

The John Wood Parent Newsletter



From the Desk of Principal Igras

Dear John Wood Families,

Welcome to the 2022 – 2023 school year! We have had a great few weeks building relationships with your child and putting things in place to make sure your child is thriving at school. It is great to have all of them back in the building.

Communication is essential to the success of your child. Please make sure that you touch base with your child's teacher whenever you have questions or concerns. Also, please make sure that your email address is updated in skyward so you can receive information from me as well. Twitter (John Wood Principal @WoodPrin) and the PTO Facebook is another way for you to find out about all the wonderful things that are happening at John Wood.

Dismissal time involves a lot of student movement to different areas of the building and your child's safety is our number one priority. Therefore, if you need to change your child's dismissal procedure please remember to send a Gold Note to school with your child. *This is the preferred method of communication regarding changes to dismissal!* We understand that sometimes things happen during the day that may change those plans. In those cases, please call the office and let the secretary know so we can assure to have them in the correct area at dismissal time. Please, do not email the teacher with last minute changes. The office will notify the teacher.

As we continue the school year, please remember that your child's needs are our first priority. Together we can help your child have an amazing school experience.

Mission Statement: John Wood School

Together with parents and community, the John Wood team shall provide a safe learning environment and prepare students to be productive, tolerant, and respectful citizens by fostering individual development and striving for highest academic achievement.

Early Dismissal

We no longer have early dismissal on Thursdays.
Each month, there will be either one half day or one full day of elearning. Check the corporation calendar on the MCSC website or the monthly activity calendars that are sent home each month for dates.

September 2022

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

New Staff Members

We have several new staff members in our building this year. Welcome to the John Wood Family!

Principal

Mrs. Igras
(replacing Mrs. Petralia)

Secretary to the Principal

Miss Woodworth
(replacing Mrs. Kidd)

Secretary/Clerk

(new at the end of the last year)
Mrs. Dukes
(replacing Mrs. Serrano)

F.A.C.E.S.

Mrs. Hehr
(replacing Mrs. Ooms)

Instruction/Behavior Aide

(new at the end of last year)
Miss Duke
(replacing Mrs. Hill)

1st Grade

Miss Talian
(replacing Miss Wiley)

3rd Grade

Miss Hull
(replacing Mrs. Busch)

Music

Miss Godfrey
(a former John Wood Student!)
(replacing Mr. Colakovic)

PE

Mrs. Davidson
(replacing Mr. Butler)

Title One

Miss Wiley (transfer from 1st)
(replacing Mrs. Gates)

LRE Teacher

Mrs. Nikolov
(replacing Mrs. Mansfield)

ED Teacher

Mr. Barenie
(replacing Ms. Hannigan
and Ms. Spoolstra)

ECD Speech

Ms. O'Brien
(replacing Mrs. Kramer)

Coming soon: Dean of Students

(replacing Mrs. Rassbach)

Social Worker

(replacing Mrs. Robbins)

Part-time Social Worker

(new position)

2nd Building Sub

(new position)

Cafeteria Aide

(replacing Mrs. Fairbairn)

Important Information

Sometimes things happen unexpectedly and it may be necessary to have an unscheduled school closing. When we do, it is vital that we have your current phone number on file in our office. We have an automated system that is used when we need to notify you quickly with important information. If we have an incorrect or disconnected number, you may not get the notice. Please note, you will only receive one call from the automated system, and that call will only go to the number you designated as your "home" number.

Please do not change your "home" number in the Skyward system to "unlisted" or "confidential" or block our school phone number or you will not receive important notifications.

Remember that all toys as well as personal tablets, iWatches, cell phones, and electronic gaming devices are prohibited at school. In addition to being a distraction from learning, many of these items are expensive and we do not want them lost, broken, or stolen.

We are not responsible for lost or stolen items. If a child **MUST** bring a cell phone, it **MUST** remain in the backpack and turned off during the school day.

Occasionally teachers may allow a stuffed toy or will allow students to bring a toy from home as a special reward. They will notify you if this is the case.

Upcoming Events

Every Thursday

Buddy Blue Day

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

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 receive a small prize.

September 12-26

Fall Fundraiser

A packet with information came home with every student last week. See the PTO article on page 9 for more details.

September 16

Title 1 Meeting/Movie Night

10-11 a.m. and 5-7 p.m.

See the article on page 4 for more information.

September 23

End of the 1st grading period

Please check your child's grades online at any time through our Skyward system.

September 28

Last day for 21-22 Free & Reduced

See the article on page 7.

October 8

MEF Walk-a-Thon

Merrillville High School, 8:00 a.m.

See the article on page 8 for more information about this Merrillville Education Foundation fundraiser.

October 11

Picture Day

All students will have their picture taken. Info will be coming home soon.

October 17-21

Book Fair Week

More information will come home as we get closer to this date.

October 27

Trunk or Treat

MHS, 5:30-7:00 p.m.

See the flyer attached to this newsletter.

October 28-31

No School – Fall Break

No school for all students.

Medications at School Reminder

Mrs. Brack, RN
John Wood School Nurse

Just a reminder regarding medication at school:

Only those medications that are necessary to maintain the child in school and those ordered by a physician during school hours will be administered.

1. A physician's written order and signed parent note are required for any medication (prescription or over-the-counter) that is kept at school or carried by the student. Medication forms are available in the nurse's office and on the MCSC website. Notes written by the physician on a script pad are also accepted.
2. All medications must be brought to the nurse's office by the parent. No student should have medication (including cough drops) in his/her possession, unless the physician has ordered the medication to be carried by the student.
3. Prescription medication must be in the original prescription bottle, labeled with:
 - Student's Name
 - Name of Medication
 - Correct Dosage
 - Time to be given
4. Over-the-counter medication must be:
 - In the original bottle
 - Labeled with the student's name
5. A parent note must be sent to the nurse in the event a medication is discontinued at school before its expected time.
- 6. Medication orders must be renewed every school year.**
7. According to state law, medication received at school in grades K-8 cannot be sent home with the student.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Kindergarten and 1st Grade Request

Occasionally our young students have "accidents". We try to provide clean, dry clothing for the child so that he/she can get back to class quickly. Unfortunately, our supply of "spare" clothing is limited.

Please consider sending a complete change of clothing (including underwear) for your child in a labeled gallon-sized Ziploc bag. The nurse will store it in her office in case your child needs a change. Anything that does not get used will be sent home at the end of the school year.

When selecting clothing for young children to wear to school, please be mindful of buttons or buckles that are sometimes difficult for little fingers to undo. Many "accidents" result from the child not being able to undo their clothing quickly enough.

Coats for Kids (and families)

Each year the Merrillville schools participate in a community-wide effort to provide coats for people facing economic hardship.

As you begin to put away summer clothing and bring out cool-weather clothing, keep this project in mind. If you find out-grown winter coats that are still in good condition, consider saving them for our collection in October. You don't even need to wash them. They have a team of volunteers who are willing to clean all the coats before the give-away in November.

Information will be sent home soon with more information about this community service project.

Nurse Julie's Office

Mrs. Brack, RN
John Wood School Nurse

Welcome to a new school year at John Wood Elementary.

I want to reassure you that my role as your school nurse is to keep your children healthy and safe. There is a Merrillville School Nurse webpage on the MCSC website where you will find helpful information on policies, immunization requirements, and links to our health forms. It can be found on the District website under Administration.

According to Indiana State law (I.C. 20-34-4-2) all students need to be current on their immunizations or they will be excluded from school. If your child still needs immunizations, now is the time to call your physician, North Shore Health Center (219-763-8112) or the Lake County Health Department (219-755-3658) to get these required immunizations. The exclusion deadline is **Monday, September 19th**.

It is also very important to call me if your child has any ongoing health concerns or needs so that we can keep the communication open for the benefit of your child's health and educational needs.

It is essential to keep your child home if he/she has a fever of 100° or above or has symptoms of illness. Your child should not return to school until his/her temperature has been below 100° for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. If your child has symptoms of influenza or COVID, please contact your health care provider.

Remember, I am here for you and to support your child's health and educational needs. Let's work together as a community to help prevent the spread of viruses and continue safe health practices by hand washing and staying home when ill.

If you have any questions or concerns please call me at: 219-756-5745 or email me at: jbrack@mvsc.k12.in.us

Emails and Robocalls

In an effort to reduce paper and touch points, we will send home some notifications by email rather than a paper copy. These may include reminders and this monthly newsletter. Please make sure that a current and correct email address is listed in Skyward so you will receive these notifications.

Occasionally we will send robocalls to the parents. We try to use the robocall only for vital information that we feel you need to know. Please don't block the school's number or you may miss out on important information.

Reminder

Students received a packet of information on the first day of school. There were a few items in the folder that need to be filled out and returned ASAP. If you have misplaced these, extras are available from your child's teacher or the school office.

Please send in the following ASAP:

- Enrollment Card
- Yellow Emergency School Closing – This info will be used in the event that there is an emergency closing of the building **after** school has already started (deteriorating weather, power failure, loss of water, etc)
- Attendance Policy/Letter from Merrillville Town Court

You may want to send:

- Background Check – This is required if you plan to chaperone a field trip or volunteer in the building. This needs to be filled out annually, so if you filled one out last year, you need to resubmit a new one for this year.

Attendance

It is important to your child's education that he/she attends school every day. If your child will be absent, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the school. If your child will be absent, you must call 650-5305 then press 2 by 9 a.m.

Request from Playground Aides/ Lost and Found

We feel that it is important for students to have time to be able to go outside and get fresh air and have some fun each day. However, when students are not dressed appropriately for the weather, many times they end up sitting inside while their friends are outside playing.

Before you know it, we will begin having colder weather conditions. Remember that students go outside for recess whenever the actual temperature and the Real Feel is at least 15°F or higher and the playground is in suitable condition.

Students will need to have a warm coat, gloves/mittens, scarf, and hat/hood. If you have difficulty obtaining any of these items, feel free to contact our social worker and she can assist you.

Sometimes it is chilly in the morning as the children come to school, but warms up during the day. On these days it is common for the children to take off items and forget about them while they are on the playground.

We have a lost and found in the cafeteria, however we are asking you to PLEASE write your child's name inside any article of clothing that might be taken off during the day. Even if you only have a first name or initials written on the label or tag inside the item, our aides can many times do "detective work" and find the owner.

We know that jackets and other outerwear can be expensive to replace and with a little assistance from you, we would like to make sure that these items go home with their original owner.

Student Council

Miss Jongsma, Miss Vlassopoulos

A new student council has been selected for the 2022-2023 school year. The student council has many responsibilities throughout the school year. Students are involved in a variety of service activities such as serving as greeters at some events, organizing collections for Riley Hospital and other causes, sponsoring Food Drives, assisting with Red Ribbon Week and Spirit Days, and helping decorate the school for festivities and events.

This year's student council members are:

Miss Jongsma

Jaxx Anoman
Amber Brown
Andwele Cook
Jayden Correa
Maranda Daniels
Stella Finneary
Khaiden Harris
Kaelyn Kitchens
Dominic Molinari
Isabel Whittinghill

Miss Vlassopoulos

Jayden Carr
Brody Finneary
Kamarion Flakes
Deron Gill
Aubrey Hill
A'Shari McKinney
Alexander Nawrocki
Liam Perez
Zane Theodorakos
Mariah Williams

Skyward Family Access

Skyward is a student information system that Merrillville uses to store and share information. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of this beneficial tool of communication. By logging onto your child's account, you will have access to a wealth of information. Grades, attendance, discipline, and test scores are among some of the information available. You can also use this system to add money to your child's lunch account and pay book rental.

Important Reminder Regarding Parent Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

Some of our arrival and dismissal procedures may have changed. Please use the following procedures for arrival and dismissal at school if your child is a car rider. We want to make sure that everyone is safe and things go smoothly and efficiently. **NEW THIS YEAR, NO ONE WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE BUILDING BEFORE 8:30 A.M. IN THE MORNING AND BETWEEN 2:15 AND 3:30 P.M.**

ECD ONLY

Both A.M. and PM Arrival – Please pull into the square parking lot on the southeast corner of the building. **DO NOT PULL INTO THE CIRCLE DRIVE!** Please park in the first row next to Entrance B. Stay in your car until a staff member arrives to take your child.

Both A.M. and P.M. Dismissal – Park in the first row of spaces in the southeast parking lot next to Entrance B. A staff member will bring your child out to you. You will need to put your child in the vehicle.

All K-4

- All car riders are to be dropped off and/or picked up at Entrance F on the east side of the building.
- To avoid blocking traffic, please do not make a left into the school lot when approaching from the west. Instead, go past the school, pull into the church parking lot, and approach the school from the east.
- **Driver must remain in the vehicle at all times.**
- Please pull all the way up to the yellow painted line. Children must get out and in the car on the passenger side only.
- Do not double-up the row. Children should not cut through any cars.
- If for any reason you need to come into the building, you must park in the southeast parking lot and come in to the office through Entrance A. Parents will not be allowed to enter the building through the student entrance for any reason.
- Be aware of the staff member directing traffic.
- **The circle drive in front of the building is for bus use only during drop-off and pick-up times. No other vehicles are allowed in this area from 8:00-8:45 a.m. and from 2:45-3:30 p.m.**

Arrival

- Doors are locked until 8:15 a.m. **Please do NOT drop off any student before that time.**
- Students not in the building before the 8:25 a.m. bell will be marked tardy. After 8:25, parents need to pull around to Entrance A, walk the student(s) into the building, and sign them in at the office.

Dismissal

- Your assigned pick-up number should be displayed where the staff can easily see it from the building/sidewalk. A staff member will dismiss each child once they check off his/her name from the list. Each car rider goes through two checkpoints before leaving the building.
- **Gold Notes are necessary if there is a change from the regular dismissal procedure.**
- All dismissal changes should be made before 2:00 p.m.
- If you do not have your pick-up number, you will need to park in the southeast parking lot, come into the school after the buses have left, and show your ID.
- Once the car rider line has ended, remaining students will be brought to the office and you will need to pick them up there. You will need to come inside and show your ID.

School bus transportation is available for students. If you need more information about this service, please call the office at 219-650-5305 or the Transportation Department at 219-650-5311.

Car Rider Number Suggestions

Here are just a few helpful suggestions:

- Put your number in a plastic page protector to keep it from getting mangled. You can sometimes find small packages of page protectors at the dollar store!
- We've seen some who clip the number to the passenger visor using binder clips, then just flip it down to show it.
- We've also seen some who use a plastic pant/skirt hanger (the kind with clips) to hang the number from the rear view mirror.
- We have put reminders on the back of the number so if you share the extra number with grandma, babysitter, etc., they have all the info they need.

Title 1 Movie Night

You are invited to hear about the wonderful things that are happening in our school and learn more about our instructional programs.

The purpose of this annual Title 1 meeting is to:

- Learn about the goals and purposes of the school improvement plan.
- Learn about the standards, curriculum, and the types of tests used to measure student progress and goals students are expected to meet.
- Learn about the right of families to be involved, how they can support their child's learning, and the Family Engagement Policy and School-Family Compact.
- Provide suggestions and ask questions regarding policies, programs, and activities.

While parents attend the in person meeting, children are invited to participate in a supervised Movie Night! We will be showing "The Bad Guys" (Rated PG). The PTO will be selling snacks and drinks after the meeting.

Virtual Meeting

Friday, Sept. 16th
10 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Google Meet Link:

<https://meet.google.com/umk-mysy-cfn?hs=224>

In Person Meeting/Movie Night

Friday, Sept. 16th
5 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Attendance "Beary" Award

Each month we have a fun monthly reward for the class with the best attendance. The class with the highest percentage of attendance for the month receives the "Beary" Attendance Trophy at our monthly Pirate Power meeting.

Remember, attendance is critical to learning. Make sure your child is well rested and arrives at school on time every day!

Attendance Policy

The Town of Merrillville has an ordinance affirming parental responsibility for school attendance of minor children. Parents may be held criminally responsible for their child not attending school. The Merrillville Town Court will attempt to provide an opportunity to address problems before criminal charges are filed. The school corporation has outlined a process for addressing students that have excessive absences and will now include interactions with Merrillville Town Court. The parent **MUST** make an appearance in court. The judge will advise of the process for answering the charge and correcting the problem. This may include a fine, court cost, community service, parenting classes or some other provision. If a second referral is made, criminal charges will be filed.

Attendance is essential to the success of our students. When a student misses class time, they miss important instruction time that cannot be made up.

Gold Note Dismissal Reminder

A **signed and dated "Gold Note"** is needed from the parent if:

- your child is going home a different way than usual (for instance, normally a bus rider, but a car rider today)
- your child is going anywhere other than their regular after-school destination (for instance, going to Adventure Club instead of riding the bus)
- your child is going home with another student. (We will also need a note from that parent).
- your child will be picked up before the end of the school day.

Remember that transportation changes cannot be made after 2:00. Things get hectic at the end of the day and verbal messages are not always received on short notice.

If there is no note, students will go home as usual.

Emergency Communications

In cases of inclement weather or other emergency situations, there may be times when school may be cancelled or delayed. In an effort to make sure that parents are notified, there are many ways we try to make sure you are informed.

- Information may be broadcast over various Northwest Indiana and Chicago television and radio stations.
- Delays and closings will be posted on the Merrillville Community School Corporation website at www.mvsc.k12.in.us.
- You should receive an automated call to your primary phone number. **Please do not go into Skyward and change your number to "unlisted" or you will not receive these important calls.**
- You may also choose to receive an email notification by registering with an outside service. Links for this service are available at the MCSC website listed above.

To read an explanation about how 2-hour delays and school closings are decided, go to the MCSC website listed above. Click on the "Parents" tab on the right, then "Emergency School Closing Information".

Informative Notes

When writing notes to either the teacher or the office, please make sure you include the following information:

- ✓ Date note is written
- ✓ Teacher's name
- ✓ Student's name (first and last)
- ✓ Date/day you are writing about
- ✓ Reason
- ✓ Signature

Remember that Gold Notes must be sent in to change the way a child is going home or for an early pickup.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Birthday Treats

The safety of our children is of the utmost importance. We have many students with a wide range of food allergies. In order to keep all of our students safe, the Merrillville Elementary Schools now enforces a more restrictive birthday treat policy. First of all, we would prefer non-food items be sent to celebrate your child's birthday. These items could include pencils, stickers, erasers, or even donate a favorite book to our school library in honor of your child's birthday!

However, if you choose to send a food treat for your child's birthday, the treats must be pre-packaged, store bought, individually wrapped and include a list of ingredients on the package. Suggestions of acceptable items would include Little Debbie treats, individual small bags of chips or fruit snacks, or small candy bars.

Store bought cupcakes, cakes, cookies, and homemade food items are NOT ALLOWED. These are not individually wrapped and labeled. **Treats that do not follow our guidelines will not be passed out and will be sent back home.**

We appreciate your support and understanding as we continue to reflect on how to provide all students with a safe learning environment.

Did you know that birthday treats are now available through our Food Service Department? Ordering birthday treats for your child's class is easier than ever!

While you can still call the Food Service Department to order your treats (219-650-5300, ext. 6008), you can also now visit the school corporation website at www.mvsc.k12.in.us and order treats at any time of day, seven days a week!

Simply go to the "PARENTS" tab on the right-hand side and select "FOOD SERVICE & MENUS". The "PIRATES BIRTHDAY TREATS" link is on the left side.

The order must be placed at least two weeks in advance, and treats must be paid in advance prior to delivery to the classroom. Please make sure to have funds in your child's Skyward account at least two days prior to the delivery date.

All treats are compliant with USDA smart snack guidelines.

Please do **NOT** have balloons or flowers delivered for students. These will remain in the office and an adult will need to come pick them up.

Book Rental

All book rental was due on the first day of school. Credit/Debit card payments can be made online through Skyward. Check/Money order payments can be made in our school office. **Checks/ Money orders must be made out to "John Wood School" and must include your driver's license number on the check.** 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 11th) will be turned over for collection.

ECD Fees - \$75
Kindergarten - \$127.07
1 st Grade - \$123.22
2 nd Grade - \$120.14
3 rd Grade - \$118.95
4 th Grade - \$129.51

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

Free and Reduced Program

If you were on the free and reduced program in 2021-2022, please be aware that you need to reapply every year. The 2021-2022 applications will expire on **Wednesday, September 28th.**

Meals are no longer free to ALL students this year. The Merrillville Community School Corporation has begun charging for breakfasts and lunches.

If you are still in need of this service, make sure to:

- Apply online using Skyward **or**
- Download the application from the MCSC website or pick one up from our school office to complete and drop off or mail to Central Office.

The Latest Scoop from the Kitchen

Since the pandemic began, all students enjoyed free school meals due to universal meal waivers granted by the USDA; however, the USDA are not extending the meal waivers into the 2022-2023 school year.

Merrillville Community School Corporation has begun charging for breakfasts and lunches. Please make sure your children have money in their Skyward accounts to pay for meals.

2022-23 Elementary Meal Prices
Breakfast – \$1.70
Lunch - \$2.70

To deposit funds online:

- * Log into Skyward Family Access
- * On the left side, click on Food Service
- * Click on Make a Payment
- * You will be directed to the web store to make a deposit.

There is a fee of \$1.50 for depositing funds no matter how big or small or for one child or as many as you have.

Monthly Lunch Menus and the rotating Breakfast Menu can be viewed on the Food Service website at: <https://www.mvsc.k12.in.us/Administration2/foodservices>

If you have any questions, please call the Food Service Department at 219-650-5300.

USDA Regulations

Due to USDA and Wellness regulations, NO restaurant foods may be brought into the school for breakfast or lunch.

Pirate Pride Days

In an effort to promote pride in our school community, we encourage students to wear purple on Fridays.

Students are encouraged to wear ANYTHING "John Wood" (Spirit Wear, Math Fact Shirts, etc) or "Merrillville" (Athletic Department Spirit Wear, Pop Warner shirts, etc) or even just purple.

Especially now, at the beginning of the school year, you may be able to find "Merrillville" t-shirts and sweatshirts at some of our local big box stores. Unfortunately, usually they are adult size, but it doesn't hurt to look!

John Wood School **BEST** Pledge

John Wood is the **BEST** of schools,
Spell out **BEST** you'll know the rules,

First is **B**, that's the way.

Be responsible every day.

Next is **E**, that's correct.

Everyone deserves respect.

Third is **S**. This is cool.

Safety counts when you're at school.

Finally, it's letter **T**.

We will **T**alk appropriately.

PBIS

John Wood uses a curriculum program called **P**ositive **B**ehavior **I**nterventions and **S**upport Program or PBIS for short. PBIS is a school-wide systems approach to discipline that emphasizes prevention, instruction on social skills, and data-based decision making to both reduce problem behavior and improve academic performance.

We believe that schools are successful when they help children grow academically, emotionally, and socially. Therefore, we must create a safe and orderly environment so that all children can grow and learn. We want to create an atmosphere for learning by setting clear expectations and teaching the students about these expectations. We look at behavior data often and adjust the program to best fit our needs. There are positive reinforcements for appropriate behavior for individual students. Classroom and school-wide acknowledgements of accomplishments are also recognized.

There are several tools we use to help reinforce good behavior. The students may have heard the John Wood Pledge during the announcements each Friday. A copy of that pledge can be found on this page. At the end of this newsletter is the John Wood School Behavior Matrix. This shows you the actual expectations for various locations.

Students can earn Treasure Tickets. Students receive tickets from teachers and staff when they demonstrate good behavior. Different rewards can be "purchased" with the tickets. Rewards may include small items, extra recess, first in line for lunch, homework passes, etc.

We urge you to discuss this program with your child. Please encourage them to follow the school rules, not only to earn tickets, but because it will make school more enjoyable and safe for them and all students. Help us motivate and reinforce the positive behavior your child is demonstrating at school. You may even want to use the same approach at home! Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Merrillville Education Foundation "Better Health, Better Minds" Walk-a-Thon

The Merrillville Education Foundation is a not-for-profit organization whose primary goal is supporting Merrillville schools in areas where public funds are not available. This is accomplished by providing grants. Twice a year, teachers can apply for grants. The MEF encourages teachers to look for educationally innovative ideas and creative opportunities for students. Since 2002, the MEF has awarded 456 grants totaling nearly \$400,000 impacting just under 125,000 Merrillville students in grades K-12. This cannot be accomplished without support from the public.

The Merrillville Education Foundation invites you to participate in their Annual MEF Walk-a-Thon fundraiser on Saturday, October 8, 2022! Participants in the "Better Health, Better Minds" event will be walking at Merrillville High School to raise funds for MEF teacher grants.

MEF Walk-a-Thon details:

- Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. and walking will begin at 9:00 a.m.
- Location of the walk will be at the MHS Soccer/Track & Field Area (east of the football stadium). In case of rain, the walk will relocate to the MHS Field House.
- Minimum participation donation is \$10 per walker for ages 5 and up.
- Every participant must submit a signed event disclaimer in order to walk in the event.
- Participants are asked to walk one mile, but can choose to walk more if they wish.
- T-shirts for ages 5 and older will be given to each participant who raises at least \$20 in sponsorship donations and submits the registration form and donations to our school's office by Tuesday, September 20, 2022.
- Participants will receive one raffle ticket for a chance to win a door prize on the event day. The raffle ticket will be given during registration on Oct. 8th.
- If you raise \$100 or more, you are guaranteed a prize!
- The student who raises the most money will get first choice of the available prizes!
- This is a family-friendly event open to EVERYONE in the community. Please join us! However, if you are unable to participate, please consider making a donation to MEF.

More details are available on the MEF website at <https://merrillvilleeducationfoundation.org>.

PTO Update

The role of our PTO is to enhance the educational experiences of our children through the commitment of teachers and parents like you! With your continued help and support, we can continue to provide programs and activities for our children, as well as the materials and equipment to enhance our educational settings. All of the money we collect during the school year benefits our school and our children!

In the past, our PTO has used money from fundraisers to sponsor activities such as assemblies, field trips, 4th Grade Symphony, and classroom parties. The PTO also has purchased a set of this year's Young Hoosier books for our school library.

Throughout the year, our PTO also usually sponsors several family events. With this being our first year beginning with no COVID restrictions, we are excited to begin bringing back more of these family events! These activities and events enrich our children's school experience, provide family entertainment, and promote friendship and a sense of community!

Watch the monthly activity calendar that comes home at the end of each month and check our PTO Facebook page for reminders and updates.

Fall Fundraiser

Our annual Fall Fundraiser is currently in progress! Packets came home last week. Remember to exercise safe selling practices. Sell only to family, friends, and neighbors you know. We DO NOT encourage students to sell door-to-door to strangers. This fundraiser ends on Monday, September 26th.

Box Tops/Coke Rewards

Box Tops for Education has changed the way we "clip" box tops. Almost all products now have a "No More Clipping" logo. Those products need to have the receipt scanned using the Box Tops for Education app (free at Google Play or the Apple App Store). Receipts need to be scanned within 14 days of the date of purchase.

We earn 10¢ for each Box Top. But did you know that sometimes products offer MORE than 10¢? Did you know that there are frequent sweepstakes you can enter to earn Box Tops for our

school? Did you know that if you purchase Box Top items online through Amazon or using a store online pickup service you can still submit those receipts? You can find all this information at www.boxtops4education.com.

We are also still collecting Coke codes this year. These codes can be found inside Coke product caps and inside the tear-off flap on cardboard cases. We receive 5¢ for every cap, and more for 12-, 24-, and 36-count cases. You can also find codes on the plastic wrapper of Dasani Water cases. Look on the bottom of the shrink wrap for the black box next to the UPC. The code can be found on the reverse side of the black box. Participating Coke products can be found online at <https://us.coca-cola.com/participating-brands/>.

Participation in these two programs has drastically dropped during the last few years. Part of this is due to the students not being in the building and part of this is resistance to the change in the BTFE program. Participation in the Box Top program has gone from almost \$1000 per year to almost non-existent in our building. Both of these programs require you to purchase nothing more than what you are already purchasing. We only ask for you to spend a few seconds of your time either scanning your receipt or saving and sending in Coke codes.

Apples for the Students/ Strack & Van Til's Receipts

We are once again participating in the Strack & Van Til fundraiser. This fundraiser will enable us to earn a variety of items for our school, from Apple computers and iPads to playground equipment! Last year we were able to get a substantial amount of new items to be used during recess!

All you need to do is save ALL your receipts from ANY Strack & Van Til store. A drop box is available in the front lobby. You can also send the receipts in with your child and the teacher will send them to the office.

Receipts must be dated September 1, 2022 or later. We will not get credit for any purchases of money orders, gift cards, lottery tickets, or alcohol and tobacco products.

This fundraiser will continue all year until March 31, 2023, so tell family,

friends and neighbors to save their receipts for us too!

Popcorn Friday

We are planning to continue with our Popcorn Fridays again this year! There are a few "rules" in place for this fun treat:

- Forms will come home every Thursday, unless there are no volunteers to pop the popcorn on Friday morning.
- Fill out the form with your child's name and teacher. A separate form is needed for each child as it will be stapled to your child's bag.
- Attach the exact amount to the order form...tape it or put it in a baggie or envelope and staple it to the form. Anything over the exact amount will be considered a donation to the PTO.
- Limit one bag of popcorn per student. Students will be encouraged to eat the popcorn during lunch. Grades 1-4 will also have the opportunity to eat it during recess if recess is outside.
- In the event that the student chooses to leave their popcorn stapled and take it home, if they open it on the bus or while waiting for their car ride and it is reported, the student will not be allowed to purchase popcorn the following week. We are trying to limit the inconvenience of clean up to specific areas.

If you are interested in helping pop popcorn on Friday mornings, please contact Mrs. Hehr, our Family and Community Engagement Specialist at 219-650-5305 ext. 6551.

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.

Updates from the Staff

You already get regular updates in the form of notes and newsletters from your child's classroom teacher, but what about other staff members your child may see? In this section, you will get updates each trimester from various staff members in an effort to keep you informed about what is happening throughout the school.

The Art Loft

Mrs. Lattimer

Hello to the 1st trimester of Art! I am excited to bring some fun art projects to the classroom! Usually we do not start out with paint, but we got a real cool project that we needed to complete (thanks to the PTO and the 4th grade teachers). We painted rocks for the garden areas of our school. It will be joyful to see all the bright colors that the rocks were painted! I know how much the students like to paint and use markers, so I will make sure we utilize those art supplies! Just like how the Impressionist painters went outside in the field to do their artwork, I hope we can use the adjacent courtyard to make our art and be a true artist! :-)

Last year, we drew "The People of John Wood" and it was such a success that we will draw our friends and teachers and lunch ladies again and showcase them in the hallways! Everyone loved seeing the beautiful portraits of themselves!

We are going to have a great Fall Trimester!

The Fitness Forecast

Mrs. Davidson

Students will be working on locomotor and balancing skills in PE class. This involves hopping, galloping, running, sliding, skipping, leaping, and walking. We will practice these skills through warm-ups, activities, and games. We will also be practicing listening skills, following directions, and cooperation/collaboration with our classmates and teacher.

Grades 2-4 will be practicing skills through lead-up activities and small sided game plays that will require sudden movements and listening skills.

Notes from the Music Room

Miss Godfrey

Parents and guardians, it has been a pleasure meeting all of these lovely students in my music class. As I am getting to know the students, we are starting with introductory games and activities, just so we can build relationships filled with trust and responsibility.

As we move forward in the school year, I will be introducing new activities to each grade level to enhance their musical skills. For the kindergarten and first grade classes, I will choose activities that will focus on rhythm and following along in their 30 minute time frames. In the second and third grade classes, for their hour, I will introduce rhythm as well as tonation activities and exercises. Finally, for the fourth grade classes, we will explore rhythm and tonation activities as well, but on a higher level to prepare them for MIS.

A Plea to Parents from All Teachers

More and more children are coming to school with their shoes untied or carelessly tied and we are continually surprised at how many students don't know how to tie their shoes. Tying shoes is a skill that is no longer taught in kindergarten and needs to be taught at home.

Practice, practice, practice tying shoes. Please assist your child in making sure they tie their shoes every day! A double knot helps assure the shoe stays tied throughout the day. Look on YouTube for fun videos that teach how to tie your shoes.

The Book Nook

Mrs. Echols

The Library Nook!

Welcome to 2022-2023 school year!
Library Itinerary: Aug. & Sept.

We begin our school year going over the following:

Expectations and Rules of the library:

- Enter the library quickly
- To avoid yourself from getting hurt, no running or playing in the library
- Stay in your seat until further notice
- Respect your classmates when they have the floor to speak
- When it's okay to talk, use your indoor voices and only talk to the people at your table.
- Respect one another's space.

We also discussed the emergency procedures in the library:

- Exit to door "J" for fire drills
- Use library storage room during tornados
- Quickly move to the Kiva for lockdowns

Lesson Plans: (not all grades have the same lessons)

- Book Care
- Five Finger rule (for choosing a book)
- Story-time (reading various stories)
- Book Scavenger Hunt to reinforce the system of the Dewey-Decimal System
- Digital Citizenship (making the right choices and keep safe) using the Internet.
- Using Epic online
- Coding & Programming

The Coaches' Corner

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

Welcome back to school! Starting off the school year on the right foot is very important. Here are some things you can do at home:

Reading

- Make reading a part of your daily routine and kids will learn to love it! Whether it is reading after dinner or going to the library, this can support in making kids lifelong readers. Set aside some time when everyone turns off electronics and does nothing but read. You can make it fun too by reading a book that has been made into a movie. After reading, you can make it a family night, pop popcorn, and watch the movie together! The point is to make reading a regular, enjoyable part of your family's routine.

Math

- You can help support your child in math by practicing basic math facts. You can practice orally while driving, walking, waiting and so on. Practice orally presenting facts promotes immediate recall more effectively. In addition, math is all around us in our daily lives. Assist your child in seeing that math is part of your daily life when they pose problems in everyday situations.

"A good beginning makes a big difference...Make sure you begin this academic year with new hopes and a positive mindset to make it a brighter chapter in your child's school life."

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

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

Follow Mr. Brown at @MerrillvilleSu3

Follow Mrs. Igras at @WoodPrin

Pop Tab Collection

To many, a pop tab is just a piece of aluminum with one purpose – to open a can. But to the Ronald McDonald House of Indiana, the pop tab is a valuable resource. Why? 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.

In the years since the program began over one billion pop tabs have been donated generating about \$500,000 in pop tab revenue for the House.

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

How can you help? John Wood School is now collecting pop tabs for Ronald McDonald House. Simply remove the pop tab from the aluminum can 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 drop them off at the school office. There's no competition, no goal, no prizes...just the reward of doing a good deed. Each year we are able to donate about 8-10 pounds of pop tabs to Ronald McDonald House of Indiana!

Here Comes the Bus!

The MCSC has adopted an innovative app and website! Here Comes the Bus is a tracking software tool that helps keep you informed and your child(ren) safe as they travel to and from home and school on the bus. It gives you real-time bus locations and alerts to help you get your child to the bus stop at just the right time.

This technology is free to you.

- Download Here Comes the Bus app or visit herecomesthebus.com
- Click the "Sign Up" button
- Enter school code 6601 and click "Next" followed by "Confirm"
- Complete the "User Profile" box
- Under "My Students," click "Add". Enter your child's last name and student ID number.
- Once you confirm your information, you're ready to begin.

Should you have any questions, please contact MCSC Transportation Department: email – transportation@mvschool.k12.in.us or phone – 219-650-5311.

Transportation

Please remember that school dismisses at 3:05 p.m. Please make sure you make arrangements to pick your child up **on time** and/or be home to receive your child. Additionally, please note that we cannot make any changes to transportation after 2:00. Thank you!

Behavioral Expectations Matrix - John Wood School

All Settings	Hallways	Playground	Cafeteria	Special Classes	Bus	Assemblies	Rest Rooms	Office
Be responsible.	Walk in a single line facing forward. Follow the set procedures.	Use equipment properly. Don't litter. Tell an adult when someone is hurt or there is a conflict.	Take all needed belongings to lunch. Clean up after yourself. Keep your food on your tray.	Be prepared. Bring supplies. Stay on task. Follow the directions of the teacher.	Be at the stop on time. Remember your school materials. Stay in your seat.	Listen attentively to the speaker. Stay seated. Follow adult directions.	Flush the toilet. Wash and dry hands. Keep the rest rooms dry and clean.	Introduce yourself. Tell the staff your reason for coming to the office.
Everyone deserves respect.	Respect personal space. Be courteous. Be considerate of the other classes.	Take turns. Include everyone. Listen to the person in charge.	Use table manners. Listen to the person in charge.	Raise your hand to ask questions. No name calling. Listen to the speaker.	Listen to the driver. Respect personal space.	Clap at appropriate times. Respect personal space.	Privacy, please. Observe quiet zone.	Be polite. Wait your turn.
Safety counts.	Keep feet, hands, and objects to yourself. Walk on the right side away from the wall.	Keep feet, hands, and objects to yourself. Use equipment properly. When whistle is blown, stop, look, and listen.	Eat your own food. Raise your hand before leaving your seat. Walk. Keep the legs of the chair on the floor.	Keep feet, hands, and objects to yourself. Use equipment properly. Dress appropriately.	Stay seated. Get on and off the bus in single line. Follow the bus rules.	Keep feet, hands, and objects to yourself. Walk on the bleachers.	Use one pump of soap. No school supplies in the rest room. Report unsafe conditions.	Walk on the right side away from the wall when coming to and from the office.
Talk appropriately.	Observe quiet zone.	No put downs or name-calling. Be quiet in line. Use kind words.	Use an inside, restaurant voice—6" voice. Be quiet in the serving line.	Use kind words. Use the right voice for the activity. Speak when called upon.	Talk softly. Use inside, 6" voices.	Be quiet during the presentation. Speak when called upon.	Observe quiet zone.	Quietly wait your turn. Say please and thank you.



TRICK OR TREAT

Thursday, October 27

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