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**Special points of interest:**

- Winter Vacation 12/24/09-1/4/10
- Ski Club Begins 1/8/10
- No School 1/18/10 - Civil Right's Day
- Night Owl's Book Bingo - 1/22/10, 6-9pm
- Early Release 1/27/10 - Dismissal 1:10 pm
- Progress Reports 1/29/10

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# Atkinson Academy December 2009

## Principal's Corner:

Dear Families,

'Tis the season! It's the time of year when we take the time to enjoy our families and to have fun together.

The holiday season officially started at Atkinson Academy on December 1<sup>st</sup> with the Holiday Concert at the PAC center. Friends and family members were entertained by festive songs played and sung by our band, strings, and chorus. The fun continued with a special PTA sponsored event on December 11<sup>th</sup> as the Polar Express visited for a special viewing of the movie. Hot chocolate and cookies were served to warm the evening.

We are so fortunate to have such strong support from our community. The PTA and Night Owls have worked hard to plan fun family events throughout the year and the funds raised through those efforts help our students in so many ways.

The latest "gifts" these two organizations have provided to our students include beautiful landscaping done this fall and a climbing wall in our gymnasium. It was unveiled to our students at an all school assembly on December 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The wall was dedicated to Jeff Goddard, Physical Education Teacher, who has faithfully volunteered as a Night Owl for years.

At this time of year, many families ask about gift suggestions or ideas. High interest books and magazine subscriptions are fun for students. We strongly recommend ***the gift of time—it is a priceless gift that leaves lasting memories.***

We want to wish each family a wonderful, fun-filled, and relaxing vacation.

Have a happy holiday season!

Kathie Dayotis  
Principal

Chris Snyder  
Assistant Principal/Curriculum  
Coordinator



Seasons Greetings

## News from Everyday Mathematics

The following is an excerpt from the *Everyday Mathematics Home Connection Handbook*. It addresses the question of why and how *Everyday Mathematics* was developed.

### A Curriculum for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The goal of the University of Chicago Mathematics Project is to significantly improve the mathematics curriculum and instruction being offered to school children in the U.S. The *Everyday Mathematics* curriculum was developed as part of this mission.

### Philosophy of *Everyday Mathematics*

The philosophy of the program is based on extensive research about how children learn mathematics and how mathematics is taught. Children need a

rigorous and balanced mathematics curriculum. Such a curriculum:

**Emphasizes conceptual understanding while building a mastery of basic skills.** When children understand mathematics, rather than simply memorize facts or procedures, they are able to use their knowledge flexibly and solve new and unfamiliar problems.

**Explores the full mathematics spectrum, not just basic arithmetic.** Children are introduced to all the major mathematical content areas - number sense, algebra, measurement, geometry, data analysis, probability - beginning in Kindergarten.

**Considers how children learn, what they're interested in, and the future for which they must be prepared.**

Consistent with the ways children actually learn mathematics, the program allows for understanding to be built over time. Children acquire knowledge and skills through active involvement in meaningful, real world experiences.

*Everyday Mathematics* was developed through a process of writing, field testing, and revising one grade level at a time. The result is a comprehensive curriculum that carefully builds upon and extends knowledge and skills from one year to the next.



**Kathy Fowler**  
Elementary Math Coach

*Wishing everyone  
a happy and  
healthy holiday  
season.*

*Paula Amante*  
School Nurse



## ~~ Health Office ~~

Living a healthy lifestyle involves making choices about the foods we eat as well as exercise and other daily activities. Eating low fat meals that include 5 to 9 servings of fruit and vegetables every day is an important part of a healthy life plan.

The Better Health Foundation recommends, "to get a healthy variety, think color. Eating fruits and vegetables of different colors gives your body a wide range of valuable nutrients, like fiber, folate,

potassium, and vitamins A and C. Some examples include green spinach, orange sweet potatoes, black beans, yellow corn, purple plums, red watermelon, and white onions. For more variety, try new fruits and vegetables regularly".

The Atkinson Academy Building Wellness Team will be running a healthy snack contest during the month of January. We will feature a different color each week. Students are encouraged to bring a fruit or vegetable of the featured color

for snack. Every Wednesday we will tally the amount of fruits and vegetable snacks in each classroom. The classroom with the highest participation at the end of January will win an extra physical education class with Mr. Goddard. The color schedule is: Wed., January 6, 2010- Yellow Wed., January 13, 2010- Red Wed., January 20, 2010- Orange Wed., January 27, 2010- Green Canned, dried, and frozen fruits and vegetables are also good options.

Bon Appétit!

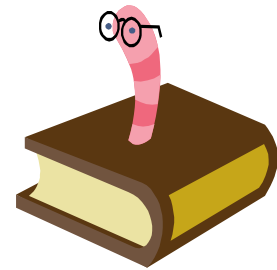


## Reading Specialist

Children need to experience the world around them in order to build background knowledge they will need to comprehend text. Strong readers tap into background knowledge or cognitive structures referred to as "schema" even before they begin to read a text. When readers realize that they have some idea of what they are about to read, they

proceed with confidence and focus. Readers continue to use their background knowledge to create visual images, make connections, analyze and evaluate the text. You can help your children build background knowledge by helping them become aware of the world around them. Talk with them, read to them, and provide experiences that

expand their knowledge base. The more they know about the world, the more knowledge they bring to their reading and their comprehension.



Enjoy a Book!!  
\*\*\*\*\*

Arlene Amendolara  
Reading Specialist



## Physical Education



As I write this article, our climbing wall is being installed in the gym. Thank you to the Night Owls and PTA for making this happen. I look forward to the challenge of incorporating it into our curriculum.

During the month of December we did several different things in PE class. We finished our Field Hockey unit in week #1. I feel that the students benefit more from the success that they have on the smooth wood floor of the gym rather than doing it outside on our rather bumpy and patchy field. In week #2 we tried several new games that I just learned at the most recent state PE teachers conference that I attended in November. Ask your child about Crazy Carrot Tag, Star Wars, Toxic Meteors, Extinction, or Pinball. Week #3 was either Parachute or in classroom activities, depending on which day and what time of day the class fell.

*I would like to  
wish everyone a  
happy and  
healthy holiday  
season!*

~~~~~  
**Jeff Goddard**  
**PE Teacher**

## Health/Tech Ed



~~Anna Lizier~~

Your children have been very busy in technology. First graders have been using technology to create a simple poster about themselves. After vacation we will be creating trading cards of people in our school community. Second graders are becoming very skilled at importing clipart and working with all sorts of interesting fonts. We will be studying seasons and using their technology to skills to write a second acrostic poem. This poem will be about winter. I am extremely impressed with

the level of typing skills for the third graders this year. I can see that many of them are typing outside of class. It is nice to see this. In fourth grade the students have been learning more about creating tables and columns. They have also been using the school search engine to research women athletes. After vacation the fourth grade will be using technology to analyze and hypothesize weather data. In fifth grade, students were introduced to

blogging. We had some interesting discussions through Moodle, a district supported educational website. One topic that seemed to catch on was about the school's "no hats inside" rule. They have also been using the school search engine to research different topics including Ellis Island and World War 2 heroes. After vacation they will be doing a project about inspirational women in their lives.  
Happy Holidays to Everyone!

## Counselor's Corner ~ November Theme: Kindness/Bully Free Strategies

**Grade 1:** Students learned and practiced **I Care Language. I feel... When you... Would you please...** They learned the importance of listening to one another, using their feeling words and work together to solve their problem. Role Plays were about different conflict situations that arise on the playground, on the bus, and in the classroom.

**Grade 2:** We reviewed I Care Language from first grade. I read the book **The Bully Blockers Club** and then the students talked about ways to keep an **eye** out for their friends. We learned the 4 T's system:

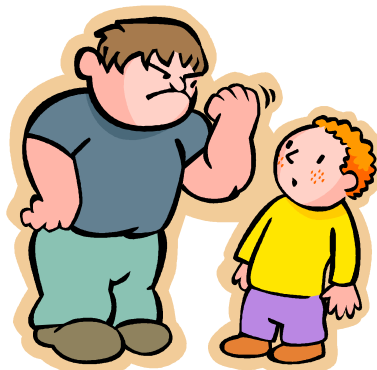
**Think** before you react; **Talk** it out; **Turn** and walk away; **Tell** an adult. We ended with an art activity – coloring an eye and pasting the 4 T's in the center.

**Grade 3:** We discussed what brainstorming means and practiced the activity by brainstorming all the things we could do with an empty water bottle. Then we brainstormed bright ideas to solve conflict peacefully using paper light bulbs. Students were encouraged to use the list of ideas when a problem arises.

**Grade 4:** We reviewed conflict and problem solving lessons from the previous years. When a discussion ensued about how conflict can lead to bully behavior. We identified the 3 roles in a bully incident – bully, victim and bystander. We followed up with a video: **We Can All Get Along**. Ideas suggested in the video included: Get the facts/talk it out; Good communication skills vs. communication blockers (blaming, threatening, insulting, name calling); brainstorm ways to solve the conflict; Compromise; Quick and easy fixes which include flip a coin, make a deal, skip it, walk away, own up and apologize.

**Grade 5:** We took the stand up against bullies pre-test. We did it orally. The main ideas in the DVD were pre-taught with the test questions. We watched the DVD: **When You Seeing Bullying Happen: What A Bystander Can Do**. This is a follow up to the Grade 4 movie. The same actors are in both films. The DVD gave practical tips for what a bystander can do. They included: talk to the bully in private in a non-threatening manner; help the victim walk away; stand up as a group to the bully; and tell an adult especially when it is a matter of safety.

Mary Beth Ditoro  
School Counselor



## Busy Band

I would like to extend congratulations to all the 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade band members who did an outstanding job at our December 1<sup>st</sup> Holiday concert. Everyone watched the conductor, started & stopped together, acted very professionally, sounded great and...followed the 2 guest narrators. What a great evening!

Special thanks go to Mrs. Dayotis and Mr. Snyder for being brave and narrating our special version of the 12

days of Beginning Band. It was fun having them as such an important part of our concert!

I would also like to thank the following advanced band students who performed for 45 minutes straight (phew!) at the Atkinson Country Club Tree Lighting Ceremony. Mary Cosio, Sophia Calandriello, Emily Hammond, Daniel Jordan, Liam Desmond, Brian Desjardins, Ben Longchamp, Alexander Torosian, Mike Parigian and

Zachary Hertrich. Great, great job!!

Remember parents...I'm holding the last few SMART-MUSIC CD's/mics for you. Please contact me if you need one.

Thank you.  
Debbie Lincoln



## A Note from the Night Owls

We are in need of prizes for the annual Night Owl's Bingo event to be held on January 22nd at Atkinson Academy as follows:

- Any unopened holiday items you wish to donate are greatly appreciated.
- Last year, we received over 30 donations! Our Bingo event was successful thanks to your generosity.

- All proceeds from this event benefit the Atkinson Academy PTA.
- Donations may be dropped off at the school office.

The Night Owls

Thanks you for Your Support



## Other Highlights:

\* 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 notices (community related) need to be submitted and approved by the school district office. They will then be posted on the bulletin board in the main office foyer.

\* 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. Please indicate the specific reason for the absence (i.e. cold, sore throat, doctor visit, vacation, etc.) 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.

\* Put names in your child's jackets, sweat-shirts and other belongings.

\* Please write your child's name on the memo line of checks that you send to the school. This would be helpful to the cafeteria when recording payments to the student's lunch account.

**SPECIAL NOTE:**

\* If you are a certified nurse or know someone that is, we would love to have you become a substitute nurse on an as needed basis. If you are interested, please contact Kathie Dayotis at X301.

**Check us out on Twitter!!**

## MUSIC NEWS



The fourth and fifth grades have read percussion scores to accompany holiday music with boom whackers, hand drums, finger cymbals, triangles, and tambourines. Fifth graders have been learning about syncopation, clapping patterns to songs. Fourth graders have listened to the sound of double reed instruments.

Third graders now know G, A, and B on their recorders. They have a few songs to practice so they can play a solo for the class. They had fun adding movement to Waltz of the Flowers.

First and second grades enjoyed the Jingle Bell Dance and also accompanying the song Burn Little Candles with xylophones and tambourines. Grade two is learning about ABA form. Grade one listened to the Children's Symphony featuring The Farmer in the Dell and Jingle Bells. They imitated playing the instruments that they heard.



Joyce Peavey  
Music Teacher

## ART

Our First and Second graders have been learning about texture and how an artist uses texture to add details in their artwork. Both grades have been using clay and making texture impressions in their piece to add details. The second graders are not going to finish their clay project before our holiday break due to a snow day and loss of power last week.

Third graders are working on a woven pouch made on a weaving card with an over under pattern. They are also making a handle for their pouch and will have a choice of learning how to braid, make a loop chain handle or a tied knot handle.

Fourth graders are finishing up their monochromatic Pop Art painting inspired by Andy Warhol and some students are creating some fun crafts if they have extra time.

Fifth graders have been learning to use value to create the illusion of three dimensions in their artwork. They have been working from a 3-D geometric shaped still life. They are learning to look for light and shadow cast upon objects to see how it effects there shape and color.

When we return in the January Mrs. Ditoro and I will be integrating our lessons with all grade levels. We are working on themes that combine art with lessons about tolerance and peace. Have a wonderful holiday.

Have a Wonderful Holiday!  
Pam Alexander  
Art Teacher

