

RSU #16

February 2010



News From the Schools

PRHS

Thanks to a federal ARRA grant (written by business manager Rick Kusturin), PRHS will receive \$636,000 to install a new alternative fuel source boiler! We'll be green! We'll have heat! Woo Hoo!

Whittier

On February 11th, Whittier 8th graders welcomed PCS 5th graders to the building and held a science exhibition featuring their Rube Goldberg projects. The 5th graders recently built their own simple machines. Eighth graders completed projects showing a variety of tasks from opening soda cans to topping ice cream to snuffing candles. After the exhibition, students met to discuss their learning and the processes they went through in planning and building. Kudos to all on the tremendous success!

Elm Street

On March 6th, the Price Is Right will be held in the gym at Elm Street School. The Price Is Right is a fundraiser for the 8th grade trip and a popular community event. The Math Team is preparing for a competitive event on March 4th in Raymond. Fifth graders shared their knowledge of social studies with dioramas, which were displayed for all to enjoy.

Minot

On Thursday, February 25th,

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CHEER LEADERS AT THE TOURNEY
February 6, 2010, Augusta Civic Center

*Poland Regional High School Cheering Squad
WINNING the Class B Cheerleading Competition.*

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Discussions: A New Way To Do Middle School

The RSU16 Middle School Exploration committee has had four meetings over the past month, and will begin hosting a series of COMMUNITY MEETINGS for students and parents to discuss the two possible new models for middle school education. Faculty and staff are invited to attend.

Tuesday March 2nd @ 7:00 @ Whittier Middle School
Thursday March 4th @ 7:00 @ Elm Street School
Monday March 8th @ 7:00 @ Minot Consolidated School

Please note, these meetings are *in addition* to the public meetings being held by the School Committee to discuss the school budget (including the middle school question) on March 1st, March 15th and March 29th. Those meetings are all at PRHS and begin at 6:30.

Thank you,
Dennis Duquette

The Middle School Exploration Committee (MSEC) Looks at How We Do Middle School

At the request of the School Committee, a committee has been formed to examine the possibility of creating a new middle school model within RSU16 as one means of addressing the current fiscal crisis. The Middle School Exploration Committee (MSEC) is comprised of 6th and 7th grade parents from each of the three communities, as well as school committee members and school principals from all three towns.

The MSEC is looking into a bi-town middle school model, in which 7th and 8th students from Minot would go to Elm Street School; and a tri-town middle school model, in which 7th and 8th grade students from Minot and Mechanic Falls would go to Whittier Middle School. The MSEC will make a recommendation to the School Committee by mid-late March.

The School Committee will decide whether or not to accept that recommendation. The School Committee will then put a budget before the citizens of all three towns for a vote later this spring – likely in May. That budget would reflect any changes the School Committee determines should be made to our middle school structure. If included in the School Committee budget and approved by the townspeople, a new middle school model would go into effect in September, 2010.

Public discussion of these issues will happen at the School Committee Meetings on March 1, 15, and 29 (at the PRHS auditorium). Three smaller community meetings will be held on March 2 at Whittier, March 4 at Elm Street, and March 8 at Minot.



Rube Goldberg Contraptions were on display at a Science Exhibition at Bruce M. Whittier Middle School.



At the Bruce M. Whittier Middle School, students participate in a recent science exhibition.

Spring Time is SAC Time

Time for curriculum work

The Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies SACs have all launched into some pretty intense work for this spring. All faculty should be hearing news of this directly from their SAC representative. They may also be asking for your input. All I can say is, "Please give it!"

The **Math SAC** has overseen the administration of the Math Mid-year Exam across the district. Two members will spend the Feb 26 ERD scoring and tallying those. Then the SAC as a whole will meet and do some intense number crunching and reporting results out to you!

The **Science SAC**, inspired by their Math-ly brethren and sistren, are working on timed landmark tests for science that may be given at mid-year and year-end. Aside from letting us know how the science curriculum is "doing," the very existence of the tests will standardize delivery of the science curriculum across the district and focus it on important, over-arching themes (e.g., scientific inquiry).

The **ELA SAC**, will be spending a full release day on March 10, taking all of the information gathered over the past two years and compiling it into a comprehensive, K-12 curriculum map. This is huge work and much requested! Very ambitious!

The **Social Studies SAC**, similarly, will be spending release time on March 31 looking over the information you all provided in workshops over the past few years about what is taught -- and what ought to be taught -- in social studies K-12.

All of this work will be presented to you formally when it's ready, but if you have any questions or input -- if there's something you'd really like to see done regarding one of the curricula -- please talk to Gary Chapin (gchapin@rsur6.org) or a SAC rep in your building!



It's in the SAC! Er ... in the bag?
Hmm, perhaps the ELA SAC will help me work out this metaphor?

SAC teams **generally meet on Wednesdays, from 3:30 to 5:00.** SAC meetings are held in the new conference room of the Elm Street School.

ELA:

March 10 - All Day

May 5

Math:

March 3

April 28

Science:

April 7

May 26

Social Studies

March 31 (noon to 5:30)

May 12



RSU16 Dempsey Challenge Team

RSU16 is putting together a team to participate in the 2010 Dempsey Challenge. Do you want to join our team? Please go to <http://dempseychallenge.kintera.org/rsu16> And join our team. Need an excuse to get fit? Start training now for the 5k, 10k or bike race. To see the full list of events you can opt for, check here: http://www.dempseychallenge.org/content/4089/Schedule_of_Events/ We would like to get as many employees as possible to join the team. You can walk, run or bike. Questions, contact Linda Chaisson at lindachaisson@rsu16.org or Dennis Duquette at dduquette@rsu16.org

Professional Liability Insurance

From the Business Manager

Professional liability insurance is not the kind of insurance which you purchase to protect yourself if somebody breaks a leg in your residence and sues you for damages. Professional liability insurance protects you when something occurs while you are on the job at school or performing school approved duties. RSU 16 provides professional liability insurance for all its employees. As an employee, you are defined as an 'agent' of RSU 16 and, as such, are protected with up to \$3,000,000 worth of coverage. Exactly what is covered and what is not is defined in coverage agreements that are given to us by our carrier, Maine School Management, and are available at the Central Office.

There are many different avenues for purchasing additional professional liability insurance above and beyond

what is already provided. Most home owner policies can be modified to provide additional professional liability insurance coverage at reasonable and surprisingly affordable rates. Many

"Our General Liability Coverage pays for all legal representation for our employees. You are not charged for any portion of these costs. The District does not have the option of denying you coverage."

private insurance companies and professional associations offer specific policies for professional educators. Be a smart shopper; there are many very good policies out there.

Risk is something that everyone has to deal with on a daily basis. What aggravates risk in the performance of our jobs is the fact that people will sue first, then ask questions. It is the policy of

RSU 16 to protect its employees from legal liability so that the mission of RSU 16, the education of our students, is faithfully and efficiently achieved.

Your first question, as an employee of RSU 16 may be - "Who will pay for my legal representation in the event that I am sued individually or as a party in a legal action?" Our General Liability Coverage pays for all legal representation for our employees. **You are not charged for any portion of these costs.**

The District does not have the option of denying you coverage. There are, of course, restrictions in coverage, primarily those actions which are clearly criminal acts for which you are found guilty, activities not arising out of your educational activities and

actions which intentionally inflict bodily injury.

Professional liability insurance is relatively inexpensive. You cannot afford to be without this valuable insurance. Again, consult your insurance professional or teachers association about coverage and costs.

--Rick Kusturin

News from the Schools Continues!

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students at Minot will be participating in our very own Winter Olympics! This is a culminating activity for our Friday Frolic travels around the world, visiting countries that are participating in the Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

Poland Community School

PCS congratulates Deb Daigneault's first grade class, winners of the 2nd Vacation Reading Challenge this year. Over vacation, students called Mrs. F-D and read to earn points for their class. Of the 524 calls made, Mrs. Daig's students called 53 times. Way to go, readers! Students and staff are now tracking their time reading for the Million Minute Reading Challenge. Can we reach a million minutes by Monday, May 3rd? We'll see!

Adult Ed

Adult Education is happy to offer several courses this spring focusing on sustainability in support of the Tri-Town Reads program. In January, 9 students participated in Holistic Animal Care taught by Don McLean, DVM. Hunter Safety registrations have exceeded expectations and required us to add a second class. We still have openings in several courses: homemade skin creams, container gardening, growing seedlings, composting, and bird watching. To learn more about our course offerings or to register, please see our website

<http://mechanicfalls.maineadulted.org>.

Adult Education's academic and vocational enrollments continue to climb with the month of February. 180 students have been served since July 1.

THINK ABOUT IT!

The
worlds
we manage
to get
inside our heads
are mostly
worlds
of
words.

-Wendell Johnson-