

# Helen A. Thompson School

## Newsletter

**School Telephone: 724-3930**

**School Fax Number: 724-3934**

**Transportation: 582-6663**

**District Web Page: [msad11.org](http://msad11.org)**

### School Hours:

8:10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

As a matter of safety, please do not drop students off before 8:10. There is no supervision on the playground or in classrooms until that time.

## Dates to Remember

### October

5th: No school, Staff Workshop Day

8th: No school, Columbus Day

9th: PTA Fundraiser order forms & payment due

10th: PTA meeting, 6:00 in library

17th: Early release day, K-5 students

dismissed at 12:00, no school for PreK

17th: Parent Teacher Conferences, 12:30 - 4:00

17th: PTA budget meeting, 6:00 in library

18th: Parent Teacher Conferences, 3:30 - 7:00

26th: Mismatched socks day

26th: Grade 5 dance (for all district 5th graders),

7:00 - 8:30 in HTS gym

### November

2nd: Early release, students dismissed at 12:00

7th: Picture retake day

12th: Veterans Day observed, no school

14th: PTA meeting, 6:00 in library

21st - 23rd: No school, Happy Thanksgiving!

30th: End of first trimester



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**Helen Thompson Elementary School  
and Helen A. Thompson PTA**

## Notes from the Principal

Dear Families,

Happy October! It is incredible to think that we have been in school now for nearly a full month of days. Routines are well established, early assessments have been conducted, and classroom learning units are in full swing! We are looking forward to seeing you all for Parent-Teacher Conferences coming right up on October 17th (early release day) and October 18th (evening conferences). You can schedule a conference with your child's teacher by going to <https://www.pickatime.com/client?ven=11604240>. Remember that in addition to meeting with your child's homeroom teacher, you can also schedule time to meet with our literacy specialist, Mrs. Inman, and special educator, Mrs. Thomas. Our specialists, Ms. Cochran, Mrs. Geishaker, and Mrs. Mazerolle can be contacted directly through email (below),

Our transportation department has been working hard to create and maintain efficient bus routes with a growing number of students riding each bus. Thank you for taking the time to discuss with your child the importance of riding the bus safely every day. We are still in need of bus drivers across the district! If you know anyone interested, please call transportation at 582-6663.

October is Fire Prevention month! Local firefighter, Nick Whitmore, will visit our school next week to teach students about the importance of fire safety. This is a great time to talk to your child about fire safety at home and to discuss your fire safety plan.

Remember that on our Early Release day, all K-5 students are dismissed at 12:00 this year.

As always, thank you for partnering with us to support your children in the best ways possible!

In the spirit of growth and learning,

## It's Time to Schedule Parent-Teacher Conferences!

**Wednesday, October 17th, 12:30 - 4:00**

**Thursday, October 18th, 3:30 - 7:00**

To schedule your conference(s), go to

<https://www.pickatime.com/client?ven=11604240>.

If you are interested in scheduling a conference with our itinerants, please contact them directly at:

Music: Mrs. Geishaker [cgeishaker@msad11.org](mailto:cgeishaker@msad11.org)

Art: Miss Cochran [dcochran@msad11.org](mailto:dcochran@msad11.org)

PE: Mrs. Mazerolle [bmazerolle@msad11.org](mailto:bmazerolle@msad11.org)

## Pledge of Allegiance Hosts

Thank you to 5th graders Aubrey D., Raymond F., Macv H. And Lilly D. who used the intercom to lead the school in the Pledge of Allegiance.



## Guidance Notes

October is anti-bullying month and to recognize that fact we will be putting aside our regular guidance lessons to focus on this topic. We will be focusing on what bullying actually is, what strategies we can use if it happens to us, how we can safely be an up-stander, and how to make our school a safe, comfortable place for everyone to learn and have fun.

According to the website [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov): "Bullying is being mean to another kid over and over again. Bullying often includes: teasing, talking about hurting someone, spreading rumors, leaving kids out on purpose, or attacking someone by hitting them or yelling at them. Bullying does not always happen in person. Cyber-bullying is a type of bullying that happens online or through text messages or emails."

It is not bullying to tell someone you don't want to play with them, to say you don't like their outfit, or laugh when they miss the ball. Those things are not nice or kind, however, unless they occur more than once they are not considered to be bullying.

Through education and practice, it is my hope to help students choose to be kind and more understanding and accepting. We don't have to like everyone but we do need to be respectful. I also want the students to be able to be their own advocates and to feel confident in themselves so that on a day when someone forgets to be kind they can protect their "bucket" and be strong enough to not let it affect them.

Helping students discover their own strength and confidence is a passion of mine. I look forward to watching them learn and to reinforcing skills that will be helpful to them and lead them on a life-long journey of success. If you have any questions or concerns about this or any topic, I am only a phone call/email away. I am grateful to have the support of involved parents as we work together to create the next generation of world changers.

Joan Tourtelotte  
("Miss T.")  
School Counselor

## PTA News

Thank you to all of our families who have been supporting our PTA fundraisers. A reminder that *No Fuss Fundraiser* donations as well as catalog orders and payment are due on Tuesday, October 9th.

Fall Fundraising Update: To avoid shipping costs please use the paper order form provided. Shipping is free for any amount when using the paper forms. All items will be shipped to your home for you to deliver. Shipping is free on online orders over \$79.

Our next monthly meeting is Wednesday, October 10th at 6:00 PM in the Helen Thompson Library. All are welcome!

We will be holding a budget planning meeting for anyone interested in helping to set this year's PTA budget. This meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 17 at 6:00 PM in the school library.

## Box Tops Update

Congratulations to Mrs. Brann's First Grade for bringing in the most Box Tops in September! Thank you to all for participating. Keep up the great work of clipping and collecting!



## Fifth Grade News

Thank you to everyone who contributes to our bin at the West Gardiner Transfer Station for returnable bottles and cans. The community support for this fund raiser helps to provide funding for fields trips for our fifth graders.

### No School

Friday, October 5th  
Staff Workshop Day  
&

Monday, October 8th  
Columbus Day

Have a safe and restful weekend!

### Early Release Day

Wednesday, October 17th  
K-5 students dismissed at 12:00  
No school for PreK

**Notification from the Director of Operations**

Dear Parent, Guardian, or Staff Member:

Each year it is required that I inform everyone on our policies for handling Asbestos and the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. Below is some information regarding each topic.

**Asbestos:** The current operation and maintenance plan is maintained at the Superintendents office. This includes a 6-month surveillance program and a 3-year AHERA inspection conducted by an independent company as outlined in the State Regulations. The following facilities have been identified as having asbestos floor tile, ceiling tile or both: Pittston Elementary, and the Gardiner Area High School.

**Integrated Pest Management:** The objective of the IPM program is to provide effective pest control while minimizing pesticide use. Through maintenance and the cleaning, we will reduce or eliminate available food and water sources and hiding places for the pests. We will also routinely monitor the school area to detect pest problems and prevent the pest from becoming established. Non-chemical methods will always be implemented first when dealing with pests. However, pesticides may be necessary to control individual pest problems. When this happens, the school will use the least hazardous effective pesticide feasible. Spraying of exteriors will only be used in a worse case situation and is not allowed at this time. The Director of Plant Operations is the only individual authorized to allow the contacted company to spray for pests. Parents, legal guardians, and school staff will be notified of specific pesticide applications made at the school. To receive notification, you must be placed on the registry. Notification will be given at least five days before planned pesticide applications. Notices will also be posted in school and on school grounds. If you need a copy of the registry form please ask for one at the front office at your school. Please remember that we are not spraying for pests at this time and we would only use this in an extreme situation. Each school is required to maintain records of monthly inspection and information about the pesticides used.

If you have any questions about asbestos or the IPM program please feel free to call me at the Superintendent's Office at 582-5346.



Sincerely,  
Gabe Dostie  
Director of Operations

**MSAD #11: Parents' Right To Know Notification**

Your child is attending a school receiving Title I federal funds through the Every Student Succeeds Act (referred to as ESSA). This Federal law requires that parents be notified of their right to know the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s) in core academic subject areas, including the following:

The type of state credential or license that the teacher holds. Some teachers will have a credential in a particular subject area, such as English or mathematics, and others will have a multiple subject credential, which allows them to teach a variety of subjects, such as in elementary schools.

The education level and subject area of the teacher's college degree(s). All teachers have a bachelor's degree, and many teachers have graduate degrees beyond the bachelor's, such as a masters or doctoral degree.

In addition to the qualifications of the teacher, if a paraprofessional (Educational Technician) provides your child services, you may also request information about his or her qualifications. Many paraprofessionals have two years of college, and others have passed a test that verifies their qualifications.

If you would like this information, please contact the school principal.

**M.S.A.D. #11 Child Find Policy**

MSAD #11 seeks to ensure that all children within its jurisdiction are identified, who are school-age five through the school year in which they turn 20 and who are in need of special education and supportive assistance, including homeless children, state wards, state agency clients, students who have been suspended or expelled, children attending private schools receiving home instruction, children incarcerated in county jails, children who have the equivalent of 10 full days of unexcused absences or seven consecutive school days of unexcused absences during a school year, highly mobile children (including migrant or homeless), and children who are suspected of being disabled and in need of special education and supportive assistance even though they are advancing from grade to grade.

MSAD #11 is responsible for Child Find for resident students attending private or public schools through public tuition payments or public contract and shall meet this duty either through appropriate arrangements with the receiving school unit or through direct child find services by district personnel or contracted personnel.

*(Continued on next page.)*

**M.S.A.D. #11 Child Find Policy (continued)**

MSAD #11's Child Find responsibility shall be accomplished through a unit wide process which, while not a definitive or final judgment of a student's capabilities or disability, is a possible indicator of special education needs. Final identification of students with disabilities and programming for such students occurs only after an appropriate evaluation and a determination by the IEP team.

This Child Find process shall include obtaining data on each child through multiple measures, direct assessment, and parent information regarding the child's academic and functional performance, gross and fine motor skills, receptive and expressive language skills, vision, hearing and cognitive skills. MSAD #11 may schedule child find activities during its annual kindergarten enrollment to assist in planning for necessary special education and related service at the start of the school year. If screening occurs in the spring prior to school entry, MSAD #11 will refer the child to the regional Child Development Services (CDS) site within 10 school days.

If the Child Find process indicates that a student may require special education and supportive services in order to benefit from regular education, the student shall be referred to the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Team to determine the student's eligibility for special education services.

School staff, parents, or agency representatives or other individuals with knowledge of the child may refer children to the IEP team if they believe that the student, because of a disability, may be in need of special education and supportive services in order to benefit from regular education. Such a referral should follow the school unit's pre-referral and referral policy.

Legal Reference: 34 C.F.R. §300.111 (2006)

Maine DOE Rule Ch. 101 § IV(2) (July 2011)

Adopted: April 7, 1994

Revised: November 4, 2004; May 3, 2007; December 3, 2009; February 4, 2016

**Early Release Days**

Please note that the dismissal time for Early Release Days has been changed by 30 minutes. Elementary students will now be dismissed at 12:00 on Early Release Days. There is no PreK on scheduled Early Release Days. In the event that school is closed early due to weather conditions or for other unexpected closings, PreK will be released at 10:00 and K-5 students will be released at 12:00.

**Spotlight on Staff"**

**Interview with Tamia Welch  
Fifth Grade Teacher**



**Where did you go to school?**  
Drury College, Springfield, Missouri

**What is your favorite book?**  
I can't pick one - favorite genre - mysteries

**What are your hobbies?**  
Baking, gardening, reading, playing the piano

**What is your favorite food?**  
Baked beans!

**What is your favorite thing about working at HT?**  
The staff and students are welcoming and friendly

**Attendance Matters**

If your student will be absent or tardy, be sure to let the office know at 724-3930. We will be keeping careful track of student attendance and tardy arrivals as required by Maine State Law. If a concern develops, you will be notified right away and we will work together to develop a plan for improved attendance. So far, 66% of our students have been present every day!