

# FORT PLAIN CENTRAL SCHOOL

## Home of the Hilltoppers INFORMATION NETWORK CO-OP

### STAFF/MEDIA NEWSLETTER

In an effort to keep our community and staff informed as to decisions made by the Fort Plain Central School Board of Education, a newsletter is issued by the superintendent's office following each board meeting. Comments, questions and suggestions should be directed to Superintendent of Schools, Douglas C. Burton (993-4000x3500). Below, please find highlights of the Board of Education meeting held January 20, 2010.

**TIME FOR VISITORS** – Mr. Dave Blackwell, Bovis Lend Lease, provided the Board with his report on the progress of the Capital Project. He noted the structural steel for the high school has arrived and will arrive in February for the bus garage and there is a lot of inside work being completed. Mr. Blackwell answered questions from the Board and will provide requested information during his next report.

Mrs. Lauri Dahlin presented a report to the Board detailing the Talented and Gifted Program in the Elementary School. Programs offered include Challenging Minds, Math Fact Fiend, Chess Club, Student Council, and Toppers Have Talent. The programs are well attended by students and many look forward to participating in activities and learning beyond the school day. Mrs. Dahlin also provided the Board with information regarding Arts in Education. She noted that according to a 2005 Harris Poll 93% agree that the arts are vital to providing a well rounded education for children, 86% agree that arts education improves a child's attitude towards school, and 83% believe that arts education helps teach children to communicate effectively with adults and peers. She urged the Board to continue to support arts in education for the benefit of our students. The Board thanked Mrs. Dahlin for her report.

**PREVIOUS BUSINESS** – Mr. Rockefeller provided the Board with quotes for snow removal and an analysis versus our own in-house cost. Mr. Rockefeller noted that the cost of snow removal done by our own staff is approximately half the cost of the lowest quote. He also pointed out that our snow removal team is on site and therefore the response time is immediate. He recommended to the Board that our own snow removal is cost effective as well as beneficial.

Mr. Fredericks noted that the District hired a Grant Writer a few years ago and he would like the Board to consider this option again. He noted that there are many grants available and it would be worth a look to see if we would be eligible. The Board agreed and Mr. Burton will begin to gather information and report back to the Board.

**NEW BUSINESS** – Mr. Fredericks and Mr. Burton attended the Legislative Breakfast in Albany. They noted the Legislators did not attend. They were able to meet with Senator Farley and Assemblyman Amedore after at their offices. They noted that everyone should contact their legislators and express their concern for the school budgets. This will be a very difficult budget year for all involved.

**BUSINESS MANAGER** – Mr. Rockefeller provided the Board with information regarding the Special Election for HFM BOCES to fill the vacancy created by the passing of William Finch. The Board voted to cast their vote for Mrs. Joanne Freeman to fill the vacancy on the HFM BOCES.

**PRINCIPAL'S REPORTS-** Mrs. Tharp provided her report to the Board consisting of Morning Program information, December Students of the Month, candid photos taken for the year book, PTA Secret Santa Sale was successful, and awards ceremony for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students was held, December charity was Autism Awareness in memory of Lucas VanSchaick, January's charity is the Fort Plain Fire Department, fifth grade Social Studies Assessments results were received in December, Mrs. Tharp's review of the tardy policy, and the PBIS sponsored a dance for students in 4, 5, and 6<sup>th</sup> grades which was very well attended. Mrs. Tharp also noted that students are watching and hearing a lot about the earthquake in Haiti and they are feeling helpless. She noted Mrs. Fredericks had the idea to collect health kits to send to the victims and they will continue to discuss what the students can do to help. Mrs. Tharp also told the Board the recent professional development day was successful with the PreK – 6 grade teachers continuing with their mapping, the aides participated in a CPI refresher course, some teachers traveled to Binghamton to observe other teachers methods, and the special education department worked on revised testing for IEPs. The Board thanked her for her report.

Ms. Larrabee provided the Board with her report which consisted December Students of the Month, Class of 2011 fourth annual prom fashion show, student council participation in Choices youth conference at FMCC, Mr. Dale Smith and the 7<sup>th</sup> graders will participate in the Up Close Cardiac Surgery Program, GearUp presented financial aide information to sophomores and juniors, regional conference day will be held February 11, 2010, SADD received a \$1,000.00 check from the Sharon Springs Wal-Mart Community Grant Program, report cards will go out February 5<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Eric Barnes will be filing in for Mrs. Katie Sacco, the letter to the class of 2010 parents regarding end of year activities has been sent out, TA for discipline, Jenn Rivenburg stated that there were 376 discipline issues reported since the beginning of the school year and are being handled expeditiously, the Peer Mentoring Program is being

organized members of the National Honor Society are being trained, and the June 2010 NYS Examination Schedule has been released. The Board thanked Ms. Larrabee for her report.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS** – Mr. McFee reported that the Support Services Committee met to discuss the snow removal quotes and options discussed by Mr. Rockefeller earlier. The committee agreed with Mr. Rockefeller’s recommendation.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS** –Mr. Burton provided the Board with the Student Moving Report dated December 23, 2009. The enrollment is 864 with 475 in grades PreK – grade 6 and 389 in grades 7 -12.

Mr. Burton provided the Board with numerous conference reports. Mrs. DeKalb attended the NYS Business Education Association’s 2009 Annual Convention in Rochester. She was a presenter at this conference and was very well received. She also attended many informational sessions and returned with materials that she immediately used in her classroom and shared with colleagues. She thanked the Board for allowing her to attend. Mrs. Paradiso and Mrs. Colvin attend the conferences Co-Teaching That Works: Working Together in Today’s Inclusive Classroom and Response to Intervention: Assessing Students’ Needs in Reading. They found both to be very informative and thanked the Board for allowing them to attend. Mrs. Toomey attended the conference Making Technology Work Best for You and Your Students, The Best New Web Sites, Tools and Tips for Today’s Classrooms (Grades K-6). She said it was very informative and she has already applied some of the video information in her class. She thanked the Board for allowing her to attend. Mrs. Jordan attended the Institute for Educational Development conference: Response to Intervention: Assessing Students’ Needs in Reading within a RTI Framework (Grades K-6). She will be sharing the ideas with her colleagues and incorporating them in ways that will work well in her classroom. She thanked the Board for allowing her to attend.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – The Board listened to comments and addressed concerns from those in attendance regarding the Arts and Education Program, Gifted & Talented Program, Employee Salaries, District Insurance Policies, Meetings with Legislators, and Help for Haiti. There was much discussion regarding the budget and the shortfalls we may face. The Board assured the public they work together as a Board to prepare a fiscally responsible budget with the least impact to the taxpayers and the least reduction in services to our children.

**APPROVE ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE HFM BOCES SUBSTITUTE LIST** – The Board voted to approve the changes to the **HFM BOCES Substitute list dated January 1, 2010** as presented.

**SUBSTITUTE BUS DRIVER** – The appointment of a substitute bus driver was removed from the agenda.