

# MoCo Monday Minute

**Monday, May 16, 2016**

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**5/17/16 Make-Up Day** – School will be in session tomorrow, May 17<sup>th</sup>.

***Celebrating Success*** – (1) On the first day of testing, dads and male role models lined the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade hallway at MSE to cheer them on for KPREP; (2) McNabb 7<sup>th</sup> grade baseball finished #1 in the Bluegrass Baseball Championship last week; (3) McNabb 8<sup>th</sup> grade baseball team was runner-up in the Bluegrass Baseball Championship; (4) Mapleton hosted a volunteer breakfast; (5) McNabb’s band concert was held Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>; (6) A “Ghost Out” (pictured) was held for MCHS seniors on May 12<sup>th</sup>, just prior to prom, to increase awareness of the danger of drinking and driving or texting and driving; (7) The high school Regional Track Tournament was held Friday and included a few records being surpassed. Competitors are awaiting state bids, following the completion of regional tournaments. The state tournament will be held Saturday, May 28<sup>th</sup> at the University of Kentucky track.



***Camp Kaleidoscope*** – There is still time to register your child(ren) for summer camp. Camp Kaleidoscope has been in operation for many years and is an annual favorite. It is from June 8<sup>th</sup> – July 29<sup>th</sup> at Mapleton Elementary, 6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. daily. Registration is ongoing. Activities include swimming, movies at the theater, open gym, field trips, arts, and more. Meals and snacks

are included. The cost is \$100 per week full-time or \$75 three days or less. It is for ages 5-12. For more information call 497-8724 ext. 217.



**Bench Dedication** – Friends, family and educators gathered to dedicate a bench in memory of Mike Eads before the MCHS vs GRC baseball game last Wednesday at Whitaker Field. Mike Eads, a 1987 graduate of Montgomery County High School, where he excelled at both football and baseball, passed away last month. Richard Fuller led the dedication with a speech while friends and family gathered around home plate.

**Student Attendance** – Congratulations to MCIS for having the highest one day attendance with 98.24%, and the highest average attendance for the week with 97.47%. Way to go!

**Dates:**

- May 17 – Election Day – Instructional Make-Up Day
- May 17 – MCIS Art Show, 5:30 p.m.
- May 17 – Family Reading Night, 6:00-7:00 p.m., ELC
- May 17 – Orchestra Spring Concert, 7:00 p.m., MCHS Auditorium
- May 17 – Board of Education Special Session, 6:30 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria
- May 19 – Accelerated Reader Auction (4<sup>th</sup> Grade), Mapleton
- May 19 – MCHS SBDM Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- May 19 – Family Reading Night, 6:00-7:00 p.m., Camargo Preschool
- May 19 – Willy Wonka Play, 6:00 p.m., Camargo
- May 20 – Mapleton Behavior Carnival
- May 20 – MSE AR Dance Party
- May 20 – Stringapalooza, 5:00-7:00 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria
- May 21 – FFA / Vet Science Dog Wash, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Chenault Farm
- May 23 – Chorus Concert, 9:00 a.m., MSE
- May 23 – MSE 4<sup>th</sup> Grade AR Auction, 10:00 a.m.
- May 23 – Talent Show, 1:00 p.m., MSE
- May 23 – Awards Ceremony, 6:00 p.m., MSE
- May 24 – McNabb Tier 3 Movie Reward
- May 24 – MCIS 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Field Day @ MCHS
- May 24 – MSE K-1<sup>st</sup> Grade Field Day
- May 24 – Montgomery County Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria
- May 24 – Senior Honors Night, 6:30 p.m. MCHS Auditorium
- May 25 – Mapleton K-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Field Day
- May 25 – MCIS 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Field Day @ MCHS
- May 25 – MSE 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Grade Field Day
- May 25 – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Lexington Legends Game
- May 25 – Senior Baccalaureate, 7:00 p.m., First Church of God
- May 26 – Kindergarten Completion Ceremony, 8:00 a.m. & 9:00 a.m., Mapleton

- May 26 – MCIS AR Party
- May 27 – Last Day of School for Students
- May 27 – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Completion Ceremony, 10:00 a.m.,
- May 27 – Kindergarten Graduation, 8:00 a.m., MSE
- May 27 – Kindergarten Graduation, 8:30 a.m. & 10:00 a.m., Camargo
- **May 30 – Memorial Day**
- May 31 – Closing Day
- June 2 – Camargo SBDM Meeting, 10:00 a.m.
- July 18-21 – Summer Reading Program, Camargo
- Aug. 1 – Camargo Kindergarten Jumpstart

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

### **Grading Less, Learning from Students, and Giving Better Feedback**

(Originally titled “How I Learned to Be Strategic About Writing Comments”)

In this *Educational Leadership* article, high-school English teacher and consultant Cris Tovani bemoans the way her students used to ignore the comments she spent hours writing on their papers – and the fact that her comments didn’t seem to make a difference. Overhearing a conversation between two high-school athletic coaches, Tovani realized how differently their feedback was received and used by young players. “In a perfect world,” she thought, “teachers and students would work together toward a common goal, like athletes and coaches do. Students would care about the feedback we give them as much as we do.” This epiphany led Tovani to three conclusions:

- Spend less time writing comments.
- Modify instruction based on what’s learned from students’ work.
- Build in time for students to revise their work based on feedback and self-assessment.

“Where I really needed to give feedback was before final assignments were due,” she says. “I needed a chance to reteach concepts, and students needed a chance to revise.”

In Tovani’s reading lessons, students now take four-question comprehension checks as they read, assessing how well they can summarize, analyze the author’s craft, annotate a text, and make inferences. Tovani grades these quickly (very few comments), gives them back the next day, and has students self-assess against a model answer. “Students compare my criteria of success with their performance,” she says, “and reflect on how my responses are alike or different from theirs.” If students do poorly on one of her quizzes, she’ll go over items in class, giving students a chance to add points by showing improvement.

In her writing lessons, Tovani takes a cue from Kelly Gallagher, who gave her this rationale for assigning students four times more writing than it’s possible to grade: “Improvement starts

with volume. Volume suffers if I have to grade everything. Grading doesn't make kids better. Volume, choice, and conferring makes kids better." This helped Tovani realize that she didn't have to assess every piece of student writing, which allowed her to grade less and assess more: "I don't have to always write the perfect comment or give a grade," she says. "[W]hat's most essential to improving the quality of students' work is collecting feedback for ourselves from that work and noticing patterns in students' skills (or lack thereof) that we can use to determine our next instructional moves."

Her new philosophy is, "Give students daily opportunities to leave tracks of their thinking, use those tracks to notice patterns, and adjust instruction on the basis of what kids know and what they need. Repeat cycle." Here are some of her tools:

- Reading think worksheets – Students jot on these as they do their independent reading, prompted to note pages read, stamina, use of their inner voice to remember what they read, and how their reading reflects new thinking (see the full article for a sample).
- Exit tickets – At the end of class, students jot one thing they figured out and one thing they're wondering about. Tovani spreads these out on a table and draws conclusions about the next day's lesson. "I don't waste time writing comments," she says. "I simply look for patterns, and when I've figured out a few, I throw the tickets away."
- Response journals – In individual composition notebooks, students reflect on their learning for the day. Tovani reads a third of these each day during her planning period, takes a third home, and reads the rest the next morning. "I limit my comments and challenge myself to identify patterns," she says.

Tovani continuously streamlines her process. She decides which qualities of students' reading and thinking she'll focus her feedback on and limits her comments accordingly. While commenting, she records her observations in four columns: students' use of skills and strategies; confusing vocabulary; students' questions related to the reading; and how skillfully students are dealing with a genre or text structure. She gives feedback or a quick correction to individual students or to the whole class.

"As much as we'd all like to coach kids one-on-one," Tovani concludes, "we can't. Getting feedback from student work and giving students feedback to advance their learning are both essential, but educators have to be strategic in how we use these instructional moves. In the end, both teacher and students have to get smarter."

"How I Learned to Be Strategic About Writing Comments" by Cris Tovani in *Educational Leadership*, April 2016 (Vol. 73, #7, p. 56-60), available for purchase at <http://bit.ly/1SgYzpf>; Tovani can be reached at [ctovani@hotmail.com](mailto:ctovani@hotmail.com).

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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).*