

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 Parent,

May is always an exciting and busy month for our school as you'll see when you are reading this newsletter! Enjoy!

Thank you, staff!

May 2-6 is Aitken Staff Appreciation Week and May 3rd is National Teacher Appreciation Day! It is a time to celebrate and honor the hard work and dedication of each staff member at Aitken School. Perhaps the best way to "thank a teacher" is to encourage your child to take a few minutes to write a thank you note(s) to someone who has made a difference in his/her school life.

Progress Reports

Progress reports will be distributed and sent home with students in grades 1-5 on Tuesday, May 3rd.

PARCC/MCAS Tests - Grades 3, 4 & 5

The PARCC tests will be administered to students in grades 3-5 according to the schedule below. Fifth graders will also be taking the MCAS Science & Technology test.

On these dates, parents are reminded to help by having students well rested with a good breakfast, and by encouraging them to work hard and try their very best. All of the classes are well prepared academically and have taken several practice tests. Hopefully, this will reduce some of the test anxiety that students often feel.

Your child's results will be sent home next fall as soon as the school receives them. Please feel free to give your child's teacher or me a call if you have any questions.

Test Schedule

Grade 3 - Wednesdays & Thursdays - May 4-25

Grade 4 - Monday & Tuesdays - May 2-23

Grade 5 - Thursdays & Fridays - Apr. 28 - May 26

Dates to Remember

May 2016

3rd	Progress Reports
5th	FACE Parent Workshop 6:30 - 8:30 Aitken Library
6th	Mother's Day Plant Sale
12th	Aitken PTO
17th	Aitken School Council Meeting
24th	Book Fair BOGO 5:30 - 7:00 evening hours
25th	Book Fair BOGO & Gr. 5 Band Concert @ Martin 7pm
30th	No School
31st	Creative Awareness Week Begins

June 2016

1st	Martin & Aitken Gr. 5 Social
2nd	Creative Awareness Evening Talent & Art Show
3rd	Field Day PreK & K
7th	Used Book Swap
10th	Field Day Gr. 1-5
14th	Gr. 5 Promotion Ceremony
15th	Preschool Graduation
16th	Kindergarten Graduation
20th	LAST DAY OF SCHOOL!!! AR Awards Ceremony Move-Up Day



A Message from the Principal

...continued

Elementary Band Concert

The Aitken and Martin Grade 5 Elementary Band will be performing in the gymnasium of Martin School on Wednesday, May 25th at 7 PM. If you thought that they were great in February, you will be absolutely amazed at the growth since then!

Gr. 5 Activities

The final months of elementary school for our fifth graders are here and plans for the end of the year activities are well underway.

The student tour of Hurley Middle School is scheduled for June 13 in the morning. The experience is always enjoyable and informative for our students. Prior to their visit, Dr. Whalen, the middle school principal, will be visiting with them at Aitken School on June 6. There will also be a 5th grade parent orientation on June 14 at 6 PM.

The Aitken and Martin PTOs have also planned an event for the students of both schools to get to know each other. The event will be held at the Seekonk Swim & Tennis Club on June 1. Information will be sent home with 5th graders so you may register for the event online.

Just a reminder - the promotion ceremony is scheduled for June 14 at 9:30 A.M. followed by activities planned in coordination with the PTO. You are invited to attend the ceremony. You may also volunteer to help with the activities by singing up on Volunteer Spot as long as you have a current CORI on file. Please call if you need a form or would like to check to see if your CORI check is current since it is only valid for two years.

Dress Requirements

As the hot weather approaches, please review the dress code with your child that is contained in the handbook. We have discussed this with the upper elementary students and reminded them that super short shorts, spaghetti straps and muscle shirts should not be worn to school. The dress code in the handbook states:

“Attire that is not acceptable is articles of clothing such as tank tops, halter tops, pants worn below the waist, etc. which are revealing in nature. Any student in violation may be sent home until more appropriately attired.”

Playground Safety, Sandals and Flip Flops

With the warm weather upon us, many students are wearing sandals and flip-flops. They are not always suitable for the types of sports and activities that they play at recess. Please consider sending in a pair of sneakers which are much better for climbing, kickball, jump rope, etc.

Cell Phones

Students are not allowed to use cell phones during school, on the school buses and on field trips. I am aware that some parents want their students to call them when they arrive home and, therefore, give their children cell phones to take to school. If this is the case, please let your child know that during school and on the bus, the cell phone must be turned off and kept in a backpack. Also, as with any electronic device or toy, the school is not responsible if it is lost or stolen.

Last Day of School

The last day of school is Monday, June 20. School is dismissed at its usual time. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours truly,
Nancy Gagliardi



Art Notes

April vacation is upon us and that means it's time to start thinking about our annual art show! We're very busy in the art room with painting, and getting in all the art we can before the end of the year.

Each student in grades 1-5 will have at least two pieces of artwork on display throughout the halls of Aitken School. There will also be many large collaborative pieces of art displayed by grade level. You can find your students work by looking for the name and class code of your child on the bottom of each artwork. Students can also submit individual artwork done at home to put in for the show that will be displayed in the art room.

Please come join us for the night celebrating visual arts! There will be a fun little spot to do coloring pages, draw with family and friends to fill our Aitken paper gallery! There will also be handmade photo gallery! There will also be handmade photo spot with art props to take photos with!

If you would like to offer your support and volunteer to help us hang art for the show, please contact the PTO or myself. A flyer for exact dates of the event will go out the week before so we can plan accordingly.

Our students and PTO have worked hard to make this event creative, colorful, and full of talent!

Thanks for all your support,

Ms. Walsh



Differentiation News

By Barbara Manickas



"Knowing that one size does not fit all...
and finding the way to get to the right fit."
-from Dear Teacher/Love Teacher

Grade 3: The third grade math students have started a differentiated unit on fractions. Since fractions are a difficult concept, more instruction and practice can be beneficial for students. Some of the activities include: Fraction Bump Games, All About Fractions ball, and literature. (Polar Bear Math and Full House: An Invitation to Fractions)

Grades 4 & 5: Reading – The fourth and fifth grades have been learning about text structures. Using a variety of informational texts, the students are practicing comprehension skills through how an author organizes their books. For example, we read a book about making chocolate. This book integrates science (matter) in reading and demonstrates a step-by-step process. Fifth graders have read the book *The American Revolution* which is organized in chronological order. *When The Wolves Returned: Restoring Nature's Balance in Yellowstone* is a book that involves a problem and solution.

I have sent a survey to parents whose children have been in my groups this year.

Thank you for your feedback.



Library News

Grade 1 objective: Students will be able to recognize a sequence of steps that lead to an end result, suggest ideas for a how-to book to write as a class, and contribute to the class how-to book.

Grade 2 objective: Students will be able to describe the purpose of technical procedures, develop a list of procedures for a chosen task, write a procedure with a partner, and type their finished procedure.

Grade 3 objective: Students will begin a Jon Scieszka author study.

Grade 4 objective: Students will begin a state research project.

Grade 5 objective: Students will present their country research Google Slide presentations to their class. Since day one, Aitken students have selected 612 books for the Awesome Box! Here are some of the latest entries:

Tell No One by Dotti Enderle

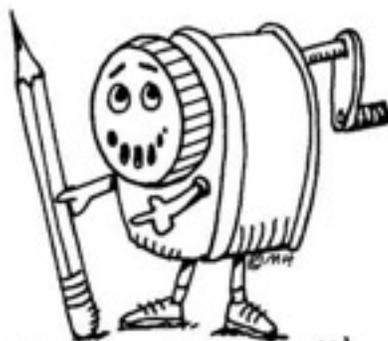
The Last Leopard by Lauren St. John

Minecraft by Nick Farwell

Junie B., First Grader by Barbara Park

Bad Kitty: School Daze by Nick Bruel

Mrs. Lamar



Sharpen Your Skills

Testing Schedules



GRADE 3 PARCC

May 4th: English Language Arts
 May 5th: English Language Arts
 May 11th: Math
 May 12th: Math
 May 18th: Math
 May 19th: Math
 May 25th: Math

GRADE 4 PARCC

May 2nd: English Language Arts
 May 3rd: English Language Arts
 May 9th: English Language Arts
 May 10th: Math
 May 16th: Math
 May 17th: Math
 May 23rd: Math

GRADE 5 PARCC

May 5th: English Language Arts
 May 6th: Math
 May 19th: Math
 May 20th: Math
 May 26th: Math

GRADE 5 MCAS

May 12th and 13th

PE News

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

MEANS MOVEMENT FUN FOR EVERYONE

“SWEAT AND SMILES”

Respect for others has been the social emphasis in class. The students are asked to smile and work hard together. The students work towards being a star student. An emphasis that you are ready to learn, Treat others the way you want to be treated, having an awesome attitude, and being a rule follower is the goal. The tickets that all grades earn are placed in a raffle that the students receive prizes such as books and book marks. Please Remember sneakers are still important for class and they make games and skills safer for classes to participate.



Turn Around the Teasing: Teachable Strategies to Help Your Child By Tara Haggerty

- I. Tell an adult - You should always tell an adult right away if:
 - A. Physical violence or threatening violence is involved.
 - B. If property is destroyed.
 - C. If comments or actions are inappropriate.
 - D. If other strategies were used and the teasing does not stop.
- II. Don't show a reaction to the teaser - That is what they are looking for.
 - A. Sometimes ignoring is not enough, a child may be ignoring the teaser but showing a reaction on their face or body.
 - B. Strategies such as pretending to read a book or looking out the window can help a child not show a reaction.
 - C. Self-talk statements such as “I can handle this” or “I can stay calm” can be helpful in not reacting.
- III. The “I” message - If someone does something you don't like use an “I” statement.
 - A. When using an “I” message it is important to let the other person know what they are doing to offend you.
 - B. Make eye contact when using an “I” message.
 - C. Body language is key - Stand up straight and arms to the sides.
 - D. Role playing is very useful in practicing “I” statements.
 - E. Example of “I” statements.
 1. “I don't like it when you say that, please stop.”
 2. “I don't like it when you push me in line, please Stop.”
 3. “I feel upset when you make fun of my shoes, please stop.”
- IV. Deflect Insults
 - A. Use humor
 1. Just make sure that the humor is not insulting towards the other person.
 2. After humor is used, it is important to walk away to avoid further negative
 - B. Agree with them
 1. Say “Yes, I know” and walk away.
 2. Say, “Thank you for noticing” and walk away.
- V. Noticing your surroundings
 - A. Safety in numbers - Someone is more likely to be teased if they are alone. Make sure that you are with some friends during unstructured times.
 - B. Play or be near an adult - Children tend to tease each other when they are not within earshot of an adult.
 - C. Allow the person who is bothering to go first in line or to be seated - This will allow your child to sit far away from the person who is teasing him/her.
 - D. Let the adults in charge know about the teasing and ask them to keep an eye on you.

An Article Shared With You By The School Psychologist

Karen Hurley-Cicatiello

Strategies for Teaching Children to Make Good Choices

Choice is a big part of people's lives. We decide daily what to wear, what to do, and how to treat people. Teaching children how to make good choices is critical for independence and self-control. This article focuses on a variety of strategies for teaching choice making.

- 1. Allow Children to Make Choices** - Often it is easier to choose for children than allow them to decide for themselves. Unfortunately, lessons learned by making good and bad choices help children become responsible, independent adults. Choice also gives children a sense of ownership in activities. Take time to offer choices, create situations for choice, and reinforce the importance of good choices in your day.
- 2. Limit Choices** - Keep the number and types of choices within reasonable limits. For example, if you let a child pick a snack, give them two or three healthy choices. By providing only allowable choices you reduce opportunities for conflict and create a situation where they succeed at making a good choice.
- 3. Discuss Options** - When faced with decisions, think through and discuss the options to help children understand why one choice is better than another. Discuss possible choices, consequences, and why one option is better. For example, when leaving the house look outside and discuss the weather. Is it cold? Is it raining? Which coat is the better choice? What happens if you pick the light cotton coat and it rains? By guiding children through choices you teach them how to make decisions for themselves.
- 4. Consider Other People** - When decisions involve other people, discuss the implications of the choice for the other people. For example, if a child wants to use the swing for the duration of recess discuss: Have other people asked to use the swing? Are other children waiting for the swing? How would you feel if you didn't have a chance to use the swing? Are there other places you can play for part of recess? This helps children realize their choices affect people other than themselves.
- 5. Use Past Choices as Opportunities** - When a child makes a bad choice such as cutting in line, saying something hurtful, or playing rather than finishing homework, use the opportunity to discuss why the choice was bad, consequences, and better choices for the future. Ask the child what other choices they could have made and what may have happened. Additionally, use past decisions and consequences as reminders. For example, "Noah, remember how you played video games rather than clean your room yesterday and had to miss your favorite show and clean up? What do you think you should do today?"
- 6. Praise Good Choices** - When children make good decisions let them know what they did and why it was a good choice. For example, "Jason, I like the way you moved over to make room for Ella on the bus. It was nice of you to share your seat. That was a very good choice."
- 7. State When There Is No Choice** - Some situations such as safety and schedules have no choices. Holding hands crossing the street, participating in fire drills, and leaving on time for school are examples of times when there is no choice. Explain why these situations do not have choices and why all people must follow certain rules and schedules. Let children know if there is an aspect of the event that is their choice. For example, "We have to leave now for the bus, but you can carry your blue or red book bag."

Original article can be found by visiting the website: www.sandbox-learning.com

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PTO News



The next two months will be filled with many fun activities for families and students. PTO is always looking for volunteers to help coordinate and execute these fun filled events. Please visit our Facebook page for updates and volunteer opportunities, just search for and like: Aitken School PTO.

Some of the events coming up that are being sponsored by the PTO are the Mother's Day Plant Sale, Irish Step Dancers, a special guest musician, Odiako Japanese ceremonial drummers and Field Day.

There are also some great field trips and programs coming up for the grades. Grade 1 can look forward to Fire & Ice program and Marvels of Motion program. Grade 2 will be having a Fossil Program. The 3rd grade is having a field trip to the New Bedford Whaling Museum and Grade 4 will be visited by a special guest author.

These are just an example of some of the fun things the PTO helps to organize for the teachers, students, and families.

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED!**

5th

Grade

Events

MAY:

- 3rd: Grade 5 Events Meeting
Library at 7 p.m.
- 9th: T-Shirt Signing
- 23rd: Field Trip to Vet's Auditorium

JUNE:

- 1st: 5th Grade Social
Seekonk Swim & Tennis Club from
4pm to 7pm
- 6th: Dr. Whalen visits Aitken
- 10th: Field Day
- 13th: Visit to the Hurley Middle School
- 14th: Promotion Ceremony
9:30AM in the Gym
- 14th: Parent Meeting
Hurley Middle School 6pm
- 20th: Last day of school



Reading Lingo

By: Joanna Rioux and Lynn Owens

Parents hear many terms brought up by educators about reading development and progress. There's fluency, accuracy, and comprehension to name the "Big 3". But what do they actually mean?

The easiest to convey and determine, is accuracy. It means exactly what you might expect. How many words were correctly read in a given chunk of continuous text? This is often how we teach children and suggest to parents as a guide for choosing Just Right books. For example, if you open a book of interest to any page, you could use the 5 Finger Rule to help determine if it's an appropriate difficulty. Reading an entire page of text without having to figure out any words is considered easy text. In like fashion, reading a page and having to figure out 1-3 words would be considered just right. Children can learn from that work and progress their own reading by having an appropriate amount of challenge. The point where there is too much work, making the book too hard (frustrational) would be if there are 5 words or more that have to be solved in order to keep reading.

Another term we use is fluency. Most often this is thought of as the speed at which a text is read. While this is true, there is much more to fluency than simply the rate of reading. It also includes phrasing, rather than reading word by word. Likewise, ability to use punctuation appropriately is considered when teachers think about fluency. This includes pausing for periods and commas as well as changing our tone of voice for dialog, question marks, and exclamations. The ultimate goal in this area, is for the reading to sound conversational.

Then there's comprehension. Most often this is thought of as understanding what we've read. While that is partially true, there is so much more to comprehension than that. That understanding of what we've read is literal understanding. For example, who is the book about, what happens in the story, how does it end, etc. On a deeper level, comprehension includes making inferences about character motives as well as having theories about what personality a character has and allowing that theory to change as the story progresses. Comprehension also involves considering an author's purpose for writing and what we can take away from the reading such as a lesson, particular information, or broad understanding. Another big piece of comprehension is making connections to the text while we read. For example, does a character remind you of yourself, someone you know, or a character from another book or a show? Likewise, can you make such connections for events and settings?

Reading is the single most complex learning we engage in over the course of our lives. It is amazing that such a huge process begins so young. If parents and educators alike are using the same language to discuss this progress, our children will get the best start they can.



Notes from the School Nurse

A Tough Call--When Should I Keep My Child Home?

These days, with all the sickness going around, and with all the fright about the flu, it's a question parents are facing regularly: when should you keep your child home? It's not usually a straightforward question, either. For most families, keeping a kid home means missing work--and although our families are of course our first priority, missing work can be hard. Missing school isn't great for kids' learning, either.

What makes the keeping-home decision even more complicated is the fact that it's not just about your kid--it's about other kids too. Children are really, really good at spreading germs.

As a tip and clarification because there can be a fine line between keeping children home or sending them to school. I ask the same question with my own children. Here are some clear-cut guidelines--and some judgment calls. First, the clear-cut ones:

If they've got any symptom you'd want to take them to the doctor urgently for, they shouldn't go to school. Like any trouble breathing, or bad pain, or a new limp.

Fever. You can't send your kid to school with a fever. Not only will they feel miserable, but people are usually at their most infectious when they are febrile. The definition of a fever is 100.4, but chances are I will call for 100.5 or higher. Besides, a temp of 100 often has a way of going up in an hour or two. Please--resist the temptation to give acetaminophen or ibuprofen, send them off, and cross your fingers. You might decrease their fever, but you won't decrease their contagiousness--and the stuff wears off.

Vomiting or diarrhea. Reasonably obvious. I know you won't send your child with either one. Unless they've gone many hours without vomiting, they aren't better--and really, with vomiting, diarrhea and fever you should wait until your child has gone 24 hours without symptoms.

Okay--now for the judgment call ones:

Cough and runny nose. If we kept kids home for every cough and runny nose all winter, they'd hardly ever go to school. And usually, if they don't have a fever and don't have trouble breathing, they can go. However, if they are really hacking away, keep them home for a day or so. It's kinder to your child--and to everyone at school.

Headache and other pains (assuming they aren't severe). Take their temperature, ask about any other signs of illness, ask about injury, look them over (do your Dr. Mom exam). If you don't find anything, ask yourself: how uncomfortable are they? If they really seem uncomfortable, keep them home--and check in with the doctor. If they don't seem so bad, try some acetaminophen or ibuprofen. If you administer these meds before your child comes to school a phone call to the school nurse- Mrs. Soares 336-5230 is very helpful so that I am aware of the time you gave it. I can bet the student will be in the nurse's office that day to say they don't feel well. It is helpful to know when and if they received medication at home so that I don't give them another dose too soon.

"I don't feel so good." We all hear this from our kids some mornings--usually mornings when we've got an important meeting at work or they've got a test or something else is going on that makes missing school suboptimal. My advice for this one is the same as the above: check 'em out, and if you don't find anything and they send them to school. I am here if they get sick at school. I've also found that reminding them that if they are sick they need to stay in bed all day and not watch TV sometimes makes them suddenly feel a bit better. Remember, too, that you don't have to be the only one making the decision. Even if your doctor's office isn't open yet, there should be someone on call that can help you figure out the best thing to do. Also know that I am available for questions too!