

MCo Monday Minute

Monday, August 22, 2016

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Carly Walker was crowned Rec Bowl Queen between games on Saturday night!

Peace Path – Over the summer MSE’s Guidance Counselor, Sara Beth Mays, had a ‘Peace Path’ painted in the school’s picnic area. The Peace Path may be used as a conflict resolution strategy and is a three step process to find common ground between feuding students. The students first express how they feel given the conflict, next they explain what could change so that they feel better, and lastly students talk about what should be done next time to avoid such a situation.



Junior Chef – The Montgomery County Junior Chef Team competed and won the first two rounds of the Kentucky State Fair competition last week. Good luck to the team on Thursday, as they advance to the semi-finals. Junior Chef is sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture Farm to School Program.



Student Attendance – The highest one day attendance for the first full week of school was achieved by Mapleton Elementary with 98.05% on August 17th. The weekly high attendance goes to MCIS with 97.29%.

Annual Notice about Political Activities – Election time is right around the corner. With that, and as required by law, I want to take this opportunity to inform all certified and classified staff of their obligations under state law, board policy, and the code of ethics.

The guiding statute is located by clicking the following link [KRS 161.164](#). Board policies, available online at <http://policy.ksba.org/Chapter.aspx?distid=91>, for Classified (policy 3.2324) and Certified (policy 3.1324) Staff are as follows:

PERSONNEL 03.2324/03.1324

Political Activities

No District employee shall promote, organize, or engage in political activities while performing his/her duties or during the work day. Promoting or engaging in political activities shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Encouraging students to adopt or support a particular political position, party, or candidate; or
2. Using school property or materials to advance the support of a particular political position, party, or candidate.

"Political positions" shall not be defined to include communications approved by the Superintendent to be distributed to parents or the community concerning District needs or proposed actions by the Board. Examples of such communications may include, but not be limited to, those addressing designation of attendance zones/areas and District facility and financial needs.

School Board Elections

The Superintendent shall inform all District employees of the provisions of [KRS 161.164](#).

Dates:

- Aug. 22 – Volunteer Orientation, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Camargo
- Aug. 23 – Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria
- Aug. 25 – Volunteer Orientation, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Mapleton
- Aug. 26 – Camargo Family Movie Night, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
- Aug. 29-30 – MCIS Musical Auditions for Aladdin Jr.
- Aug. 29-Sept 2 – MSE Book Fair
- Aug. 30 – Mapleton 4th Grade Environmental Camp Parent Chaperone Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- Aug. 31 – Volunteer Orientation, 10:00-11:00 a.m., MCIS
- Sept. 1 – MSE Family Reading Night
- **Sept. 5 – No School – Labor Day**
- Sept. 6 – Camargo Kindergarten Grandparent's Day
- Sept. 6 – MSE 1st & 4th Grade Grandparent's Day
- Sept. 6 – MSE Camfel Productions
- Sept. 7 – Camargo 1st Grade Grandparent's Day
- Sept. 7 – MSE 2nd Grade Grandparent's Day
- Sept. 7 – MSE 4H Parent Meeting, 5:00 p.m.
- Sept. 8 – Camargo 2nd Grade Grandparent's Day
- Sept. 8 – MSE 3rd Grade Grandparent's Day
- Sept. 8 – Girl Scout Parent Night, 4:30 p.m., Camargo
- Sept. 8 – Read to Win Rally, 5:30-7:30 p.m., MCHS Media Center
- Sept. 8 – Volunteer Orientation, 6:30-7:30 p.m., McNabb Middle

- Sept. 9 – Camargo 3rd & 4th Grades Grandparent’s Day
- Sept. 9 – MSE Kindergarten Grandparent’s Day
- Sept. 9 – Camargo 4-H Meetings (4th Grade)
- Sept. 9 – 4H-FFA Livestock Show & Sale, 6:00-9:00 p.m., Chenault Agriculture Center
- Sept. 10 – ACT Test, 8:00 a.m., MCHS Zone II Lobby
- Sept. 12 – Mapleton Kindergarten Grandparent’s Day
- Sept. 12 – MSE Fall Picture Day
- Sept. 13 – Mapleton 1st Grade Grandparent’s Day
- Sept. 13 – Mapleton SBDM Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- Sept. 13 – Volunteer Orientation, 6:30-7:30 p.m., MSE
- Sept. 14 – Mapleton 2nd Grade Grandparent’s Day
- Sept. 14 – MSE SBDM Meeting, 3:30 p.m.
- Sept. 14 – Mapleton PTO Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 14 – Camargo SBDM Meeting, 3:00 p.m.
- Sept. 15 – Mapleton 3rd Grade Grandparent’s Day
- Sept. 15 – Camargo PTO Meeting, 3:00 p.m.
- Sept. 15 – MCHS SBDM Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- Sept. 16 – Mapleton 4th Grade Grandparent’s Day
- Sept. 20 – High Attendance Day
- Sept. 20 – MSE PTO Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 20 – MCIS SBDM Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- Sept. 21 – Mapleton PTO Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 24 – Volunteer Orientation, 9:00-10:00 a.m., MCHS
- Sept. 26 – Born Learning Parent Workshop, 5:30 p.m., Early Learning Center
- Sept. 27 - Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria
- Sept. 27 – MCHS Work Seal Follow-up Program, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m., Clay Center
- Sept. 29 – Mapleton Fall Picture Day
- Sept. 30 – Camargo Career Fair 3rd & 4th Grades, MCHS
- Sept. 30 – MSE Career Fair, MCHS
- Sept. 30 – MSE Fall Ball
- Oct. 5 – Camargo Fall Picture Day

Continuous Learning through Professional Literature

Advice on “Grit” from Daniel Willingham

What’s all the fuss about this new hot topic? wonders Daniel Willingham (University of Virginia) in his regular *American Educator* column. Haven’t we always known that determination and persistence are desirable traits?

Actually, grit is something new, says Willingham. It’s passion, persistence, and stamina in pursuit of a goal that takes years to attain – a fire in the belly that gives purpose and direction to one’s life. First identified by Angela Duckworth (University of Pennsylvania) in a 2007 article, it became a hot topic after Paul Tough’s best-selling 2013 book, *How Children Succeed*, a widely viewed Duckworth TED talk, and lots of media chatter. All this raises four questions:

- *How is grit distinct from similar character traits?* To be sure, says Willingham, grit seems very similar to conscientiousness, one of the well-established OCEAN personality traits (the others

are openness to experience, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism). Grit is also closely related to self-control – the ability to regulate unhelpful emotions, behaviors, and thoughts and stay focused on a particular goal (the famous marshmallow experiments measured this). Conscientiousness and self-control predict a number of positive school and life outcomes, so what does grit add?

The distinction, says Willingham, is the time horizon. Conscientiousness and self-control involve doing what you're supposed to do or restraining yourself from doing the wrong thing *right now*. Grit involves sticking with difficult tasks over a period of time, in pursuit of a long-term goal – for example, practicing the piano to play in a jazz trio versus doing so because that is what's expected of you. A conscientious, self-controlled student might work hard in all subjects and get consistently good grades and standardized test scores. "But sometimes, being the sort of person who does what's expected, putting one foot in front of the other, just won't cut it," says Willingham. "The task requires long-term commitment. That's when it may be most useful to look at grit; grit seems to capture something important about people who can weather the trials of West Point, for example, or study years for a spelling bee."

- *Is the concept of grit scientifically valid?* Duckworth and her colleagues devised a short survey in which people say whether certain statements describe their perseverance (for example, "I finish what I begin") and their consistency over time (for example, "I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one," reverse scored). What people say in response to the eight items in the survey is remarkably accurate in predicting what they actually do – for example, not dropping out of West Point, finishing the grueling U.S. Army Special Operations Forces selection course, and succeeding in the National Spelling Bee. "The common thread among these diverse tasks seems intuitive," says Willingham. "Each requires a great deal of hard work that carries little short-term reward."

People who score high on the grit survey tend to think about their goals differently. For example, in a study of low-income high-school seniors heading for college, those who ultimately stayed on track for graduation had transcendent goals (they wanted to help others and make an impact on the world) versus goals focused on personal self-development. The grittier students also found their schoolwork more meaningful.

- *Do we know how to teach grit?* "The enthusiasm is getting ahead of the science," said Duckworth in a recent interview; we don't know precisely how to teach it. But some schools are making educated guesses. We should: help students find what they're passionate about; encourage them to pursue their passions find helpful resources; tell students that failure is a normal part of learning and that success is not a matter of inborn talent but of effective effort; and help them set goals, organize their time, and realize that not every passion will work out long-term.

"There are many personality characteristics you probably try to cultivate in your students," says Willingham: "conscientiousness, self-control, kindness, honesty, optimism, courage, and empathy, among others. Some are related to academic success, some contribute to good relationships with others, some contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere, and most do more than one of these. Grit is another personality characteristic that you may want to nurture in your students. Grit is not necessary for a successful, happy life, and it's not sufficient for one either.

However, understanding what grit is may serve you in helping along its nascent development when you spot grit in a student.”

- *How should schools use data on grit?* If grit is important – and if Duckworth’s survey is valid and reliable – why shouldn’t colleges and employers use people’s grit scores for admission and employment decisions? “But measurements are developed with a particular purpose in mind,” says Willingham; “it’s hazardous to use them for other purposes. The Grit Scale was designed as a research instrument, not for college admissions. One obvious problem is that it would be really easy to answer questions so as to appear gritty.” There’s also the problem of reference bias – people answer questions like “I finish what I begin” comparing themselves to people around them, and the norms of students’ reference groups are different in every situation. Similarly, performance tasks (like the marshmallow test) are necessarily short-term, can be gamed, and might be influenced by extraneous factors – for example, whether or not a student is hungry.

The best way around these problems is looking for signs of grittiness in students’ performance over time – for example, a student who worked on the high-school newspaper for four years and was made an editor senior year has clearly demonstrated grit. However, says Willingham, for high-stakes decisions like college admission or employment, “It’s well to bear in mind that the wisdom or foolishness of weighing grit in these decisions is still unknown.”

Another way for schools to think about grit is as information for school and student development. If a school believes it’s important for students to be passionate about long-term goals, teachers and administrators might check in periodically to see how many students have found their passion – and use the data to tweak the program and support students: “What needs to change so that your passion can be fulfilled, and how can I help?”

“Ask the Cognitive Scientist: ‘Grit’ Is Trendy, But Can It Be Taught?” by Daniel Willingham in *American Educator*, Summer 2015 (Vol. 40, #2, p. 28-32), <http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ae-summer2016willingham.pdf>; Willingham can be reached at willingham@virginia.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.