

Happy Thanksgiving!



News & Updates - November 2016

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Have a Thanksgiving Moment...Everyday! A message from the Superintendent

Thanksgiving - it is a centuries-old holiday that is adopted by just about everyone that considers themselves an American. We consider Thanksgiving such an important cultural tradition that churches, synagogues and social service agencies collect frozen turkeys and other food items to be able to give these items to less fortunate families because we, as a society, don't want anyone to have to miss out on this celebration. We do this because our society attaches significant value and importance to this holiday and the family bonding it engenders.



As schoolchildren learn, the first Thanksgiving was celebrated in 1621. In 1863 Abraham Lincoln issued a presidential proclamation to designate the date of the holiday as the final Thursday in November as Thanksgiving. His effort to standardize the date was an attempt to foster a sense of American unity between the Northern and Southern states. Even Lincoln acknowledged the power of Thanksgiving to draw people together. (In 1941, the holiday was officially moved to the fourth Thursday in November.)

We need to infuse the Thanksgiving spirit into the Montville Township community.

Since I came to the district in July 2015, a number of incidents and interpersonal interactions have occurred, in the schools and within the community that represent various forms of bigotry and bias. The symbols and words that have been used can only be characterized as disrespectful and hateful. I am proud to serve as superintendent in a high performing school district that offers such a broad range of academic, extra-curricular and athletic opportunities for our students. We have a cadre of administrators, faculty and support staff that are passionate about providing an excellent educational experience for our students. However, when I hear about students finding a swastika spray painted on a tree or a student being on the receiving end of a racial or ethnic slur, it saddens my spirit because I know that Montville Township is a better community than what those actions represent.

Thanksgiving celebrates many of the core values we hold dear: the strength of family bonds, the joy of spending quality time together, and the opportunity to pause and reflect on the fact that we cherish these things. We are honored that two of our elementary schools, Cedar Hill and Woodmont, were named 2016 National Schools of Character. It is precisely these values that form the heart of community. In all of our schools we are engaged in programs that support the pillars of character: trustworthiness, fairness, respect, responsibility, caring and citizenship. These are our core values. They are the same ones that we all celebrate around our Thanksgiving tables. We are thankful for the ways in which these values create a better, more caring world for us all to share.

Last year, the OneMontville organization was formed. The mission of that group is to create and promote a climate of acceptance, inclusion and kindness which teaches and celebrates respect for one another by embracing and being enriched by the diversity that comprises the Montville Township Community. The mission can only be fully accomplished through the involvement and commitment of community leaders, religious leaders, business leaders, and residents of all ages, races, religions, ethnicities, abilities, gender identity or sexual orientation. This group is actively engaged in supporting and enhancing acceptance, respect and kindness among Montville residents. It is important work that deserves our support.

In the spirit of what OneMontville represents, we need to adopt a Thanksgiving mindset every day and the adults in the community need to lead this movement. As parents, we have heard time and again that we are our children's first teachers. You may not be mindful of how your thoughts, words and actions have a deep and lasting effect on your children - but they do. Their attitudes, beliefs and opinions are influenced and developed by what they experience as they go about their daily lives. Your parental role in helping your child develop social responsibility

and gain an understanding of how to be respectful to each other is critical.

Please accept my sincere wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving. I hope that you will embrace my vision of infusing a little bit of Thanksgiving spirit in each day to truly make a difference in all of our lives.



District Seeks to Make Parents, Staff and Students aware of Outdoor Air Quality

As part of the Montville Township Public School's Goal of attaining Bronze Level Certification through the Sustainable Jersey for Schools Program, we are sharing information regarding the Air Quality Index:

Air Quality Index (AQI) Basics

The AQI is an index for reporting daily air quality. It tells you how clean or polluted your air is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for you. The AQI focuses on health effects you may experience within a few hours or days after breathing polluted air. EPA calculates the AQI for five major air pollutants regulated by the Clean Air Act: ground-level ozone, particle pollution (also known as particulate matter), carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide. For each of these pollutants, EPA has established national air quality standards to protect public health. Ground-level ozone and airborne particles are the two pollutants that pose the greatest threat to human health in this country.

How Does the AQI Work?

Think of the AQI as a yardstick that runs from 0 to 500. The higher the AQI value, the greater the level of air pollution and the greater the health concern. For example, an AQI value of 50 represents good air quality with little potential to affect public health, while an AQI value over 300 represents hazardous air quality. An AQI value of 100 generally corresponds to the national air quality standard for the pollutant, which is the level EPA has set to protect public health. AQI values below 100 are generally thought of as satisfactory. When AQI values are above 100, air quality is considered to be unhealthy-at first for certain sensitive groups of people, then for everyone as AQI values get higher.

Understanding the AQI

The purpose of the AQI is to help you understand what local air quality means to your health. To make it easier to understand, the AQI is divided into six categories:

Air Quality Index (AQI) Values	Levels of Health Concern	Colors
<i>When the AQI is in this range:</i>	<i>..air quality conditions are:</i>	<i>...as symbolized by this color:</i>
0 to 50	Good	Green
51 to 100	Moderate	Yellow
101 to 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Orange
151 to 200	Unhealthy	Red
201 to 300	Very Unhealthy	Purple
301 to 500	Hazardous	Maroon

Each category corresponds to a different level of health concern. The six levels of health concern and what they mean are:

- "Good" AQI is 0 to 50. Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
- "Moderate" AQI is 51 to 100. Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people. For example, people who are unusually sensitive to ozone may experience respiratory symptoms.
- "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" AQI is 101 to 150. Although general public is not likely to be affected at this AQI range, people with lung disease, older adults and children are at a greater risk from exposure to ozone, whereas persons with heart and lung disease, older adults and children are at greater risk from the presence of particles in the air.
- "Unhealthy" AQI is 151 to 200. Everyone may begin to experience some adverse health effects, and members of the sensitive groups may experience more serious effects.

- "Very Unhealthy" AQI is 201 to 300. This would trigger a health alert signifying that everyone may experience more serious health effects.
- "Hazardous" AQI greater than 300. This would trigger a health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.

AQI colors

EPA has assigned a specific color to each AQI category to make it easier for people to understand quickly whether air pollution is reaching unhealthy levels in their communities. For example, the color orange means that conditions are "unhealthy for sensitive groups," while red means that conditions may be "unhealthy for everyone," and so on.

Air Quality Index Levels of Health Concern	Numerical Value	Meaning
Good	0 to 50	Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Moderate	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.
Unhealthy	151 to 200	Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.
Hazardous	301 to 500	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.

Book Club Recommendation for Parents

In October, Heather Praml, Counselor at Cedar Hill Elementary School, led a parent book club discussion of *The Gift of Failure*, by Jessica Leahy. Leahy, a teacher and parent, emphasizes the importance of providing opportunities for students to experience failure. She notes that it is simply part of life and children need to experience some disappointment and setbacks in their lives in order to develop the resiliency that will serve them well as they navigate the challenges in their future lives. She notes that in the very competitive society that we live in, children begin to experience pressure from numerous sources at a young age. She suggests that parents can help give students perspective at home. One of the ways is to alter the conversations that parents have with their students about tests. Instead of asking "What grade did you get on your test?," Leahy suggests the following alternatives:

"What material was covered on the test?"

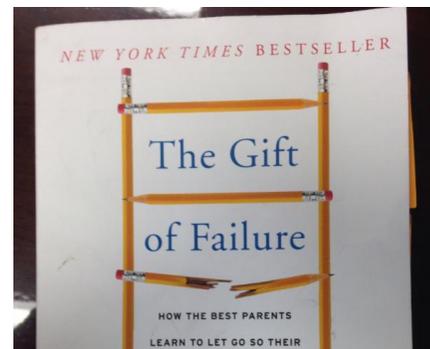
"Did you find the material interesting?"

"Do you feel you learned the material?"

"Did you give yourself enough time to prepare for this test?"

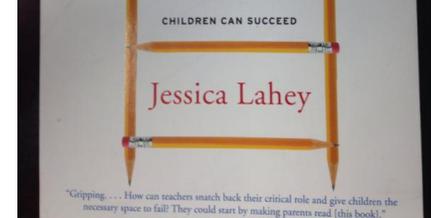
This approach to discussing a test conveys the positive value of learning out of curiosity and interest (intrinsic motivation) rather than being solely focused on the grade (extrinsic motivation).

Leahy gives powerful suggestions for assisting your child in developing the autonomy and confidence they will need to successfully operate independently in our world. She discusses the importance of household chores in developing competence and describes the growth that children can experience when they encounter defeat in the sports



arena.

As a parent, it is hard to sit back and watch our precious children experience disappointment, defeat and rejection. Our core instinct is to want to smooth the path before them and remove any opportunities for disappointment to enter their lives. Leahy easily debunks this parent approach as detrimental to a child's esteem and one that will have them less equipped to handle the demands of adult life.



The book is a relatively quick read and all parents will take away at least one suggestion that will enhance their approach in raising a healthy and successful child.

Bits and Pieces....

New Jersey has been identified as the best state for teachers according to a 16 point rating scale developed by the financial services website Wallethub. The ratings measured the quality of education received by the students and assessed the working conditions for teachers. New Jersey also score high for its low student-to-teacher ratio and its high level of per-pupil spending.

On Thursday, October 20, four students took part in a post-debate discussion of the final presidential debate. Students Andrew Hong (Class of '18), Ravi Upadhya (Class of '17), Arushi Gupta (Class of '17), and Sean Taltavall (Class of '17) are all members of the renowned MTHS Forensics Team (advised by Ms. Mary Gornley) and offered their insight into how well the candidates performed. The MTHS Community appreciates their participation in the discussion and wishes them luck as the Forensics season progresses.

Lazar - To raise money for our biannual program, Living Lessons, Lazar students held a Walk-A-Thon on Friday, Oct. 14 in their gym classes. Collectively they walked hundreds of laps and raised over \$10,000 for this wonderful program which will be held in May 2017. Mrs. Gothelf, organizer of Living Lessons, would like to thank all the students that participated and contributed to this endeavor, and their parents and teachers for their support and encouragement.



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