

NEWSLETTER

ASA C. ADAMS

ISSUE No. 5 | January | 2019



On December 18th, Asa C. Adams Schools students in grades 3-5 performed at the Hawk Auditorium at the University of Maine at Orono. This is an annual event, one that was performed again at the school for all other students. Under the astute and passionate direction of Jessica Moore, the students regaled concert-goers with a wide range of holiday selections. Pictured here, the students are demonstrating their version of If I Were a Reindeer. The set list included:

Grade 3: When the Holidays Come, Glow, Let's Make it Shine, & If I Were a Reindeer;
Grade 4/5: Can You Hear, Dona Nobis Pacem, You Will Be Found, Sleighride.

Calendar

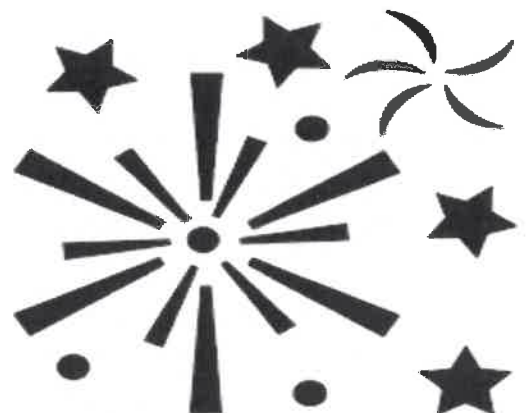
January 9 PTO Meeting,
6:30-7:30

January 21 Martin Luther
King Day—No School

February 13 PTO Meeting
6:30-7:30

February 20th ½ day am

February 18-22 Winter
Break—No School

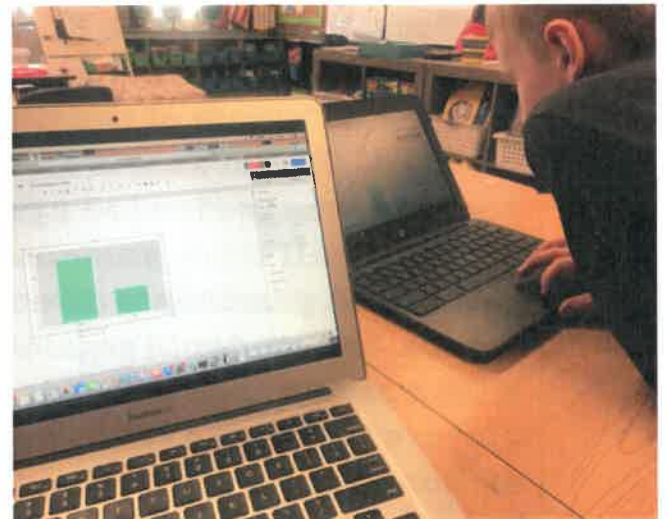




Dear Parents and Community Members,

At Asa C. Adams School, we strive to ensure all students have appropriate access to technology and use the most current educational research to guide our instruction. It's important to understand that, in the 21st century, our students live in an age of disruptive technology, a term used to explain the rapid nature of nature not only of

devices and applications, but the interactive effects that occur for users. As staff and administrator, we are highly conscious of this paradigm and thoroughly examine applications and devices before instructional use; moreover, we advance a well-tempered use of technology approach, balancing digital learning with hands-on activities and experiential pedagogy designed to encourage personal mastery and productive peer collaboration. We always consider the developmental levels and needs of our students. We keep our students physically active and remain keenly aware of the need for outdoor recreation, real-life interaction, and expressiveness. We also engage students through **Social-Emotional Learning**, which we implement with our **Habits of Mind**, e.g. Listening with Empathy, Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations, Gathering Data through all the Senses, and more.



Our designated **STE(A)M Team** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) meets regularly to discuss how best to assess and apply instructional technology. One recent development is the

widely popular [EDU Break-Out Session](#), which is currently used across the grade levels. Students are presented with several lockboxes and various clues to help them collaboratively solve the problem. The emphasis in these sessions is inquiry-based learning, which requires students to use critical and creative thinking with only two clues provided by the teacher. Students might find, for example, an ultra-violet flashlight in a box needed to decode 'invisible' ink on a paper they need to find. Break-out sessions provide wonderful opportunities for even the most introverted students to shine!

Our Fab-Lab is another example of our commitment to incorporate 21st century instructional technology. The Fab-Lab is a ['Maker-Space'](#), designed to encourage inventiveness, cooperation, and active learning with such projects as 'bots' (miniature robots that need to be programmed in teams), origami, and 3-D printing.

January has also been designated 'Coding Month' at Asa C. Adams School. Teachers will have the opportunity to invite STE(A)M Team members and ['Coding Buddies'](#) (older students with coding knowledge) into their classrooms to conduct coding activities. Coding, as you may know, is the digital language that creates functionality in technology applications. While it may be 'One small step' in the digital universe, it is a giant leap for students prepared for the 21st century.

Finally, we are pleased to announce the start of our [after-school Coding Club](#), which will be led by our Technology Director, Sean Malone. We are fortunate to have parents with professional backgrounds also interested in participating. We will be starting with a quick survey for students in grades 3-5 and, depending on the level of interest, student letters of application.

As always, our intention is to be inclusive and equitable. We appreciate the trust you have in us to educate RSU 26 students for the future.

Sincerely,

Darren J. Akerman, Ed. D.
Principal



Mrs. McLaughlin's 2nd graders worked in the computer lab to write code using the website code.org. They chose to work alone or in partnerships to write code using Blockly, which is a drag and drop coding program. The students showed many Habits of Mind during our Hour of Code including flexible thinking, striving for precision and accuracy and perseverance. It was a wonderful experience!



What is the Hour of Code? The Hour of Code started as a one-hour introduction to computer science, designed to demystify "code", to show that anybody can learn the basics, and to broaden participation in the field of computer science. It has since become a worldwide effort to celebrate computer science, starting with 1-hour coding activities but expanding to all sorts of community efforts.



When is the Hour of Code? The Hour of Code takes place each year during [Computer Science Education Week](#). The 2018 Computer Science Education Week will be December 3-9, but you can host an Hour of Code all year-round. Computer Science Education Week is held annually in recognition of the birthday of computing pioneer [Admiral Grace Murray Hopper](#) (December 9, 1906).



Why computer science *Every* student should have the opportunity to learn computer science. It helps nurture problem-solving skills, logic and creativity. By starting early, students will have a foundation for success in any 21st-century career path.

On Thursday, December 20th, Grades 2 and 3 were very fortunate to have a few special guest performers from Bangor Ballet's productions of Nutcracker in a Nutshell come into Asa Adams and demonstrate some of the variations we have been learning about in music classes. Students were able to see the Chinese Tea Dance performed by Ms. Bella and Mr. Reilly, the Arabian Dance performed by Ms. Sophia, the Spanish Dance performed by Ms. Elise, and the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy performed by Ms. Jenny. The demonstration was followed by a question and answer session with the dancers and some very fun "dance along" activities.

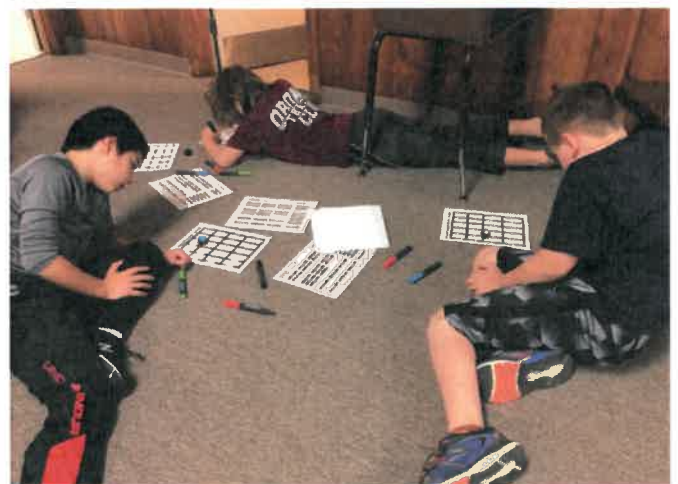


FABLAB

Students are expanding their horizons in Fab Lab! From straw creations to programming bots to building and printing 3D projects, Asa students are planning, designing, and problem solving. Students know that when they come to Fab Lab they will have challenges to solve, and they must apply the habits of mind to reach their goal. Mrs. Smart's role is to support them, not to 'show them what to do.' All our students know that they are coding, whether they are using low-tech materials such as Strawbees or building code to run high-tech bots.

These pictures demonstrate students coding with Dash bots, drawing code for Ozobots, and puzzling out the code to create a successful ball maze. All of these activities require dedicated problem-solving skills. Our students rise to take on these challenges, and it is a delight to see their level of engagement!

Some of the technologies (both high and low) that we've used so far this year include: Strawbees, paper towel/plastic cup structures, Fiddlesticks, Ozobots, Dash bots, Bee Bots, Code & Go Mice, Origami, Snap Circuits, and ball mazes.



Mrs. DeGesere's Kindergarten students use iPads in the classroom to help reinforce literacy skills. They use apps like Starfall to practice letter names and sounds. They can use a QR Reader to scan a barcode and a book will be read aloud to them! The Epic! app has thousands of books. Students can have individual profiles. Many of the books are Read-to-Me books based on student's interest. The iPads allow my students to have some choice. It makes their learning purposeful as they interact with the apps and some cases see the letters and words come to life.

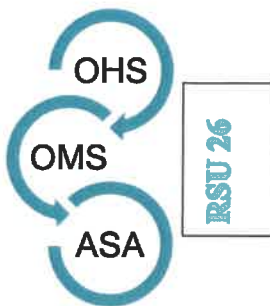




Curriculum Update: Science

Curriculum can be viewed as a map we follow to answer the question: “What do we want our children to know?” As elementary educators, Asa staff must be fluent in multiple content areas. Since they deliver instruction, we also value their input. Currently, for example, our 3-5 staff is piloting the ‘Elevate Science’ curriculum, which aligns with NextGen Science Standards and also provides hyperlinks to a number of science simulations. Thus far, this appears to form a good connection for ‘Mystery Science,’ which is used in Kindergarten through Grade 2; ‘Mystery Science establishes a strong inquiry-based approach, helping students think like scientists. In addition, this early pedagogical approach aligns well with our current emphasis on S.T.E.(A.) M. The general premise of underpinning much of the NextGen Science Standards is to create and sustain thought processes that require students to examine, hypothesize, experiment and use data to draw conclusions. The results of these efforts have resulted in Asa’s very high standing in Science in state assessments.

ATTENTION COMMUNITY MEMBERS: FACILITIES



Sub-committees have been formed to examine possible facilities upgrades. Please see the district website for specific dates relating to each sub-committee. We encourage members of the community to attend, express their thoughts and see what plans may be developed.