

MONONGALIA COUNTY DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION NEWSLETTER

“LANGUAGE IS UNIQUE ALL OVER THE WORLD”



Monongalia County celebrates the different languages throughout the world in October

Monongalia County Schools is committed to providing a mutually respectful educational environment that is welcoming to all individuals from diverse backgrounds that promotes individual development, intellectual growth, and responsible citizenship

Throughout the world there are over 7,000 different languages that are spoken with more languages emerging every day. In the United States there are 347 languages that are spoken with English being the primary language.

Why so many languages? That is often asked by many people. The answer comes down to why languages are important.



Language is how we communicate with one another. We convey our feelings and needs. It can be written, oral or signed.

Most of the 7,000 plus languages were developed within tribes of people that were specific to an area or group. When someone came along that did not speak the language it showed that individual did not belong in that area.

Without language we would not be able to communicate with one another. In the times of traders or travelers it was smart to learn certain words or phrases of areas that they would travel to. It helped with the communication and building relationships

Why is it important to learn other languages? It can be beneficial to learn words or phrases of other languages because it allows us to communicate and form relationships with others.

We are living in a globalized world and interacting with individuals that speak different languages on a daily basis. Helping expose our kids to different languages can help them succeed as they go throughout the lives.

October Observations

- Down Syndrome Awareness Month
- Global Diversity Awareness Month
- Italian-American Heritage Month
- LGTB History Month
- National German-American Day- Oct. 6th
- National Stop Bullying Day- Second Wednesday in Oct.

For questions or more information please contact:

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PARENT CORNER

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The parent corner is optional reading for parents that are looking for additional resources or ideas at home. Monongalia county schools in only providing optional resources and respects everyone's differences.

Learning a second language has many benefits to it.

- Career options can improve
- I can expand one's knowledge about other cultures
- It helps boost creativity
- Helps connect with other people.

Even learning certain words or phrases can have benefits to it. All students in K-12 have an opportunity to learn a different language.

How you can help at home

- **Help your child make time to practice-** Your child is already participating in some type of foreign language at school. Find time to talk about or practice what they learned.

This does not need to be every day, but try finding time during dinner or before bed. If you know your child is learning about different foods, then try to incorporate that into the dinner conversation.

- **Have your child teach you to say something-** Give your child an opportunity to teach you will help them and make it fun for them.

Taking an interest in what they are learning and giving them the opportunity to show you will help them stay interested and engaged in learning a new language.

- **Find events related to the language-** See what is going on in the community that celebrates the language they are learning. Providing more exposure and opportunities to learn will help with their interest in the language.

- **Ask the teacher for resources-** Ask the language teacher at school if they could send home additional resources to practice at home or if they have any recommendations.

- **Provide videos, movies and books in the language-** Again, exposing your child and giving them more opportunities to learn another language will help them. Just make sure they are geared toward children and not adults.

THIS MONTH

Learning Sign Language

Sign language has a lot of benefits to it. You always hear about the benefits that sign language has for babies and toddlers, but the benefits are there for older kids too.

- **Improves Spelling-** Research shows that learning the basic sign language skills of the alphabet can help improve spelling in young kids. It helps give them another way of remembering to spell words.

- **Improve classroom behaviors-** Teachers that have incorporated sign language into their classroom are finding it useful with better classroom management. Kids can sign that they need something (toilet, drink, pencil). It helps cut down on classroom interruptions.

- **Improves small motor skills-** Because of the dexterity it requires. Sign language helps improve small motor skills.

- **Build a better vocabulary-** nonverbal communication is a big part of our communication. Sign language helps reinforce vocabulary and meaning of words. When words can be both seen and heard it leaves a stronger impression on you.

There are benefits to starting your child learning early, but no matter the age sign language can have a lot of benefit. Basic knowledge of sign language is beneficial in jobs such as firefighters, police officers, or other civil servant jobs.

WHAT IS MY SCHOOL DOING

Preview to next Month

November is "Kindness to all cultures"

This month will focus on treating others with kindness. We may all have our differences, but it is important to treat everyone with kindness regardless of those differences.

November Observations

- National Native American Heritage Month
- World Kindness Week- Week of November 13th
- World Kindness Day- November 13th

Please note that these are not all observations throughout the month. If any were missed that relates to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion it was not intentional

What is being done at Morgantown High School

Ciao! Greetings from the Italian Language program. We are proud to share that our program continues to grow. We have a range of Sixth through Twelfth graders who are busy learning about Italian culture and language. We could not be happier to once again be in person, “faccia a faccia,” face to face.

Given that there are roughly 22,100 people of Italian descent here in West Virginia, it is important to keep this beautiful romance language alive. Italians have been coming to the Mountain State since the early 1900’s to work in our various industries. We associate Italians with the invention of our state’s beloved Pepperoni Roll, yet the history and traditions that they brought with them from Italy long ago are profound and aplenty. Even our senator, Joe Manchin (formerly “Mancini”) is of Italian descent!

We are also working with the West Virginia Department of Education to establish a certification in Italian for teachers throughout the State. As of now, Monongalia County is one of the only counties that offers the Italian language option. We hope that soon there will be many more!

We Are Diverse!

Morgantown High School has approximately 155 students who have another home language other than English.

There are approximately 30 different languages represented at MHS.



West Virginia Seal of Biliteracy

The Seal of Biliteracy is a nationally recognized award presented to high school students who demonstrate proficiency in English and at least one other language. Last year, Morgantown High School had 8 students that received this award by demonstrating proficiency in English and one other language. The World Languages Department is hoping to have more students achieve this award this school year.

The Seal is recognized at most universities and can give students college credit. The seal also validates that a student has language skills for the 21st Century workforce and our global society. If students are interested, please talk with any of our World Language teachers!

WHAT IS HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH?

Every year, National Hispanic Heritage Month is observed and celebrated in the United States from September 15th to October 15th. This month is set aside to mark and commemorate the histories, cultures and contributions of Americans whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central South America.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that Hispanic Heritage Month began as only a week-long celebration? In 1968, President Lyndon Johnson began efforts towards recognizing the contributions of people with Hispanic heritage by creating this special week. In August of 1988, President Ronald Reagan expanded this observation to the current dates by enacting Public Law 100-402.

WHY IS IT CELEBRATED FROM September 15th to October 15th?

Most monthly celebrations in the United States last from the beginning of any month to its end. However, because the dates for so many important Hispanic struggles for independence fall within the September 15th to October 15th time frame, this month long observation reflects these special dates.

PICTURE CAPTION: Hispanic Heritage Flyer

Hispanic Heritage Month

- September 15th marks the anniversary of independence for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.
- September 16th marks the date of independence for Mexico.
- September 18th marks the date of independence for Chile.
- September 21st marks the date of independence for Belize.
- October 12th (also Columbus Day) is celebrated as Día de la Raza