

# Principal's Newsletter

## Asa C. Adams Elementary School



Issue No. 10 August-September  
2019

August 27	Open House for Pre-K and Kindergarten 5:30-7:00pm	
	Freezer Pops on playground by PTO	
August 29	First Day of School for Students	
August 29	PTO sign up/light breakfast in library	8:30-9:00am
September 2	Labor Day	No School
September 5	Pot Luck Barbeque in playground	5:30-7:00 pm



Dear Parents,

Welcome to a new year at Asa C. Adams School. I want to take this opportunity to personally welcome you to what will be an exciting and adventurous learning experience. Your child is at the center of our attention, and we want to reach out to you as a partner in education.

This year we will be using a thematic approach called Bridges to Learning. This idea was developed by our S.T.E.(A).M. Team, a group of educators at Asa, who are working to help integrate Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics into content areas. This takes the form of 21<sup>st</sup> century constructs that include many digital tools housed in our former 'Fab-Lab' such as Oz-bots, coding programs, and 3-D printers. Research supports using these tools and the ideas associated with them with interdisciplinary intent—in other words, they can help engage students by making connections between content areas. For example, how does music relate to mathematics? What are engineering principles that apply to Social Studies? How can coding help us decode scientific principles?

On another level, bridges to learning also encompasses our commitment to Social-Emotional Learning. Again, research supports the idea that students who develop Habits of Mind such as Listening with Empathy, Flexibility, and Taking Responsible Risks have a greater likelihood of success in navigating an ever-changing global environment. Think about it this way: sometimes it not what you ask but how you ask.

Of course, we will be using our Bridges to Learning approach to connect with parents, the community, and other learning organizations, too. A particular focus for my leadership practice is building relationships, and I believe we are all well-served to work collaboratively toward that connection.

I am fortunate to work in such a caring and committed district. I also recognize that it takes the work of many to help our students at Asa C. Adams School span the grades and cross into middle, high school and beyond successfully. I am honored to be part of that process and truly appreciate the support you have shown our school over the last year.

For parents new to Asa, (and for returning parents), I encourage you to join our Parent-Teacher Association and become a Parent Volunteer. We welcome your expertise—indeed, that is often one of the unique features of Asa C. Adams School. It may be as simple as assisting in the classroom, or a read-aloud, but always know, you are welcome.

Our proximity to the University of Maine at Orono is another bridge we strive to keep open. It is not uncommon for us to have visiting scientists, professional authors, and visual artists.

Most of all, I want you to know that the highly dedicated staff at Asa C. Adams School will always keep you informed about your child. Our staff is diverse, creative, and focused on providing your child with a solid foundation to 'bridge' the years of childhood into a life with meaning and good intent.

Please reach out to me if you have questions, concerns, or ideas you believe might be beneficial to the RSU 26 community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Darren J. Akerman

Michelle Bricahcek is joining Asa C. Adams' 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Team. Michelle is well-known as a leader for the Parent-Teacher Organization and substitute teacher. She brings a wealth of experience distilled from her background as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. We believe Michelle will be a wonderful addition to our staff.



Grade 4 Teacher

Bethan Bilodeau will be filling our one-year Pre-Kindergarten Teacher position. Bethany has an extensive background in Early Childhood Development and has worked in many creative endeavors such as children's theater. We welcome Bethany as part of the Asa C. Adams School and community.



Pre-K Teacher

## High-Performing Teachers Make the Difference

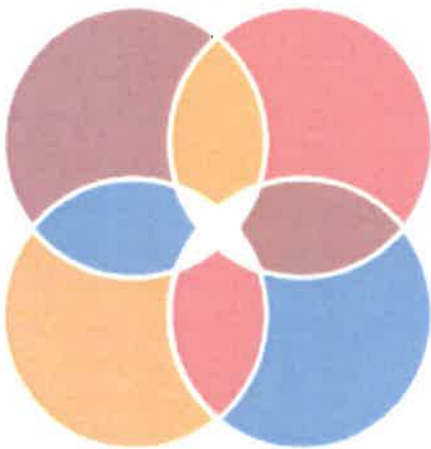
Do you know how your child's teacher is evaluated? You should know that it is an intensive process designed to help teachers constantly improve their instruction. Instruction, however, is only one of the four domains in the Danielson Teaching Framework. The other three include: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, and Professional Responsibilities.

THE FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING

EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

### Teacher Evaluation

2013 EDITION



CHARLOTTE DANIELSON

“Teacher evaluation can be an opportunity for genuine professional learning. When organized around **clearly established and accepted standards** of practice, teacher evaluation offers an opportunity for educators to reflect seriously on their practice, and promote learning.”

Charlotte Danielson

*The Handbook for Enhancing Professional Practice*

### Facilities Update: Asa C. Adams School

As part of our facilities improvement plan, we have updated 3 classrooms with a ‘light touch,’ a process that will continue throughout the next 5 years in conjunction with our major facilities updates, which are scheduled to begin this spring. These exciting new developments have a powerful effect on our ability to provide your children with the best possible learning environment.



# Attendance Matters!

Students who consistently attend school gain the academic and social skills they need to reach their full potential. Attending school provides the resources, opportunities and support that students need to be ready for future learning and post-secondary success.



## What is Chronic Absenteeism?

Chronic Absenteeism is missing 10% (18+ days) of school for any reason – excused or unexcused. Chronic absenteeism is an early warning sign for subsequent school problems.

## Is there a “Chronic Absence” problem in Maine?



### Yes, 1 in 6

Maine students are chronically absent. Over 28,500 K-12 students in Maine missed 18 or more days of school.<sup>1</sup>

Chronic absenteeism impacts the learning of both the individual absent student and their classmates.

## How is this impacting our students?

Chronically absent students are more likely to: end up with **gaps** in their learning, **score lower** than their peers in math and reading, and are at greater risk of **dropping out** of high school.



In reading and math, Maine's elementary (K-5) students who are chronically absent score a **full year** behind their peers who attend regularly.<sup>2</sup>

Addressing chronic absenteeism is a key strategy for increasing academic achievement and graduation rates.

## What can be done?

Chronic absence can be solved when:



Schools, families, and communities **work together** to create a culture of attendance as early as preschool and kindergarten



Student attendance is **regularly monitored**



The **barriers** to getting to school are identified and addressed

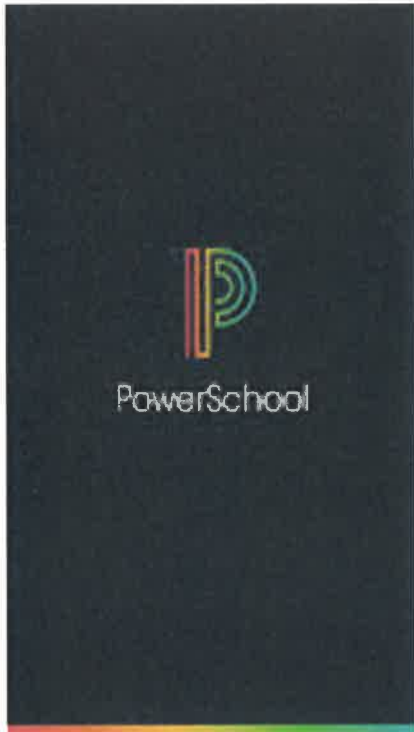
<sup>1</sup>ME DGE, 2018 <sup>2</sup>Count ME In, 2017

Schools that fully implemented the Count ME In program have decreased their chronic absentee rate by an average of 25%. More students in these schools are attending and engaging successfully in their learning.

Contact Count ME In to learn more about our program to address chronic absenteeism in Maine!  
[www.countmeinmaine.org](http://www.countmeinmaine.org)

Education is a partnership. At Asa C. Adams School, we take pride in knowing our students, their interests, abilities, needs, and families. Our connection to with families is particularly important. We work to hold students accountable for their own learning and understand that it is an incremental process. As adults, we are also always learning. Here's something we have learned: One key finding of research regarding attendance is that it can be one of the most profound indicators of student success. If your children are missing a significant number of days at school, we are required by state mandate to contact you. Similarly, from a day-to-day perspective, if your children are frequently tardy, they miss vital introductory parts of instruction and can lose valuable learning. Often, these students can feel disconnected from their peers, which is detrimental to their well-being. Please make every effort to ensure your children are present for learning on time each day. We truly appreciate your help and want to build the foundation for educational success for many years to come.

## Power School: A Power Tool to Support Students



The implementation of a School Information System (SIS) is a large-scale project that—in the words of Technology Director, Sean Malone—“is the single most important technology decision any district will make.” RSU 26 has made the decision to use Power School, one of the most comprehensive systems available. Why is this important to you? Power School maintains a data base of student information that includes everything from academic grades, scheduling, attendance, health needs, home addresses, pick-up information, and much more. In essence, Power School provides the working framework we need to address ‘the whole child.’ The system allows teachers the ability to examine, cross-reference, and create data reports that accurately monitor performance. Power School also makes the registration process easier and enhances our ability to communicate with parents. This is a learning year for many staff at RSU 26 regarding Power School, but we will make it work to enhance the educational experience for your children and you.

### *SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S CORNER*

Welcome back! It seems like just yesterday we were waving goodbye to students for the summer, and here we are looking forward to another great school year. I hope this finds your family having enjoyed some sun, fun, and having had a nice break from the school year routine.

I am excited to have had the opportunity to meet several of our new students and their families this late summer. If you are new to our school, and we did not have a chance to meet, please stop by the school counseling office and say hello! I love to meet and get to know all of our families, as we often have a long working relationship as your children progress through their years at Asa. If you are an Asa family that doesn't know me, please feel free to stop by too. My door is always open.

During this time of transition back to school, if you find your child is struggling with the transition to school, or emotionally for any reason, feel free to email me, call me, or stop by for a visit. The change from a summer schedule to a school schedule, new classmates, a new teacher, and a new routine can be a lot for elementary school kids. We are flexible and accommodating here, and we know kids do their best learning when they are feeling safe and happy. We are here to help.

*My summer vacation took me on a fun adventure to Europe. While I certainly enjoyed my trip, I found that travel makes me very aware of how truly important our Habits of Mind are! If you aren't yet familiar with the Habits of Mind, we teach them at Asa Adams each school each year as life skills that can you can apply at any age, in any profession. You can find out more by searching for them here: [https://www.chsvt.org/wdp/Habits\\_of\\_Mind.pdf](https://www.chsvt.org/wdp/Habits_of_Mind.pdf)*

***How did I use my Habits of Mind on my trip this summer?***

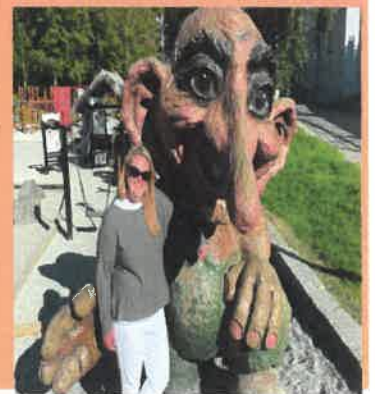
*-I took a responsible risk trying several new foods (octopus, fresh anchovies, eel, and some stinky cheeses!)*

*-I had to persevere and manage my impulsivity at the rental car counter. That was hard to do (they gave away our rental car before we arrived).*

*-I had to think flexibly when someone spoke to me in a different language and I didn't understand. But people around the world are friendly and helpful, and so we could usually figure things out.*

*-I had to use past knowledge applied to new situations when I went snorkeling. I was given a different kind of mask, and I had to use what I had learned snorkeling before to figure out how to use the new kind of mask. I'm looking forward to getting started teaching our Asa students how they can use their Habits of Mind this 2019-2020 school year.*

*Mrs. Lisa Erhardt, School Counselor*



Mrs. Erhardt in Bergen, Norway