

MVHS Seeks Feedback on New Competency-Based Grading System

By Mike Jette, MVHS Principal

This is the first year of Merrimack Valley High School's new competency-based grading system. On Wednesday, April 9, school administrators and teacher leaders will hold a parent listening session to receive feedback on the strengths and limitations of the new

grading system.

Parents of current MVHS students are invited to join us from 6:30 to 8 PM in the MVHS cafeteria. Parent feedback will be considered along with feedback from students and faculty members to help school leaders identify any needed adjustments to the system.

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March 14 (3-14) was a day to celebrate All Things Pi at AE/MS. The whole school came together at the end of the day to create a giant human spiral. The center of the spiral was Ernie the AE/MS Eagle holding the number three, followed by Ms. Slayton holding the decimal point, followed by the rest of the students and staff each holding a digit of pi on a decorated paper plate. The AE/MS mathematicians have a fascination with the digits of pi.

Caption: Jane Slayton. Photo: Mike Wiley

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AE/MS Celebrates Pi Day

Paper plates build pi one digit at a time

By Michelle Keezer
AE/MS Math Teacher

Pi Day is celebrated on March 14th (3-14) around the world. Pi (Greek letter "π") is the symbol used in mathematics to represent a constant — the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter — which is approximately 3.14159. Most textbooks however only use 3.14 or 22/7 to calculate the circumference and area of a circle.

Paige Makechnie and Addie Pine display their creatively decorated pi-digit paper plates.

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Pi has been calculated to over one trillion digits beyond its decimal point. As an irrational and transcendental number, it will continue infinitely without repetition or pattern.

While only a handful of digits are needed for typical calculations, pi's infinite nature makes it a fun challenge to memorize and to computationally calculate more and more digits. Akira Haraguchi, a Japanese mentalist, has recited the most digits of pi from memory. It took him 16 hours to recite 100,000 decimal places from memory.

AE/MS celebrated Pi Day on March 14. There was a competition school-wide to see who could memorize the most digits of pi, and everyone who memorized digits did a great job! We had 71 kindergarten through eighth grade students who wanted to take a shot at reciting pi digits. The reciting ranged from 3 digits up to 101 digits of pi.

During the week, students and staff members each decorated a paper plate with one digit of pi. Students brought their plates to the gym for a school-wide assembly. Seventy-one students were recognized for their efforts, and then it was time for the big Pi Challenge. Our goal

was to make a spiral starting in the center of the gym with Ernie the Eagle and spiraling out in the order of the pi digits.

We had well over 250 people participating. This process took about 30 minutes to complete. I am very proud of everyone who made this day a huge success! Everyone received a pi pencil and a "Whoopie Pi"!

Interesting Facts About Pi

Pi is the 16th letter of the Greek alphabet, just as P is the 16th of our alphabet.

Pi is an irrational number, which means that it cannot be represented exactly by a fraction. This was first proved in the 18th century.

The mathematical use of the Greek letter pi was popularized by William Jones in 1706.

It was chosen for being the first letter of the Greek word for "perimeter."



Paige Makechnie and Addie Pine display their creatively decorated pi-digit paper plates.

Albert Einstein was born on Pi Day: March 14, 1879.

Pi is the most recognized mathematical constant in the world. Scholars often consider pi the most important and intriguing number in all of mathematics.

In the Star Trek episode "Wolf in the Fold," Spock foils the evil computer by commanding it to "compute to the last digit the value of pi."

Egyptologists and followers of mysticism have been fascinated for centuries by the fact that the Great Pyramid at Giza seems to approximate pi. The

See Pi on page 45

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