

MoCo Monday Minute

Monday, December 11, 2017

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The Newport Aquarium WAVE Foundation visited 5th and 6th grade students at MCIS with two African Penguins. Students listened to a presentation on African penguins and had the opportunity to pet the penguin!

Quote of the Week – “Was it a bad day? Or was it a bad five minutes that you milked all day?” – Toby Mac

Celebrating Success – (1) MCIS fifth and sixth graders had their Winter Orchestra Concerts; (2) Camargo presented The Best Christmas Pageant Ever; (3) MCIS students in Mrs. Neal’s class made gingerbread houses for the Gateway Regional Arts Center Polar Express event held over the weekend.



Jacob Caudill, Samuel Cooper and Jason Rodriguez tied with another entry for first place; (4) The MCHS Varsity Cheerleaders competed Saturday at KHSAA Cheerleading Championship. They placed fourth out of 16 teams in the Large Varsity Division; (5) The MCHS Boys’ Freshman Basketball Team won the Rowan County Classic, improving their record to 7-0.



FBLA Visits McNabb Students – The FBLA Chapter 5341 American Enterprise Team recently visited McNabb Middle School to educate and inform seventh and eighth grade students on financial literacy and fiscal responsibility. Students also learned what it means to have access to a free enterprise marketplace in America. Team members compiled a list of financial related questions and administered a pre-test to see where the students understanding was before the lesson was taught. Students then played the Game of Life and had to make month to month decisions based on their individual budget, including car payments, utilities bills, mortgages, and entertainment expenses. After the game was complete, students were administered the same test and asked to complete it with their newfound financial knowledge. The results of the pre and post-test showed great improvement. The FBLA chapter ensures each year they observe and teach the importance of the American Enterprise system.



Health Science Class Tours MSU at Mt. Sterling – Students enrolled in the Pre-Nursing and Medical Business Office Pathways at Montgomery County ATC had the opportunity to tour the MSU Mt. Sterling Campus. While there, MSU staff spoke with students about the campus, described programs offered, and discussed scholarships and FAFSA. Students also participated in hands-on activities in the nursing department and a question and answer activity for the chance to win t-shirts and other items.

Students Study Native American Culture – During Mr. Allison's Reading and Study Skills informational unit, students compared and contrasted fiction and non-fiction texts through the presentation of Native American music and culture. Several students openly shared their personal connections to their own Native American heritage then took turns playing the instruments with Mr. Allison. Students performed in class for their peers a Navajo Folklore on how the first Native American drum and flute came to be. Students then read the true history of the instruments, and analyzed how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by advancing different evidence and interpretations of facts.



Vote for Your Favorite Banner – Each school district has been invited to design a banner for display at the 82nd Annual Kentucky School Boards Association Conference scheduled for March 2018 at the Galt House in Louisville. The banners are a very important contribution to the conference, reminding attendees of schools' primary focus -- learning

and learners. In order to be displayed at the conference, the banner must identify the school district and depict the conference theme:

"Kentucky School Boards: Adapting and Achieving"

Only one banner from each school district is allowed. We are asking our students, staff, and community to vote for the one that will represent Montgomery County at the KSBA annual conference. Please [click here](#) to vote for your favorite choice. Voting will end Wednesday, December 20th at 4:30 p.m.

Student Attendance – Congratulations to MSE for having the district’s best student attendance for one day and for the week, with 95.5% on 12/7 and a weekly percentage of 94.85.



Christmas Parade – The 2017 Mt. Sterling-Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce “A Kentucky Christmas Parade” was successful last Monday night. The district was represented well with several participants. The parade had more than 70 floats and participants, which is more than many larger cities. [Click here](#) to view the video provided by Mound Magazine.

Dates:

- Dec. 11-15 – MSE Santa Shop
- Dec. 11 – Camargo PTO Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- Dec. 12 – Mapleton SBDM Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- Dec. 12 – McNabb Orchestra Winter Concert, 6:30 p.m.
- Dec. 13 – Camargo SBDM Meeting, 3:00 p.m.
- Dec. 13 – MSE SBDM Meeting, 3:30 p.m.
- Dec. 14 – Student Holiday Showcase, 5:00-5:45 p.m., Camargo
- Dec. 14 – Holiday Celebration, 6:00 p.m., Camargo
- Dec. 14 – MCIS SBDM Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- Dec. 14 – MCHS Orchestra Winter Concert, 7:00 p.m.
- Dec. 18 – Sterling Academy of Dance Nutcracker Performance, Mapleton



Kindergartners in Mrs. Wilson's class bought and wrapped presents for their Angel Tree recipient.



Students and staff at MSE wore tacky Christmas sweaters to school on Wednesday.

- Dec. 18 – McNabb SBDM Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- Dec. 19 – MSE 4th Grade Christmas Dinner
- Dec. 19 - Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria
- Dec. 19 – MCHS Vocal Music Winter Concert, 7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 20 – Christmas Parties, Mapleton
- Dec. 20 – Polar Express Day, Camargo and MSE
- Dec. 21 – MCHS SBDM Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- **Dec. 21-Jan. 2 – No School – Christmas Break**



MCIS presented Disney's Alice in Wonderland JR. over the weekend.

Continuous Learning through Professional Literature

Building Students' Executive Functioning Skills

(Originally titled "Helping Anxious Students Move Forward")

In this article in *Educational Leadership*, Jessica Minahan says that in her work as a behavioral analyst and consultant, she hears lots of stories about students avoiding work – a first grader staring at the wall during a reading lesson; a high-school basketball star who *still* won't do his homework even when he's in danger of being kicked off the team for not doing it. These students all seem to lack motivation, but that's not what's going on, says Minahan. It's one or more of these aspects of executive functioning:

- Accurate thinking – Assessing how difficult a task is, how long it will take, and one's ability to do it;
- Initiation – Organizing one's thoughts and getting started;
- Persistence – Sustaining effort in the face of errors and difficulty;
- Help-seeking – Knowing when to ask for support.

"Penalties and incentives don't teach these skills and are unlikely to improve students' behavior," says Minahan. Instead, students feel misunderstood and rejected.

Minahan's analogy is training wheels when children are first learning to ride a bike – accommodations as they learn how to think accurately about challenges, get going, persist, and ask for help. "If we remove the supports before students are ready," she says, "they'll crash." Her suggestions:

- *Accurate thinking* – Anxious students tend to think all-or-nothing (*I hate math*) or engage in catastrophic thinking (*I'll probably flunk sixth grade*). One strategy is having students rate the difficulty of an assignment beforehand (*very difficult*) and afterward (*not that bad*); comparing the

two may help reset the student's mindset. Another approach is breaking a task into parts and rating each one – *I like it. It's okay. I don't like it.* Looking over these after making a catastrophic statement can help isolate the problem.

- *Initiation* – Don't ask students prone to negative thinking to work independently at first; instead, provide helpful support within 30 seconds of giving an assignment and then have them continue solo. Or go over the assignment beforehand: *This is the math sheet we'll be doing later. Let's start the first and second problems together.* Or chunk assignments and take one piece at a time. Or give the student a math sheet with all but the last two problems completed and ask the student to finish. Working with an erasable whiteboard is also helpful for students who are risk-averse and perfectionistic.

- *Persistence* – Some students need a dose of Carol Dweck: "Every time you push out of your comfort zone to learn hard things, your brain grows new connections and you get smarter." It also helps to reward increments and get students monitoring themselves on persistence rather than the final product: *Did I attempt more problems today than on my last quiz? Did I correct an answer?*

- *Help-seeking* – "Students with anxiety or depression may lack the initiative to ask for help when they're stuck or overwhelmed by a task," says Minahan. Or they may be too embarrassed to ask. Agreeing on a silent signal may be the answer: *Put a pencil behind your ear when you need help.* Next get students thinking about how to reduce dependency: *What do you need help with and why?* The idea is for students to realize that they can solve some problems by themselves. *Great! You didn't need my help! I'm glad you figured it out.* These students need to learn how to self-monitor, assess their needs, and find strategies to get help without depending on the teacher.

The key is seeing where the student is at. Jeremy seemed unable to do research on the computer in his history class and answer two open-ended questions. Instead, he scrolled through social media and encouraged classmates to join him. Eventually the teacher kicked him out of the room. When Jeremy's teachers were asked how often he completed open-ended assignments, they said, "Never!" They were "overshooting the method of output," says Minahan. He wouldn't engage in reading when there were more than two paragraphs on the page. The solution was simple: limit texts to one or two paragraphs and give Jeremy multiple-choice questions. Within five weeks, he was completing work and moving toward reading one page of text in a book and answering fill-in-the-blank questions. "It's like I'm a student," said Jeremy. "I hand in work and get graded." History was the one class he passed that term.

"Helping Anxious Students Move Forward" by Jessica Minahan in *Educational Leadership*, December 2017/January 2018 (Vol. 75, #4, p. 44-50), available to ASCD members and for purchase at <http://bit.ly/2nsrN1b>

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.