

Principal's Newsletter

Asa C. Adams Elementary
School



Issue No. 12 November 2019

November 8	Library Theater Program	6:00 pm
November 11	Veteran's Day	No School
November 15 th	PTO Meeting	3:30-4:30pm
November 25	Early Release	12:45 pm
November 26-29	Thanksgiving Break	No School



What is it all about in elementary school?



Dear Parents,

According to Dr. Harry Wong, an influential educational researcher, "Students want a safe, predictable, and nurturing environment—one that is consistent. Students like well-managed classes because no one yells at them, and learning takes place. Effective teachers spend the first two weeks teaching students to be in control of their own actions in a consistent classroom environment." This means students must learn how to 'Manage Impulsivity,' or practice 'Thinking Flexibly,' two competencies we teach within the framework of Habits of Mind.

Habits of Mind is one way to teach Social-Emotional Learning skills. At Asa C. Adams School, we use this approach to help students build strengths that will help them navigate the world of human relations and interactions, which many researchers believe are skills as important as content areas like mathematics and literacy. Think of it this way: What skills would you want your child to have someday in an interview, in a relationship, in society?

Most teachers know that addressing behavioral issues from a proactive approach is important. Developing positive relationships and open communication is also integral. From a Principal's perspective, these approaches are vital. Commonly, appropriate support for maladaptive behaviors requires knowledge of an antecedent, or the 'reason' behind the behavior.

In addition to Habits of Mind, we use Zones of Proximity, which helps students visualize and reflect upon their behavior, and Social Thinking, a common-language-based approach that helps students understand norms, expectations, and interpersonal relations. It's not uncommon to hear staff use such words and phrases as "Following the group plan," or "Unexpected behavior (as opposed to 'bad' behavior)". You may note that in both cases these words avoid labeling or judgements; instead, the goal is to help students apprehend the world in language that is easy to understand and meaningful.

Sincerely,

Darren J. Akerman, Ed. D.
Principal



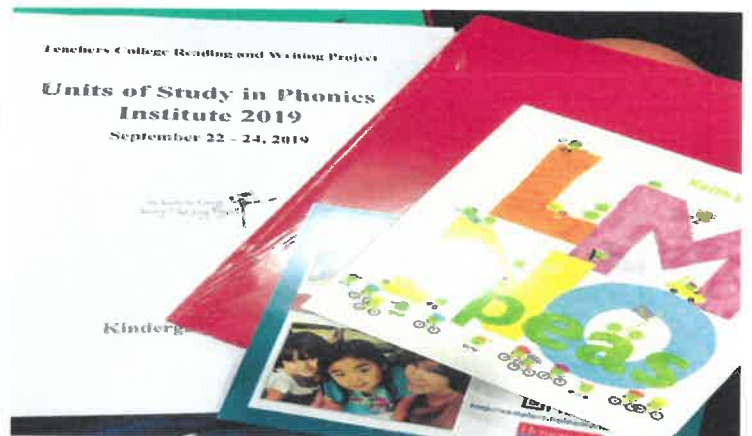
Lifetouch.

Picture Re-Take Day
Tuesday, November 12th,
2019

ASA STAFF STUDIES PHONICS IN NEW YORK CITY

Mrs. Shaw, Kindergarten Teacher, Mrs. Cavazos, Grade 2 Teacher, Allison Woodard, Literacy Specialist

Back in September, along with two colleagues, I had the privilege and honor of attending a Units of Study Phonics workshop hosted by the Teacher's College at Columbia University in New York City. This conference was over the course of 3 days but wanting to experience the city that never sleeps, we decided to head down a day early in order to enjoy being a tourist. Before the conference, my colleagues and I learned to navigate a transit app and the subway station to head over to Battery Park and join the masses to buy souvenirs and join the crowds waiting to board the ferry to the magnificent Statue of Liberty. We also visited Ground Zero, Time Square, Tom's Restaurant (Seinfeld, anyone?), Central Park (at night!) all while making frequent stops to a nearby Starbucks to keep us running. What made playing a tourist even better was being able to do with this-outside of the classroom- with my esteemed colleagues which allowed for some much-needed social collaboration time with great conversations over authentic NYC pizza, cheesecake and delicious NY deli pickles.



REMINDERS FOR PARENTS

1st Trimester Ends on November 22

Parent-Teacher Conferences. Nov. 14th 3:30-6:30 & Nov. 21 1:00-6:40 pm

Have you signed up for Power School yet? If not, please contact Technology Director, Sean Malone at smalone@rsu26.org

PHONICS (Continued)

During the conference, the keynote speaker- Natalie Louis, a staff developer and co-author of the Units of Study Phonics book, talked about the importance of transfer and how phonics shouldn't really feel like you're teaching it formally. It's supposed to be engaging, silly but meaningful, fun and applicable for kids to sing along to while also highlighting patterns you will teach in other blocks of time in your day. Phonics is about introducing developmentally appropriate, research- based principles to help students learn strategies to read and write and more importantly, to WANT to read and write. Natalie emphasizes the importance of using the stuffed mascots for all grades because it helps students have a unified classroom champion for learners. Their journey also belongs to the stuffed animal where they can see and feel the lessons and cheer for new lessons experienced together. She realizes that some teachers may consider grades 1 and 2 "silly" for mascots but stressed how much students love and eventually learn to believe in them after witnessing this transformation through months of visiting K-2 classrooms. During break-out small group sessions, we learned guided reading tricks to keep lessons efficient yet effective (so helpful when we are trying to pack it all in!) and how shared reading can easily become a part of your instruction to reinforce previously taught concepts (syllables, vowels, high frequency words, punctuation, etc). We also learned the importance of interactive writing and the difference between shared writing and interactive writing (share the pen and keeping the pen) and when/how it's most useful to do either/or. We also learned that writing workshop is a great way to informally assess what phonic concepts students are needing and how forming small strategy groups during this time can help students understand the transfer between phonics and writing. She referenced the book The Carrot Seed and used the metaphor "it may not seem like it's going to come up...but it will!" Patience, practice, perseverance, reinforcement of concepts, explicit modeling/teaching and fun, engaging lessons (especially with the mascots) are the best way to make sure this happens!



Nature is always part of the picture at Asa C. Adams



Mrs. Dreher's class went on a nature walk on the trails behind the high school with the focus of observing nature with our senses. We found some interesting fungi, heard some chattering squirrels, and smelled the fresh autumn woody air.

actem
Association of Computer
Technology Educators of *Maine*



Kim Oldenburgh, (Grade 2) Kelley Dill (Grade 3) Janet Metcalf, (Grade 1) Sean Malone, (Technology Director) Deb White (OMS Teacher) and Emily Jackson-Sanborn (OHS Teacher) recently attended the ACTEM Technology conference in Augusta. ACTEM's mission is to influence education in Maine through the use of technology. Many breakout sessions were attended by the RSU26 staff and they enjoyed several keynote speakers, including the Tech Rabbi, author of *Educated by Design*-a book about developing and growing a creative mindset and Tom Murray author of *Learning Transformed* and *Personal and Authentic*. While both speakers left an impact, Tom Murray's words will come back to you as you move through your daily life. His work is to build people up and his new book due out this week, *Personal and Authentic*, is all about developing personal relationships with students that matter by designing awe-inspiring experiences. Throughout the breakout sessions, attendees were encouraged to think about the application of the tools they were using and how to integrate technology tools into the regular curriculum in a way that enhances student learning.

Grade 5: Teamwork at Play



Students in the 5th grade class played "The Ball Game", focusing on the importance of communication and teamwork in the classroom. The activity was intended to help reinforce behavior that helps create a calm and positive environment. The theme of 5th grade behavior this year has been borrowed from the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, which is "Don't Panic". It has been applied in all subject areas this year in 5th grade.

Asa PTO Calendar



November 4th—Silver Graphics order forms due back
November 8th—Coffee Cart for Asa Staff) Donations welcome!
November 13th—Silver Graphics –Online orders due
November 15th—PTO Meeting 8:30 am Art Room (no childcare)
November 18th—Governor's Spirit Night 4:30-8:00 pm
November 22nd—Craft Fair items due back to Asa
November 22nd—Popcorn Friday
November 26th—Start of Thanksgiving break

Safety Notice



As you know, RSU 26 takes the safety of all students and staff seriously. We regularly conduct fire drills and varied emergency preparedness procedures. Our Emergency Response Team meets to update our procedures according to best practices. With our new phone/Public Address system, we have taken further steps toward keeping students and staff safe. In October we conducted a full district evacuation that was highly effective. Please know that we also take steps to ensure that students do not experience undue anxiety and have trained our staff to use developmentally appropriate language.