

# Principal's Newsletter

Asa C. Adams Elementary School  
Issue No. 9 May 2019



4pm Dismissal	April 30	
Pre-K/Kindergarten Screening (Note: No school for Pre-K and Kindergarten students)	May 2-3	By appointment
4 pm Dismissal	May 7	
PTO Meeting	May 8	6:30-7:30
4 pm Dismissal	May 14	
Memorial Day	May 27	No School
Pot Luck Facilities Gathering	May 23	5:30
Variety Show	June 6	6:00-7:30 pm



## at Asa C. Adams School

Dear Parents,

A child's natural curiosity is a great way to help them learn, and science is often one of the most exciting subjects. It is natural for many of us to categorize learning, but science tends to be most engaging when students see how it relates to other areas and their own lives.

At Asa C. Adams School, our focus on inquiry-based learning provides students with the cognitive tools they need to examine and understand the how and why of natural phenomena. This may be one hypothesis that helps explain why Science scores on MEA and NWEA assessments at Asa. C. Adams are far above the state average. However, I am of the opinion that other factors also contribute to the exceptional performance of our students.



Our highly trained staff understands that students need time to collaborate and conjecture; moreover, they understand how to scaffold information so that the discovery process is highlighted. Using a wide array of hands-on learning approaches, students literally build their knowledge, collaborate with others to share different ideas, and 'construct' their knowledge. This parallels the learning modality known as Constructivism.

We use two science programs—Mystery Science in grades K-2, and Investigations in grades 3-5; however, grades 3-5 are now piloting units from a new series, Elevate Science, which aligns with NextGen Science Standards and offers electronic links to simulations. While rigor and fidelity to any program is essential, it's important to understand that teaching science requires something more, namely an interdisciplinary approach. At Asa C. Adams, that means STE(A)M or Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. STE(A)M takes many forms—from coding to robotics to lockbox collaborative mysteries.

Finally, with our proximity to the University of Maine at Orono, we are fortunate to have many visiting scientists and parents, who take an active role in developing a culture of inquiry for Asa C. Adams School students.



Sincerely,  
Darren J. Akerman, Principal

**Constructivism is basically a theory -- based on observation and scientific study -- about how people learn. It says that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. When we encounter something new, we have to reconcile it with our previous ideas and experience, maybe changing what we believe, or maybe discarding the new information as irrelevant. In any case, we are active creators of our own knowledge. To do this, we must ask questions, explore, and assess what we know.**



Reminder: Pot Luck Dinner Gathering on May 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm to discuss and review proposed Facilities Bond. Superintendent Higgins will be on site with architectural drawings.

Our Fab-Lab enters a second year at Asa C. Adams—a designated 'Maker-space' where students can work on STE(A)M projects. Most recently, students have been investigating how 'bots' can be programmed to make geographical shapes, tying together engineering, technology, and mathematics. The nature of most projects in the Fab-Lab requires collaboration and problem-solving. Students are always provided with teacher guidance; however, they are encouraged to use critical thinking skills and solve simulated problems with a friend or in a small group. We are also beginning to embed many STE(A)M projects into classrooms for everyday use in enhancing instruction.

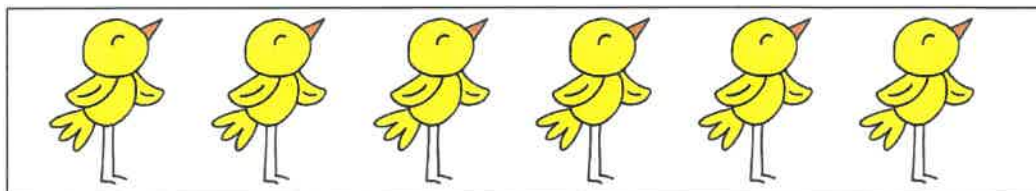


# Mystery Science in Grade 2

The second grade team uses Mystery Science as their primary science curriculum and they also supplement with stem challenges and science materials of their own to fit the needs and interests of their students. Mystery science aligns to the Next Generation Science Standards. The second grade curriculum includes four mysteries: Animal Adventures, Plant Adventures, Work of Water and Material Magic. The curriculum also offers mini-mysteries that are shorter lessons. Each lesson is highly engaging and nurtures children's curiosity by explaining how we know things, not just what we know. By using Mystery Science the second grade team hopes to create a generation of better thinkers!



Did you know that Grade 3-5 are piloting units from a new science curriculum? **Elevate Science** is a comprehensive K-5 science program that focuses on active, student-centered learning. The blended print and digital curriculum engages students in phenomena-based inquiry, three-dimensional learning, and hands-on investigations. **Elevate Science** builds students' critical thinking, questioning, and collaboration skills. It fuels interest in STEM and creative problem solving while supporting literacy development for elementary-age learners.



# Asa C. Adams School Lunch News



## Big Changes at Asa C. Adams School

In an effort to keep plastic out of our landfill and preserve the earth, our students will be using metal cutlery. The timing of this aligned with our celebration of Earth Day. Special thanks to our Student Council Students under the direction of Suzanne Neville, who supervised the roll-out. Also, we wish to acknowledge Mr. Jacobsen, who applied for and received the grant!

**New Salad Bars!**  
Earlier in the year we applied for new salad bars from the Chef Anne Foundation, an organization whose goals are to provide schools with the means to provide more fruits and vegetables to children. A few weeks ago we found out they got funded! Our new salad bars (one for the high school as well) arrived this week and we put them out as a surprise to staff and students. The overall reaction was fantastic! Students were excited with the new look and accessibility. We hope to utilize them to help incorporate more fruits and veggies into our program.

Thank you all for your continuing support!



RSU 26 Director of Food Services  
Ben Jacobson



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