

MES Weekly Update

from the Superintendent of Schools

Week of October 26, 2026



Marlborough Elementary School Vision: *To inspire wonder, awe, and curiosity and to motivate young minds to embrace learning.*

Since about the Second World War, young people have been turning to each other for guidance, instruction, behavioral modeling, and advice – not to their parents, teachers, and other responsible adults. Nature never intended children to guide each other. But this is what is happening. Today, the bonds that kids are forming with each other are replacing their relationships with adults. These peer bonds are often perceived as the most important relationships in their lives, leaving the adults trying to lead them powerless in their efforts.

~ Hannah Beach, author of *Reclaiming our Students*
(Details later in this week's Update)

This Week

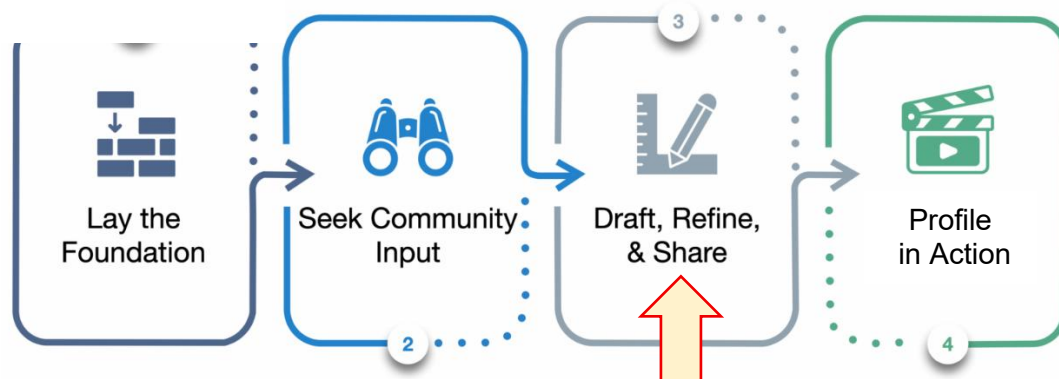
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
		MES SPIRIT WEEK!				
		 National Black Cat Day MES Building Committee MES Library 6:30 PM	Assembly Japanese Drummers	Coffee with the Superintendent 8:30 – 10:00 AM MES Central Office Budget ideas welcome! 	 Preliminary Budget requests due	 Happy Halloween

The results of the survey are in --- and we are ready for the next step!



We are grateful for the information that we gathered
as the result of over 200 survey responses –
and now it's time for the next phase.

See the "Thoughts" Section for details of the **RESULTS** of the survey.



We just finished Step 2 – Seeking Community Input. It's time to start **Step 3** - drafting our Profile of the Learner. Step 3 will have 3 parts: (1) **Synthesizing the data** from the survey and developing the exact wording of the skills and dispositions, (2) **Releasing a draft** and getting the school community's input, and (3) **Defining the skills and dispositions** for our students to develop an understanding of each aspect of the Profile.



November 2026

Send information on school sponsored and community events to psmith@marlborough.k12.ct.us for inclusion.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
November 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Daylight Saving Time ends	MES PTO MES Library 6:30 PM	NO SCHOOL Parent Conferences Coffee with the Superintendent 8:30 – 10:00 AM MES Central Office			National Nachos Day	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
		Debut of Sesame Street in 1969 Veterans Day Salute at MES <u>Veterans, please join us!</u>	NO SCHOOL Veterans Day Thank you, Veterans!	Picture Retake Day	World Kindness Day Make Kindness the Norm	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Board of Finance Town Hall 6:30 PM RHAM Board of Education @ RHAM Middle 6:30 PM	Board of Selectmen Town Hall 7:00 PM	Mickey Mouse Day Mr. Mickey Mouse Day!	In 1863, President Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address. Marlborough Board of Education MES Library 6:30 PM	PTO Bingo Night	World Hello Day Say "Hello" to 10 people! https://worldhelloday.org/
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
		MES Building Committee MES Library 6:30 PM	Early Dismissal Thanksgiving	Thanksgiving Holiday Weekend		
29	30	December 1	2	3	4	5
	Mark Twain's (Samuel Clemens) Birthday	GIVING TUESDAY Board of Selectmen Town Hall 7:00 PM		Make & Share a Handmade Gift Day	HAPPY HANUKKAH FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS December 4-12	

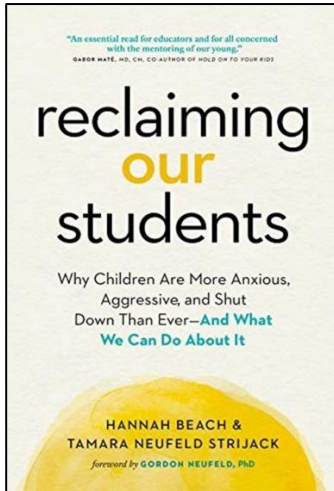
Notes



Making sure we are the strongest influence in our children's lives

The premise of the book, *Reclaiming Our Students* is that social media, cell phones, apps, etc. have caused our children to **turn away from parents, teachers, and adults** and turn to each other. In turning to peers via cell phones, they act less like kids. They have less joy, less play, and less excitement. It's not just a concern; it's a travesty. The result: our children are "more anxious, worried, and stressed than we remember being when we were growing up."

From the book: <https://reclaimingourstudents.com/>



Many students are no longer looking up to their teachers as leaders. And it's not just teachers: many children are no longer looking to their parents or other elders in the lives for guidance either. **Teaching and raising them has become a whole lot harder.**

Many parents and teachers of young children also intuitively feel that something is off: **children don't seem so much like kids anymore.**

Today's children are less likely to listen to adults. They also often seem less childlike, less full of wonder and excitement over simple things and new discoveries.

Many children also seem to become easily bored when they are not able to be with their friends or use technology. They engage in less and less solitary creative play than they used to, and many parents say that the only time their child plays alone is when they are on their iPad or playing video games. Children seem to be more anxious, worried, and stressed than we remember being when we were growing up.

Parenting has also changed. We can see that our children are stressed and more disrespectful, and we are trying harder than ever to meet their needs. Unsure of what to do, we often end up trying to cajole our children, tiptoeing around them or trying to orchestrate their lives so they don't have to experience any stress or so we don't set off a tantrum.

As responsible, loving, and committed parents and teachers, we are, understandably, very frustrated. Despite our attempts to set things right, many kids still seem difficult. Too many are not naturally attending to us. And no matter how hard we try, parents, grandparents, and teachers no longer seem to occupy what should be their natural roles as mentors and guides for children, despite the fact that this is how we have evolved as a species. Ironically, we know more about child development than ever before, and we live in a time when more people are taking courses on parenting and teaching than in all of history. So, what is going on? What has changed?

What has changed is the culture in which children are being raised, a culture in which children no longer automatically seek the wisdom and leadership of the adults in their lives. This cultural shift has disconnected children from the adults who care for them, and it has taken away the cultural context that supports children in naturally being open to the guidance of adults.

If a teacher is to succeed in imparting wisdom, a child must first be receptive to what the teacher has to say and share. The secret to teaching, then, lies not in the skills the teacher has, or in what the guiding adult *does* – but *who* the teacher is to the child.

This isn't a matter of learning more skills or executing the right skills; **this is a matter of understanding the vital importance of relationships in teaching.** We need to understand what type of relationship our students need from us in order for them to more naturally follow our lead.

One of the most challenging and pivotal issues that may undermine a teacher's ability to lead effectively is the increasing attachment of children to their peers. This is *not* to say that children shouldn't have friends. Having friends is a natural, healthy, and wonderful part of any child's life – but children are attaching to each other in ways that go beyond healthy friendships.

Since about the Second World War, young people have been turning to each other for guidance, instruction, behavioral modeling, and advice – not to their parents, teachers, and other responsible adults. Nature never intended children to guide each other. But this is what is happening. **Today, the bonds that kids are forming with each other are replacing their relationships with adults.** These peer bonds are often perceived as the most important relationships in their lives, leaving the adults trying to lead them powerless in their efforts.

November arrives next week... Slow down and enjoy the holiday season.

For many of us, the holidays mark the busiest time of the year. With November arriving next week, we can count on one hand the number of weeks until Thanksgiving – and then, just like that, the winter holidays are upon us.

What has struck me the last couple of years is how the “Black Friday” rush begins immediately after Halloween. Every day in November offers “Black Friday” deals. In fact, I predict that once the political adds end on November 3rd, the holiday sales adds will fill the gap!

Try to slow down and take it all in. You can enjoy every day of the season by slowing down, focusing, and appreciating the small moments that make life magical.

How Can You Speed Up by Slowing Down? <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/speed-up-by-slowing-down/> from Thrive by [Carolyn Mahboubi](http://www.carolynmahboubi.com), Master Certified Life and Leadership Coach at www.carolynmahboubi.com

So many of us believe that if we slow down our thinking, we will come to a dead stop or fall off the cliff or maybe we'll just lie on the couch all day and lose the thread of our lives forever, intoxicated by Netflix and chips!

An article I wrote addressed a myth most driven people assume to be true — that *striving for more, going faster, and competing to be better than others* is pretty much the recipe for creating a successful life.

Out of the three beliefs I mentioned, the most counterintuitive one had to do with **slowing down** because what I proposed was, “**Slow down your thinking to speed up your results.**”

Many members of my community reached out with questions around this principle and mostly they wanted to know, “*What does that even mean??*”

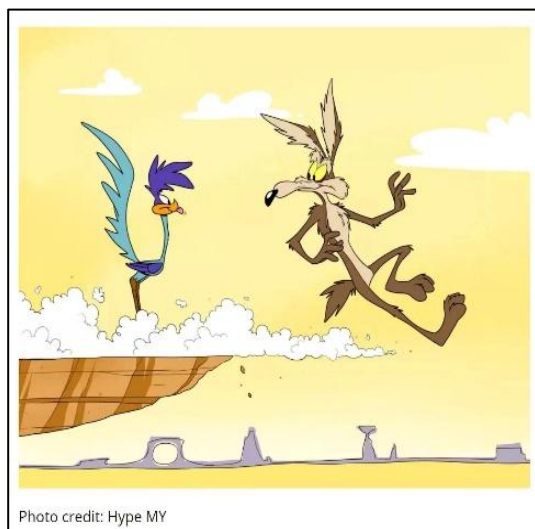


Photo credit: Hype MY

So many of us believe that if we slow down our thinking, we will come to a dead stop or fall off the cliff — a la The Coyote in the old Bugs Bunny cartoons!

Or maybe we'll just lie on the couch all day and lose the thread of our lives forever, intoxicated by Netflix and chips!

I'm here to tell you the contrary. **Slowing down does not equal slacking off.**

In fact, far from losing our edge, we actually sharpen our sword when we slow down our thinking to the speed of the present moment.

You might have already noticed that anything in life that is important, happens slowly.

Anything that lasts, happens slowly.

Here is a partial list of the conditions my clients and I want to create more of:

1. Ease
2. Health
3. Deep connections
4. Trust
5. Prosperity
6. Wisdom
7. Fun
8. Purpose
9. Life balance/integration
10. Time

Every single one of these requires...

Slowing down our thinking and practicing hyperfocus.

Slowing down is a practice and precondition to developing the primary ability of hyperfocusing. The more ambitious our goal, the more skillful we must become in these two separate yet deeply connected practices.

Steve Job's words help us understand this tradeoff, *"People think focus means saying yes to the thing you've got to focus on. But that's not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas that there are."*

Let's take "creating deep connections" as an example.

Deepening a human connection requires, actually it demands, slowing down to decide who in our life matters the most and then focusing on them in that moment, at the expense of absolutely *every other* important duty or obligation.

It's easy for me to say no to someone on the periphery of my life, so I can be present for a client or friend who is going through a rough patch. But the muscle I'm asking myself to strengthen only gets flexed when I say no (or not now) to someone unquestionably important in my life, such as my child — to be present for that client or friend.

Slowing down our thinking for the sake of speeding up our results takes extraordinary effort and is not to be taken lightly.

It is a practice that requires us to shift our focus towards long term thinking while also being radically present in any given moment.

You think that's hard?

Imagine reflecting on your life from your deathbed only to realize you've missed creating deeper connections with the people who truly mattered to you?

That's not just hard, it's devastating!

The next time you find yourself speeding up because your mind is telling you it's the only way to succeed, take note of these words from Eliot Kipchoge, the fastest man on the planet.

When asked to share his secret to success, he responded, *"You can not go to the gym today and build your muscle. You should get a program and go **slowly by slowly**. That's the way you build your muscle and that's the way you can have discipline."*

Slowly by slowly.



If you like this article, you will enjoy the Thrive Global website:

[Thrive Global - Onward. Upward. Inward. \(Click\)](#)

Taikoza at Marlborough Elementary School



Taikoza: Japanese Festival with Taiko and Flutes

There will be a schoolwide multicultural assembly at Marlborough Elementary School on **Wednesday, October 28**, thanks to a partnership between the MES PTO and CoDE (Coalition on Diversity and Equity.)

Students will explore Japanese culture through dynamic Taiko drumming, folk songs, and dance. This is a high-energy, multicultural experience of thunderous rhythms from the ancestral Japanese Taiko drums and the magical sounds of the bamboo flutes. Children will hear the 150 lb. Taiko drum give thunderous voice to traditional and new compositions.

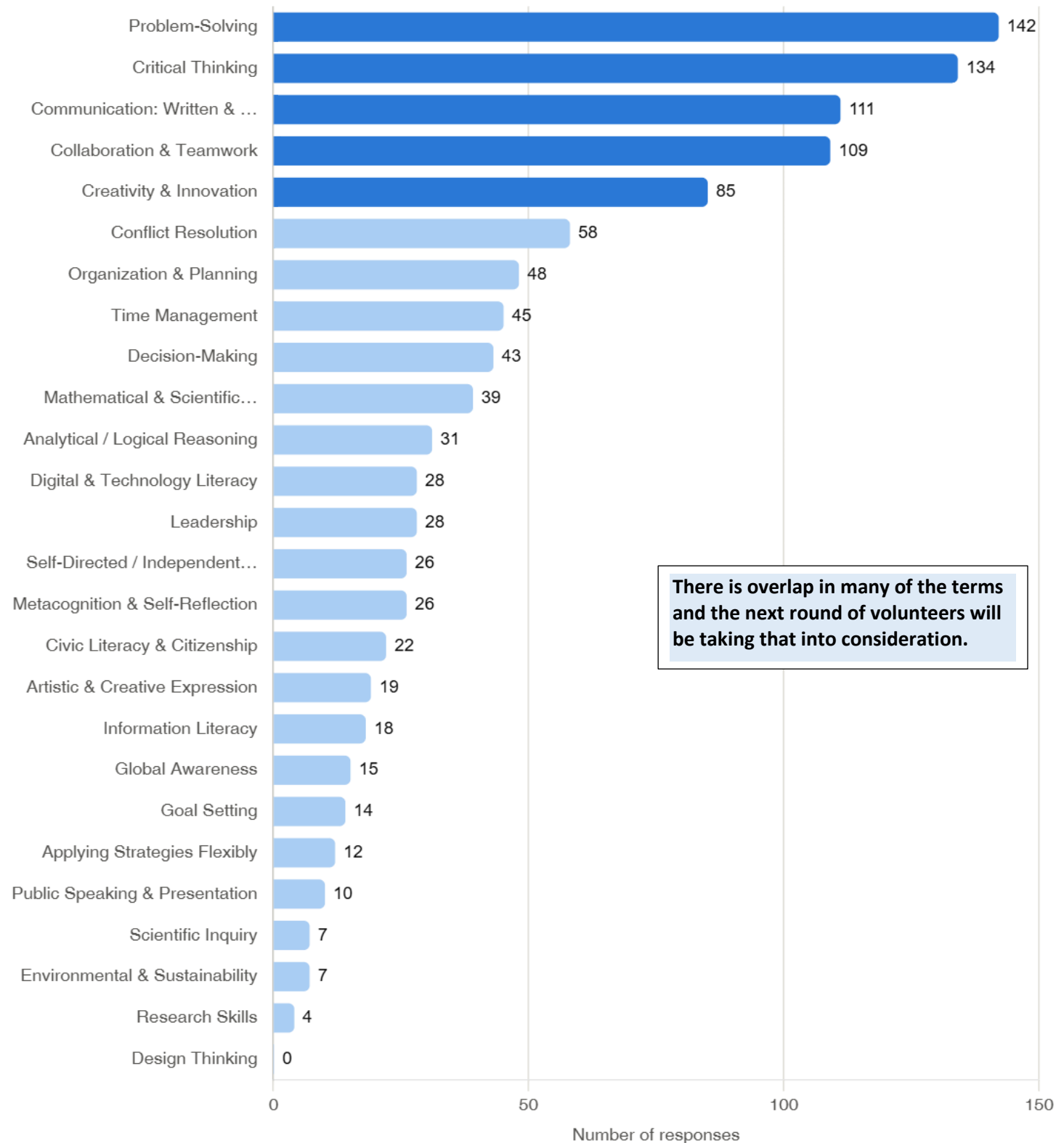
Taikoza was founded by Marco Lienhard, who grew up in Japan and performed with the legendary group Ondekoza for 18 years before starting Taikoza in New York City. Taikoza draws from Japan's rich tradition of music and performance to create a highly visual performance.

Thank you to CoDE. [You can visit their website by clicking here.](#)

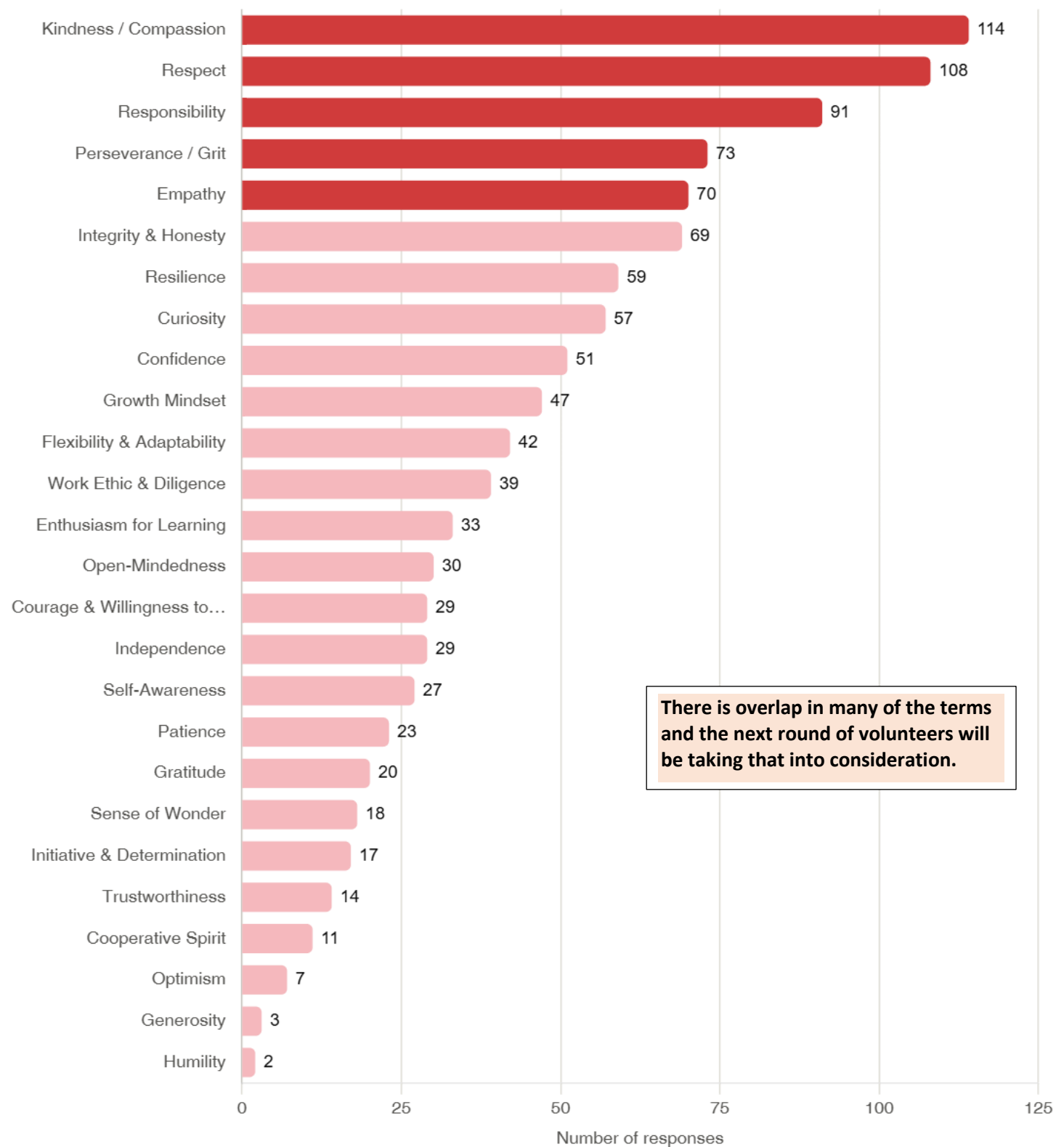
Results and Next Steps for the MES Profile of the Learner

Thank you for taking the time to answer our survey. Below are results of the survey based in 218 responses. [You can click here for a PDF version of the results.](#)

Results from the MES Survey – Skills that are most important to the MES Learner



Results from the MES Survey – **DISPOSITIONS** that are most important to the MES Learner



This data is significant to our community because it represents the desires of our parents, teachers, staff, and community members. These are not skills developed by the State of Connecticut for our children. Our own community has selected and prioritized the skills above. As the skills and dispositions of MES Profile of the Learner are finalized, our community will have chosen the essential skills that our students need in school and for their future success in college and careers.

The final question of the survey was:

***May we contact you for further input as this work continues?
If so, please share your email.***

For those who responded with their email,
they will be contacted and continue with our next step:

***Choosing the SKILLS and DISPOSITIONS
for the Profile of the Learner based on survey results.***



If you did not respond with your email,
but would like to participate in the next step, [click here](#).

for Round 2!

Next Steps	Timeline
Synthesizing the data from the survey and developing the exact wording of the skills and dispositions	October 26 - November 3
Releasing a draft and getting the school community's input	November 5 - 13
Sharing the final version with the Board of Education and community	November 19
Defining the skills and dispositions for our students to develop an understanding of each aspect of the Profile • Clearly defining the chosen terms • Developing "I can..." statements from the students' perspectives (K-2 and 3-6) • Reviewing the school's vision and mission for alignment with the newly chosen terms	December 1-14 (Additional volunteers)

What Is the MES Profile of the Learner?

The MES Profile of the Learner will serve as a strategic framework describing the competencies every student should develop by the time they leave MES.

What the Profile Will Accomplish

- Clarify what matters most for student growth and success.
- Create a shared language for educators, students, and families.
- Align instruction with the lifelong skills students need.

We are thoughtfully developing the profile to reflect the values and aspirations of the entire MES community. Families and local stakeholders will remain engaged throughout the process.

**By products of developing these skills
are increases in grit, critical thinking,
social responsibility, resilience, and
personal accountability...**

**...Let's raise a generation of people
predisposed toward kindness and
proficient at being uniquely human.**

– Erin Clabough, *Second Nature*



Marlborough Elementary School - Better Together For Children

Our mission is to educate, challenge and inspire each individual to excel and become a contributing member of society.



Join the Superintendent for a cup of coffee and conversation at the Central Office at MES from 8:30 – 10:00 AM.

Thursday, October 29
Tuesday, November 3
Tuesday, December 8



No taxpayer dollars used for coffee or supplies!

If you have questions, come in for coffee at your convenience with the Superintendent of Schools.

E-mail Paul Smith at psmith@marlborough.k12.ct.us or call (860)295-6236.

Family Resources State of Connecticut 	Mental Health Resources 	Emergencies GET HELP 24/7 Call 2-1-1 in CT 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988 Crisis Text Line: 741741	MES School Calendar 2026-27 	Important Annual Notices from MES 
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Reminder to families: Breakfast is available and **FREE** to all MES Students this year.



Total Number of Days Absent	Acceptable Reasons for a Student Absence to be Considered Excused	Documentation Required within 10 Days
1-9	Any reason that the student's parent or guardian approves.	Parent or guardian note or email to the appropriate school email address.
10 and above	- Student illness - Religious holiday - Funeral - Mandated court appearance - Extraordinary educational opportunity pre-approved by the Superintendent of Schools. Contact the school for further information.	Parent or guardian note or email to the appropriate school email address and additional documentation as required and outlined in the Board of Education's Attendance Policy #5113 .

Build the habit of good attendance.

[View Marlborough Board of Education Policy 5113 - Attendance](#)



Nondiscrimination Statement of the Marlborough Public Schools:

The Marlborough Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national/ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, status as a victim of domestic violence, Veteran status, disability in its programs, activities, and employment practices, status as a victim of sexual assault, or status as a victim of trafficking in persons. Equal access is provided to Scouting America and other designated youth groups.