

Mustang Musings

MORRIS CENTRAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying 'I will try again tomorrow.' —Mary Anne Radmacher
March/April 2021

From the Superintendent's Desk

Over the past 11½ years I have had the honor and privilege of being the superintendent for our outstanding school district. I have enjoyed watching our students excel in the classroom, on the playing field, and on the performance stage. Most importantly, I am extremely proud to see our former students excelling in life after leaving MCS and all the many ways they are contributing to our society. Even though I will miss working with the outstanding faculty/staff on a daily basis and will miss interacting with students each day, I have decided to retire at the end of this school year. I have enjoyed my time as superintendent in Morris immensely, but feel it is time that another person comes in and continues to move the district forward.

Each year at this time, we need to develop a budget for the following school year; a budget that will help meet the needs of our students but will also be fiscally conservative. Developing the budget for next year is proving to be more difficult than any other budget I have done in the past. We still do not know how much money the state will withhold from this year's state aid and have been threatened with a possible 5-20% cut in state aid this year. To MCS, that equates to a possible loss from \$300,000 to \$1.2 million. Any amount will have a negative impact on not only this year's finances, but our finances for years to come. To complicate matters further, the governor has proposed a state budget for next year that includes a possible six billion dollar bailout from the federal government. We don't know if the bailout will come to fruition, and if so, how much New York will actually receive. Of course, this places a real uncertainty on the amount of state aid that might be available to school districts. The governor's proposed state aid formulas also have a greater impact on high needs, rural school districts like Morris. Over the next several weeks, I hope to receive more clarity on the amount of state aid not only for this year, but also for next year.

The last two years have been extremely challenging, but with your support, the best years for MCS are ahead. I want to thank the outstanding faculty/staff for your dedication to the students of Morris. I want to thank the parents and the community for your support of the school and most importantly, the students for your motivation, curiosity, and drive to be the best possible leaders of the future. I will miss Morris Central School, but I know that the district will continue to thrive for years to come.

—Mr. Matthew Sheldon, Superintendent

Bus Vote

We will be having a vote on March 17 on the purchase of one 65-passenger school bus and a school car. The cost for both vehicles will not exceed \$153,658.

The vote will take place in the school lobby from noon to 8:00 p.m.

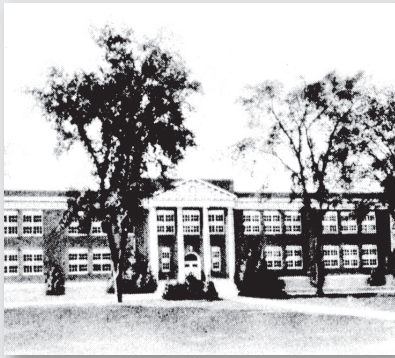


Search for Superintendent

The Board of Education is reaching out to the community to assist in our search for the next school superintendent for the district. The BOE will narrow down the list of candidates for superintendent and we would like to have a committee of community members assist in interviewing the finalists. The committee will consist of six to eight members and will be one of five other committees that will assist in the selection process.

The plan is to conduct interviews March 29-31. The interviews will be during the day and interested community members need to be available all three days.

If you are interested in being part of this important committee, please reach out to the district office at 263-6102 by March 15. We will randomly select the members from the community members interested.



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Mary Dugan, Vice President
Emily Boss
Russell Tilley
Michael Walling

**Morris Central School
Administration**

Matthew Sheldon, Superintendent
Katharine Smith, Principal
Gary Williams, Director of
Pupil Personnel

**Main Office 263-6100
Guidance 263-6116**

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263-6102**

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Three Cheers to . . .

- ☺ MCS Cafeteria Staff for a delicious turkey dinner faculty and staff were able to enjoy late January as a gift. YUMMY!
- ☺ Spanish III Class for working so hard and making it fun.
- ☺ All the people who donated food items for the NHS food drive
- ☺ All the people who donated gum and Chapstick for the Spanish Club and Spanish National Honor Society
- ☺ All the people who purchased the sophomore class kissygrams for Valentine's Day!
- ☺ **Elese Southard** and **Ian Rehrmann** for helping Mrs. Telfer with "the box."
- ☺ **Taidan Myers** for watering Mrs. Telfer's plants every week.
- ☺ **Georgia Kolka** for having a "BE NICE TO EVERYONE" sign on her class folder
- ☺ **Garrett** and **Maddie Aikens** for shoveling out their neighbor!
- ☺ All the students and staff for working so hard to help ensure that school stays open and we can have in-person learning.
- ☺ Everyone who made NHS Hat Days successful and spreading school spirit.
- ☺ The cafeteria staff for the outstanding holiday meal.
- ☺ Mrs. Mackey for working so hard so students will be able to start taking out Library books again.
- ☺ Mrs. Allaire, our new music teacher and choral director—Welcome!
- ☺ Chloe Ross for always willingly helping her peers whether it is academically or picking up a mess.
- ☺ To all my sixth graders who are "masking up" all day to keep us safe! So proud of all of you for doing your part!
- ☺ Mr. Iannelli, who diligently organized our pre-season athletic program so our students can safely prepare for the return of sports, and cheers to the coaches who help run the program too.
- ☺ Morris second graders, for being a joyful, kind, and welcoming community who are always willing to help one another.
- ☺ The middle school teachers, who give up their rooms and spend their planning time in their "hallway offices."

Taidan Myers Learns All Things Aztec

In Mrs. Telfer's Spanish 1-9 Class, **Taidan** has been learning all things Aztec. We learned about their clothing and lifestyles, their warriors and calendar. "I think my favorite part was the fighting part," said Taidan. "The weapons were really cool since they didn't have machines to make them, they had to make them by themselves."

The final part of the unit was understanding the Calendar. "The calendar is very intricate and complex," Taidan added, "but cool, too." Taidan learned to write his name in Aztec Glyphs (they didn't have an alphabet), write his birth year, the day of the month he was born, and his correlating god, The God of Night. The Aztec had Stelae that they would make to honor their chiefs. Taidan made his own Stelae. Great Job, Taidan!

—Mrs. Joanne Telfer, Spanish



College Credit Classes

When students reach their junior and senior years, they have the opportunity to take a college level course instead of regular education classes. I had the opportunity to take College English this year. The course, in association with Tompkins Cortland Community College, offers both local English credit and college credit. It centers around the understanding and analysis of modern ethics and essays that reflect the philosophy of current arguments. When examining these sources, students are asked to write their own perspectives on certain topics and form thesis statements, often giving personal stances of agreement, disagreement, or separate opinions. Students learn to support their ideas with credible, authoritative information from academic sources. They also learn to recognize the audience, purpose, and bias of these sources. The readings help shape a foundation for ethical judgment. The course instructor, Mr. Degan, wrote, "The goal of the course is to encourage a greater degree of critical thought and introduce students to the habits of mind necessary to be successful at the next academic level. Like anything else in college, students will get as much out of the course as they are willing to put in." If any juniors are interested in taking the course, they should consult with Mrs. Catella, MCS' guidance counselor when they are deciding what senior classes to take.

Besides College English, Morris Central offers other college-level classes for a total of 39 college credits. Some classes have prerequisites for enrollment such as grades from the previous year or teacher recommendations. These classes are a great way to save money in the long run. Sometimes, when students graduate from Morris they leave as sophomores in college—saving a year's worth of college tuition is a big savings.

The courses Morris currently offers are as follows: College English (6 credits), College US History (6 credits), College PIG/ECON (6 credits), Spanish IV (6 credits), College Chemistry (3 credits), Psychology/Sociology (through Distance Learning) (6 credits), Criminal Law/Psychology (through Distance Learning) (6 credits). These classes are taught by MCS teachers, other schools through Distance Learning and the credits are earned from Tompkins Cortland Community College as well as HVCC, SUNY Oneonta and TC3 Herkimer.

—Matthew Wendler, Senior

Living the BOCES Life

Morris Central School is filled with many classes and opportunities to help their students succeed in the future, one of these things is BOCES. Students from different schools in the district can go there, and a ride is provided by the school.

There are many different options for courses to take that help with any job you'd like in the future. From Culinary Arts to Welding, BOCES offers students from Freshman to Senior year with many opportunities. Students have the option to go all day, in the morning, or only in the afternoon. BOCES is a wonderful program that prepares students for life after high school.

I sent out a Google Form to some of our MCS BOCES students to fill out since I couldn't personally talk to them due to COVID rules. I asked them questions about what classes they're taking and when they attend the BOCES. The first question I asked the students was "What is your favorite part about BOCES?"

One student, who attends morning BOCES and is taking an Automotive course of study, said what they liked most is the "laid back classes." Who doesn't love educational, interesting, and seemingly easy classes you can actually use in the future?

Another student who goes in the morning and is taking Visual Arts said, "I enjoy the people and the lessons I am taught."

The next question was "What do you miss about BOCES before the pandemic and quarantine occurred?" Some students said they missed not having to wear a mask, which many of us could agree with. On a more positive side, however, other BOCES participants said things haven't changed that much.

Not only is BOCES an accommodating option to help them with getting a job in the future, but it also provides knowledge for everyday life. Students also have opportunities to make new friendships with other kids that attend the school. BOCES is an extremely educational and fun opportunity for those who want to be a step ahead of other students as they lean toward their future careers.

—Leah Rehrmann, Junior

Chewing Gum Helps

Spanish Club and Spanish National Honor Society come together this winter to help deployed servicemen and women. Students collected over 300 packs of gum and over 60 tubes of Chapstick for our servicemen and women deployed overseas. "Our community is really something, so generous and so kind," said Advisor, Joanne Telfer. The big box of goodies will be sent to Military Missions, a non-profit organization headquartered in Lexington, KY and they in turn will send the care packages out to our troops.

In April, we will be continuing our service projects by collecting kitchen towels that will be donated to warriors who return from war with PTSD and/or physical ailments. Many come home and are homeless because of their disabilities. Operation Troop Appreciation helps to set these folks up in new living situations and our contribution ensures they have tea-towels aplenty! It may not seem like much, but it is so appreciated by those who have sacrificed so much for us.

As always, thank you for your support. For more information on these worthy organizations, visit www.military-missions.org and www.operationtroopappreciation.org.

—Mrs. Joanne Telfer, Spanish



Bicycle riding is fun, healthy, and a great way to be independent, but be cool when riding!

RULES OF THE ROAD—BICYCLING ON THE ROAD

Bicycles in many states are considered vehicles, and cyclists have the same rights and the same responsibilities to follow the rules of the road as motorists. When riding, always:

- ★ **Go with the traffic flow.** Ride on the right in the same direction as other vehicles. Go with the flow—not against it.
- ★ **Obey all traffic laws.** A bicycle is a vehicle and you're a driver. When you ride in the street, obey all traffic signs, signals, and lane markings.
- ★ **Yield to traffic when appropriate.** Drivers on a smaller road must yield (wait) for traffic on a major or larger road. If there is no stop sign or traffic signal slow down and look to see if the way is clear before proceeding. Yield to pedestrians who are in a crosswalk.
- ★ **Be predictable.** Ride in a straight line. Signal your moves to others.
- ★ **Stay alert at all times.** Use your eyes AND ears. Watch out for potholes, cracks, wet leaves, storm grates, railroad tracks, or anything that could make you lose control of your bike. Don't wear a headset when you ride!
- ★ **Look before turning.** When turning left or right, always look behind you for a break in traffic, then signal before making the turn. Watch for traffic.
- ★ **Watch for parked cars.** Ride far enough out from the curb to avoid the unexpected from parked cars (like doors opening).

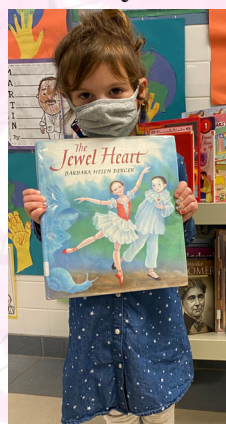
SIDEWALK VERSUS STREET RIDING

The safest place for bicycle riding is on the street, where bicycles are expected to follow the same rules of the road as motorists and ride in the same direction.

- ★ **When Sidewalks are Safest:** Children less than 10 years old are not mature enough to make the decisions necessary to safely ride in the street and should ride on the sidewalk.
- ★ **For anyone riding on a sidewalk:**
 - ★ Watch for vehicles coming out of or turning into driveways.
 - ★ Stop at corners of sidewalks and streets to look for cars.
 - ★ Make sure the drivers see you before crossing.
 - ★ Enter a street at a corner and not between parked cars. Alert pedestrians that you are near by saying, "Excuse me," or, "Passing on your left," or use a bell or horn.

For more information on bicycle safety, visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Web site at: www.nhtsa.dot.gov

Library on a Cart



This year Library looks a little different! In order to get beautiful books into children's hands this year, we are hosting "library on a cart." After February break, Mrs. Mackey is making a cart of books for children to check out. Elementary students will have library "class" every other week. Any high school student that would like to borrow books can email Mrs. Mackey with their request. Happy reading!



Silvana Burdick taking advantage of the Library on a Cart.

Still Serving the Community

National Honor Society, in spite of pandemic rules, was able to help our community this year. In January, they hosted a Hat Day fundraiser that raised \$190 in donations for Super Heroes in Ripped Jeans. In addition, before February break, Morris' NHS was able to collect over 150 food items in a food drive that they hosted for The Butternut Valley Food Pantry. Mrs. Kane said, "They were so excited to see all of the donations."

Welcome!

Kelly Allaire, Vocal Music Teacher



I'm the new Vocal teacher here at Morris Central School! I grew up and graduated from Norwich City School District then pursued a degree of Music Education with a concentration in voice, at Mansfield University of Pennsylvania. I'm excited to watch all your children grow as musicians throughout the years! If you have any questions, comments, or concerns feel

free to always email me at kallaire@morriscsd.org.

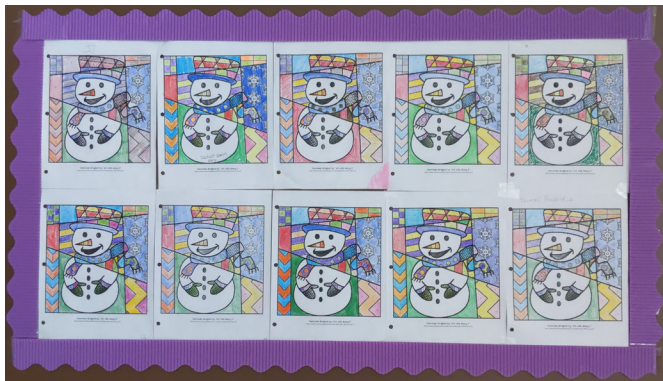
Spanish National Honor Society to Induct 11 Students

On Wednesday, March 3, eleven students will be inducted into the Pachacútec Chapter of Morris Central School's Spanish National Honor Society. To be considered for induction into the SNHS, the students must be actively enrolled in a fifth semester of Spanish or higher, have a minimum average of 90 for three consecutive semesters, and have an overall average of no less than 80. Additionally, students must not have failed a class due to attendance. Freshmen are not able to be inducted unless they are approved by the AATSP Council. We are lucky that eight of our inductees this year are, in fact, freshmen. They have done an amazing job in language studies, holding averages in the mid- to high-90 range per semester.

"These students are the cream of the crop," said Advisor Joanne Telfer. "They are hard working, kind and full of integrity. It is such an honor to be a part of the Spanish Honor Society. It's not something that is available to everyone and for that reason alone, it's truly a special honor. I was a member of this Honor Society when I was in High School and College, and now it is a great opportunity to pass this along to my students. I am very proud of them all."

Current members include Juniors Mackenzie Graves and Alex Page; New Inductees this year include Sophomores **Ethan Franklin, Thomas Pondolino, and Hannah Swayer**. Freshmen inductees are **Maddie Coleman, Maiya King, Sawyer King, Yana King, Tatiana McAdams, Noah Moore, Aislinn Ray and Jessica Walling**. Congrats to all!

—Mrs. Joanne Telfer, Spanish



Math: Color Us Fun!

Geometry students have been hard at work the last few weeks working on Geometry constructions as well solving the third side of triangle inequalities. To make high school math a little more fun and exciting, we've added a coloring activity to it. You can never be too old to have fun and color.

—Ms. Alison Dening, Math

Expert Earth Dwellers

Fifth graders have been working on becoming an expert on one of Earth's systems (geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere). Students had to research their system, take notes, and illustrate what their system included, and then presented their findings to their classmates.

On Wednesdays, while working at home, students have been learning about planets. Students have read many articles and completed a planet report on the planet of their choice. They have been working enthusiastically on creating a slideshow to present their findings to the class.

—Ms. Jessica Wellman, Fifth Grade

Multi-digit Math Wizards

Fifth graders just concluded their unit in math, on learning how to multiply multi-digit whole numbers and worked hard on learning all the steps involved in dividing multi-digit whole numbers using the standard algorithm. Students also learned many mental strategies in order to check their answers for reasonableness. Students were then able to apply their newly learned knowledge to real world problems.

Fifth graders are now beginning to learn about fractions. Students are currently learning how to make equivalent fractions which is crucial for them to be able to add and subtract fractions with like units as well as unlike units. We will then move on to learning how to multiply and divide fractions.

—Ms. Jessica Wellman, Fifth Grade



Pick a Planet, Any Planet

Sixth Grade Science starts with a review of our solar system. The students got to pick a planet and design their own space colony. Each student needed to share what it would take to live on this planet. They drew pictures and gave oral presentations on each of their planets. This was followed up by researching a different planet and doing a slideshow presentation. This class is very creative!

—Mrs. Courtney Mackey, Sixth Grade

KEEP YOUTH ATHLETES SAFE

Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 in Youth Sports

Reduce physical closeness between players when possible

- Allow players to focus on building individual skills, like batting, dribbling, kicking, and strength training
- Limit full contact between players to game days (avoid during practice)
- Increase space between players in the practice areas, including on the sideline, dugout, and bench
- Avoid high fives, handshakes, fist bumps or hugs



Minimize sharing of equipment or gear

- Encourage players to bring their own equipment, like gloves, balls, and helmets (if possible)
- Clean and disinfect shared items between use

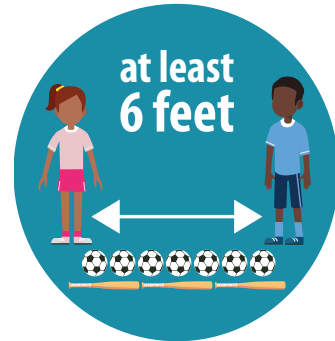


Limit travel outside of your area

- Consider competing against teams in your local area (neighborhood, town, or community)

Identify small groups and keep them together

- Avoid mixing between groups
- Stagger the arrival and drop off of each group to limit interaction
- Have scrimmages within team to limit exposure



Implement plans to **space out spectators by 6 feet** at games or competitions. Limit nonessential visitors, spectators, and volunteers.

Lower Risk



Higher risk



Skill-building drills at home



Within-team competition



Full competition from different areas



cdc.gov/coronavirus

Sports Return to MCS

Much to the happiness of student-athletes and coaches, sports are back at MCS. Everyone is hoping that we will start soccer and Cross-Country in March and Softball, Baseball, and Track in April. There will, of course, be strict competition rules as well as sanitation rules, but if you ask any student-athlete, they are happy to have athletics back. Mr. Iannelli, our Athletic Director, said, "I am just glad our kids are going to have the opportunity to get out and have some fun and play sports again. And most importantly, stay healthy doing it."

In February, Seventh Graders through Seniors were allowed to work out in station work just to get athletes' bodies moving again. We eased into the workouts using a four station rotation. A dynamic warmup and stretching station, a core station, a weight room station, and a running/jogging station. Each station was ten minutes long with water and sanitation breaks between. Seniors were able to attend all four days of after school workouts while underclassmen

worked out on cohort days. **Maddie Aikins** and **Triana Hawkins** were so happy to start sports again! Triana said, "I enjoy being together with everyone again and being able to work out with the girls and again." Maddie said, "Sports give us the opportunity to have some normal back and makes us motivated to do more in school." Being a senior during these COVID restriction days, was hard too because many seniors didn't have hope we would have sports seasons. One senior and track and field team member, **Katie Tilley**, said, "I'm happy to be able to finish what I started and have the senior seasons I have always wanted." **Matt Burtis** will participate in soccer and baseball when it begins again. He added to Katie's sentiment when he said, "As a senior and missing out on baseball last year, I really hoped we could all, as a collective, get sports back at Morris." They are really taking advantage of being able to work out after every school day to prepare for the coming soccer, baseball, cross-country and track seasons.

—Mrs. Julene Waffle, English



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Storyline Learning in Science

Both Science 8 and Living Environment are currently working on units that tackle learning science through a storyline. This means that students learn content as they figure out the answer to a real problem found in nature. It also means that students are often asked to think more deeply about the content and struggle through figuring things out, instead of simply being given the “answers” right away.

In Science 8, students learned about a teenager who was having digestive problems that lead to symptoms throughout her entire body. At first glance the symptoms seem to be affecting most of her organ systems but don’t seem connected. As students learn more about how different body systems work (especially the digestive system), they are learning more about how these systems work together to maintain balance within the body and help keep a person alive. By the end of the unit, students will have figured out what the cause of the symptoms were and how they could best be treated.

In Living Environment, students have been exploring how ecosystems work through the invasion of non-native Zebra Mussels in the Hudson River. Students first learned what factors help to maintain balance within an ecosystem and how changes to one population of organisms can affect a different organism. Students have been working to apply what they have learned to analyze real data from the Carey Institute to argue how the invasion of the Zebra Mussels have affected a living or non-living factor of their choice.

—Ms. Carlena Johnson, Science

