

MORSE HIGH SCHOOL

The Navigator



Volume 24, Issue 2

November 2020

MESSAGE FROM PRINCIPAL ERIC VARNEY

You are receiving the Autumn 2020 Navigator as we complete the first quarter at Morse High School. Our first round of half-credit courses finished last Friday and a new grading period, along with new half-credit courses, started this Monday. One-credit courses are at their half-way point for the semester and will conclude in late January, with the second semester starting on January 25th. If your student would like to add or drop a half-credit course, they should do that by next Friday, 11/20. After the first of December, course grades will be posted to a student's transcript; if there are any changes that a student would like to make to this quarter's schedule, your student should do that next week. You should receive your student's Quarter 1 report card in the mail by the middle of next week.

I continue to look for successes and take stock in what we have accomplished, as it is too easy to focus on our current challenges during the pandemic. As of today, we have completed nine weeks of school ($\frac{1}{4}$ of the school year), with no wide-spread interruptions to in-person learning; I consider that a success in itself!

I am very impressed with the adaptability of our students and staff. We have essentially redefined education over the last six months; something that we certainly did not wish to do, but have made the best of the situation. We have restructured our course and daily schedules, deployed a completely new online learning platform, reorganized curriculum within courses, and adjusted the expectations of our students to include completing a considerable amount of work from their homes. This has not been a perfect system, but given the challenge that we are faced with, I am impressed with the progress of students and staff members as they have adapted, adjusted and readjusted in order to continue to move forward with the education process. Bravo for this! Given that this initial adjustment to our new school structure could be the most challenging, I am hopeful for the months ahead of us.

Again, I do not want to paint a picture that is more rosey than reality. We do have challenges, not the least of which is the fact that we just cannot cover the amount of material that we could when students attend school five-days-per-week. We are making good progress, but I don't know that we will ever be able to get to all of our

curriculum under the current model. We are not alone in this situation, high schools across the country are dealing with this same challenge. Having said this, I am confident that Morse students will be in-line with other American high school students.

We are also still adjusting and having growing pains with our new online learning platform, Brightspace. Again, we have made significant strides and solved issues that were holding us back just weeks ago, but this has been challenging for teachers and students. We are hopeful that missing grade reports will be more accurate in the parent view during the second quarter and can, once again, be a valuable communication tool for families.

Lastly, I continue to worry about the level of at-home engagement that we have with many of our students. Most students are doing great work on their in-person days; however, the level of engagement often drops-off on the three distant learning days per week. At the end of each distance learning day, teachers are looking to see whether students were engaged in their work through Brightspace during the school day and recording student attendance. Please continue to support your student by following-up with them when they do not “attend” their classes during their distant learning days.

None of these issues are particularly surprising considering the fact that we are conducting school amidst a pandemic that has caused a national crisis. All of the stated issues are improving as the weeks move on. We have made some big jumps forward in terms of student engagement and our use of Brightspace. We are actively engaging families to help get their students moving forward. Most importantly, we are doing all of this work while keeping students safe.

Morse Clubs and other activities are back up-and-running in their modified form. Morse Drama just completed a very creative way to perform Thornton Wilders’ *Our Town* on the front lawn of Morse. Students stood on six individual stages that were well-distanced during the play. It was so wonderful to hear these familiar sounds of a bustling theater as students rehearsed. Morse Debate, Interact, Green Club, Math Team, SCLC, NHS, Civil Rights, SAFE, and other clubs continue to engage students in their modified forms, some splitting the club into two cohorts, while others have the engagement of the full membership in an online format.

MOHIBA opens on Friday, 11/20, on the RSU1/Morse YouTube channel. We will post the link on our website and social media. Although the format is different, it will have the same familiar feel of the MOHIBAs that have occurred over generations. This is the final MOHIBA to take place in our old home at 826 High Street!

Our fall sports seasons are drawing to a close. Although we were unable to have a postseason, we did find a safe way to let our athletes play this fall. Of note, the Morse boys and girls cross country teams were very successful in the Kvac championship meet; with the boys’ team taking first place and the girls’ team runners-up! This was the first time since 2001 that the Morse boys and girls cross country teams qualified for the state meet in the same year. Overall, fall athletic participation was steady with that of last season, with increased participation in cheering, football, and cross country. We are happy that our fall athletes, especially from the class of 2021, were able to participate in athletics, even within their modified seasons.

Morse recently added an esports team this fall and they are off to a great start! Coach Brandon Murray and Coach Brian LaFlamme report that coaching esports is not unlike coaching a physical sport. Team dynamics, the need

for positive morale and to rally around a common purpose are critically important on the esports team. Esports also offers a way for students to earn a varsity letter with a different skill set than other athletics require. The Morse team has had some big wins in the start of their first season and are looking forward to further competition.

We are still on-schedule to open the new Morse High School during the last week of February, 2021! The moving process will begin in January as we continue in-person learning at our old home on High Street until February vacation. When we return after February vacation, we will be in our new, beautiful facility at 826 Shipbuilder Drive.

As case numbers of COVID-19 continue to rise across the state, there is certainly cause for concern. I am confident that our procedures are currently adequate to keep us safe and that we have the ability to change if the need should arise. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, student and staff safety is our number one priority. This will continue as we move into the winter months.

Sincerely,



Eric J. Varney

NEWS FROM THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

Hello from the Athletic Department at Morse High School!

To say this was a “different” fall season would certainly be an understatement. The field hockey and soccer teams were restricted to a 10-game schedule without playoffs. We didn’t have a traditional tackle football season, but we did offer 7v7 flag football to our students. Cross country and golf both had relatively normal seasons with opportunities for championships at the end. Our cheerleaders cheered a lot of different events that they normally would not cheer. All in all, we had approximately 200 student-athletes participate across all of our fall sport offerings.

It is easy to measure success in wins and losses; however, the real successes of this season started with the coaches and student-athletes. In order to participate this season, we were under strict regulations regarding masking, attendance, and sanitization practices. Overall, our coaches and athletes did a phenomenal job of adhering to the guidelines that were expected of them. The Morse Athletic Department could not be happier with how our staff and students responded to the adversity they faced this season.

While the season was certainly different, it did have its share of successes. Morse golf saw steady team improvement throughout the season. Football had 30 athletes on its roster despite not having a traditional tackle season and players were still able to practice and work on skills as they prepare for a possible spring season. Fall cheering had 24 athletes, which is the largest roster they have had in years and maybe ever. They were able to cheer a variety of games this year, which included field hockey, soccer, and flag football. Our girls’ soccer team had a very young starting roster and managed to beat perennial Class D powerhouse North Yarmouth Academy. Our boys’ soccer team was quarantined after exposure to a student who tested positive on another team; however,

they have handled the situation with poise and class. Our boys' cross country team won the Class B Kennebec Valley Athletic Conference championship and qualified for the state championship and the girls' finished 2nd at the conference championship and also qualified for the state championship. This is the first year since 2001 that both boys' and girls' cross country teams have qualified for the state championship in the same year!

As the fall winds down, we are beginning to wonder what will happen this winter. As of this writing, the Maine Principals' Association is in discussion with many state agencies in creating guidelines for winter sports. There is much to be determined and many decisions yet to be made, but we remain optimistic in hopes that we will be able to have some kind of winter season.

We have a new athletics website this year. Please visit our new website [here](#) to find forms, athletic training information, schedules, relevant links, and more. You can also sign up for notifications regarding schedule changes. If and when we do open registration for winter athletics, please visit <https://www.familyid.com/morse-high-school> to fill out the registration form.

As always, please visit Morse Shipbuilders Athletics on social media. This is a quick and easy way to get updates regarding Morse Athletics.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ShipbuildersAD/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/morseshipbuilders/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ShipbuildersAD>

If anything, this year has taught us to take advantage of opportunities while we have them, as these opportunities may be taken away at any given moment. I encourage all of our students to try something new, whether it be sport, club, or another school-affiliated extracurricular activity. As a Morse Shipbuilder, it is clear that the pride and tradition of this school are without parallel. I encourage all students to come out and become part of a proud tradition that is the Morse High Shipbuilders!

GO SHIPBUILDERS!

Sincerely,



Nate Priest

A MESSAGE FROM NURSE BARTER

As you are aware, our boys' soccer team was quarantined for two weeks in October due to a COVID-19 close contact during a soccer game. More recently, two Morse students tested positive for COVID-19. Thankfully, both students are doing well and are looking forward to returning to Morse once their isolation is over. These two cases were not connected to each other and it is believed that the contacts occurred outside of Morse. In addition, there were no "close contacts" within the school due to the amount of time that had passed between the student testing

positive and the last time the student was present. Also, please know that we contacted the appropriate State authorities to discuss the two cases and we were advised that it is completely safe to keep the school open.

In all three situations, we had to employ our COVID response procedures, start contact-tracing, and determine what immediate measures needed to be taken in order to prevent any spread in the school community. All three of these situations lead to further refinement of our response protocols and have made us more prepared.

One thing we can all do is be diligent in following guidelines which include all staff and families use the [At Home Health Screening Tool](#) before coming to school. This screening tool is part of the reason why the two recent cases did not result in any close contacts at school.

I am very proud of both our students and staff for continuing to follow the school requirements for protecting the health and safety of those in our community. Please reach out to me directly if you have any questions or concerns.

SENIOR DEADLINE CHECKLIST

November 19th: BLAST FROM THE PAST PHOTO (FREE)

Submit your elementary and middle school years photos on Google Classroom.

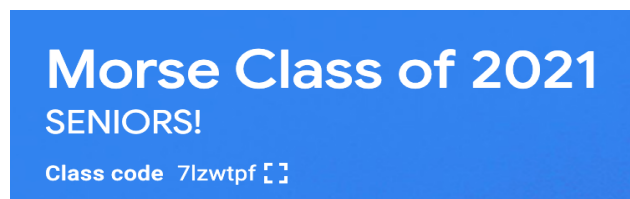
December 10: BABY PHOTO WITH MESSAGE (\$20.00)

Option 1: Parents give money and message to Mrs. Barter. Please put payment in an envelope with the students first and last name.

Option 2: Submit a photo and message on Google Classroom.

PHOTOS SUBMITTED WITHOUT PAYMENT WILL NOT BE INCLUDED.

PURCHASE YOUR YEARBOOK HERE: <https://bit.ly/32fCqGD>



NEWS FROM THE STUDENT SERVICES (GUIDANCE) DEPARTMENT

Visit us online: <http://bit.ly/MHSstudentservices>

Freshman Check-In Meetings: The school counselors are meeting individually with freshman students throughout the second quarter. The check-in includes a psycho-educational curriculum to help students understand their Executive Skills strengths and challenge areas as well as suggestions to improve them. After students take the online survey, an email is generated with their personalized report. Ask your freshman to see their report.

Junior Post-Secondary College Planning Roundtable: Morse Student Services is hosting a virtual Junior Post-Secondary College Planning Roundtable on Wednesday, December 2nd from 11 am-12 pm. The Student Services Team invites students and parents to this presentation on how to begin preparing for college exploration and application and will include guest presenters from Colby College, The University of Maine, and Southern Maine Community College. More information will be provided later this month.

PSAT Coffee Talk: Student Services will host our annual PSAT & Pastries virtually this year on January 13 from 7:30-8:30 am. All students who took the PSAT are invited with their parents to review how to interpret their PSAT results. Information will be provided about what the test results mean and what to do next to prepare for the SAT.

FAFSA: Seniors are encouraged to complete the 2021-2022 FAFSA online now at www.fafsa.gov. Students who complete their forms now increase their chances of accessing grant, scholarship, and need-based financial aid at 2-year and 4-year colleges as well as certification and training programs. Please share your student's EFC (Estimated Family Contribution) found on the first page of the Student Aid Report (SAR) with your student's school counselor when it is available or use this survey: <http://bit.ly/MHS21efc>. A student's EFC may qualify them to apply for additional scholarships. If you have questions about the FAFSA or about filing procedures, please contact Student Services at 443-8250 x1109. For help filing, you can access information through FAME (Finance Authority of Maine) at 1-800-228-3734 or online at <https://www.famemaine.com/>

RaiseMe: RaiseMe is a recommended site to encourage college readiness in students through the offer of micro-scholarships. As early as 9th grade, students can begin tracking their school and community engagement as well as explore ways to increase their chance for micro-scholarships making it easier to plan financially for school. RaiseMe has proven to be a great tool to motivate students. As an example: • Get an A in a course (\$100 - \$1,000) • Get a B in a course (\$50-\$600) • Participate in a school club or sport (\$25 - \$250) Maintaining an accurate RaiseMe account throughout high school helps students track the things they are involved with which will make completing job, college and scholarship applications easier when the time comes. Parents can make a companion account and be connected to their children's RaiseMe accounts. FMI: <https://www.raise.me/parents>

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY LIAISON COUNCIL (SCLC)

The School Community Liaison Council (SCLC) has started the year with an amazing group of students and solid leadership. We are in early conversations about how our group will look and function in the current Covid world, considering many of our previous involvements are on hold or are not Covid-friendly. While one part of SCLC's mission is community involvement, the other part is school leadership and providing student voices. We are inviting members of our school and surrounding community to reach out to us with ideas or needs as we continue to plan our year. If you're interested in learning about other ways you can support our mission, feel free to reach out to Ms. Lindsay Davis, the SCLC advisor, at ldavis@rsu1.org.

MORSE HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY

Building an Anti-Racist Community

As part of the Morse High School Library's [Read Woke and Big Table Discussion](#) program, the library is sponsoring a student and staff book discussion of Tiffany Jewell's book, This Book Is Anti-Racist.

Students and staff who sign-up receive:

1. This Book Is Anti-Racist, by Tiffanny Jewell
2. composition notebook (used with the reading)
3. #socialjustice t-shirt (upon completion of the program)

Four (4) Big Table Discussions will be held virtually, via Google Meet, on the following Wednesdays, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM, and each discussion will focus on a specific section of the book:

- November 18 - "What Is Racism?" (Chapters 1-5)
- December 16 - "The History We Carry" (Chapters 6-9)
- January 13 - "Taking Action" (Chapters 10-14)
- February 3 - "Working In Solidarity" (Chapters 15-20)

The author addresses racism and helps readers form a plan to create inclusive, safe communities.

Our hope is the reading and discussions will lead to more Morse High School community reads in the spring and provide a springboard for administrators, staff, students, school groups, clubs, and organizations to work together as we address racism in our community and foster social action. Please encourage your student to sign up.

For more information and to sign-up, visit [Building an Anti-Racist Community: Book Discussion Group for Students and Staff](#) or scan:



For questions, contact Dawn Lee (dlee@rsu1.org) or Brenda Fagan (bfagan@rsu1.org).

MORSE HIGH SCHOOL FOOD PANTRY

Serving students for 12 years, the Morse High School Food Pantry is located in the library. Students can select food for evening, weekend, and school vacation meals and personal hygiene products.

The pantry is available to all students. No paperwork is required, and no questions are asked.

Students make their requests by completing an order form, which is found at [Morse High School Food Pantry](#). Students will receive an email notification when their orders are ready for pick-up.

How You Can Help

There are many ways you can help our food insecure students. Awareness is the first step. We suggest sharing this article with your family, friends, and community members. Grow and share is another way to support our students. If you have a garden and surplus produce, think about donating your harvest to the Morse High School Food Pantry. Giving food items and money also are ways you can assist. Checks may be made out to Morse High School Food Pantry.

If you would like to donate to the Morse High School Food Pantry, the following is a list of needed items:

- Canned tuna and chicken
- Peanut butter
- Macaroni and cheese (in a box)
- Pasta noodles
- Spaghetti sauce
- Canned vegetables and fruit
- Apple sauce
- Soup
- Crackers
- Cereal
- Bread
- Hamburger
- Chicken

If you need more information, please contact Dawn Lee (dlee@rsu1.org) or Brenda Fagan (bfagan@rsu1.org), Morse High School Library, 443-8250 extension 1018. Thank you!

MORSE HIGH DRAMA

This year's Mohiba, our 91st and our last in our beloved 826 prior to moving to our new, beloved 826!, will be held virtually on YouTube this November 20th and 21st at 7pm. Look for the log-in link which will be provided by Morse alum, Aaron Watson, of the class of 2008, who said to Mr. O'Leary, "Mr. O'Leary, I want to give back to my school and I'll do it for free." That is Shipbuilder pride! **So, look for Mohiba 2020 "Goodbye 826!" coming to YouTube on Friday and Saturday night, November 20th and 21st at 7pm!**

JMG

Support the JMG students by shopping at [Charleston Wrap](#). Charleston wrap offers over 2000 products including wrapping paper, gourmet foods, decor, and kitchen items.

Forty percent (40%) of the proceeds go directly to the JMG program at Morse High School to support our projects. Thank you for your support!

UPDATE FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

We are entering the season of lasts and firsts. At our favorite 826...the last Spirit Week, the last Mohiba, the last visit to the Pit, the last assembly in Montgomery Theater. We also look ahead to the firsts at the new MHS...the Spring Play in the new Montgomery Theater, new classrooms, playing fields on campus, Alumni Banquet in the new gym. The Alumni are working with the building committee to take the physical pieces of our history to the new space and we look forward to opening up our new room to share our extensive collection of Morse history. The past gives us a sense of place, the future gives us hope!

Holly Bisson Lowe '79

COMMUNITY FLYERS

ALL RSU1
STUDENTS INVITED
TO PARTICIPATE



MAKERS MARKET
FOR ALL STUDENT MAKERS, BAKERS,
CRAFTERS & ARTISTS



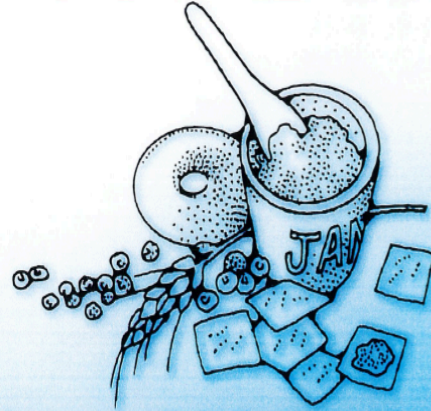
SATURDAY NOVEMBER 21,
2020
9AM-12PM
MORSE HIGH SCHOOL



FOR MORE INFO:
BATHELEMETARYPTA@GMAIL.COM

Sp Adobe Spark

Food Drive



Help donate to the Bath Area Food Bank and help feed people in need.

Items Needed:

- Peanut Butter
- Canned Tuna
- Jam/Jelly
- Canned Pasta
- Mac and Cheese

Sponsored By: NHS, SCLC, JMG, and Interact

RESOURCEFUL LINKS

[Morse Website](#)

[Student Handbook](#)

[COVID Information & Resources](#)

[BrightSpace Access](#)

[Infinite Campus Access](#)

[Daily Bell Schedule](#)

Follow us!

