



The Morris News

An Update for Families of
Morris Elementary School

December 1, 2018

Greetings to all Morris Families;

Welcome to December! I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving filled with food, family and friends! The bustling holiday season is upon us. We are hoping to keep the students on task as much as possible in the next three weeks. It is a challenging feat indeed! The minds of young children tend to wander to all that the holiday season has to offer and we got a jump on the snow this year too!

November was a quick and busy month for the staff and students at Morris. Everyone was busy as we came to the end of the first marking term. I hope that you have had the opportunity to meet or talk with your child's teacher and have a good idea of how your young student is doing with their school progress. Report cards were distributed on Wednesday, November 28th. Parent/Teacher conferences were held that evening and again at the end of the week on Friday. This is the only formal date for conferences during the year, but you are strongly encouraged to maintain frequent contact with your child's teacher throughout the year and you can always arrange for an individual conference if you or the teacher feels the need to meet. A big THANK YOU to the PTO organizers and volunteers who held a wonderful book fair last week. It was a great fairyland event!!

The cold weather is here and snow is too. Please be sure that your children come to school prepared to go outside for their recess. Students WILL be going outside as often as possible. Students will not be allowed to stay indoors because they are not properly dressed, so please have coats, hats, mittens, ski pants and boots ready!! Also, please check the "Lost & Found" table across from the art room for any missing items. The inventory is growing!!

Another piece to the winter arrival is the chance for snow days. As much as the kids (and maybe a few teachers) pray for them, Mother Nature is the one in control. If the forecast calls for bad weather, please be sure to tune in to local radio or television stations in the morning so that you will be aware of any delays, early closings or cancellations that may be made. Notices are issued as early as possible by the Superintendent after consultation with the highway department and the bus company. The district's phone messenger system will be used to send a phone message, but with

all of the calls, it may not be the timeliest method of contact. This is one of the trickiest decisions that our Superintendent has to make. It is difficult to make the call that is the safest for our students and staff while trying not to cancel school unnecessarily. Please know that it is made with safety as the primary concern.

Speaking of safety, as a school and district, we are taking time to review and revise our school safety plans with the goal of creating a comprehensive plan that we can use in the event of any type of emergency situation that could impact a public school. The Superintendent had a team of local first responders along with Massachusetts State Police come to Morris in November to tour our building and make recommendations to help us become the safest facility that we can be. We will also be working to develop plans for evacuations, severe weather, and dangerous person drills that we will eventually rehearse with our staff and then students. While it is unfortunate that we have to think and plan in this manner, it is a difficult reality of the world we live in. As trained and dedicated educators, we will always take care with how we carry out drills and other safety procedures knowing that we are working with young children. The safety of these children is always a top priority and students who are prepared are much more capable of reacting in the best way to a real situation. We certainly hope that we never have a reason to use these procedures, but it is better to prepare. I know it is scary stuff, but it would be much scarier if we were in a situation and people did not know what to do. Please understand that in order to do an effective drill, there may not be advance notice to families. It is important to see how people carry out the training that has been done and advance notice is not given for real situations. In my years of education, many of these drills have been done and the students typically do very well and have not been traumatized if they are done correctly. We have terrific resources with our Lenox Police and Fire Departments as well as specifically trained State Troopers who help guide this process. Your support is critical too as we educate our children about how to respond in an emergency.

A couple of other things...

REMINDER....Please send in a note, or at the very least, call the office if your child is going to be dismissed early or in a different manner than usual so that teachers, bus drivers, and duty personnel can plan accordingly.

Give the gift of your time this holiday season. Parents can continue to be an active participant and help with their children's education by maintaining a good routine of checking homework and folders daily and keeping track of assignments that are due. A strong education is one where the student, teacher and parent all work toward the common goal of educating our children! We love being able to share them with you!!

Parents & Guardians, please do not drop children off at school earlier than 8:20 unless they are enrolled in an early morning activity like Art Club or Chorus. There is not any staff on hand to supervise students before this time.

Not to be a Grinch, but please remember that children should not be bringing any toys, electronics and stuffed animals into school. They often create an unnecessary distraction and are the source of arguments or tears when they are lost. Some of the younger grades have show and share time, so that is the only exception. Thanks for your help with this.

With the winter weather, comes the cold and flu season as well. Please be sure to remind your little ones to practice careful hand washing and to not share water bottles, etc. If your child is sick, please have them stay home until they are symptom free for 24 hours. We want to try hard to keep illness to a minimum!

Coming in Dec & Jan....

- 12/11 – Morris School PTO monthly meeting – 6:00 – Library
- 12/21 – (Friday) Regular time dismissal for vacation. School will resume on Wednesday, January 2, 2019.
- 01/08 – Winter Concert – 6:30 - Gym

I hope that each and every family has a wonderful holiday season shared with family and friends.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Bachli

Principal