notification that the curtailment of subsidy for M.S.A.D. No.75 this fiscal year will be \$413,000. As you know, we have frozen discretionary spending and taken other fiscal steps to ensure that we do not spend budgeted dollars in this amount this year. By comparison, the curtailment during last fiscal year was \$293,000. The 1.4% increase in curtailment is a good indicator of the status of the Maine economy.

We are now looking ahead to next year. The subsidy for the 2010-11 fiscal year has yet to be established by the Legislature. Things we do know...

Federal/State Monies

We received \$464,366 in federal stabilization (ARRA) funds for the current fiscal year. It is ironic that as one hand gives, another takes away. Next year we do not anticipate any stabilization funds. We will not see this year's \$413,000 curtailment restored; and we have been told that the State will reduce school subsidy by another \$36 million which for us means at least another \$400,000 drop in subsidy. When added together, we will realize at least a \$1.2 million loss in subsidy for our next budget year.

Local Challenges

We also know that it will be extremely difficult to increase town assessments to cover the loss. The local economy is suffering and people are losing jobs. Applications for general assistance from the towns have increased tremendously from last year to this. With the last squadron having left the Base and the civilian employees leaving in **January**, there will be close to 3,000 fewer employed adults spending their dollars in the local economy than there were last year.

Looking Ahead

This is the most difficult economic challenge this District has faced in the last 20 years. Next year will be the third year of subsidy reductions. As we approach budget planning for 2010-11, we are looking for any suggestion you might have that will allow us to continue to provide an education that will meet the needs of all students. We know we have to explore creative alternatives to the way we currently do business. We are looking into every program and aspect of the enterprise for these alternatives. We cannot forsake our responsibility to prepare our students to be successful. All students need to graduate with reading, mathematics and cultural literacy, the foundation for success. We have to make the very best use of the time we have with students and with every resource that could possibly be available to us.

Congratulations

- High School French teacher Ellyn Ballou and students Kaycie Clark, Grace Hutchinson, Chris McIntire and Jordanne Woodbury - Their encounter with a moose when returning from Quebec in 2008 is to be part of a Discovery Channel documentary.
- Kelly LaFountain - KVAC Field Hockey Coach of the Year
- Diane Fournier - KVAC Cross Country Coach of the Year
- Travis Dube and Dennis Edmondson of Mt. Ararat High School - recipient of *Schools That Shine* Award - *Schools That Shine* is a WCSH6 and Dunkin' Donuts program that rewards schools for innovation and creativity. \$1,000 was awarded for the annual student expeditionary trip to the Gettysburg National War Memorial.

Holiday Schedule

The District Office will be closed
December 24 – January 1.

It will reopen on Monday, January 4, 2010.

After the holidays we will turn to parents and the larger community for suggestions. You, however, know the work of the District best and **may** have ideas for meeting this challenge that could help. Please feel free to email our Business Manager, Steve Dyer, or me, with your suggestions.

An Assessment System that Works for All Stakeholders

During the past ten years we have experienced a number of changes in assessment. At the federal level NCLB and AYP have become fixtures in education. At the State level we've lived through the shift from the Comprehensive Local Assessment System to the moratorium; this year our MEA is now the NECAP. At the District level we are making changes to our local assessment practices as we implement RTI and develop approaches to standards-based reporting with Infinite Campus. We have become increasingly aware of the need to align our practices in order to work as an effective system. Ultimately all these efforts should make it more possible for all students to learn.

Enough changes have occurred to merit review of our assessment policies and guidelines. We will need to check in and give feedback regarding how we view and use assessment. As a system we will develop a shared understanding of the stakeholders, their needs, the types of assessment data and how it is used to measure progress. We will make sure to focus on classroom assessment practices that engage students in their progress. We will define effective assessment guidelines both formative and summative in a standards-based environment.

This January we will be taking a little time during our staff development day to engage in reviewing draft assessment policy and guidelines. Once we have refined them they will be taken to the Board for adoption this spring.



GreenQuest is a personal energy information website that makes it easy for you to track and evaluate your property's energy use, expense and greenhouse emissions. Home owners, apartment dwellers and small businesses can all benefit from clearly seeing where their energy dollars go.

How do I sign up? GreenQuest is accessible directly from the web at <http://www.mygreenquest.com/msad75me>., or you can click on the link provided for you on the District home page. Either one will take you to the MSAD 75 GreenQuest site where you can enter a few informational items to establish a personal account and get started entering your utility bill data. GreenQuest is provided to you as a FREE service from M.S.A.D. No. 75.

Support Staff Perfect Attendance

M.S.A.D. No. 75 wishes to recognize its support staff of the Merrymeeting Employees Association with perfect attendance. The [Support Staff Perfect Attendance](#) link on the Human Resources website will take you to the webpage listing perfect attendance for each month.

Mini-grant Awards Across the District

Trust for Our Future: M.S.A.D. No. 75 Education Fund has recently awarded five "mini" grants totaling over \$3,000. The mini-grant program was established to provide resources for innovative learning projects within the District.

The Mt. Ararat High School I-Team was awarded \$603 for its proposal entitled [Student Leadership Development for Technology Integration](#).

Vicky Dow and Marybeth Browne, Grade 5 teachers from Woodside Elementary School, were awarded \$500 to continue their "Grandfriends" program. It is an intergenerational project that partners with seniors at the Highlands.

Claudette Brassil, Mt. Ararat High School English teacher, was awarded \$450 for her proposal [Women's Stories/ Women's Voices](#).

Marianne Haughwout, Librarian at Bowdoin Central School and Harpswell Islands School, was awarded \$913 to help fund the "Festival of Books," a celebration of literature using Maine Student Book Awards from this year's list and selections by the librarian from past award winners.

Ryan Holmes, Mt. Ararat High School Physical Education teacher, was awarded \$650 for his "Morning Exercise" program designed to promote student health and wellness.

For more information please visit www.trustforourfuture.org

Vaccination Clinics Running Smoothly - Thank you to everyone for helping make the H1N1 vaccination clinics run smoothly. With the help of our area hospitals, public health nursing, local rescue, and Sagadahoc Emergency Management Agency, we vaccinated 56% of our students during the school day for H1N1 and 7% of our students on the first Saturday of December for Seasonal influenza. A final booster shot clinic for students under 10 years old still needs to be held and will probably take place in Topsham one day after school in January. As availability of both vaccines loosens up in the next few weeks, all healthy adults interested in obtaining a vaccination should watch for local clinics in the area.

Harpswell Application - The Commissioner of Education has approved the District's application to close West Harpswell School at the end of this school year. With the approval, the Commissioner has set the dollar amount, \$219,030, to go to referendum in Harpswell. The District will schedule the referendum at which the Town will vote whether it wishes to close the school or keep it open. If closed, West Harpswell students will attend Harpswell Islands School. If the school remains open, the Town will pay the District the amount approved by the Commissioner.

Internet Speed Has Increased - The District has finally received its increased connection to the public Internet. We have been experiencing the effect of insufficient bandwidth since adding 900 computers this fall. Although we have now effectively doubled the connection, concern over appropriate Internet usage remains. The network connection is a finite resource. When the demand for Internet access exceeds the supply of bandwidth, the system slows down and Internet use is compromised. We want to ensure that the bandwidth we do have is available for teaching and learning during the school day. "Appropriate use" is broadly defined as anything relating to the educational goals of the District. Please reserve any personal activities to when you are home and outside the school network. We also ask that you expect the same of students. The biggest users of bandwidth are streaming videos and music, Skype, and games. It takes a village to create a healthy and fast network. If we all limit use of the network for school related purposes, we will not experience the delays and problems that emerged this fall. Thank you for your help with this. .

Reminder: Teachers need to notify the Superintendent in writing of their intent to retire by **January 31, 2010**.