

Nov. 22, 2019

Woodland Park School District e-Newsletter

Building the road to success

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Important dates

Mon.-Wed., Nov. 25-27 - Early dismissal:
Memorial and BG, 12:48 p.m.; CO, 1:28 p.m.

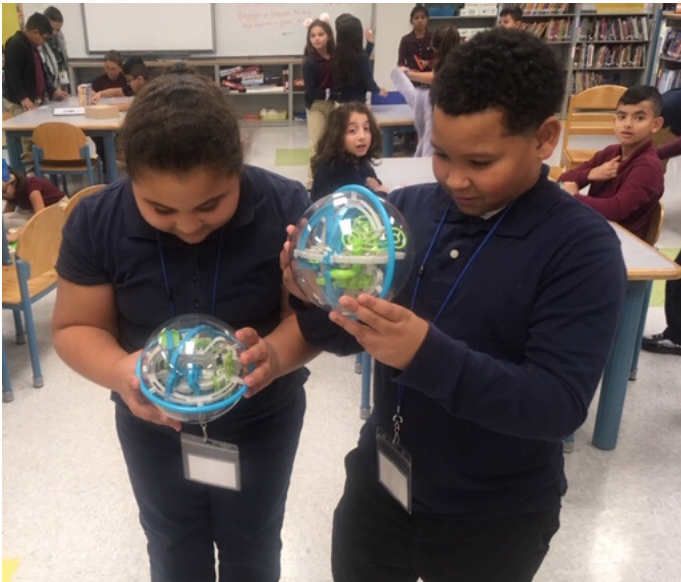
Monday, Nov. 25 -
BG Parent/Teacher Conferences

Tuesday, Nov. 26 - Memorial
Parent/Teacher Conferences

Thursday, Nov. 28 and Friday, Nov. 29 -
District schools are closed

Welcome to the Woodland Park School District e-Newsletter, which will be sent out weekly when school is in session. This will serve as a glimpse of some of the wonderful things going on in our schools, as well as a point of reference for upcoming events.

Your Partner in Education,
Michele R. Pillari, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Amazing Mazes



Beatrice Gilmore Library Media Aide Mrs. DeRosa has partnered with Zim Cares' free incentives programs. Pictured are students learning to navigate the Perplexus maze during indoor recess with Mr. Pomante. This fun activity helps children to further develop their motor and problem solving skills.



Libraries = Success program concludes at Memorial School

The results are in for the Libraries = Success program at Memorial Middle School.

The program, sponsored by the NJ State Library, is a joint collaboration with the Alfred Baumann Public Library. The initiative is geared toward encouraging middle schoolers to sign up for a library card. The goal was to have every student signed up for a card.

The program specifically targets grades 6 to 8 as they embark on officially becoming independent learners, and also when student leisure reading starts to drop off.

The Library issued 78 new library cards to students in grades 6 through 8 - the target group. Overall statistics in Memorial Middle School at the conclusion of the program: grade 6 students topped the chart with 97% of the class having library cards. The grade 5 students were close behind with 94%; grade 7 and 8 tied at 78% and LLD students were at 65%.

In addition, as of Oct. 31, 90% of children over 3 years old in Woodland Park have a library card. This number is a true testament to the successful partnership that the Library has with the school district.

The first 200 students that brought in their library card to show their teacher received a sling pack or ear buds. The homeroom in each grade level that reached 100% first received an ice cream party.



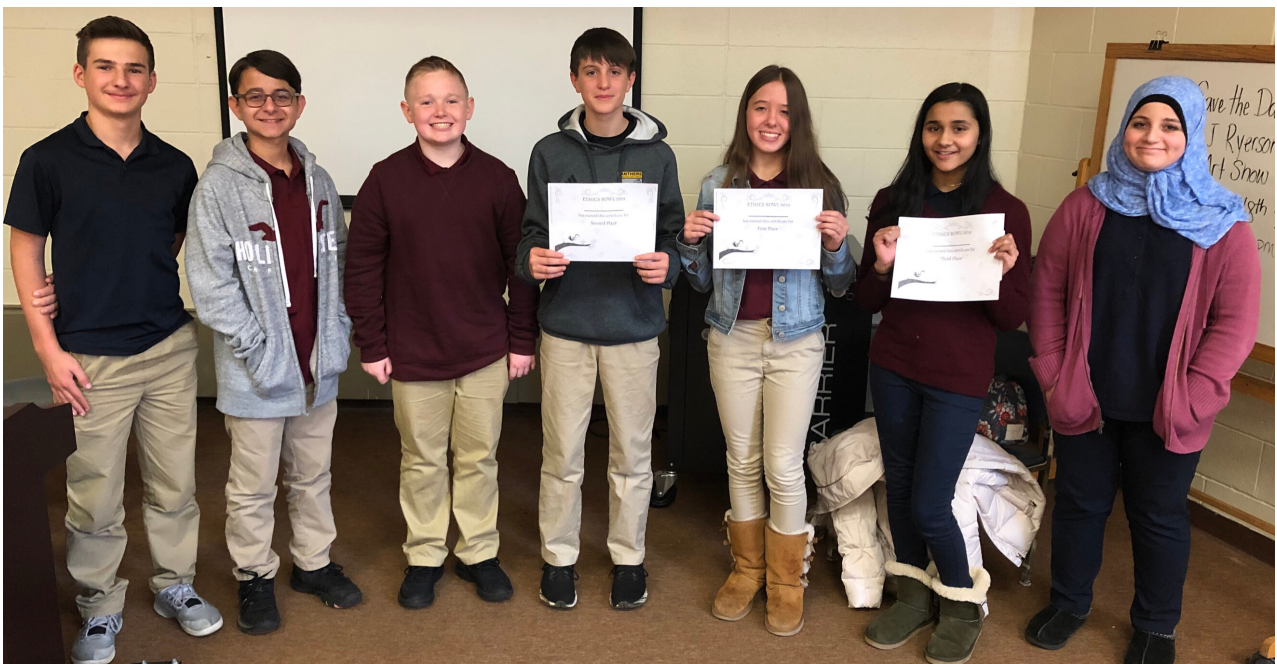


An In Depth Look

Seventh grade students in Miss McCluskey's class recently presented PowerPoints that they created about a branch of the military. They were responsible for choosing a branch, researching that branch, and presenting their findings to the class. Students concluded the lesson by writing a letter of appreciation to that branch of the military. This activity was also done during the classes Miss McCluskey co-teaches with Mr. Napoli and Mrs. Sonners.



Tackling the Tough Topics



The 8th Grade STRIVE class traveled to Ringwood on Monday to participate in the county's first ever Ethics Bowl. The students partnered up with peers from different towns to discuss and present ethical dilemmas such as self-automated driving cars, stolen bicycles, and the electoral college. Yastika Singh and her team placed third, while Alex Limone and his team won second. Kaitlyn Amanullah and her teammates made a very convincing argument and placed first. Fellow STRIVE students Nick Raguseo, Nick Salemi, Scott Nayda, and Montana Moraktan also participated in the event.



Shown is Memorial School Principal Lisa Barreto and Vice Principal Stephen Scholtz (far right) along with some staff and student members of the Culture & Climate Committee.

Memorial hits mid-point of School Culture and Climate Initiative

In mid-2018, Memorial Middle School entered into a 3-year partnership with the United Way, which provides the school an opportunity to proactively address the culture and climate in the building. Principal Lisa Barreto and Vice Principal Stephen Scholtz presented an update to the Board of Education at its meeting on Monday evening, as the program is now at the midway point.

The School Culture and Climate Initiative (SCCI) is a systematic, collaborative and sustainable initiative where specialists work with schools to proactively address the needs of students and staff. “Culture” refers to the beliefs and perceptions that shape every aspect of a school, Mrs. Barreto explained, while “climate” refers to the quality and character of the school.

“We want the school to be a place where they want to come,” Mrs. Barreto said. “It’s our job as school leaders.”

In year one of the partnership, 2018-2019, a staff team was established. A survey was sent to all students, staff members and parents. The team discussed the results and a vision plan was put in to place on how to move forward with planning and professional learning and activities to grow in a positive direction.

The data showed that students felt connected to the school, felt strong support and care from the staff and indicated high teacher approval. However, the data showed that improvement was needed in the areas of student pride, student's ability to shape their environment and overall student approval (how much they like school).

In year two, 2019-2020, the Memorial team met with the SCCI consultant to work to implement a number of things including enhancing the school’s 6 Pillars of Character Education program, and working to beautify the school. Over the early-November break, the custodial staff repainted all the hallways a shade of blue, which brightened them up. Going forth, students plan to paint murals on the walls. In addition, the school will be implementing a unity/pride school “house system” that should be in place after winter break. A student climate team was established this fall and the school team has been meeting with them to discuss what they hope to accomplish.

Looking ahead, the third year of the program, 2020-2021, after the team is able to implement a number of initiatives, the SCCI consultant and team will assess progress with a post-program survey. The District is hopeful that at this point, it can apply for a Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School Award, a recognition of excellence for schools with high performance in nine categories of the Blueprint for Excellence assessment.

“Research shows that when you improve the school climate, students are happier,” Mrs. Barreto noted, adding that as the students spend 35 hours of their week there, school should be a happy place. Studies also indicate that when a school is a happier place, it is the single best way to prevent harassment and bullying.