

MIDDLETOWN STANDARD

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BUILDING A LEARNING COMMUNITY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

From the SUPERINTENDENT...

Dear Colleagues & Parents,

Welcome back! I look forward to working with you to make this a successful school year for all students.

How do we plan to achieve success for all students?

We have found a formula that helps us achieve success in Middletown by

- ◆ ensuring that our curriculum planning is closely tied to assessment and by
- ◆ working diligently to keep the lines of communication among all key players (school district, administrators, teachers, students, parents, family, and community) wide open.

On September 2nd, as we planned for the start of the 2008-2009 school year, we provided all Middletown teachers and administrators with a half-day training and discussion session. At that session, we talked about the three key elements of the district's strategic plan:

- √ **Instruction** – Working together as a professional learning community to ensure a vital and rigorous curriculum for all Middletown students and provide them with the opportunity to achieve high educational expectations and standards.
- √ **Assessment** – Ensuring that the local assessments are in place at Middletown Public Schools to provide all students with the opportunity to achieve high educational standards and expectations.
- √ **Communication** – Improving our support for parents, families and students so that we can increase their involvement in decision-making and support for student learning through the use of technological tools.

In upcoming issues of The Standard, we'll provide readers with an in-depth look at each of these key elements of the MPS Strategic Plan.

One of the new initiatives we'll be introducing to strengthen the lines of communication will be to hold **Parent Chats** at each school. It is a chance for the administrators and teachers to highlight some of the great programs at each school and for parents to learn more about their child's school through these conversational meetings. As the **Parent Chats** meetings are scheduled, we will be sure to notify all parents through ConnectEd. Congratulations to all the students and teachers who worked so hard last year to achieve educational excellence. Your efforts paid off! Middletown was the only school district on Aquidneck Island to have all of its schools achieve the Annual Yearly Progress benchmarks set by the Rhode Island Department of Education. Keep up the good work!

I would also like to welcome all the new employees who have joined the Middletown Public School's team. I would like to personally congratulate **Linda Savastano**, who was recently promoted to the role of **Assistant Superintendent For Technology and Learning**. For the past 20 years, Linda has done an exceptional job as a math teacher, a Technology Integrator Specialist and recently our school district's Technology Director. I know she will bring that same level of enthusiasm and attention to detail to her new position.

Welcome Back!

Sincerely,

Rosemarie K. Kraeger

THE STATE ASSESSMENTS **ARE HERE AGAIN!**

Every year, the state of Rhode Island assesses student performance in grades 3 through 11 in the areas of reading, writing and math. The state assessments are commonly known as the NECAP (New England Common Assessment Program) Assessments and were developed with Vermont and New Hampshire. The assessment window is from October 1-23 this year and districts and schools have developed their own schedules for administering the assessments.

For more information about the NECAP assessments, and to see how Middletown schools performed in previous years, visit <http://www.ridoe.net/assessment/NECAP.aspx>

New After School Programming at Gaudet

Looking for a new after-school program for your middle-school age child? Well you're in luck. Middletown Public Schools is partnering with the Middletown Parks and recreation Department to offer the **Rising Tides After School Enrichment Program** at Gaudet Middle School. Offerings include martial arts, yoga, cooking, mind challenges, tennis, dance, and the list goes on. **Rising Tides** is an affordable and healthy alternative for middle school age students who reside in Middletown. Reduced rates for free and reduced qualified students are available.

To learn more about this program, please contact Shannon Shea at 824-9104 or e-mail at sshea@middletownri.com

MIDDLETOWN SCHOOLS ACHIEVE ANNUAL YEARLY PROGRESS

Middletown is the only school district on Aquidneck Island to have all of its schools achieve the Annual Yearly Progress benchmarks set by the Rhode Island Department of Education. Congratulations! For a look at how each school performed, please refer to the charts below:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

| SCHOOL | ELA TARGET SCORE | SCHOOL SCORE | DISTRICT SCORE | STATE SCORE |
|---------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| Aquidneck | 84.1 | 92.1 | 89.1 | 86.2 |
| Forest Ave | 84.1 | 87.3 | 89.1 | 86.2 |
| Kennedy | 84.1 | 87.4 | 89.1 | 86.2 |
| Gaudet Middle | 70.6 | 91.7 | 91.5 | 85.7 |
| High School | 75 | 93.4 | 93.2 | 85.2 |

MATHEMATICS

| SCHOOL | MATH TARGET SCORE | SCHOOL SCORE | DISTRICT SCORE | STATE SCORE |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| Aquidneck | 74.5 | 92.0 | 89.1 | 82.3 |
| Forest Ave | 74.5 | 87.1 | 89.1 | 82.3 |
| Kennedy | 74.5 | 86.4 | 89.1 | 82.3 |
| Gaudet Middle | 64.1 | 90.7 | 90.5 | 79.6 |
| High School | 63.2 | 75.8 | 75.2 | 66.3 |

KRUPOWICZ PLANETARIUM
“2008 BEST OF RI”

RI Monthly Magazine recently acknowledged what local residents have known for years. The Krupowicz Planetarium at the Gaudet Middle School provides a great family fun night for all ages. The Planetarium was chosen as one of the Editors’ Picks in the annual *RI Monthly Magazine* Best of RI awards.

Here’s what *RI Monthly* had to say about the Krupowicz Planetarium:

“Sometimes kids deserve a night out, too. A stellar option: Family Fun Nights at Middletown’s Krupowicz Planetarium. One Monday a month, the planetarium’s director uses a projector to recreate more than 6,000 stars in the night sky. She keeps it fresh by tackling a new topic –from star locations to basic celestial motions—each month. Get there early: Space-themed crafts and simulated astronaut activities are offered a half-hour before the 7:30 p.m. show, plus the planetarium has been known to have to turn people away after reaching its sixty-seat capacity. J.H. Gaudet Middle School, 1113 Aquidneck Avenue.”

If you’d like to take advantage of one of these family fun nights geared for families and children ages 4 and up, check out the fall schedule below. The cost is \$3 per person, \$2 for children ages 4 to 8. No reservations – first come, first served! Seating capacity 60 people. For more information, please go to <http://www.ri.net/middletown/planetarium> or contact Renee Gamba at rgamba@mpsri.net.

WELCOME NEW STAFF

Peter Wood—Director of Technology
 Karen LaFleur—Forest Avenue
 Robin Fricchione—ALP
 Denise Morrow—High School
 Amanda Jordan—High School
 Corinne Piner—High School

Welcome to Middletown!

DATES TO REMEMBER

11/04—Election Day (NO SCHOOL)
11/07—Gr 9-12 1st Quarter Ends
11/11—Veterans Day (NO SCHOOL)
11/27 & 11/28—Thanksgiving Break (NO SCHOOL)

FOREST AVENUE ELEMENTARY CREATES NEW LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



As part of the **Fielding Nair** recommendations that are helping Middletown enhance its learning environments, the Forest Avenue Elementary School has a new learning center for Kindergarten and Multi-Age students.

With this new space, students and teachers will really be able to fully engage in activities such as collaborative learning, large group and small group instruction, tutorials, and active, exploratory learning. While the teachers have been progressive and employed common planning, collaboration and team teaching to guide learning to meet the personal needs of each child for

many years, this new environment will create many new possibilities for early learning at Forest Avenue.

This new learning space will have a “commons” area as the focal point; this will be a center for active learning and group presentations. In addition to “Peanut-shaped” tables with computers for students on them, there will also be a teacher planning center which supports collaboration and frees up classrooms for shared use among several teachers.

The Gaudet Middle School Library/ Technology Center was the first MPS building to employ a similar philosophy of redesigning computer

space to make the area more student friendly. Rather than rows of computers, computers are housed on a variety of table shapes which allows more mobility for both teachers and students. The students at Gaudet absolutely love this new learning environment and have asked that the existing computer lab be rebuilt on similar lines.

For more information about the Fielding Nair recommendations, visit http://www.ri.net/middletown/mef/Fielding_Nair_Executive_Summary_1107.pdf on our district webpage.

NEW STATE SCIENCE TESTS RESULTS

Last spring, for the first time, Rhode Island, Vermont and New Hampshire Departments of Education administered New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) Science tests to assess elementary, middle and high school performance in physical science, earth science, space science and inquiry. Students in grades 4, 8 and 11 were tested using the state’s new Grade Span Expectations (GSE) in science, which can be viewed at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/Instruction/gle.aspx>

Assessment results show that the district scored higher than the state in grades 4 and 8 and only one percentage below in grade 11. The scores for each level are below:

| Grade 4 | | Grade 8 | | Grade 11 | |
|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| District | State | District | State | District | State |
| 39% | 36% | 34% | 18% | 16% | 17% |

Middletown elementary students are taught science using specially designed, inquiry-based kits known as “KITES”, which stands for “Kits in Teaching Elementary Science”. The KITES curriculum uses science curriculum materials that were developed through funding from the National Science Foundation. The grade 7-8 counterpart to KITES is called “HELMSS”, which stands for “High Expectations for Learning in Middle School Science.” Information about the curriculums can be found at <http://www.ebecri.org/custom/cmatrix.html>.

The district will be reviewing the results of the assessments and working with East Bay Educational Collaborative to revise the curriculums to more closely match the new state Grade Span Expectations. The next science assessments will take place in the spring of 2009.

From the Director of Facilities Management. . .Ed Collins

LEARNING TO GROW SPORTS FIELDS

It may seem easy to take a football field that has been beaten up and make it look better. Or take a baseball infield that is a dust bowl in September and have it withstand the long season without seeing the cloud of infield dirt kick up when the wind blows. But there is more to it. Two years ago the maintenance department staff was not knowledgeable enough and did not have the proper equipment to take care of our sports fields.

Our first step was to educate ourselves on how to turn the fields around. We attended some meetings and seminars with New England Sports Turf Managers Association (NESTMA) and then decided to become members. We solicited their help in coming to evaluate our fields. Our main priority was the football field.

NESTMA spent three days working with us on improving and maintaining the field. Our crew learned how to properly repair and care for the field and develop a field maintenance schedule. We also found we lacked the proper equipment, so the Town and School Departments came through with funding to purchase a new tractor, a spreader, an aerator and water cannon.

At this point, we were now ready to tackle the baseball infield. First, we needed to select the right "mix." We needed to select a mix that would not require daily watering, not hold too much water (certain clay mixes turn to mud after rain) and most importantly, not dry up. Again, NESTMA provided the education on how to get through this process, helping us to select a mix that is very similar to the one used at Fenway Park. We also chose an additive that helps add some color and holds the moisture, which prevents the field from drying up.

We again brought down people from NESTMA to work alongside of us to repair and maintain the fields. They spent three days working on the baseball field and going back over our other fields, showing us what was being done correctly and what we needed to improve on.

As we continue to build and improve, it is important that we become able to maintain our fields with our own staff. This translates to avoiding paying larger costs for contractors to come in and do the work.

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