

## It's Back to School Time!

### **A Letter from Superintendent Timothy J. Quinn, Ed.D.**

In just a few short weeks, we'll welcome back more than 5,200 students to our schools. Emotions and feelings will range from eager to anxious, and excitement to apprehension. Our students are standing at the beginning of a brand new school year! Just as our students are filled with excitement for all the possibilities that this new school year brings - so too are faculty and staff!

### **Budget Constraints Bring About Change**

The close of the 2010-2011 school year brought with it a number of changes. Some of these changes are associated with the completion of an extremely difficult budgeting process, during which Methacton was forced to eliminate 15 staff positions. Program curtailments include the elimination of the district's transitional first grade, sixth grade family and consumer science, a number of elementary math specialist positions and a realignment of the Arcola Intermediate School program. A total of 16 faculty transfers appeared on the June 21 board agenda.

This reduction in staff began with the prior year's budget cycle, during which the district eliminated elementary library aides, and reduced the number of elementary recess aides by half. In addition to staffing changes, a number of purchases and programs have been delayed, eliminated or curtailed over the past three years as we navigated difficult budgets in anticipation of flat revenues from year to year. This would include postponing textbook adoptions in elementary social studies and science as well as secondary foreign language, and delaying the purchase of replacement musical instruments, and hardware and software that enhance the delivery of curriculum. Staff development and conference travel not funded through federal grant monies was also curtailed. We completed professional reviews of our building energy consumption and transportation procedures in order to identify practices and modifications that can reduce costs. Late bus runs were eliminated for both MHS and Arcola. We reduced our postage costs through increased use of available technology to communicate information traditionally sent by mail, and eliminated printing of the community newsletter and student activities calendar.

### **A Streamlined, Student-Focused Approach**

These changes have challenged us to think differently about how we work as an organization. Working closely with teachers and staff, our administrative team completed important planning that will enable us to continue to provide our students with the high quality education they need to be successful.

The most significant changes were made at **Arcola**. Principal Lu Page and Assistant Principal Ryan Creeden have reorganized the seventh and eighth grade program. The elimination of a team at each grade level precipitated changes to the overall scheduling. While this was a daunting task, we took it as an opportunity to streamline how each minute in the middle level student's day is allocated.

The newly restructured student schedule now incorporates bullying prevention in succession with the character education program at Skyview, as well as increased club and activity opportunities that help students explore varied interests. There is a renewed focus on ways to utilize the teaming approach to integrate student leadership skills that will help them achieve success at MHS and beyond.

After careful review of faculty, we reorganized the available staff and increased the gifted position as well as the reading and math specialists positions to full time at Arcola. Available opportunities for students to receive honors instruction were increased, and students identified as gifted will have the opportunity to engage in seminars in their specific area(s) of giftedness and/or interest, while expanding their use of technology. We are now able to reach out to all students and meet them where they are academically, while challenging them to increase their skills to prepare for the rigors of the high school curriculum.

In addition to creating a more rigorous learning environment, these changes also help faculty and staff to embrace the middle school philosophy with smaller learning communities where the focus is on "every student by name."

**Skyview**, now entering its second year, also saw changes as a result of budgetary reductions. The family and consumer science program was curtailed, and the district's overall contribution to the outdoor

education program was reduced. Families were asked to bear most of the cost for their fifth grade student's attendance with support from the Skyview Home and School Association, and the experience was reduced to one night instead of two. A survey of Skyview families was conducted to guide program planning for this year.

At the **elementary level**, the elimination of transitional first grade will have teachers, counselors and principals using the tools that Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) provides us through testing and data collection to bring a renewed focus to the close monitoring of the progress made by our youngest students. When we see a student struggling, we'll have the important information we need to provide targeted interventions that will help them be successful in meeting the benchmarks that are necessary for a smooth transition to first grade. Parents will play a critical role and can expect clear, quality communications from their student's teachers.

Change is always difficult, but I'm confident that as a more efficient, streamlined organization, we've maintained a sharp focus on what's most important - preparing our students to achieve their greatest potential while making the best possible use of our available resources.

I look forward to another successful school year in Methacton, and to witnessing an exciting fresh start for faculty, staff and students on September 6.



## Orientation and Back to School Night Schedule

Skyview Open House and Scavenger Hunt .....	Aug. 25 .....	6:30 p.m.
MHS Freshman & New Student Orientation .....	Sept. 1 .....	7:30 a.m.
MHS New Parent Orientation .....	Sept. 1 .....	10 a.m.
Arcola 7th Grade New Student Orientation .....	Sept. 1 .....	10 a.m.
Arcola 8th Grade New Student Orientation .....	Sept. 1 .....	1:30 p.m.
Arrowhead Kindergarten & New Student Orientation .....	Sept. 1 .....	1:30 p.m.
Audubon Kindergarten & New Student Orientation .....	Sept. 1 .....	2 p.m.
Eagleville Kindergarten Orientation .....	Sept. 1 .....	1:30 p.m.
Eagleville New Student Orientation .....	Sept. 1 .....	2 p.m.
Woodland Kindergarten Orientation .....	Sept. 1 .....	2 p.m.
Worcester Kindergarten Orientation .....	Sept. 1 .....	1:30 p.m.
Worcester New Student Orientation .....	Sept. 1 .....	2:30 p.m.
Arrowhead Back To School Night .....	Sept. 13 .....	7 p.m.
Woodland Back to School Night .....	Sept. 14 .....	6:30 p.m.
Eagleville Back to School Night .....	Sept. 15 .....	6:45 p.m.
Worcester Back to School Night .....	Sept. 15 .....	6:30 p.m.
Audubon Back to School Night .....	Sept. 20 .....	6 p.m.
Skyview 5th Grade Back to School Night .....	Sept. 21 .....	7 p.m.
Skyview 6th Grade Back to School Night .....	Sept. 22 .....	7 p.m.
Arcola 7th Grade Back to School Night .....	Sept. 26 .....	7 p.m.
MHS Back to School Night (Grades 9-10) .....	Sept. 27 .....	7 p.m.
Arcola 8th Grade Back to School Night .....	Sept. 28 .....	7 p.m.
MHS Back to School Night (Grades 11-12) .....	Oct. 6 .....	7 p.m.
NMTCC Back to School Night .....	Oct. 6 .....	6 p.m.

# Methacton

## SCHOOL DISTRICT

1001 Kriebel Mill Road  
Eagleville, PA 19403

W W W . M E T H A C T O N . O R G

Non-Profit  
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**First Day of  
School!**  
**September 6, 2011**

## New Faces in Methacton

Methacton's faculty and staff welcomed a number of new faces that will bring about other positive changes as the new school year gets underway.



Dr. Todd A. Fay

**Dr. Todd A. Fay was appointed Director of Pupil Services** in February, and completed his transition to Methacton full-time in July.

Prior to joining Methacton's administration, Dr. Fay served as Superintendent of both the West Amwell Township and Lambertville Public school districts. Dr. Fay brings more than 30 years of educational experience to his position in Methacton.

**Aaron J. Roberts joins Methacton as the principal of Arrowhead Elementary School.** Prior to joining Methacton's administration, Mr. Roberts served as principal of Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center in the Wyomissing Area School District. He brings 14 years of combined experience in counseling and education to his position at Arrowhead.

"Both Dr. Fay and Mr. Roberts are fantastic additions to our administrative team," Superintendent Dr. Timothy J. Quinn

said, "They share our deep commitment to what's best for students, and we look forward to working with them this year and for years to come."

The Methacton School Board recently approved the appointment of **Aramark Educational Services, LLC** to manage all of the district's food services needs. Aramark's five year plan outlines several improvements to the Methacton's food services. Within the first year, these improvements include the installation of a point of sale system in Methacton's elementary schools, the implementation of a nutrition curriculum for all schools and new menu options. "Aramark will provide the high quality service and varied menu choices our families expect for their children." Dr. Quinn noted.

A contract with **Moss Rehab will provide increased athletic training service coverage** at both MHS and Arcola beginning this school year. This includes dedicated trainers who will provide full coverage at all home games and practices at both schools, as well as all varsity "away" football games and any nightly district or state playoff event.



Aaron J. Roberts