

ATKINSON ACADEMY - February, 2008

17 Academy Avenue, Atkinson, NH 03811

(603) 362-5521

NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRINCIPAL:

Last night I submitted my letter of resignation to the Timberlane School Board. As many of you know, I have been bit by the travel bug, and I have found a great way to see the world! This summer I will be traveling to Malaysia to become the assistant principal of the elementary school at the International School of Kuala Lumpur. It is a very large and highly respected school, and I am looking forward to working with a dynamic administrative team and delightful students from all over the world. Of course I am also looking forward to wonderful travel opportunities.

I will continue to give my work at Atkinson Academy my full energy and attention through the end of the school year. I have loved my job, the students, and the people I have worked with the past eight years. It is a fine school in no small measure due to the support of all of you. I'm sure the transition to new leadership will go smoothly.

Best wishes for an enjoyable winter break.

Best regards,

Heidi Webster
Principal



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.

FROM THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Academically, children can be doing well in the classroom but lack organizational skills. Teachers and parents need to work together to develop good organizational skills that will continue throughout their lifetime.

Teachers should make sure that assignments and activities are clearly written. Every day after school parents should have their child empty his or her backpack of any unnecessary papers.

While homework assignments for the week are sometimes given on Mondays, your child may need help breaking the work into small daily tasks. Using a calendar for the older children will help determine project deadlines. Work together to include all activities that might affect their daily schedules. Knowing the expectations is an important contributor towards getting organized.

In the evenings after homework is complete, have your children put their assignments in their backpacks for the next school day. You might also include any reading books, shuttles, teacher notes, sneakers or musical instruments.

Children need our guidance to become better organized. It doesn't always come naturally. Strong organizational skills will benefit children in the years ahead as they will develop better daily routines, have less stress, and better grades.

Kathie Dayotis
Assistant Principal/Curriculum Coordinator

Enrichment News

There's a lot going on in Enrichment right now. Three 5th graders were honored for winning the stock market challenge for the entire state of New Hampshire and all divisions. The Pink Cows turned a \$100,000 investment into \$115,000 in an eight-week period. They were honored by Fidelity Investments and the Union Leader with a tour of the Fidelity campus in Merrimack and a banquet.

There will be two teams representing Atkinson Academy at the Destination Imagination Meet at Sanborn Academy on March 15th. Both teams are solving the "Hit or Myth" challenge.

We have been enjoying visits by landscape architect, Laura Campbell. So far the 3rd, 4th, and Kindergarten students have made model gardens. They are preparing for the actual garden that will be constructed on the hill in front of the school in May. It's fun to think about flowers, plants, and getting outside when we have been experiencing so much cold and moisture.

In April we will have an Enrichment Day to go along with our theme of Caretakers of the Earth. We are looking for volunteers to share their interests in gardening, crafts from recycle materials, and other things to do with preserving our earth for future generations. We hope you will be able to join us.

Sandra Bauer
Enrichment

FROM THE GYM

While the weather has been cold and snowy outside, we have been participating in four Winter Olympic events in the gym. For our first lesson we all used "skis" made from strips of newspaper to simulate cross-country skiing. Next, the children were divided into teams for the very popular bobsled competition. The bobsleds are made of a gymnastics mat placed on top of 6 scooters. A driver sits on top of the "bobsled" holding a steering wheel (rubber ring). The team pushes the sled around an oval track inside the gym. Only one bobsled runs on the track at a time. I keep track of their times with a stopwatch. The group with the best teamwork, not necessarily the fastest students usually wins. Despite (or maybe because of) the occasional crash, a great time is had by all.

On day two of the Olympics we start with "the luge competition". The luge is actually 2 scooters joined together and the course is a zigzag through pylons. The kids work with a partner, one "driving" and one pushing. We also play hockey in this class. The 1st and 2nd graders play scooter hockey, while the upper grades play floor hockey.

At this time, I would like to remind everyone of the upcoming Jump Rope for Heart. A notice went home in the shuttle of 2/15/08. It is a fun event, and it is for a good cause. It is open to students in all grades.

As always, thanks for your help in making sure that your child dresses correctly for PE class.

Jeff Goddard
PE Teacher

FROM THE NURSE'S OFFICE

Many children have come to the health office lately and tell me that they did not eat breakfast and most of the time they say it is because they did not have time. It has been proven medically that breakfast is one of the most important meals of the day and necessary to start the metabolism. Avoid the temptation to be a breakfast skipper by following these quick tips from the USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service:

- **No time?** Build a breakfast around foods that are ready to eat or take little preparation time. There are plenty that qualify: fresh and canned fruits, milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, ready-to-eat cold cereals and instant breakfast.
- **Take it to go** - try celery stuffed with peanut butter or a meat or cheese spread, dried fruits, granola bars or vegetable juices.
- **Perk up cereals** - top with fruit or chopped nuts
- **Not hungry yet?** Drink 100% juice. Something is better than nothing. Please remember to pack your child's lunch box with healthy snacks, especially if this will be the first thing they eat for the day. Cookies and chips should not be what they eat at 9 or 10 in the morning.
- **Start the day 10 minutes earlier** in order not to rush and have time to enjoy some food.

Eating something nutritious first thing in the morning will jump start your child's brain for their busy job of learning.

Linda Tobin, Nurse



LIBRARIAN'S REVIEW

The Caldecott Awards were announced a few weeks ago. This award is given for the best illustrated children's books published in 2007. Only one winning book and several "honor" books are selected. This year's winner was a surprise because it is not a typical picture book. In fact, it is over 500 pages long. However, the story is told mostly through the numerous illustrations. Because it is such a long book, it will probably appeal more to older readers.

First the Egg

Written and Illustrated by Laura Vaccaro Seeger

This deceptively simple picture book is one of four Caldecott Honor books for 2008. Readers are introduced to transformations through a die-cut cover of an egg followed by a chicken. Subsequent pages show seed to flower, caterpillar to butterfly, tadpole to frog, and so on. Every introductory page has a die cut that reveals the transformation in three parts. For example, with the egg and the chicken, the egg appears in the die cut. Upon turning the page, the die cut reveals a hatched egg, with the full grown chicken on the next page. Words are used sparingly, encouraging the reader to dwell on the oil on canvas pictures, which are simply amazing. A surprise ending brings the reader "full circle".

The Invention of Hugo Cabret

Written and Illustrated by Brian Selznick

The winner of the 2008 Caldecott Award, this book is truly a masterpiece of art. Exquisite pencil drawings reveal a mystery set in 1930's Paris. Hugo, a twelve-year-old orphan, lives in the walls of a train station. Shortly before his death, Hugo's father, a clock maker, had discovered an automaton in a museum. He tried to get it to

function and now Hugo picks up where his father left off. An old man who runs a toy booth and an odd, bookish girl add to the mystery. The sequential pictures reveal elements of a flipbook, a graphic novel, and even filmmaking. This is truly an unusual book.

BOOK FAIR

I would like to publicly thank all of you who supported the book fair this year. We had our best year ever, with a 10% increase in sales. The money we raise from the book fair, pays for a visiting author or illustrator. Thank you again for your support. It is appreciated!

Ellen Beckwith
Library Media Specialist

Music News

Fifth graders have been experiencing drumming ensembles as part of a percussion focus. They have to listen to each other to keep together.

Fourth graders have been experiencing ostinato patterns that keep repeating. They have used body percussion and then transferred to percussion instruments. They also must listen to keep together with a steady beat.

Third graders have learned a new note and now have new songs that use four notes. They should be practicing at home so they can remember the notes and fingering.

Second graders did well playing the barred instruments as an accompaniment to "Dancing Snowflakes." They also watched the video "Bach's Fight for Freedom."

First graders have been playing games and singing songs using steady and strong beats. They enjoyed putting the beat in their feet with "Valentine Dance."

The fourth and fifth grade choruses will perform in the elementary chorus concert on Monday, March 24, at 7pm at the Performing Arts Center. They will have the opportunity to hear the sixth and seventh grade choruses perform.

Joyce Peavey
Music Teacher



Stringed Instruments

All-State Stringfest coming soon!

Advanced 4th and 5th grade string students are busily learning their music for the All-State Stringfest in Goffstown on Saturday, March 29th. Two hundred elementary and middle school students from across the state rehearse all day in four orchestras, and then perform a 3pm concert for family and friends.

Congratulations to fifth graders Catherine Boudreau, Joan Guischard, Abbie Isenberg, and Lauren Nathan; and to fourth graders Noah Bakalyar, Noelle LeBlanc, Rebecca Lee, and Emilee Nathan.

Keep up the good work!

Marjorie Nelson
Stringed Instruments

Computer/Health

The students are busy in the health and technology classes.

First graders are learning good dental habits. After vacation, they will be learning about the different food groups and foods found in the new food pyramid.

Second graders continue to learn about different ways to use the font tool and inserting clipart. They will use these skills to create a simple PowerPoint slide show after vacation.

I am very pleased at the keyboarding progress of the third graders. The students are becoming very skilled at typing with correct fingering and increasing their speed. After vacation we will be working together to research different rainforest animals and putting our information together with clipart.

Fourth graders are learning about the new food pyramid, the nutrients found in the different foods and the benefits to their body. Hopefully they use this knowledge to help them make healthy choices.

Fifth graders have finished making impressive brochures about Atkinson Academy. They are excited about exchanging them with other schools in the district. After vacation they will learn Excel.

I am happy to hear from the students that many of them have found the nutrition games that I have put in my website. You can access them by going to the Atkinson Academy website. Click WEB that is located by my name in the staff directory. If you go to the nutrition page in my website you will find the games. Hope you enjoy them!

Anna Lizier
Computer/Health Teacher

ART

What a winter it has been so far!

We have had many delays and snow days and still must get through March. Unfortunately, the weather has been a cause for delaying our Artist of the Week student order and many of our art projects. I'm hoping for a quiet March and spring to catch up on our projects.

Currently, our fifth graders are involved in an art unit on value. They are learning to shade forms drawn on paper to give the illusion of three-dimensions. Many families might have noticed the ribbon drawings floating around. Students are applying a value scale with ebony pencils to the ribbons to show dimension.

Fourth graders have been finishing many projects on colonial crafts and the book they created with Mrs. Ditoro on conflict resolution. The fourth graders' next project will be on cylinder drawings.

Third graders are working on Native American crafts. Most coil pots are completed and will soon be glazed. Some classes have missed valuable art days and are behind, but we will get everyone caught up.

Second graders have just made a clay plaque with slab and coil construction. Textures were impressed into their design. We are waiting to fire and paint those projects.

First graders have just completed their moon journal projects. We will be working with Mrs. Ditoro on a cooperation lesson, and then moving on to a fairy tale unit with castle drawings.

Pam Alexander
Art Teacher



Counselor's Corner

There are many things you can do at home to reinforce what your child has learned in school. For Math, you can reinforce measurement by using measuring cups when baking. You can use your scale to weigh things, use a tape measure to measure height and length and in the car, use your odometer to measure how far it is from one point to another.

For addition, count out the pieces of cereal in a bowl, add telephone poles while you are in the car, have your child add your check in to your checkbook, add how many items on the grocery list or count the canned goods in your kitchen. Have your child categorize them by food group. Make a collection of 100 items (buttons, pennies, pebbles). Pile the items into groups of 10.

Yahtzee, Candy Land, Chutes and Ladders and War are great math games for addition, multiplication and subtraction.

Memory games such as I Spy and Memory are good for recall and vocabulary. Play "Memory Magic" - Choose any subject (ex. vegetables). The first person names one item, the second person repeats the first item and then adds another. This continues until someone mixes up the order or forgets one item.

Serial story is great for language. One person starts telling a story. As he/she gets to an exciting or suspenseful part, he/she stops talking and the next person takes over. Scavenger hunts around the house are also good for language. Give your child a pen and paper. Choose a category

and have him/her find 20 items in the category (ex. nature).

For fine motor, have your child trace numbers and letters in regular shaving cream (menthol stings!) or sand. Let your child do any cutting with scissors (under your supervision). Play with clay to shape letters, animals, etc. For gross motor, play follow the leader and hop, skip and jump around the house.

The best listening skills game is Simon Says.

In the car, look for safety signs and lead a discussion on safety rules and why they are important or count the number of red cars that go by.

These are just a sampling of things you can do to reinforce what your child is learning in school. With a little creativity, I know you can come up with several more ideas. If you do, please let me know so I can pass your ideas along to other parents.

The guidance curriculum theme for March is cooperation.

In **Kindergarten**, we will be talking about listening to directions and we will play I Spy.

Grade 1, 2 and 4 are in Art. In grade 1 we will be making a cooperative quilt. In grade 2 we will be making cooperative superheroes. And in grade 4 we will break into teams and each team will build a project yet to be determined.

In **Grade 3** I will be reading "Swimmy" by Leo Lionni and then we will do a cooperative exercise.

In **Grade 5** we will discuss cooperation and then break into groups and make cooperative towers out of blocks.

Mary Beth Ditoro
School Counselor

Reading Specialist's News

When children learn to read, they are learning to think and process information that will enable them to live richer, more productive lives. We teach children the conventions, skills, and strategies that can lead to comprehension at deep and complex levels. It is when the reader synthesizes all the important skills and strategies and interacts with the text that comprehension occurs.

From the beginning of first grade, we ask children to use three systems of cues to read text. The visual system requires readers to know and use letters, sounds, and spelling patterns; structural cues help the reader to think about what sounds correct according to whether or not what they read made sense. Efficient readers use all three sets of cues automatically and they are aware of occasions when comprehension breaks down. In order to comprehend the text, the reader needs to figure out what to do in order to maintain the meaning.

There are many skills and strategies involved in the reading process but the whole is greater than the sum of each individual part. Reading occurs when readers use all that they've learned to comprehend rich literature by developing a new perspective on the world around them.

Arlene Amendolara
Reading Specialist

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 2/25 - 2/29 VACATION - WINTER BREAK
- 3/4 - Early Release, 1:00, No PM/AM Kinder.
PTA Executive Board Mtg., 7:30 pm
- 3/5 - Grades 2 & 3 Field Trip to the PAC,
Native American Storytelling, 9:30 am
- Night Owl's Meeting, 7:00 pm
- 3/6 - School Board Mtg. @ SAU, 7:30 pm
- Artist in Residence, Grade 2
- 3/11 - NO SCHOOL - Prof. Development Day
- District Voting, 8:15-3:30
- 3/18 - PTA Math Night, 6-7 pm
5th Grade Band Rehearsal, 7:00 pm
- 3/19 - 5th Grade Band Concert, PAC, 7:00 pm
- Jump Rope for Heart, 3-5 pm
- 3/20 - School Board Mtg. @ SAU, 7:30 pm
- 3/24 - Elementary/Middle School Chorus
Concert, PAC, 7:00 pm
- 3/28 - Lip Sync, Grades 2 & 3, 6:30-9:00 pm
- 3/29 - All-State Stringfest, Goffstown, 4th &
5th Grade Stringed Instrument Students
- 3/31 - 4/4 Staff Appreciation Week

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**.

LUNCH SCHEDULE

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

1 st Grade	RECESS	11:45 - 12:05
	LUNCH	12:10 - 12:30
2 nd Grade	LUNCH	11:45 - 12:05
	RECESS	12:10 - 12:30
3 rd Grade	RECESS	12:15 - 12:35
	LUNCH	12:40 - 1:00
4 th Grade	LUNCH	11:00 - 11:20
	RECESS	11:25 - 11:45
5 th Grade	RECESS	11:00 - 11:20
	LUNCH	11:25 - 11:45
