



# Morris School November Newsletter

November 2011

## Calendar Highlights

- 11/11 Veterans Day—No School
- 11/15 School Council 6pm
- 11/15 PTO Meeting 7pm
- 11/22 Report Cards
- 11/22 Thanksgiving Feast
- 11/23 –11/ 25 Thanksgiv- ing break; **NO SCHOOL**
- 12/5—12/9 PTO Book Fair
- 12/7 Service Club
- 12/8 Title 1 Meeting 6:30pm
- 12/8 & 12/9 Parent Teacher Conferences

## REMINDER NOTES

### Title I Annual Meeting.

“What is Title I” ? To have this and other questions answered, please join us on December 8th at 6:30 in the Morris School conference room where Title I staff will be holding their annual meeting.

### Dress Warm and Bring a Change of Clothes!

Cold weather is here. Please dress your child in layers and remember boots, hats and mittens are necessary gear for outdoor play during recess.



## From the Principal’s Office:

As November arrives, we hope to see that all of our students have settled into the routines of school and learned the boundaries between appropriate school behavior and behavior that is more appropriate for home or the playground. These behaviors include being good listeners to adults and to classmates, responding to adult directions the first time, and sharing materials and toys with others. Eventually almost all kids settle into the routines and expectations of working at school, and because they do; they enjoy their school experience more... and learn more.

This year in our youngest classrooms, we’ve noticed that there are a greater number of kids that are still challenged in learn-

ing the norms and routines of school. An example: a teacher is reading-aloud to the class and a student shouts out, pokes neighbors, gets up to walk around or otherwise does not participate appropriately. This is not malicious acting out by any measure. Rather, we believe this student has simply not learned the routine of sitting quietly, giving the teacher attention during the read-aloud time, keeping hands in one’s own space, or staying put when the adult in charge requests it. Some children may take a while to even grasp the concept of “adult in charge.” Until they do, they see the school as an extended play-space where their wants and desires take precedent above all.

Why the noticeable difference this year? I can’t say

for sure, but it might be that we have a greater number of students entering Morris who turned five just prior to the start of school. It is perhaps a less mature group. We also have a few more students who have limited or no preschool experience. Playing with others, sharing materials and interacting as a group is still very new to many of our students. What ever the cause, the impact of the slow acceptance of school routines means that less learning takes place. Kindergarten has become a more academic place than ever, and learning demands require that students behave as students at an earlier age than ever before.

Parents of students in all grades can help us by  
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## Health and Wellness Tips:

During this period of increased flu outbreaks, the Lenox Schools are committed to support the health of our students and our community. The main symptoms of influenza (flu) include fever and cough and/or sore throat. Some people

also have a runny nose, body aches, headache, chills and feel tired. Some also have diarrhea and vomiting. The most important thing that can be done to keep flu from spreading is to keep your child home when they are sick. In order for us to work together in keeping our

schools healthy and safe, we ask that you keep your child at home when he/she exhibits the following symptoms:

***Fever of 100.4 or more within 24 hours; cough or sore throat; diarrhea and/or vomiting.***

Please don’t hesitate to contact the health office.

## Strategic Reading

In our upper elementary grades, students are learning how to apply strategies to their reading. These strategies focus on four areas of reading: accuracy, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. Explicit teaching of strategies improves problem-solving abilities and metacognitive skills.

Below, you will find a description of one strategy that will aid students in monitoring their comprehension. In future newsletters, I will continue to provide information on subsequent strategies. Any reinforcement of these strategies during reading aloud at home would be extremely beneficial for students.

### **Check for Understanding (Boushey and Moser, 2009)**

#### **What is it?**

New readers tend to focus so heavily on reading words correctly that they sometimes don't pay attention to the content of what they are reading. For more advanced readers, our thinking sometimes veers off task and we cannot recall anything that we have read. The strategy of checking for understanding prompts readers to pause and reflect on what they just read to ensure that their comprehension is on track.

#### **How can you help your child practice this strategy?**

When reading aloud together, pause often in your reading and ask your child to tell you **who** they just read about and **what** just happened. You can also model this strategy by saying "I just read..." or "I just heard you read..." and providing a brief re-tell of the reading.

Feel free to contact me for any suggestions on using this strategy at home. Happy reading! ~Mrs. Fisher, Reading Specialist



Morris School will once again be a collection site for the local food bank this holiday season. Each grade is assigned specific food items to cover all the items requested.

Students may drop off the donations in the front lobby of school starting **Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup>** ending **Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup>**.

## **FOOD DRIVE!!!**

As always, the food bank is very appreciative of the generosity of our school community.

**Pre-School & Kindergarten-**  
**Stuffing, Instant Potatoes**

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade-** 1 Can Meals (i.e. **Dinty Moore, Canned Ravioli**),  
**Canned Fruit**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade-** Cookies/Dessert

**Mixes, Canned soup**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade-** Bread Mixes, Tuna

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade-**Canned Vegetables,  
**Coffee**

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade-** Cranberry Sauce,  
**Peanut Butter (in plastic containers, please)**

Please contact **Aviva Wichler** for more information.

### PTO Help Wanted

The Book Fair will be held the week of December 5-9 and volunteers are needed. If you have some free time during this week (even an hour or two) it would be very much appreciated. Please contact Liz Weibrecht.



### Parents Visiting Morris:

are reminded to sign in at the main office and check with the classroom teacher before visiting. While we do engage parents as classroom volunteers, the daily schedule tends to change and students at every level have a lot to do in a busy school day. With these facts in mind, the unarranged "drop in" visit is discouraged. Thank you for understanding.

### Know a Veteran?

Invite them to join us as guests of honor at the November 10, All School Morning Meeting. We will be recognizing the service of our veterans with a special presentation of songs, poems, and music. The start time is 9:30 and several parking spaces will be reserved by the front entrance for our veteran visitors. Please pass the word. Wear Red, White or Blue to school to show our support to all Veterans.

## From the Principal's Office continued.....

constantly reminding kids of the importance of listening and cooperation. Parent discussions about rules at home and rules at school and how they are the same and different will help to move children to a place of understanding and acceptance. Reinforcing routines and boundaries at home will teach kids that limits are a part of life, but they exist for the benefit of all. Parents may wish to reassert their role as "adult in charge" at home, reminding children that being directed or re-directed by an adult is an act of caring and teaching.

Talk to your kids about their school day and ask them about the different parts of the day—what they like and don't like. Reinforce that even if they don't like writing or math, these are still important skills that everyone has to learn. Assure them that they can and offer praise as they show growth. And then there's the basics: please see that your kids get plenty of sleep and

have a good breakfast. This is critical. Tired hungry children have to work twice as hard to attend and learn.

Please consider the observations above as friendly advice from folks who care about your child's growth. We don't aim to preach and few of us are qualified to give out expert parenting advice. But, we do know children and the conditions under which they do the best in school. We offer these suggestions with your child's learning and happiness in mind. Parents and teachers work best as a team and as always, we thank you for your support.

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### Healthy Snacks

**Healthy snacks** are essential. Some students don't eat lunch until 1:00 and a good snack is needed to keep the energy levels up through a long morning of learning. Sugary snacks are not the best because they tend to provide only a short burst of energy and often lack the nutrition that kids need. There is a great website with some healthy snack suggestions for parents. Check it out, there's lots of great choices, but please note that some of the snacks listed on this site contain tree nuts or peanut butter. Remember that some classrooms have to restrict these snacks due to food allergies:

[http://www.betterschoolfood.org/downloads/resources/BSF\\_Healthy\\_Snack\\_List.pdf](http://www.betterschoolfood.org/downloads/resources/BSF_Healthy_Snack_List.pdf)

## More information to keep connected....

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 ★ Wear Red, White and Blue ★  
 ★ on November 10th ★  
 ★ to show our school spirit!!! ★  
 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**Service Club**

Service Club will be starting December 7 for 4th and 5th graders. Watch for a notice coming home soon! Mrs. Pezze

### **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 Elementary  
 129 West St, Lenox, MA

### **Report Cards Under Construction**

When report cards go home on November 22, parents may notice a blank box or the letters "N/A" in a few areas. The reason is that report cards in their current form were created some years ago and the school's program of instruction has changed substantially in the past three years. Consequentially, our report card has become outdated to the point that a few comments and areas no longer correlate to what we do. We will be addressing this problem this year as a faculty-gradually updating the areas of our report card so that by 2012-2013 we will have a completely revised progress reporting document.

There's actually a lot to this process. We have to make sure that new curriculum components such as GoMath! and Foundations are represented. We have to make sure that the information reported aligns with new state learning standards. We have to be certain that the document can be accessed and managed using the school's data management program, and we have to make sure the new report card goes through the required administrative review. I am confident that the result will be a more accurate and informative report card for all. Until then, we thank parents for their patience and ask that you don't hesitate to call if you need clarification.

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# Math News!!

## *Figure This!*

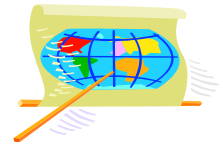
Exploring mathematical concepts is important in developing children's problem solving abilities and mathematical thinking. Try these challenges with your children and discuss how math is used in everyday life and many careers.

**Grades K-2** Symmetry is a basic geometric concept. With rotational symmetry, the shape or image can be rotated some amount and it still looks the same. Line symmetry exists when one half of the shape or image is the mirror image of the other half. Understanding how one part of an object mirrors the rest is important in art, design, medicine and other fields. *Figure This!*



What letters when written in lowercase, can be read the same upside down as right side up? What letters when written in uppercase have line symmetry? Do any uppercase letters have more than one line of symmetry?

**Grades 2-5** Determining the time in different regions of the world involves the use of positive and negative values. A similar approach is sometimes used to describe profit and loss, or to describe changes in climate. *Figure This!* After Felix gets home from school in San Francisco, can he call his grandfather in Cairo, Egypt, and expect to find him awake? (Hint: Think about the number of time zones separating San Francisco and Cairo, Egypt.)



**Grades 4-5** Similarity and scaling underlie design and model building. Architects, clothing designers, toy makers, and civil engineers all use scaling in their work. *Figure This!* The arm of the Statue of Liberty is 42 feet long. How long is her nose? (Hint: How long is YOUR nose? How long is YOUR arm?)

Adapted from NCTM's *Figure This! Math Challenge*. For more information, go to [http://www.figurethis.org/challenges/challenge\\_index.htm](http://www.figurethis.org/challenges/challenge_index.htm).

**Mrs. Cherry, Math Specialist**



## The 2011 Thanksgiving Feast: A Morris Tradition

For at least 20 years, students at Morris have recognized the Thanksgiving holiday with classmates and school friends. The feast has changed somewhat over the years. Originally a full blown turkey dinner with all the fixins, the feast was scaled back in recent years. With Tuesday the 22nd a full school day it was determined that it would be great to bring the feast back as a regular school lunch that serves the entire school. Some of the details have yet to be worked out but parents are advised that Tuesday, November 22 will be a special day featuring a special roast turkey sandwich, stuffing cup, and apple sauce. Classrooms will also be assigned additional feast items and the PTO will be providing the traditional pumpkin bread. **All contributors are asked to closely follow any and all directions regarding the food choices you send in.** We have several severe food allergies in our student body and want to make sure everyone is safe and has fun.

