



MONROE CENTER GRADE SCHOOL

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRICIPAL'S DESK

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Dear Monroe Center Grade School Families,

As we begin this beautiful fall season, let's remember to appreciate the many accomplishments of our students, both big and small. This is also the perfect time to recall the old proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." This has never been more true than it is today. Parents and guardians are often busy with the pressures of work and home, and there doesn't seem to be enough time in the day to talk with our children about their school experiences.

The Monroe Center Grade School Staff is dedicated to each student's academic, social, and emotional needs, but we know that we can't do it alone. As a Monroe Center School parent or guardian, you will soon be attending parent/teacher conferences on October 22nd or October 30th. These conferences allow our teachers to formally meet with you to discuss your child's progress at school. We know that all children learn in different ways, have their own individual personalities, and their own set of listening skills and work habits.

To help your child acquire new knowledge and skills, we must know as much as we can about your child. No one knows more about your child than you. Additionally, no one has more influence over your child than you. We are truly honored to partner with you to create a positive and educational "village" where our students can thrive.

Thank you for your continued support of your children, as well as the staff and programs at Monroe Center Grade School.

Sincerely,

Leslie Showers, Principal

News from 3rd Grade

Please spend some time each night with your child reading, practicing flashcards, or practicing cursive. Children should do some type of school work on a nightly basis.

As the weather starts to get colder, please remember to dress your child for the weather. The children go outside everyday for recess and most of the time for PE, so please send jackets.

We look forward to meeting with all of you at Parent/Teacher Conferences on Monday, October 22nd, and Tuesday, October 30th. Please arrange a time with your child's teacher, if you haven't already done so.

4th Grade –Burch, Eden, Kaltenbach, Massari, Papke, Simpson, and Tucker

Spooktacular events are happening this month in fourth grade! Please be sure to help your child study at least 5 spelling words a day. If you help them break up the list that way it won't seem so overwhelming. We will be focusing on place value in math, and then moving onto addition and subtraction. PLEASE review basic multiplication facts because we are in full swing with Rocket Math, and want every student to reach letter G by the end of 1st quarter. We will be continuing to work on our reading stories. We are grouping stories based on reading skills, and the students are enjoying the activities that go along with each story. Language will focus on different types of nouns this month. Science has taken us on a spooky journey learning about the different questions scientists ask, as well, as what types of tools they use to help answer questions and draw conclusions.

Our Halloween party will be held on Wednesday, October 31. The parade will be at 2:00 and the party at 2:30. Please be sure your child's class has games to play during the party. That seems to be an area that doesn't get signed up for too often. Also remember, only parents who are signed up to bring a treat, or do a game for the party are allowed in each of the classrooms. October 12th is the end of the first quarter. Each student has an A.R. goal of taking 4 A.R. quizzes on a book in their level and passing each of those tests with a 70% or higher. Please encourage your child to meet that goal. If your child had less than satisfactory midterm grades now is the time to make improvements and get help before report cards come out. Please maintain parent responsibility of checking your child's assignment notebook each day and ALSO have your child show you the homework they brought home so you can see if they need help or if they still need to work on it.

We would like to thank all of the parents who have donated items to our classrooms! We appreciate your generosity very much! We appreciate your patience with all of the new programs that are being put into practice. Don't forget about conferences on October 22nd and October 30th. Please make sure you have scheduled a conference with your child's teacher. Have a safe and Happy October!

Fifth Grade News

It's hard to believe that we've passed midterm of the first quarter, but things are off to a good start! The students are becoming more accustomed to the expectations of fifth grade and the routine. We would like to remind students to put your best foot forward, and always give your best effort.

If you have not already, please begin to review basic math facts with your child. These facts will be used extensively throughout the year. We are practicing them daily in the classrooms through Mastering Math Facts, but additional practice will help them achieve and maintain mastery. We are wrapping up our first two units in social studies and are now working our way through our unit A (Science, Engineering, and Technology) in science. In reading, the children have been learning about using context clues, making inferences, problem and solution, and characters and setting. Our goal for AR is to have all students read one AR book at their level every two weeks, which translates to 4 per quarter. In language, subjects and predicates as well as sentence types have been the primary topics.

Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held on Monday, October 22 and Tuesday, October 30th. Please contact the school to set up a time for conference if you haven't reserved a time yet.

As a reminder, students should be filling out their assignment notebooks on a daily basis. Reviewing this with your child in the evening is an excellent way to see what they may need to do on a given night or to see what is coming up in the future. This is one of several organizational tools that can be used to help students be successful.

LIBRARY – Mrs. Wise and Mrs. Brooks

We are so excited that students have begun their weekly library visits. We look forward to seeing students for story time and checkouts. Kindergarten and 3rd graders have begun listening to Monarch books during story times. Each week Mrs. Wise will read one of the twenty nominees for the Monarch Illinois Children's Choice Award (K-3). In February students will vote for their favorite, and in March we will find out which book was the favorite statewide! Parents – if you would like more information or would like to see the book titles, go to www.islma.org/monarch.htm

3rd, 4th and 5th graders have begun the Bluestem Reading Program sponsored by the library. This is a voluntary program in which students can earn prizes by reading books from the 20 titles nominated to win the Bluestem Illinois Children's Choice Award (Grades 3-5). Any student reading 4 or more of the titles by mid-March will be eligible to vote. Students reading all twenty of the titles by the end of the school year will also be invited to a pizza party in the library. If you would like more information about the Bluestem Program visit <http://www.islma.org/Bluestem.htm> HAPPY READING!!

Mr. Schiltz – Resource Room

Reading fluency encompasses the speed or rate of reading, as well as the ability to read materials with expression. Meyer and Felton defined *fluency* as "the ability to read connected text rapidly, smoothly, effortlessly, and automatically with little conscious attention to the mechanics of reading, such as decoding." Children are successful with decoding when the process used to identify words is fast and nearly effortless or automatic. As noted, the concept of automaticity refers to a student's ability to recognize words rapidly with little attention required to the word's appearance. The ability to read words by sight automatically is the key to skilled reading. Does your child require more reading practice to improve his or her fluency? If so, you may wish to use Audacity.

What is Audacity?

It is a free, open source software for recording and editing sounds that can be downloaded to your computer via the Internet. It is being used by classroom teachers across the country to help improve reading fluency and analyze students' reading patterns. Parents are using it also.

Kids simply wear headphones with a microphone and record a given passage a set number of times right onto the Audacity software. The Microsoft Life Chat LX-2000 is one example of a good mobile headset with microphone. You can find it online for about \$15-\$20. Once the students have recorded themselves, they then listen back to the passage and follow along carefully with the text as they hear themselves reading. It will also show them how long it took to read each passage. Teachers or parents may even have them chart the time it took to read the passage to increase motivation. Students can also listen to how their reading rate and expression has improved in reading the same passage over a period of time. Parents or siblings may even want to record themselves reading a passage to model fluent reading for a student.

Audacity requires Windows, Mac OS X, GNU/Linux or a similar operating system, at least 64 MB RAM and a 300 MHz processor, a microphone, speakers or headphones, and a high speed internet connection (recommended). When downloading Audacity, you may want to search for the Audacity 2.0.2 version. Here is the download web page address:

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/windows> and here is the Audacity user manual web page <file:///C:/Program%20Files/Audacity/help/manual/index.html> Try it out. It's pretty easy to use. Just click the Red record button and begin reading. When finished, click the Tan stop button. Then click the Skip to Start Purple rewind button. Next, click the Green Play button to hear yourself. That's about all there is to it. Audacity may be the key to getting your kids more interested in oral reading practice.

COUNSELING CENTER

October is National Bullying Prevention Month. Join us on Monday, October 1st by wearing a blue shirt to school to help spread the word of ending bullying. If you have questions or concerns regarding a student who is being the target of bullying please contact the school counselor or the principal. The following is an article that talks about what bullying is.

Defining Bullying Behavior

What is bullying? At first glance, many people might think this behavior is easy to define. Their first image of bullying might be of a physically intimidating boy beating up a smaller classmate. While that can still be considered bullying today, parents need to know that bullying behaviors can be much more complex and varied than that typical stereotype. For example, harmful bullying can also occur quietly and covertly, through gossip or on the internet, causing emotional damage. Let's consider a few definitions of bullying.

Although definitions of bullying vary, most agree that an act is defined as bullying when:

The behavior hurts or harms another person physically or emotionally. Bullying can be very overt, such as fighting, hitting or name calling, or it can be covert, such as gossiping or leaving someone out on purpose.

It is intentional, meaning the act is done willfully, knowingly and with deliberation.

The targets have difficulty stopping the behavior directed at them and struggle to defend themselves.

Bullying can be circumstantial or chronic. It might be the result of a situation, such as being the new student at school, or it might be behavior that has been directed at the individual for a long period of time (www.pacer.org 2012).

For more information about bullying you can visit www.pacer.org or call the school and talk to Stephanie Haugh, the school counselor.

Stephanie Haugh
Monroe Center School Counselor

October, 2012
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ATTENTION 5TH GRADE PARENTS

Please arrange to stop by the office at school to pick up the medicine for your student that was taken to Lorado Taft. It can not go home with your student on the bus. Thank you for taking care of this!!

Jorey Grey & Connie Nyberg, Monroe Center School Nurses

Kindergarten News

Fall has begun in our Kindergarten classroom. We have been working on our Forest Life Centers. We will also be talking about the seasons and the changes happening out our window.

The Letter Olympian bulleting board is starting to be filled up with Kindergarten students that know all of their letters. If you child has not yet received their medal, please continue practicing the uppercase and lowercase letters.

Just a reminder to send you child to school with a coat, hat and gloves as the weather turns colder. We do still go out for our recess at the end of the day.

If you haven't signed up for a conference yet, please call your child's teacher. Happy Fall!

October PE News

Ms. Smith and Mrs. Hager's Physical Education classes have been Skill Testing at the end of their Soccer Unit. We are using a new SPARKS PE Program. This was purchased with grant money that was received by the Meridian Physical Education Departments. This has allowed us many great new pieces of equipment, as well as resources to enhance and create a new and better PE program for all of our students in the district.

We just finished the Fruit's and Vegetable Surveys, Pedometer data, and the Pacer tests, along with the 5th graders, who entered their 3DPAR, which is their Daily Activity Recall. These data entries will be sent to the State as a part of our 4th Quarter data which is a part of the Physical Education Grant requirements.

We are beginning our Fall President's Physical Challenge, which has a few changes from the President's Physical Fitness Tests. Ms. Smith started her mile run Wednesday September 26th and Thursday September 27th. While Mrs. Hager will start her mile run testing October 4th and 5th.

We will also be participating in a Football Unit, working on the following skills: throwing, catching and kicking. While the 3rd and 4th graders will be doing some Football lead-up games, such as "Steal the Bacon". The 5th grade classes will be participating in Flag Football games.

The PE Department at MC encourages all families to get outside with their children. Enjoy the many outdoor activities while we are having this gorgeous Midwest Fall weather!

Ms. Smith & Mrs. Hager