

September

8

2009

# PTO Notes

Marion Cross School



## Letter from the Principal: The Long Range Planning Process

This fall, Marion Cross School will begin the development of a three to five year Long Range Plan (LRP). The long range planning process is a collaborative effort that will review Marion Cross's traditions and mission, collect information from the community regarding its hopes for the future of the school, and develop goals and strategies for how to turn these hopes into reality.

The first step in this process is to create a long range planning committee. Applications for membership on this committee can be found on the last page of this publication, in the back of the Parent Handbook, or at the MCS office. If you are interested in serving on the LRP committee, please send a copy of your application to the school office by September 15, 2009. It is our hope to develop a committee of approximately fifteen people who are very interested in the future of the school and who represent various segments of the Norwich community, including parents, teachers, and board members.

The first Long Range Planning committee meeting will take place on October 19. It will be a half-day retreat during which the committee will review the school's mission, discuss internal and external influences on the life of the school, and begin to reflect upon what we want our school to look like in the next three to five years. Also in

October, members of the committee will meet with focus groups of parents and teachers to discuss what they want Marion Cross School's graduates to know, which of the school's goals they want changed (or to remain the same), and what they would like the school to look like in the next three to five years.

In November, the committee will discuss the recommendations contributed by focus groups and what the individual long range planning committee members want MCS to look like during the next three to five years. In December, the committee will develop a new school mission statement and specific goals for the long range plan. In February, it will develop strategies for the implementation of each of the goals, and in March, the goals will be reviewed, organized, and finalized. In April, the final version of the long range plan will be presented to the board for its vote of approval.

If you have any questions about this process, or if you are interested in taking part, please stop by the school office. I would be happy to speak with you.

Linda Kelley

*If you have any comments for Dr. Kelley, feel free to email her ([linda.kelley@marioncross.org](mailto:linda.kelley@marioncross.org)).*

## Calendar

### September 10

*Bike-to-School Day*  
7:30 am, Huntley Meadow  
See page 5 for details.

*4th Grade Curriculum Night*  
5-6:30\*

*5<sup>th</sup> and 6th Grade Curriculum Night*  
6:30-7:30 pm\*

### September 12

*Norwich Olde Home Day*

### September 14

*PTO Meeting*  
8:30 am, Former French Room

### September 15

*K and 1st Grade Curriculum Night*  
5-6 pm\*

*2nd and 3rd Grade Curriculum Night*  
6-7 pm\*

### September 17

*Breakfast with the Principal,*  
8 am, MCS Conference Room

*Pizza with the Principal*  
5 pm, MCS Library

### October 21

*Open House*  
4:30-6 pm

## Take Note: Marion Cross School News and Information



### New After School Program

The NASP program has ceased operation. Its board, in collaboration with Marion Cross School, has offered the Child Care Center of Norwich (CCCN) the opportunity to take over the school's after care services. NCCC, under the direction of Allison Colburn, will offer separate programs for K-1 and 2-6 during the coming year. All students who had originally signed up for NASP will automatically be served by CCCN.

### MCS Electives Program Rejuvenates

Students in grades 4-6 will be offered an electives program that will take place during the afternoons of Day 3 beginning September 8. Various electives will be offered by all teachers of upper elementary students and specialists. Each elective will meet four times. The teacher of a particular elective may limit the number of participants, but no elective may have fewer than four students or more than 24. Sign up will take place on Day 6 of the week prior to the start of a four-week session. Students in grades 5 and 6 must sign up for at least one community service offering during the year.

### Pizza with the Principal

Due to the popularity of "Breakfast with the Principal," and the request that it be extended to late afternoon for those unable to participate in the morning, MCS will offer an additional "issues driven" parent discussion program. On September 17, parents are invited to "Pizza with the Principal" at 5 pm as well as "Breakfast with the Principal" at 8 am. Both programs will deal with the same topic. This month's discussion will focus on MCS dismissal procedures and other after school student issues. If you are interested in attending either event, please call Corinne Fenton in the MCS office (649-1703).

### Faculty Ad Hoc Committees

This year's faculty ad hoc committees are the following:

- Report Card (to manage implementation of new report cards)
- Daily Schedule (to manage implementation of six-day schedule)
- Handwriting (to continue the development of handwriting curricula)
- REP (to assess and modify the REP program)
- Technology (to write a new school tech plan for 2009-2012)
- Recess (to improve scheduling, coverage, student behavior, etc.)

### Opening Days of School

Faculty in-service for 2009-2010 began on Thursday, August 20 with a potluck for faculty, staff, board members, bus drivers, and custodians at the Kelleys. Many thanks to the members of the school board who attended. Faculty workshops during the following three days included a presentation by Superintendent Wayne Gersen regarding the goals for the 2009-2010 academic year, first aid certification for all teachers, and a presentation entitled "Differentiation in an Inclusive School" by Cheryl Jorgensen from the University of New Hampshire's Institute on Disability.

### LEEEP Publication

Last year's fourth grade has published a new book that contains drawings and explanations of various species found in vernal pools. *Creatures of the Vernal Pool* was produced and edited by Lindsay Putnam, Director of the LEEEP program. It explains why vernal pools appear in the northeast United States in the early spring, the kinds of creatures that are born and live there, and why it is a race for life before these pools dry up in the heat of the summer. This beautiful book was created with the help of Shannon Wallis and a grant from the Norwich Conservation Commission.

## Library Volunteers Needed

Helping in the library is a very enjoyable experience. Currently, I need volunteers on a regular basis to help check books in and out for the students and to shelve books. The following shifts are available: Monday: 8:15-10:15 and 10:15-12; Wednesday: 10:30-12 and 12:30-3; Thursday: 10:30-12. There is flexibility in any of these shifts. If you want to pair up with somebody to split the days, that would be fine. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Joy Blongewicz, teacher-librarian ([joy.blongewicz@marioncross.org](mailto:joy.blongewicz@marioncross.org)) or call 649-1703 ext. 208. Thank you very much! Joy Blongewicz

## Giving Bowls 2009 Volunteer Opportunities

Preparations for Giving Bowls 2009 are in full swing, but we still need many more volunteers to ensure the success of the event. On October 4, from 3-5 pm on the Norwich Green, community members will come together to share soup, break bread, learn about local and international hunger issues, and raise funds to address those issues.

Two years ago, Giving Bowls 2007 was a huge success with over 600 people attending and over \$8000 raised for a non-profit hunger organization in Africa. Please help us make Giving Bowls 2009 even more successful. Proceeds from this year's event will benefit Willing Hands, a local hunger organization, and Sustainable Harvest International in Central America.

There will be many opportunities to participate in this wonderful event. First, we will be glazing bowls on Tuesdays and Thursday evenings throughout September, from 6-9 pm in the MCS art room. No artistic skill or prior experience is needed. We also need two individuals to help Tracy Smith oversee each session.



Second, we need old/unwanted napkins to use at the event. Please bring any you have to donate to the MCS art room.

Third, we will need many, many folks to help the day of the event.

Tasks include setting up tents before hand, serving soup during the event, collecting donations, helping with educational programs, and cleaning up after the event is over. There will be a sign up sheet in the school lobby.

Last, and far, far from least, please come to the event with your families and neighbors and make a difference in the lives of others.

For more information about any volunteer options, please contact either Tracy Smith ([tracy.smith@marioncross.org](mailto:tracy.smith@marioncross.org) or 649-1703, ext. 225) or Julie Choi ([mmecclementine@yahoo.com](mailto:mmecclementine@yahoo.com) or 649-8592).

## SAU #70 Special Educational Workshop Series

SAU 70 is offering three educational workshops during the 2009-2010 school year (Oct. 5, Nov. 2 & 30). All workshops will be held at the Richmond Middle School auditorium from 6-7:30 pm. We are very fortunate to have Dr. Ray Chin present the workshops, which will focus on supporting students with executive function, social cognition, and behavioral concerns. Their purpose will be to:

- clarify often confusing concepts so that educational team members can be on the 'same page' before planning any intervention, and
- give examples of successful team interventions that employ neurodevelopmental models (vs pathology models).

The first session will focus on behavior disorders. The term 'behavior' is something of a red herring, as it can mask the neuropsychological substrates of our actions. For example, the behavior of inattention can be caused by cognitive (e.g., lack of salience), neurological (e.g.,

underactive prefrontal cortex), and emotional (e.g., ruminative anxiety) reasons. Therefore, in order to treat the 'behavior' one must understand the brain function first. Simple behavior modification programs often overlook these underlying causes, each of which require different interventions. More effective treatment programs using cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) strategies will be discussed.

The second topic in the series will focus on executive functions (EF) – the regulatory and reasoning abilities that affect our attention, emotions, organization, planning, memory and decisive actions. EF are most often associated with the frontal lobes of the brain that act as the CEO of the rest of the brain. Intelligence as measured by IQ tests is not synonymous with EF. Consider IQ as what you know, but it is EF that performs what you know. The most well-known EF disorder is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, but almost all neurodevelopmental disorders (e.g., autism, trauma, etc) involve

EF deficits.

The last topic in the series will be social cognition, that is the ability to consider others' points of view, subtle emotions, thoughts, and beliefs, and intentions. The ability to predict others' actions is a distinct survival skill (just ask any poker player!). Therefore, deficits in social cognition put children at a distinct disadvantage in life. According to Vygotsky "all learning is social" and children who have social cognition deficits do poorly on the playground as well in the classroom when engaged in turn-taking, negotiation, debates, and group activities. Autism is the most well-known social cognition disorder, but many other disorders can have social cognition deficits. Social cognition training programs will be discussed.

The workshops will be open to anyone interested in attending as long as there is space. To sign up for a single or multiple workshops, email Jean Patten, SAU 70 Special Education Administrative Secretary ([jean.patten@sau70.org](mailto:jean.patten@sau70.org)).

## Notices, Calls for Volunteers, Reminders & Other Timely Information

### Thank You!

Kudos to the following parents for their efforts in putting together these back-to-school events:

K/1st Grade Parent Coffee: Justine Fahey and Linda McNamara  
Walk-to-School Day: Din Seaver  
New Parent Night: Beth Ryan  
PTO Rep System: Alison Miller

### Contributions to PTO

The PTO has many exciting activities planned and wishes to continue providing grants to the teachers and staff at Marion Cross to enrich the curriculum. To make this possible, we rely on membership contributions and funds raised through partnering with organizations such as Inspiring Kids. The suggested contribution is \$20.00, but we are pleased to accept any amount (large or small). All donations are tax-deductible and confidential. Please make your check payable to "MCS PTO" and either mail it to Marion Cross School PTO, P.O. Box 567, Norwich, VT, 05055 or leave it in the PTO Box in the school front office. Your generous and on-going support is much appreciated. Thank you.



### 6th Grade Celebration Committee

School has just started, how can you think about the 6th graders' graduation from Marion Cross?! My friends, the year will fly by. Also part of the fun of a good party is the planning. Interested in organizing? taking on a task? fundraising? Email Karen (kgemery@comcast.net).



### Spelling Bee Coordinator(s) Needed

This PTO sponsored *spring* event, open to the entire Norwich community, is in need of a head honcho or honchos. If you love the Bee but can't spell without spell-check now is your chance to shine! Interested? Email Karen (kgemery@comcast.net)

### ArtStart Volunteers Needed

ArtStart is a PTO sponsored program designed to introduce students to a variety of great works of art in a way that relates to topics in their class curriculum. It is led by parent volunteers, who present the work of a chosen artist for consideration and discussion, and then lead a hands-on activity related that study. It is not necessary to have formal art training or be artistic to participate. Our goal is to collect a team of 3-4 volunteers per grade. The time commitment is limited and flexible – usually two 1-hour sessions spaced throughout the school year.

In most cases the basic lesson plan, visual aids and materials are provided. If you are interested in volunteering, or would like to learn more about ArtStart, please join us for our first informational meeting on Tuesday September 8, at 3:15 pm in the art room. If you would like to volunteer, but can't make the meeting, please contact Amy Neuman 649-2084 (amy\_neuman@hotmail.com) or Karen Wilson 649-2436 (zakwilson@earthlink.net).

### Grassroots Soccer Family Festival

An evening of soccer games, music, and good food to support HIV prevention efforts in Africa on Saturday, September 12, 5-8 pm at Camp Aloha Hive in Fairlee, Vermont. Bring a dish to share. \$35/family and \$20/individual. Contact Laurel Mackin (laurel@tuckermancapital.com) or Sarah Martel (martel71@gmail.com).



### Hanover Hockey Association Skate & Equipment Sale

Saturday, September 12, Champion Rink. Consignment drop off begins at 7:45 am; sale begins at 9:30 am, ends at 1 pm. Support local youth hockey programs by donating or consigning gently-used hockey gear. Plus one-stop shopping for your child's hockey equipment. A donation and consignment drop box will be placed by the gym entrance at MCS from 9/8 - 9/11. Contact Aimee Goodwin (aimee970@yahoo.com).

### Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts is under way. If you want to know more, email or call Dodi Hill (dodi.hill@gmail.com or 649-3749).

## Music Notes: Chorus, Band & Orchestra

We're off to a great start in all General Music classes but don't hesitate to contact me should you have any questions. In addition to General Music we offer the following activities:

### Chorus:

Chorus begins the week of September 14th. The 3rd and 4th chorus is on Monday at 2:15 and the 5th and 6th on Tuesday at the same time. 3/4 chorus is not elective but 5/6 is. If you have a 5th or 6th grader please discuss this with them. Our sign-up will be after the first rehearsal. I am hopeful that we will have a great turn-out this year.

## A Successful Walk to School Day

Thanks to all who participated in and volunteered to help with the walk-to-school day held last Tuesday. It seemed like we had more walkers than in years past. Please keep walking or biking (or scootering, or unicycling, or ???-ing) to school as much as possible.

Let's try to beat last year's distance! Remember that each completed punch card adds 10 miles to our journey towards South America. Last year we travelled 1,620 miles - all the way from Nuevo Laredo, Mexico to Managua, Nicaragua. Last years top travelers were, in no particular order: Alice Garner, Hank Trimble, Rory Livingston, Sage, Noah P., Jasmine T. and Jackson L., (all four in grade K last year), Carly and Perrin Milliken, Patrick Osborn, Jack and Peter Burnham, Emma Tysinger, Avery and Amelia Wallis, Ian Nolan, Hannah Chipman, Ann Osborn, Ingrid Miller, and Kyle Koehler.

### Band:

5th grade students are in the process of signing up for a beginning band instrument. This is completely voluntary of course, but we do offer group lessons and a band experience once they are ready for ensemble work. The school has a couple of instruments should you not own one or be able to rent one. Just get in touch with me and we can discuss it. 6th grade band is at 7:30 am Wednesday morning and lessons will be either Monday or Tuesday am for 6th graders.

### Orchestra:

If your child plays a stringed instrument, please let me know. We offer orchestra but all of our string players take private lessons. Once I know the students who play and their level, I will be in touch regarding our rehearsal time(s).

Warmest Regards,  
Carolyn Keck, Music Teacher

## Ecoteam

Come join the Norwich Ecoteam!

Are you interested in having fun while improving the health of our planet? Here is your chance! We are seeking kids *and adults* who are interested in exploring ways to green up our community. We plan to build on the momentum and success of last year's team efforts toward composting and recycling.

There will be opportunities to get dirty (think compost, paint and sawdust for starters), get creative, collaborate, go on field trips and perhaps enjoy a movie night or two. As a team you will decide what projects you would like to work on and with the support of your friends you will turn your ideas into action!

To join this fun and exciting group please contact either Amy Neuman (amy\_neuman@hotmail.com) or Ashley Milliken (apmilliken@tuckermancapital.com).



## Bike to School Day Thursday September 10th (rain or shine)

Join the "bike parade" from Huntley Meadow to MCS. All students and parents are encouraged to participate. For safety reasons, if you have a child in kindergarten or 1st grade, s/he must be supervised by an adult for the entire length of the parade.

Please gather at Huntley Meadow no later than 7:30 am so that we can start biking promptly at 7:40 am.

# Marion Cross School

Norwich, VT

**School Phone**  
802-649-1703

## **PTO in the Know**

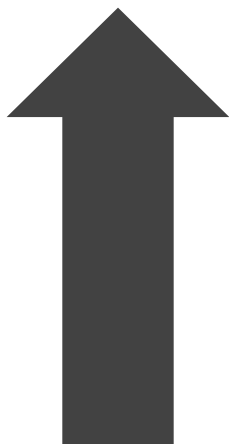
Want to stay in the loop?  
Get notice of PTO meetings,  
minutes, and newsletter  
deadlines (no junk) . . . send  
your email address to  
[kgemery@comcast.net](mailto:kgemery@comcast.net) or  
[atticusmac@comcast.net](mailto:atticusmac@comcast.net)

***The MCS Community  
values a tradition of  
educational excellence  
and is committed to  
nurturing the whole child  
in a climate of respect.***

## **We're on the Web!**

PTO newsletters and more:  
[www.marioncross.org/pto](http://www.marioncross.org/pto)

PTO Notes does not accept  
notices about commercial  
ventures (camps, classes,  
etc.). Flyers can be left in the  
pockets available inside the  
school entrance.



# Happy & Healthy School Year

Dear Parents,

We are looking forward to a happy and healthy school year. With that in mind, we'd like to remind you that keeping your children at home when they are ill is the best way to take care of them, and is protective of the entire MCS community.

If your child has flu symptoms or another illness, please be sure to let the MCS receptionist know when you report the absence. This way we can track the flu or other illnesses within the school community. Flu Symptoms are:

- fever (temperature of 100 degrees or greater)
- chills
- sore throat
- cough
- headache
- body ache
- sometimes nausea, vomiting, diarrhea

Parents will be called when a child is not feeling well and is unable to participate in the programs we offer at school.

Children should not be sent to school with a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Keep your child home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (without fever reducing medication).

Please review these basic cold/flu prevention steps with your child:

- Wash your hands before eating or use alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Turn away from others, when you sneeze or cough.
- Sneeze or cough "into your elbow".
- Wash your hands afterward, if you sneeze or cough into your hand.
- Put soiled tissues in the garbage; don't leave any laying around.
- Don't drink from another person's container. If sharing food, divide it.

Please call us at MCS with questions @ 649-1703, extension 206.

Thank you for following these guidelines, for helping us monitor the situation, and for reinforcing healthy hygiene habits with your child.

Sincerely,

Linda Kelley (Principal) and Jan Hopkins (School Nurse)

## This Year's PTO Reps

Ms. Morse	Sandy Bailey
Mrs. Newberry	Anne Day & Katie Kitchel
Mr. Wilson	Michelle Avila
Mrs. Draper	Lisa Christie
Mrs. Moore	Justine Fahey
Ms. Devoid	Lauren Adams
Mr. Tobin	Alison Miller & Laura Perras
Mrs. Holley	Margaret Lukovits
Ms. Thompson	Becky Zebo
Mrs. Haney	Christina Hall
Mrs. Keogh	Laura Duncan & Donna Mackall
Ms. Dustin	Sheryl Stotland
Mr. Fenton	Megan Brendel
Mr. Girard	Linda Danilek
Mrs. Ames	Anne Alford
Mr. Buck	Dominica Borg
Mrs. Hall	Linda Hazard

## LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE APPLICATION

One of the critical responsibilities of academic institutions is to plan for the future. Developing such a plan is the biggest task facing Marion Cross School this year.

The Norwich School Board is in the process of putting together a long range planning committee. A small group of faculty and board members has been appointed as the core group, but the actual planning committee will be made up of representatives from all Marion Cross School constituencies – board members, faculty, administrators, staff, parents, and alumnae/i.

Members of the committee will be representative of Marion Cross School's rich diversity. The long range planning committee will be charged with developing a plan for the future, which will be adopted and monitored by the School Board, and implemented as appropriate by all in the school community. We would like to hear from YOU if you would like to be a part of this process.

Unfortunately, not everyone can be on the formal committee of 10-15 people, but do let us know if you would be interested in having a part in this exciting process by filling out this form and sending it to Dr. Kelley.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Check all categories that apply: \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty    \_\_\_\_\_ Administrator    \_\_\_\_\_ Staff  
\_\_\_\_\_ Alumna/us    \_\_\_\_\_ MSC parent

If MCS parent, grade(s) and gender(s) of your child(ren): \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been involved in long range planning?  
\_\_\_\_ No    \_\_\_\_ Yes (If yes, please explain briefly.)

I am interested in participating in long range planning because...  
(Feel free to use the back of this paper.)

Tentative Long Range Committee meeting dates:  
October 19, 2009 / November 16, 2009 / December 7, 2009 / February 8, 2010 / March 8, 2010

Return this form by September 15 to:

Linda Kelley, Principal  
Marion Cross School  
Post Office Box 900  
Norwich, VT 05055