

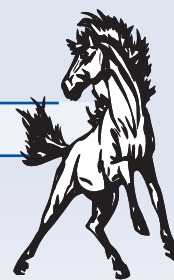
Mustang Musings

MORRIS CENTRAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

"The budget is not just about dollars and cents; it's about living a life that reflects our values and priorities."

—Ric Edelman

Budget Issue,
May 2025



VOTERS TO DECIDE ON \$11.8 MILLION BUDGET

On Tuesday, May 20, 2025, Morris Central School District voters will decide on an **\$11,850,343** spending proposal for the 2025-2026 school year. Polls will be open from noon to 8:00 p.m. in the main lobby.

This year, we saw health insurance costs increase by over 10% while retirement contributions for both ERS and TRS exceeded 16.50% and 10%. As we look to balance our decreasing enrollment with increasing costs, we have remained focused on creating a safe environment and providing a quality education that allows students to achieve their personal best. Through attrition, regionalization of special education services, and fiscal responsibility at all levels, we continue to maintain programming without exceeding our financial constraints. This year's budget aligns with the District's state-calculated tax cap of 2.50%.

"Throughout the budget process, we continue to plan in a way that allows us to meet student needs while absorbing limited increases to State Aid. As always, our goal in creating this budget is to remain fiscally responsible while continuing to provide students with excellent educational opportunities right here in Morris," said Superintendent Jamie Maistros.

At the polls, voters will have the opportunity to approve bus purchases for the 25-26 school year. In the past, MCS has held a separate bus vote in March for the current school year. For example, in March of 2025, voters approved bus purchases for the 24-25 school year. The shift to a May vote for buses for the following year will mean that, moving forward, the community will only need to come out to the polls once to vote on both the budget and the annual bus purchases. This will not impact the quantity or type of buses we purchase; it just adjusts our timeline for approving and ordering vehicles.

In addition to voting on the budget, voters will select two seats on the Board of Education and vote on a minor capital outlay project for next year.

Where does the funding come from?

A line-by-line look at Revenues

	(projected)	2024-2025	2025-2026
State Aid		\$6,699,628 <i>actual \$6,849,458</i>	\$7,689,6821
Local Taxes		\$3,287,952	\$3,370,355
Fund Balance & Reserves *Based on Governor's Budget		\$346,182	\$418,250
Miscellaneous Revenue		\$257,916	\$371,917
Capital Fund Transfer		\$390,000	\$0
Total Revenue		\$10,981,678	\$11,850,343

PROJECTED REVENUES

MISCELLANEOUS REVENUE

3%

FUND BALANCE & RESERVES

4%

CAPITAL FUND TRANSFER

0%

LOCAL TAXES

28%

STATE AID

65%

Where does the funding go?

A line-by-line look at Expenditures

	2024-2025	2025-2026	% Change
Administrative	\$1,105,286	\$1,243,488	12.50%
Program	\$7,947,831	\$8,222,184	3.45%
Capital	\$1,928,561	\$2,384,671	23.65%
Total Expenses	\$10,981,678	\$11,850,343	7.91%

PROJECTED EXPENDITURES

ADMINISTRATIVE

11%

CAPITAL

20%

PROGRAM

69%



Morris Central School Board Members

Mary Dugan, President

Russell Tilley, Vice President

Emily Boss

Teresa DeLaurentiis

Wendy Moore

Morris Central School Administration

Jamie Maistros, Superintendent

April Vunk, Building Principal

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NEW WEBPAGE

www.morriscsd.org

*You may have noticed MCS has
a new webpage. Please check it out.
It is full of important and useful
information.*

THE OFFICIAL BUDGET HEARING ON THE PROPOSED BUDGET WILL BE HELD TUESDAY, MAY 13, AT 6:30 P.M.

3-PART BUDGET

Administrative Component

The administrative portion of the budget provides funding for District and building oversight, along with instructional support services. The 2025-2026 budget includes increased costs in employee benefits as more staff utilize health insurance through MCS.

Administrative Component	2024-2025 Budget	2025-2026 Proposed Budget	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Board of Education	7,326	7,426	100	1.37%
Central Administration	221,393	226,072	4,679	2.11%
Finance	281,405	333,702	52,297	18.58%
Staff	44,006	46,518	2,512	5.71%
Central Services	34,025	66,112	32,087	94.30%
Special Items	183,192	207,439	24,247	13.24%
Administration & Improvement	198,861	190,939	(7,922)	(3.98)%
Employee Benefits	135,078	165,279	30,201	22.36%
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	1,105,286	1,243,488	138,202	12.50%

Program Component

The program portion is the most significant piece and primary focus of the District's budget. The main components of the program selection include instructional costs such as teachers, support staff, pupil support services, co-curricular activities, and athletics.

Program Component	2024-2025 Budget	2025-2026 Proposed Budget	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Teaching—Regular School	2,681,214	2,718,596	37,382	1.39%
Special Services	1,612,561	1,714,540	101,979	6.32%
Teaching—Special Schools	1,033	1,033	0	0%
Instructional Media	171,997	140,153	(31,844)	(18.51)%
Pupil Services	437,938	424,497	(13,442)	(3.07)%
Instruction	4,904,744	4,998,819	94,075	1.92%
Pupil Transportation	617,436	656,446	39,010	6.32%
Interfund Transfers	30,000	30,000	0	0%
Employee Benefits	2,395,653	2,536,919	141,266	5.9%
TOTAL PROGRAM	7,947,833	8,222,184	274,351	3.45%

continued on next page →

Capital Component

The capital portion of the budget consists of the expenses to operate and maintain our facilities. Planned expenditures to onboard our current capital project will appear under this line, and are balanced by an increase of aid in the State Aid portion of our revenues. Once our project is complete, the State will begin aiding all approved capital project expenses, and we can expect this area of the budget to stabilize. Our capital fund offset the planned increase here to prevent this cost from being passed on to taxpayers.

Capital Component	2024-2025 Budget	2025-2026 Proposed Budget	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Central Services	645,576	645,522	(54)	(0.01%)
Special Items	2,000	2,000	0	0%
Debt Service	1,062,209	1,536,574	474,365	44.66%
Interfund Transfers	100,000	100,000	0	0%
Employee Benefits	118,776	100,575	(18,201)	(15.32%)
TOTAL CAPITAL	1,928,561	2,384,671	456,110	23.65%

District to Stay Within Tax Cap

Many people assume that the tax cap that was placed on school districts and municipalities in 2012 is limited to a two percent increase; however, this is not true. A complicated formula is used to determine each school district's tax cap. With a tax base growth factor of 1.0033%, the district's maximum allowable tax cap for 2025-2026 is 4.16%. If the district elected to go with a tax levy increase greater than this limit, we would have needed a super-majority (60%) positive vote for the budget to pass.

The board has elected to seek a tax increase of 2.50%, an increase of \$82,290. The board understands that our community values the quality education the Morris Central School students receive and wants to see that it is maintained. The board also recognizes that many of our community members are struggling financially, especially now due to the rate of inflation, and that the taxpayers expect the board to remain fiscally conservative. As a result of focusing our budget process on the needs of our students as well as the expectations of our community, the board is proposing an increase within our tax cap.

Capital Outlay Project

For the sixth year, the Board of Education is proposing a capital outlay project as part of the 2025-2026 budget. This will be paid through our unassigned fund balance and aid on last year's outlay project, and there will be no expected tax increase because of this proposal.

New York State laws allow school districts to receive state aid for small building projects that do not exceed \$100,000. To receive the aid, however, there are specific requirements that school districts must follow, including:

- The project cannot exceed \$100,000, including all incidental fees (legal, architectural, etc.)
- The project must be part of the annual budget, be voter-approved, and be paid through a budget appropriation.
- A district cannot borrow money for this type of project.
- The district will receive state aid back on the project in the year following completion of the project. It is not paid out over a series of years.
- This is separate from our Capital Project. Unlike the Capital Project, the Capital Outlay allows us to address immediate needs within one calendar year.

How does a capital outlay project work?

Within the proposed 2025-2026 project, the specific project for which the funds will be used is outlined.

- Once the budget is approved by the voters, the school must have architects complete and submit drawings of the project to the State Education Department for approval.
- The project must be completed within the school budget year, July 1- June 30.
- Once the project is completed, the district submits final cost reports to the state for approval and reimbursement.

The purpose of a capital outlay project is to allow a school district to perform small projects to maintain its facilities rather than waiting for issues to become larger and requiring more costly projects in the future. The district is in the process of narrowing down the scope of the work that we hope to accomplish in the capital outlay project. We expect the scope of planned work to address necessary updates to doors, magnetic door holders, safety upgrades, and water fountains.

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE TUESDAY, MAY 20TH

Polls will be open from noon to 8:00 p.m. in the school's lobby.

Voter Eligibility

To vote, you must be at least 18 years old, a U.S. citizen, and a resident of the Morris Central School District for at least 30 days prior to the vote. You do NOT need to be registered to vote.

Absentee Ballot Information

To vote by absentee ballot, you must fill out an application. Contact the district clerk, Judy Matson, at 263-6102 for the application. Completed absentee ballots must be received by the district clerk by 5:00 p.m. on May 20, 2025, the day of the vote.

2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR BUDGET SUMMARY

<i>Proposed Expenditures by Category</i>	2024-2025 Budget	2025-2026 Proposed	Dollar Change
Program Expenditures (Total)	\$7,947,831	\$8,222,184	+\$274,353
Teaching (Regular)	\$2,681,214	2,718,596	+\$37,382
Special Education	\$1,392,161	1,451,740	+\$59,579
Occupational Education	\$220,400	262,800	+\$42,400
Instructional Media	\$171,997	140,153	-\$31,844
Summer Music/Driver's Ed.	\$1,033	\$1,033	-
Attendance	\$3,557	3,795	+\$238
Pupil Services (Guidance, Health, Psych.)	\$290,224	\$275,737	-\$14,487
Student Activities	\$144,157	\$144,965	+\$808
Student Transportation	\$617,436	656,446	+\$39,010
School Lunch Fund	\$30,000	\$30,000	-
Employee Benefits	\$2,395,652	2,536,919	+\$141,267
Aministrative Expenditures (Total)	\$1,105,286	\$1,243,487	+\$138,201
Board of Education	\$7,326	7,426	+\$100
Central Administration	\$221,393	226,072	+\$4,679
Finance	\$281,405	333,702	+\$52,297
Staff	\$44,006	46,518	+\$2,512
Central Services	\$34,025	66,112	+\$32,087
Special Items	\$183,192	207,439	+\$24,247
Administration & Improvement	\$198,861	190,939	-\$7,922
Employee Benefits	\$135,078	165,279	+\$30,201
Capital Expenditures (Total)	\$1,928,562	\$2,384,671	+\$456,109
Operation & Maintenance	\$645,577	645,522	-\$55
Refund on Property Taxes	\$2,000	\$2,000	-
Employee Benefits	\$118,776	100,575	-\$18,201
Debt Service	\$1,062,209	1,536,574	+\$474,365
Interfund Transfers	\$100,000	\$100,000	+\$0
TOTAL	\$10,981,679	\$11,850,342	+\$868,663

<i>Proposed Revenues by Category</i>	2024-2025 Budget	2025-2026 Proposed	Dollar Change
State Aid	\$6,699,628 (actual \$6,849,458)	\$7,689,821	+\$840,363
Other Revenues			
Charges for Services - Tuition	\$85,000	\$65,000	-\$20,000
Interest & Penalties on Taxes	\$10,000	\$10,000	+\$0
Interest on Investments	\$1,000	\$125,000	+\$124,000
Rental of Real Property	\$400	\$400	+\$0
Refunds for BOCES Aided Serv.	\$141,517	\$141,517	+\$0
Medicaid Reimbursement	\$20,000	\$30,000	+\$10,000
Transfer from Capital	\$390,000	\$0	-\$390,000
Subtotal	\$647,917	\$371,917	-\$276,000
Use of Appropriated Fund Balance & Reserves	\$346,182	\$418,250	+\$72,068
Property Taxes			
Property Tax Levy	\$3,287,952	\$3,370,355	+\$82,403
Payment in Lieu of Taxes	\$0		-
Subtotal	\$3,287,952	\$3,370,355	+\$82,403
TOTAL	\$11,131,509	\$11,850,343	\$718,834



Other Items on the Ballot . . .

TWO CANDIDATES FOR THE AVAILABLE BOARD OF EDUCATION SEAT

The school district has a five-member board of education. Members are elected by voters in the district and serve three-year terms. Current members are Mary Dugan, Russell Tilley, Emily Boss, Teresa DeLaurentiis, and Wendy Moore. This is a volunteer position and takes a great deal of dedication to be a member.

This year, voters will select candidates to fill the positions currently held by Mary Dugan and Teresa DeLaurentiis. Mary and Teresa are running unopposed for re-election*.

*These are the candidates who have turned in a completed petition at the time the newsletter was printed. Other candidates may submit a petition prior to the April 2025 deadline.

The official budget hearing on the proposed budget will be held Tuesday, May 13, at 6:30 pm.

CONTINGENT BUDGET

If the proposed 2025-2026 MCS budget is voted down, the Board of Education has three options to consider:

- Put the same budget before the voters a second time
- Put a revised budget before the voters with additional reductions
- Adopt a contingent budget which would be an \$82,290 decrease to the tax levy

WHAT WILL BE CUT IN A CONTINGENT BUDGET?

What used to be a spending cap on contingent budgets is now a zero percent cap on the tax levy increase. In other words, Morris would have to levy the same amount of taxes as in the current year. We would have to decrease the budget by \$661,819.00.

HAPPY RETIREMENT

Maria Deysenroth



Mrs. Maria Deysenroth began working at Morris Central School 32 years ago as a varsity basketball and softball coach. MCS then invited her to spend the following year as a long-term resource room sub and assistant in the CSE office. Thirty years ago, she started teaching PE at Morris and spent her entire teaching career here. Not many teachers can say that.

Mrs. D., as she is affectionately known as by the students, said she would like to travel a little in her retirement, maybe see some Yankee spring training games. But other than that, she will not roam far from home. She said, "Morris and Cooperstown will still be where I spend most of my time."

Mrs. D. said, she will "miss so much about MCS and the Morris community. Most of all, I cherish all the personal connections I have made with individual students, players, parents, and co-workers. I love Morris like family."

We will miss you very much, Mrs. D. We wish you all the best in your retirement. Have fun!

LEADERS OF TOMORROW

In February, Mrs. Catella took Juniors, **Brodie Coleman, Grace Wing, Ali Farmer, Carter Swayer, Jonah Baldo, and Robert Hill**, to a leadership conference at SUNY Oneonta where they learned how to be good leaders with students from all over the county. It was one of several conferences they have attended, and they will attend another in early April. Ali Farmer said, "We learned how to better take control and communicate in difficult settings. We also learned how to work together with people we don't know." Grace Wing added, "We learned how to work together with new people, and communicate better."

Mrs. Catella said, "The Catskill Area School Study Council (CASSC) Student Leadership Workshops are interactive learning experiences that encourage teamwork and communication with a focus on service to community. It is a series of three conferences for high school juniors that are held each year to support young people in personal development and service to others."

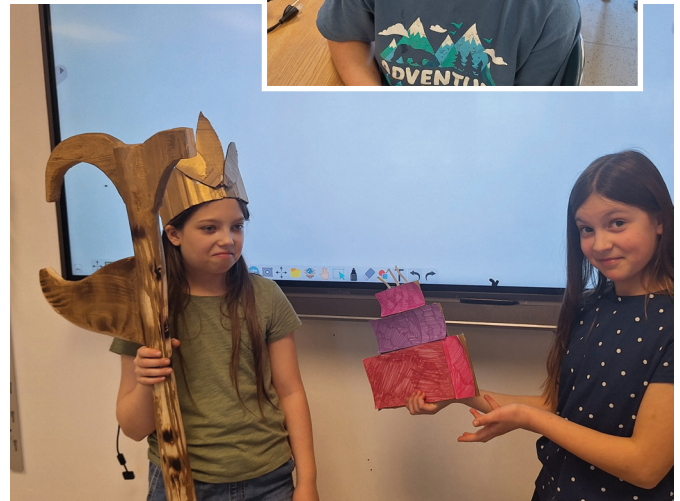
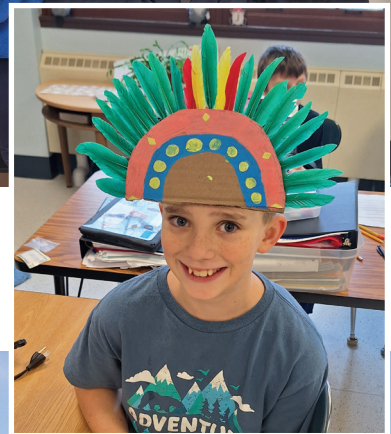
—Mrs. Julene Waffle, English Teacher



Brodie Coleman and Robert Hill gave speeches as part of a process to be voted on becoming a student director next year for the leadership workshops. They were both chosen!

COOL STUFF WE DO!

OUR 5TH GRADE NEWS TEAMS HAVE BEEN BUSY REPORTING FROM THE MESOAMERICAN CIVILIZATIONS!



5TH GRADE ELA & SOCIAL STUDIES

ELA (English Language Arts) is one of the most important subjects in school because it can help you so much in life. So, today we are going to talk about the fun and important things that we do in 5th grade ELA. We've read many interesting and informational texts about natural disasters, famous inventors, and more, each as fun and useful in life as the next! Currently we are learning to write more advanced and sophisticated (multi-paragraph) responses. Mrs. Bjorvand also taught us how to have polite collaborative discussions (and also how to respectfully disagree) with each other. We are all improving our social and educational skills this year. We also have something called thinking sticks(aka candy canes) that are occasionally passed out when everyone's working really hard—sometimes a good treat gets the brain moving. We also learned to annotate our texts, circle unknown words, add an exclamation point to info that pops out to us, etc.

Social Studies is another important subject because you can learn a lot from the past. We studied the three Mesoamerican civilizations: the Maya, Inca, and Aztec. We learned about their culture and lifestyle (a few gory details were shared like the use of human sacrifices!). In class, we use a site called Kids Discover that makes learning a lot of fun for students, (we highly recommend Kids Discover for all teachers and students eager to learn). At the end of the unit, we created news reports for the three civilizations to test our knowledge on them. It was so much fun! We are currently learning about explorers during the Age of Discovery. Keep an eye out for our explorer trading cards!

—Fiorenza Burdick and Sofia Baio , Fifth Graders

5TH GRADE MATH & SCIENCE

Miss Harrison's 5th grade math and science classes have been busy all year long! In math, we started off the year with decimals and worked our way up to learning about fractions. Recently, we have worked on conversions, like when we convert decimals to fractions. We practice these skills everyday in fun ways, like using Boddle, whiteboard work, singing jingles and more! Miss Harrison also gives us a "5 Minute Math Dash." This time gives us five minutes to do what we need to do to prepare for our math period. This is just a little bit of what is going on in Miss Harrison's 5th grade math class.

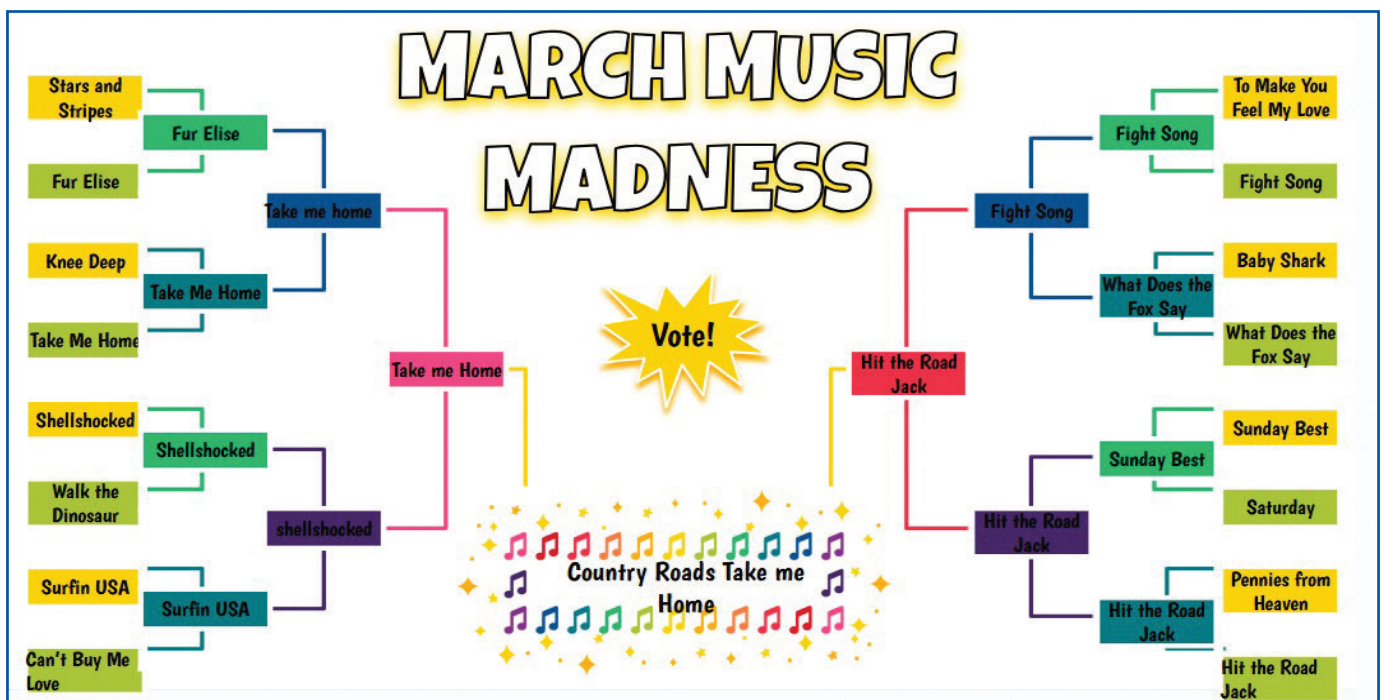
In science, we've been learning about alchemists and how they make new substances. We talked about the different types of acids like citric acid, acetic acid and sulfuric acid. We discussed what some acids do when they come in contact with different metals. Mrs. Foster, a school volunteer, comes in occasionally to do experiments with us. For example, she helped us with filling up a balloon with carbon dioxide by using vinegar and baking soda. We also just completed a "cloud in a bottle" experiment with Miss Harrison. We also talked about how explosions are made and boy was it explosive! These are just a few things that we have worked on in Miss Harrison's science class. Math and science are some of the most important subjects, as you will use them in your everyday life!

— Bella Marino and Roman Turek, 5th Graders

MARCH MUSIC MADNESS

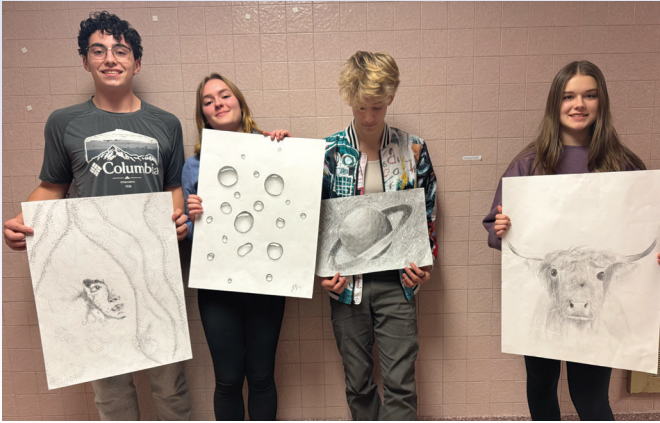
Third through fifth graders have spent the month of March listening to music and voting weekly until we have ended up with the most liked song. And the winner is . . . "Country Roads Take Me Home," by John Denver.

—Mrs. Brianna Thompson, Choral Director



ART CLASSES

Advanced Art students with their value drawing projects.



Pictured left to right: Seniors, Levi Waffle and Leah Gregory; Sophomore, Hayden Kolvik; and Junior, Grace Wing.

Mrs. Bjorvand's 5th graders helping with set building for *The Wizard of Oz* musical.



Students learned how to create a sketch for their stuffed animal, thread a needle, sew, and stuff their projects.



Piper Sherwood (4th grader) with her stuffie project.



Sierra Baldo (4th Grader) with her stuffie project.



Isabelle Hutzley (4th Grader) with her stuffie project.

Studio Art with their clay trinket dishes. We discussed clay techniques and learned about the origins and process of ceramic arts. Students planned their designs, picked their glazes, and hand built their own trinket dishes.



Back row, left to right: Broden Connally, Sam Schiller, Delilah Triolo, Kylee Canfield, Julia Barrett; front row, left to right: Aniya Kogut, Alysia Alvarado

Mrs. Norton's Third Grade class in front of their neuro-graphic art with their clay coil pot projects.



Top, left to right: Jordyn Lindberg, Grayson Bard, Anthony Tabone, Nora Burdick, Quinn Kelley, Harlie Gould, and Lydia Erwood. Bottom, left to right: Chloe Bailey, Hunter MacPherson, Owen Perkosky, Hawken Griffiths, and Caleb Wayman.

HARD WORK PAYS OFF



Congratulations go out to Junior, **Natalie Barley** (Cosmetology) and Seniors, **Georgia Kolka** (Visual Communications), **Maddie Moore** (New Visions Healthcare Professionals), **Ethan Nisius** (New Visions Engineering), and **Hannah Wist** (New Visions Healthcare Professionals) for being inducted into the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) for their work at their BOCES or New Visions programs on April 3, 2025. Their hard work has paid off. Natalie Barley, Junior, said, “I thought the whole experience was amazing, with all of the instructors and parents watching us achieve something so great. It was an absolute honor to be inducted into NTHS, but to get there took a lot of hard work and dedication. My favorite part was when I got inducted, and was able to receive my certificate.” Hannah Wist, Senior, said, “The ceremony was

great! It was a fabulous reflection of the hardwork and dedication all the individuals put in throughout the year. Sometimes it was rough, but we have all been working for this honor.” Georgia Kolka, Senior, said what many of these inductees felt: “I am so thankful for all of the teachers and my parents who have helped me get this far. I wouldn’t be this successful if it wasn’t for them!”

You will be able to recognize the seniors’ efforts when they graduate as they wear special white NTHS stoles over their graduation gowns.”

Mrs. Vunk was able to attend the ceremony, She said, “[These students] have worked hard and [it] is a great honor!” We are all very proud of these students.

—Mrs. Julene Waffle, English Teacher

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE



On April 2, tenth grade students attended a College and Career Fair at SUNY Delhi. This event was sponsored by the Delaware County Counselor Association. Students were able to speak with college admissions representatives from over thirty institutions and a dozen prospective employers. After the fair, students toured the campus with a current SUNY Delhi student and then ate lunch in the campus dining hall. This was a wonderful opportunity for sophomores to gather information

and begin their search for what opportunities there are for after graduation. Eddie Ceuavas said, “I learned a lot about colleges and the food was great.” **Lucas Waffle** added, “It was nice to find out that SUNY Delhi is one of the most affordable schools in NYS.” **Jed Dugan** said the experience was valuable “because I learned about college and what I need to do and what is offered. I had no real ideas about it until this trip.”

—Mrs. Kelly Catella, Guidance Counselor

FIFTH GRADERS VISIT BOCES

On Friday, March 28, the Morris fifth graders, teachers, and the MCS Elementary Counselor visited the Milford Campus of ONC BOCES campus. We were given a tour of the entire facility and enjoyed many hands-on activities. We enjoyed our trip so much that many of our students want to start classes at ONC BOCES tomorrow!

—Angela Garutto, Elementary School Counselor, DAC



ALL-COUNTY ALL-STARS



Congratulations to the Mustang Musicians who represented MCS at the All-County Music Festival!

- **Elementary Chorus:** Paige Sherwood, Maggie Bourgeois, Makenzie Pegg, Mickenzie Goodwin, Fia Burdick, and Bella Marino
- **Elementary Band:** Abigail Connally
- **Junior Band:** Kendall Gould
- **Senior Chorus:** Brodie Coleman

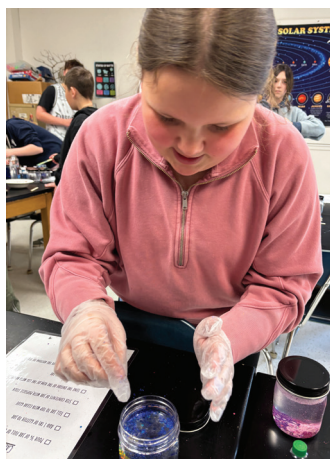
CALM JARS



Last week, as part of their SEL curriculum, Ms. G. taught 6th grade students how to make calm jars. The Calm Jars were then sent home with grades kindergarten through second grade.

A “calm jar,” also known as a glitter jar or mindfulness jar, is a sensory tool filled with water, glue, glitter, and sometimes other small objects, used to help individuals, especially children, calm down and regulate their emotions by focusing on the visual movement of the glitter settling.

—Angela Garutto, Elementary School Counselor, DAC



COLLEGE BIOLOGY STUDENTS SHOWCASE INTERESTS WITH GENIUS HOUR PROJECTS

On Fridays, Mrs. Fredette’s College Biology students work on Genius Hour projects, an innovative and self-driven assignment that allows her students to explore topics they are passionate about. This project, inspired by a concept used by major companies like Google, gives students dedicated time to research, create, and present something meaningful to them.

The basis of Genius Hour is simple: students choose a topic of interest, conduct research, and develop a final product or presentation showcasing what they’ve learned. Unlike traditional assignments with strict guidelines, Genius Hour encourages curiosity, creativity, and independent thinking.

This first round of projects include cryptocurrency, the genre of heavy metal music, taxidermy, whittling and science career choices. The variety of topics highlight each student’s unique interests and talents. Students are really excited at the prospect

of learning about things they are interested in, and some have a list of future topics they would like to explore.

At the end of the project round, students will present their work to classmates and teacher, and starting with the second round, we will open up the presentations to whoever is interested and available to join us. These presentations not only showcase the students’ hard work but also help develop public speaking and critical thinking skills.

Genius Hour allows students to take ownership of their learning, explore new ideas, and apply real-world problem-solving skills. By the time they graduate, these students leave with a deeper appreciation for self-directed learning—an essential skill for future success in college and beyond.

—Mrs. JoAnn Fredette, Science

A MONTH OF READING FUN

For the month of March, students in PK-12 got to dress up as book characters, read books in fun ways, listen to mystery readers and try to guess who they were, celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday as well as grow their love of reading. Parents and Reading Partners in conjunction with Drop Everything and Read time turned out to be an awesome month of building reading skills and enjoyment.

Pre-K PARP Experience

Pre-K has really enjoyed the last two weeks of PARP. The first week was Dr. Seuss Week. Our favorite parts were:

1. Singing Dr. Seuss songs.
2. Bringing favorite stuffed animal to school to read to during PARP.
3. All the days we dressed up!

The second week of PARP has been really fun. We really like DEAR time!

We also really, really like the masked readers!

— Submitted by Pre-K students!

Below are photos from D.E.A.R. Day of flashlight reading! The students had a blast.

—Ms. Kalliann Harrison, Fifth Grade Teacher

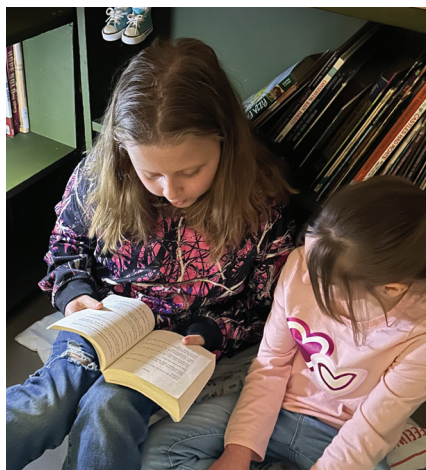
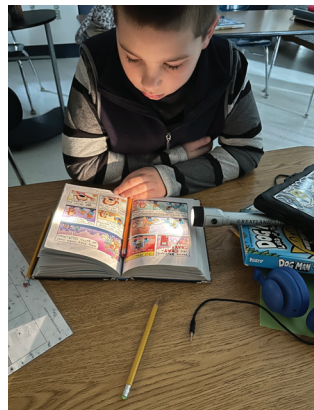
A LITTLE HISTORY AND MORE ABOUT PARP

The month of March has been given the acronym, "PARP," which stands for, "Pick a Reading Partner." PARP was created in 1978, by the late Senator James Donovan, who served as chairman of the United States Senate Education Committee for fourteen years before his passing in 1991. PARP was an initiative to encourage good reading habits and a positive attitude toward reading beyond the classroom, and is voluntarily implemented by school districts. Morris Central School, for one, partook in PARP month through DEAR time. DEAR stands for "Drop Everything and Read." The elementary school, junior high, and senior high all participated. At one random moment throughout each school day, a bell went off and fifteen minutes were given for students to drop what they were doing to read a book of their choice.

Since its foundation, PARP has had a different theme each year. This year, the theme was about Dr. Seuss. There was a series of spirit week events that students and staff participated in. Some of these events included students and staff wearing their pajamas to school, wearing their clothes inside out, backwards, and mismatched; wearing a college/career shirt, wearing wacky socks, and so much more! Mrs. Mackey, the MCS Librarian, said, "There were so many wonderful PARP

activities this year! PARP Spirit week was so much fun. It was great to see all of the students who participated! Of course, the 7th graders wondered why I was in pajamas!" Mrs. Mackey also said that her favorite part of PARP was DEAR time, and "I Even brought a book from home to read! Also, I couldn't wait to find out who the mystery readers were too!"

— Grace Schiller, Senior



A SPECIAL VISITOR IN MS. CALLEA'S FIRST GRADE CLASS!

Puppies are so much fun to cuddle, pet, and talk to—and this year, Ms. Callea's first grade class had a very special furry visitor! Thanks to ONC BOCES, we had the opportunity to borrow a *Joy for All* puppy, and the students absolutely loved it.

This lifelike toy pup wags its tail, barks happily, and responds to gentle voices and touches—just like a real dog! Its soft, fluffy fur, and soothing heartbeat made it the perfect classroom companion.

Our classroom puppy brought a sense of calm and comfort to our days. Students enjoyed spending time with it during quiet moments, when they needed a break, or just wanted a little extra cheer. Whether they were petting its fur or simply sitting beside it, the puppy helped create a warm, cozy environment for everyone.

We're so grateful for the chance to experience the *Joy for All* puppy—it truly brought smiles, relaxation, and a little extra joy to our classroom!

—Ms. Christine Callea,
First Grade Teacher



ENGLISH 11

Altered Art, Poetry, Research, Hemingway—these are all topics studied in Mrs. Waffle's ELA 11 classes this quarter.

The students started out January by learning about poetry—how to read it, interpret it, and write it. They even threw in some reading comprehension questions for Regents practice. Instead of an exam at the end of the unit, students chose their favorite poem they wrote and figured out how to represent that poem using the art form called, "Altered Art." They took their poems and interpreted them on an old discarded hard-cover book. Students spent a week in class painting, folding, cutting, and sculpting their creations. They are all on display for this year until next January in the library. They will also be on display at the Academic Fair on May 20, from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

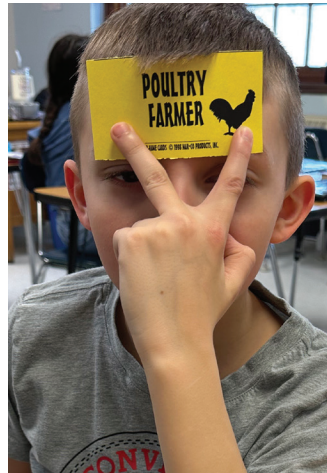
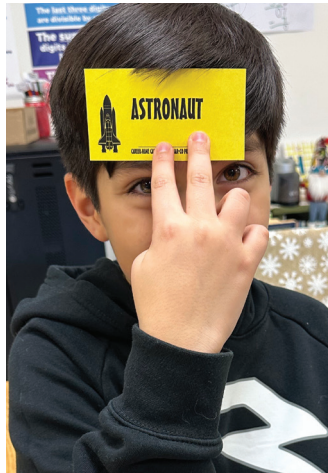
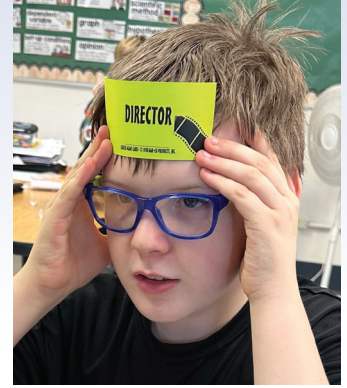
After poetry came a formal research project where students studied several short stories by Ernest Hemingway and watched a documentary about him. Students were charged with finding out what a code hero is, how did Hemingway write about code heroes and deciding if Hemingway himself was a code hero. While researching they learned how to write a formal paper using Modern Language Association (MLA) formatting standards. It was a big project but we tackled it in small parts, making the whole thing more manageable. The skills learned in this unit will be used throughout the rest of high school and into college.

—Mrs. Julene Waffle, Secondary English Teacher

FUTURE CAREERS

Ms. Garruto's visited the fifth grade classroom this winter. They explored the topic of "Future Careers." She passed out cards so all of the students could play a game just like "Heads Up." Instead of guessing the objects on their cards, the cards said job titles and they had to see if their partners could describe the occupation! They had a blast, and she went over the cards that the students did not know about.

—Ms. Kalliann Harrison, Fifth Grade Math and Science Teacher



School-Based Health will be open on weekdays over school break, 8am–4pm.

Any child enrolled in School-Based Health can be seen at any SBHC when schools are on break.

MON. – Cooperstown Elem.
Unadilla Valley

WED. – Delhi Middle/High School
Gilbertsville–Mount Upton

FRI. – Sherburne Elem.

TUE. – Richfield Springs
Sherburne Elem.

THU. – Edmeston
Sidney

School-Based Health is closed on the following days:
New Year's Day, Memorial Day,
4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving,
and Christmas.

Please call for well visits, sick visits,
telehealth, and medication refills:

844-255-7242



Bassett Healthcare Network
School-Based Health

BUSY IN ENGLISH 12



In English 12, students have studied *Tuesdays with Morrie*, a story about a man's journey through his debilitating disease, ALS, and another man's discovery of what is most important in life: love for friends and family. It was a wonderfully inspirational (and sad) book. They even watched a Nightline interview with Morrie Schwartz, the man who suffered from ALS. If you read the book, did you know that Mitch Albom (one of Mrs. Waffle's favorite contemporary authors) donates all of the proceeds of this book back to charitable organizations?

Because Morrie offered so much great life advice, after seniors finished the book, they had the chance to work with sixth graders in group interviews where they shared their advice for being successful students. The sixth graders asked all sorts of questions about sports and school and the seniors enjoyed answering them.

After that book, Students joined forces "against" the sophomores, to study William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. In a battle of the books, students read the book, became experts on certain parts of their choosing, such as setting or symbolism, and made awesome presentations to show the other class as well as three community or staff members in a competition. The presentations were really awesome, and, in spite of suffering terribly from nerves, students presented in very mature ways. Thanks to former superintendent, Mr. Virgil, Community member, Mrs. Child, and Principal, Mrs. Vunk (and fill-in Mrs. Catella, Guidance Counselor) for being the judges. They helped Mrs. Waffle and Ms. Turner figure out who was the "overall best presentation" in both classes. Kudos to all the students, who were all winners and were celebrated in the cafeteria with

pizza and wings provided by Mrs. Waffle and Ms. Turner. It was both a fun, exciting, educational, and delicious experience.

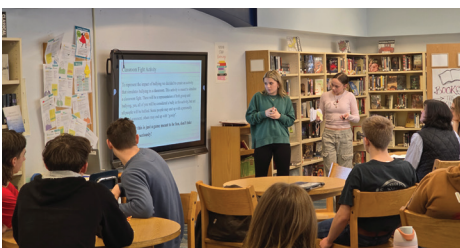
The sophomores like the project as well. **Lainey Fraser** said, "I liked how we got to do the unit with the seniors and not just the 10th graders." **Ryan Townsend** said, "*The Lord of the Flies* was pretty rad." **Hayden Kolvik**, who was very well-spoken during the presentations, said, "I liked the presentations we did." The seniors like the project, too. They spent much of the week before paper macheing a giant conch shell or a pig head. They made slide show presentations as well. Senior **Leah Gregory**, "I really enjoyed the final project." Leah's group explored the setting and they made a replica of the island in the story. She also said, "The best part was that we were able to work with the tenth graders" one of whom was her brother. Senior **Jayden Kolka** thought the "projects at the end were very creative." He wasn't wrong.

At the end of March up until April Break, the seniors allowed **Benjamin Newell** (also a senior) to convince them to create their own next unit of study. Ben presented to the class his idea: a unit focused on student choice and getting to know each other in the last months of their high school careers. Affectionately called, "Ben's Unit," students picked their own novels and created a presentation about why they picked it and how it reflects them as a person. Mrs. Waffle added a few little assignments that enhanced that work as well as assignments that served as review of major literary elements that the students have learned this year as well as some revisiting of business writing. **Delaney Coveny** said, "Reading isn't my favorite, but picking my own book made it better. I think seniors should do the book next

year and even keep the name 'Ben's Unit.'" Namesake Ben Newell added that "This unit has been a good break from the usual English class. I am glad we have time to explore our interests as a class and learn more about each other before we don't see each other regularly anymore."

Finally, all seniors started working on their senior profiles that will be on display the last month of school by the main entrance. Always a fan favorite read, look for them at the end of May.

—Mrs. Julene Waffle, Secondary English Teacher



NEWS FROM LPP

The SUNY Morrisville Liberty Partnerships Program (LPP) now in its second year at MCS, has established a fine footing with a current enrollment of 91 students, grades 5-12. LPP is part of a statewide program designed to provide students with academic support, connections to school and local communities, character and leadership development, service learning opportunities, access to community resources, and personal social and emotional development as they transition to the next phase of their lives.

We've had another active and exciting year! LPP students have visited local businesses for lessons in implementing business plans, volunteered for clean-up days at local organizations, they've engaged in student/parent-led activities, worked with an Honor Society student and lower elementary students, and completed service projects for our annual clothing drive. They even helped organize a LifeNet of NY Critical Care Team visit, and were able to attend a performance by DownBeat, the official drumline team of the Buffalo Bills!

It's with happy hearts that we're able to gather in room #236 each day, in order to grow together.

— Mrs. Lisa Marino, LPP Student/Family Advocate



PE STATIONS

This winter, second graders worked on balance, strength and coordination with stations in Mrs. Deysenroth's PE classes.



THE ROAD TO THE BINGHAMTON ARENA ELITE 8

To get to the Elite 8 in Binghamton, Morris had to first travel to SUNY Delhi to face #1 seed Edmeston who they faced and lost to during the regular season. The game was a super close game the whole time. Fans felt like they had ulcers by the last quarter and plates were quite stressed and hyped up. The last minutes proved to be nail biters as the teams were only separated by one or two points. At the one minute, twenty second mark, Senior **Levi Waffle** was fouled and made a foul shot. Soon after the ball was turned over and Edmeston had the ball. They made an attempt to throw it long for a fast break, but Levi intercepted it near half court with 14 seconds in the game left. He passed the ball to Junior **Ty Turner** who made the basket and was fouled. Ty made his foul shots, which put Morris up by three. Morris won 36-33, sending us to the Section IV Class D Final. Sophomore, **Lucas Waffle** said, "It was really cool to play there, and it was awesome that we gave it our all and that we would be back for the Section IV title game."

— Mrs. Julene Waffle, English Teacher

IV Champions

We were all jumping up and down. For the first time in 50 years, the Morris Mustangs became the Section IV Class D Champions. Even with the crowd roaring, all we could hear was the excited screams of our teammates.

Heading into this game, we were determined to win. After upsetting number one Edmeston in the semifinals, we believed we could beat anybody. During the Finals, **Carter Swayer** (18 pts) and **Ryan Murphy** (12 pts) had a combined 30 points with **Ryland Boss** chipping in 7. At the same time, **Ty Turner** (10 rebs) and **Levi Waffle** (11 rebs) added a whopping 21 rebounds for the win.

The game was a close one throughout the whole thing, but late in the game things became even more tense as leading scorer, Ryan Murphy, fouled out. Everyone worried about the outcome. But even with our best player out of the game, we still found a way to succeed.

Ryland Boss hit a dagger three and increased Worcester's deficit. After the last minutes of the game, everyone rushed onto the floor with euphoria. The team, the coaches, and even the fans couldn't believe it: They were Section IV Champions. The Morris Mustangs will never forget the victory we had won on that day. It was the first time since 1975, fifty years later, that Morris boys brought home the Section IV Class D Banner.



Matthew Schiller, sophomore, said, "The moment the clock ran down to 20 seconds left and our team placed the ball down on the court, it felt as if we were in a movie--there was so much excitement and happiness!"

One cool fact about the game was that Mr. Ed. Webster who was part of the original Section IV Class D Championship team was there at the game. He thought it was pretty awesome to be there to witness that kind of MCS history.

— Ty Turner, Junior

Elite 8

Earning the Section IV Championship title was not the last of the season's excitement either. The team earned the right to be part of the Elite 8 games held at the Binghamton Arena for the first time in MCS history. The team played hard and were only down a few baskets at half behind Sackets Harbor, but after half time Sackets Harbor came out with intensity, speed, and scoring options. Our Morris boys ended up losing at the arena, but Sackets Harbor faced the same losing fate we did in their next game.

So many people thought this team would not do well after several winning seasons and a three-peat Tri-Valley title. But this team surpassed everyone's expectations, maybe even their own. What a great season, gents—kudos to all the players, coaches, bus drivers, and score keeper for their dedication. Many thanks to the fans, too!

— Mrs. Julene Waffle, English Teacher



THE WIZARD OF OZ

Drama Club and Chorus are great ways for people to make friends, see what it's like behind the scenes, act, and so much more! This year the MCS Drama Club and Chorus hosted a very entertaining play loved by many, *The Wizard of Oz*. We had 65 students involved between cast, stage production, sound, lights, and choreographer. Many people loved helping out and acting in the play. **Delilah Triolo** ('28), who played Dorothy said, "I love musicals so much because everyone is so welcoming. You don't have to worry what others think of you." **Brodie Coleman** ('26), who played the Cowardly Lion, said, "Being in the play this year was a lot of fun. Being with all of my friends just made the experience even better. Everyone's performance was incredible, and I can't wait to see what we do next." Mrs. Fredette, one of the directors, said, "Pulling together a play is a lot of work, but I loved it. I get to work with a lot of kids whom I usually wouldn't have had the chance to. Working closely with these talented students here in Morris is always fun and an honor." This year's play was very fun and entertaining, we are excited to see what is to come from the MCS Drama Club.

Co-Director Mrs. Thompson said, "I would like to give a special thanks to the backstage moms (Vicky Pegg, Jamie Sherwood, Stephanie Connally, and Heather Hoosock). Also a special thank you to Teresa DeLaurentis who provided food during tech week for the students and Justine Triolo who provided food during our practice-a-thon. Also a special thank you to Deanna Perkosky who set up our lights and Maiya King who not only ran the microphones but also recorded our show."

Mrs. Thompson added, "In the end, putting on a musical is more than just telling a story—it's about building a community, embracing vulnerability, and sharing joy. It's an act of love that echoes long after the final bow. I am so beyond proud of the entire cast and crew. They did this show the justice it deserved. I'm very excited to see who participates next year and know that they will make it even better than this year."

The show packed the auditorium for three days straight. It was both funny, serious, and very entertaining. Everyone did so well! Congrats, Cast and Crew! The show was awesome.

—Shiloh Jones, Junior



6TH GRADE INTERVIEWS

We're excited to share some highlights from the recent visit the senior class made to the sixth graders! The senior class took the time to explain what high school life is like, helping to ease some of the worries that the younger students might have about this big transition. The seniors started the discussion by talking about the importance of staying organized. Senior **Leah Gregory** said, "Keeping notes from classes and writing your assignments in a notebook is a good way to remember things and keep track of all your work for each class."

Next they talked about a variety of clubs and sports available in highschool. Senior **Levi Waffle** said, "My favorite part of high-school is being able to play basketball and have a great time with my team on the court." This got the sixth graders really excited for their next four years. They had great conversations about what clubs and sports they would want to join when they get to highschool.

Finally, the senior class outlined how important friendships are and that they are formed in the next six years. The sixth graders were excited for the years to come and what they have to offer them.

Overall, the interviews went very well! The sixth graders were left feeling more informed and excited about their futures in highschool.

—*Delaney Coveny*, Senior

WHAT'S NEW IN COLLEGE ENGLISH?

Did you know MCS offers two college English classes through Tompkins County Community College (TC3)? The first class is ENGL 101: Academic Writing which is offered in the fall. If students do well there, they may continue to ENGL 102: Approaches to Literature. TC3s focus is on the short form in this class which means students study short stories, plays, and poetry. So far students studied fiction writers such as William Faulkner, Joyce Carol Oats (one of their favorites), and Ralph Ellison. The unit ended with an in depth study of one author and three of their stories where students dove into story meanings and found patterns using textual analysis skills they learned as well as historical and contextual analysis skills.

After the short fiction unit, students read and watched Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* as well as Lorraine Hansburry's *A Raisin in the Sun*. Both plays dealt with poverty and difficult issues such as racism, spousal abuse, and selfishness.

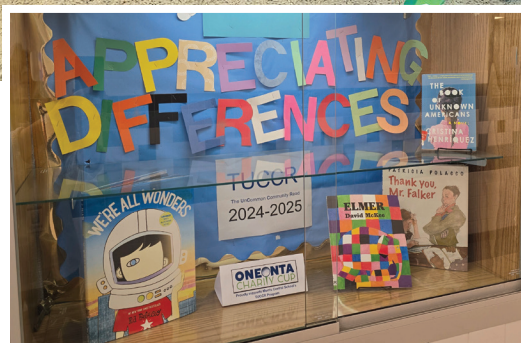
Next up is poetry for this half of the class.

—*Mrs. Julene Waffle*, Secondary English Teacher

BADMINTON TOURNAMENT BRACKET FROM PE CLASS



APPRECIATING DIFFERENCES



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know you can borrow the TUCCR books from the Village Library? If you want to experience what our students have this year, please go check the books out. They are wonderful. This display is in the hallway outside our library. Thanks to The Oneonta Charity Cup (our biggest sponsor), we were able to purchase all of this year's books and gift them to all of our MCS students.

Morris Central School
Morris, New York 13808

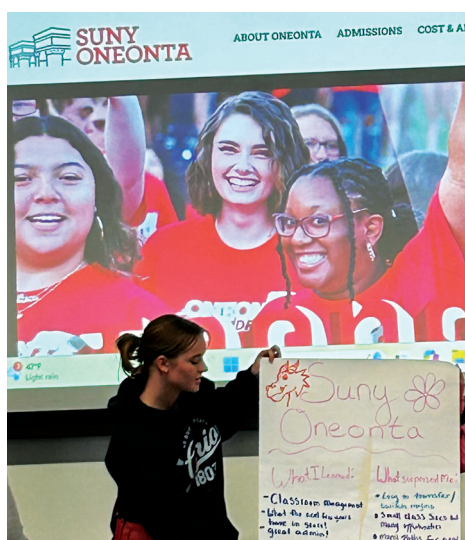


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TEACHER PIPELINE

This year, there were only a couple of students from Morris who attended the Teacher Pipeline Workshop trip—Junior **Eveyn Burke** and Senior **Leah Gregory**. There, the students learned how to manage and keep a productive classroom. They were also able to attend a college class where they were able to observe the environment there and get an idea of what it will be like when they go to college. They were also introduced to some of the students who attend SUNY Oneonta, and they even had lunch with them where they were able to ask them questions directly. Evelyn Burke said, “It helped prepare me for my future career. I got great insight into the actual classes I am going to have to take.” At the end of the day, students were asked to put together a poster presentation that illustrated what they learned from their experiences at The Pipeline, and there was time to have any questions that they still may have answered.

—Leah Gregory, Senior

Leah Gregory at the Teacher Pipeline Workshop held at SUNY Oneonta on Friday, March 28.

THREE CHEERS TO . . .

- ★ The whole musical cast and crew—great work, everyone!
- ★ Student Council for an excellent Spirit Week in February.
- ★ The Varsity Boys Basketball team for winning the Section IV Championship. Great coaching, Coach Joy and Coach Aikins.
- ★ All of our sports teams for representing MCS and making us proud!
- ★ All the juniors for hosting a successful BINGO night!
- ★ Mrs. Norton, Miss Fraser, and Miss Callea for planning PARP week!
- ★ State Test Preppers!
- ★ Mr. Virgil, Mrs. Vunk, Mrs. Child, and Ms. Catella for helping sophomore and senior ELA classes with their Lord of the Flies project.

ALL-STAR ATHLETES

Varsity Boys Basketball

- **Ryan Murphy:** First Team Tri-Valley League All-Star
- **Carter Swayer:** Second Team Tri-Valley League All-Star
- **Levi Waffle:** Honorable Mention Tri-Valley League All-Star

Varsity Girls Basketball

- **Hannah Wist:** First Team Tri-Valley League All-Star

Varsity Track

- **Maddie Moore:** Section IV 100 Meter First Team All-Star
- **Maddie Moore:** Section IV 1000 Meter First Team All-Star
- **Hayden Kolvik:** Section IV 55 Meter Hurdles Second Team All-Star
- **Hayden Kolvik:** Section IV 55 Meter Hurdles State Qualifier Second Team All-Star