

MoCo Monday Minute

Monday, December 12, 2016

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The cast of Aladdin JR.

Quote of the Week – “I see what is right with you, despite your struggles. And I believe what is right with you is more powerful than anything that is wrong.”

The message communicated by a teacher, counselor, nurse, bus driver, school secretary, or volunteer that makes the difference to a student, quoted in “Havens of Resilience” by Nan Henderson in *Educational Leadership*, September 2013 (Vol. 71, #1, p. 22-27); www.ascd.org Henderson can be reached at nhenderson@resilience.com.

Vote for Your Favorite Banner – Each school district has been invited to design a banner for display at the 81st Annual Kentucky School Boards Association Conference scheduled for February 2017 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:

"Be a Superhero for Public Education!"

Only one banner from each school district is allowed. Each school has created a banner and 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 21st at 4 p.m.

Mapleton listed on KASC Top 25 Elementary Schools – The Kentucky Association of School Councils (KASC) has used information from the School Report Card to compile lists of the top 25 schools in Achievement, Gap, Growth, and each subject area. Mapleton was ranked top 25 in growth. This score is calculated in reading and math from 3rd to 4th grade. Congratulations Mapleton!

Celebrating Success – (1) The school districted was represented with a float in the community Christmas parade last Monday night. Several groups participated from the school district, including cadets who dressed in era uniforms;



(2) On Tuesday, MSE held their Reading Fair and Winter Wonderland; (3) Mapleton had Family Reading Night on Tuesday evening! Students enjoyed their special activities along with hot cocoa and doughnuts; (4) MCIS and McNabb had their Winter Orchestra Concerts; (5) MCIS presented Disney's Aladdin JR. over the weekend and was very successful.



Student Attendance – MCIS had the highest one-day this week with 95.71% on Thursday, but they were edged out by Mapleton the highest attendance for the week with 94.71%.

Leadership Montgomery County – December 8th was Education Day for the 2016 Class of



Leadership Montgomery County. Participants toured the Montgomery County Intermediate School, Mt. Sterling Elementary, Montgomery County High School, McNabb Middle School, Transportation Compound, and Chenault Agriculture Center.

Board Member Honored – Congratulations to Montgomery County Board of Education member, Donna Wilson, she was honored by Executive Director Mike Armstrong for her service on the KSBA Board of Directors during the board's December 2nd meeting in Louisville. Mrs. Wilson served two years as a director at large on the 27-member KSBA board.



Dates:

- Dec. 12 – Camargo PTO Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- Dec. 12 – Mapleton Special Called SBDM Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- Dec. 12 – Creative Writing Showcase, 5:30 p.m., MCHS Auditorium
- Dec. 12 – MSE Treblemakers Choir Concert, 6:30 p.m.
- Dec. 13 – McNabb Winter Band Concert, 6:30 p.m., McNabb Auditorium
- Dec. 13 – MCHS Orchestra Winter Concert, 7:00 p.m., MCHS Auditorium
- Dec. 15 – Camargo Holiday Celebration, 6:00 p.m.
- Dec. 15 – McNabb Choir Concert, 6:00 p.m., McNabb Auditorium
- Dec. 15 – Vocal Music Concert, 7:30 p.m., MCHS Auditorium
- Dec. 15 – MCHS SBDM Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- Dec. 15 – Local Planning Committee Meeting, 4:00 p.m., Clay Community Center
- Dec. 19 – MCIS SBDM Meeting, 5:00 p.m.
- Dec. 19 – McNabb SBDM Meeting, 5:00 p.m.
- Dec. 20 – Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria (review session at 5:00 p.m.)
- **Dec. 21-30 – No School – Christmas Break**
- Dec. 27-29 – Gateway Holiday Classic, MCHS Arena and Barn



Mapleton's Family Reading Night.



MCIS Winter Orchestra Concert

Continuous Learning through Professional Literature

How to Make Learning Stick

In this thoughtful *Education Week* article, veteran educator Alden Blodget says the current debate about standards, testing, accountability, more math and science, teacher training, funding, and a longer school day doesn't get at the real problems in our schools. Here's his analysis:

- Learning something new (how to solve quadratic equations, the history of the Vietnam War) involves building new "wiring" – neural networks or circuits – in the brain.

- Unfortunately, new neural networks aren't permanent – they constantly degrade. Students seem to understand and then the next day they don't. "It's as though they had never seen this stuff before," is a common complaint in faculty lounges. What seemed clear in a quiet classroom with a supportive teacher falls apart when the student struggles with the homework in a noisy house with nobody around who can answer their questions.

- The process of building and rebuilding neural networks "requires considerable effort from the learner," says Blodget. "The essence of learning isn't memory and recitation; meaningful learning (the sort of learning educators hope to foster) results from an active effort to understand, an effort that promotes the growth of increasingly efficient webs of neural connections among different regions of the brain."

- "Teachers can tell and talk," he continues, "but only learners can learn... It isn't that Sally won't listen or isn't intelligent or won't try harder to memorize what she has been told; it's that she hasn't engaged in the hard work of constructing and reconstructing neural pathways to understanding."

- "Each time we rebuild the neural network, the skill or concept becomes more stable and automatic," says Blodget. "The highest level of skill or understanding results from repeatedly experiencing this building-rebuilding cycle over time (years), moving through a sequence of increasingly complex levels. That movement is not linear and steady; it is dynamic and messy."

- One reason many students don't make the effort to build better circuits is that they're not motivated – what they're learning doesn't matter deeply to them. Neuroscientists have found that attitudes and emotions play a major part in learning, says Blodget: "Just as you cannot separate hydrogen and oxygen and still have water, you cannot separate emotion from cognitive function and still have thinking – or learning." Emotion acts as a rudder for thought.

- "Children are natural learners, alive with questions," says Blodget. "And then school happens." But it doesn't have to be that way. For years, some teachers have intuitively understood what neuroscientists are now discovering about learning and the brain. "The time is right for educators and researchers to become partners," Blodget concludes, "... to look at school reform through the lens of the biology and psychology of learning instead of bickering about testing and standards and more of the same old failed practices. Waving sticks and carrots at our kids will not produce the sort of deep, meaningful learning that everyone claims to want. Neither will blaming teachers, parents, or kids."

"Brains and Schools: A Mismatch" by Alden Blodget in *Education Week*, Sept. 11, 2013 (Vol. 33, #3, p. 30-31), www.edweek.org

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.