



Fall Edition 2023

School Talk

A Newsletter of RSV 54/MSAD 54

E.O.E.



Volume 29, No 4.

Mill Stream Elementary Celebrates Apple Fest



On Saturday, September 16, Apple Fest cast its spell on Mill Stream Elementary. This much-anticipated event, now in its sixteenth year, once again lived up to its reputation as a splendid family affair. Attendees reveled in an array of carnival-style games, crafts that ignited creativity, face painting that transformed little faces into vibrant canvases, and a chance to win exciting prizes. It was a day filled with laughter, joy, and the vibrant spirit of the fall season.

What made this year's Apple Fest even more special was the incredible turnout of over 100 enthusiastic children from the local community. Their infectious excitement and energy added an extra layer of charm to the festivities. A heartfelt thank you goes out to the school's Student Leadership team, whose dedication and hard work were instrumental in running the games smoothly and contributing to the overall success of the event. Their commitment to creating a fun and engaging atmosphere truly shone through.

But the festivities didn't end there. Families were also treated to another delightful facet of the event: the Scholastic Book Fair. Expertly managed by our dedicated MSES Parent/Teacher volunteers, the fair provided a treasure trove of books for eager readers. The book fair proved not only to be a literary haven but also a financial success, raising over \$5,000.

The funds generated from the book fair were put to excellent use, benefiting the entire Mill Stream Elementary community. A portion of the proceeds were allocated to enriching classroom libraries, which will ensure that students have access to a diverse range of books to fuel their imaginations. Additionally, the school library received a boost in its collection, allowing for an even more extensive selection of

books catering to various interests and reading levels.

One particularly heartwarming initiative was the commitment to place a brand-new book into the hands of every child at MSES. This not only fosters a love for reading but also provides each student the opportunity to embark on their own literary adventures.

In reflection, the 16th Annual Apple Fest transcended its role as a mere community event. It was a celebration of togetherness, learning, and the magic that unfolds when a community comes together. As we express our gratitude to all who made this event possible, let us eagerly await the coming years, filled with more Apple Fests and the promise of fostering a lifelong love for learning among the students of Mill Stream Elementary.

North Elementary Students Attend Lakewood Play



Students at North Elementary School were able to attend the beloved Lakewood Theater in East Madison to see a production of *Straw into Gold*. After a three-year hiatus, the Lakewood Jesters brought back their children's show, and the North El students were delighted.

After only three weeks of kindergarten, all our students did a great job using their "movie theater manners" while watching the performance. There were lots of laughs from students, teachers, and parents. Students were especially excited to meet the cast after the show.

Thank you to Mrs. LaRock for organizing this event, the Lakewood Jesters for putting on a great show, and all the parents and staff of North Elementary for helping to provide our students this important opportunity to enjoy the arts.

MCSS Students Create Projects for Craft Fair



At Margaret Chase Smith School, the 5th grade team has been working hard to provide student-created projects to sell at the Mill Stream Craft Fair in November. All funds will go toward field trips, purchasing books for students, and more!

Each teacher has provided a different, hands-on opportunity for students to participate in, from ornament making to slime creations.



Bloomfield Elementary School Celebrates Students

The goal at BES is to create a positive learning environment where staff and students work together to grow academically and socially. The positive approach starts by meeting students as they arrive at school via the bus or family drop-off. A BES staff member welcomes the students at both entrances and helps the students make a choice to enjoy breakfast in the cafeteria or to walk and talk outside. Students then begin their day with a greeting from their

classroom teacher and a morning warm-up to settle into the day's routine.

Vision

During the first six weeks of school and throughout the school year at BES, we teach kids about behavior, just as we would teach about other subjects like reading or math. Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding. The purpose of school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm and, as needed, to provide logical consequences for reflection. Ask your child about the tools they are learning at school to help themselves with tricky moments, conflicts, and learning challenges. Lots of learning to celebrate at BES!



Student Recognition

BES, North Elementary, and Margaret Chase Smith School are utilizing a curriculum called Core Values. The Core Values Curriculum has monthly social-emotional learning themes that the students study at grade-level assemblies, with their teachers, and during monthly lessons with our school guidance counselor. The themes for the 2023-24 school year are friendship, integrity, gratitude, generosity, responsibility, kindness, peace, patience, commitment, and celebration. Each day teachers recognize positive student behaviors by awarding "Hawklips." Students can earn prizes for Hawklips through weekly and monthly drawings, and then some students are recognized at our monthly assemblies as "Core Value Students of the Month."

Parent-Teacher Group

BES is lucky to have an active Parent-Teacher Group that supports and celebrates students and staff. The group meets monthly to plan for our school. The PTG helps with prizes for students, recess toys, fundraisers, family events, funding field trips, other school needs such as clothing or snacks, and celebrating staff. Check out the Facebook page: Skowhegan Little Hawks Parent Teacher Group to follow events and meeting dates.

Canaan Elementary Celebrates Grandparents' Day



Returning to school each fall is always exciting. There is a buzz in the air as students reunite with friends after the summer break. Staff enjoy seeing our students' smiling faces and meeting the families on the first day and at Open House. Learning new routines, making new friends, and sharing new experiences always top the list of our fall favorites.

One of our other favorite fall traditions at Canaan Elementary School is Grandparents' Day. On October 19, children and staff in grades K-5 celebrated these special adults by inviting them to the school for a few hours. The students shared lunch, enjoyed recess, and visited the book fair with their special adult or grandparent. Pre-K enjoyed special time with their grandparents that afternoon doing activities in their classrooms and on the playground. We can't wait to share more experiences with our families throughout the year.

After School Program “REACH”ing 200+ Students



The REACH After School Program is off to an exciting start this school year, with over 200 students enrolled across all three programs. This year REACH will celebrate five years of keeping the “Lights on After School” and providing Skowhegan students with quality academic and educational enrichment programming.

The middle school program is again fully club based this school year, offering 14 clubs for students to participate in. From culinary arts, theater and dance, basic and advanced robotics, art, civic engagement, outdoor adventure, and basic and advanced sewing, each club is designed to engage students in a content area that connects them to real world learning, career exploration, and community service.

Our MCSS program, which serves 3rd – 5th grade, has followed suit and now offers two days each week of club-based programming. Along with offering fun and engaging clubs focused on science, robotics, space exploration, creative writing, cooking, sewing and art, our MCSS staff work hard to provide opportunities for students to solve problems collaboratively, communicate through disagreements, build healthy relationships, cultivate self-awareness, and lean into bravely trying new things.

The Bloomfield program is getting ready to launch their program using a guided play model. Recreating imaginary restaurants, vet clinics, hospitals, mechanic shops, and stores are all part of this year’s Bloomfield after school adventure. Each play station will offer students an experience that fosters their social and emotional development and agency through collaboration, group problem solving, relationship building and self-regulation. Students will also learn how to apply the math, literacy, and science skills that they learn in the classroom into real life situations, as well as to make connections to future careers.

Our Bloomfield program is on the hunt for toys and materials that could support our play stations. We welcome donations and sponsorships. Please reach out to our program director, Dawn Fickett, at dfickett@msad54.org for more information on how you can help.

MSAD 54 Welcomes New Math Coaches



We are excited to announce that our district now has four mathematics coaches to support the implementation of our new math program, Illustrative Math, in Kindergarten – 5th grade. Valerie LaPointe and Mary Herrick will be working alongside Beth Downing and Morgan Marden to support this curriculum shift. After a systematic process, Illustrative Math was selected because it coincides with our district’s Vision for Mathematics Teaching & Learning.

Vision for Mathematics Teaching & Learning

Our vision at MSAD #54 is that mathematics teaching and learning is an intentional process, in which stakeholders value:

- taking risks
- working collaboratively
- math as constructing meaning, by connecting new to prior learning
- engagement in relevant problem solving
- flexible thinking
- productive struggle
- regular assessments that inform instructional choices, and
- the belief that everyone is capable of learning mathematics.

We aspire to be passionate teachers, engaged students, and effective leaders.

As a result, we are mathematical thinkers who have the mindset, skillset, perseverance, and confidence, to build productive mathematical futures.

What is Title I?

By Erin Madore, Title I Director

Many of you may remember Title I when you were students. Often it consisted of small group or one-on-one interventions with a Title I teacher. Title I has evolved over the years. The intent of this article is to clarify what exactly Title I is in 2023, and why it is important.

The Maine Department of Education defines Title I as “a federal program that provides financial assistance to school districts and schools with high percentages of children from low-income families. Federal monies support a variety of services to help ensure all Maine students have fair and equal opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on State standards and assessments.” In essence, Title I is a program designed to help equal the playing field, ensuring all children have access to effective programming and teaching despite challenging socioeconomic circumstances.

All MSAD 54 elementary schools are currently Title I schoolwide. This means that all students

in our elementary schools are considered Title I students. MSAD 54 schools use the Title I funding to responsively meet the needs of all children in Kindergarten – 5th grade. Some children still receive one-on-one instruction by a Title I teacher. Other children may receive their instruction in small groups. Title I support may also be provided by placing an extra teacher in the classroom during reading, writing, or math blocks.



The overarching goal of Title I programming is to provide the support necessary for every child to reach grade level expectations. Our Title I staff and interventions have a significant impact in the lives of our students across the district.

If you have any questions regarding the MSAD 54 Title I program, please feel free to contact me at emadore@msad54.org or 474-2907, extension 3301.

Positive New Changes at SAMS

Skowhegan Area Middle School takes pride in what we offer our students, their families, and our staff. Our school values statement focuses on attitude, behavior, and commitment ($A2+B2=C2$), and we have a district mission, vision, and guiding beliefs rooted in inclusivity and welcoming all to school. With these philosophies in mind, the SAMS staff started the year in an expanded, bright school excited by the opportunity to work with all MSAD 54 middle school students.

Now that we now have all 6th-8th grade students across the district attending Skowhegan Area Middle School (bringing our total population to nearly 500 students), we have added five new classroom spaces, a spacious expansion to our cafeteria, and new teachers. We are also serving students with new team configurations to provide a quality educational

experience to our SAMS students that matches their changing needs.



With all our middle-level students now under one roof, we will continue to focus on our students' academic and social-emotional experience. Initiative such as iPOWER and Restorative Practices will have an even greater impact. The future of SAMS is bright!

In order to stay up to date on SAMS' news, please take a moment to like the Skowhegan Area Middle School Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61551219593115>.

Aspire Sponsors Career Day Field Trip



On Thursday, October 5, 75 students from Somerset Career and Technical Center (SCTC) traveled to Midcoast Excavation in West Bath to participate in The National Association of Women in Construction's (NAWIC) Maine Construction Career Days. Female students were particularly encouraged to participate in a "Girls Can Too Challenge," as NAWIC encourages more women to enter the construction

field.

The day included hands-on activities including operating excavators and cranes, rigging, and welding. Students also were able to learn about apprenticeship opportunities and to connect with employers from the private and public sector. SCTC students and instructors spent hours exploring the day's options and participating in a variety of experiences; several students said it was the best field trip they had ever attended.

Robin Wood, Reed & Reed's Director of Human Resources and President of NAWIC, said, "We are thrilled to bring this event back for our second year. This is the platform our Chapter uses to raise funds to award scholarships to deserving Maine students entering a construction related field. Our goal is to expose Maine high school students to possible career paths in both the construction and transportation industries, and this event hits on all cylinders."

Michaela Charles, SCTC's Workforce Development Coordinator, said, "We appreciate the MELMAC Education Foundation's support of this trip through the Aspire River Hawks' initiative. Students were able to meet with many contractors throughout the state and learn of career opportunities they did not know existed before this event."

To learn more about NAWIC, please visit <https://nawicmaine.org/>. For more information on the Aspire River Hawks initiative, please visit <https://sites.google.com/msad54.org/aspireriverhawks>.

Maine Supreme Court Holds Session at SAHS

By Carlie Jarvais and Carolyn Snowman

Since 2005 the Maine Supreme Court Justices have gone on the road to schools around the state; in three different schools each year, they set up shop for the day and hear cases. Once the proceedings conclude and a decision is rendered, the justices give each school a personal copy of the conclusions so that students can read the rulings on

the cases they heard. On October 5, 2023, Skowhegan Area High School had the privilege of hosting the Maine Supreme Court.

When our teachers first told us about the upcoming event, we were excited because we knew it would be an interesting academic exploration and application of our curriculum. Our social studies teachers were especially involved. They took the time to brief us about the court cases, which helped us to feel prepared and allowed us to be better engaged.



(Photo courtesy of Mrs. Brenda Grenier)

As young people entering the “adult” world soon, some of us in less than a year, this experience was a wonderful way to learn about being a citizen and the American justice system in general. Although we have studied the Constitution and our rights as Americans, this was the first time many of us witnessed these ideas being put into practice.

The court itself provided an incredible balance between allowing the proceedings to be an educational experience, while still getting through necessary procedures. At first, we thought that the courtroom would be strictly serious business. Although this was mostly true, there was some occasional levity from the justices, such as Justice Connors turning an argument into a humorous situation rather than a tense moment.

Encounters between the attorneys and justices were mostly cordial and based on trying to get their ideas across to one another; we greatly respect their ability to interact with such civility despite being on opposing sides. As young women, we were also pleased to see women not only as attorneys but also as justices, including Chief Justice Stanfill. Some of us went into the courtroom assuming the proceedings would be led primarily by men.

We even learned a new word, “curtilage,” which

was a significant factor discussed in the case of a man who was pulled over in his driveway and searched on the scene without a warrant. Attorneys debated allowable searches and seizures as outlined by the Fourth Amendment in the Bill of Rights, and this case explored whether a driveway is considered someone’s private property.

Since the Maine Supreme Court only chooses three schools every year to hear cases, we are grateful that students at SAHS were among the few to have this experience. We would like to thank the people who advocated for the Supreme Court to visit us and provide this rare opportunity.

MSAD 54 Adult Ed Graduates Eight CNAs



Eight students recently completed their CNA training through a partnership of Mount Joseph in Waterville, the Department of Labor, and MSAD 54 Adult Education. A graduation ceremony was held at Mount Joseph on Wednesday, September 27.

Thanks to the “Healthcare for ME” initiative through the Maine Department of Labor, the students’ tuition and textbooks—along with supplies like scrubs, shoes, stethoscope, and watch—were 100% covered.

MSAD 54 and Mount Joseph also tapped into this funding to offer a CNA-M class that started November 14. To qualify for CNA-M training, a CNA must have worked a minimum of 1,200 hours in the past two years and must be in good standing on the CNA Registry.

If you are interested in free or low-cost workforce training, please visit maineadulted.org.

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MSAD 54/SCTC Backpack Program Receives Award



Somerset Public Health presented the MSAD 54 Backpack Program with the Redington Fairview General Hospital Award at their Annual Celebration on September 13, 2023.

Volunteer Chelsey Carrier and SCTC Director David Dorr were in attendance to accept the award. Each week, over 200 backpacks are filled with food and delivered to the schools in the district for students to take home.

In addition, the MSAD 54/SCTC Food Pantry has expanded and is open to the families of MSAD 54 students on Thursday afternoons from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Superintendent Moody: Maine’s 2024 Superintendent of the Year



We are proud to announce that our own Superintendent Jonathan Moody was recently named Maine’s Superintendent of the Year. Letters from town select board members, school board members, union presidents, and teachers overwhelmingly supported Mr. Moody’s nomination.

One Board member wrote: “Jon embodies what it means to be ‘in it for the kids’ every single day.” To read the full press release, please visit mainedoenews.net.