From: Ben Lothrop
Principal
Limestone Community School
and member of the MPA Board of Directors

When Holly asked me to write an article on “March Madness”, I immediately realized she didn’t mean the annual college basketball tournament, but the struggle we, as educators, feel as we near the end of winter, and spring is still ahead of us. But for me, March is not a struggle, but an awakening! I have always thought the six weeks between Christmas break and February vacation were the most difficult … short, cold, and windy days. Dark when you leave for school, dark when you come home. How tempting it becomes to just have supper, and veg out on the couch for the rest of the evening – not the healthiest choice for sure!

By March? The days are getting longer (and hopefully warmer), and before you know it, spring is really here! For me, the real March Madness basketball tournament is fun, along with the first snaps of a baseball glove! But, as principals, what else can we do to make the struggle easier for our staff and students of our schools?

I first suggest to take care of yourself. It’s probably been a long winter with basketball games or other sports and activities keeping you in the building all hours of the night. Take advantage of the lull in March. An array of winter activities are available to you on those warm, sunny afternoons. Or, for those of you in the southern end of the state, it could be time to get outside to go walking or jogging again; a chance to get an early jump on that summer beach body!

And for your staff and kids? I’ve always thought March was a great time for winter carnival activities (or spring carnival if the weather permits!), winter fun days, theme week, or whatever activities you can think of to break the month up. How about a big fundraiser for a local charity? Sometimes a simple “hat” day on a Friday can make all the difference in the world for students and staff!

Oh, you might get a storm day now and then, but consider this – how about integrating a long weekend into the District Calendar in March for all staff and students, roughly half way between the vacation weeks? I know a school in the St. John Valley that has done this for years … named after a teacher who first suggested it. The weekend is certainly looked forward to, and helps refresh everyone for the push into April! Isn’t that worth one day in June? And I just don’t mean the kids and the teachers, but the entire staff. Close the building right down for the day!

Whatever you decide to do, work toward a positive attitude in March. As we know, it’s one of the best educational months of the school year, so take advantage of that time. But, remember, it’s probably been a long winter; take care of everyone’s other needs as well!

Have a great rest of the year!

“LIKE US” ON FACEBOOK!
Click on the link below to go to our Facebook page:
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Maine-Principals’Association-ProfessionalDivision/1703592959867688

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Follow us on Twitter!
Holly Blair ~ @HollyBlairMPA
Mike Bisson ~ @MikeBissonMPA

FREE: Job Vacancy Postings on the MPA Professional Webpage

The MPA is listing job postings for administrative positions (principal, assistant principal, dean of students, CTE Directors, etc.) on the www.mpaprof.org website AT NO COST TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS!

Please email your job opening to Tammy at tmcnear@mpa.cc.
PROFESSIONAL OFFERINGS

MCLA is excited to host a Spring Conference on April 8, 2024
From Obstacles to Opportunities: The Power of Learning!

The day will feature our keynote speaker Trevor Ragan, the founder of The Learner Lab. Come join us as we discuss three key areas as leaders: Why learning matters, Identifying the individual and group obstacles that can limit our learning & development and exploring the tools to help us overcome these obstacles. In the afternoon we will host a series of roundtable discussions focused on a variety of topics including MTSS, Literacy, Growth Mindset and more! The conference will be held in person on April 8th at the Hilton Garden Inn Freeport. Registration is available at this link registration.

Maine Student Council State Conference
“The Power of You: Motivation for Team Members”
Friday, May 17, 2024
Cost: $85/person
University of Maine, Orono
More information to come by March!

School Law for School, District, Special Education, Administrative Assistants, and Secretaries
April 2 ~ Hilton Garden Inn, Bangor / April 3 ~ Holiday Inn By the Bay, Portland
Click HERE to Register.

MCLA Winter Webinars
Sign up for one, or the remaining two!!

Redefining Rigor with Depth of Knowledge
with Erik Francis
March 19, 2024
Fill the room or watch it with your admin team – THAT’S UP TO YOU!
AND THE BEST PART??? YOU WILL GET A RECORDING OF THE SESSION TO VIEW AS MANY TIMES AS YOU’D LIKE FOR ONE WEEK! That means, you can bring an EXPERT to train your teachers into your building – FOR THE SINGLE COST OF A WEBINAR!!!

Webinar 9—March 26, 2024 ~
Connecting the Dots to Nurture the Whole Teacher
with Allyson Asprey
Click HERE for more information on the remaining two Winter Webinar Series and to register!

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MEA’s FREE

Early Career EdPalooza Conference

MARCH 16 2024

KING MIDDLE SCHOOL - PORTLAND, ME

Sessions Include

- Addressing Challenging Behavior
- AI in Education
- Supporting Student Attendance
- Preparing & Participating in IEP and 504 Meetings
- Understanding Your Contract
- Preparing for Recertification
- Financial Literacy

Scan to learn more/register!
THE BETTER FAFSA

What High School Educators and College Access Counselors Need to Know

What Students and Their Families Need to Know

Higher Education Opens Doors to Opportunity

The U.S. Department of Education is making transformational changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form. The FAFSA form is an application that students and families need to complete to apply for federal student aid, such as federal grants, work-study funds, and loans. Completing and submitting the FAFSA form is free, and it gives students access to the largest source of financial aid to help pay for higher education.

Click HERE for more information on What High School Educators and College Access Counselors Need to Know.

Click HERE for more information on What Students and Their Families Need to Know.

Scholarships Available

ConvenientMD will be awarding five $2,500 scholarships this spring to students in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. The scholarships are open to high school seniors pursuing post-secondary education in any healthcare-related field. Students can apply by completing a brief application at convenientmd.com/scholarships.

The deadline to apply is April 30. Please share this opportunity with students in your school who may be interested in applying. If you have any questions, please contact communitysupport@convenientmd.com.

CALLING ALL POSITIVE STORIES!!

The MPA is continuing to spotlighting the AMAZING things going on in Maine schools. If each of you have a fun, positive, or a “Kids are GREAT,” story to share – I’m putting these positive stories out on the MPA website and social media. Feel free to share pictures that are okay to spotlight as well. Thank you in advance for bringing smiles and positivity to each other.

Please click HERE for the form to submit your Positive Story.

GET YOUR MPA SWAG!!!

Click on link below for more details:

https://nwd.ink/s/mpa/mpa-merchandise/

Click HERE for more information on Ware-Butler.

YOU ASKED FOR THEM – SO THEY ARE BACK!

IN PERSON REGIONAL MEETINGS!

Please see the Google Form that indicates the days and locations of the five In-Person Regional Meetings being held in April. Please indicate that you will plan on attending the following In Person Regional meeting by writing your name under the location(s) where you intend on going. These are PK-12 meetings for MPA members and aspiring members.

During this time, you will hear what is happening at the MPA, as well as, get feedback from you on how we can better meet your needs. We will also discuss any thorny issues that you may have. The power of the network is incredible!

Note that you are welcome to come to any or all - that is 100% up to you. I just need a count to let our hosts know roughly how many to expect. All meetings will be from 3:30 - 5:00 pm. Contact Holly if you have any questions. Thank you!

https://forms.gle/TNeKtaz4nwoXjQ829
MPA Photo Album

Great Beginnings Session III
February 1, 2024

Mock Legislature Day
February 9, 2024
Mock Legislature Day
Continued
February 9, 2024
UNIFIED ACADEMICS AND ATHLETICS: BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Morse High School
826 Shipbuilder Drive
Bath, ME

March 7, 2024
(Snow Day - March 14, 2024)
8:00 am - 2:30 pm
Stay for a Unified Basketball Game

One day conference for educators who want to bring the Unified Mission to their school community:
- Earn 5 CEUs
- Meet representatives from Special Olympics, Morse High School Unified Coordinators, Unified Content Teachers, Parents and Students
- Learn more about the Mentor and Mentee Model that brings students of all abilities together in an engaging academic setting
- Content Classes: Physical Education, Literacy, and Science
- Extra curricular: Basketball and Volleyball

CONTACT US  ileeman-hook@rsu1.org