

# SMS COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Volume 6 Issue 3

November 2009

STAFFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Principal's Forum

The end of the first quarter of this school year will be upon us this month. On the 19th and 20th, parents and guardians will have an opportunity to meet with teachers to discuss their student's effort and grades during this period. I encourage all parents and guardians to take advantage of the parent conference opportunities. At Stafford, we run an open conference format. This means that teachers are available to parents on a first-come, first-served basis for both the evening and day conference sessions. Here are a few suggestions that may make your discussions with teachers more meaningful:

- Determine the specific reason your child is not being

successful in a particular class. It may be that he/she needs to do homework more regularly, needs to study more for tests, or be more engaged in class participation.

- Talk about the possibility of your student staying after school to receive extra help.
- Discuss behavior concerns that might be interfering with your child's academic success.
- Seek additional support if necessary by also meeting with your student's school counselor.

If you feel that there is not enough time to completely dis-



cuss your student's progress with any of his/her teachers, you are advised to check with guidance and schedule an additional conference at a later date with the specific teacher in question.

I look forward to seeing everyone on either of the two designated dates for parent conferences, November 19th or 20th.

Patty Amo, SMS Principal

## Go Home Drill - Date Correction

Parents are advised of an error that appears on the hard-copy version of the school district calendar that was distributed to all Stafford families on the first day of school. Review of events for the month of November will reveal two different dates for the annual district "Go Home Drill."

The correct date for this early release for students should be Monday, November 23rd. Please disregard the drill indicated on the 30th.

Prior to this drill, it is very important that the school has correct information from parents regard-

ing their preference for students getting home when released early from school. A form for this information was sent home with students' first day information. If we did not have a record of this information, we will send another one home for completion in the next week or so.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Stafford Pride Committee Positively Reinforces Good Behaviors	2
No Smoking on School Grounds	2
Parent Input Sought to Improve Communication	2
SMS FSO News	3
Give Your Child a Lesson in Being Respectful to Other People	3

### Special points of interest:

- Please call the school by 7:30 AM if your child is absent. Request homework at this time - 563-6800. Choose Option 2 for attendance or email absences to [smsattendance@plattscsd.org](mailto:smsattendance@plattscsd.org)
- Parent Conferences— Nov 19 - 6:00 - 8:30 PM; Nov. 20 - 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
- Go Home Drill - Nov. 23 - 2:00 PM
- Thanksgiving Holiday - Nov. 25, 26, & 27

### Stafford Pride Committee Positively Reinforces Good Behaviors



Free books for good behavior!

The school's Stafford Pride Committee has reinstated one of its positive reinforcers for students who demonstrate "safe, respectful, and responsible" behaviors at Stafford. Each Friday, a drawing will be held for stu-

dents who have not had an office referral or gum slip during that week. One student drawn from each grade, 6, 7 and 8, will receive their choice of a new book from a collection supplied by the Stafford Pride Commit-

tee.

The committee is working to develop other ways to support those students who follow the rules and demonstrate good behavior on a regular basis.

### No Smoking on School Grounds

Thanksgiving  
Holiday

November 25,  
26, & 27

No School

A reminder to all of our district families and friends: Smoking is prohibited on school grounds. Please refrain from using all tobacco products while waiting in parking lots, attending school events and chaperoning school-sponsored events.

Obviously there are so many benefits to maintaining a smoke-free

home and vehicle, the greatest of which is your power to remove the health risks associated with second-hand smoke from your family. Two resources that may assist families with smoking issues are the New York State smoker's Quit Line (1-888-697-8487) and Freedom from Smoking on-line (FFSONLINE.ORG)



Smoking is not permitted on school grounds.

### Parent Input Sought to Improve Communication

Stafford parents and guardians are notified that they may be asked to take a telephone survey which is being conducted by students from Plattsburgh State working on their communication degrees. The purpose of the survey is to solicit information on the effectiveness of our efforts, as both teachers and administrators, to communicate with parents. The phone interviews will be collected anonymously and the data gathered will be shared with our SMS staff for their information and hopefully will provide some viable suggestions for improvement of this important area.

Any questions or comments on the survey process should be directed to Mrs. Amo, by calling the school at 563-6800 or via email at pamo@plattscsd.org.

## Stafford Middle School's Family/School Organization News

The Stafford FSO continues to seek parent interest in its efforts to support the school's goals. At its November meeting, a discussion will occur regarding the group's fund raising efforts for this year. Parent input is always important in such decisions, so please consider attending the group's November meeting,

The FSO will also have

a presence at the upcoming parent conferences. School spirit items such as tee shirts and sweatshirts will be on sale during the conference times. Please stop by the sales area to review products for your student.

The group continues to accept donations of cans and bottles at the new recycling facility sponsored by Checker-

hill Farms, located in the old Agway building on Boynton Avenue.

Parents dropping off recyclables are asked to mention they are for Stafford and the school will be compensated a portion of the value of the items.

The FSO's Papa John's Pizza Nights continue this year with the next opportunity to participate being Thursday,

November 19th. A reminder flyer will be sent home with students.



Join us for the FSO's next meeting.

## Give Your Child a Lesson in Being Respectful Toward Other People

Does your child know the real meaning of respect? For too many children today, the word has become associated with forcefulness and fear. If you can force someone to do something for you, he is respecting you.

Of course, this couldn't be farther from the truth. As a parent, part of your job is to teach your child that real respect simply means treating other people nicely.

Tell your child to:

- **Be kind to others no matter what.**

He/she should treat people the way he/she would like to be treated.

- **Speak in a way** that shows he/she values the listener. Profanity and talking back are not respectful and will not be tolerated.
- **Be careful with** his/her things and those of others. People usually work very hard to get the things they own.
- **Listen.** He/she doesn't always have to agree with

what others say, but he/she does have to be polite. He/she shouldn't interrupt or use rude body language, such as rolling his/her eyes. This insults the speaker just as much as if he/she had used rude words.

Source: Michele Borba, Ed.D, *Building Moral Intelligence: The Seven Essential Virtues that Teach Kids to Do the Right Thing.*

Building Character Requires Parental Support

