



# Troy A. Howard Middle School

## September 2009

### FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

Welcome! We hope you have had a wonderful summer and that you are excited about the upcoming school year. We know we are!!

There is a lot of important information contained in this newsletter. Please read it over carefully so as not to miss any important dates or paperwork that must be returned to school.

We have two new staff members this year: Sarah Joy is our new librarian. Miss Joy is excited about working with all THMS students and will have the library open before and after school for students to check books in or out or to use the library for study time or to finish up homework. Sarah comes to us from the Albany, NY area, please stop by the library and say hello!

Jeff Lovejoy is the Social Studies teacher for the Ecology Team. Mr. Lovejoy is a former BAHS student and has just moved back to Belfast with his family. Please stop by room 119 and welcome him back to Belfast.

The phone system at THMS allows for easy communication with parents and teachers. Simply follow the automated instructions or press 0 to reach Mrs. Sawyer at the Front Desk (between 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.) After 3 p.m. all phone calls go directly to the automated system. Students with messages in the office have their name posted on the whiteboard outside of the office. They may check in with Mrs. Sawyer in between class to get their message. We do not interrupt class for individual messages unless it is an emergency.

Cell Phones may be brought to school and used for after school communication with parents. However, during the school day all electronic devices must be kept in student lockers. Staff will confiscate any "rogue" cell phone, Ipod, etc., and students may pick it up in the office the end of the day. A second offense will require a phone call home and at third offense will necessitate parents coming in to school to retrieve the item from the administration.

We have included the RSU #20 calendar in this newsletter, along with a THMS calendar. The RSU calendar includes all Regional School Unit #20's dates, the THMS contains dates only pertinent to our school. Posting both of these at home will help you keep track of what is going on in the school unit and at THMS.

**Morning Routine** - Buses begin dropping off students in the morning around 7:05 p.m. If parents need to come in to the school, please park in the parking area below the flagpole to avoid blocking the buses. Please do not park in the side area, as that is where parents are dropping off students. All students remain outside until 7:15 a.m., unless they are getting breakfast or using the library. Morning announcements occur at 7:30 a.m., and signal the start of our day. Students arriving at school after 7:30 a.m. will be marked tardy. Excessive tardiness (defined as more than 5 days in a grading period) will result in disciplinary action. Please note that any student arriving at school after 11 a.m. will not be permitted to participate in any after school activities, unless an administrator has granted permission prior to the absence.

**End of the Day Routine** - Announcements are made at 2:00 p.m. and students who have messages in the office are called down at that time. Actual dismissal begins at 2:05 with private riders, walkers and then bus students. Students walking or being picked up will be dismissed following all buses leaving the parking lot, generally around 2:15 p.m. Students must have a note from a parent/guardian regarding any change in their typical routine.

If you are picking up your student, please park in the round loop or along the garden side of the building. If you need to come in to the school, please park in the visitor parking area below the flagpole. Please DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH THE REAR LOT as students are exiting there for buses and practices. Never park directly in front of the school during school hours, as this area is for buses and deliveries only!

**Student Insurance Forms** - The Chalmers Insurance Agency offers low-cost student insurance for any student in need of accident insurance. The cost is between \$38 and \$50 for a schooltime plan. If you are interested in school insurance, please pick up a form from the Front Desk. Once the form is completed, return it directly to the insurance company, not to the school. Please note that any student participating in a school sport must have some type of insurance.

**Free/Reduced Lunch Forms** - Student's will soon be bringing home the Free/Reduced Lunch program information. If you wish to participate in this program, please complete the form and return it to the office by Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009. All students eligible for free/reduced lunch will also be eligible to participate in free tutoring. Information on this tutoring will be coming home later in September.

**School Pictures** - School photos will be taken September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009. All students will have pictures taken for their school I.D. and for homeroom pictures. You are not obligated to purchase any packages but please know that the school receives a percentage of all school picture sales.

**School wide Fundraiser** - Your student will soon be bringing home a packet for our annual all-school fundraiser. This fundraiser will run from September 18<sup>th</sup> to October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Delivery will be the beginning of November. This is our only school fundraiser for the entire year. The money raised last year was used to fund field trips, classroom and pride time activities, classroom incentive programs, special assemblies, and much more. As we do each September, \$400 was sent to the high school to help jumpstart the freshman class's Project Graduation fund. We appreciate your support in this very important fundraising effort.



**Student Planners** - A student planner is provided to every student by the school at no cost to parents. This planner is used to help student's organize their schoolwork and to familiarize them with the school rules. Students write their assignments in the student planner each day. Please check your child's planner each evening to assure assignments are being done.

**After School Opportunities** - THMS offers a variety of sports and extra-curricular activities for the after school hours. Fall sports are; boys and girls soccer, cross-country, field hockey and football. Any student interested in participating should speak with Ms. Reed, our Athletic Director.

Drama is another big opportunity for students. See the bulletin board in the front hallway for information regarding this year's undertakings, or see Mr. Bannister in room 118.

Starting in November, Mr. Bouchard runs an Intramural program on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30 - 3:30. Sports and activities like broomball, archery, swimming, and flag football are all a part of this great program. Students should listen to the end of the day announcements for more information.

The Waldo County YMCA also offers several programs for THMS students. The Teen Access program gives all middle school students free access to the YMCA from 2:30 - 5:30. Students must sign up to take advantage of this program, and forms can be picked up at our Front Desk or at the YMCA.

The YMCA in partnership with Healthy Waldo County and a local Healthy Maine Partnership also offers a Youth Advocacy Program (YAP). YAP's main goal is to support youth in the decision to remain and/or become tobacco free, nutritionally aware and physically fit through educational activities and programs. The program promotes community involvement and supports building leadership skills. Youth will be encouraged to share their ideas about creating a Healthy Waldo County and work together to make it a reality. Student's interested in participating in YAP should contact Brandon Hurd at the Waldo County YMCA for more information.

**Fundraising Made Easy!!** - By purchasing participating products at Hannaford Supermarkets from September 6 through December 6 we can earn money for our school. This year Hannaford has added shelf tags on items that will help us earn money for our school. Purchasing 4 participating products earns 3 school dollars, purchasing 8 products earns 6 school dollars and purchasing 12 products will earn 9 school dollars. Simply drop off your school dollars at Hannaford in the THMS slot or bring them in to school. Last year we received \$934 from this program.



NURSE'S CORNER Mrs. Weaver RN, BSN

Your student will be coming home with a new THMS Emergency sheet. Please have this form completed and returned to school no later than Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009. This form is crucial as the information on this form is how we contact you should an emergency arise. It also gives us permission (when signed in the appropriate places) to give your child Tylenol or Ibuprofen. If we do not receive this form, your child may be excluded from school until the form is completed.

**PEANUT ALLERGY:** We have students at THMS who have severe life-threatening allergy to peanuts/tree nuts. In order to prevent them from having an allergic reaction, foods with peanuts/tree nuts need to be restricted from school. Examples of these foods are bags of peanuts; trail mix, peanut granola bars, and candy bars with peanuts or peanut butter.

We can allow Peanut Butter to be consumed in the cafeteria because it does not spread through the air like particles from peanuts and so is less of a threat in causing an allergic reaction. The area is cleaned after each lunch period and so the chance of cross contamination is decreased. Peanut butter sandwiches will be served in the cafeteria; these are prepared in the kitchen in a designated area and wrapped to prevent any contact with other foods or utensils. If students do eat peanut butter during lunch they are asked to wash their hands to prevent any traces on other surfaces.

**Asthma:** For students who were identified with Asthma on the Emergency Sheets you will be receiving a Maine School Asthma Plan. These need to be signed by your MD and returned to school, this will allow your child to carry their inhaler while at school.

**Medications at School:** If your child needs to have medication during school hours you must have a signed MD order. I am not allowed to give any medication without an order. These orders need to be renewed each school year. The forms can be picked up in the Nurse's Office.

Included in this newsletter is a letter from our Superintendent, Bruce Mailloux regarding flu clinics that will be held in our schools. Please read the letter carefully and should you wish to take advantage of the clinics, please complete the form and return it to Mrs. Weaver our school nurse as soon as possible.

**As a precaution, we are asking that any student who has a fever, cough, or sore throat remain at home until the symptoms have been gone for twenty-four hours. This is to prevent the spread of any type of influenza. If your child has these symptoms while at school, we will call you to arrange dismissal for your child.**