

AITKEN TO KNOW

A newsletter for parents, teachers and students at Aitken School

The mission of Mildred H. Aitken School, in partnership with children and families, is to maintain a safe, nurturing environment in which responsibility, mutual respect and high academic standards are achieved.

A Message from the Principal

Dear Parents,

Our last trimester of the school year began on March 14th. With approximately 30% of the school year remaining, we look forward to an exciting and productive spring!

Report Cards

K-5 report cards for the second trimester were sent home on March 23. If you would like to schedule a conference with your child's teacher, please call to schedule an appointment (508-336-5230).

Spring Clothing

It is beginning to get warm once! Please remind your child not to wear clothing that is too revealing. Extremely short shorts or skirts, spaghetti straps and muscle shirts are not appropriate school clothing especially for our older students. Please also remember that flip-flops are not the best shoes for playing on the equipment.

Spring Vacation

Spring vacation for students is the week of April 18-22. Have a great week!

Grade 3 Wax Museum - April 28

The Wax Museum presentation by grade 3 will be on Thursday, from 6:30-7:00. You will be absolutely amazed as our historical wax figures come to life with a push of a button!

Dates to Remember

April 2016

- 1st Sweetheart Dance
- 4th Polished Dental Program
- 5th Free RIF Book
- 8th Gr. 5 MOS Sleepover
- 13th Aitken PTO Meeting
- 18th - 22nd Vacation
- 25th Seekonk School Committee Work Session
- 28th Gr. 3 Wax Museum

May 2016

- 3rd Progress Reports & Blood Drive
- 6th Mother's Day Plant Sale
- 12th Aitken PTO
- 17th Aitken School Council Meeting
- 24th Book Fair
- 25th Book Fair & Gr. 5 Band Concert @ Martin
- 30th No School
- 31st Creative Awareness Week Begins

A Message from the Principal

...continued

PARCC & MCAS Spring Testing Schedule Reminder

PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) & MCAS

During the month of May, all students in grades 3-5 will be taking the PARCC tests on-line again this year. Students in grades 5 will also take the MCAS Science & Technology tests. To find out more information about either test, you may visit the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Please also feel free to give a call to your child's teacher or me if you have any questions.

PARCC & MCAS Test Schedule - April 28-May 26

Mondays & Tuesdays - grade 4

Wednesdays & Thursdays - grade 3

Thursdays & Fridays - grade 5

Elementary Band Concert

Aitken and Martin Schools under the orchestration of our band teacher, Mr. Anderson, will hold a combined band concert this spring! The performance will be on Wednesday, May 25 and will begin promptly at 7 P.M. in the Martin School gymnasium. You will truly be impressed!

As always, please feel free to call if you have any questions or concerns. We value your input!

Yours truly,

Nancy Gagliardi



Notes from the

School Nurse

Mrs. Soares



Hand washing is like a "do-it-yourself" vaccine—it involves five simple and effective steps -Wet, Lather, Scrub, Rinse, Dry. These 5 simple steps will absolutely reduce and hopefully STOP the spread of diarrheal and respiratory illness so you can stay healthy and enjoy healthy times with family and friends and not be sick. Regular hand washing, particularly before and after certain activities, is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs to others. It's quick, it's simple, and it can keep us all from getting sick. Hand washing is a win for everyone, except the germs.



Art Notes

Spring greetings Aitken family and friends!

We're excited for sunny artwork here in our art room!

Students in grades 1-4 have begun to learn about the color wheel. First grade is focusing on primary colors red, yellow, and blue and learning how together those colors make up all the other colors we see.

Second grade is learning how to mix primary colors using only red, yellow, and blue. We learned about ROY G. BIV, a silly fictional tale that teaches us about rainbow order.

Third graders are learning how to use the color wheel. Did you know that colors can convey emotions? Colors can have a temperature too. Red, orange, and yellow are warm colors. Green, blue, and violet are cool. Third graders used this color scheme to create Picasso faces.

Fourth grade students are learning how to mix the colors that sit between the primary and secondary colors on the color wheel. Students are also giving their opinion on the great art education debate as to what makes better, more vivid colors. Do you take a traditionalist approach and believe red, yellow, and blue make better secondary and intermediate colors? Or do you side with Modernists who believe magenta, cyan, and yellow make better, brighter colors. Ask your fourth grader their opinion this month.

Fifth grade students have been busy learning about the artist Frida Kahlo and her many self-portraits to produce their own personal portrait that shows what is important to them. Students are showing prior knowledge about the color wheel as well as learning new techniques about shading and highlighting.

Before you know it it'll be time for our annual art show! We can't wait to display all our hard work from our art students here at Aitken!!

Thanks for all your support,

Ms. Walsh





Library News

Grade One is participating in a Dr. Seuss author study. We will play Dr. Seuss computer games, complete Dr. Seuss rhyming activities and read Dr. Seuss books.

Grade Two has finished a nonfiction text features activity, discussed and determined the author's purpose for a set of short stories and will play a sight words game in the computer lab.

Grade Three filled out a graphic organizer for a fable we read in class. They had to recount the story and determine the central message, lesson or moral. Then they read a Greek myth identified the phenomenon the myth explained. We will finish this month by playing an online game about fables, folktales and myths.

Grade Four is reading Love That Dog by Sharon Creech as a class. Students will create a poem inspired by the William Carlos Williams poem "The Red Wheelbarrow" that is discussed in the book.

Grade Five is finishing a country research project using Google Slides. Students have been paired up with a partner to research a country. They will co-create a Google Slide presentation using their notes.

Our after school program, "Mr. Lemoncello's Library Scavenger Hunt" was a big success! Special thanks to Sharon Clarke, Children's Librarian at Seekonk Public Library, for helping to coordinate this event!

If you haven't checked out the AWESOME BOX recently, here are the more recent Aitken School book recommendations made by students:

The Story of Ruby Bridges by Robert Coles

I Survived the San Francisco Earthquake by Lauren Tarshis

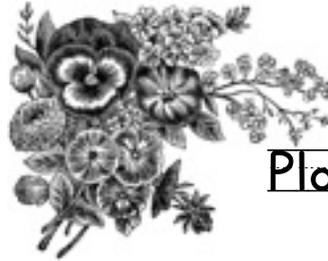
Science Fair Flop by Abby Klein

The Dragon Prophecy by Geronimo Stilton

Rabbits by Antia Ganeri



March 2016



Plant Sale

The Annual Mother's Day Plant Sale will be held on Friday May 6th in the school lobby. Students will have the opportunity to visit the sale during school. There will be a great selection of plants to choose from. Look for details coming home soon!



RIF Book Day



There will be a Reading is Fundamental (RIF) free book distribution on Tuesday, April 5. During this event every child is allowed to select a new book which is purchased by the PTO. This event happens three times per year and we encourage the children and staff to wear RED (Read Every Day).

PTO

Hope Turenne & Lisa Foss

PE News

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

MEANS MOVEMENT FUN FOR
EVERYONE

“SWEAT AND SMILES”

The students in all grades have worked on jump rope skills. Different ways to use the jump rope and how to measure if it is the correct size for you was demonstrated. Tennis rackets were used with the students in the upper grades. They identified the different parts of the racket. The forehand strike was introduced to the third, fourth, and fifth grades. They were able to use training rackets and balls that allowed them to practice the skill individually and also with a partner. The importance of the ready position was emphasized and how to hold the racket. The upper grades will focus on running longer in aerobic fitness lessons to achieve a mile distance with a jog or walk. Each grade has learned new tag games and activities that enhance their skills during game play.



Aitken Rockets Update

By Tara Haggerty



Over the past couple of months, our updated PBIS system has been really taken off. New posters have been put up throughout the school identifying the expected behavior in each area. Students have been learning what it looks like to be Safe, Respectful, and Responsible in the hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria, playground and on the bus. The children are earning many tickets for demonstrating these positive behaviors. These tickets are entered into various raffles that will occur throughout the year. There are many students who have been chosen this past month to be recognized by having their picture posted throughout the school. Next month, Pawtucket Red Sox tickets will be raffled off. These students are also going to be able to walk on the field and have their names called before the game. I am looking forward to awarding more tickets and prizes over the next couple of months.



An Article Shared With You By The School Psychologist

Karen Hurley-Cicatiello

Taken from The Parent Letter VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1
Written and Developed by Lori Evans, Ph.D. and the staff of the NYU Child Study Center

HELPING YOUR CHILD MANAGE TEST ANXIETY

What is test anxiety?

Test anxiety is the uneasiness or apprehension that a student feels before, during or after a test because of worry or fear of failure. Everyone experiences anxiety from time to time; in fact, low levels of anxiety can motivate students to study and perform well. However, when anxiety interferes with test-taking and learning it can cause students to blank out or have trouble paying attention, limiting their ability to think clearly and do their best work. The good news is that parents can help their children manage test anxiety.

What does it feel like?

Some students report physical symptoms including butterflies, cold or clammy hands, headaches, nausea, being hot or cold, or feeling faint. Others report feeling like they want to cry or even leave the room and not take the test. Still others feel angry or helpless.

What Can I Do As A Parent?

The Practical First Steps

- Make sure your child has enough sleep, eats a healthy breakfast and gets to school on time.
- Make sure your child has the needed school supplies (notebooks, pencils, etc.).
- Doing well on a test is easier if a student has been consistently completing school assignments, including studying or reading. Encouraging your child to complete homework each day is important and helpful.

Specific suggestions

- Motivate your child to want to take a test. You can do this by reinforcing their efforts, including the studying and homework tasks, rather than focusing on having to make a certain grade.
- Help you child reduce fear and anxiety. This can be accomplished with enthusiasm, praise and, at times, small rewards for giving their best effort in spite of feeling worried.
- Anxious children tend to have many negative thoughts (I'm going to fail this test or I will do badly on every test). You can teach your child to challenge these ideas by looking at the evidence against each negative thought (Do you really fail every test? What is likely to happen if you study?). Finally, help your child to find a more optimistic thought to

use whenever the negative ones arise (When I study I do pass tests).

- Teach your child ways to relax through simple techniques such as deep breathing and meditation. Relaxation is a skill that requires learning and practice, so keep the relaxation practices short and simple. Make it a family activity, where everyone takes the time to breathe deeply: you can teach by example. Use the techniques yourself, for example, when you become frustrated while driving. Encourage your child to practice in real life situations (e.g., before going to a stressful family event).

What Should I Avoid Doing?

- Avoid giving excessive reassurance, such as repeatedly saying, "You will do great!" Too much reassurance causes anxious children to seek to discredit the parent's opinion.
- Avoid telling your child exactly what to do. It is more useful to ask your child to come up with a realistic plan for studying and taking the test. Successful completion of the plan enhances the child's feeling of control and accomplishment, and this will decrease anxiety. Build in some relaxation time to your child's plan.
- Don't ignore the problem by hoping it will go away by itself.
- Don't be impatient (Just take the test and get over it!).
- Don't allow the child to avoid the situation (You can stay home today).

When should I seek professional help?

Students with severe test anxiety may decline in their academic performance, and are more likely to repeat a grade and perform worse on other activities that require new learning (Campbell, 1986). Test anxiety has also been related to poor self-esteem and school refusal (Ollendick & Meyer, 1984). Although it is normal to have some degree of test anxiety, if the problem persists or the symptoms are interfering with school performance, help is available. Reducing test anxiety alone will not be effective unless children know how to study and take tests. Teaching study skills and test-taking strategies are effective in helping students perform better in school (Beidel & Taylor-Ferrerira, 1995).

For further information, guidelines and practical suggestions on child mental health and parenting issues, visit the NYU Child Study Center's website, www.AboutOurKids.org.

NYU Child Study Center 577 First Avenue New York, NY

Differentiation News

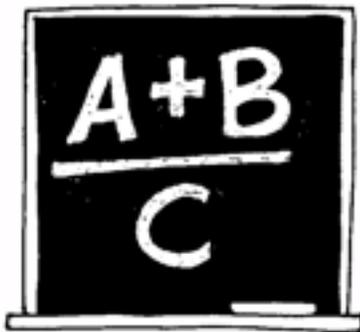
By Barbara Manickas

“Every child has a different learning style and pace. Each child is unique, not only capable of learning but also capable of succeeding.” By Robert John Meehan

Grade 3: The third grade math groups have been reviewing line plots, elapsed time, and multi-step word problems. I have also been integrating literature into the lessons. The students love being “Number Detectives” while solving some mathematical misunderstandings about topics such as shapes, perimeter, elapsed time, and skip counting. Other nice books that include math are: [Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday](#), [Max’s Money](#), [Pigs Will Be Pigs](#), and [Tiger Math](#).

Grade 4: The fourth grade math group is covering a number of important skills. We have been concentrating on fractions, but at least once each week, we spiral back to previously taught standards. Miss Carr’s reading group has been reading about and applying skills with electricity, supporting science in the classroom. They created a timeline of electrical inventions. We will continue to practice nonfiction skills integrating the science and social studies curriculums. After completing [The Landry News](#), Mrs. Ward-Smith’s class will begin nonfiction as well.

Grade 5: The fifth grade is also working on nonfiction standards with science and social studies. They are reading several short books, noticing the text structure in each book. Being able to use this information about how a book is organized and determining why an author may have used that particular structure helps students think deeper about books.



From the Technology Integration Specialist

Recently I have had the pleasure of working with Mrs. Lamar at Aitken School and Mrs. Sullivan at Martin School teaching students in Grades 1-5 Digital Citizenship. Our main focus; to keep their personal information private when online. We used a variety of age appropriate material to teach the same objectives on privacy. You may have heard your student talking about it or, for some, seen something tangible they may have taken home. In an effort to keep children safe it is an aspect of my job to inform not only the students but the parents as well. There are some fantastic websites aimed at parents that offer some great tips, advice, and resources for Online Safety and Digital Citizenship. I have done some research and have compiled a short list of helpful websites. You may also visit my website at anytime and click on Internet Safety for more information. Mrs. Keough
seekonktechintegration.weebly.com

[Netsmartz from Missing and Exploited Children](#)
[Common Sense Media](#)
NSPCC.org.uk
[Think You Know](#)
[Center on Media and Child Health](#)

Seven Strategies to Teach Students Text Comprehension

From an article by: C.R. Adler

Shared by: Lynn Owens and Joanna Rioux

Comprehension strategies are conscious plans – sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of text. Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension. These seven strategies have research-based evidence for improving text comprehension.

1. Monitoring comprehension

Students who are good at monitoring their comprehension know when they understand what they read and when they do not. They have strategies to "fix" problems in their understanding as the problems arise. Research shows that instruction, even in the early grades, can help students become better at monitoring their comprehension. *Comprehension monitoring instruction teaches students to:*

- Be aware of what they do understand
- Identify what they do not understand
- Use appropriate strategies to resolve problems in comprehension

2. Metacognition

Metacognition can be defined as "thinking about thinking." Good readers use metacognitive strategies to think about and have control over their reading. Before reading, they might clarify their purpose for reading and preview the text. During reading, they might monitor their understanding, adjusting their reading speed to fit the difficulty of the text and "fixing" any comprehension problems they have. After reading, they check their understanding of what they read.

3. Graphic and semantic organizers

Graphic organizers illustrate concepts and relationships between concepts in a text or using diagrams. Graphic organizers are known by different names, such as maps, webs, graphs, charts, frames, or clusters. Regardless of the label, graphic organizers can help readers focus on concepts and how they are related to other concepts. Graphic organizers help students read and understand textbooks and picture books. *Graphic organizers can:*

- Help students focus on text structure "differences between fiction and nonfiction" as they read
- Provide students with tools they can use to examine and show relationships in a text
- Help students write well-organized summaries of a text

4. Answering questions

Questions can be effective because they:

- Give students a purpose for reading
- Focus students' attention on what they are to learn
- Help students to think actively as they read
- Encourage students to monitor their comprehension
- Help students to review content and relate what they have learned to what they already know
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The Question-Answer Relationship strategy (QAR) encourages students to learn how to answer questions better. Students are asked to indicate whether the information they used to answer questions about the text was textually explicit information (information that was directly stated in the text), textually implicit information (information that was implied in the text), or information entirely from the student's own background knowledge.

Seven Strategies to Teach Students Text Comprehension

Continued

5. Generating questions

By generating questions, students become aware of whether they can answer the questions and if they understand what they are reading. Students learn to ask themselves questions that require them to combine information from different segments of text. For example, students can be taught to ask main idea questions that relate to important information in a text.

6. Recognizing story structure

In story structure instruction, students learn to identify the categories of content (characters, setting, events, problem, resolution). Often, students learn to recognize story structure through the use of story maps. Instruction in story structure improves students' comprehension.

7. Summarizing

Summarizing requires students to determine what is important in what they are reading and to put it into their own words. *Instruction in summarizing helps students:*

- Identify or generate main ideas
- Connect the main or central ideas
- Eliminate unnecessary information
- Remember what they read

We hope knowing a little more about the strategies used to teach comprehension give you a clearer picture of what your child is doing daily in reading.

