



Morris School Newsletter

December 2011

Calendar Highlights

- 12/5—12/9 Book Fair
- 12/7 Service Club
- 12/8 P/T Conferences
- 12/9 P/T Conferences/NO SCHOOL
- 12/26—1/3 Holiday Break
- 1/10—Winter Concert
- 1/13—Professional Development: 1/2 Day
- 1/16—Martin Luther King Day—NO School
- 1/17—6pm School Council
- 1/17—7pm PTO Meeting

***Happy Holidays
from Morris to all
Morris families!***

Winter Recess Reminder

Parents are reminded that we go out for recess everyday as long as the temperature is 15 degrees or above. Students should dress appropriately and are encouraged to wear snow pants and boots for play in the snow. Please send in a change of clothes also! Thanks!



From the Principal's Office: Tis the Season... for Data Teams

This morning I ran into second grade teacher Mrs. Vanasse in the hallway. She was wearing her 100 day necklace that she puts on when we hit important base ten benchmarks in the school year. She reminded me that today was the sixtieth day, and I marveled for a moment that we have already completed a third of the school year.

It is during this time of year that we take a careful look at student progress in reading and math. This week teachers, special educators, Title I tutors and our curriculum specialists in reading and math are meeting to discuss student progress. They look at student data, which consists of different numbers and levels depending on the grade, and discuss

every student-placing them on a continuum from “no risk” to “high risk.” As you might surmise, “no risk” students are making nice progress in their learning and “high risk” students may be stuck in their progress.

These meetings are called “Data Teams” and we have about five a year. They ensure that all of our students are moving forward in their acquisition of basic skills and they allow teachers to share strategies with each other—helping students to overcome learning obstacles. Whether it’s a difficulty with reading comprehension, number sense, or a phonics fact, the data team discussions help to isolate learning issues and steer specific instruction to those students who need it.

All this business of periodically reviewing student data and making small changes in instruction is part of a trend in education called RTI or Response to Intervention. It is, simply put, acting on the premise that if kids aren’t getting something within the day to day instruction, a little more instruction is needed. Periodic assessments, data teams, and intervention groups have been around at Morris for years in different forms, but the addition of common curriculum and the expert contributions of our curriculum specialists have made our data teams highly focused, and, in my opinion, more effective than ever.

Lately, a good amount of data team discussion has taken place on the topic of students who easily master the concepts instructed.

(continued)

Learning about Healthy Choices Through the Art of Mime

On December 2, Morris students enjoyed two performances by artist/educator Robert Rivest. Mr. Rivest taught us a lot about the physical art of mime while infusing some practical tips about stress management, healthy eating, getting plenty of

sleep, and staying active. Students loved this performance, which was highly interactive and physical. We would like to thank the Morris PTO for sponsoring this event which was chosen to address a school and district goal of student wellness.

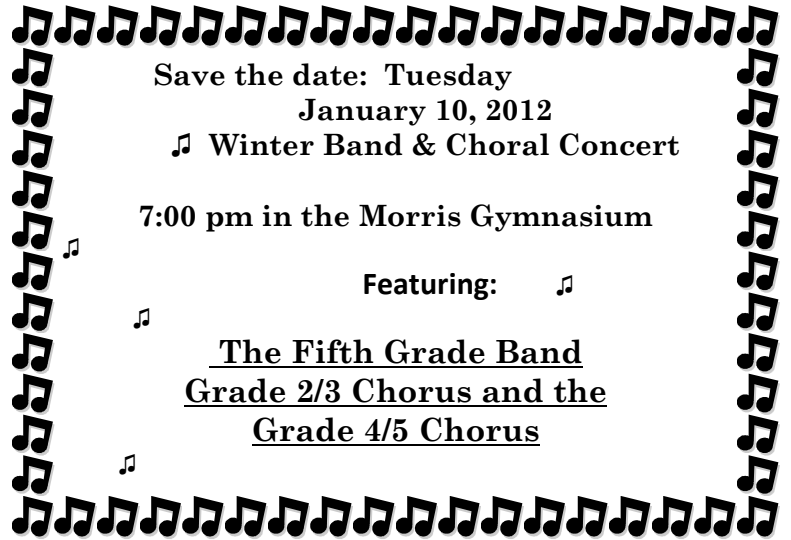


BOX TOP\$ EXPIRATION

Many BoxTops have a 12/31 expiration date. **Please send in all box tops by Friday 12/23/11** so we get credit for any expiring 12/31/11. Keep clipping (and ask neighbors and relatives to help too!) BoxTops to benefit Morris!

Since they must be submitted in bundles of 50, if you have 50 or more, it would be helpful to submit just 50 in one Ziploc (write 50 on the outside) and submit the rest in a separate Ziploc. Also, please visit the BoxTops website at www.boxtops4education.com for even more ways to generate \$\$ for Morris School.

THIS IS FREE \$\$\$ FOR MORRIS SCHOOL!



Save the date: **Tuesday**

January 10, 2012

♪ **Winter Band & Choral Concert**

7:00 pm in the Morris Gymnasium

Featuring: ♪

♪ **The Fifth Grade Band**
 ♪ **Grade 2/3 Chorus and the**
 ♪ **Grade 4/5 Chorus**

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Don't forget to bring in your trash to treasure during your parent teacher conferences!!

The Book Fair will be taking place in the Library on December 5—9th. Hours: Monday—Preview only. Tuesday 10am-1pm; Wednesday 10am—1pm, 6—9pm. Thursday 10—1pm, 6—8pm; Friday 9:00am—4pm.



From the Principal's Office continued...

These are students who consistently score at the highest performance levels. Teachers and specialists are working together to find and introduce enrichment materials and books at that "just right" level to meet a wide range of student abilities. Having accurate and organized data about all of our students will greatly assist in identifying these students and enriching their school experience.

I want to recognize and thank our curriculum specialists Mrs. Fisher and Mrs. Cherry, our classroom teachers in all grades, our special educators and our Title I tutors who work as interventionists. Through data study and creative instruction they are doing a great job keeping all of our students moving ahead as learners. TL

News From the Art Room



There has been much activity happening in the art room. The kindergarteners have been very busy with surprises they will bring home in late December, but also in learning many new concepts. They are becoming familiar with basic art vocabulary, learning about line and color, and respect for materials and tools in the art room. They have shown solid growth and much enthusiasm. I look forward to each of them having a very enjoyable and productive year.

The Business Partner's of the Lenox School District have asked for a presence of the children's art work in the community this holiday season. I have chosen projects that are representative of this time of year and will be displaying them from December 7th through the New Year in the windows of town businesses. The 5th grade folded paper stars, the 4th grade created paper quilled snowflakes, the 3rd grade made stain glass windows, the 2nd grade cut circular tissue windows, and the 1st grade created and colored nutcrackers. Please look for them as you do your errands or holiday shopping.

In closing, I want to commend Mrs. Sorrentino's and Mrs. Scherben's 4th grade classes on a very successful trip to the Clark Art Museum in Williamstown. (Mrs. Nelson's class will go on December 15th.) They were attentive, asked pertinent and interesting questions, and were extremely polite. The docents commented on their excellent behavior and solid art appreciation background many times. I am very proud of each and every child. I also want to thank Mrs. Fox and Mrs. Novitsky for joining us on this field trip.

Mrs. Kain, Art Teacher

