



# Morris School Newsletter

January/February 2010

## Calendar Highlights

- 1/13 —Winter Concert
- 1/18—Martin Luther King Day/No School
- 1/19 PTO Meeting 7pm
- 1/20—District Wide Chorus Concert in Duffin Theater
- 1/21—School Council 6pm
- 1/25 & 1/26 Professional Development— HALF DAYS
- 1/27—Family Math Night
- 2/15-19—February Break

## REMINDER NOTES

### **LAST DAY OF SCHOOL**

Because of a snow day, the last day of school is officially scheduled as Thursday, June 17. This day will change, of course, if additional snow days take place this winter.

### **SCHOOL DIRECTORY**

Please remember that our directory is intended for **private use only**, by parents, students, and staff of Morris School. Please do not use the names in our directory for solicitation of any purpose.



## **From the Principal's Office:**

As we start 2010, we are quickly approaching the middle of a new school year. The stretch between winter break and spring time can feel long to students (and teachers,) but it is a time of year when a lot of learning takes place in the growth we see in children's skills and can be quite significant. The challenge to keep students engaged in their learning begins at home. We thank all parents for your help in talking to your kids about what they're learning in school. It also helps to see that students have a regular homework time and place. Of course getting plenty of sleep and having a good breakfast helps every child do their best when they arrive in the classroom.

I am happy to remind parents of our upcoming **winter**

**concert** on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January. Walking past the music room in the past weeks I have been treated to a preview of performances from our Chorus Groups in grades 2-5 and our 5<sup>th</sup> grade band. Fourth grade band musicians I'm told are making excellent progress but they will not be featured at the concert. Band members are asked to report to the music room no later than 6:30 and Chorus members should sit with families until the concert begins at 7:00.

One week later on **January 20<sup>th</sup>** you can enjoy an encore performance of our choral groups at the District Wide Choral Concert. Enjoy the voices of Lenox's young people ages 8-18 at the Duffin Theater starting at 7pm.

Morris and LMMHS staff will be continuing several important **professional development efforts** at the end of January (1/25-1/26) on two half-day in-service days. Some teachers will be continuing to learn to use formative assessments to measure reading progress. Some will be observing the teaching of a nationally renowned math teacher named Tom Schersten. Tom will be leading a Family Math Night event on the 27<sup>th</sup> for parents and students in grades 3,4, and 5. At Morris we run the two half days as one school day with Monday following a morning schedule and Tuesday following an amended afternoon schedule. It sounds more complicated than it is and the two most important facts for parents to remember are that we dismiss at noon on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> and no lunches will be served. (continued)

## **Reading News!!**

In 2000, the National Reading Panel published a report outlining the five key areas of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Over the next few months, I will address each of these components

of reading and provide strategies for developing these critical aspects of reading development.

**Phonemic awareness** is the ability to blend, manipulate, and identify each of the individual sounds (phonemes) in a spoken word. There are many fun ways to help children develop phonemic awareness. Practice rhyming with songs

and nursery rhymes – have children guess what rhyming word might come next.

Read literature that includes the manipulation of sounds: (Dr. Seuss, poetry, etc.)

Have children count the sounds heard in a word or pick out the first/last sound. (continued)

## School Health Notes: Head Lice

Head lice appears in our school from time to time and in schools throughout the world. Head lice are tiny bugs that nest only on humans and draw blood from the scalp.

They can not jump or fly and they do not burrow. They attach their eggs (nits) to the strands of hair close to the scalp. Lice is spread through person to person contact or contact with infected personal items. Head lice are not a health hazard but can be a nuisance. They are hard to get rid of and may come back after consecutive treatments.

Reinfestation occurs with regularity and can be frustrating for parents, teachers and children. The most common treatments come in the form of a shampoo or cream rinse. Some persistent cases may require

the application of medication prescribed by the child's pediatrician. It is critical to check the hair thoroughly following the treatment for at least ten days.

Our school no longer follows a zero nit policy, mainly because the American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend it. Best practices in school nursing emphasize prevention, monitoring and treatment with the recognition that some dead nits may remain attached to hairs well after treatment and combing. The decision to send a child home is made by school health staff based upon the number of nits and their distance to the scalp. If there are few nits and they are more than 1 inch from the scalp, and the child has been treated, students may be allowed to remain in school. If any

nits are found, parents will be contacted.

For more information about head lice, check out MDPH website at [www.state.ma.us/dph](http://www.state.ma.us/dph).

Another good site is at the Harvard School of Public Health or [www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html).

School health staff Mrs. Pignatelli and Mrs. Woodger can also answer many head lice questions.



## Bus Conduct Reminder

Students and parents are reminded that students are expected to show the same positive behavior on the bus that we expect in the school. Bus drivers are encouraged to note the names of unruly or uncooperative riders and to report those riders to the principal. The first offense for an infraction of school bus rules will bring a warning to parent and student and the assignment of a seat on the bus close to the driver.

The second infraction will bring a suspension of bus privileges for up to 5 days. The third infraction will result in a suspension of bus privilege for up to 10 days and the fourth infraction will result in suspension of bus privilege for the remainder of the school year.

When infractions are documented by drivers or otherwise verified, there are no exceptions granted to these disciplinary consequences. We ask all parents to talk about bus rules periodically with their children. They

can be found on page 20 of the Morris Family Handbook. TL



## Keeping you connected.....



### APPROPRIATE DRESS

With these frigid winter temperatures upon us, please make sure your children have the appropriate clothes for winter play. Without boots, coat, hats, mittens and snow-pants they are not allowed to play in the snow during recess.

### BRINGING TOYS TO SCHOOL:

Parents are advised to refrain from sending students to school with valuable toys or personal items. Such items can disrupt the learning process if they are taken out during instructional times and the school cannot assume responsibility for any loss or damage that may occur.

### Reading News Cont.....

Play word games that encourage children to play with words and create new words (mat to sat, sat to sap, sap to sip).

Most of all, have fun playing with sounds, words, and language as often as you can!

Mrs. Fisher, Reading Specialist

## A Note from 5th Grade

In the New Year, let's collect Pennies for Peace. Author Greg Mortenson's book, Three Cups of Tea has been adapted to a young reader's version by the same title and a younger children's version, Listen to Wind. We have a few copies of each at our school. The books are about one brother's journey to make the world a better place in his sister's honor by building schools in under-developed countries around the world. Greg honors children by collecting donations and giving the money to communities without schools. The communities gather together and build a school for their children. Let's collect Pennies for Peace. We are fortunate to have a wonderful school. Our pennies can help other children less fortunate

than us. Please bring in pennies to your teacher and/or to any of the fifth grade teachers.

**Best regards from 5th Grade!**



### MORNING DROPOFFS

Winter conditions make morning drop-offs in the Kindergarten Circle even more difficult than usual. Snow and ice removal are both problems that complicate parking and drop-offs. If possible, please put your children on the bus in the morning, or consider arriving at

school closer to 8:20 when the back up on West Street is not quite as bad as it becomes by 8:30.

At this point in the school year, all children in Kindergarten should be able to make their way through the doors and to their classrooms by themselves, eliminating the need for their parents to park in the circle.

Please remember our safety guidelines: Make sure your car is in park when you stop to let children out. Do not leave your parked car running. Watch for other children getting out of their cars. Thanks for your help in making the circle in the morning a safe place for our children to be.



## From the Principal's Office cont'd.....

Shakespeare and Company's artist-in-residency will start in February leading fifth graders in a production of Julius Caesar. Actors from Shakespeare will work with students over the course of two months. Students will learn their lines in the original old English and prepare a production scheduled for some time in April. This exceptional opportunity is made possible through cooperative funding by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, The Lenox Public Schools, and the

Morris PTO.

**Our PTO** has been working quietly behind the scenes for years making great things happen for our school! Since October PTO volunteers have been leveling library books to support our reading initiative. Leveling activities are currently on-hold pending some technology improvements to the library area. PTO fundraising will support two upcoming cultural events for students starting with a February performance of the Nutshell Playhouse.

This show, sponsored by a Lenox Cultural Grant and our PTO will be exclusively for younger audiences in grades PK, K and 1. Parents in these grades are invited to join their children for this program. In March, Trio Surcari, will perform two shows of Latin folk music representing traditions from all over the Americas.

There is a lot happening at Morris this winter. I hope to see you around the school at one of these events. Remember, if you can't make it to school and have questions or comments, please call me at 637-5570 or e-mail [tle@lenoxps.org](mailto:tle@lenoxps.org). Stay warm! TL

## Notes from the Music Room

Chorus will continue after our concert with all new music. Grades two and three meet Tuesdays @ 8:00 am. Grades four and five meet Thursdays @ 8:00 am. This is the perfect time for new members to join chorus. If your child would like to give it a try simply drop me an email, or a phone call, or send them to chorus with a note. I'm hoping to increase our numbers.



Thank you. Mrs. Pollard

## SPANISH VOCABULARY

leche—milk

agua—water

jugo—juice

gracias—thank you

por favor—please

## Preschool Orientation and Screening

The Lenox Special Education Department offers an annual screening for Lenox and Lenox Dale three and four-year-old children who will not be entering kindergarten in September 2010. The purpose of the screening is to identify children who may have substantial needs in speech/language, cognitive, emotional/social or physical development. Identified children will be further evaluated and may be eligible to receive special education services prior to entering school. Research studies indicate that early identification and remediation of potential learning problems improves school performance in later years. Parents who would like to have their

child considered for the preschool program as a typical (non-special needs) child, MUST have their child participate in this screening.

### Orientation Meeting - March 23

All parents of three and four-year-olds are encouraged to attend an orientation meeting on Tuesday, March 23, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. at Morris Elementary School. The meeting will provide an opportunity for parents to meet the screening team and to examine screening materials.

### Screening - March 30 & 31, 2010

The screening will be held on

March 30 and 31st from 9:00 a.m. to noon at Morris School. Appointments for screening are required. Please call the Special Education Office beginning March 8, 2010 at 413-637-5571 to make an appointment.

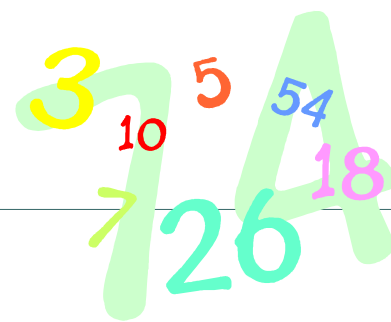
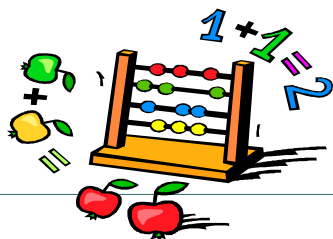
All families listed on the 2009 Lenox Town Census with children in this age range will also be contacted directly by mail. If you have a three or four-year-old and you do not receive a direct mailing by March 12, 2010, or if you have any questions concerning the screening process, please call the Special Education Office at 413-637-5571.

# FAMILY MATH NIGHT

JANUARY 27TH

AT 6:30 PM

Grades 3, 4, 5



**PARENTS:**

*Connect to your child's learning!!*

*Come and have fun with math!*

*Please RSVP to 637-5570 if you will be coming*