

# MORRISTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Volume 2, Issue 6 December 2019

*Of Special Note: It is this time of year that our local support groups provide gifts and funds to some of our families in need. I want to say "Thank You" to these service agencies and organizations. Their efforts truly impact various families and thus they should be acknowledged for their efforts.*

#### *Arizona Tax Credit Info:*

*As we move into December we can anticipate the start of a new tax season. We encourage our families to take full advantage of the Arizona Tax Credit program. More info at the end of the newsletter.*



## **SCHOOL LETTER GRADE UPDATE**

On November 1, the Arizona State Board of Education released letter grades for Arizona public schools. Morristown Elementary received a "D" Label. The purpose of this process is to identify those schools that demonstrate expected results on the state assessments. These assessments are the AZMERIT Test and the AIMS Science Test. This year the AZMERIT test will be changing its name but the content of the assessment will be the same as in past years. The school stakeholders are working extensively to improve on this performance. This year there have been aspects to Tier II and Tier III intervention for our students. This includes the hiring of a Reading Interventionist and the utilization of the highly successful 95 Percent which will build on students reading comprehension. The school will also be implementing an After-School Tutoring program for identified students. We are very fortunate to have dedicated paraprofessionals whose role will be to support the role of the teacher in the classroom. The school recently sent a team to the Arizona Department of Education addressing the School Improvement Process. Through the Comprehensive Needs Assessment, the stakeholders are conducting a Root Cause Analysis for last years unexpected performance on the state assessments. I want to acknowledge that we have a very safe and supportive school and from the Governing Board down to the individual classrooms will do our best to ensure vast improvement of our students' performance on these state assessments. The goal is to demonstrate that we are an "A" school. This will be accomplished with collective work from all the stakeholders from Morristown Elementary School. An update to the Governing Board will take place at the December 9<sup>th</sup> Governing Board meeting. The meeting begins at 6:00 pm.

## **UPCOMING WINTER PERFORMANCE**

The school's annual Winter Performance is scheduled for December 16th. This production will take place on a single night and will include all our K-8 students. As in the past years the performance offers a dinner hosted by PTSA. The dinner will start at 5:00 pm and the performance is scheduled to begin at 6:00 pm. Traditionally this has been a two-day performance. The opportunity to take in both events on a single night will be very rewarding.

We expect a very large turnout so please plan ahead. PTSA does a tremendous job with the dinner and we encourage you to come early for this dinner. Our students and teachers have been working extremely hard to for this production.

---

*"Thank you every who serves our school... our community... and nation"*

---

## VETERANS DAY LUNCHEON

In conjunction to Veterans Day the school hosted a lunch to Veterans in the Morrystown area. As a prelude to the luncheon current and past service men came to the school and spent time



talking to our youth. We want to thank the following guest speakers: Mr. J.C. Campbell, Mr. Michael Trad, and the service men from Luke Air Force Base. The students got to hear about the different roles these individuals currently play or performed in the past. It is amazing to hear the behind the scenes work that takes place to ensure the aspect of democracy stays in tack and to preserve the spirit of our nation.



## VOLLEYBALL CONCLUDES SEASON

Our boys and girls volleyball teams recently concluded their season with the Central Mountain League Volleyball Tournament. Though the teams did not capture a championship, or end up in the final games, they played to their best extent possible and represented themselves and the school very well. Both squads played several hard fought matches. We want to thank all the athletes that made the commitment to their respective teams. We appreciate the support of our parents many of which made it to the tournament to support the players. We need to acknowledge the commitment of Ms. Perry and Ms. Wimberly the coaches for this years program. They both put in a great amount of time in their role to work with the students and to attend all the games and practices.

## WICKENBURG LIGHT PARADE

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Parade of Lights will take place Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup> in Wickenburg. Morrystown Elementary School will have a float entry in this parade. This is one of the best winter parades in Arizona. Because of this time of year the parade can be a little chilly. We encourage your participation and would remind you in advance to dress a little extra-warm for the event.



**MORRISTOWN PTSA**  
WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A PART OF THE  
**MORRISTOWN SCHOOL FLOAT**  
At the  
WICKENBURG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
**23<sup>rd</sup> Annual PARADE OF LIGHTS**  
Friday, December 13, 2019  
Find us on Yavapai street at 5:30pm, parade starts at 6:30pm.  
Arrive early and help finalize decorations  
To ride on the Morrystown PTSA float bring a Non-perishable food item, one per rider for donation to Wickenburg CAP (Community Action Program)  
Parade ends at Wickenburg Community Center and The Little Red Schoolhouse will have a Santa, cookies, & Hot Apple Cider

## WICKENBURG KIWANIS POSTER & DESERT CABALLEROS POETRY WINNERS

Congratulations go out to Ralene Williams (Grade 3) and Heather Walter (Grade 4) who both qualified to move forward with their posters they submitted to the Wickenburg Elks Lodge during Red Ribbon Week. Both posters focus on the goal of making a good decision not using drugs due to the risk of causing bodily harm. Best of luck to these two representatives of the school and hopefully they can qualify to the next level. We would also like to recognize Bradford Layton (Grade 5) and Reagyn Smith (Grade 7) for their 3<sup>rd</sup> Place finishes in the recent Desert Caballeros poetry contest. There were over 100 poems from 13 different schools



in this years contest. As part of the Cowboy Christmas Poetry Gathering these students have been invited to the Museum's Learning Center to recite their poems Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> @ 1:00 pm.

## THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON

We appreciate the great turnout out our annual Thanksgiving Luncheon. Kudos to Mrs. Amy Potter, our Food Service Manager, and all those other folks that helped her put on the school's Thanksgiving Feast. The turnout of our parents and families was amazing. We know this was just a warm-up to each of our families



Thanksgiving celebration so hopefully everyone had a chance to spend time with family and friends. Thanksgiving is a segway into December and we all should be "thankful" for the positive things that are happening in each of our lives.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF

On November 22<sup>nd</sup>, the teachers and paraprofessionals took part in a Professional Development Day. The school brought in Kathy Toodgood to support in the training for the need for Phonics awareness and how to implement the 95 Percent program. Increasing phonics awareness school wide will impact reading fluency and reading comprehension. Both of



these are foundational pieces to support student literacy in the area of reading. We have begun implementation of the 95 Percent program. As students improve their reading skills they will read for both enjoyment and knowledge. We look forward to the ongoing support of our families to incorporate reading opportunities at home and most specifically spending time reading with their child daily. Taking ten minutes a night reading with a child will have such a great impact in the future.

## STUDENTS OF THE MONTH FOR SEPTEMBER

The school would like to acknowledge both Logan Villarreal (Kindergarten) and Reagyn Smith (7<sup>th</sup> Grader) as the school's Students of the Month for this past November. Both students bring a positive work ethic and a huge smile to their class every day. Mrs. Ruskin notes that Logan is so supportive of her classmates and is very respectful in all areas of the classroom. Mr. Trad notes that Reagyn is very focused in her efforts as a student and also supports her classmates to the fullest.

## BASKETBALL SEASON UNDERWAY

The Morristown Elementary school's basketball program has begun its season. The program will be under the leadership of Head Coach Lindsey Fortkamp and Assistant Coach Jennifer Ross. The team has been working on their skills and are improving daily. The first home game is Wednesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. Please take a moment to come to the school and/or support an upcoming away game. Our fans will be amazed with the brand of basketball the Central Mountain League has and more importantly on the style of play they will see with this year's boys and girls Mustang teams.

## ELKS CLUB HOOP SHOOT FINALIST

The following students were the top performers in their respective age group at the recent Elks Hoop Shoot. These students get the opportunity to compete against other school winners at the next go around taking place this December 7<sup>th</sup> at Wickenburg.

Ages 8 & 9	Richard Ennefer	None
Ages 10 & 11	Ulises Sanchez	Haley Hernandez Traber
Ages 12 & 13	Luis Carrasco	Reagyn Smith

## WICKENBURG CULTURAL ORGANIZATION HOSTS NORTH PHOENIX SYMPHONY

On November 26<sup>th</sup>, the school was invited to the Del Webb Center to watch the North Phoenix Symphony perform. This



event was sponsored by the Wickenburg Cultural Organization. The premise of this year's performance was aligned to movie theme songs. The opportunity to watch these musicians and to listen to classical theme songs was very rewarding. Morrystown Elementary School's very own Savannah Dimmitt (8<sup>th</sup> Grader) was chosen to be "the conductor of the day" and was provided an opportunity to lead the symphony through a performance.



## PROGRESS MONITORING OUR STUDENTS

As we enter December the teachers will be giving the students the mid-year formative assessments. These formative assessments include the STAR Reading & Mathematics tests, and the DIBELS assessment systems. Both assessments systems will provide valuable data to your child's teacher as well as you and your child. This data will highlight the development and progress of your child. In addition, the results will provide feedback to our teachers on areas of strengths and areas needing reinforcement in the classroom. The school is working hard to ensure grade level standards are being delivered in the classrooms. These standards are then measured through our formative assessment tools. In the spring, the school will be administering the AZM2 (AzMerit) and AIMS Science exams. Our goal is to perform at the highest level possible and to reduce the number of students minimally proficient while increasing the number of students proficient. These state tests best guide your child in where they are with the other students in the same grade within Arizona.

### Upcoming Events

Dec 4th	Basketball Home vs Aguila (4:00 pm)
Dec 5 <sup>th</sup>	Basketball at Canon (3:30 pm)
Dec 9th	Regular Governing Board Meeting (6:00 pm)
Dec 18th	School's Winter Performance/PTSA Dinner (5:00 pm)
Dec 20th	Winter Recess Begins
Jan 6th	School Resumes 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter Begins
Jan 9th	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter Awards Ceremony (10:15 am)
Jan 13th	Regular Governing Board Meeting (6:00 pm)
Jan 20 <sup>th</sup>	Martin Luther King Day (No School)







MORRISTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT #75  
25950 West Rockaway Drive  
P.O. Box 98  
Morristown, Arizona 85342

November 26, 2019

Dear Morristown, Elementary School Families,

Arizona Revised Statutes § 15-241 requires the Arizona Department of Education, subject to final adoption by the State Board of Education, to develop an annual achievement profile for every public school in the state based on an A through F scale. The system measures year to year student academic growth, proficiency on English language arts, math and science, the proficiency and academic growth of English language learners, indicators that an elementary student is ready for success in high school and that high school students are ready to succeed in a career or higher education and high school graduation rates.

Recently, the Arizona State Board of Education released A-F letter grades to all public-school districts. This year's letter grade release identified Morristown Elementary School with a "D" label. The outcomes provide Morristown Elementary School with information to align and implement changes needed to increase student achievement. With this release, the school has been involved with the Arizona Department of Education in the School Improvement Process. This will include reviewing needs, root causes, and developing an action plan supported by evidence-based practices.

Currently the school is using its formative assessment system to monitor student progress leading up to the state assessments in the spring. This includes our STAR Reading & Math and our Dibels assessment systems. As Morristown Elementary School monitors students' progress, students will be provided targeted intervention to support areas of deficiency. Reading interventions have been taking place since the beginning of school. This includes the hiring of a Reading Interventionist. Students who continue to demonstrate difficulty will receive additional assistance and interventions as we will be implementing a tutoring program for these select students. We look to communicate progress throughout the year. To further support this process, the district is looking to update its ELA program with new textbooks. Beyond these focused initiatives, there are additional action steps that will support Morristown Elementary School achievement. An update will be provided at the upcoming regular Governing Board Meeting, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. This is a public meeting and the public is encouraged to attend.

The A-F Accountability System is not designed to stigmatize schools but rather to help the state identify which need support. A collaborative partnership between the school and home is essential to our students' successes. Attaining of a "D" is not acceptable and we will work extensively hard to correct this. If you have questions or comments, please contact Dr. Sackos and or your child's classroom teacher.

The following link takes you to the Arizona State Board of Education listing of public schools and their A-F label:  
<https://azsbe.az.gov/f-school-letter-grades>

With regards,

Dr. Gregory T. Sackos  
Superintendent



MORRISTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT #75  
25950 West Rockaway Drive  
P.O. Box 98  
Morristown, Arizona 85342

Noviembre 26, 2019

Estimadas Familias de Morristown Escuela Primaria,

Los Estatutos Revisados de Arizona § 15-241 requieren que el Departamento de Educación de Arizona, sujeto a la adopción final de la Junta de Educación del Estado, desarrolle un perfil de rendimiento anual para cada escuela pública en el estado basado en una escala de A a F. El sistema mide el crecimiento académico de los estudiantes año a año, el dominio de las artes del lenguaje en inglés, matemáticas y ciencias, el dominio y el crecimiento académico de los estudiantes del idioma inglés, indicadores de que un estudiante de primaria está listo para el éxito en la escuela secundaria y que los estudiantes de la escuela secundaria están listos para tener éxito en una carrera o educación superior y tasas de graduación de secundaria.

Recientemente, la Junta de Educación del Estado de Arizona publicó calificaciones de letras A-F a todos los distritos de escuelas públicas. La publicación de calificaciones de este año identificó a Morristown Elementary School con una etiqueta "D". Los resultados proporcionan a la Escuela Primaria Morristown información para alinear e implementar los cambios necesarios para aumentar el rendimiento estudiantil. Con este lanzamiento, la escuela ha estado involucrada con el Departamento de Educación de Arizona en el proceso de mejora escolar. Esto incluirá la revisión de las necesidades, las causas fundamentales y el desarrollo de un plan de acción respaldado por prácticas basadas en evidencia.

Actualmente, la escuela está utilizando su sistema de evaluación formativa para monitorear el progreso de los estudiantes que conducen a las evaluaciones estatales en la primavera. Esto incluye nuestro STAR Reading & Math y nuestros sistemas de evaluación Dibels. A medida que la Escuela Primaria Morristown monitorea el progreso de los estudiantes, los estudiantes recibirán una intervención específica para apoyar las áreas de deficiencia. Las intervenciones de lectura han tenido lugar desde el comienzo de la escuela. Esto incluye la contratación de un intervencionista de lectura. Los estudiantes que continúen demostrando dificultades recibirán asistencia e intervenciones adicionales, ya que implementaremos un programa de tutoría para estos estudiantes seleccionados. Esperamos comunicar el progreso durante todo el año. Para apoyar aún más este proceso, el distrito está buscando actualizar su programa ELA con nuevos libros de texto. Más allá de estas iniciativas enfocadas, hay pasos de acción adicionales que apoyarán el logro de Morristown Elementary School. Se proporcionará una actualización en la próxima reunión regular de la Junta de Gobierno, el 9 de diciembre a las 6:00 pm. Esta es una reunión pública y se alienta al público a asistir.

El Sistema de Responsabilidad de la A-F no está diseñado para estigmatizar a las escuelas, sino para ayudar al estado a identificar cuáles necesitan apoyo. Una asociación de colaboración entre la escuela y el hogar es esencial para el éxito de nuestros estudiantes. No es aceptable obtener una "D" y trabajaremos mucho para corregirlo. Si tiene preguntas o comentarios, comuníquese con el Dr. Sackos o con el maestro/a de su hijo/a.

El siguiente enlace lo lleva a la lista de escuelas públicas de la Junta de Educación del Estado de Arizona y su etiqueta A-F: <https://azsbe.az.gov/f-school-letter-grades>

Sinceramente,

Dr. Gregory T. Sackos  
Superintendente