

Afton Central School Elementary Newsletter

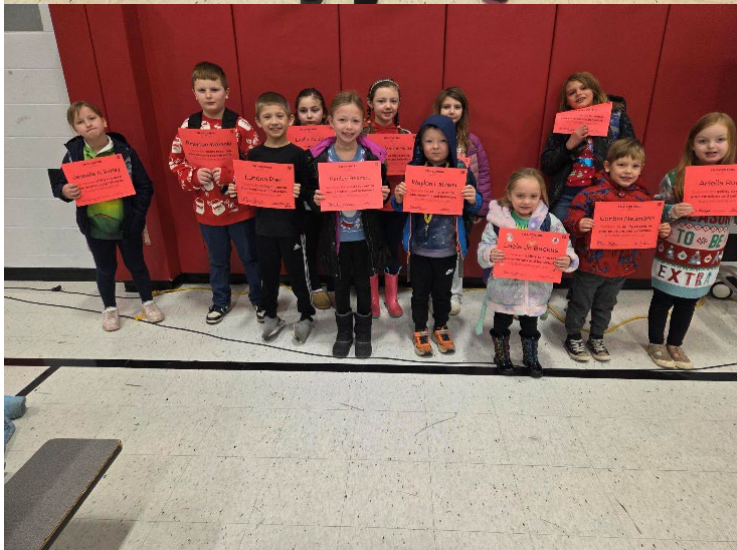
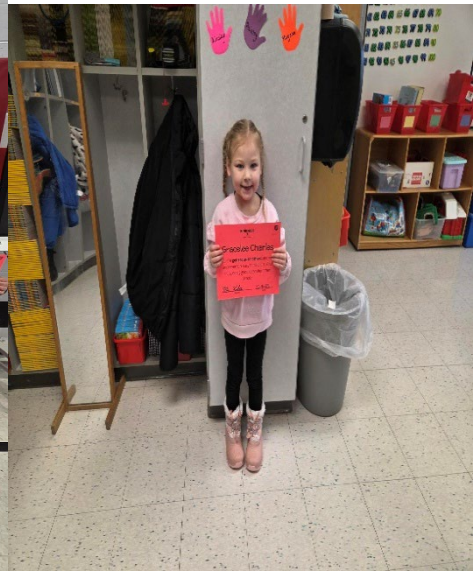
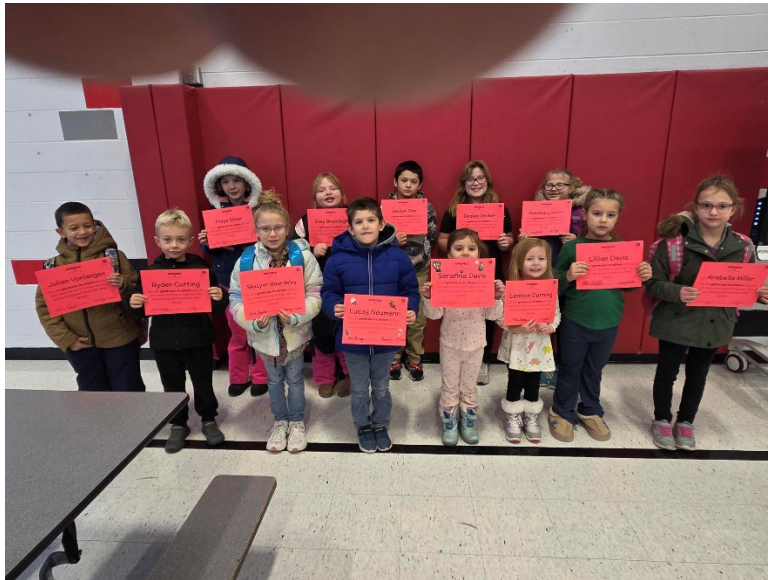
December 2025



Important Information:

- There will be no school Thursday, December 24, 2025, through Friday, January 2, 2026.
- PTO meeting on Wednesday, January 7, 2026, from 3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. in the MS/HS Library
- The next guest reader event will take place on Wednesday, January 7, 2026 at 8:15 a.m. If you're interested in being a future guest reader, please email pwagner@aftoncsd.org.
- There will be a half day of school for students on Friday, January 16, 2026.
- There will be no school on Monday, January 19, 2026 in observation of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- The second marking period ends on Friday, January 23, 2026.
- Grades and comments are due Monday, January 26, 2026, by 12:00 p.m.
- Third grade ELA CBT simulation will be on Tuesday, January 27, 2026.
- Fifth grade Science CBT simulation will be on Thursday, January 29, 2026.
- Report cards will be sent home on Friday, January 30, 2026.

KNIGHTS OF THE WEEK





Bright Knight's Ceremony



STUDENT SUPPORT



I wanted to give you some information on the importance of reading to children. It helps so much more than just their ability to read in school. It can help children with problem solving skills, it can help them to learn empathy and acceptance of others. There are also many books that are geared towards helping children to cope when they are feeling frustrated or upset. Reading can help children with communication and to learn to resolve conflicts with other children. It can strengthen emotional bonding with their parents, siblings, family, etc. If you have some time to read with your children over break, there are many wonderful options to consider. There are many great holiday books such as Rudolph, Frosty, 'Twas the Night Before Christmas, etc. Many books can be watched free on Youtube as well. Some of my favorite books for emotional regulation are:

Today I Am Mad, by Michael Gordon:

[Today I Am Mad. Written by Michael Gordon, illustrated by Max Larin and read aloud by Tiddlybops.](#)

This is another good one:  [What should DANNY do? By Ganit & Adir Levy - Children's Books Read Aloud](#)

With whatever you choose to do, have fun spending them time with your children and enjoy the holidays!

Thanks,

Angela Perry and Student Services

Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters: What the Research Says

What is chronic absenteeism?

Chronic absenteeism is typically defined as missing at least 10 percent of school days, or approximately 18 days in a year, for any reason, excused or unexcused.

Why does this matter?

Academic Outcomes: Research suggests that children who are chronically absent for multiple years between preschool and second grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the third grade. This has been shown elsewhere to make students four times more likely to not graduate from high school.

Student Connectedness: Chronic absenteeism can also further disengage students from their learning and connections with their peers and with other caring adults.

For more information regarding Chronic Absenteeism, please visit the following website: [Chronic Absenteeism | U.S. Department of Education](#)

Attendance Team

All students in grades 1-5 have been using the career exploration program called XELLO. XELLO is accessed on students 1:1 device during our regularly scheduled SEL lessons. Using the XELLO curriculum, students in grades 1-2 are taken on an adventure through Career Town to solve the mystery of its missing workers. Along the way, students learn about the meaning of careers and what goes into choosing one. In grades 3-5, the XELLO student experience evolves. Student lessons and missions are aimed at building self-knowledge, exploring career options, setting goals, and developing critical thinking skills. For more information about XELLO, please check out the following website: [Career Exploration for Elementary Students | Xello](#)

HOW IT WORKS

One program, two age-specific modules



Xello for K-2



Xello for 3-5

Marie Wurtz

Elementary School Counselor

RTI



Our academic MTSS (formerly RTI) providers: Trevor Beames, Kim Buckler and Peggy Wagner work closely with our classroom teachers, counselors, and administration to meet the needs of the whole child. As academic MTSS providers, they may help by:

- Pushing into the classrooms at different times of the day to help support math and reading.
- Taking groups of students to their rooms to do math or reading that works on a specific skill. This also allows for a quieter place to work and provides students with extra support in areas of need.

If your child needs to officially be entered into academic MTSS based on assessments or classroom data, you will be contacted by the classroom teacher.



PRE-K

The Pre-K had an exciting month. In math, the students completed the intro to patterns and positional words units. The students worked with numbers 6-10. They had fun participating in holiday math centers to practice these concepts that have been taught. On the Grinch day, students wrote and illustrated how they would make the Grinch grin. Some of the stories we enjoyed were Snowmen at Night and Turkey Claus (which is from the same author as Turkey Trouble). These stories provided writing and retelling opportunities. The students have worked with the letters Aa, Mm, Ss, Pp, Tt, Ii, Nn, Cc and Oo. In science, we did some holiday experiments. Which included dissolving candy canes, snowmen drinking cold/hot chocolate, and the gingerbread float. I hope your child shared these with you. In S.S., we talked about families and holidays. We had a visit from the Bainbridge Lions Club who brought each Pre-K student a teddy bear and a box of crayons. We would like to thank them for that kind gesture. Visiting the Roberson Museum was a wonderful day spent together viewing the elaborate holiday trees and other holiday displays. Thank you to the families who provided us with a snack for the classroom. I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

-The Pre-K Team







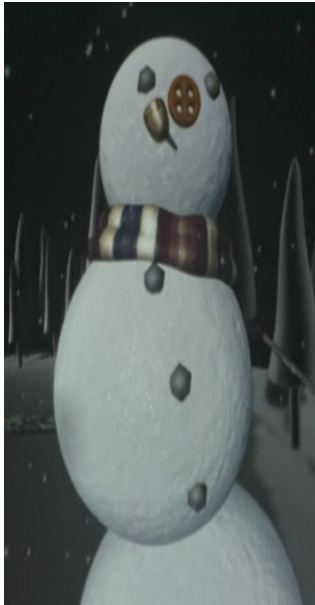
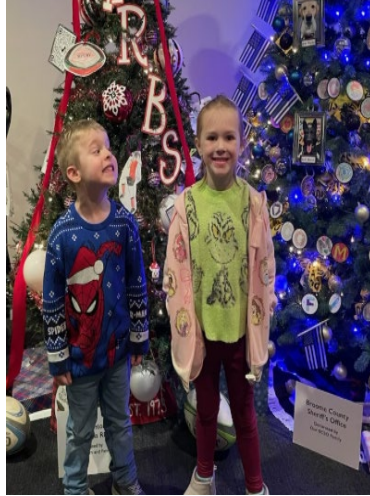
KINDERGARTEN

December has been a busy month! We have been adding sums to ten and students have learned a total of nine sight words: *a, can, the, we, like, to, and, I, and see*. Students are reading short stories with decodable CV and CVC words like *it, am, tip, Sam, and pat*. When they bring home their Reading Writing Companion books feel free to tear out the stories and staple them into little books for your child to read. When we return from winter break, we will begin our math unit on measurement.

Students have had a lot of fun with various holiday activities too: Grinch Day on the 1st, Guest Reader - Superintendent Mrs. Hammond on the 3rd, VIP Lunch and Sweethearts and Heroes Assembly on the 17th, Read Across America and the field trip to Roberson Museum and Planetarium on the 19th, and a movie and holiday party on the 22nd, and snowman construction 101 at recess. Students have had a very fun month this December! Please enjoy our photos and have a wonderful holiday with your family and friends.

-The Kindergarten Team







1ST GRADE

The first grade has had a busy December. We have finished our second ELA unit, learning mostly about our community and how to help. We started our second unit of math, learning about adding to make ten. We also learned about how people around the world celebrate Christmas and their unique traditions. We had fun with our guest readers and enjoyed learning about Mr. Rick and how to help stop bullying. We spent a lot of time playing together during indoor recess because it was so cold but made many memories together. We hope everyone has a restful Winter break and enjoys time with their families during the holidays.

-The First Grade Team





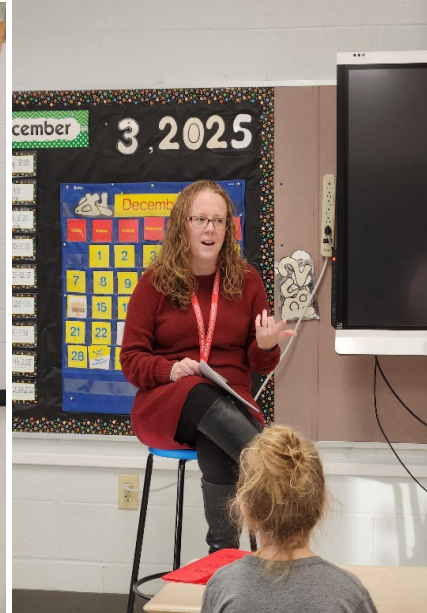
2ND GRADE

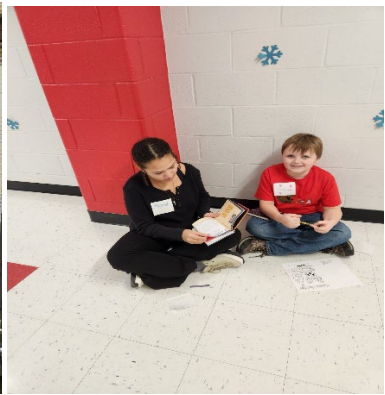
This month in second grade, we have learned so much! In math, students explored how to add and subtract using hundreds, tens, and ones and even challenged themselves with more advanced problems. In social studies, we focused on understanding different types of communities and what makes each one special. In ELA, our learning centered around the essential question, *"What do we love about animals?"* Students read, wrote, and discussed their ideas with great curiosity and enthusiasm. It has been a wonderful month of growth, discovery, and excitement in our classroom!

-The Second Grade Team









3RD GRADE

Third grade has been working hard this month! We finished up our first unit on multiplication and division and will be starting the next part after break. The students have been reading about the holidays in other parts of the world and talking about similarities and differences they see in them. Students need to have snow boots and snow pants in

order to play on the playground in the snow. They should also be bringing gloves, hats and a warm coat to play outside. We hope that everyone enjoys their break! Happy Holidays!

-The Third Grade Team

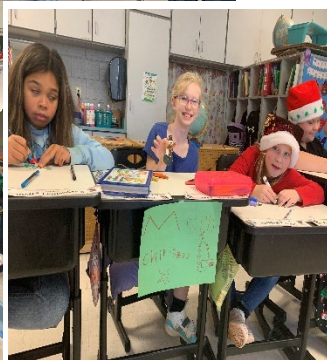
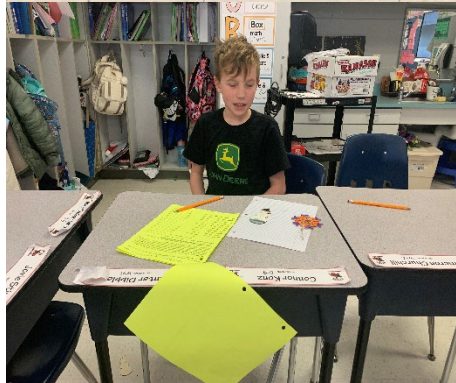
4TH GRADE

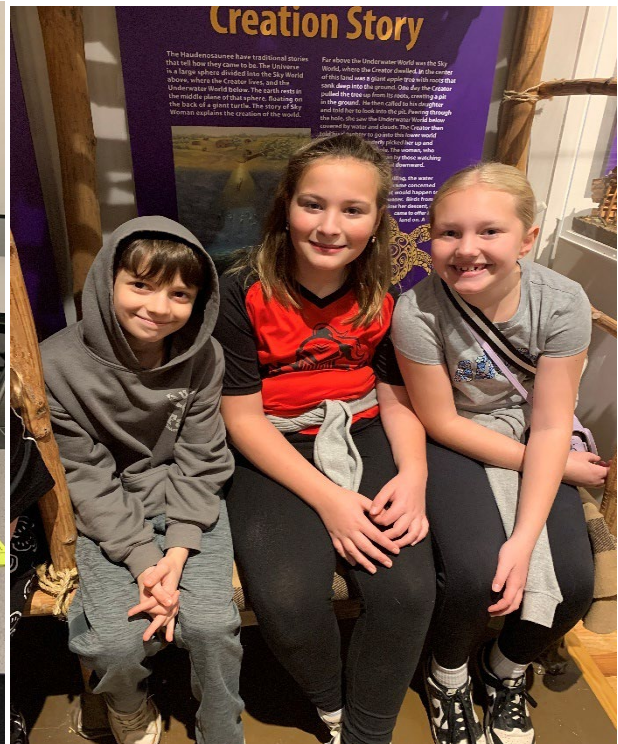
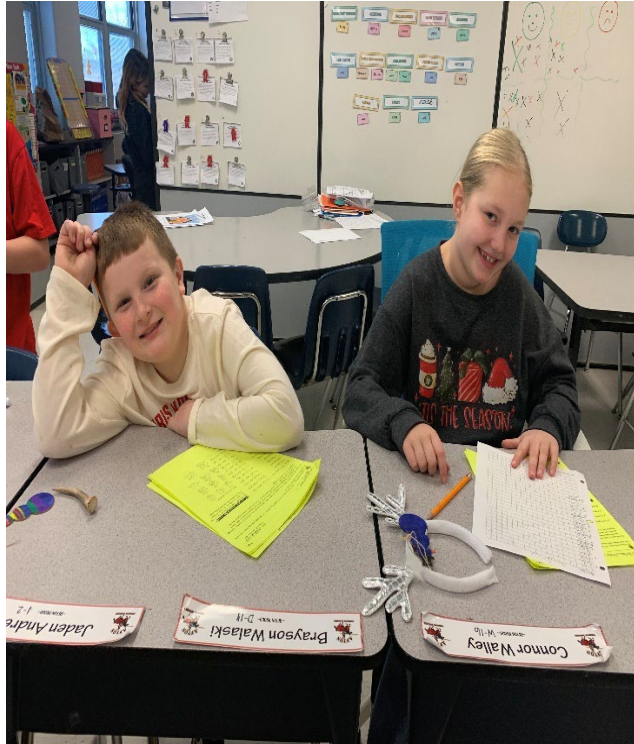
The excitement and magic of the holidays and for holiday break is in the air! It was wonderful to see and hear our chorus and band members at the holiday concert! They did a fantastic job! We had a fun Spirit Week of dressing up and being festive and cozy, and we enjoyed our month with Waffles, the classroom elf too! We made snowmen and snowflake ornaments, listened to holiday music every day while we worked, and we did fun holiday themed ELA and Math activities while working on important skills within them. We watched a performance of The Nutcracker, saw The Grinch movie, and enjoyed some holiday treats. With the year wrapping up, we wrapped up our Math module and took an assessment. We will start the next module when we return from break. We are also nearing the end of our New York State Social Studies Unit, and we will be wrapping that up when we return from break. We will then go into Science. In ELA, we are working on our argumentative essays. We have been filling out organizers for each part and writing rough drafts for each part. When we return from break, we will be putting it all together then moving back into our next Wonders Unit. We hope all of our students and families have a wonderful holiday and break! We will see you in the new year!

-The Fourth Grade Team





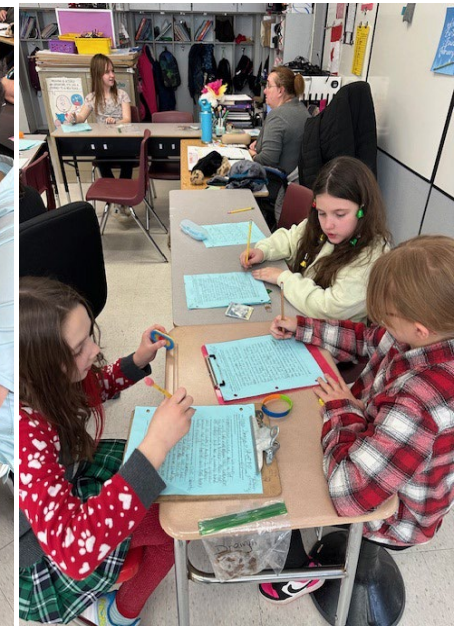
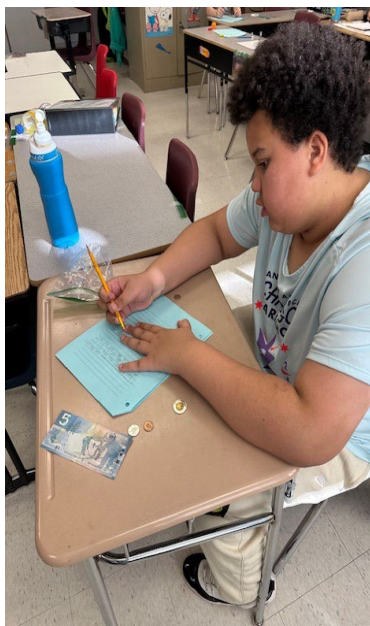




5TH GRADE

Greetings 5th grade families! We have been very busy in 5th grade! In Science, we have been working to get a seed to germinate. Students were given baggies, paper towels, water, and lima bean or corn seeds and they had to figure out how to make the seeds germinate. They were not given any clear instructions; they had to use the scientific method to figure out what might make them germinate. The first time, many of them added too much water and drowned the seeds, so they had to change one variable (the amount of water) and see if that would work. For most, that was the problem! So, we discussed why it's important to only change one variable at a time to see how it may affect an outcome. In Social Studies, we are beginning our Canada unit, so we have been looking at Canadian currency to make a few inferences about Canada before we dive into the main part of the unit. In Math, we have been working on place value of decimals, and in ELA we have been continuing with *Esperanza Rising*. We are discussing themes, metaphors, context clues, and details from the text to prove our inferences. The fifth graders have been drawn into the book and don't want to put it down! Ask them about it! We hope everyone has a safe, wonderful, and relaxing holiday season.

-The Fifth Grade Team



12:1:1

This month the students worked on a project based learning activity of making and designing a Gingerbread House. At the end of the project they were able to make their Gingerbread House. The students had a lot of fun seeing their designs come to life!

-The 12:1:1 Team

SPEECH

Happy December!

The holiday season is a great time to encourage speech and language skills. In speech this month we continue to focus on storytelling and retelling, word finding and vocabulary, articulation and phonology, and building social communication skills. We continue to utilize holiday themed stories and crafts to support speech/language growth. I've included some photos of stories and activities that students have participated in this month.

Encourage your kiddos to talk about their holiday traditions, describe holiday decorations, retell stories from a favorite holiday book/movie. Even simple conversations at the dinner table can support speech, language, and social skills. Keep those conversations going into 2026! ♥

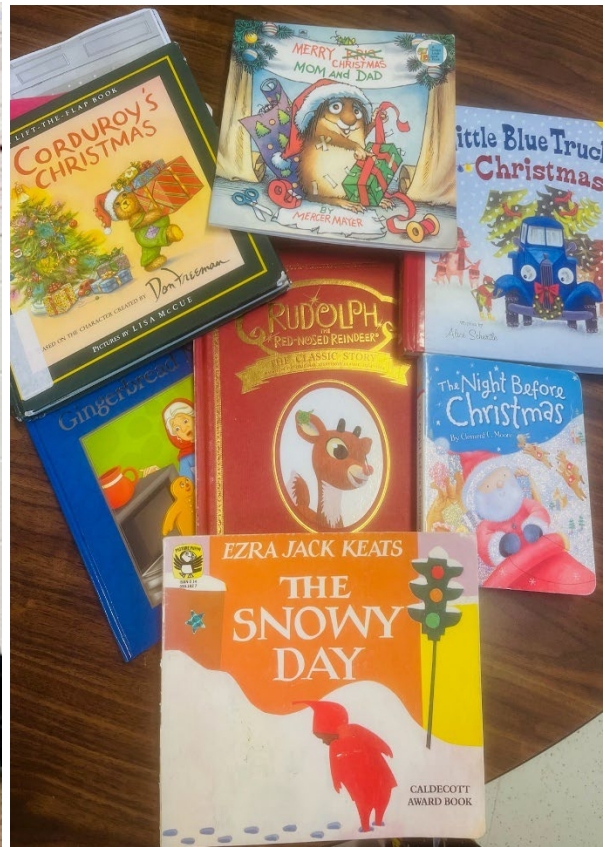


I'm wishing everyone a joyful holiday season!



-Traci Parks TSSLD





EXTENDED STUDIES

POOL

This month in aquatics class PreK have been focused on their back float. The students have been doing an awesome job. They are trying to float for 5 seconds. The Kindergarten-2nd grade students have also been working on their back float, but they are back floating and then going into their elementary back stroke arms. The cue words we use are chicken, airplane, and soldier. They are trying hard to stay relaxed through the whole movement. In Kindergarten they have also been learning how to do a pencil jump. Quite a few of them are already doing it independently. The 3rd-5th grade students are working on their back float and the back crawl. They are trying to get their arm up out of the water from their hip and stretch it up over their head before putting their arm back in the water for the push. The students are picking up the movement very quickly and doing an impressive job. I hope everyone has a great holiday break and gets to relax and spend time with loved ones.

Community open Swim

It is on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30-7:30pm. The fee per session is \$2.00 per adult and \$1.00 per student. Children under 5 years of age are free. Everyone is welcome! Also, please know that small children (kindergarten and under) must have an adult in the water with them. Note that community open swim is only available when school is in session.

-Mrs. Sheldon

STEAM

Hello Afton Families!

We have been super busy in STEAM! Students in 2nd–4th grade have been learning all about keyboarding and have been diving into lots of typing practice. Pre-K and Kindergarten students have been exploring science through a fun experiment involving the Grinch.

Our 1st graders learned all about the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and were able to create their own balloons, then vote on the larger balloons you may have seen displayed in the hallway. Our 5th graders have even begun preparing to build a robot!

I am so excited to see what this new year will hold for our little scientists and engineers. Happy Holidays!

-Ms. L





ART

artsonia

PARENTS! Connect to Afton Elementary School using Artsonia to receive important updates on your child's art classroom activity.



Use your camera to scan this code.

You can also browse to www.artsonia.com/parents and enter this Parent Code

R4XYCH5P

Veteran's Day Breakfast









Penguin Patch



Sweetheart & Heroes Assembly



