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# Atkinson Academy

## March/April 2012

**KEY DATES:**

- \* 4/17/12 - Climbing Club, 3:15-4:30, Gym
- \* 4/18/12—Beginning Band Concert, 7pm, PAC
- \* 4/19/12 - Enrichment Day
- \* 4/20/12 - No School, Professional Develop. Day
- \* 4/23-4/27/12 - April School Vacation

UPCOMING MAJOR EVENTS:

- 5/2/12**  
- Spa Night
- 5/7-5/11/12**  
- Staff Appreciation Week
- 5/11/12**  
-Fisher Cats Game
- 5/17/12**  
- 3rd Grade Play, PAC, 6pm
- 5/19/12**  
- Car Wash, Coco/Earley Building
- 5/21/12**  
- Volunteer Breakfast
- 6/13/12**  
- Move-up Day, 5th Graders
- 6/14/12**  
- 5th Grade Celebration, 6pm
- 6/15/12**  
- Field Day
- 6/18/12**  
- Last Day of School, 12 pm Dismissal

### Principal's Corner:

Mother Nature certainly threw us a curve ball this month with a taste of summer heat and then the cold returned.

This has been a busy month with the Book Fair, Lip Sync and Jump Rope for Heart ending with the Celebration of Inventions. This was attended by many parents who were able to enjoy the creation of their children's projects.

April proves to be just as busy as we open the month with Writing Trait Workshops for third grade teachers. The African Drum and Dance Troupe will visit to showcase African cultures. Enrichment Day is scheduled for April 19th. The theme "Make EveryDay Count" will highlight various workshops for the children to attend all day. What a better way to prepare for vacation the week of April 23-April 30.

NECAP Science Testing will take place for fourth grade students the second week of May. More information will follow.

Parents are preparing to say good-bye to our present fifth graders by planning the celebration on June 14th.

Since we are in New England and the weather is constantly changing, please dress your child in layers.

The Atkinson Academy staff and students congratulate Hannah Luscomb. Hannah was one of the NH State Regional winners of the Smokey the Bear Woodsy Owl poster contest sponsored by the Atkinson Garden Club. She will be honored by Governor Lynch, April 18th. We are so very proud of her!

Thanks also to the Global Corporation that awarded us \$500 to benefit our students. They will be receiving new non-fiction science and social studies books relating to the curriculum. Also, Steven Murphy from Skelly Mobil matched the funds. We appreciate Mr. Murphy's efforts to gain this award and his generous matching contribution.

Kathleen Dayotis,  
 Principal

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## Physical Education

Although I was conflicted, I chose to stay inside and finish the unit.

Lesson #1 in Volleying consisted of stations (5 for grades 3-5 and 4 for grades 1+2) that involved the skill of volleying. Two stations (one for grades 1+2) required the use of different kinds of paddles to keep a ball in the air or hit off of a wall. Two stations were team-volleying with a beach ball and a punch balloon. At the fifth station the students were asked to use nerf balls to practice the underhand serve (some even tried overhand) against the wall.

Lesson #2 started with everyone practicing their serves with nerf balls at the wall. We quickly moved to the net and played a game called "Clean up your room". The objective is to serve, volley, or one-bounce volley any balls away from your side and over the net. This game was followed by small group volleying using beach balls, punch balloons, or practice volleyballs. The groups got to choose which ball they wanted to use. The upper grades finished this lesson with some team volleying back and forth over the net using the beach balls.

In lesson #3 all grades again warmed-up with a quick game of "clean up", followed by small group work. All upper grades spent at least half of class time playing a modified game of volleyball. The younger grades just tried to volley back and forth across the net.

In all grades and throughout every lesson we talked about and demonstrated the (very difficult) skills of bumping, setting, and serving. We learned about real Volleyball rules as well. To facilitate play at this level, I have found it to be in the best interests of the children to modify many of the rules. For example, we allow the ball to bounce once on the floor between hits and teams are allowed multiple hits to get the ball over the net. Although I have a variety of practice (and real) volleyballs for the kids to practice with, we invariably end up using beach balls to get the best game play.

As I write this article, the boys Varsity Volleyball team from TRHS is practicing in our gym. I am happy to see several Atkinson Academy grads on the team. I was also delighted to hear (during the first week of our Volleying unit) that the older sister of one of our Fifth graders was inspired by her experience here at AA to play Volleyball at the Middle School. These are examples of what makes my job so rewarding. I love teaching your children.

Thanks for your support.



~~~~~  
**Jeff Goddard**  
**PE Teacher**  
**X305**

## Tech Ed

The students have been learning and creating wonderful projects in technology.

Grade 1 has been using the keyboard to write sentences for their plant books. The students are correctly using the Shift key, space bar, and enter keys to type their information correctly. They also are using many of the font tools to enhance their letters. These students have also been introduced to inserting data into Excel documents to create simple bar graphs. It's amazing how early these concepts can be developed.

Grade 2 has written their second season poem. Although we may not have had much snow this winter their poems are filled with wonderful descriptions and pictures of ice and snow. Second graders will soon be creating a number chart in Excel that they will use for "mental math" problems.

In grade 3 we have focused on correct key-boarding habits. It is easier for them to learn the correct fingering now rather than "unlearn" it later. They use a keyboard cover to cover the keys so that they are

truly required to learn key locations. Many of the students are making impressive progress in this area. I would love to know that they practice at home. A good website for them to use is Dance Mat Typing. The web address is <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing/>. I have suggested to the students that they cover their hands with a dish towel when they are home so that they can type without seeing the keys.

Fourth grade has been busy creating a state glog that they have researched. This is an interactive poster that they insert information and pictures along with video clips and sound. Please ask them to show it to you. The website ([edu.glogster.com](http://edu.glogster.com)) is set up so that the students can look at all of the glogs from their class.

Fifth grade has also created glogs about the thirteen colonies. If you have not already, I would encourage you to take a look at them. The fifth grade students also created PowerPoint presentations where each slide revealed more of a hidden picture supported with text to

help you to guess what was behind the different shapes. Mr. Shawley's class did their presentations about explorers. Mrs. Camire's class did theirs about revolutionary heroes and Mrs. Lozowski's class did their presentations about planets.

Anna Lizier  
 Tech. Ed. Teacher



## Counselor's Corner ~~

Throughout the school year, whether I am in the classrooms for lessons or with your children for counseling, I spend much of my time teaching how to recognize and identify feelings. I talk about why this is an important skill and spend a lot of time talking about using "feeling" words. When children are able to recognize the feelings others are having and are able to identify their own feelings, it helps them with other important social skills such as impulse control, empathy, conflict management and friendship. Be a role model for expressing feelings and encourage your children to use feeling words. This will help them develop into influential capable people.

Happy Spring!

*Elissa Salemi*  
*School Counselor*

## Reminder to Parents of 5<sup>th</sup> Graders

A parent survey form from the middle school was put in your child's shuttle last Friday. It is very important that you fill these out as thoroughly as possible to help the middle school teachers begin to get to know your child.

Please return these surveys to your child's teacher by **Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup>.**



## Nurse

A good breakfast is an important start to a child's day. It provides energy and prevents headaches and stomachaches. Children are better able to study and to learn when they are not hungry.

If your child does not like to eat in the morning try a nontraditional meal. Sandwiches with a protein source such as peanut butter, tuna fish, or cheese are good. Cottage cheese, yogurt with fruit, or last night's leftovers can also be eaten for breakfast. Serve all of the above with a small glass of milk and/or juice.

Remember the old saying, "Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a duke, and dinner like a pauper." Breakfast is the most important meal of the day! Enjoy.

Also, I have seen an increase in the number of student visits to the health office for the removal of ticks. With that said, I would like to share the following information from the *NH Department of Health and Human Services* of how best to avoid mosquito and tick bites.

### **PRACTICE the 8 "Ds"**

Use bug sprays with **DEET** in them to keep mosquitoes and ticks from biting you. For mosquitoes only, sprays with picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 can also be used. The last 2 ingredients are as effective as lower concentrations of DEET. Not all products are safe for children. Always follow label instructions.

**DRESS** in long pants and a long-sleeve shirt. Wear light colors to make ticks easier to see. Limit time outdoors between **DUSK** and **DAWN** when mosquitoes are most active. Check your clothes and skin frequently for ticks while outdoors. Do a final full-body tick check at the end of the **DAY**.

*Keep your home safe!*

Mosquitoes grow in water. **DRAIN** standing water from gutters, wheelbarrows, and wading pools.

**DISPOSE** of old tires, tin cans, glass bottles, and other water-holding containers left outside.

**DO** away with ticks around your home by removing leaf litter and tall grass at the edges of lawns, gardens, and stone walls.

Wishing everyone the best of health!

Mrs. Amante

## 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. Reminder: for safety reasons, buckle up your child before they leave the car pickup line.

\* 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 (x347) 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.

\* Change in Going Home forms are available on the school website. Notes must have the date, student's full name, teacher name and the address where the student will be dropped off clearly written out. Notes written by students are not acceptable. Please remember to send change in going home procedures in with your student. The office and/or classroom teachers will no longer accept changes via telephone, e-mail, or fax.

\* 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, sweatshirts 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.

## MUSIC NEWS



Check us out on Twitter!!



### RECYCLING NOTES:

With the help of Funding Factory, we recycle cartridges and cell phones to earn new technology equipment, educational software, or other updated equipment for our school. At a time where school districts and nonprofit organizations across the country have been dealing with huge budget cuts, we've found recycling to be a great opportunity to supplement our finances.

This fundraiser is FREE and simple. The program runs year-round, accumulating constant income for our efforts. We need your support. Please donate your empty printer cartridges and used cell phones to the Academy and we'll take it from there!

Last year alone, more than 300 million cartridges were thrown away, while 30,000,000 cell phones were tossed or replaced. We're alleviating the volume of waste that goes into landfills, while collecting needed products and equipment to keep our school running smoothly. Your help is vital to our fundraising success. Cell phones and cartridges can be dropped off at the school's main office.

Thank you for your support!

The talented Atkinson Academy musicians are soaring with knowledge! First graders have been learning about orchestral instruments. They have been studying *The Carnival of Animal* and are developing their active listening skills. Second Graders have been learning how music can tell a story through Sergei Prokofiev's famous *Peter and the Wolf*. They are also beginning to read simple musical symbols while playing classroom percussion instruments. Third graders have been studying the names of the notes on the treble clef staff. They are flying through their recorder songs and becoming excellent musicians. Fourth graders have just finished learning about John Williams. They studied the compositions he wrote for Star Wars, Jurassic Park, E.T., Harry Potter, Indiana Jones and Superman. Their projects were outstanding. The fifth graders recently finished learning about African drumming. They performed an African drum circle, worked with call and response and played a rock passing game from Ghana. They are now studying hidden messages in songs of the Underground Railroad.

The fifth grade band gave an outstanding performance at the PAC on Thursday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. They played three combined pieces with the district's fifth grade band members. There will also be a district wide fourth grade band concert on Wednesday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM. Students should arrive at the PAC at 6:30PM.

Musically,  
Kate DePalo  
General Music and Band Teacher



All first year Strings, grades 3-5, prepare to join the district first year Band students on April 18<sup>th</sup> at the PAC. Our District First Year Instrumental concert takes place Wednesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>. Beginner Strings are memorizing their five concert pieces, so please encourage your son or daughter to get into a daily practice routine playing their songs for fun! We look forward to sharing our music with you on April 18<sup>th</sup>.

### Strings

Advanced fourth and fifth grade strings are busily preparing for their Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup> District Grades 4-8 Orchestra Concert at 7 pm at the PAC (arrive at 6:15 pm to tune). We are excited to perform in the same concert as the Middle School Orchestra! District fourth and fifth graders have only one rehearsal for this concert: on stage at the PAC on Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 pm until 8 pm. Please have your child attend this very important rehearsal: an orchestra is like a complex puzzle where we need to fit all the different parts together (violins, violas, cellos) for one complete whole! We look forward to sharing our music with you on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

Marjorie Nelson  
Strings

### CHORUS

The students in chorus had a wonderful opportunity to sing with other grade 4/5 chorus students from the Pollard School and Sandown Central in our recent district-wide Chorus concert in March at the PAC. All of the students did an amazing job, and I am proud of how well our students represented Atkinson Academy. Thank you to the parents for all of your support, and the students whose hard work and dedication really paid off!

We have a very busy schedule ahead of us for the remaining school year. In May, the chorus will sing "America the Beautiful" at a Fisher Cats game. We will also be singing at the Volunteer Appreciation Assembly in May, and the Grade 5 Graduation in June. Students involved in the Advanced Chorus are preparing musical theater songs to sing at a "recital" in June. We are very busy, but having a lot of fun!!

If your child is presently in 3rd or 4th grade, you may want to think about whether he or she would be interested in joining chorus next year. We meet on Monday and Thursday mornings from 7:45am-8:30am in the band/strings/chorus room. Singing is a fabulous way to start the day! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to e-mail me at [MRaiti@aol.com](mailto:MRaiti@aol.com). Enjoy the warmer weather!

Matty Farrell  
Chorus

## *From the Library*

It has been a very busy 2012 in the library! During the month of February, Atkinson Academy spent two weeks celebrating *I Love to Read* and *Read Across America*. Students were very excited to participate in the activities that celebrated reading, both at school and at home. We are particularly proud of our grade level Truffula Trees in the hallway near the cafeteria. Each leaf celebrates one title that a student read during those weeks. First grade was the overwhelming winner! They have earned an extra recess.

Most recently, we were host to our annual Scholastic Book Fair. We enjoyed our "Luau" theme - and the summer-like weather that came along with it! Once again, I must thank everyone for their generosity. As you know, funds raised are used to support activities that impact all students in school - particularly Author Visits. This year we are very excited to have Chris Van Dusen (in April) and Donna Seim (May) coming to visit our school. These visits are always an exciting opportunity for students to hear from 'real' authors about their writing process.

During the month of April, we will celebrate National Library Week with events that will include a school-wide reading event, along with other special library events. Also during this month, we will have the Merrimack Valley Storybook Quilts in the library. These quilts have been inspired by children's picture books and created by members of the Merrimack Valley Quilting Guild. Students will be exposed to the stories told by the quilts and learn a little bit about the history of quilt making and how it relates to storytelling. Later, in May, we will be celebrating Children's Book Week!

Thank all of you for your support of our school and these library events. Happy Reading!

*Jennifer Toth*

### **ATKINSON ACADEMY**

On-line Usernames and Passwords

Access **Destiny** and **Web-Path Express** through the school home page.

[www.atkinsonacademy.com](http://www.atkinsonacademy.com)

Click on Library/Destiny

Click on Atkinson Academy  
and then the green HOME tab.

#### **EBSCO Host/Novelist K-8**

(online database)

Username: Atkinson

Password: 03811

#### **World Book**

(online Encyclopedia)

Username: timbernh

Password: facts

#### **CultureGrams**

(information about 200 countries & cultures)

Username: Atkinson

Password: welcome

#### **BookFlix**

(interactive reading resource)

Username: trsd

Password: bookflix

#### **TrueFlix**

(new this year -  
will be up and running shortly!)

Username: aaes

Password: trueflix

## READING SPECIALIST

### Using the Six-Traits to Improve Writing

I heard this quote once, and it really made me think about how we teach writing to our students. "Writing is easy; all you do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until the drops of blood form on your forehead." - Gene Fowler

It has been said that there are two kinds of writing teachers: those who assign it and those who teach it. Putting pen to paper can be the start of an inspiring and complex process, or it can be a painful exercise in frustration. Our job is to help students organize and articulate their thoughts and experiences, all the while finding the joy in writing. In the upper-grades, using a six-traits approach allows students to learn the language of writing and experiment with the craft of writing.



The traits are not new. They weren't discovered or invented by anyone, although many would claim otherwise. They have always been the inherent part of what makes writing work. The traits include:

**Ideas:** The detailed, insightful, fresh description of a carefully focused topic. This is the heart of the writer's message.

**Organization:** The correct fit of theme, structure, and pace in a piece of writing. This is the skeleton part of a writing piece that gives support and direction to the writer's ideas.

**Word Choice:** The vivid and precise wording that shows the reader what is being communicated. This is the knack for selecting just the right word or phrase that makes everything become clearer for the reader.

**Sentence Fluency:** The ability to vary the length and cadence of sentences, which will insure smooth oral reading. This is the music, rhythm, flow, and poetry of the language.

**Voice:** The passion, personality, and style of the writer, which ignites meaning and connects to the audience. This is like the writer's fingerprints and personality preserved on the page, which keeps the reader reading.

**Conventions:** The mechanically correct grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation. These are the editor's tools, which enhance readability and meaning.

I remember in fifth grade bringing a piece of writing to my teacher for a conference. I'm sure meaning well, she told me it was "pretty good" and to go back to my seat and make it better. Yikes! That hurt. You see, I had absolutely no idea what to do. If I knew how to make it better, I would have! The six-trait rubric acts not just as a tool for assessment, but as a guide to thoughtful, effective revision.

With direct instruction with six-traits, students will use popular children's books as mentor texts, study examples of anonymous student papers, and practice on a focused skill area. Students set goals and use the language of a writer to improve their own writing. Because the six-traits define writing, students look at writing in a step-by-step order. Consequently, confident writers are created!

Establishing a common vocabulary is the core of trait-based writing assessment and instruction, and it becomes the foundation for all direct instruction. Writing is a way to communicate facts and ideas, to express thoughts and feelings, and to tell a story. Encouraging our students to sharpen their writing skills and stretch their imaginations is critical. Who knows? We may be encouraging a future Ernest Hemingway, J. K. Rowlings, or William Shakespeare!

*Jill Feneberg*, Literacy Specialist



"The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." - Dr. Seuss



## ENRICHMENT

Only those that dare to fail greatly can achieve greatly. –Robert F. Kennedy

You'll always miss 100% of the shots you don't take. –Wayne Gretzky

Mistakes are the portals of discovery. –James Joyce

### Creative Thinking and the Importance of Mistakes

It is important to be able to find the right answer but sometimes too much importance is placed on “the right answer”. Often we want our children to be right so much that we end up creating children that don't try. These children believe that if they aren't going to be right they might as well not try. We all know that not trying is the biggest mistake of all. Many of the world's greatest achievers first failed, often many times.

#### How can we create thinkers that will try?

- \* Ask open-ended questions with several acceptable answers.
- \* Brainstorm frequently. Remember, all ideas are valid in a brainstorm.
- \* When problem solving, discuss the merits of a given idea and how it has gotten you closer to a solution.
- \* To help your child discover his/her own error (rather than pointing it out) try asking these questions: Are you sure? Why do you think that? How did you come up with that answer?
- \* Sometimes, children get questions wrong because they do not think it through before answering. In a way, this is great—the child is not afraid to take risks.
- \* When you make a mistake, admit it and talk about how everyone makes mistakes.
- \* Tell stories about times when you or other people made a mistake, but then went on to succeed. For a list of famous people that failed before succeeding go to <http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/efficacynotgiveup.html>

Remember it is okay to get an answer wrong and the journey to discovering why we were wrong makes us better thinkers.

Happy Thinking!

Mr. Blay  
Enrichment Teacher



We are collecting box tops again this year; Molly Casey, PTA, will be in charge of this. She will be running a contest to see which class can bring in the most box tops. The first place class will get extra time on the rock wall. 2nd place will get extra recess time and 3<sup>rd</sup> place will be able to have extra gym time.

Please cut out the box tops, put them in a Ziploc baggie with the teacher's name on the baggie and send them down to the office. A box has been setup in the office for collecting the box tops.

Last year we earned 1,127.40 which the PTA used for field trips, playground equipment and enrichment programs. Our goal this year is 1,400! So start Caring, Collecting and Cutting box tops for your school!

Thank you for your support!





## ART



I wanted to congratulate all the students who participated in Art Olympics. Our students are very talented artist. The winning drawings are going to be posted on our school's web site, be sure to check it out.

Our fifth graders completed their pen and ink texture drawing. They are on display around the school. The detail and craftsmanship are wonderful. They are now learning about one point perspective and are starting to draw 3-D houses and cities.

Fourth graders are just starting to finish their cylinder drawings. Their goal was to create an arrangement of cylinders that showed overlapping. We will be building a cylinder out of clay using a slab rolling technique in the next few weeks.

Third graders have started to build a pinch pot with coil construction out of clay. They are learning about the ancient Pueblo pottery technique. We will be glazing traditional geometric shaped patterns onto our pots after their first firing.

Second graders have finished weaving a small key chain and now they are learning to cut symmetrical shapes. They are beginning to use those shapes as a stencil to create a pattern that overlaps.

Our first graders are learning to weave with yarn. They have a small weaving card, a tapestry needle, and bright colored yarn. They have learned their weaving pattern of over, under, over, under... for the last few weeks when they first made a paper weaving.

*Pam Alexander*  
*Art Teacher*

