



Welcome to 2009-2010 at Morris School!

September 2009

Check out our website at www.lenoxps.org

Calendar Highlights

- Beginning Band Night 9/14
- Parent Open House 9/17
- Picture Day 9/17 & 9/18
- PTO Meeting 9/15 7pm
- Morris School Council
- Rosh Hoshana 9/19 & 20
- Yom Kippur 9/27 & 28
- Columbus Day 10/12

Meet our New Staff Page 2

REMINDER for VISITORS

All visitors please check in at the main office before proceeding to classes or any other location of the school. It is essential for the office to know about the presence of all adult visitors to the school for safety reasons.



Please be sure to **return all forms** such as permission slips, intramural sports sign-ups, health information, emergency cards and parent register forms as soon as possible. Thanks!

Don't forget our **Parent Resource Center** in the library. We have many books on raising and educating our children.



From the Principal's Office:

The 2009-2010 school year is off to a great start. It's so great to see the return of our students and hear their wonderful stories about summer adventures. I'm very happy to be starting my second year as the Morris principal and I look forward to reconnecting with all of our students.

Several important changes punctuate the start of this school year. Total school enrollment is up slightly with the most notable increase taking place in the youngest grades. Kindergarten classrooms have increased from an average of 16 students up to 19 and our smallest group (the current third grade) has added a few students up from 14 per class to an average 16. Another

change for students in grades 1-5 is the addition of a 45 minute computer learning time which will include the use of skill development software in core academics and the teaching of key technology topics. Library time is now a time that can be used flexibly: by classroom teachers or specialists to help students finish assignments and reinforce concepts, and by students to get a start on homework and also to make reading choices and learn library and information-getting skills. If your child says they had to miss library to finish an assignment or take a test, this should not be a cause for concern.

We have made some scheduling changes and have re-assigned staff so

that each block of reading instruction in grades 1 and 2 will be led by a teacher and at least one paraprofessional or specialist. This enhanced adult-student ratio is intended to meet a greater range of needs and challenge every learner more effectively. We will be using federal stimulus funding to acquire state-of-the-art instructional materials and assessments for reading. All of these efforts are intended to keep Morris current with the most recent research and cutting-edge practices. Morris' reading efforts will be coordinated by a new member of the faculty- Reading Specialist Allison Fisher. Mrs. Fisher comes to us from the Berkshire Hills (continued on page 2)

Join the PTO at the Apple Squeeze!!

Carnival games, pony rides, kickboxing, bouncy slides: this year's Apple Squeeze will have it all! The Morris PTO is organizing a Kids' Park at the Apple Squeeze, in cooperation with Kimball Farms Retirement Community. The fun will take place on **Saturday, September 26 from 10 am – 4 pm** at Lilac Park on Main Street in

Lenox. Tickets for all activities will be sold at the event. All proceeds from the Kids' Park will support the Morris School PTO and the many activities and programs it makes possible at the school.

Bring the kids!

Carnival Games & Bouncy Slid
ALL DAY 10:00 am – 4:00p.m.

Pony Rides: 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.

10:30 a.m.: Kids' Kickboxing

11:30 a.m.: Music Singalong

1:00 p.m.: Jump & Run Obstacle Course

2:00 p.m.: Drum Performance by Rhythms

(schedule subject to change)

(continued on page 2)

From the Principal's Office: (Continued)

School District with an extensive background assisting struggling readers and coordinating reading curriculum.

Professional development efforts at Morris this year will support our focus on reading but will also include work with instructional techniques to build math fluency. All of us will also be focused on the topic of wellness this year - particularly social and emotional wellness and the teaching of kindness and good citizenship. Fourth grade students will be participating in a Williams College research study focused on the effects of bystander attitudes and bullying behavior. All of our school's and the district's initiatives are taking place under the supervision of a new interim superintendent, Basan Nembirkow. Mr. Nem-

birkow joins us with 43 experience years as an educator, most recently as superintendent of the Brockton (MA) city school district.

As always, there's a lot happening at Morris Elementary. We hope these newsletters will be a source of needed information throughout the year. I'd also encourage parents to periodically check our website www.lenoxps.org/morris/index/php and refer to the family handbook for other questions. If you still have questions, please give us a call, e-mail or stop by. I wish you and your child a rewarding 2009-2010 school year.

Timothy Lee

Drop Off and Pick-up Reminder

Drop off in the morning begins at **8:20** at the kindergarten door.

Pick-up at the kindergarten door begins at 3:05 for students in grades K and 1 and their siblings only. Pick up volume has been heavy to start the school year and we request parent cooperation by following these guidelines:

- Do not leave your vehicle in a traffic lane and do not park in the turn in or exit to the school.

Do not get out of your car to get your child. A staff member supervising pick-up will bring your child to the car.

**Meet our New Staff:**

Cheryl Congdon is a long-term substitute in Mrs. Roche 's kindergarten class. Cheryl is an experienced educator, a reading specialist who has taught first grade, and has been an assistant teacher in kindergarten.

Allison Fisher is our new reading specialist. She has been a special educator, reading tutor, and English teacher with a range of age groups. Most recently a fifth grade special educator and a language based specialist, Allison comes to us from the Berkshire Hills School District.

Maryjane Pignatelli is a registered nurse and is the district's nurse leader. She comes to Morris from Berkshire Community College where she has been on the nursing faculty. Prior to and during BCC, Maryjane was an emergency room nurse at a local hospital.

Kate Wampler is an ESL Tutor who has worked with adults and children to improve their abilities with the English Language. Kate has last worked with students in the Lee Public Schools and currently instructs adults learners at Kripalu.

Daria Woodger is a registered nurse joining the Lenox Schools as a health aide. Daria will be at the middle and high school for the first part of the week and here at Morris on Thursday and Friday. She joins our health team with varied experience in nursing.

**IMPORTANT NOTICES****PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The first professional development days for the school year will be on **Monday, November 9th and Tuesday November 10th**. The children will have a half-day of school with **dismissal at noon**. No lunches will be served.

TELEPHONE SYSTEM

We ask that you use our 637-5522 number for calls to Mrs. Pignatelli or Mrs. Woodger (nurses), ext. 4, Mrs. Weber or Ms. Grimes, ext. 6, the kitchen, ext. 7 or Mrs. Barnoski and Mr. Lee, ext. 8. Voice mail messages may be left for teachers during the day.

STARTING TIME

Morris School students go to classrooms at 8:35 and children will be marked tardy after 8:40. If you drive your child to school, they should arrive between 8:20 and 8:35. We ask that students be dropped no earlier than 8:20. Tardiness affects everyone's education. Please be prompt.

Apple Squeeze Volunteers Needed!! (continued from page 1)

Volunteer!

Please give a couple of hours of your time to support Morris and the PTO! Volunteers are needed to take tickets, supervise games, sell refreshments, and help set up and clean up. Volunteer shifts are as follows:

8:00 – 10:15 a.m. (set-up)

10:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

12:00 – 2:15 p.m.

2:00 – 4:15 p.m.

4:00 – 6:00 p.m. (clean up).

Parents interested in volunteering should contact Margaret Keller at 637-5030.

Box Top\$ Equal Extra Cash!!

Please remember to **keep collecting Box Tops**. It is such an easy and valuable thing to do! They are found on more and more products everyone uses, not just packaged food items. THANKS to those who brought in box tops last year. We earned over \$400, but it would be great to get back to previous years amounts of \$600 or more!! So ask your neighbors and relatives to save them for you too. This fall's mailing deadline is 10/31 so please make sure to **send them all in before 10/23**. If you are new to Morris or you don't know, the collection box is the Cheerios box in the library window just inside the front door of the

school.

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 make sure to visit the Box-Tops website at www.boxtops4education.com

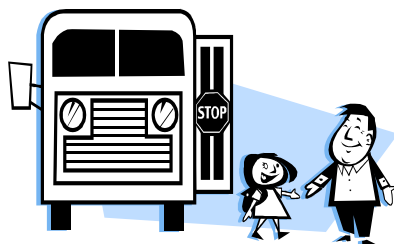
for even more ways to generate \$\$ for Morris School. What a great way for our school to generate additional \$\$ to spend on extras for our children.



Bus Safety is Everyone's Concern!

While statistics show that riding the bus is the safest way to get to school, dangerous situations could occur if children don't follow school bus safety rules and procedures. Here are some general tips for helping students remain safe on the bus:

1. Make sure children stand back at least 5



feet from the edge of the roadway and do not approach the bus until it has come to a complete stop. 2. While waiting for the bus, children should stay out of the street and watch for cars. 3. Children should be courteous when getting on and off, wait their turn, never push or shove on the stairs and remember your manners! 4. Children are ex-

pected to follow the driver's instructions and rules.

Drivers will not drop off children 3rd grade and younger unless they see a parent or caregiver—if this poses a problem, please call Jill Barnoski at 637-5522 x8.

MORE IMPORTANT NOTICES

LUNCH MONEY COLLECTION

If you haven't sent in a lunch deposit, please do so as soon as possible. Our lunch program operates as a debit system and each child's account should have a positive balance from which to deduct purchases. We do not send bills home—if it is necessary to check your balance, please call Mrs. Hopper.

FOOD ALLERGIES

We have an increasing number of children who are allergic to foods such as peanuts, peanut butter, nuts, and other peanut products, milk, soy, etc.. We have established the following rules for safety:

No sharing of snacks and/or lunch. Peanut free lunch zones are available.

CAUTION ON WEST STREET

It is important for all of you who are dropping students off as well as walkers using the crosswalk to exercise great caution. We have flashing lights that should slow traffic but these are often ignored by some drivers. Please observe the traffic signals and crosswalk laws and help keep all our students safe.

RESTRAINING ORDERS AND CUSTODY DOCUMENTATIONS

If you have special instructions or court orders prohibiting a spouse or other family member from seeing your children, it is essential that you make a copy for us. We need to let our recess staff and bus duty teachers know the specific requests so we may keep your children as safe as possible. Please remember to furnish us with up-to-date copies as changes are made.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HANDICAPPED

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Lenox Public Schools affirms that no qualified handicapped person shall, on the basis of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored by the Lenox Public Schools. Any complaints or inquiries concerning this policy should be directed to:

Cynthia Dinan

Dir. of Special Education 637-5571

TITLE I PARENT NOTIFICATION

We have been working hard during these first couple of weeks to identify students in Grades 1-5 who may qualify for Title I services in Reading or Writing. We use a combination of teacher recommendations and selected test scores to determine which students are eligible for this supplementary assistance. In Grade 1 we use the Slingerland test, in Grades 2 and 3 we use the results of the Developmental Reading Assessment, Degrees of Reading Power, and in Grades 4 and 5 we use the long essay from the MCAS testing as well as the MCAS Reading and English Language Arts subtests from Grades 3 and 4, and the Degrees of Reading Power.

If you believe your child should be receiving Title I instruction in Reading or Writing, and do not get a letter from us by September 26th, please call Mr. Lee at 637-5522 x8.

TITLE IX/CHAPTER 622

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Act of 1972, and Chapter 622 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Lenox Public Schools affirm that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, age, creed, national origin, or sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination in any education program or activity it operates including employment therein, and admission thereto.

Any complaints or inquiries concerning this policy should be directed as follows. For matters concerning PreK-5:

Timothy Lee, Principal
Morris School
129 West Street
Lenox, MA 01240

Enrichment Notes

The Enrichment program is designed to stimulate creative and critical thinking skills and enhance the regular curriculum. This school year, I will teach 4th & 5th grade classes once a week from September through January, and each 2nd and 3rd grade from February through June. Some learning units are process oriented, stressing skills such as fluent production of original ideas. Other focus more heavily on content such as Astronomy or Government and Politics.

Extra enrichment classes for 3rd, 4th and 5th graders are open to all students on a self-selected basis—every student has the opportunity to choose from a variety of mini-courses offered for small groups at each grade level. Students “revolve” in and out depending on individual interest in the topics available. Examples of topics include LAW, GALAPAGAS and DANCE and MOVEMENT. Course selections, detailed information and sign up sheets will be explained in class, and sent home for parents to review later this month. A third component of the program is **Destination ImagiNation**, an international, multi-

faceted problem-solving competition which involves brainstorming, designing, writing, a commitment to teamwork, and production of creative solutions to an unusual array of cultural, social and/or technical challenges. All 5th graders are invited to apply for team membership in DI, which runs from October to March or April. Parent volunteers will be needed to assist with managing responsibilities. Staff, students, parents, and the school community have always provided support and enthusiasm for all aspects of the Enrichment program. Please contact me with questions or suggestions, and look for Enrichment notes in this newsletter on a regular basis.

Mrs. Edelman, Enrichment Teacher



PICTURES TAKEN OF YOUR CHILDREN

From time to time the newspaper takes photos of your children engaged in school activities. Many pictures are also taken for the yearbook.

Please let us know, in writing, if you do not wish your child's picture to be included in the yearbook or used with any newspaper stories. Without a written note specifying otherwise, we will grant permission for photos to be used as appropriate.