



Mattole Valley Charter School Newsletter

To Share and Celebrate our Vision

December 2007

Greetings and Happy Holidays!

Newsletter Revival:

When I started at MVCS four years ago, coming out of almost 30 years of traditional school experience, one of my duties was to put out a high school newsletter. I thought it was important, and tried to put out useful information, but I didn't know a lot about the operation and ideas behind how MVCS worked.

After 4 years, I've learned a pretty important fact: MVCS is an ever-changing entity, constantly adapting its services to meet the goal of trying to provide an education to those many kids who don't always fit into the template of public school student.

The other thing I know is that every school community needs a feeling of teamwork, validation, and a place to ask, share and communicate. Hopefully this newsletter can be a venue for this.

So, this first edition is put out for you all, to help everyone feel that their work and effort is not going unnoticed, and that everything you do for your students and the school is appreciated.

Please help make this a success. Send me photos and articles (they can be brief), calendar dates for special events, ideas for curriculum, or good training/in-services you'd like to share.

Some of our staff and teachers have felt overwhelmed with implementing so many new plans this year. So this seems like a good time to look at some of those activities within the bigger picture and take away from them a feeling of accomplishment toward the goal of being stronger educators and better serving our students.

Cathy ☺

SB 472 Training

This last summer many ESs took advantage of the SB 472 Trainings in either language arts or math. It speaks well of our quality of instruction that we have so many dedicated teachers taking the time to improve their knowledge of curriculum.

Congratulations Linda Dillen, Lance Blodgett, Debra Davis, Valerie Walsh, Barbara Giacomelli, Rebecca Fortna-Hansen, Darlene Bryner, Sheryl Fearrian, Char Peterson on your certificates of completion!



First Ever MVCS Inservice

For the first time, teachers, administrators, and other staff participated in a two day informational and team building event organized by Pam Lane. Information on changes to Learning Records and the new AIP (Academic Improvement Plan) program was presented by Pam, Alyssa Stamm and Shari Lovett. New employees Shakati Walsh (counselor) and Teresa Creech (math coordinator) were introduced. Cheryl Ingham of HCOE explained to ESs how to use the LARS system to clarify and get more information from STAR test results.



Calendar:

Remember you have 3 extra days to get your Learning Records to your Record Checker. Due Dates at a Glance has not yet been updated. LP4 LRs are due January 11th. ☺

ES meetings:

Humboldt 1/11/08 1:00 PM @ Sonoma St Center
Siskiyou 1/18/08 10:30 AM @ Yreka North

CAHSEE Test Dates:

Administration Date	Test Material Ordering Deadline
February 5-6, 2008	December 18, 2007
March 11-12, 2008	January 28, 2008
May 6-7, 2008	March 24, 2008

Thanks to Supt. Richard Graey, David Bollwinkle, a former Chicago Bulls coach, and current corporate, and educational team trainer wowed us all with his inspiring, team building activities.

There was good food and a great time getting to see members of our school from four counties working and planning together.



SAT 2007-2008 SAT Program Test Schedule

The College Board offers students [online registration](#) for SAT I, SAT II, and CSS/Financial aid PROFILE (The College Board financial aid form). Registration booklets are available in high school counseling offices. The following is the preliminary test schedule for the 2007-2008 SAT program

2007-08 Test Dates	Test	U.S. Registration Deadlines*	
		Regular	Late (a fee applies)
January 26, 2008	SAT & Subject Tests	December 26, 2007	January 4, 2008
March 1, 2008	SAT only	January 29, 2008	February 7, 2008
May 3, 2008	SAT & Subject Tests	April 1, 2008	April 10, 2008
June 7, 2008	SAT & Subject Tests	May 6, 2008	May 15, 2008

WASC

Under the competent leadership of Gwen Neu, the WASC accreditation process is moving along according to schedule. The effort to keep MVCS fully accredited is complex and ongoing. It requires tons of cooperation and involvement by all stakeholders to get ready for our visit from the WASC team in March. Pictured is the Humboldt Independent Study Home Group Team working on Focus Questions.

Thank you all for your hard work!



AIP Academic Improvement Plan...

Implementation of the restructuring process specified in the High Priority Schools Grant is in full swing, and keeping many of us extremely busy. Part of this process involved implementing the new Academic Improvement Plan (AIP). Teams are in place for language arts and math for students scoring far below basic on the STAR test. Teams of experts in each area are included in

meetings with ES, student, and parents to design a specific plan to improve individual student learning. The same meetings will go on without the team, but include ES, parents, and student for below basic and basic students. This plan will be revisited and documentation provided each month with parents and student at the learning record meetings. More than half of our students qualify as needing Academic Improvement Plans in at least one category.

Implementing the AIP is a huge undertaking, but most of our ESs have risen to the challenge and taken on this task with a positive attitude. We are hopeful that targeting the weak areas in a student's knowledge of a subject with tutors and extra focus from the teacher and parent will really help improve these students' learning. Scheduling has been difficult, but the goal behind the plan is a wonderful intervention strategy. We've gotten a lot of good feedback from parents who seem reassured that Mattole Valley Charter School pays attention to their children as individuals, takes time to suggest particular individualized interventions, **and** includes the family as part of the team. We feel that just sitting down with the family and going over the scores, and deciding on what each person, including the parent and student can do to improve a curricular area, is a good reason to be going through the extra time for a family meeting.

The AIP team for Humboldt, Mendocino, and Trinity includes Pam Lane as administrator, Teresa Creech as math coordinator, and Cathy Wright as language arts coordinator. The Siskiyou AIP team includes Jennifer Kausch as administrator, Barbara Giacomelli as language arts coordinator, and Debra Davis for math coordinator. Please contact any of the AIP team members if you need help or have specific questions about the AIP process.



One of the GREAT dividends in going out to AIP meetings with ESs and students and visiting the many sites in our four counties is the chance to see some of the really beautiful places in which we serve our students. MVCS must include some of the

most beautiful scenery in California (if not the US). Above is the Beginnings Site with a lovely view setting in BriceLand.

(Editor's note: Before I thought about putting out the newsletter again, I visited Three Rivers Learning Center in Fort Bragg, and Hoopa among others. Pam, Teresa, Barbara, and Debra had some other adventures into some remote spots.

Unfortunately, I didn't think to take pictures until late in the game. Hopefully, we can all remember our cameras and take some pictures of the other lovely spots in the future. ☺

***Sonoma St* - New Independent Study Learning Center!**

The classrooms which used to be NCLA High School on Sonoma and F Streets in Eureka are now called the Sonoma Street Learning Center. Classes are ongoing with courses in many levels of Math, Theater, Language Arts, Digital Photography, High School English, Ecosystems, and Art. There is also an open math lab with tutors available.

We are working on getting our Independent Study students into the habit of regular attendance. The students who have gotten into the class routine are enjoying their classes and interaction with other students and teachers.



A High School Art Student Showing a Watercolor.



Devora Kaufman & one of her young art students.

Math Lab

Below, Math Coordinator Teresa Creech helps some of her Algebra students in the math lab at Sonoma Street.



A+ Conference and Achievement Gap Summit

The A+ Conference on personalized learning was well attended by MVCS. There were many interesting and informative presentations and speakers. Unfortunately, I didn't get a picture of us all, because my camera battery died. Attendees were Jennifer Kausch, Pam Lane, Jodie Bechtal, Cathy Wright, Barbara Giacomelli, Jane Coover, Debra Davis, Nancy Tout, Teresa Creech, Alyssa Stamm, Cerelia Barbados, Gwen Neu. (I just know I'm forgetting someone! Please let me know if I forget you so I can correct it next issue.)



Pam, Jodie and I went to the Achievement Gap Summit. There was an amazing turnout of 4000+ educators in one spot. There were many great keynote speakers and presentations, though many were too full to get into. Since MVCS serves many students who are definitely in an achievement gap, this seemed like an appropriate place to get some ideas on ways to make all of our students successful. Many schools with problems similar to

ours presented information on programs that helped turn them into exemplary schools. We heard many ideas and information. Hopefully, we'll be able to share some of the best ideas with you as the year progresses.

On the Siskiyou Side



First day of school at Diamond View.

Taylor Erickson (left) and Chelsea Schuler enjoy their lunch break after science class at Diamond View.

Greetings from North Siskiyou County.— Diamond View Learning Center.

From Barbara Giacomelli

I am in the computer lab this morning because we are testing some of our high school students on NWEA. We had hoped for 7 students and right now we have 5. That is a great turnout as most of you know how difficult it is to get independent students in for group sessions. Last Monday we tested about 6 or more elementary students. Our lab has 11 computers on line with NWEA access. We also have about 4 more computers throughout the school on which students can test, so - little by little - we are gaining ground.

Diamond View actually started planning our school year last June because we were excited about trying to improve student test scores this year. Most of us were able to attend SB472 training in Santa Rosa this summer and as a result, adopted McDougal Littell Algebra I as our official Algebra text for this year. So far, the text has been well received and time will tell if what we are doing will make a difference with STAR this year.

Speaking of STAR, Debbie Davis and I, as Math and Language Arts coordinators have really enjoyed the privilege of visiting ESs over here, meeting with students and parents and talking about the AIP. The AIP process is a good one because it brings the families into the decision making process

and students really see how it is important to our school for them to do their very best on the test. I think all of the Siskiyou ESs are hopeful that our students scores will improve with our weekly tutorials and enrichment classes and the added family support through the AIP process.

As to our classes, using the STAR Test blueprints has become integral to our course outlines and daily instruction. Released test questions are also a part of how we assess learning. Attendance at these classes is encouraged for those students who have transportation. We are still working toward meeting needs of those students who cannot get in to classes. Finding good tutors who are willing to travel is still a challenge but we are working on a solution. It is a big challenge for the already busy ESs to set time aside to share their area of expertise with all of our students. Kirk has a very large group of enthusiastic guitar players. Rebecca is teaching students American Sign Language. Linda is like a shining star when the younger students come in for their weekly enrichment classes, and I am loving my integrated English 2 and World History class. Debbie Davis is very busy with her math classes. We also have some wonderful tutors at both Diamond View Learning Center and Mattole Valley North—Ian Anderson has very busy computer and math labs, Robbert Wijtman's science labs are reinforcing standards beyond the textbook, Roberta Miles teaches Spanish, and Mary Harris is invaluable to our budding art students and those needing extra help in Social Studies.



8th Grader Boston Hudson celebrates his graduation at Greenhorn Park last spring.



Thank you to the wonderful parents of our 8th grade students for making this beautiful cake and organizing the graduation ceremony and picnic last spring.

What's Next?

Kudos Corner – Please send any notice about a student(s), ES, Staff Member, Parent, or Community Partner who has done something great, helped out or otherwise deserves some notice, and we'll recognize them in the Kudos Corner.

Ask the Experts (Us) – This is an idea for sharing our expertise. If you have a problem – can't find appropriate curriculum, need help with a troublesome student, don't understand a new policy directive – you get the idea.... email me to post in the newsletter; and with our combined diverse experience, we can help or answer your questions. So, post your problems and feel free to answer, too.

One Last Note – I've been developing a lending library of reading intervention programs: PALS(Peer Assisted Learning Strategies, Read Naturally, Expository Reading and Writing, and Lexia, to name a few, plus books and articles on teaching reading. Please contact me if you would like more info or would like to try out these programs.

I'm planning to do Newsletter about every two months. Next one is going out beginning of February. To contact me, or for any newsletter entry, email cathywright@mattolevalley.com.