

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,

Welcome March! Spring is just around the corner!

Mr. Feinstein to visit - March 8

Please encourage your children to wear their Feinstein sweatshirts to Aitken School on Tuesday, March 8 for Mr. Feinstein's visit. It is always an exciting assembly for the students and they should also be receiving their new Feinstein Jr. Scholarship cards on that day as well.

Grade 5 Puberty Nights - March 1 & 8

Fifth grade students received a notice regarding the March parent/child puberty nights. The boys' evening is scheduled for March 1 and the girls' session will be held on March 8. Both evening presentations will begin at 7 PM in the Aitken cafeteria. Parents or other designated adult must attend with each 5th grader. If you did not receive a notice with an attached RSVP or have any questions, please call Laurie Soares, our school nurse.

Kindergarten Plays - March 14 & 16

Our kindergarten students will soon be the talk of the town! On March 14 our morning students and on March 16 our afternoon and full-day students will delight everyone with their play. Both performances begin at 6:30 PM.

Discover Seekonk - March 18th - 6-8 PM - Aitken gymnasium

Mark this date on your calendar especially if you are not familiar with all this town has to offer your family! This joint effort by the Aitken School Council and Aitken PTO will acquaint you with many of the services and opportunities available to you. There will be over 30 community, recreation, camp and business members available to help you DISCOVER SEEKONK!

Dates to Remember

March 2016

- 1st Boy's Puberty Night
- 2nd & 9th Preschool Screening
- 7th Kindergarten Screening
Seekonk School Com. Meeting
- 8th Used Books Swap
Girl's Puberty Night
- 10th Aitken PTO
- 11th End of 2nd Trimester
- 14th Morning K Play
- 16th Full & PM K Play
- 18th Family Bingo Night
Discover Seekonk
- 21st Seekonk School Com. Meeting
- 22nd Aitken School Council Meeting
- 23rd Report Cards Issued
- 25th & 28th No School

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

A Message from the Principal

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Family Bingo - March 18th - 6:30-7:30 - Aitken cafeteria

This event is always a family favorite! Come play bingo and you'll still have time to visit Discover Seekonk either before or after the games!

Marks close - March 11

Marks will close for the second trimester on March 11. Report cards will be sent home with students on March 23.

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 27

Mondays & Tuesdays - grade 4

Wednesdays & Thursdays - grade 3

Thursdays & Fridays - grade 5

School Safety

Student safety is always in the minds and hearts of Aitken School personnel. Posted in every classroom is the Seekonk Public Schools Crisis & School Safety Manual and all staff have reviewed and practiced its procedures.

As always, please feel free to call if you have any questions, concerns or comments.

Yours truly,

Nancy Gagliardi, Principal



Art Notes



Welcome to a new exciting year of art at Aitken School! It's so great to be back after my year away and end the year with art! It was so fantastic to see so many smiling familiar faces and some new ones as well. I am looking forward to working with all our art with all our artists. Students in grades 1-5 have gone over rules and expectations for art class. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to email me or schedule a conference!

During the month of Feb students in all grades will be working on portfolios. Each grade has a different theme to demonstrate different skill levels. These portfolios will be used to store all our artwork to keep safe and save for Creative Awareness art show in May. We're going to have such an incredible year together! Parents please don't forget to dress your students accordingly for art class, old clothes you don't mind getting paint or charcoal on would be best.

As always I cannot wait to see what the year 2016 has in store for our Aitken School artists!

Sincerely,
Ms.Walsh

Notes from the School Nurse

Time is flying.....

I have been in my new position as the Aitken School Nurse since January 4, 2016. I am getting to know the students more and more everyday. Although I am not a teacher by trade, I am very much enjoying teaching health class. I teach 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students health education on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. The students are becoming more comfortable with me being their school nurse. We are developing a nice rapport.

To review my role and mission on a daily basis might help in understanding why or when to report to the nurse's office. There are two main circumstances/ reasons that students should make a visit to see the school nurse; illness or an injury that occurs while the student is at school. Many students walk off the bus directly to my office and tell me they are sick. Students who are sick should stay home especially if they have a fever. If a student has a fever they should remain out of school once they are fever free for 24 hours. Other reasons students visit with the nurse is for medication administration or diabetic monitoring of blood sugars. When there are sick students with colds, fevers, and the stomach bug in the nurse's office, it is best to keep the healthy students out of the nurse's office so that germs and bacteria are not passed onto the healthy students and their healthy family members. Remember that in trying to maintain a healthy environment hand washing is key. Most recently survival kits were created for each classroom teacher with gloves, Band-Aids and tooth holder necklaces for those still losing teeth. This was an effort to keep our healthy students healthy and decrease the spread of germs throughout the school. It's working!

So...if I didn't mention.... I am enjoying and loving every minute of my new role as your Aitken School Nurse. The students are amazing! I have told them that I enjoy seeing them during the day when they pop in to just say "Hi". Maintaining their health and caring for them when they are acutely sick or injured at school is my job.

We are all a team in this effort....

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding



Library News

Grade one is working on an author study of Kate Banks. Books we will be reading include Max's Words, Max's Castle, Max's Dragon, and Fox.

Grade two is also doing an author study. We are reading books by Mike Thaler. These include The Teacher from the Black Lagoon, The Cafeteria Lady from the Black Lagoon, The Principal from the Black Lagoon and The Art Teacher from the Black Lagoon.

Grade three is working on writing procedures. We discussed what a procedure was and looked at examples of "How To" books. We wrote a procedure as a class and then with a partner.

Grade four has been working on a biography project. Students chose a person to research and completed a project organizer. They will complete this project by creating a Prezi about the person they researched.

Grade five completed their timelines and we presented them in class. They did an amazing job! We will move on to a country research project next.

*On Thursday, March 10th the Aitken School Library will be hosting an after-school event for fourth and fifth grade students based on the book, Escape From Mr. Lemoncello's Library. I will be working with Sharon Clarke, the children's librarian at the Seekonk Public Library to offer this event. I hope to make it an annual thing!

*Don't forget to check out the Awesome Box on my web page to see the latest student book recommendations!

Book Swap



PLEASE READ & SHARE WITH YOUR CHILDREN BECAUSE THE PROCESS HAS CHANGED FOR THE USED BOOK SWAP!

Tuesday, March 8, 2016

Please have your children bring all gently used books to the main lobby upon arrival to school.

Each child should ONLY bring in books that are appropriate for their grade level or higher. The used books will be quickly accessed by the volunteers and each student will receive a slip of paper which says how many books they may select at lunchtime.

For example: If Molly is in 3rd grade and brings in two used third grade level books, and one used 5th grade level book her slip will say that she can redeem 3 books.

There is a limit of 5 books each student can bring in for this event. Please DO NOT bring any board books, magazines or comic books.

Thank you,
PTO Lisa Foss & Hope Turenne

PE News

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

MEANS MOVEMENT FUN FOR
EVERYONE

“SWEAT AND SMILES”

The students will participate in “Jump Rope For Heart” from February 22-28. The students are encouraged to participate and recognize the importance of the American Heart Association. They will become more knowledgeable with heart healthy facts. A parent letter is going home and envelope for any money raised by each student in grades 1-5. A recess kit with 5 balls and 2 long jump ropes will go to the class which raises the most collectively. Students will also participate in Heart activities during their regular physical education class during the week of February 22. It is optional to raise money and all students will be able to participate during these activities.

Envelopes will not have to be returned to their classroom teachers until March 21.



Test Taking Strategies

By Tara Haggerty



This is the time of year in which students start to talk more and more about having to take tests in school. Some students are nervous about assessments and some are excited. When a student asks me why they have to take tests, I tell them that the teacher needs to know what you have learned and what you need to keep working on. Here are some tips to help your child become a more effective test taker.

At home:

When your child knows there is going to be a test it is important to plan ahead. Cramming to study the night before a test often times leads to anxiety. Cramming can also cause a failure to retain the material for the assessment as well as for the future. Ten to thirty minutes a day (depending on age) is a good amount of time to be spent studying per day. It is also important for your child to get a good night sleep and a nutritious breakfast to ensure success. I also recommend wearing comfortable clothes on test day to reduce distractions.

During the test:

The most important recommendation that I give to kids is to try and relax. Sometimes this is easier said than done. Remind your child that they have to take tests so that their teacher knows what they have learned and what they are still working on. During the test I also tell students to try and use strategies such as belly breathing and positive self-talk. Another test taking skill that is important to use is pacing. It is important to go at a medium pace. Encourage your child to skip questions that they don't know and go back to them later (but tell them to make sure that they go back). It is important to encourage your child to stay focused and to read as well as listen to all of the directions. Finally, urge them to review all of their work when they are finished and make sure that they have tried to answer all of the questions to the best of their ability. This is a time for them to shine.

Source:

<http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/school/teststress/article10.html>

<http://www.greatschools.org - test taking tips>

<http://peers.aristotlecircle.com/uploads/Study%20Tips%20For%20Elementary%20School%20Students-2-1375717237.pdf>

An Article Shared With You By The School Psychologist

Karen Hurley-Cicatiello

How to Spot and Treat Anxiety in Children

Experts say that kids today are more anxious than ever. Find out why and what to do if you see signs of anxiety in your child. By Ginny Graves (the full article can be found online at <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/social-emotional-skills/how-to-spot-and-treat-anxiety-children>)

Anxious Behavior: What's Normal and What's Not

It's perfectly okay when kids . . .

- worry about an upcoming test
- want to be tucked in at night
- hang back for the first half-hour of a party
- keep an eye out for bees or dogs

It's a red flag when they . . .

- vomit, lose sleep, or cry from stress
- wind up in your bed every night
- refuse to go to parties or leave your side
- need to be coaxed outside because they're afraid of being stung or attacked

Helping Your Child Cope.

These long-term strategies teach kids that things aren't as scary as they seem.

1. Keep calm. Overreacting spooks kids even more, so take the long view: "If you don't give kids the chance to confront their fears, they'll be anxious every time there's a challenge," says Stephen Whiteside, Ph.D., of the Mayo Clinic.

2. Be empathetic. Explain that anxiety is normal, and share your story: "When I was a kid, I was terrified of tests. But I learned that the best way to get rid of my fear was to face it."

3. Take small steps. Break down challenges so they're more manageable. "If your child is afraid to sleep alone, check in every few minutes before she nods off, slowly extending the time between check-ins over days or weeks," advises Whiteside. This method, known as gradual supportive exposure, is one of the best ways to extinguish a specific fear.

6 Anxiety Soothers to Try Now

1. Have your kid tense and relax each muscle group, working up from the toes.

Why it works: Your child releases tension, and when the body relaxes, the brain does, too.

2. Tell your child to pay attention to the noises around him until he hears five different sounds.

Why it works: Focusing his thoughts helps your child stay in the moment rather than worry about the future.

3. Grade-schoolers can write down (or dictate) their fears and stash them in a shoebox.

Why it works: Writing worries helps minimize them and gives kids permission to let 'em go.

4. Tell your child to remember a time he faced a scary situation and overcame it or learned something hard.

Why it works: Picturing a previous success makes anyone feel more confident.

5. Tell your kid to pretend she's holding a slice of pizza. Have her inhale the aroma by breathing in deeply through the nose and cool the pizza by blowing out through the mouth.

Why it works: Focused breathing sends the brain a message that it's time to relax.

6. Download some anti-anxiety apps. Try the Meditation Jar (iTunes, free). Set the timer, shake the phone, and watch the particles settle.

Why it works: This app gives kids something to gaze at as they quiet down (or breathe).

Differentiation News

By Barbara Maniocas

"Differentiation means giving students multiple options for taking in information (1999). Differentiating instruction means that you observe and understand the differences and similarities among students and use this information to plan instruction."

Carol Ann Tomlinson

Grade 3: Two of my third grade groups are reviewing and practicing area and perimeter concepts. We are solving word problems, sorting real world situations into either area or perimeter categories, "name" area and perimeter, and also, reviewing last year's PARCC questions. The other third grade class is working on review and practice of previously taught standards. This includes addition, subtraction, time and data analysis.

Grade 4: One group has just completed the novel, *The Jacket* by Andrew Clements. We are continuing to practice comprehension skills and strategies with a new novel also by Andrew Clements called *The Landry News*. The other two groups are working on math reinforcement practice with fractions. In addition to practice worksheets, the students are using interactive websites and games.

Grade 5: Ms. Sansoucy's group is reviewing previously taught math skills depending on the needs of the individual students. Something really wonderful about this 5th grade group, is that they are terrific peer tutors. Many times, the students will help one another by showing which strategies have worked best for them. As an educator, it is exciting to watch the dynamics in this group.



Why Can't I Skip My Twenty Minutes of Reading Tonight?

(shared on mailing by Emmy Ellis: source unknown)

Let's figure it out mathematically!

Student A reads 20 minutes 5 nights of every week.
Student B reads only 4 minutes a night...or not at all.

Step 1: Multiply minutes a night x 5 times each week.
Student A reads $20 \text{ min} \times 5 \text{ times a week} = 100 \text{ mins/week}$.
Student B reads $4 \text{ min} \times 5 \text{ times a week} = 20 \text{ mins/week}$.

Step 2: Multiply minutes a week x 4 weeks each month.
Student A reads 400 minutes each month.
Student B reads 80 minutes each month.

Step 3: Multiply minutes per month x 9 months per school year.
Student A reads 3600 minutes in a school year.
Student B reads 720 minutes in a school year.

Student A practices reading the equivalent of 10 whole school days a year.
Student B practices reading the equivalent of 2 school days a year.

By the end of 6th grade, if Student A and Student B maintain these same reading habits, Student A will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days. Student B will have read the equivalent of 12 school days.

One would expect the gap of information retained will have widened considerably and so, undoubtedly, will school performance.

How do you think Student B will feel about himself or herself as a student?

Some other questions to ponder:

- Which student could you expect to read better?
- Which student would you expect to know more?
- Which student would you expect to write better?
- Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary?
- Which student would you expect to be more successful in school....and in life?

Shared by:
Lynn Owens, Reading Recovery and Differentiation teacher

