

COMMUNICATOR

MORGANTON DAY SCHOOL'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

21st Century Education

Bold, Flexible, Creative, Challenging, and Complex

Children entering Kindergarten in 2009 will retire in 2079. They will work in jobs and careers that do not exist today. They will use technologies not even created, and they will live in a community that is more global in nature and in a world flatter than even the early explorers imagined. So how do we educate children to be prepared?

21st century education must be interdisciplinary, integrated, project-based, and include collaboration, critical thinking, oral and written communication, technology, global citizenship, and rich content. Additionally, 21st century students must have the capacity for problem-solving and decision-making, creative and critical thinking, collaboration, communication and negotiation, as well as the intellectual curiosity and the ability to find, select, structure, and evaluate information.

If this makes you think of our IB curriculum, I am with you. Each and every day, as I walk through the halls, I have the pleasure to witness characteristics of 21st century learning taking place here at Morganton Day. Our curriculum is filled with opportunities for students to draw on multiple disciplines and realize the interdependence of various systems. Our curriculum also provides practice with working as a team while creating habits of mind that are critical to success in school and in the future. Our curriculum is authentic. Students become engaged through their passions and interest and extend their learning beyond the classroom into their community and beyond.

So whether it is understanding an immigrant's perspective through taking a virtual journey, building a catapult with team members for Science Olympiad, or experiencing the inauguration with the school community and then reflecting on its significance through poetry and verse, 21st century learning is evident daily at Morganton Day School.

Come and be a part of the future....reenrollment begins next week at our Annual School Report meeting, Tuesday January 27, at 6:00. See you there!

Melanie Mikusa

Head of School



Students pose at the end of the "Neighborhood Inaugural Ball" held January 20, 2009.



Did You Know...

....a coyote can hear a mouse moving under a foot of snow?

...one-quarter of all butterfly species on Earth live in South American rainforests?

...the Earth traveled more than 5,000 miles in the past 5 minutes?

and finally...studies show that when evenly matched teams compete, the team wearing **red** has a better chance of winning?

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Collaboration, Creativity, and Critical Thinking

The dictionary defines collaboration as “the act of working together with one or more people in order to achieve something”. At Morganton Day School, we define collaboration as a great way to learn!

Science is more exciting and engaging than ever in the exploratory Science Olympiad class. Over the past several months, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students have been working collaboratively with one another and with teachers, Mrs. Gramer and Mr. Clough, preparing for the regional Science Olympiad contest. One of Science Olympiad’s goals is to develop teamwork and cooperative learning strategies among students. Our students, working in teams, have built catapults designed to propel a ball specific distances, designed and built cars intended to transport an egg without breaking, sharpened communication skills in “see it, do it”, and explored many other science-related topics.

Students selected topics/events of their choice based on their interests and passions, formed small groups, and then began researching their topic. After thorough research, the authentic learning opportunity to collaborate, create, and think critically began. The students work through multiple attempts of trial and error. Each attempt yields information that allows improvements to be made on their original design.



Mr. Clough looks on as Hisham Qadri, Paul Fitzgerald, and Tyler Gramer test their car in preparation for Science Olympiad while Kinders watch closely.



8th grade students, Sam Corn and Michael Brazinski, calibrate their catapult. Working collaboratively, they work to achieve specific goals.

During a recent testing of the self-propelled car, Kinder students were extremely interested in what the middle school students were doing. After watching, questioning, and wondering, several Kinders went straight to work planning how they would build a car.

The Kinders’ response to observing authentic learning activities is a wonderful example of how students, when given the opportunity for curiosity and inquiry, are able to learn and understand on a deeper level.

Additionally, this

example demonstrates our students’ ability to be independent, self-directed, and creative learners who use intellectual curiosity to find and structure new information and make sense of it in a way that leads to greater understanding.



After watching 8th grade students work on their Science Olympiad projects, Kinders Nick Corn and Harlen Hullett design a car of their own.

Inauguration Day 2009

This week, the country inaugurated the 44th president of the United States of America, ushering in a new era for our country and perhaps the world. The president's speech highlighted changes our country and world have experienced during the past century and the hope for our country in the 21st century. Morganton Day School has experienced many changes over the past 30 years and we are also filled with hope as we move forward in the next 30 years.

This year, MDS was represented at the inauguration with 19 MDS students and parents. With the help of technology, all of our students took part in the ceremony. While Mrs. Gramer and the eighth grade class stood in the cold on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., students back at school experienced the historic day by watching the ceremony on a large screen T.V., sharing their own hopes and dreams for their county, working collaboratively on a large mural, and celebrating by marching in a parade to the Armory, the site of our Neighborhood Inaugural Ball.

The Kinders led the student body in the Pledge of Allegiance while the 4th graders repeated the Pledge in Spanish, another sign of our increasing global community. Each class, in turn, shared poems and readings inspired by this historical event.



Students watch intently as President Obama takes the oath of office of the President of the United States of America.



Learning in Action

It's here! Let the celebration begin! The fifth grade students are now working on their PYP Exhibition Unit. The transdisciplinary theme of this year's Exhibition is *How We Express Ourselves*. The students have selected the topic of electronic communication as a vehicle to demonstrate their understanding of inquiry-based learning. They will be applying knowledge and skills acquired over their tenure at MDS to investigate real world global issues. This is a time for the students to show the community they are prepared as learners and problems-solvers for today's world.

Over their years at MDS, the 5th graders have planned and prepared many activities through their summative assessments to get ready for the Exhibition. Recently, the students utilized their knowledge of plate tectonics and landforms to create their own games to play with peers. They have also been collecting data in math and organizing it into tables, along with taking samples of information to determine outcomes. This is an exciting time in fifth grade as students work together to make a difference using what they have learned at MDS.



5th grade students, Zach Ayotte, Eli Fisher, Will Kirk, and Molly Fitzgerald construct knowledge through project-based learning.



Cray Collett, "immigrant from Ireland", tells of his travels to the United States.

4th Grade Students Walk in Immigrants' Shoes—Past and Present

After studying immigration in the United States, 4th grade students were asked to pretend they were an immigrant who was trying to enter this country. Students chose a country and a specific year in which they immigrated. After researching their chosen country for historical accuracy, students stated their reason for immigrating. And their journey began.

Students packed a bag or trunk of things to bring. Thoughtful consideration went into deciding what would be necessary and important in a new world. Students had to consider all aspects of travel, their mode of transportation, and how to pack. Could they carry all of their belongings or make difficult choices if items needed to be left behind?

A written autobiography described their family and their journey to the new country and helped paint a rich picture of the issues immigrants faced. As part of the presentation, students dressed in character and shared a scrapbook they created about their journey that included pictures, letters, journal entries, maps, travel tickets, and many other items. At the end of their presentation, students accepted questions from the audience about their immigration experience.

Bringing immigration to life gave these students the opportunity to delve deeper into the history and geography content as they synthesized and analyzed the information. This type of critical thinking helps prepare students for the future.

Explore. Acquire. Excel.

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Upcoming Events

OPEN HOUSE -2nd and 4th Wednesdays
each month

January 27- Annual School Address
Re-enrollment opens

January 29 - Whole School Picture

February 5 - Math Night

February 10 - Camp Expo

February 15 - Public enrollment opens

February 27 - Game Night

Important Information

MDS Happenings

There is a great deal of activity taking place at MDS. Be sure to mark your calendars for all exciting activities happening here at school.

I want to personally invite everyone to our first Annual School Report **January 27, 6:00 PM**. This will be an opportunity to hear the vision of the school as we move into the 2009-2010 school year and open re-enrollment.

Whole School Picture - Chris Garner will be here **January 29 at 9:00 AM** to take our whole school picture. Smile!

Math Night is right around the corner. Plan to enjoy an evening of Math activities on all levels. Staff and students will present math activities from around the world. **February 5, 6:00 PM**.

Come join MDS families and the community at the 2009 Camp Fair, **February 10, 4:00-7:30**. Day and residential camps from all over Western North Carolina will be represented. Our Young Explorers Adventure Camps will be featured.

The Parent Action Council (PAC) is sponsoring a Game Night **February 27 (note the change of date)**. It looks like this evening will be full of fun, pizza, bingo, and a movie. WOW! Looking forward to seeing lots of folks there. Mark your calendars now and more information will follow as the event gets closer.



History- Barack Obama is making history as the first African American president

Obligation- To support the new president by being good citizens of the United States of America

Progress- As a country and for African Americans going from slaves to president

Excitement- As we celebrate together

(written by the 5th grade)



"Don't ever forget, we are all free, all races alive have liberty. Over time, humans will fight, but they'll make resolutions, to make it alright. More and more, people see, just like Lincoln, that America is FREE."

Morgan Reid and Sana Mohiuddin,
6th grade students MDS

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 5 Mattie Wisniewski
- 14 Mr. Kendall
- 15 Ms. Milliron
- 18 Madison Story
- 19 Zach Ayotte
- 22 Mrs. Gramer
- 27 Courtney Medina

