

MoCo Monday Minute

Monday, January 30, 2017

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MCHS was selected to receive an arts tote which included several supplies from Morehead State University.

Quote of the Week – “Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.” – Thomas Edison



Make-Up Day – At the January 24th board meeting, the Montgomery County Board of Education agreed to use Monday, February 20th as an instructional day. Schools will be in session on February 20th.

MSE a 2017 Kentucky School of Character – We are pleased to announce that Character.org, a national advocate and leader for the character education movement in collaboration with Kentucky, named Mt. Sterling Elementary a 2017 Kentucky School of Character. This is the first time in five years that a Kentucky school has been named a School of Character. [Click here](#) to read more.

MCHS Hosted District Academic Tournament – Congratulations to the academic team on a great season. The team finished third in the district tournament that was held this past weekend. Rebecca Swartz placed second in written composition. Greyson Cox finished second in math written assessment and second in arts and humanities written assessment. John Farley finished second in social studies written assessment. John, Greyson, and Rebecca will be advancing to regional competition.

2017 Great Kindness Challenge – The students and staff at MSE worked very hard last week to create a culture of kindness. They joined hundreds of schools across the country for the 2017 Great Kindness Challenge. This movement is part of a powerful and positive bully prevention initiative that will lead to more kindness, unity and respect. All MSE students received a checklist with 50 kind acts and were encouraged to complete the checklist and



show the world that KINDNESS MATTERS. They also finished the challenge with all students completing crafts that will be used to spread kindness into our community and hopeful touch others! Students made encouraging cards that will be delivered all over Montgomery County, kindness trading cards that students can give to a person of choice, a helpful chain that will be displayed in the hallways, a MSE KIDS ARE KIND banner with painted hands from each student and a book station where they heard kind stories. MSE wants to impact their students to have good character and leave a lasting impression on their lives.

Valentine's Plans – Valentine's Day is only two weeks away. Please join us in reminding students and parents that glass items and balloons cannot be transported on the school buses due to safety issues.



Student Attendance – Mapleton had the highest daily and highest weekly attendance at 95.15 % on Wednesday and 94.01% for the week.

Dates:

- Feb. 1 – Camargo Spelling Bee, 8:30 a.m.
- **Feb. 3 – No School – Teacher Planning Day**
- Feb. 4 – PTO Daddy/Daughter Dance, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., Mapleton
- Feb. 6 – MSE Spelling Bee, 8:00 a.m.
- Feb. 8 – Mapleton Spelling Bee, 8:00 a.m.
- Feb. 8 – Camargo SBDM Meeting, 3:00 p.m.
- Feb. 8 – MSE SBDM Meeting, 3:30 p.m.
- Feb. 10 – McNabb Spelling Bee
- Feb. 10 – Family Valentine's Dance, 6:00 p.m., Camargo
- Feb. 11 – MCHS ACT Test, 8:00 a.m., Zone II Lobby
- Feb. 13 – Camargo PTO Meeting, 4:00 p.m.

- Feb. 14 – I LOVE My Career Day/Heart Healthy Valentine’s Day, MSE
- Feb. 15 – Mapleton SBDM Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- Feb. 15 – Mapleton PTO Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- Feb. 16 – MCHS SBDM Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- Feb. 16 – MCIS SBDM Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- Feb. 16 – Raising Freshmen Parent Night, MCHS Cafeteria, 6:00 p.m.
- Feb. 17 – College Day/Reality Store, MSE
- **Feb. 20 – Make-Up Day (President’s Day) – School will be IN SESSION**
- Feb. 21 – 6th Grade Science Night, 5:30 p.m., MCIS
- Feb. 23 – FFA Parent-Member Banquet, MCHS Cafeteria, 6:00 p.m.
- Feb. 23 – Internet Safety Evening, 6:00 p.m., MSE
- Feb. 25 – KMEA District 8 Instrumental Solo & Ensemble, MCHS Music Wing, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Feb. 25 – PTO Superhero/Princess Day, 11:00 a.m. – 12 p.m., Camargo
- Feb. 27 – Born Learning Parent Workshop, 5:30 p.m., ELC
- Feb. 28 – Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria

Continuous Learning through Professional Literature

Fred Jones on Dealing with Nasty Backtalk from a Student

In this *Tools for Teaching* article, classroom management guru Fred Jones shares his advice on how to respond to nasty backtalk from students. “If we can think of discipline management as a poker game in which the student raises the dealer (you) with increasing levels of provocation,” says Jones, “then nasty backtalk is going ‘all in.’ The student is risking it all for the sake of power and control. What separates nasty backtalk from whiny backtalk is not so much the words, but rather, the fact that it is personal. The backtalker is probing for a nerve ending.”

The key, says Jones, is never taking anything a student says personally. If you do, you’ll probably feel wounded and respond emotionally, in which case the student has won.

The first kind of backtalk is an insult. Students have a limited number of options, all of which have been used through the years:

- Dress:

- *Say, where did you get that tie, Mr. Jones? Goodwill?*
- *Hey, Mr. Mickelson, is that the only sport coat you own?*

- Grooming:

- *Hey, Mr. Gibson, you have hairs growing out of your nose. Did you know that?*

- *Whoa, Mrs. Wilson. You have dark roots! I didn't know you bleached your hair. Ha!*

• Hygiene:

- *Hey, don't get so close. You smell like garlic.*

- *Hey, Mrs. Phillips, your breath is worse than my dog's!*

"Take two relaxing breaths," says Jones. "When the sniggering dies down, the kid is still on the hook." The key is staying rational, not getting angry, not showing that you're upset. Remember, *Calm is power, upset is weakness.*

The second kind of nasty backtalk is profanity. The words students use are all-too familiar to you, some low-grade and some "biggies." Jones says the underlying agenda with student profanity is power. Power boils down who controls the classroom. And that boils down to who controls you. "Can a four-letter monosyllable control you and determine your emotions and your behavior?" Jones asks. "If so, then the student possesses a great deal of power packaged in the form of a single word." If kids see the impact of these words on you, they will use the tactic repeatedly.

So what to do? Jones advises thinking of the response to nasty backtalk in two time-frames:

• *Short-term response* – Take two relaxing breaths, stay calm, and give the student "the look" – calm, almost bored, totally unruffled, while thinking of an appropriate long-term response. "Your lack of an immediate response is very powerful body language," says Jones. "It tells the student, among other things, that you are no rookie. You have heard it all a thousand times. If the student runs out of gas and takes refuge in getting back to work, count your blessings, and consider getting on with the lesson." How about what the other students think? They've just seen the backtalker try "the big one" and fail – and they saw you handle it with cool professionalism, and learned that profanity won't work in this classroom.

• *Long-term response* – Talk to the student after class. It's quite possible that the student's outburst was related to something that happened outside your classroom. In that case, delivering a consequence might make the situation worse. You might start off like this: "Vanessa, what you said in class today was not at all like you. Tell me, what is really going on?" You've opened the door and really don't know what the student will say. Be patient. "Silence is truly golden since young people have a very low tolerance for it," says Jones. "If you wait calmly, the whole story will probably come spilling out. Do not be surprised if the lip starts to quiver. Have some tissues handy." Vanessa might need a pass to visit the nurse and pull herself together before going to her next class. And make sure she knows you're available to talk more. This might be the turning point in a year-long relationship.

A student who backtalks may very well be in an abusive situation at home, and lashing out at a teacher is a way of testing to see if you are as uncaring as other adults in his

or her life and if you will respond as expected – with anger and another trip to the office. “What does surprise students in this situation,” says Jones, “is to find a teacher who says, ‘I can see that you are hurting. Tell me about it.’ It catches them off guard. Sometimes their defenses crumble because they are so unaccustomed to anybody caring about whether or not they hurt. Sometimes, healing is mediated by simply taking the time to ask and to listen. Without going that far out on a limb, you can answer the defining question in your relationship with the child, ‘Do you even care?’”

“Our calmness and skill,” Jones concludes, “allow us to say ‘no’ to backtalk while potentially strengthening the fabric of our relationship with the student rather than tearing it.” The more emotionally intense an interaction is, the more possibilities there are. “A student’s crisis in class, therefore, presents us with a rare opportunity... These heart-to-heart talks are some of the most precious moments between adult and child. They teach important lessons within a context that says that being ‘bad,’ while it leads to real consequences, cannot threaten the bond of caring.”

“Nasty Backtalk” by Fred Jones in *Tools for Teaching*, December 16, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2jLsD3H>

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.