

The MSSM Parents Association exists to support the Mission of MSSM and represent the parents to the School and Board of Trustees. In its support role the Parents Association has organized or supported several on-campus activities, including Teacher Appreciation Day, Prom Night, a silent auction, and a day of parents helping in painting the dormitories. Statewide, many parents made themselves available to Pam Perkins to assist with recruiting applicants and conducting joint visits at schools. A parent residing in Cumberland County also hosted a summer gathering that was attended by several parents and students.

In service of its representation role, the PA maintains a listserv on the PA website, in which parents can collectively discuss MSSM policy issues, both academic and those involving residential life. Senior administrators at MSSM have access to this listserv in order to monitor parental concerns and respond to them as they deem appropriate.

At the recent semi-annual PA meeting held on move-in weekend, the PA elected a new president, Brent Andersen, and a new treasurer, Shannon Benedix. Ayo Olugbemi continues to serve as vice president, and Eric Howard serves as secretary and parent representative on the Advancement Committee of the Board of Trustees. There is currently a parent representative vacancy on the programs committee of the Board of Trustees. The PA is working on filling this vacancy and expects to have a representative in place by the September 10 Trustees meeting.

Consistent with its mission to represent parents to the School, the PA also came up with three goals that the parents would like the MSSM administration to work on. These were

Academic Support to Students. Ideas suggested included using tutors and requiring that students get help when *instructors* (versus students) deem that they need it. Another idea was using more senior students as mentors to junior students.

Strategies for Increasing Acceptance to Top Colleges. Here, parents suggested fostering more ongoing and substantial extracurricular activities that students could put on their college applications. Also creating special prizes for students and examining whether MSSM's grading system is too harsh, thereby disadvantaging students in their applications. Other ideas included working to promote MSSM to top colleges, and networking through alumni.

Better Communication from the School with Parents. This goal encompasses communication about how students are doing both academically and socially, and promptly informing parents of system changes.

Looking forward to the new academic year, the PA anticipates continuing its traditional role of supporting on and off-campus activities, as well as working with the Executive Director to realize the above-listed goals. Possibilities include networking with parents to create expanded internship and J Term opportunities for students. An extra-curricular activity opportunity is the Maine Winter Sports Center's Adventure Initiative, an outdoor leadership program for high school students. Finally, to better institutionalize parental input into MSSM governance, the PA would like to explore having parent representatives on more Board of Trustee committees-----*Brent Andersen, Ph.D., MSSM PA President*