

“Give me a small school where teachers want to work together . . . and I’ll show you a school that doesn’t need a metal detector, I’ll show you a school without a high dropout rate, I’ll show you a school where children are doing well...”

Theodore Sizer



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The Principal's Flyer

Hi All;

Daylight Savings Time will end next weekend, and the late afternoons will be greeting us with darkness within a week. I for one could use a few more weeks of sunlight and warmth, if for no other reason than simply to wait until all the leaves fall to the ground for raking. I am excited to carve pumpkins and go trick-or-treating with the kids next weekend, and I'm hoping for some dry, warm, weather next Saturday.

Many of you have likely seen the media reports from the **state's Graduation and Dropout Commission** that were all over the news last week. They made some recommendations that are getting a lot of attention. The Commission was formed last year as a result of the State Legislature's Bill #2462 that can be viewed here: <http://www.hslda.org/docs/link.asp?URL=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Emass%2Egov%2Flegis%2Fbills%2Fstate%2F185%2Fst02pdf%2Fst02462%2Epdf>

The data on high school dropouts is well documented and very clear. The impact on so many areas for those who fail to get a high school diploma is overwhelming. Right now, the statewide dropout rate hovers around 3.4% and has changed very little in the last decade. About 10,000 kids in Massachusetts drop out each year. The Commission's charge was to make recommendations on how to decrease the state's dropout rate by 50% by the year 2012, and their recommendation that got the most attention was the suggestion that the minimum age for dropping out of school should be raised to 18 years old (currently it is 16 years old).

No one disputes that a high school diploma is a minimum pre-requisite for getting ahead in the future. However, to cut the dropout rate in half is going to take more than just raising the minimum age. This has all the makings of another "unfounded mandate" from the state, and I hate to reveal my skepticism at what may eventually become law. Currently there are 19 states that have the 18-year old cutoff. I have not yet researched what impact this change has had (New Hampshire raised their minimum to 18 last year), but I know that we can't do much more without some additional resources. Alternative schools, credit recovery programs, and night school all have shown promise and are proven methods when large comprehensive high schools don't work, but they are also quite costly. Our own Thayer Campus Alternative school works wonders with students who would otherwise drop out. Where will these funds come from given the current state of the economy if we double the number of potential students? Even though we at the high school level see the impact most closely, most high school dropouts could have been identified when they were in elementary school. I would advocate that we should invest more resources earlier to stem this tide, while simultaneously ramping up our alternative programs and possibly on-line and night schools. All this will cost a LOT of money, but we also know that the costs for NOT acting are even greater. Every student who does not get a high school diploma will have substantially reduced career earnings and therefore decreased income tax contributions (not to mention likely creating a drain on other state services). I will be following this bill very closely in the days ahead. Click here to see the recent Boston Globe article about this issue:

http://www.boston.com/news/education/k_12/articles/2009/10/21/law_urged_to_make_teens_stay_in_school/?page=2

I would be remiss if I did not mention the significance of the **recent passing of well-known educator Ted Sizer**. Ted's trilogy of books about high schools in America (starting with "*Horace's Compromise*" in 1982 and culminating with "*Horace's Hope*" in the early 1990's) had a profound impact on education theory and the concept of the "small schools" movement. He was a dean at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and his teachings inspired the creation of the "Coalition of Essential Schools" focused on the principles of knowing our students well and providing education in a well-coordinated manner. There are over 1000 Coalition schools nationwide, and his books are standard reading in graduate schools all over the world. I had the pleasure of hearing Ted speak on numerous occasions and he was a very driven and inspired proponent of smaller schools and their benefits. There is a twinge of irony that the recent commission on dropouts in Massachusetts came out the week he died. Ted has been harping on smaller high schools as a proven way to reduce the dropout rate for over 20 years.

The **FHS Marching Band** performed in the MICCA Marching Band Finals on Sunday, 10-25 in Lowell, MA. This event featured over 30 of the best marching bands in MA. The FHS band walked away with a Bronze Medal. This was their first ever performance in the Finals. It was a great day and ended with a performance from the Umass-Amherst Marching Band. Please congratulate the band students and their director, Brian Cervone, for a job well done and for another successful marching season.

The FHS Drama Company is having a **fund raising event at Barnes & Noble on Friday, Nov 6th**. For anyone who shows their voucher or tells the cashier that they're shopping to benefit FHS Drama Co, a percentage of their purchase will be donated to Drama Company and the Edinburgh trip. The event is timed to help promote the upcoming production of *Seussical the Musical*. Several FHS cast members will be performing a sneak preview and will be on hand for children to have a photo op with *The Cat in the Hat* or *Horton the Elephant*. There will also be Dr. Seuss readings and activities, so if you have been waiting to make any purchases, now would be the time to go.

Congratulations are in order for our own **Cheryl Aglio-Girelli**. Cheryl is one of the district's adolescent health nurses, and she was recently awarded the prestigious Mildred Reid Award at the annual Massachusetts Alliance of Teen Pregnancy conference held in Worcester on Wednesday, October 21, 2009. This is wonderful tribute to the valuable work Cheryl does to support the students of our district. The award is named in honor of Mildred Reid, a longtime member of the Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy's Board of Directors, who passed away in 1994. Mildred was a dedicated youth worker who spent many years working with pregnant and parenting teens at several community-based agencies. In Mildred's memory, the Board of Directors established the Mildred Reid Award to honor individuals who, like Mildred, have shown dedication and excellence in their work with pregnant and parenting teens. This is a wonderful tribute to the valuable work Cheryl does to support students in the Framingham district. Congratulations, Cheryl!

Two more weeks of classes until the end of term one. Make sure you're checking your pacing to avoid any acceleration as we approach the deadline. Better to end a little early than to rush through some concepts near the end. Remember to alert and enlist the help of students' parents to see if there are any opportunities for improvement as we near next Friday!

Remember to scroll down for the weekly calendar!

Statistic Of Week

Most Recent Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 2008-09 Rankings Of Grades 9 – 12 High School Sizes In Massachusetts (Previously #4 Lawrence High School was recently converted into multiple smaller high schools within the larger building...)

	School	Gr. 9	Gr. 10	Gr. 11	Gr. 12	SP	TOTAL
	State Totals - State Totals	79,315	73,214	71,514	68,329	723	958,910
1	Brockton - Brockton High	1,279	980	897	928	18	4,102
2	Lowell - Lowell High	1,000	873	769	754	25	3,421
3	New Bedford - New Bedford High	966	616	855	526	0	2,963
4	Fall River - B M C Durfee High	689	571	547	523	0	2,330
5	Framingham - Framingham H S	559	545	536	522	0	2,162
6	Springfield - Springfield Central High	771	497	462	349	18	2,097
7	Weymouth - Weymouth High School	533	522	543	496	3	2,097
8	Greater New Bedford Voc Tech	562	547	504	451	0	2,064
9	Lexington - Lexington High	526	496	460	506	0	1,988
10	Acton-Boxborough Reg High	478	520	464	495	1	1,958
11	Methuen - Methuen High	484	502	453	488	13	1,940
12	Wachusett - Wachusett Regional High	489	497	461	476	11	1,934
13	Greater Lowell Regional Voc Tech	497	508	466	435	16	1,922
14	Peabody Veterans Memorial High	447	486	481	471	0	1,885
15	Haverhill - Haverhill High	540	443	444	437	9	1,873
16	Taunton - Taunton High	536	466	475	356	5	1,838
17	Newton - Newton North High	421	440	472	462	9	1,804
18	Brookline - Brookline High	445	432	443	450	3	1,790
19	Newton - Newton South High	405	438	443	472	3	1,761
20	Malden - Malden High	484	436	404	396	19	1,739
21	Attleboro - Attleboro High	491	410	446	388	0	1,735
22	Everett - Everett High	428	378	478	445	0	1,729
23	Andover - Andover High	450	443	436	390	0	1,719
24	Lynn - Lynn English High	500	418	417	370	1	1,706
25	Barnstable - Barnstable High	471	391	472	363	8	1,705

Calendar Of Events

Listed are all school-wide calendar and home athletic events.

Remember to Check the FHS Web Site at: www.framingham.k12.ma.us/fhs/
For All Other Athletic Event Days & Times Visit: www.framinghamflyers.com

This Week:

Monday, 10/26/09 Day 7 - CBGFE

Varsity Field Hockey vs. Ashland @4:00 PM
Girls JV Volleyball vs. Algonquin @4:00 PM
Girls Varsity Volleyball vs. Algonquin @5:00 PM

Tuesday, 10/27/09 Day 1 - ABCDE

Underclass picture re-takes
Free Senior Pictures in Main Office Conference Room
Girls Frosh Soccer vs. Braintree @3:45 PM

Wednesday, 10/28/09 - Day 2 - CADG

PM Collaboration
Dismissal @1:00 PM
Boys Varsity & JV Soccer vs. Brookline @4:00 PM
Frosh Field Hockey vs. Brookline @4:00 PM

Thursday, 10/29/09 Day 3 - BAEFG

Department Heads Meeting @1:00 PM
Boys Frosh Soccer vs. Brookline @4:00 PM

Friday, 10/30/09 Day 4 - ACDEF

Boys Varsity & JV Soccer vs. Newton North @3:45
Frosh Football vs. Norwood @4:00 PM
Girls Varsity Swimming vs. Natick @7:00 PM

Saturday, 10/31/09

Daylight Savings Ends Sunday @ 1:00 AM
Set Clocks Back 1-hour!

Next Week:

Monday, 11/2/09 Day 5 - BDCGF

PTBO Meeting @7:00 PM in H-100

Tuesday, 11/3/09 Day 6 - DABEG

Faculty Meeting @2:15 PM

Wednesday, 11/4/09 - Day 7 - CBGFE

MCAS ELA Re-Tests

Thursday, 11/5/09 Day 1 - ABCDE

MCAS ELA Re-Tests
Principal's Meeting @10:00 AM @Hemenway
School Council Meeting @7:00 PM in Library

Friday, 11/6/09 Day 2 - CADGF

End of Term 1
MCAS ELA Re-Tests
Barnes & Noble Drama Company event
Frosh Football vs. Milton @3:45 PM

Saturday, 11/7/09

SAT's at FHS