

ATKINSON ACADEMY - January, 2008

17 Academy Avenue, Atkinson, NH 03811

(603) 362-5521

NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRINCIPAL:

What an interesting winter this has been! As I write this note I realize that we have not had a five day school week since early December. I appreciate both your flexibility and the flexibility of our teachers as they constantly re-adjust their schedules and expectations. At this point we are expecting at least three full weeks of school in June. Please keep this in mind as you make your summer vacation plans.

In recent letters I have spoken about our Professional Learning Communities. One of the exciting aspects of this is that our teachers are meeting every other week to review standards, review student work and to talk about teaching. This kind of discussion, with the purpose of sharing best practices results in improved achievement for all students. It is exciting for all of us to be part of this vibrant learning community.

I would like to ask your assistance in using the online forms (on the school web site) for student change in going home procedures, and to please limit calls to the office. Too much of our secretary's valuable time is spent making changes that should have been taken care of before students come to school.

This is an important learning time, and we have many exciting projects going on. As always, thank you for your support at home.

Best regards,

Heidi Webster
Principal



FROM THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Even though Corporal John Lapham will not be here this year as our D.A.R.E. officer, our thoughts and prayers are with him, and for his family as he battles leukemia.

We are looking forward to welcoming Officer Patrick Schiavone, from the Plaistow Police Department, as the Project D.A.R.E (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) instructor. He will be here on Tuesday mornings from February 5th through April to instruct our fifth grade classes. Each 45 minute lesson is designed to equip our students with the skills needed for resisting peer pressure and the temptation to experiment with drugs and alcohol. Officer Schiavone will work with our students to raise their drug and alcohol awareness, on building self esteem and to help them learn to make positive decisions on their own. These lessons will prepare them for different situations they might face as they enter their middle and high school years. When he is not involved with classroom duties, he will be participating in both lunch and recess activities. This will help create a positive attitude towards law enforcement officers and respect for the law.

Kathie Dayotis
Assistant Principal/Curriculum Coordinator

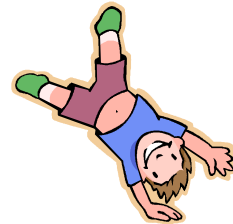


FROM THE GYM

Happy New Year to everyone.

All grades have started the New Year with an educational gymnastics unit. In the first two classes we covered basic balances (solo, partner, and group), animal walks, rolls, and cartwheels. Subsequent lessons involved the use of equipment such as the wedge, vaulting box, tunnel, cargo net, and climbing ropes. The children have been doing a wonderful job of following the safety rules, cooperating, being creative, and of course ... having fun. This unit takes a great amount of time for me to set-up each day, but it is well worth it.

If you ever have any questions concerning your child, my classes, or anything else, please don't hesitate to contact me. My phone extension is # 305. I will be happy to return your call. As always, thanks for your support.



Jeff Goddard
PE Teacher

Music News

First and second graders played rhythm bingo. They should be good at reading simple rhythms using quarter notes and rests and eighth notes.

Third graders are practicing a B-A-G song to play for their classmates. They need to remember to bring recorders to music class.

Fourth graders are learning about obstinate patterns that accompany songs and poems.

Fifth graders listened to the pioneer and cowboy songs that Aaron Copland used in "Street on a Frontier Town" from the ballet Billy the Kid.

Chorus members are learning new songs for the March 24th concert.

Joyce Peavey
Music Teacher



Computer/Health

It is hard to believe that we are at the half way point of the school year. The last two months the students have been working hard in the computer lab. First graders continue to improve their math skills on the Everyday Math Program. Visitors that come into the room are always impressed with how much they are learning while having fun.

Second grade students are learning all about fonts and clipart. Look for some fantastic acrostic poems to be coming home soon.

Third graders continue keyboarding. We have also been using those keyboarding skills to write letters and stories.

Fourth grade students have been learning more involved skills such as using spell check, the thesaurus, cut and paste and making columns. These skills will be very important with future work.

Fifth graders are doing a wonderful job making brochures about Atkinson Academy. They are very excited about sharing these with fifth graders from other schools in the district.

Starting January 28th the first and fourth grades will return to the health room. The focus for the first graders will begin with good dental care. In fourth grade the students will be learning about nutrition. The second, third and fifth graders will continue with technology instruction for another couple of months.

Anna Lizier
Computer/Health Teacher

ART

Moon journals are an exciting way to pass the time in January & February. Our first grades and multi-age classroom are following one full cycle of the moon. Students and families observe the night sky each night and record their sightings. As the moon waxes and wanes, students draw pictures and describe in writing what they notice. In Art class, they are learning creative ways to paint and draw the night sky. They are making many pictures featuring the different phases of the moon. Students will pick their favorites to include in their moon journals. This is one of my favorite integrated lessons and I have my own journal and enjoy sharing my pictures and observations. Our full moon festival at the end is my favorite school family night.

Second graders have been using texture in their artwork. We have been comparing the texture styles of Vincent Van Gogh and Georgia O'Keefe. We have been recognizing the difference between man-made and natural textures as well. Our unit will end with a clay project incorporating textures, slab roll and coil building techniques.

Third graders are enjoying the creation of their traditional Navajo pottery. They begin with a pinch pot base and use coil construction to build the sides up or outward. They will also be glazing a traditional geometric pattern onto their pot. The whole process does take several weeks and the pots must be fired in the kiln twice but the results are wonderful.

Fourth graders started the New Year learning cutting techniques to make a colonial stencil pattern. Patterns were then printed in with a sponge painting technique. Their next unit will be cylinder drawings and it will be the beginning of learning to draw 3-D shapes.

Fifth graders started their new year with an integrated project with Mrs. Ditoro, our school counselor. She and I created a project where students would design a flag communicating what is different and unusual about them. Our goal is to enforce the valuable social skill of tolerance.

Students are encouraged to take a chance and share something different and unusual about themselves in a supportive environment. The knowledge that they are different, unique, accepted, and celebrated for their individuality creates a positive atmosphere for life and learning.

Our art lessons for the month of January and February for grades 2-5 have been briefly delayed so that Mrs. Ditoro and I can integrate important themes like the fifth grade flag project. Second graders are learning the importance of saying 'sorry'. Third graders did a project on "point of view", how we all have a different opinion or impression about the same thing. Fourth graders created a book about problem solving. Each page shared a way to solve conflicts peacefully.

Pam Alexander
Art Teacher



Counselor's Corner

Happy New Year! I am hoping 2008 is a promising year for us all. It was great to see all the children after the holidays filled with excitement and eager to continue learning. As I talked to the children I was surprised to hear how many of them received all kinds of electronic gadgets and video games as gifts. I have been reading some studies on the video games vs. board games and the impact they have on children and on family life in general. Video games are generally played in isolation and do not require much, if any, social interaction. Children are exposed to constant bits of rapid action in these games that may affect their attention span and focusing in other settings.

On the other hand, board games promote social interactions between people. They are a great way for a family to spend some quality time together. They teach many social skills including taking turns, waiting patiently, problem solving and they provide opportunities for social conversations.

The New Year is still young. How about adding a game night to your schedule, complete with some board games, and popcorn, and have some old fashioned family fun.

February's guidance theme is Problem Solving with a focus on bullying.

In **Grade 5** I will be showing an excellent video entitled: When You See Bullying Happen. It is all about what a bystander can do. The children in the video are 5th and 6th graders who are not professional actors. This makes it very appealing to the students.

In **Grade 4** we will look at what bully behavior is through the eyes of a victim, a bully and a

bystander. Several students will play the roles of the characters in a story.

In **Grade 3** we will be brainstorming ways to solve conflict peacefully. They will be able to reference their list for the rest of the year when a problem arises.

In **Grade 2** I will be reading The Bully Blockers Club and students will be brainstorming ways the characters can solve the problem in the book.

In **Grade 1** I will be co-teaching with Mrs. Alexander in Art. We will read Hands are Not for Hitting and there will be an art project to reinforce the message of the book.

In **Kindergarten** I will be reading Talk and Work It Out. We will be making "bugs" and discussing what bugs us and how we can handle our "bugs" peacefully.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at mditoro@atkinsonacademy.com or call me at 362-5521 ext. 313.

Mary Beth Ditoro
School Counselor

Reading Specialist's News

As your children grow in their literacy development, please support their progress in the following ways:

- Talk with them about the world around them: The more knowledge they have, the more background information they will bring to their reading.
- Discuss the different and varied purposes for reading: We read for enjoyment and pleasure as well as for information: Novels, recipes, newspapers.
- Let your children see you reading and discuss the different types of reading you do.
- Ask children about their favorite types (genres) of writing.
- Encourage your children to explore new genres.
- Provide a range of reading materials such as novels, magazines, newspapers, recipes, and instructions.

When you create a literate environment and model literacy, you are taking important steps to ensure that your children will become life-long readers and writers.

Let's hold on to the joy of reading!

Arlene Amendolara
Reading Specialist

Don't forget to:

- Call the school absence line, 362-5521 (x303) when your child will be absent (this saves us a phone call to you).
- School hours are 8:30-3:00. Please do not drop off students before 8:15.
- Send in a note when your student will be dismissed early (please, no later than 2:30).
- Send a note when your student is taking a bus other than his or her assigned bus (change in going home forms can be found online at www.atkinsonacademy.com). Please include the student's full name, teacher name and date.
- Update phone numbers and emergency contacts promptly.
- Drop items off at the office and we will deliver them to your child. We prefer that you not go to the classroom directly.
- Sign in and wear a visitor pass if you are going beyond the office.
- Put names in your child's jackets, sweatshirts and other belongings.
- Please note the new Monday Morning Meeting start time of **9:15 am**.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 2/1/08 - Progress Reports sent home
- 2/2/08 - Town Deliberative Session
- 2/4-2/8 - School Book Fair**
- 2/5/08 - Book Fair, 3:00-7:00 pm, Library
- PTA Executive Board Mtg.
- 2/6/08 - Early Release 1:00;
No PM Kindergarten
- Ski Club
- 2/7/08 - Book Fair, 3:00-7:00 pm, Library
- Deliberative Session, PAC, 7:00 pm
- 2/13/08 - Ski Club Makeup Date
- 2/21/08 - School Board Mtg., SAU, 7:30 pm
- 2/25 - 2/29 VACATION - WINTER BREAK

LUNCH SCHEDULE

The following schedule should help you with plans for lunch with your students:

1st Grade

RECESS 11:45 - 12:05
LUNCH 12:10 - 12:30

2nd Grade

LUNCH 11:45 - 12:05
RECESS 12:10 - 12:30

3rd Grade

RECESS 12:15 - 12:35
LUNCH 12:40 - 1:00

4th Grade

LUNCH 11:00 - 11:20
RECESS 11:25 - 11:45

5th Grade

RECESS 11:00 - 11:20
LUNCH 11:25 - 11:45

**Kindergarten
September 2008**

Incoming Kindergarten

2008-2009

Registration for incoming kindergarten students has begun! If you have a child or know of a child that will be 5 years old by September 30, 2008, please call the office at 362-5521 X300 or come in to fill out a kindergarten registration form. Please mark your calendars: Kindergarten Parent Information Night will be on April 1st from 6:30-7:30 pm.

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**Timberlane Regional School District
Annual Child Check Clinic**

Why: Screen the developmental skills of children from birth to school entry age for potential learning difficulties

Where: Timberlane Learning Center
Pollard School
120 Main Street
Plaistow, NH

When: Monday, February 11 from 9:00-2:00pm

How: Appointments are required and may be made by contacting Jane Grimm at 382-7146 ext 262

This service is free of charge and open to all residents of Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow and Sandown.
All results are confidential.

New Students

Parents of new students planning on enrolling at Atkinson Academy in September 2008, including those who will be new to the first grade, should call the school office to register their children.