

October 2021

Inside this Issue

1

Principal's Corner

2

Mrs. Rassbach's Reflections
Reminder
Thank You
Halloween Reminder
Good Citizens – September
Coats for Kids (and families)
Safety Concern
Help Needed

3

Attendance Rewards
Book Rental
Red Ribbon Week
Upcoming Events

4

Important P-T Conf. Information
Getting the Most out of P-T Conf.

5

PTO News
Pop Tab Collection
Upcoming Events - Continued
Book Fair
Trunk or Treat

6

The Coaches' Corner
A Message from Food Service
School Transportation
Purple Pirate Pride

7

Trick or Treat at MHS

No School- Fall Break

October
22-25

John Wood Elementary School
6100 E. 73rd Ave.
Merrillville, Indiana 46410
(219) 650-5305
<https://www.mvsc.k12.in.us/>

The John Wood Parent Newsletter



Principal Petralia's Page

by Mrs. Petralia

Dear Families,

During the month of October, we honor Anti-Bullying Awareness as well as Red Ribbon Week. These are two very real issues that students will face if they haven't already. Mrs. Robbins, our social worker at John Wood, and our student council leaders, Miss Jongsma and Miss Vlassopoulos, have worked to plan some very meaningful activities for both of these events. With the technology available to our children, it is important for them to know that once something is put on the Internet, it is impossible for it to be removed.

For Red Ribbon Week, we empower students to be strong enough to resist temptation and be swayed to make bad decisions. We have our students pledge to remain drug free, participate in fun activities and spirit days all week.

Thank you for reinforcing these important topics with your children at home. By hearing several adults using the same language and discussing the same topics, children retain that information much better.

Also coming up on November 12th is the end of the first trimester. Please make sure you are able to log into Skyward to access your child's information. The entire Merrillville Community School Corporation is working to be more paperless meaning progress reports and report cards will no longer be sent home. Please make sure to check your child's grade regularly.

Thank you for your teamwork!

Mrs. Rassbach's Reflections

by Mrs. Rassbach, Dean of Students

Questions that Encourage

Kelly Bartlett, author of *Encouraging Words for Kids*, offers up a list of questions like this that inspire children's confidence and sense of ownership of their accomplishments:

- **Tell me about how you practiced that?**
- **How did you learn to do that?**
- **How long did you work on that?**
- **What was hardest about doing that?**
- **What was easiest for you?**
- **What made you decide to try that?**

Of course, sometimes a simple statement like "Good job" or "I'm so proud of you" is the best choice. But when you have a little time, try asking these kinds of questions to your child. Like the question my friend asked me, these questions stimulate reflection and further effort along with pride of accomplishment. They also convey respect. You are telling your child that you really want to know about what they have achieved or how they achieved it. You want to learn from *them*.

Reminder

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to call and let the school office know why a child is not in school. Make sure you call 650-5305 then press 2 before 9 a.m. if your child will not be in school.

Thank You

A huge thanks goes out to the Merrillville Lions Club. They recently donated a variety of back-to-school supplies to our school. Our teachers truly appreciated receiving these items for our students.

Halloween Reminder

We do not have Halloween parties at John Wood School. The state allows two one-hour celebrations per year for Indiana students. At John Wood School our celebrations will take place as follows:

Kindergarten through third grade:

- Winter Holiday
- Valentine's Day

Fourth grade:

- Winter Holiday
- End of the year celebration

Please do not send treats for the class or allow children to wear costumes to school.

Good Citizens September 2021

ECD

Grayson Dumas –
Miss McCorkle (Miss Kati)

Kindergarten

Trinity Dennie – Mrs. Anderson
Naija Nunn – Mrs. Scott
Ella Shooltz – Mrs. Shalla

1st Grade

Ayden Chhutani – Mrs. Pace
Lucas Boord – Miss Welsh
Adamari Lopez – Miss Wiley

2nd Grade

Maya Castro – Mrs. Carney
Aliyah Brown – Ms. Foster
Valoria Wardlow – Mrs. Marshall

3rd Grade

Mason Russell – Mrs. Busch
Aubrey Hill – Mrs. Cseke
Samantha Gonzalez – Mrs. Mahy

4th Grade

Jaylon King – Miss Jongsma
Jimmy Abiona – Miss Vlassopoulos

Multi-Grade

Isaac Estes – Ms. Hannigan

LRE

Jaylon King – Mrs. Mansfield

Coats for Kids (and Families)

Announcing the 19th annual coat collection and giveaway

The Merrillville Schools are once again participating in the annual **Coats for Kids (and families)**. This is a community-wide effort to provide coats for people facing economic hardship.

You can help the children (and families) of our community by donating new or gently-used coats. Just drop your used coats in the bin at our school. Collection for the **Coats for Kids (and families)** drive will run until October 23rd.

Coats will be distributed:

Saturday, November 6th
River Forest High School
3300 Indiana Street
Hobart

Saturday, November 13th
Merrillville Intermediate School
1400 W. 61st Avenue
Merrillville

Saturday, November 20th
Impact Church
7071 Broadway
Merrillville

Safety Concern

When sending a lunch with your child, please avoid sending food in glass containers, if possible. We've already had a couple of mishaps this school year. Thank you for helping to keep our students safe.

Help Needed

Occasionally we are in need of subs to help on the playground during recess and in the lunchroom while the students are eating lunch. If you are interested in being put on our "Playground/Cafeteria Sub List", please call the office at 650-5305 and talk to one of our secretaries.

Attendance Rewards

Each year we have a committee who works to make a School Improvement Plan (SIP) for our school. This is a blueprint of ways that we can improve the achievements of our students throughout the school year.

One of our ongoing goals is to improve our attendance rate. To help encourage students to be at school every day, we have a fun monthly reward. Each month the class with the highest percentage rate for the previous month will receive "Beary", our attendance trophy. During the month of September, the average of ALL of our classes was 93.2%! The class with the highest percentage and the winner of the "Beary" trophy is:

Mrs. Anderson's Kindergarten class
96.12%

Book Rental

All book rental was due on the first day of school. Payments can be made online through your parent access, or in our office. We do not have a formal payment plan, but partial payments are acceptable until the obligation is met.

Any balance remaining after the end of the first trimester (November 12th) will be turned over for collection.

Checks must be made out to "John Wood School" and must include your driver's license number on the check.

ECD Fees - \$75
Kindergarten - \$66.13
1st Grade - \$57.81
2nd Grade - \$57.51
3rd Grade - \$59.11
4th Grade - \$64.75

Thank you to all of the parents who have already paid their child's book rental.

Red Ribbon Week

Red Ribbon Week is a week when millions of our American population wear a red ribbon to show that our young people and our adults are united for a drug-free society. The National Family Partnership organized the first Red Ribbon Campaign in 1988. Since that time, the campaign has reached millions of U.S. children. The Red Ribbon Campaign is now the oldest and largest drug prevention program in the nation.

John Wood School will support this program by having a variety of activities planned for the week of October 26-29. Our students and staff will be showing their support in a number of ways:

- ✓ Some classes will make a drug-free banner or poster to be hung in the halls.
- ✓ Each class will sign and make a "drug-free chain" to demonstrate their commitment to stay drug-free.
- ✓ The doorknobs throughout the school will be decorated with red ribbons.
- ✓ Daily announcements with an anti-drug or healthy alternative theme will be made by members of the Student Council.
- ✓ There will be special "Spirit Days" throughout the week.

Monday
No School

Tuesday
"Sock it to Drugs"
Wear ***crazy socks***

Wednesday
"Celebrate Red Ribbon Week"
Wear ***red***

Thursday
"Saying 'NO' to Drugs is No Sweat"
Wear ***sweats***

Friday
"Team Up Against Drugs"
Wear a ***team shirt***

Upcoming Events

Every Thursday
Buddy Blue Day

Wear blue on this day to remind you to be a buddy! Everyone needs a buddy!

Every Thursday
Early Dismissal
1:15 p.m.

Please plan for your child to be home approximately one hour earlier on this day.

Every Friday
Pirate Pride Day

Wear John Wood spirit wear, Merrillville spirit wear, or even just purple to show support for our school community! Everyone who wears purple will have their name in a weekly drawing. One winner will be pulled from each grade level to win a small prize.

October 20
PTO Meeting
Cafeteria, 6:00 p.m.

This meeting will be IN PERSON!! A link will still be emailed to parents so you can join virtually if you can't make it in person. We will be discussing plans for the upcoming year.

October 22-25
No School – Fall Break
No school for all students.

October 26-29
Red Ribbon Week

Several activities are planned at John Wood and around the community to create awareness of drug abuse. See the Monthly Activity Calendar or the article on this page to find out about Spirit Wear Days throughout the week with themes that reinforce this focus.

November 2
Virtual Learning Day

This is the first of two pre-scheduled virtual learning days this year. Your child's teacher will send you more information about this day.

November 7
Daylight Savings Time ends
Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour!

November 8-11
Scholastic Book Fair

This week the book fair will be available in the library. Students who bring money will have the opportunity to make a purchase. See the article on page 5.

November 11
Veteran's Day

Make sure you remember to thank a vet today!

continued on page 5

Important Parent-Teacher Conference Information

As the Merrillville Community School Corporation continues to become more “paperless”, we no longer send home a paper copy of the report card. You will be able to see your child’s report card on their Skyward account.

During your child’s Parent-Teacher Conference, there will NOT be a paper copy of your child’s report card available. You will be asked if you have the Skyward app on your phone. If so, you will be asked to log into your account and bring up the report card so that you and the teacher can view it together and discuss it. If you do NOT have the app, you will be asked to log into your Skyward account on an iPad that will be available for this purpose. Either way, you will need to make sure you have your login information with you so that you can access your account.

If you need help with viewing your child’s Skyward information or logging in, please call the school office ASAP and they will assist you. Please do NOT wait until conferences!

Thank you for being patient as we continue to learn new ways to incorporate technology into our schools.

Follow our MCSC superintendent and our John Wood principal on Twitter!

Both Mr. Brown, our MCSC superintendent, and Mrs. Petralia, our John Wood principal are on Twitter!

Follow Mr. Brown at @MerrillvilleSu3.

Follow Mrs. Petralia at @PrinPetralia.

Getting the Most Out of Parent-Teacher Conferences

Everyone can win from a parent-teacher conference. Parents learn how their children are doing in school and how to help. Teachers can better meet each child’s needs. And most important, children receive a better and more personalized education. Below are some suggestions for getting the most out of the conference:

- Talk to your child before the conference. What does she or he like and not like about school?
- Make a list of questions to take with you to the conference. (See box at right.)
- Tell the teacher about the things that your child enjoys and does well.
- Ask to see the books and other materials that your child uses in school.
- If the teacher tells you about a problem with your child, ask for some specific examples and talk about what you and the teacher will do.
- Afterwards, tell your child about the conference. Stress the positive as well as the areas that need improvement.
- Keep in touch with the teacher through notes, phone calls, or meetings.

Questions you can ask

Here are some questions that you might ask your child’s teacher. Remember that conference time is limited, so select the ones of most concern to you.

What will my child be expected to master this year?

Is my child working at grade level?

Does my child participate in class?

How does my child get along with others?

How can I know what the homework is each day?

Has my child missed any assignments?

What strengths do you see in my child?

What does my child need help with most?

What help is available?

How do you keep parents informed about their child’s progress?

What can I do at home to support what you are doing?

**Our PTO has a Facebook page!
Friend us at:**

www.facebook.com/johnwood.pto

We try to use this page to pass along important reminders from the school and also to inform you of upcoming PTO activities.

PTO News

We have lots of ideas for things we'd like to do for our students and families, but we need your help! Join us at our next PTO meeting on Wednesday, October 20th at 6:00 p.m. in our school cafeteria and give us your input. We will also be sending out a link for you to join us virtually if you cannot attend in person.

Fundraiser Update

We recently finished our Fall Fundraiser. We have not gotten the final numbers yet, but it looks like we may have done a great job! We will announce the top selling winners in the next newsletter.

Box Tops for Education

We are continuing to participate in this program, however, there is no longer anything for you to send in. In order for our school to get any funds from this program, it is necessary for YOU to download the BTFE app and scan your receipts. Our school will get the credit immediately on any qualifying purchases it finds. Just a reminder, receipts need to be scanned within 14 days of the purchase. This is a great way for relatives who live out of town to help raise money for our school!

Coca-Cola Codes

While BTFE no longer has anything for you to send in, Coca-Cola still has codes that will earn us cash. Just look for the 14-digit code on participating Coca-Cola products. Codes can be found under the caps on bottles, inside the flap on cases, and inside the shrink-wrap on Dasani Water cases. The amount we get varies. We now make more from this program than we do from the BTFE!

Apples for the Students/ Strack & Van Til

Once again we are collecting all Strack & Van Til receipts! All you have to do is send in your receipts, we'll do the rest! We will accept all receipts. It doesn't matter if it is only for \$1, the receipts add up! Last year we were able to purchase a multitude of items for our Physical Education department. Receipts must be dated between September 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022.

Pop Tab Collection

We are continuing to collect pop tops for the Ronald McDonald House of Indiana. Collected pop tabs are recycled, generating much-needed funds to support the Ronald McDonald House and the nearly 1,500 families they serve each year.

Funds received by the Ronald McDonald House of Indiana from the recycling of tabs usually add up to between \$30,000 and \$50,000 annually. All this money goes to the operating expenses and can cover the cost of operating three rooms in the House for an entire year.

Simply remove the pop tab from aluminum cans and put them in your favorite collection container. When you are ready to send them to school, just put them in a Ziploc-type bag and send them with your child. There's no competition, no goal, no prizes...just the reward of doing a good deed.

Upcoming Events

continued from page 3

November 12

End of the first trimester

Today is the end of the first trimester.
REMINDER: ALL BOOK RENTAL BALANCES AFTER THIS DATE WILL BE TURNED OVER FOR COLLECTION.

November 15

Teacher Work Day

No school for all students. Teachers will use this day to prepare for conferences.

November 17

Picture Retake Day

Picture retakes will be taken today for students who did NOT have their photo taken because they were either absent or enrolled after Picture Day. If you are having retakes because of a problem with your first picture, you **must return the entire original package** at the time of the retakes!

November 18

Parent-Teacher Conferences 12:30-7:30 PM

No school for all students. Conferences are scheduled to be held on this day. Watch for an important note to be coming home with your child with more information as we approach this date.

November 24-26

No School, Thanksgiving Break

Enjoy time with family and friends and remember all the things you have to be thankful for this year. School will resume on Monday, November 29th.

Book Fair

The Scholastic Book Fair is coming to the John Wood School library! Students will have the opportunity to visit the book fair and make purchases starting Monday, November 8th and through Thursday, November 11th.

Our students love the feeling they receive as they experience shopping and handling money. Soon, there will be information about the book fair in your child's Chromebook under "classwork". A flyer will also be sent home as we get closer to the date.

The extra funds generated by the book fair goes right back into our library. This event allows our library to purchase more books for our students to read.

Purchases will also be able to be made online, so this is a great way for parents, grandparents, friends, and neighbors to buy books, posters, and small treats from our annual fall book fair!

Trunk or Treat

Students are invited to attend a local Trunk or Treat!

October 23, 2021

1-4 pm

**Trinity Free Methodist Church
8650 Grand Blvd, Merrillville**

This is a local church with a small population who has "adopted" our school. In the past, this church has purchased food and essentials for some of our less fortunate families, delivered meals to families who had no transportation to get meals during the nationwide quarantine, and paid off some of our students' food service balances.

The Coaches' Corner

Ms. Copeland, Mrs. Lavelle,
Mrs. Matthews, Miss Zorich

Reading Skills at Home

"Reading is a passport to countless adventures." – Mary Pope Osborne

Journeys and adventures help children ignite their imaginations. Reading books can begin the passport stamping of your child's countless adventures. Establishing a regular routine, finding books your child loves, setting up a special place to read, reading with your child, and exploring the journey through conversations will help build the foundation to effective reading skills.

After the foundation is built, you might want to focus more on improving such strategies like reading comprehension. To strengthen their reading comprehension, have your child read aloud, make sure the books are at the appropriate level, reread the text to build fluency, and discuss the passage with your child.

Overall, remember reading is all around us every single day. Getting your child involved in reading recipes, board game directions, comic books, store signs, and menus will all help your child and their reading abilities.

Math Skills at Home

As weather starts to change and more activities begin to move inside, creating a family game night would benefit math skills. Below are some games in which math skills are the focus.

Monopoly - This is a game to help kids learn about money management, negotiation, and counting. This game overall boosts memory formation and cognitive skills.

Yahtzee - This is a game to help kids work on matching, counting, and subitizing.

Chutes and Ladders - This is a game in which kids need to count out the spaces and move their game piece.

Phase 10 - This is a game to help them learn numbers, colors, number pairs, and ordering numbers.

Connect Four - This is a game in which kids have to build skills such as problem solving and have to think ahead for ways to connect their 4 circles.

Trouble - This is a game in which kids learn how to count, take turns, and follow each space one after the other.

A Message from the Food Service Department

As school corporations face labor shortages, we are also working with food shortages in our school corporation. Like other areas of the country, it is a nationwide crisis. It affects not only school corporations, but could potentially show when you go grocery shopping for your home.

While it is our intention to serve the posted menu each day at every school, supply issues will not make this possible throughout the school year until national supply chain issues are rectified. We will always attempt to substitute the scheduled menu item with another that is as similar as possible to the extent we are able to do so.

While breakfast and lunch are offered at no charge, we would encourage, if you are able, to send your child with a prepared lunch from home. Your support would be greatly appreciated. Please know that we will always provide wholesome meals each and every day. We are also doing our best to continue to provide meals to those students who have special dietary needs.

School Transportation

We begin by extending our deep gratitude to parents, guardians, and students for your patience, understanding and support during our shortage of bus drivers crisis occurring not only in our school corporation, but across the nation. This is not something that will be resolved in a short period of time; therefore, we must soften the effects as much as we possibly can as a school corporation.

Presently, our school corporation requires seventy-five routes to operate efficiently; however, we currently have only fifty drivers. We are actively recruiting drivers so if you know of any recently retired individuals or anyone else who may be interested in driving a school bus please send them our way.

We ask for your patience while we work through this situation.

Interested in applying??

Competitive Wages
\$17.97-\$23.56/hour

10 years of experience
starting at \$21.09/hour

Full-time benefits package
available with part-time hours

Paid Training

Paid CDL Skills Test
& DOT physicals

To apply online or for
more information, visit

www.mvsc.k12.in.us/transportation

Purple Pirate Pride

In an effort to promote pride in our school community, we encourage students to wear purple on Fridays. Students who wear purple on Fridays will be included in a drawing each week for a small prize.

Students who are wearing ANYTHING "John Wood" (old Spirit Wear, Math Fact Shirts, etc) or "Merrillville" (Athletic Department Spirit Wear, Pop Warner shirts, etc) will also count for the drawing...even if it is not purple (sometimes spirit wear is on gray or black).



TRICK OR TREAT

Thursday, October 28

5:30 - 7:00 PM

Merrillville High School

(Outside At The Track Stadium)

Youngsters to 6th Grade

(Merrillville Students ONLY)

\$5 Admission Per Child

(All Proceeds Donated to Special Olympics)

**All Trick or Treaters MUST Be
In Some Kind Of A Costume And
Accompanied By An Adult**

Concession Stand Open

Hot Dogs \$3.00

Nachos \$3.00

Popcorn \$2.00

Cold Beverages \$2.00

Hot Chocolate \$1.00

(Come and Have Dinner)

MUSIC AND FUN

Sponsored By: Merrillville Student Athletes