

ATKINSON ACADEMY - October, 2008

17 Academy Avenue, Atkinson, NH 03811

(603) 362-5521

NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRINCIPALS:

Where has the month gone! The PTA Fall Festival was a huge success. The bouncy house was a very popular place to be for the younger children while the haunted house scared many upper grade students. A fun day was enjoyed by both young and old. Our special thanks to Mary Beth Abate who took on the huge task of organizing the event and to all the other parent volunteers. The staff appreciates the support that you give us and the children benefit from all the "extras" that we are able to provide because of your involvement in the PTA.

Once again this year, Atkinson Academy received the Blue Ribbon Award for Volunteerism. We continue to welcome parents into the building and thank you for all that you do for our students. We welcome, Diane Geary, as our new Volunteer Coordinator and thank Jennifer Suech, our outgoing coordinator, for her efforts the last two years.

Our staff continues to be "learners" and our focus this year will be on Professional Learning Communities (PLC). As members of the PLC the staff will be learning about ways that we can help our students reach their fullest potential. Recently, our school was awarded a five year grant through the Department of Education and New Hampshire Response to work on positive learning behaviors and literacy. We are so excited as we were one of five schools awarded this grant along with Sandown North and Timberlane Learning Center. Right now, we are just in the planning

Earlier this month, Lieutenant Bill Baldwin completed training to become our certified D.A.R.E. instructor. He was formally introduced to our student body at our Monday Morning Meeting on October 20th.

Red Ribbon Day activities were held on October 20th. In the spirit of the election season, students were encouraged to "elect to be drug free." Each classroom worked hard to develop a classroom campaign slogan to promote being drug free. They were very creative with their words, so be sure to ask your children to recite theirs.

Members of the Atkinson Fire Department spent time with each grade level talking about fire prevention. Your children should be well versed with fire safety and may be able to help you double check things around the house.

NECAP Testing is now complete. Thanks for sending your students to school as prepared as they could be for the state testing. It made for an intense few weeks, but we commend everyone for their efforts. Even students in the primary grades who were not required to take the testing showed a great deal of flexibility in their schedules.

Lastly, it was great seeing so many of you here for the Halloween Parade. The students love "showing off" their costumes to everyone. Have a safe time trick-or-treating this weekend.

Kathie Dayotis, Principal

Chris Snyder, Assistant Principal

FROM THE NURSE'S OFFICE

Cold and flu season is upon us. Hand washing, when done correctly, is the most important technique for preventing the spread of illness. The following are some tips on proper hand washing technique:

1. Use soap and warm water.
2. Wash all surfaces thoroughly, including wrists, palms, back of hands, fingers, and under fingernails.
3. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds.
4. When drying, use a clean or disposable towel. Pat your skin rather than rubbing to avoid chapping or cracking.

I wish you all good health!

Attached to this Newsletter is the Kid Power News from the NH Department of Health and Human Services. It offers health tips and safety tips for Trick or Treating.

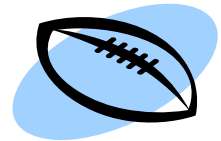
Mrs. Amante
Nurse



FROM THE GYM

With fall in full swing, PE classes have been doing a throwing/football unit. In the younger grades the emphasis is placed on throwing (both underhand and overhand) and catching. We use a variety of balls and beanbags for our activities. All grades end the unit with the very popular game of "Capture the Pumpkin". The game is actually based on the classic "Capture the Flag". Usually we play it as capture the football, but to coincide with Halloween week the football is replaced with a "pumpkin" (actually an under-inflated playground ball with a face drawn on it). The kids get lots of exercise and practice in cooperation. Each student is able to find their nitch- some prefer offense and some prefer defense- and everyone has a great time.

This could be our last week outside for the fall. We'll see what Mother Nature has in store for us. Please continue to help your children remember to wear appropriate clothing on PE days and learn to tie their shoes. Thanks for your support. Let me know if you have any questions.



Jeff Goddard
PE Teacher

LIBRARIAN'S REVIEW

Mercy Watson: Princess in Disguise

Written by Kate DiCamillo

Illustrated by Chris Van Dusen

Our favorite pig is back. Mr. & Mrs. Watson's pet, Mercy, is reluctant to dress up for Halloween, especially when she sees that it is a formfitting princess dress, complete with tiara. However, she changes her mind when she realizes the wonderful treats she will receive when she goes trick or treating (toast with lots of butter). Plenty of action, tricks and hilarious pictures make this an appealing book for beginning chapter readers. Kate DiCamillo has broad appeal with her wonderful chapter books (The Tale of Despereaux, The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane, Because of Winn Dixie). She has created an endearing character in Mercy Watson. This is the fourth in the series. Expect more of Mercy Watson in the future.

Eleven

Written by Patricia Reilly Giff

Sam, who is almost eleven, struggles to read and resents that he has to go to the Resource Room for extra help. He becomes friends with Caroline, a new girl in his class, who is almost as much of a loner as he is. Sam discovers a secret in his attic - a newspaper clipping with a picture of a young boy who could be himself at a younger age and a mysterious headline "MISSING." Who is he? Is the person he is living with really his grandfather? While working on a joint project with Caroline, she helps him start to make sense of the squiggles that make up words and together they work to discover who Sam really is. There is a lot to think about while reading this novel - Caroline's frequent moving around and reluctance to form strong friendships, Sam's reading difficulty and family secrets. Giff is known for writing novels with strong characters (Lily's Crossing, Willow Run) and she has been successful again along with creating a suspenseful plot.

Ellen Beckwith, Library Media Specialist

Music News

First graders are keeping a steady beat with their feet, on xylophones, drums, shakers, and patting their legs. They can read rhythm patterns with quarter and eighth notes and rests. We had fun acting out Hickory Dickory Dock with song and accompaniment and extra words.

Second graders are adding half notes to their rhythm repertoire. They have enjoyed learning the song Shadow from their science unit. They are looking at songs notated on the staff and discovering how to read music.

Third graders are enjoying having music books and are practicing reading music with many songs. We learned about tone color and how to make our voices sound mysterious.

Fourth graders have learned a few spirituals and have begun studying the woodwind family. They had opportunity to sing solos and it was fun to hear some individual voices.

Fifth graders have begun their exploration of American music from the Revolutionary War to the present. We listened to fifes and drums, learned a variety of sea chanteys and the song Erie Canal.

Chorus has begun. Our first performance will be the winter concert at the PAC on Monday, January 12, 2009 at 7:00 pm.

Joyce Peavey
Music Teacher



Band News

Practice Makes Perfect!

A BIG THANK YOU goes out to all the Academy teachers who worked very hard to help band members find alternate times for their lessons during the confusing NECAP testing schedule. Congratulations also go to nearly EVERY band member who remembered their instruments and their lesson times during October! Yippee!!

I have been stressing the fact that practicing at home is the best way to progress at a consistent rate. I am encouraging band members to find 4 days a week where they can practice their instrument, then fill out the practice journal in the front of the book. Each week a parent signature is required as well. (I want you to see your money is being well spent!)

Send a note to school if your child thinks they need help. I will be glad to stay in during lunch recess to offer individual assistance and remember..."Practice Makes Prefect"!

Thanks for your support.

Debbie Lincoln
Band Teacher

Computer/Health

I have been hearing from a number of the students that they have not been able to get onto my website. Great news! You now can! I'm so happy that the students have been interested enough to try to get on to it!

The fourth graders are creating wanted posters about different animals that live in New Hampshire. They have been busy researching about their animal using websites that I have provided. The students will be taking this information to create wanted posters that will describe their animal's appearance, habitat, life cycle, diet, etc. The posters will be created in Microsoft Word and will include functions such as adding a border, word art, inserting clipart, bulleting.

The third graders have taken a brief break from Mavis Beacon keyboarding. They will be finding information about Cherokee Indians to create a book about one of the tribes from the Southeast Indians.

Searching the web with your child can be a daunting idea. Each month I will give a few sites that I hope you will enjoy with your children.

National Geographic for Kids: This is one of my favorite sites filled with videos, games, pictures, and wonderful information!

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>

Froggyville: This site is hopping with great things to do!- games, jokes, facts and so much more!

<http://www.froggyville.com/lickety.htm>

Giggle Poetry: A wonderful site where children can read, write, and rate poetry and well as meet poets. <http://www.gigglepoetry.com/>

Anna Lizier
Computer/Health Teacher

Counselor's Corner

October's safety theme was very well received. I applaud you for all the safety tips you have taught your children, especially your involvement with internet access. I was quite pleased with all the background information our student's have.

I encourage you to continue to work with your children on their address and phone number. This is important basic information they need to know.

The theme for the month of November is Friendship. In Grade 5 we will be looking at two sides of friendship; in Grade 4 we will look at attractor and repeller behaviors in friendships; in Grade 3 we will make recipes for friendship; in Grade 2 we will learn how to tend a friend; in Grade 1 we will look at different types of friends and in Kindergarten we will talk about what good friends do.

I have many roles and responsibilities in my job as school counselor. I spend a lot of time teaching the guidance curriculum in the classrooms but I also see students in small groups and on an individual basis. It is my policy to have the classroom teacher inform parents if I am including a student in a group. Many times I include students who are good role models for certain behaviors the group is working on. If I am seeing a child on an individual basis more than 2 times I will call parents to inform them of our visits. I see a lot of students throughout the week because something has happened that is impacting the child's ability to stay focused on his/her learning. I do not make calls for these reasons unless it is a serious issue. I hope this clears up any misconceptions you may have.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me via email or phone.

Mary Beth Ditoro, School Counselor

Reading Specialist's News

Last month, I wrote about the importance of conversation and discussion to expand the background knowledge your children bring to every text they read. Our students learn that the information that they have in their minds is called their "schema." As schema expands through talking, reading, or learning something new, children are better able to comprehend text at deeper and more complex levels.

Children understand text on a surface level when they can identify such things as story elements: characters, setting, and the action of the story. This literal comprehension is the same for all readers of a particular text. Deep level comprehension requires the reader to use their unique schema to picture the characters and identify motives for their behavior. As the story unfolds, each reader visualizes based on his or her own experiential base.

Our students learn that "schema" is composed of everything a person holds in their minds; it's everything that a reader has ever encountered. Use every opportunity to expand your children's schema by talking with them, reading to them, and providing new learning experiences. Help them enjoy and participate in their expanding world!

Arlene Amendolara
Reading Specialist

Enrichment



Thank You!!!

Our school garden is now blooming thanks to all the wonderful donations of plants. All the classes will have been outside to plant in our garden and are eagerly waiting spring to see what will bloom. It is exciting to see so many students stopping by the window and looking out to see the garden.

Thanks also to all those teachers that spent considerable hours preparing our garden for planting and installing paving stones to prevent erosion.

Sandy Bauer
Enrichment

ART

Our fifth grade students are starting a unit on value. They will be learning how to use lights and darks to create the illusion of three dimension in their drawings. They will also be studying the effects of light cast on a still life and identify shadows and highlights.

Fourth graders created beautiful pencil sketches outside. They were specifically looking for a horizontal line and shading their sketches in with lights and dark. Our sketches are practice for creating a landscape folk art painting. We will be learning about the art created by *Grandma Moses* and we will create a painting similar to her work.

Third graders are starting an art journal unit on symmetry. The first half is a review of concepts learned in first and second grades. The last part of the unit we will learn about radial symmetry.

Second graders are also learning about symmetry and symmetrical cutting. Asymmetrical composition will also be taught and compared with symmetrical composition.

First graders have finished a big unit on lines and we will now move into geometric and organic shapes. Our students will learn to create larger forms by combining geometric shapes together.

Pam Alexander
Art Teacher

Office News

There are several new and old procedures we would like to bring to your attention as follows:

- Please send a note when your student is taking a bus other than his or her assigned bus or will go in the car pickup line (change in going home forms can be found online at www.atkinsonacademy.com; we have also recently sent home blank forms in the shuttle). Please include the student's full name, teacher name and date. **New Procedure:** Due to safety reasons, we are no longer accepting phone calls or emails with changes to going home. You may either bring a note to the office or come in early and have the student dismissed. This procedure is noted in the Student Handbook. Thank you for your cooperation.
- The bus company has asked that we accept no additional riders for BUS #106. It is full to capacity with regular riders.
- If your child has been designated as a car pickup, please do not park your car and come to the front of the building to wait for your child. You should get in the line of cars formed out front. This is a safety concern. Also, please use your directional lights when leaving the parking lot.
- Notices that are school related will be sent home in the student's shuttle every Friday. All other flyers will be sent home on Monday's or Tuesday's.
- The building closes everyday at 3:45. No one will be permitted into the building for forgotten homework or other items.
- School hours are from 8:40-3:10. Please do not drop off your child before 8:20 AM.

The child may be unattended if dropped off earlier.

- Call the school absence line, 362-5521 (x303) when your child will be absent or tardy (this saves us a phone call to you).
- 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 as this disrupts the education process.
- 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 Monday Morning Meeting start time of **9:00 am**.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 11/3 - Monday Morning Meeting, 9:00 am
- 11/4 - NO School-Professional Development Day
- 11/11 - NO School - Veteran's Day
- 11/14 - Lip Sync, Grades 4 & 5, 6:00-9:00 pm
- 11/20 - Early Release, Dismissal 1:10
NO AM & PM KINDERGARTEN
- 11/17 - Monday Morning Meeting, 9:00 am
- 11/20 - Parent Conferences; 1:30-4:30 AND
5:30 - 8:30
- 11/26-11/28 NO School - Thanksgiving Break

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

5th Grade

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

Early Release Dates

- Below is the schedule for Early Release days, including the AM and PM Kindergarten schedule:
 - * 10/2/08 - AM Kindergarten only, NO PM
 - * 11/20/08 - NO AM or PM Kindergarten
 - * 12/16/08 - NO AM or PM Kindergarten
 - * 1/28/08 - AM Kindergarten only, NO PM
 - * 2/10/08 - NO AM or PM Kindergarten
 - * 3/25/08 - NO AM or PM Kindergarten
 - * 4/21/08 - NO AM or PM Kindergarten
 - * 5/14/08 - AM Kindergarten only, NO PM

Dismissal is at 1:10 pm

PTA NEWS

Thank you, thank you, thank you to all. Our Fall Festival was a big success bringing in about \$3,000. Thank you to the Chairperson, Mary Beth Abate, for all her work and to her committee, the people who donated items including raffles, auction items, and food donations. Thank you to the volunteers without whom we could not run this event. And a big thank you to those who came and played games, bounced in the bounce house, made slime, bid on auction items and ate. Thanks to everyone in our school community.

Talk about one stop shopping for the holidays, our Art Fair orders will be on the way to the vendor by the time you receive this message. We expect them back by November 21st and we will schedule a pick up time. Watch your shuttles for that announcement. Also, keep your eyes open for the gift card information that will be coming home very soon. These gift cards will be the same as those purchased from the national chains but will give proceeds back to the PTA. Please keep us in mind as you think about gift cards for your holiday gifts.

Lastly, keep in mind the Night Owls are sponsoring the Lip Sync for 4th and 5th graders on November 14. The Lip Sync for the 2nd and 3rd graders will be December 5th. Come on out for a night of entertainment provided by children you know.

Thank you as always for your support.

Carolyn Longchamp
Atkinson Academy PTA President