

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.

DATES TO REMEMBER

March

- 03/07 Aitken School Council
3:10 pm
Boy's Puberty Night
7pm
- 03/09 2nd Trimester Ends
PTO Meeting 6:30 pm
- 03/14 Girls Puberty Night
7pm
- 03/15 AM K Play 6:30 pm
- 03/16 Used Book Swap
PM & Full Day K Play
6:30pm
- 03/17 Early Release 12:45
No PM K or PreK
- 03/19 - 03/25 Reading
Challenge
- 03/21 Report Cards Issued
Aitken School Council
3:10pm
- 03/24 Family Bingo 6:30 -
7:30 pm

April

- 04/06 RIF Free Book Day
- 04/07 Grade 5 MOS Sleepover
- 04/12 PTO Meeting 6:30
- 04/13 Early Release 12:45
- 04/14 No School
- 04/17 - 04/21 School Vacation
- 04/28 Sweetheart Dance

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents,

Welcome March! Spring is just around the corner!

Welcome to the Jungle – March 3

Mark your calendars for the boys' choice dance at Aitken, Friday, March 3 from 6-9 pm. Along with dinner and dancing there will be games such as beanbag toss, twister, ring toss, Hulu hoop contest and Animal trivia for prizes. If you haven't already registered, please call the school and we will send home a flyer with the information.

NAEP tests – March 7 – grade 4 students

Mildred H. Aitken School students will participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) on March 7, 2017. NAEP is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what students know and can do in various subjects. It is administered by the National Center for Education Statistics, within the U.S. Department of Education. NAEP is different from our state assessment because it provides a common measure of student achievement across the country. The results are released as The Nation's Report Card, which provides information about student achievement to educators, parents, policymakers, and the public. Students will take a mathematics or reading assessment.

Grade 5 Puberty Nights – March 7 & 14

Fifth grade students received a notice regarding the March parent/child puberty nights. The boys' evening is scheduled for March 7 and the girls' session will be held on March 14. 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL CONTINUED

Kindergarten Plays – March 15 & 16

Our kindergarten students will soon be the talk of the town! On March 15 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.

Early Release – March 17

On Friday, March 17, students in full day kindergarten – grade 5 will be released at 12:45. A staff professional development afternoon is scheduled on this day. There will be no afternoon kindergarten or preschool.

Discover Seekonk – will not be held this year.

The Aitken School Council worked to make it a town-wide event, but unfortunately there wasn't enough interest at this time. We may try again in future years.

Family Bingo – March 24th – 6:30-7:30 – Aitken cafeteria

This event is always a family favorite!

Marks close – March 9

Marks will close for the second trimester on March 9. Report cards will be sent home with students on March 21. Since it is a new trimester, our library, art and physical education schedules changes slightly and your child's classroom teacher will inform you of the changes.

MCAS tests

During the months of April and May, all students in grades 3-5 will be taking the MCAS tests on-line 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.

MCAS Test Schedule – April 25-May 19

Grade 3 – May 8, 10, 11, 16 & 17

Grade 4 – May 1, 4, 5, 18 & 19

Grade 5 – April 25 & 26 and May 2, 3, 9, 12 & 16

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



CONVERSATION IS A POWERFUL VOCABULARY BUILDER

By: Lynn Owens & Joanna Rioux

More and more often families and friends are on individual devices while spending time together. While technology is not necessarily a bad thing, we do want to be careful that it doesn't get in the way of good conversation with our children. Conversations are an undervalued element of learning.

During the early years, parents can sing and read to their children. These experiences are excellent for building a foundation of language. Talking about the rhymes and stories can provide enrichment with those experiences. Commenting on behaviors of characters, what you see in pictures, and sharing your opinions will all enable the development of language that will later help your child to begin reading and writing with more ease. This occurs because it builds vocabulary that will be encountered later in text.

In elementary school, the conversations become more involved. Discussions about stories can evolve into making connections. For example, what a character says or does could remind you of a time you did something similar, or perhaps remind one of you of a similar situation in a previously read book, TV show, or movie. These connections add more complex vocabulary that may be encountered during reading or writing. Later, when figuring out a difficult word during reading, it helps a great deal if the word is part of our speaking or listening vocabulary.

Admittedly at older ages, children tend to be less willing to engage in conversation. This can make it more difficult to separate them from their devices. But if daily conversation has been a part of your lives since very young, it will be less difficult. Talking at this level will require open-ended questions so that you don't end up with simple one or two word answers. Conversations about a character's motives, sharing opinions, and making judgments about behaviors are some ways to do that. Also, this is a time when more technical vocabulary is a part of education. This can seem intimidating. You can simply ask your child to describe, explain how, or show you a process or procedure they are learning about. Teaching or explaining a newly introduced topic increases learning tremendously.

Setting aside time each day to have conversations with your children will greatly promote their speaking and listening vocabularies, which in turn, will aid them in becoming stronger readers and writers.



**AN ARTICLE OF INTEREST SHARED WITH YOU BY
KAREN CICATIELLO, THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST**

This month's article is a comprehensive guide to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Parents often ask whether or not their child could have this disorder. ADHD is a real disorder which cannot be diagnosed by a simple test or two. It requires a comprehensive evaluation by a licensed medical or mental health clinician. The article is titled: "What is ADHD?" found on a website called KidsHealth.org You can access the article online by going to the Aitken to Know website at <http://blog.aitkentoknow.com/blog/>

IN THE LIBRARY WITH MRS. LAMAR

February lesson plan overview:

This month we have been creating biography timelines (using www.Sutori.com), creating book trailers (using www.adobespark.com), studying the author Kate Banks by reading the “Max” books, and studying the author Mike Thaler by reading the “Black Lagoon” books.

Centers:

We had a Valentine creation center this month that was very popular!

Technology:

First grade worked on their keyboarding skills with a “Valentine’s Day” typing game, second grade is coding, third grade completed a dental health web tour, fourth grade tried “Dragon Dash” coding, and fifth grade created an avatar using www.voki.com to talk about their favorite book!

Did you know?

Awards were announced this month for the 2017 **Newbery** and **Caldecott** winners:

Randolph Caldecott Medal for the most distinguished American picture book for children:

“**Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat**,” illustrated by Javaka Steptoe is the 2017 Caldecott Medal winner. The book was written by Javaka Steptoe and published by Little, Brown and Company, a division of Hachette Book Group, Inc.

The **John Newbery Medal** for the most outstanding contribution to children’s literature:

“**The Girl Who Drank the Moon**,” written by Kelly Barnhill, is the 2017 Newbery Medal winner. The book is published by Algonquin Young Readers, an imprint of Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, a division of Workman Publishing.

PE NEWS

AT AITKEN MEANS MOVEMENT FUN FOR EVERYONE by Mr. Queenan

Jump Rope for Heart is during the month of February. If you would like to look at the letter that went home with the envelopes for Jump Rope for Heart you can go to Seekonkschools.org and on Aitken's web page you'll find the letter connected with quick links. The students are encouraged to raise money for children who are sick and dealing with heart problems. The money is used by the American Heart Association to save lives. The easiest way to encourage participation is to visit the website heart.org/jump. On that page you'll find your school and sign up. The school is listed by Mildred H. Aitken School. So use the letter M to search for our school. Join our team and sign up your child. The Zoo Crew is the theme this year. The kids are able to show that they have earned a donation by wearing a lanyard and Lion for their first donation. An online donation is the easiest and proactive way to fundraise and earn the zoo animals. There are 6 total but one online donation earns the Lion and Elephant zoo animals. The students are reminded that the reason to raise money shouldn't be to get a thank you gift but to help children that are less fortunate and are trying to better their health. The children also learn heart facts and how to keep their hearts healthy during the month of February. The envelopes are collected at the end of the month on February 28. Also if they do the fundraising online you don't have to worry about turning in the envelope in.

R > Register online to make the loudest R-O-A-R.

O > Online take the zoo Ecard Challenge.

A > Ask for donations by sending emails and Ecards.

R > Reach 10 friends and family members and challenge them to take the pledge, too.

MUSIC NOTES



We will begin the new month exploring our own unique musical instruments: our voices. Our discussions will include the anatomy the vocal mechanism and how mindful adjustments can change the vocal registers we use. Other concepts are timbre, tone color, lighter and heavier register, breathing techniques, and vocal classifications.

Third, fourth, and fifth grades will learn more about the music staff, music symbols, how to read printed music pages, basic music notation, simple time signatures and their corresponding concepts, and the science of sound and how it travels.

All grades will continue to strengthen rudimentary written notation skills, beat and no beat, meter, melody, and form. Music vocabulary will introduced as well.

The first grade has been experiencing music classes for the first time. They always come to music excited to learn new things. The second grade has been using books for the first time, which they seem to really enjoy.

Multicultural music and movement is also included in the curriculum. Some basic dance movements and formations are do-si-do, step-touch, pathways, body facing, box formation, concentric circles and cast off. (I call it "peel the banana") I am looking forward to a great year!

Karen Roderick
Music

FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE

As a whole we recognized heart disease at Aitken school on February 3, 2017. The staff dressed in red and with great enthusiasm raised close to \$150.00 in less than 1hr on that snowy morning. It was exciting to see the spirit and energy that generated the front office and the nurse's office that day. The American Heart Association provided large red hearts for those who wore red and those who donated to heart disease. The hearts are hung around the door of my office as a reminder of those who we have lost to heart disease and those who we honor who are living with the disease.

As the week approached I introduced heart disease to the health education classes. We discussed recognition and prevention. I was able to share my personal story about Sammy who has congenital heart disease. The students learned that not only adults have heart disease, but that children of all ages can have heart disease as well. They had many questions about Sam and was amazed by how many open heart surgeries she has had. The students displayed a sense of compassion for the stories that were shared as I could clearly see they were engaged and focused. After the discussion they worked on activities such as crossword and word search puzzles on the heart. Fill in the blank from a word bank with cardiac related words was a challenge that they conquered with passion and fun.

The staff received heart healthy recipes during the week for dinner and deserts including super bowl appetizer recipes. If you are interested in any of the heart healthy recipes please e-mail soaresl@seekonkschools.org or call my office at 336-5230.

So as a whole we learned, we recognized, we fundraised, we had fun, and we became sensitive to the challenges and success stories of those who have had a heart condition and those who live with cardiac disease today. There are many "heart heroes" among us. Reach out to educate and honor them with love and a huge heart filled "way to go" to a healthier life style.

Looking forward to "wear red day" in February 2018 ❤️



DIFFERENTIATION NEWS

Differentiation is...

- Having high expectations for all students
- Adjustment of the core content
- Assigning activities geared to different learning styles, interests, and levels of thinking
- Providing students with choices about what and how they learn
- Flexible because teachers move students in and out of groups based upon students' instructional needs
- Acknowledgment of individual needs
- Articulated, high level goals reflecting continuous progress
- Assessment to determine student growth and new needs
- Adjustment of curriculum by complexity, breadth, and rate
- Educational experiences which extend, replace, or supplement standard curriculum

***From: An article posted on Reading Rockets written by: [Ann-Marie Foucault](#)

Please remember that if you ever have any questions about what we are doing with differentiation, I can be contacted at manickasb@seekonkschools.org or at 508-336- 5230. I also have a webpage on the Aitken School website that has interesting information for parents of all students.

A MESSAGE FROM AITKEN CHAMPIONS

Hello Aitken Families!!

The Aitken Champions program now has some space available in both our before and after school programs.

We offer, Homework support, fun and educational activities, great kids clubs and much more!! You can enroll online at

www.discoverchampions.com

For more info please call or email.

Director Debbie Bowyer- [508-336-5567](tel:508-336-5567)

dbowyer@klcorp.com



TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Spring is coming I promise! Until then if you are looking for a safe way to keep the children entertained but aren't happy about the ads on Youtube, there are some alternatives.

The first one is Kideos, all videos are screened prior to being posted, there are no ads, and you can set parental controls (age group, time allowed to watch). There are many fun categories that are age appropriate.

Another one is SchoolTube, a site where teachers and students can post video creations to share with others. Clicking on the "Discover" tab will bring you to a page that can be searched by topic, ie. Technology, Elementary, Animals, and plenty of other subjects. I didn't notice any parental controls but it does adhere to guidelines for students under the age of 13 as it requires an adult's permission.

Another choice is WatchKnowLearn, which is a place to find free educational videos. You can filter by age and subject.

Happy safe viewing :)

Mrs. Keough M. Ed.

Technology Integration



AN ARTICLE SHARED WITH YOU FROM TARA HAGGERTY

the School Adjustment Counselor.

When Your Child's Anxiety is Making You Anxious: Repeat These 22 Phrases
by [Renee Jain](#) on October 26, 2016 in [Anxiety Relief Tips](#), [GoZen! Anxiety Relief](#)

As parents, we have a natural tendency to reach out to our children when they are anxious, scared, or stressed. What none of us can anticipate is how our children's anxiety will cause us to feel anxious, helpless, hopeless, angry, or desperate. The next time your child is ridden with anxiety, repeat any of these phrases. You will be surprised that your child will likely mirror your reaction.

- 1. This too shall pass.** Like all emotions, anxiety will pass. Our bodies cannot physiologically maintain the heightened level of awareness caused by anxiety for very long. Chances are that waiting ten to fifteen minutes will result in a change in anxiety levels.
- 2. Anxiety serves a purpose.** Oftentimes we treat anxiety like there is something wrong with our child. In fact, anxiety serves an important biological function to keep us safe. Teaching your child to differentiate between anxiety that will help and anxiety that will hinder her/him is a valuable life skill.
- 3. Breathe.** Deep breathing actually reverses the body's stress response. When we are anxious, we tend to take shallow breaths. Taking three conscious, deep breaths will alleviate much of our anxiety.
- 4. We are on the same team.** Have you ever watched two basketball players going for a rebound, fighting each other tooth and nail, only to realize they are on the same team? Remember, you and your child are on the same team and have the same goals.
- 5. I am my child's guide.** Remind yourself that your role is not to control the challenges your child will face but rather to be her/his guide through the experiences.
- 6. Observe.** Observe. Observe. Instead of "doing something," simply observe what is happening like an outsider. See if there are commonalities in your observations. By identifying triggers, you can help your child cope with them, thereby limiting your own sense of helplessness.
- 7. The only way to get across this swift, deep river is to go through it.** Allow your own feelings, even if they are dark, to arise and pass. If this experience is like a river, it means there is **also a riverbank waiting for you.**
- 8. Stick to the routine. Anxious children thrive on predictability.** You may not be able to do anything about the trigger, but you can reinforce the routine. Bedtime, family rituals, and morning routines center our children, better preparing them for the outside world.
- 9. Meditate.** At our darkest moments, hope is rekindled simply by taking the time to be still and focus on our breath for a few moments.
- 10. Help is available.** Hopelessness usually means you have exhausted your ability to deal with your child's anxiety. Having another set of eyes on the situation may make all the difference in the world. Whether a professional counselor, a relative, or another trusted adult, turn to those in your child's circle for help.
- 11. My child's anxiety is not a reflection of my parenting.** Stop questioning whether you should or could have done something differently with your child. Focus rather on what you can do as their guide through their challenges.

AN ARTICLE SHARED WITH YOU FROM TARA HAGGERTY

Continued

12. What would make my child laugh right now? Whether it's a funny noise, a silly story, or singing the wrong words to a favorite song, laughter is the fastest way to make you both feel better.

13. I'm going to take a break. It's okay to take five minutes of quiet time or put yourself in a place to reconnect with yourself when you are feeling angry. Not only are you modeling appropriate behavior, but you also have a chance to take a few breaths and remind yourself of a few of these phrases.

14. I love you. I'm here for you. Your children will experience stress that they cannot control. They will receive an injection, perform in front of an audience, and face challenges. Reminding them that you love them and are here for them is reassuring, not just for them but for you as well.

15. In this moment, right now, what can I do to reboot my well-being? Some days it will be getting ice cream; others it will be going for a run. Whatever it is, make a long list for yourself that you can reference when you need it.

16. She/he does not know how to deal with this. Frustration over our children's anxiety can sometimes result from forgetting that they are trying to learn how to navigate a world of unknowns. Regardless whether their fear is rational, or of how many times you have been through this, ask yourself how you can be their guide.

17. I am on a beach. There is a reason why guided imagery is used during labor and delivery to reduce pain. It works! Imagine yourself in a soothing, happy place before you speak.

18. I am the adult. Simply remind yourself that you are the adult; you have the power to remain calm and provide heart-centered advice to de-escalate an anxious situation.

19. My job is to help my child become a functioning adult. When you put it into perspective, you must teach your child how to acknowledge, reduce, and wade through anxiety if she/he is to be a functioning adult. Suddenly, when your anxious child is crying about going to school, you can approach the problem as just that—a problem to be solved.

20. I have control over my reaction. Ultimately, the only person you can control is you. Govern your feelings, control your reactions, and then help your child learn to do the same. You can teach your child the art of emotional self-regulation by modeling it.

21. Progress is never linear. Coping with anxiety is not a linear process. It takes time and practice for you and your child. Don't assume you are at square one when you experience a setback.

22. I'm doing the best I can. In this moment, with the tools you have, you are doing the very best you can. Some days your reaction to your child's anxiety may be cool, calm, collected, empathetic, and thoughtful—on other days, perhaps not as much. We are all a work in progress, and you are doing the best you can.

Jain, Renee, (October 26, 2016). When Your Child's Anxiety is Making You Anxious: Repeat These 22 Phrases, Retrieved from [http://www.gozen.com/When-Your-Child's-Anxiety-is-Making-You-Anxious: Repeat These 22 Phrases/](http://www.gozen.com/When-Your-Child's-Anxiety-is-Making-You-Anxious-Repeat-These-22-Phrases/)