

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 2024

VOTERS TO DECIDE ON BUDGET

On Tuesday, May 21, 2024, Morris Central School District voters will decide on a \$10,981,679 spending proposal for the 2024-2025 school year. Polls will be open from noon to 8 p.m. in the main lobby. This budget maintains the excellent academic and extracurricular programming for students that MCS has a long history of providing.

The proposed budget is a spending increase of approximately 5.5% year-over-year. As is the case with rural schools across New York State, Morris saw a decrease of more than \$240,000 in state aid as outlined in the Governor's proposal. The proposed 2024-2025 budget includes an anticipated use of \$345,074 of the District's fund balance and reserves in order to keep the tax levy increase to 1.70%. Should NYS pass a budget that restores Morris' transition aid, the District would only need to spend approximately \$102,000 in fund balance.

"The significant reduction in transition aid has made this a rather challenging budget season. While we are hopeful that this revenue will be restored, we are also working on long-term plans that allow us to meet student needs while absorbing reduced 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. *"We are dedicated to serving the needs of this community and believe this budget proposal is a reflection of this commitment."*

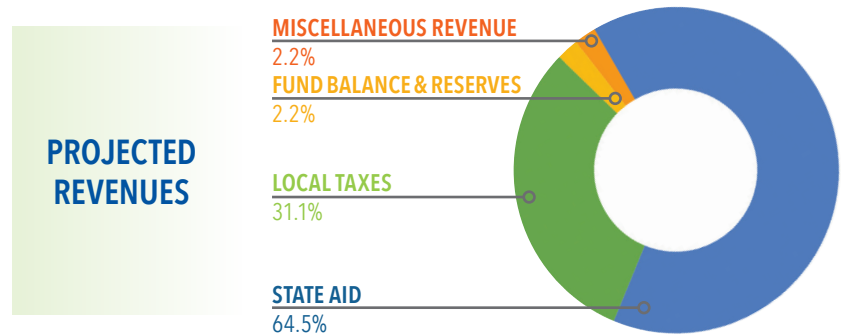
This year we saw health insurance costs increase nearly 7%, retirement contributions for both ERS and TRS exceed 10%, and inflation continues to impact our day-to-day expenses. As we look to balance our decreasing enroll-

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Where does the funding come from?

A line-by-line look at Revenues

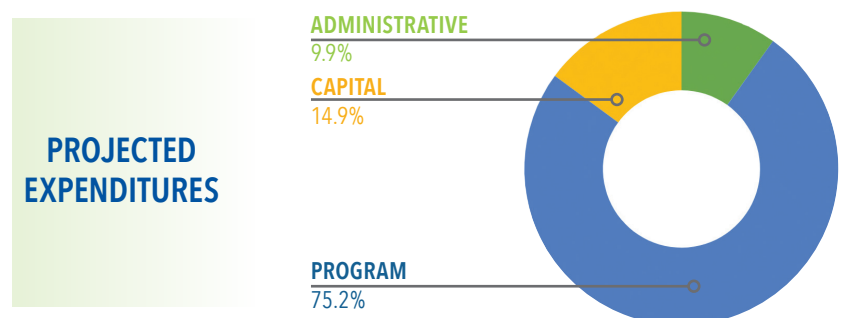
	2023-2024	2024-2025
State Aid	\$6,714,768	\$6,699,628
Local Taxes	\$3,232,901	\$3,287,952
Fund Balance & Reserves *Based on Governor's Budget	\$233,481	\$346,182
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$227,917	\$257,917
Capital Fund Transfer	\$0	\$390,000
Total Revenue	\$10,409,067	\$10,981,679



Where does the funding go?

A line-by-line look at Expenditures

	2023-2024	2024-2025	% Change
Administrative	\$ 1,040,261	\$ 1,105,286	6.25%
Program	\$7,824,347	\$ 7,947,831	1.58%
Capital	\$ 1,544,459	\$ 1,928,561	24.87%
Total Expenses	\$10,409,067	\$10,981,678	5.50%





**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

Main Office (607) 263-6100

Guidance (607) 263-6116

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**For submissions, calendar events
or to request a printed copy,
contact Judy Matson
(jmatson@morriscsd.org)
(607) 263-6102**

**or
Julene Waffle
(jwaffle@morriscsd.org)**

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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.*

ment with increasing costs, we have remained focused on creating a safe environment, we remain focused on 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 are able to maintain programming without exceeding our financial constraints. This year’s budget is in line with the District’s state-calculated tax cap, which sits at 1.70% this year.

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

3-PART BUDGET

Administrative Component

The administrative portion of the budget provides funding for District and building oversight along with instructional support services. The 2024-2025 budget includes increased costs in employee benefits as more staff utilize health insurance through MCS.

Administrative Component	2023-2024 Budget	2024-2025 Proposed Budget	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Board of Education	8,102	7,326	-776	-9.58%
Central Administration	208,070	221,393	13,323	6.40%
Finance	272,988	281,405	8,417	3.08%
Staff	40,951	44,006	3,055	7.46%
Central Services	35,113	34,025	-1,088	-3.10%
Special Items	180,682	183,192	2,510	1.39%
Administration & Improvement	201,928	198,861	-3,067	-1.52%
Employee Benefits	92,428	135,078	42,650	46.14%
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	1,040,261	1,105,286	65,025	6.25%

Program Component

The program portion is the largest 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	2023-2024 Budget	2024-2025 Proposed Budget	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Teaching—Regular School	2,475,046	2,681,214	206,168	8.33%
Special Services	1,617,184	1,612,561	-4,623	-0.29%
Special Schools	1,033	1,033	-	0.00%
Instructional Media	172,172	171,997	-175	-0.10%
Pupil Services	468,526	437,938	-30,588	-6.53%
Pupil Transportation	623,652	617,436	-6,216	-1.00%
Interfund Transfers	30,000	30,000	-	0.00%
Employee Benefits	2,436,733	2,395,653	-41,080	-1.69%
TOTAL PROGRAM	7,824,347	7,947,831	123,484	1.58%

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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 this year and next. 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 will offset the planned increase in debt service to prevent this cost from being passed on to taxpayers.

Capital Component	2023-2024 Budget	2024-2025 Proposed Budget	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Central Services	635,343	645,576	10,233	1.61%
Special Items	2,000	2,000	—	0.00%
Debt Service	710,145	1,062,209	352,064	49.58%
Interfund Transfers	110,000	100,000	-10,000	-9.09%
Employee Benefits	86,971	118,776	31,805	36.57%
TOTAL CAPITAL	1,544,459	1,928,561	384,102	24.87%

**THE OFFICIAL
BUDGET
HEARING
ON THE
PROPOSED
BUDGET WILL
BE HELD
TUESDAY,
MAY 14,
AT 6:30 P.M.**

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 1.0038%, the district's maximum tax cap for 2024-2025 is 1.70%. If the district elected to go with a tax levy increase greater than this limit, we would have needed a super-majority (66%) positive vote for the budget to pass.

The board has elected to seek a tax increase of 1.70%, an increase of \$55,051, which is at the cap set by New York State. 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.

Although the final tax rates will not be set until August, the tax levy will increase by 1.70%. The tax rates differ between the four towns because of equalization rates set by the New York State Office of Real Property Services as well as assessed values set by each town. Equalization rates are established to ensure the tax levy is fairly distributed when one taxing entity (the district) spans multiple municipalities, which may use different assessment practices. The district will set final tax rates in August after the towns finalize assessment figures and the state sets the equalization rates.

Capital Outlay Project

For the sixth year, the Board of Education is proposing a Capital Outlay Project as part of the 2024-2025 budget. This would be paid through the use of our unassigned fund balance and there will be no expected tax increase because of this proposal.

New York State laws allow school districts to receive state aid on 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 2024-2025 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 payment.

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 having to have a larger project. We expect the scope of planned work to include in the project to include restoration of the auditorium and repairs to our existing playground. Some items that we would like to include in the project are as follows.

- Restoration of the auditorium
 - Addressing damaged paint below the window
 - Replacing curtains which have become brittle from the sun
 - Updating sound equipment

2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR BUDGET SUMMARY

<i>Proposed Expenditures by Category</i>	2023-2024 Budget	2024-2025 Proposed	Dollar Change
Program Expenditures (Total)	\$7,824,346	\$7,947,831	+\$123,485
Teaching (Regular)	\$2,475,046	\$2,681,214	+\$206,168
Special Education	\$1,407,519	\$1,392,161	-\$15,358
Occupational Education	\$209,665	\$220,400	+\$10,735
Instructional Media	\$172,172	\$171,997	-\$175
Summer Music/Driver's Education	\$1,033	\$1,033	-
Attendance	\$3,150	\$3,557	+\$407
Pupil Services (Guidance, Health, Psychology)	\$330,588	\$290,224	-\$40,364
Student Activities	\$134,788	\$144,157	+\$9,369
Student Transportation	\$623,652	\$617,436	-\$6,216
School Lunch Fund	\$30,000	\$30,000	-
Employee Benefits	\$2,436,733	\$2,395,652	-\$41,081

Administrative Expenditures (Total)	\$1,040,262	\$1,105,286	+\$65,024
Board of Education	\$8,102	\$7,326	-\$776
Central Administration	\$208,070	\$221,393	+\$13,323
Finance	\$272,988	\$281,405	+\$8,417
Staff	\$40,951	\$44,006	+\$3,055
Central Services	\$35,113	\$34,025	-\$1,088
Special Items	\$180,682	\$183,192	+\$2,510
Administration & Improvement	\$201,928	\$198,861	-\$3,067
Employee Benefits	\$92,428	\$135,078	+\$42,650

Capital Expenditures (Total)	\$1,544,459	\$1,928,562	+\$384,103
Operation & Maintenance	\$635,343	\$645,577	+\$10,234
Refund on Property Taxes	\$2,000	\$2,000	-
Employee Benefits	\$86,971	\$118,776	+\$31,805
Debt Service	\$710,145	\$1,062,209	+\$352,064
Interfund Transfers	\$110,000	\$100,000	-\$10,000
TOTAL	\$10,409,067	\$10,981,679	+\$572,612

<i>Proposed Revenues by Category</i>	2023-2024 Budget	2024-2025 Proposed	Dollar Change
State Aid	\$6,714,768	\$6,699,628	-\$15,140
Other Revenues			
Charges for Services—Tuition	\$40,000	\$85,000	+\$45,000
Interest & Penalties on Taxes	\$10,000	\$10,000	-
Interest on Investments	\$1,000	\$1,000	-
Rental of Real Property	\$400	\$400	-
Refunds for BOCES Aided Services	\$166,517	\$141,517	-\$25,000
Medicaid Reimbursement	\$10,000	\$20,000	+\$10,000
Transfer from Capital	-	\$390,000	+\$390,000
Subtotal	\$227,917	\$647,917	+\$420,000

Use of Appropriated Fund Balance & Reserves	\$233,481	\$346,182	+\$112,701
Property Taxes			
Property Tax Levy	\$3,232,901	\$3,287,952	+\$55,051
Payment in Lieu of Taxes	\$0	\$0	-
Subtotal	\$3,232,901	\$3,287,952	+\$55,051
TOTAL	\$10,409,067	\$10,981,679	\$572,612

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE TUESDAY, MAY 21

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 607-263-6102, for the application. Completed absentee ballots must be received by the district clerk by 5 p.m. on May 21, 2024, the day of the vote.

CONTINGENT BUDGET

If the proposed 2024-2025 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 a \$59,159 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 \$157,968.00.

Other Items on the Ballot . . .

ONE CANDIDATE 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 a candidate to fill the position currently held by Wendy Moore. Wendy* is running unopposed for re-election.

*This is the candidate who has turned in a completed petition at the time the newsletter was printed. Other candidates may submit a petition prior to the April 22, 2024, deadline.

MR. PACKARD REMEMBERED

This spring we lost a long-standing member of our Morris Central School teaching staff. Mr. Packard began teaching here in 1987 and he was not ready to retire. He was often quoted as saying he still loved coming to school every day. Mr. Packard was beloved by students, faculty, and staff alike. He always had a ready smile and a quick laugh, and he was always good for a funny story. He will be greatly missed.



Congratulations to these Clark Scholarship Recipients:

<i>Maddie Coleman</i>	<i>Noah Moore</i>
<i>Samantha Coyle</i>	<i>Everett Pondolfino</i>
<i>Ethan Herring</i>	<i>Aislinn Ray</i>
<i>Lorissa Johnson</i>	<i>Carter Tuttle</i>
<i>Magdalena (Yana) King</i>	<i>Jessica Walling</i>
<i>Maiya King</i>	<i>Reed Wolfe</i>
<i>Tatiana McAdams</i>	

THREE CHEERS FOR

- * Mrs. Matson for all she does to help keep the school working in proper order.
- * Mrs. Parker for all her proofreading help with the yearbook.
- * All the faculty and staff who attend extra curricular activities.
- * All those who donated blood in early March and for all snacks people donated as well.
- * Congratulations to the coaches and the Boys and Girls Varsity Basketball Teams for a great season! Awesome job!
- * The Drama Department for producing a wonderful musical. It was amazing to see everyone bringing Shrek, Jr. to life on the stage.
- * Greg Thom for always being helpful when technology issues arise.
- * The many students who volunteer time to support our community through Student Council and National Honor Society or on their own.
- * Coach Connally for stepping up to take charge of this year's Color Guard for the Marching Band. We hope to work hard and earn trophies this year at The Sherburne Pageant of Bands.
- * Yearbook students for meeting their last deadline for the main part of the yearbook.
- * All the local businesses who supported the yearbook by purchasing ads.
- * The construction that has started.

HAPPY RETIREMENT!



Morris must say happy retirement to another good teacher this year. Mary Valez, Middle School Spanish Teacher and Counselor has been teaching in Morris for 21 years.

She said overall, she has “been teaching and counseling a very long time.” She spent the beginning of her career in New Jersey. For the first several years she taught Spanish, most

often levels 4 and 5. She said, “I was among the first group of educator grant recipients from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. My specific grant was used for summer graduate studies and travel in Spain.”

Before she completed her Master’s Degree and postgraduate studies in Counseling and School Social Work, her district created a Counseling position for her. She said, “This was when Student Assistance Counselors first emerged. I was among the first group in New Jersey to become certified as a Substance Awareness Coordinator, an administrative title and position

for Student Assistance Counselors. I also spent some time as a Guidance (School) Counselor.” While most of her career in New Jersey she counseled students, staff, and their families, in addition, she also supervised other Student Assistance Counselors. She was also a co-founder of the New Jersey Peer Helping Association, an organization dedicated to creating peer helping programs for students in schools across the state.

When I came to Morris, she said, “I was hired part-time to teach Spanish and Life Skills. Many years later when the district received a grant, I was then asked to do some counseling.”

Mrs. Valez’ students will surely miss her, and I know the faculty and staff will miss her caring personality and warm smile in the halls. What impresses many about Mrs. Valez is her willingness to go above and beyond at all times, especially during times of trouble. Mrs. Valez said, “I will miss both my students and colleagues.” In her retirement, she plans to spend time with her husband and her daughters. She also plans to travel.

Have fun in retirement, Mrs. Valez. MCS will miss you!

—Mrs. Julene Waffle, English Teacher

SPRING SPORTS

Spring Sports were in full swing by mid-April with track and field and varsity softball and baseball winning and setting records left and right.

This year both softball teams are using the Cooperstown All-Star Village for all Morris home games and for when Edmeston’s field is too wet to play on. The staff at CAV have been awesome in caring for the fields and accommodating us. We can practice there for free any time we ask. The ladies are really enjoying playing on the turf and we are able to get games in when it is rainy whereas before we could not. Thanks to all those who have made this deal possible.



Track photo credits to Jennifer Moore.

COOL THINGS WE DO . . .

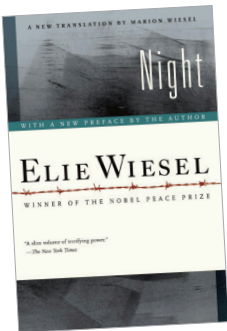


YOU ARE INVITED TO THE ACADEMIC FAIR ON MAY 24, 2024, 6-8PM

See the many cool things our students have been doing this year!

Let's celebrate their academic success together!

The Uncommon Community Reading Program: Night



Grades 9-12 read Elie Wiesel's *Night* in this year's TUCCR program. The TUCCR program is Morris Central School's Community Reading Program. Wiesel's *Night* is a memoir recounting the experiences of his teenage years which he spent in the Auschwitz Concentration Camp with his father. Along with

being a firsthand account of the horrific experiences Wiesel had to endure, *Night* also explores Wiesel's relationship with his father in depth. Wiesel wrote *Night* to be a firsthand account of the horrors of Nazi concentration camps, and to ensure that future generations would not forget what happened, and that nobody would be able to deny these events. Wiesel was fortunate enough to survive his time in Auschwitz. He lived until the age of 87 until he died in 2016. *Night* and other books read for this year's TUCCR program are on display in the hallway outside the Morris Central School Library.

—Mason Linton, Junior



Blood Drive

National Honor Society Members, with the direction of *Jessica Walling*, helped our school and community to donate blood this winter. Many students volunteered to donate blood if they were old enough or they volunteered to help in organizing the event.



Board Game Club

This year students asked to create a board game club. Mrs. Fredette volunteered her time and classroom during highschool lunch periods on Wednesdays so students could enjoy game time together. Some of the games they play are Connect Four and Battleship. They have even gone to The Gatehouse to play a board game after school. In the photo, *Hailey Candfield* shows *David Holt* how to play chess.



Another Honor for Student Voices Student Choices Team

The Morris Rotary honored the MCS Student Voices Student Choices Team for their creation of a community food pantry with a Pride of Workmanship Award at a special celebratory dinner.

On March 25, student Voices Student Choices received an award from the Morris Rotary for opening a food pantry in Morris. It was an honor to receive this award," said *Maddie Coleman*.

Community Bank also awarded the Food Pantry a donation check.

Jessica Walling said, "We are super grateful for Community Bank's generous donation that will go toward the furthering of our town's food pantry."

—*Mrs. Waffle*, English Teacher

SECOND SATURDAY COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

May 11, June 8, July 13, August 10, September 14, October 12, November 9, December 14

10 a.m. - Noon.

*Zion Church Parish Hall & Magic Closet
158 East Main Street, Morris*

Food items available for community members in need. Milk, cheese, Chobani yogurt, eggs, bread, fresh fruit, frozen meats, cereal, peanut butter, mac and cheese, and more.

The Second Saturday Community Food Pantry was created by MCS students *Maddie Coleman, Rachel Hill, Aislinn Ray, Everett Pondolfino, and Jessica Walling* with funds from the Community Foundation of Otsego County through their Student Voices Student Choices program. The Food Pantry is a student run pop-up pantry open on the second Saturday of each month year-round to all neighbors in need. The Food Pantry offers produce, bread, dairy, frozen meats, non-perishable food items and hygiene items. The MCS Student Council, MCS students, parents and staff, Morris Rotary, Zion Church, United Methodist Church, Baptist Church, Holy Cross Church, Chobani, Community Bank, The Community Cupboard, Catskill Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, and many many community members and businesses have helped to support our pantry with generous donations. If you would like to make a donation to our pantry, please contact Diane Walling at dwalling@morriscsd.org.

—*Mrs. Diane Walling*, Reading Interventionist,
Elementary RTI Coordinator,
Student Council Advisor



Making Our World a Better Place

This year Ms. Grant's Environmental Science class, Ms. Fredette's College Biology class, and Ms. Johnson's Science 8 class have been participating in a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE). This is a year-long learning experience that has been funded through a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) through the Otsego County Conservation Association (OCCA). Morris Central School is one of two area schools working under this grant to provide students with hands-on learning about our impact on the land and water of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed which Morris and the Butternut Creek are a part of!

This year all classes have approached the question "How are humans affecting the upper Susquehanna River Watershed?" and will work towards an action project to help our part of the watershed. Environmental Science students are once again collecting plastic film for recycling and will be implementing pollinator gardens along a trail near the athletic fields and Calhoun Creek. College Biology students have been mentoring Science 8 students to learn about invasive species and will work together at the end of the year for a half-day invasive species pull along the Calhoun Creek to improve the biodiversity along the athletic fields.

—*Mrs. Heather Grant*, Science Teacher



Sweetheart Dance

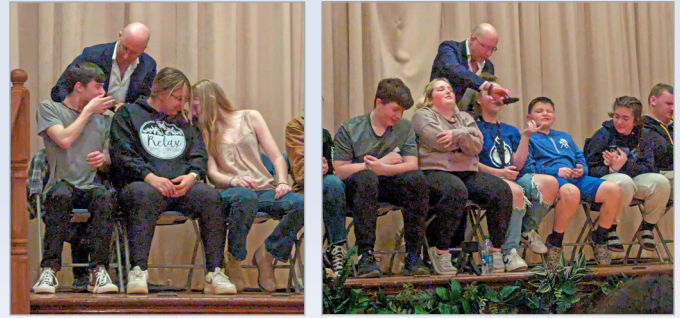
The Valentine’s Day dance sponsored by Student Council took place on February 16 in the small gymnasium, and everyone had a great time with their friends. All students in grades 7th - 12th were invited.

At the Sweetheart Dance there was a photo booth and food and drinks. Many students took pictures with their friends. Students also ate a lot of food; there were homemade cookies, brownies, and ice cream.

There were big dance songs that got everyone on the dance floor, such as “Fireball” by Pitbull, “Cupid Shuffle” by Cupid, “Cotton Eye Joe” by Rednex, and “Rich Baby Daddy” by Drake.

“My favorite part was spending time with my friends and eating a lot of food,” said *Natalie Barley* (‘26). “My favorite part was the music and group dances,” said *Charles Kolka* (‘29). *Shiloh Jones* (‘26) added, “It was fun; I loved the backdrop for photos and the music was good.” *Georgia Kolka* (‘25) wasn’t alone when she said, “My favorite part was the different kinds of songs.”

—*Kaylee Kolka*, Senior



Hypnotist

On March 8, 2024, The Class of 2024 hosted a hypnosis show. This was a great event and had a good turnout. There was also a 50/50 raffle and a bake sale to help the class raise money for their prom, class gift, and senior trip. Brave students volunteered to go on stage and be hypnotized. It was an engaging and funny show, and the best part was the volunteers were treated with the utmost respect. One of our audience members ended up being a part of the show too; Mr. Pondolino was convinced to shout “It’s all fake” every time the hypnotist said a certain word. It made the show even more funny. *Jackson Ross* (‘25) said, “I found the show very amusing and it was interesting to watch some of my friends on stage.” *Aislinn Ray* (‘24) said, “Being hypnotized was one of the most confusing things I’ve ever done, but it was also one of the most entertaining things I’ve experienced.” Overall, everyone had an amazing time watching or participating in the show.

—*Rachel Hill*, Senior



Pre-K celebrates St. Patrick’s Day!

In Pre-K, we learned all about transportation and ways to travel. Our students are ready for the adventures to begin this summer!



Fitness Center Fun



PE students in grades 3-6 participated in a fitness center unit. They rotated through stations that concentrated on flexibility, core strength, agility, balance, and cardio fitness.



Planting Seeds

Mrs. Forgit's Kindergarten class just ended their plant unit as we welcomed spring. We learned how plants help us and how plants can even change their environment like roots cracking the sidewalks as they grow! Students had fun decorating cups to look like faces and then growing grass to look like hair! Students loved taking care of their plants every day by watering them and making sure they were getting enough sunlight. We noticed some grass grew better in some cups and other cups didn't grow as much grass which led students to infer what could have caused the differences. It was such a fun unit!

—Mrs. Deidre Forgit, Kindergarten Teacher



Peep week

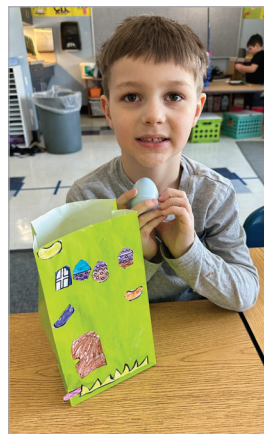
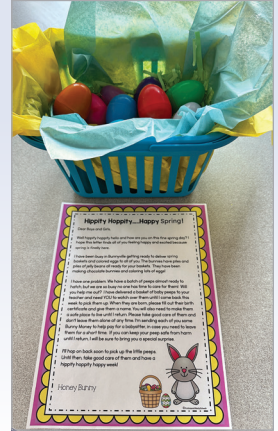
In preparation for hatching chickens after spring break, Ms. Callea's kindergarten class took care of some baby "peeps" for the week. Each child received a special little peep to love and care for for the week. Every night they brought home their peep and were responsible for keeping it safe and returning it each day to school.

At home some things that the students were responsible for were

1. Keeping their peep with them at all times.
2. Reading their peep a bedtime story.
3. Tucking their peep in and telling it goodnight.
4. Bringing their peep back to school, in its nest, each day.

At school students took their peep wherever they went and completed math, ELA, and science activities revolving around their peep as well! Overall, it was a great lesson in responsibility for the students and a lot of fun too! We are looking forward to our chicken unit when we return to school after spring break.

—Ms. Christine Callea, Kindergarten





Golf Club

The Golf Club took a trip to Turning Stone Indoor Golf Complex over the winter, and it was great! Everybody had a great time breaking out their clubs again, especially the underclassman. Many first-time golfers made the trip to learn the game and they all had such a good time that they joined the club from then on. *Dominique Cruz* ('24) said, "It was my first time golfing and Turning Stone was a very enjoyable first experience." He was excited to try outdoor golf at in the spring where he got to break in his new used clubs, courtesy of Colonial Ridge Golf Course members. Quite a few students were provided with clubs and bags this year thanks to such generous donations.

The club enjoyed golf in Afton in April and looks forward to outdoor golf at Colonial Ridge Golf in May and Leatherstocking Golf Course in June.

—*Ethan Herring*, Senior

Tri-Valley Champions

The boys varsity team was able to secure their spot in the Tri-Valley League Championship. On February 17, 2024, our boys faced Milford in the league's championship game. It ultimately led to a final score of 86-71 with the Mustangs on top, making us the second team in Tri-Valley history to take home a three-peat title. The three seniors on the team, *Asa Dugan*, *Tiger Ross*, and *Keegan Fraser* aided in the victory for all three of the consecutive championship games.

Asa Dugan said, "Being a part of all three championships was an honor and a privilege, and I am glad I was able to contribute to the team as well as build friendships and bonds with my teammates." *Carter Swayer* had the best game of his varsity career to date, scoring 25 points. *Tiger Ross* also performed well, adding 29 points to the scoreboard and collecting his 1,000th varsity point.

—*Noah Moore*, Senior

Basketball All-Stars

Tri-Valley League

Congratulations to these Morris players for being elected by league coaches as All-Stars for varsity basketball:

First Team:

- *Tiger Ross*
- *Ryan Murphy*

Second Team:

- *Asa Dugan*

Honorable

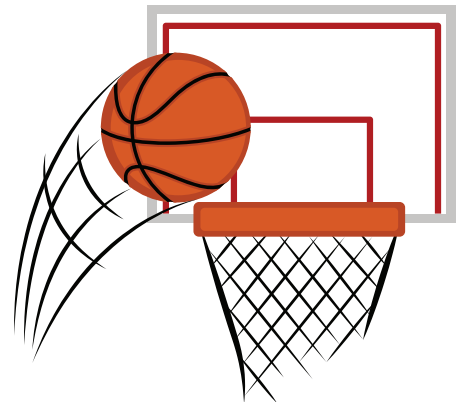
Mention:

- *Keegan Fraser*

All-State

Third Team:

- *Tiger Ross*





Our Winter Sports Teams

This year was a pretty unusual one for MCS Winter athletes. First we added indoor track to our sports schedule. They had great success! Our boys varsity basketball were three-peat Tri-Valley League champions and *Tiger Ross* joined the 1,000 point club at MCS. The Lady Mustangs merged with Edmeston for basketball for the first time and made it very far into sections. They too, had an Edmeston teammate score her 1,000th point as a junior.



Varsity Girls Basketball Sectionals

This year, the first year of the varsity girls basketball merger between Edmeston and Morris, our very own Edmeston-Morris girls went to the sectional finals. They played against Cherry Valley Springfield and, despite their best efforts, lost the game 37 to 41. Despite this being only the third loss of the season, it ultimately ended the season for the girls, bringing an end to their successful season as the number one seeded team in the league and the section.

This season-ender should not discredit the girls' hard work and dedication to the sport. Edmeston's *Molly Rifanbrug* ('25)

reached her 1,000 point in a game against Richfield, doing so in her junior year, leaving her a whole year ahead of her to up her record and improve her skills before being possibly recruited by a college. Morris' very own *Hannah Wist* ('25) also did very well this season, with a notable mention in the sectional game. All in all, everyone from the community is very proud of the team's progress. It is a remarkable accomplishment for which most teams do not get the chance to experience. Congratulations Varsity Girls and best of luck for your spring seasons and other adventures!

—*Tatiana McAdams*, Senior

TIGER ROSS SHOOTS 1,000

Congratulations goes to *Tiger Ross* who reached a major highschool basketball milestone in February.

Tiger joined Morris' 1,000 point club by scoring his 1,000th point during an intense Tri-Valley League Championship game held in Unadilla on February 17, 2024, against Milford-Laurens.

Going into the game, *Tiger* knew he needed just a few more points to reach his goal, but he was more focused on winning the game. It was an important game for the team so that was the most important goal of the night. He said, "Going into the game, it was about winning. I knew I was close, but I didn't want my personal goals to come before the team's. I was happy, but I wanted to win the game first." He felt that way because not only was the Tri-Valley League title on the line, but so was trying to earn the title for the third year in a row, a feat only done by one other school in the whole of the Tri-Valley League history (Milford was the only other school to do that).



During the fourth quarter with three minutes and 44 seconds left, *Tiger* hit the front end of a set of foul shots to score his 1,000th point. Officials stopped the clock and the team offered him a basketball painted in Morris colors with 1,000 points written on the ball.

Tiger finished his high school career, scoring 1,063 points, making him the fifth MCS gentleman and the 13th overall Morris athlete to attain this goal. He said, "You can't win without five on the court, so I would like to thank my coaches and my teammates."

—*Mrs. Julene Waffle*, English

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2024 MCS VALEDICTORIAN & SALUTATORIAN ANNOUNCED

JESSICA WALLING, VALEDICTORIAN



Jessica Walling, daughter of Michael Walling and Diane Walling of Morris, New York, is the Valedictorian of Morris Central School's Class of 2024. Both parents are graduates of Morris Central School as well. Mr. Walling is a Community Bank N.A. Commercial Loan Officer and Mrs. Walling serves as a veteran teacher at Morris Central

School. Jessica is an active member in the school and in the community. She participates in varsity soccer and softball, jazz band, marching band, NYSSMA, All-County, and drama club. Jessica also demonstrates leadership qualities as she is the President of Student Council, Vice President for Class of 2024, Captain for Envirothon (Science Club), Vice President for National Honor Society, Vice President for Band, and a Captain for both the varsity soccer and softball teams. Jessica with other members of the Student Council also helped to create a sustainable food and hygiene pantry in Morris that helps nearly 100 people each month. At school, Jessica has also had the opportunity to organize a blood drive, plan dances, help with fundraisers, facilitate updates to our school dress code policy, emcee our annual Senior Citizen Luncheon, create a hat and mitten tree, tutor band students, tutor younger students at Morris' CROP after school program, prepare food for the Teacher Appreciation Breakfast, and serve at the Veterans Breakfast. In the community, Jessica also acolytes for Zion Episcopal Church. Jessica's major accomplishments include a Coach's Award, a Student Council Leadership Award, and being on First Team, Second Team, and Honorable Mention All-Stars for soccer. Jessica was also selected to attend the American Legion Auxiliary Empire Girls State Experience in 2023. Jessica has many hobbies, including reading, spending time with family and friends, listening to music, helping the community, and sports. Jessica plans to attend Ithaca College and study Clinical Health Studies/Physical Therapy to earn her Bachelor of Science and Doctoral of Physical Therapy Degrees. Jessica believes that time and life are valuable and even though it can be hard, it is better to not dwell too long on the mistakes and troubles of the past. She tries to live by the Will Rogers quotation "Don't let yesterday take up too much of today."

MAGDALENA "YANA" KING, SALUTATORIAN



Magdalena "Yana" King, daughter of James "Mike" King and Mary "Meg" Gilman-King of Morris, New York, is Morris Central School's Salutatorian of the Class of 2024. Mr. King is a retired insurance agent, and Mrs. King is a retired secondary school teacher. Throughout her time at Morris Central School, Yana has

been highly involved in school and community activities. She is an active member of Morris' Drama Club, Jazz Band, Marching Band, Senior Band, Spanish Club, and Board Game Club. She competed in Envirothon and played an important part in the production of Morris Central School's yearbook. She was selected to attend Outward Bound and Girls State. She was also in Morris' chapters of National Honor Society and National Spanish Honor Society. She attended All-County Band and Chorus many years and earned a place on Principal's List every quarter of her high school career. She is also a leader in school, serving as Class President for four consecutive years. She has also served as Secretary and Vice President, and most recently, President of National Honor Society. She has been the Secretary of Student Council as well as the Outdoor Club. She has attended many student leadership conferences and is the President of Drama Club. In the community she was highly involved in local theater, performing in many shows for Orpheus Theatre and The Tri-Town Theater. Her most recent role was Mimi Marquez in Rent. In addition, Yana has won several different karaoke competitions at several different county fairs last summer. She sings in her church choir as well. She volunteers many hours in her community through National Honor Society and her church. Next year, Yana plans to attend Colgate University for her undergraduate degree. Yana is a driven and talented young woman who loves art and music, so it is not surprising that Yana lives by the Frank Sinatra lyric "Each time I find myself flat on my face, I pick myself up and get back in the race." This quotation reminds her, and she hopes everyone, that, despite the ups and downs in life, our positivity will eventually lead to progress.