

MoCo Monday Minute

Monday, January 9, 2017

In this edition:

- *Quote of the Week*
- *No School Monday, January 16th*
- *MOS U.S. National Championship Fall Qualifier*
- *Student Attendance*
- *Board Recognition Month*
- *Dates*
- *Continuous Learning through Professional Literature*



Montgomery County's Distinguished Young Woman, Summer Taylor, will be competing in the state competition on January 13-14.

Quote of the Week – “When a child learns to walk and falls down 50 times, he never thinks to himself: “Maybe this isn’t for me?” – Unknown

No School Monday, January 16th – School will be closed Monday for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

MOS U.S. National Championship Fall Qualifier – The Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) U.S. National Championship presented by Certiport Inc. is a competition that tests students’ skills in Microsoft Office Excel, Word and PowerPoint (2013 and 2016). Most of the training and testing takes place in Angela Barker’s Advanced Computer Applications class at the Montgomery Co. ATC. Top students will be invited to represent Kentucky at the U.S. National Championship, held in Orlando, FL in June 2017. When the students take an exam in Excel, Word or PowerPoint (2013 or 2016), students are automatically entered to qualify and compete. According to Mrs. Barker -Montgomery Co. ATC currently has 14 students that are entirely MOS certified (passing three exams) and 61 students that are MOS certified in Excel 2013 at this time and will be taking the other two exams in the spring.



Congratulations to Kelcie Cooper and Ben Rose! Kelcie and Ben each received a perfect score of 1,000 in Excel 2013 in the MOS competition. Kelcie won the qualifier with a faster time and will be representing Montgomery County ATC as the fall qualifier in Excel 2013 this June in Orlando, FL.



Participants who outperform their peers to qualify for the National Championship generally have perfect or near-perfect exam scores and completion times well below the allotted examination time of 50 minutes.

For more information about the 2017 Microsoft Office Specialist U.S. National Championship, you may visit www.moschampionship.com/kentucky.

Student Attendance – Mapleton earned the top spot for daily student attendance at 95.85% on Wednesday. McNabb claimed the weekly average with 92.99%.

Board Recognition Month – January is Board Recognition Month in Kentucky. Please join me in thanking the members of the Montgomery County Board of Education for their service. They volunteer many hours and are called upon to make difficult decisions in the best interests of students.

Dates:

- Jan. 9 – Camargo PTO Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- Jan. 9 - Board of Education Organizational Meeting, 6:30 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria
- Jan. 10 – Mapleton SBDM Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- Jan. 11 – Camargo SBDM Meeting, 3:00 p.m.
- Jan. 12 – Camargo Academic Team Match, Mapleton Elementary
- Jan 13 – McNabb Winter Dance (2nd 9 Weeks TRIBE Rewards), 6:00-8:00 p.m.
- **Jan. 16 – No School – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**
- Jan. 18 – Mapleton PTO Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- Jan. 19 – Camargo Academic Team Match, Camargo Elementary
- Jan. 19 – MCHS SBDM Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- Jan. 28 – MCHS Academic Team District Competition, 8:00 a.m., MCHS Cafeteria
- Jan. 30 – Born Learning Parent Workshop, 5:30 p.m., ELC

Continuous Learning through Professional Literature

Informational Texts to the Fore

(Originally titled “You Want Me to Read What?!”)

In this thoughtful article in *Educational Leadership*, Timothy Shanahan (University of Illinois/Chicago) addresses some common questions about the Common Core’s emphasis on nonfiction:

- *What exactly is informational text?* Definitions vary, and some lists include biographies, memoirs, and other “true stories” as well as historical works, speeches, journalism, explanatory and opinion articles, scientific writing, and other explanatory and expository texts. Shanahan quotes Susan Pimentel, one of the authors of the Common Core, expressing regret that biographies and autobiographies, which are more literary in nature, are being used too heavily as informational text in many schools. The point, says Shanahan, is for students to be exposed to a wide variety of genres, and principals should make sure this occurs.

- *Why are informational texts important?* Many students in U.S. elementary schools are getting a diet of 80 percent literature, with not nearly enough history and science. This doesn’t prepare them for the kind of reading they will need to do in secondary schools, college, and the workplace.

- *What should we expect students to learn from reading informational text?* Knowledge, says Shanahan. The more students know, the easier it is for them to read a variety of material, and informational text, by its very nature, is rich in knowledge. Reading nonfiction also exposes students to rhetorical structures that are distinct from literary texts: there’s more problem-solution, cause-and-effect, compare-and-contrast, and persuasion. Students also learn how to understand and use bullet points, italics and bold print, headings and subheadings, sidebars, tables, graphs, and indexes.

- *What is the right informational/literary balance?* The Common Core calls for a 50/50 split in elementary grades and 70 percent informational texts in middle and high school. This does *not* mean that high-school English teachers can only devote 30 percent to poetry, short stories, novels, and plays. The Common Core percentages include students’ reading in all subjects – history, science, and math – not just English. There’s nothing wrong with literature taking up the lion’s share of the reading that students do in their English classes. But English teachers can play an important part improving students’ skill analyzing and interpreting the rhetoric and language in biographies, essays, speeches, journalistic writing, and other literary nonfiction.

- *Will students be reading fiberglass installation manuals and the minutes of Federal Reserve Board meetings?* Nonsense, says Shanahan; these are canards thrown out by opponents of the Common Core. Students are much more likely to be reading the U.S. Constitution, Lincoln’s Gettysburg address, and Ronald Reagan’s speech to students at Moscow University.

- *Are informational texts developmentally appropriate for kindergarten students?* Yes, if they're well chosen, says Shanahan. Primary-grade students are fascinated with many kinds of nonfiction texts.

"The argument for informational texts is not that students should read more information and less literature," concludes Shanahan, "but that they should read more of both. Righting the current imbalance will simply require increases in reading of information."

"You Want Me to Read What?!" by Timothy Shanahan in *Educational Leadership*, November 2013 (Vol. 71, #3, p. 10-15), www.ascd.org; Shanahan can be reached at shanahan@uic.edu.

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.