



School Update  
December 10, 2010

With the Holiday break just around the corner, we hope this message finds everyone able to spend some quality time with family and friends. Read on to find out what is happening at MSA:

- As you may have seen in the paper, the high school/combined school grades were released on Tuesday, December 7, 2010. MSA earned a "B" grade for the 2009-2010 school year. There are some very important things to note in this grade calculation:
  - MSA earned enough points both at the Middle and High School levels to earn an "A" (At the High School, we scored the highest number of points in the district)
  - Our performance as a school has increased steadily over the last many years. Please take the time to look at and review our data on our website ([www.msfta.org](http://www.msfta.org)). At the bottom of the homepage there is a link to additional data, where you will find a great deal of information on the school's performance.
  - Although we scored enough points to earn an "A," we did not because of one new (this year) and very significant subgroup, what the state is calling "at-risk graduation rate." This is a very specific group of students and is based on their 8<sup>th</sup> grade test scores. We are currently evaluating this data, and are looking at the possibility of challenging the state's assigned grade.

No matter what the grade decision by the state is finally determined to be, you can rest assured that we will not rest until every student has succeeded at school. The new grading regulations create many changes to the outcome of the grade, but we are more committed than ever to assuring that every child gets the best education possible!!

- We are happy to welcome to our faculty a new member, Ms. Brandy Williams, who is teaching high school English. She has a combination of 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade classes. If you meet her, or get a chance to say hi, please give her a warm MSA welcome!!



- The Dance Department wants to remind everyone about the upcoming recitals scheduled for January. If your child is in dance here at MSA, please note the following dates and times for upcoming recitals:

Alice – Cast 1	January 7 January 8	7:00 2:00 and 7:00
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	January 12	6:30
Alice – Cast 2	January 13 & 14	7:00
Dance Showcase	January 15	11:00, 1:00, 3:30, and 6:00

- Congratulations to the Jazz Band for their outstanding performance at the Florida State Charter School Conference on November 20, 2010. The students did an amazing job!!
- If your child is in the ballet program here at MSA... make sure you check the dates and the calendar as Alice is fast approaching. The first cast performs on the first weekend we return from winter recess, and the second cast performs the next weekend. Please come and see this amazing production directed by the ballet department here at school.
- The 7<sup>th</sup> grade team will be going to the Asolo Theatre on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011 for the production of *Twelve Angry Men*. Please look for the permission slip and more information coming home with your student. This will be a cross-curricular unit, so please let us know if the ticket price is a financial burden.
- Want to receive \$200.00 off the total price of the 2011-12 trip to London and Paris? Students who sign up with Passports, either online at [www.passports.com](http://www.passports.com) or bring in the enrollment form with their enrollment fee by Dec. 31, 2010 will get \$200.00 taken off the total amount of the trip. We will be spending 8 days in London and Paris over the December 2011 holiday break and it is a wonderful experience for our students. Any student who will be in high school during the 2011-12 year is eligible to go. Please see Mrs. Turner or e-mail her at [mturner@msfta.org](mailto:mturner@msfta.org) for information and an enrollment form.
- Attention all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and parents.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade team will be going on a field trip to the Asolo Theater to see *Twelve Angry Men* on February 8, 2011.

The cost of the trip is \$10. A completed permission slip must accompany payment.

Tickets will go on sale from December 13<sup>th</sup> to January 5<sup>th</sup>. Additional information and a permission slip will be sent home with students interested in participating in the fieldtrip. Tickets are limited and on a first come first served basis.

- A reminder to all parents, but especially those of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students: The semester change is coming, which means for many students, and all 6<sup>th</sup> grade students, you will be getting new electives. In the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, students change at the end of January to a new class, which most likely will require a new uniform, such as PE or dance. Please be sure to stop by the school store to pick up the required uniform items.

Also, we want to remind parents that the school store is the only place you can purchase uniform appropriate jackets and uniform shirts. As the weather gets colder, don't forget to stop by and make sure your child has the uniforms they need.

A stop by the school store could get some needed supplies for this holiday season.

- For any students looking to attend the State College of Florida for 2011-2012, please note the following important information:

The SCF Foundation will be accepting scholarship applications between January 14<sup>th</sup> 2011 and March 14, 2011. They will be available on our website on January 14, 2011. The website for the Foundation is <http://www.scffoundation.net/>

This is a wonderful opportunity for students to get a great amount of support for their college education. For further information, please contact Debra Kelly, Scholarship Coordinator at the State College of Florida Foundation, Inc. at 941-752-5390 or [kellyd@scf.edu](mailto:kellyd@scf.edu).

# Guidance Corner

## Applying For Financial Aid – Scholarships and Grants

The Student Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA) will be available online December 1, 2010. FFAA provides students with scholarship and grant awards for postsecondary education.

### To apply for the FFAA:

1. Go to [www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org](http://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org)
2. Click on program options (top left) for available programs, their descriptions, eligibility requirements and deadlines.
3. Click on apply now (top left)
4. Click on initial state student application (left side)
5. Follow directions for application

For other news and updates on scholarships and grants check out these sites!

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com) [www.msfta.org](http://www.msfta.org) (click on guidance)

[www.manateeconnects.org](http://www.manateeconnects.org) (for local scholarship opportunities)

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) – [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) or ask your counselor for more details.

- Study Tip of the Month - **Select a consistent place to study** – With the end of the semester coming up, it is important to remember to study! Some people need total quiet and others can study well with music in the background. The key is to find a comfortable place and study there regularly, such as the kitchen table, a desk or your bedroom. Pick a place that works best for you and put aside a few minutes everyday to study!
- As for all high schoolers ... please remind them they need a 2.0 gpa or higher to graduate.
- It's never too early to start thinking about college. 9<sup>th</sup> graders should start thinking about Bright Futures Scholarships. You can receive free money for college if you meet the requirements. Go to [www.msfta.org](http://www.msfta.org) under guidance tab for eligibility requirements and more info.

### Scholarship Opportunities

Art Institutes - Enter the 2011 Best Teen Chef Competition and win a scholarship to study world cuisine. Must be a senior to enter. All entries must be in by FEBRUARY 4, 2011. Check out [www.artinstitutes.edu/btc](http://www.artinstitutes.edu/btc) for more details.

Florida Realtors is sponsoring a Scholarship Essay Contest for seniors who plan to continue their education at a college, university or technical school. All essays must be submitted by FEBRUARY 9, 2011. Please see your counselor for application and details.

\*\*\*Reminder\*\*\*

All juniors and seniors don't forget to register for the ACT and/or SAT! You can register online at

[www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) for ACT and [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) for SAT. (Florida Universities require the writing portion of these tests).

It is important to take these tests as early as possible because you can take them as many times as you need and universities will take your highest scores.

Ms. Brianne Nickelsberg  
Guidance Counselor  
Last names beginning A-L

Ms. Laura Swinsburg  
Guidance Counselor  
Last names beginning M-Z

## Upcoming Events

### December

14 Jazz Ensemble Concert – 7:00

16 Guitar Recital – 7:00 PM

20-Jan 2 Winter Recess

### January

3 Teacher In-Service Day – No School for Students

4 Back to School!!

7-8 Alice's Wonderland

12 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Dance Recital

13-14 Alice's Wonderland

15 Dance Elective Showcase

### February

12 Yes! We Can Dance Competition

21 No School – President's Day

24-26 *Putnam County Spelling Bee* Performances

*Please check the website for more dates and times*

[www.msfta.org](http://www.msfta.org)