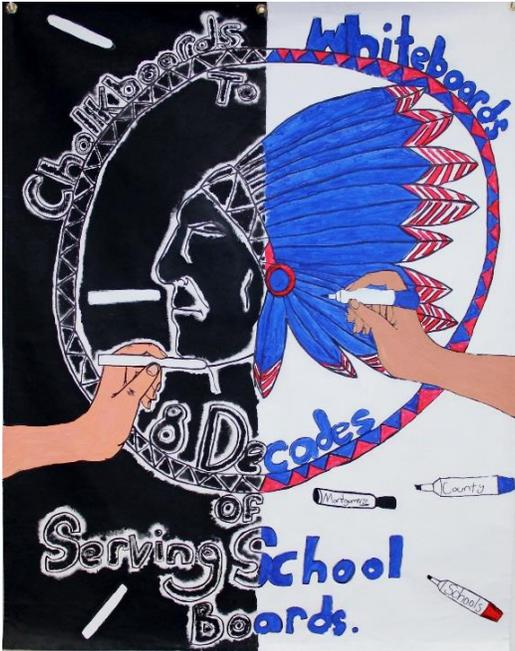


# MoCo Monday Minute

**Monday, January 4, 2016**

In this edition:

- *Happy New Year!*
- *McNabb Banner to Represent at KSBA*
- *Gateway Holiday Classic*
- *McNabb Student Spotlights*
- *First Team All-State Football & 2015 Class of the Commonwealth*
- *Board Recognition Month*
- *Dates*
- *Continuous Learning Through Professional Literature*



***Happy New Year!*** – We hope everyone had a restful break and a great start to the New Year!

***McNabb Banner to Represent at KSBA*** – Only one banner from each school district can be displayed at the annual Kentucky School Boards Association Conference. This year, McNabb's banner was voted to represent Montgomery County Schools at the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference held at the Galt House in Louisville scheduled for February 26-28, 2016. McNabb received 119 votes out of 303. Congratulations!

***Gateway Holiday Classic*** – The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Gateway Holiday Classic was a huge success. The Montgomery County Indians were runners-up in the boys' division and Lady Indians placed 7<sup>th</sup> in the girls' division. Also, Caswell Fuller, Jerryd Jones, and Kennedy Igo were selected for the All-Tournament Team. Congratulations to all!

***McNabb Student Spotlights*** – The faculty and staff at McNabb Middle have selected the following students as their *Student Spotlights* for the month of December: Will Arnett, Brooklyn Claypoole, Selina Hall, Jordan McVey, Jaden Akers, Jada Clemons, Claire Gulley, Logan Ratliff, Joshua Taylor, and Elizabeth Whitlock.



**First Team All-State Football & 2015 Class of the Commonwealth** – Congratulations to MCHS senior football standout, Mason Gooch, who was selected First Team All-State and 2015 Class of the Commonwealth. [Click here](#) to read more.

**Board Recognition Month** – January is Board Recognition Month in Kentucky. Please join us in expressing appreciation to our Board of Education members for their willingness to devote their time and effort to do what is best for the students of Montgomery County.

**Dates:**

- Jan. 8 – Camargo Reading A-Z Celebration, 1:30 p.m.
- Jan. 8 – Registration Deadline to take the ACT Test at MCHS on February 6<sup>th</sup>
- Jan. 11-22 – MSE Magazine Fundraiser
- Jan. 11 – McNabb SBDM Council Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- Jan. 11- Camargo PTO Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- Jan. 13 – Camargo SBDM Council Meeting, 3:00 p.m.
- Jan. 13 – MSE SBDM Council Meeting, 3:30 p.m.
- Jan 13 – Mapleton SBDM Council Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- Jan. 14 – Graduated Licensing Class, 4:30 – 8:30 p.m., MCHS Room 153
- **Jan. 18 – No School - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**
- Jan. 19 – MCIS SBDM Council Meeting, 5:00 p.m.
- Jan. 19 – Board of Education Organization Meeting, 6:30 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria
- Jan. 20 – Mapleton PTO Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- Jan. 21 – MCHS SBDM Council Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- Jan. 24 – FASFA Workshop, 2:00-4:00 p.m., MCHS Computer Lab
- Jan. 25-29 – MSE Book Fair
- Jan. 28 – MSE Book Fair Family Night, 3:00-7:00 p.m.
- Feb. 8 – McNabb SBDM Council Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- Feb. 10 – Camargo SBDM Council Meeting, 3:00 p.m.
- Feb. 10 – MSE SBDM Council Meeting, 3:30 p.m.
- Feb. 10 – Mapleton SBDM Council Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- Feb. 16 – MCIS SBDM Council Meeting, 5:00 p.m.
- Feb. 17 – Mapleton PTO Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- Feb. 18 – MCHS SBDM Council Meeting



## ***Continuous Learning through Professional Literature***

### **The Art of Designing Lessons With Desirable Difficulties**

In this article in *Education Week Teacher*, author/researchers Brad Ermeling, James Hiebert, and Ron Gallimore applaud U.S. educators' recent emphasis on growth mindset and "grit." They point to clear benefits in having students wrestle with complexity, uncertainty, and difficulty and coming up with their own answers rather than being guided through every step.

But Ermeling, Hiebert, and Gallimore worry that “struggle” may become an end in itself, rather than a means to higher levels of student learning. Cooperative learning has fallen into this trap, they believe: “In many classrooms, students have learned to be better ‘cooperators’ but often without any distinct benefit for deeper learning. To avoid a similar fate with growth mindset, the instructional goals must be richer learning, not just struggle.” The key is getting students engaged with a task that captures the central idea of the lesson or unit.

Here’s an example. A teacher is introducing the addition of fractions with unlike denominators (students already understand how to add fractions with like denominators and can solve problems like  $2/5 + 1/5$ ). One approach would be for the teacher to ask, “Can you find a common denominator for the problem  $1/2 + 1/3$ ?” But this doesn’t focus students on the key idea, which is that units or wholes must be broken into same-size parts to find the exact answer to the problem. A better question would be, “Can you find how much juice we would have if we added  $1/2$  cup and  $1/3$  cup? Show how you found the answer by drawing a picture or writing how you thought about the problem.” This gets students wrestling with the key idea they need to understand – how to think about the quantities of juice in smaller, equal amounts so they can be added together. When students have worked on this problem, they will be much more receptive to learning the concept, perhaps in a direct explanation from the teacher.

Designing learning experiences focused on worthy learning goals is challenging, say Ermeling, Hiebert, and Gallimore; it involves a lot of trial and error and teacher persistence. Here are some other key elements in successful “struggle” lessons:

- Determining the timing and placement in a curriculum unit;
- Crafting the problem so it hits students’ zone of proximal development (ZPD) – the level of difficulty that will challenge them without undue frustration;
- Making sure they have the prerequisite knowledge and skills – for example in the problem above, knowing how to add fractions with like denominators before tackling problems with unlike denominators;
- Doing ongoing assessments to gauge students’ current level of understanding and proficiency;
- Providing a safe environment that encourages student thinking, collaboration, and risk-taking;
- Using probing questions to nudge students into their ZPD;
- Providing appropriate help – “Success depends on teachers recognizing when a little timely assistance sustains student persistence but does not prematurely terminate productive struggle and learning,” say the authors.
- Following up each struggle episode with carefully structured lessons that build on students’ ideas, address misconceptions, and help them reflect on their new understandings.

“Beyond Growth Mindset: Creating Classroom Opportunities for Meaningful Struggle” by Brad Ermeling, James Hiebert, and Ron Gallimore in *Education Week Teacher*, December 7, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1I52vKR>; Ermeling can be reached at [brad.ermeling@gmail.com](mailto:brad.ermeling@gmail.com).

---

Be sure to notify the designated person at your school if you have calendar information that should be added to your website calendar.

*Thank you so much for your effort and commitment to children. If you have questions about any of the information contained in this issue of The MoCo Monday Minute, please contact me at [matthew.thompson@montgomery.kyschools.us](mailto:matthew.thompson@montgomery.kyschools.us).*