Afton Central School

Elementary Newsletter

January 2026



Important Information:

- Report cards will be sent home on Friday, January 30, 2026.
- The next elementary guest reader event will be held on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 8:15 a.m., if you're interested in being a guest reader, please email pwagner@aftoncsd.org.
- BOE meeting, Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., in the Board Room.
- The next Read Across the Kingdom event will take place on Friday, February 13, 2026.
- P.S. I Love You Day is on Friday, February 13, 2026.
- There will be no school on Monday, February 16, 2026, through Friday, February 20, 2026 – Winter Recess.
- The 100th day of school will be Monday, February 23, 2026.
- The next PTO meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, in MS/HS Library at 3:00 p.m.

STUDENT SUPPORT

January Newsletter: Building Emotional Resilience Together

Happy New Year! As we step into 2026, I wanted to write about **emotional regulation**.

Emotional regulation is the ability to manage big feelings—like frustration, anger, or excitement—in a healthy way. Here are some activities that you can try with your children at home.

Try These Activities at Home

1. **Create a "Calm-Down Corner"**
   Work with your child to designate a cozy spot in your home with pillows, stuffed animals, and sensory items like a "calm-down jar" (water and glitter) or stress balls or anything else that might help your child to calm down when they are upset. This teaches them that it is okay to take a break when feelings become overwhelming. And this helps to lessen arguments and to make sure that they learn to try to calm down before they make a poor choice or say something mean.

2. **Practice "Winter Breathing"**

Hot Cocoa Breathing: Pretend to hold or actually use a real cup or a warm mug of hot cocoa. Breathe in deep to smell the chocolate, then blow out slowly to "cool it down". Repeat this and teach them that this can help to calm their mind and body down. Discuss that they can do this their imagination with a pretend mug as well anywhere that they might be when they get upset.

Belly Breathing: Have your child lie down with a small stuffed animal on their belly. Watch it rise and fall with each slow breath to help settle their body.

3. **Play Self-Control Games**
   Classic games like **Freeze Dance**, **Simon Says**, and **Red Light, Green Light** are excellent ways to practice following directions and managing impulses in a fun, low-stress environment.

4. **Use "Weather Reports" for Feelings**
   Encourage your child to describe their emotions using weather metaphors. For example, they might feel "sunny" when happy or "stormy" when frustrated. This makes complex emotions easier to identify and share.

5. **Build a "Resilience Jar"**
   Throughout the month, write down times your child overcame a challenge or tried again after a mistake. Revisit these notes at the end of the month to celebrate their growing perseverance.

A Tip for Parents: The Power of Co-Regulation

Children often learn to regulate by watching the adults around them. When you feel stressed, try "narrating" your own calm-down process: *"I'm feeling a bit frustrated that we're running late, so I'm going to take three deep breaths before we get in the car"*. By modeling these habits, you provide a powerful blueprint for your child to follow.

P2 for Families

Welcome to the **P2 for Families 1-1-3**. You'll find 1 quote, 1 video, and 3 questions to help you and your children discuss The Positivity Project's character strength of the week.

Character Word: Perseverance.

Definition: You never give up.

Below is the link to a 2-minute video clip to watch as a family.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwkTc68Fzr8

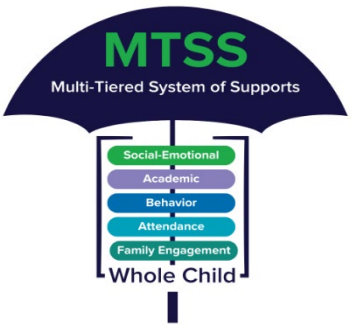
After watching the video, discuss the following questions together.

1. It can be hard to learn something new. What is something that you worked hard to learn?
2. What are some ways you can push yourself to persevere when things get hard?
3. How can you encourage others to show perseverance?

"Believe you can and you're halfway there. "

– THEODORE ROOSEVELT

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

Wow was that a quick month. In math we completed comparing numbers to 10 using the words more, less and the same for amounts and numerals. At this point your child should be able to identify most of the numbers 0-10 and count sets up to ten. We are now working on the intro to measurement unit. In ela we are continuing to work on beginning sounds and have worked with 12 out of the 26 letters of the alphabet, compound words, following directions, rhyming and decodable books. Your child should be close to independently (without the use of a name card) writing their name. If they are not quite there yet additional practice at home would be very helpful to your child. Also remember to build the love of learning through reading at home and entering reading logs. It would be wonderful to have all students submit a reading log for every week of quarter 3. In science we talked about winter and hibernation. For social studies we discussed why we had Dr Martin Luther King Jr day off and our neighborhood, food and food jobs/restaurants. Anytime you would like to share something with our class that has to do with what we are learning please don't hesitate to reach out to me and we can set up a time for you to come into the classroom.

-The Pre-K Team

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten has been enjoying the chance to have indoor and outdoor recess days! The kids love to get outside and play in the snow, but they also enjoy the chance to play

with materials that they do not always get a chance to when we go outside. Please remember to send in all required winter clothing in order for your child to play in the snow. The children need boots, snow pants, a jacket, gloves/mittens, and a hat.

It is good to be back at school and in a fresh calendar year! Over the past few weeks, the kids have been learning about measurement during math time. The kids have learned about size, length, height, weight, and capacity/volume. There have been many activities that involve placing items in order and comparing different objects. It has been a fun unit that the children have enjoyed.

During ELA lessons, the children have spent time working on letters D, O, and C. The children are reading and writing many new CVC words. We have also introduced more high-frequency words to our growing list. The new words are "do" "you" and "go" and the kids have been reading many sentences that include these words. It is an exciting time watching the kids become stronger readers.

-The Kindergarten Team

1ST GRADE

We have been very busy in first grade!

We have started our ELA mid-year benchmark testing, and all is going well! In ELA we have also started learning about and reading words with the silent e, soft c and g, using a comma when writing and building our vocabulary with new vocabulary words.

In Math we are working on decomposing teen numbers and continuing to build our knowledge and understanding of word problems.

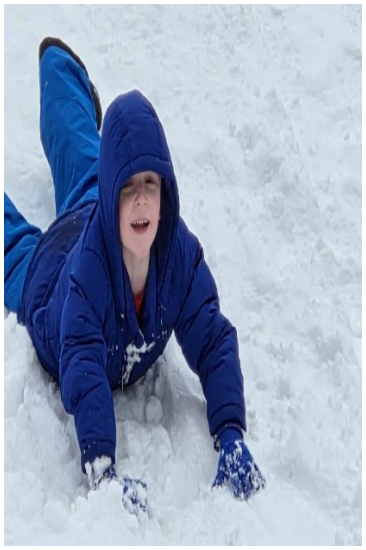
In Social Studies we discussed what peace means and being kind to each other. We even made a kindness quilt for the hallway for all to enjoy.

We were able to get outside for two days, and the children had a blast! Please remember to send in proper winter gear for outdoor recess. Extra items can be stored at school if needed.

-The First Grade Team











2ND GRADE

Happy New Year 2026 from the second grade! This month we completed our mid-year benchmarks. Many students made growth on all their testing. This is so exciting to see. In our classrooms we worked on an Earth's Features unit in science. We are learning how to add and subtract two-digit numbers in math. And our focus in ELA this month has been on narrative nonfiction as well as reading and understanding fiction and expository texts. Remember to keep reading and recording your 50 minutes for the weekly reading challenge!

-The Second Grade Team

3RD GRADE

Third grade has wrapped up quarter two! We are starting to work on our 6,7,8,and 9s facts for multiplication and division. Third graders were given skip count flash cards to practice with at home. Please encourage nightly reading and skip counting practice.

-The Third Grade Team

4TH GRADE

Happy New Year Fourth Grade Families!!

Fourth grade has been busy since we returned from Christmas Break! Students have been writing argumentative essays in ELA class. While working on this important concept, we have gone through all the steps if the writing process. We are anxious to see their finished products! We finished up our Social Studies unit on New York State geography and completed the unit assessment. The students did quite well!!! In Math class we began our next unit; we are moving on to multiplication and division of multi-digit whole numbers. We began with a review of factors and multiples and have moved on to multiplying three and four-digit whole numbers by one-digit whole numbers. This is a new concept for all of them, but they are really trying to do their best! Please be sure your students are practicing their math facts!! Now that our Social Studies unis completed, we began a new unit in Science class, "Earth's Systems". It's all about the processes that shape and affect the Earth's surface and landforms. We are looking forward to some fun activities with this new unit!

We have also set up an account on the Rooms app. We can now communicate with you all easily and more efficiently! We are still learning how to use it. We appreciate your patience!!
-The Fourth Grade Team

5TH GRADE

Hope everyone is enjoying our cold, snowy winter! In fifth grade, we are trying to pretend that it is spring with our seed project! We are wrapping up our hydroponics unit where we had to discover ways to germinate a seed. With that information, we are learning how to write an essay, using our discoveries as the details. We will type those essays on our devices and work on our computer literacy skills as well! So with one project, we are incorporating Science, ELA, and computer literacy--ask your children about it!
We are also about halfway through our novel, Esperanza Rising. The kids are loving the book, and they beg for us to keep reading whenever we finish a chapter. We love their enthusiasm toward the book, and hope they are making the connections to theme, metaphors, character traits, and inferences as we go along. We are working on multiplying three digit by two digits in math and shifting place values when multiplying or dividing by powers of ten. Finally, in Social Studies, we are concluding our Canadian unit and will be shifting to geography of the US. In addition, we will incorporate map skills, landforms, water forms, and other geographic terms and skills. Thanks to everyone at home for your support and continue to check email or our fifth grade "Room" for other information and updates!
-The Fifth Grade Team

12:1:1

This month we learned about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The students read a Scholastic News about who Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was and all the things he accomplished. They also completed a scavenger hunt based on Dr. Matin Luther King Jr. and answered facts about him based on what the card said.
-The 12:1:1 Team

EXTENDED STUDIES

POOL

This month in aquatics class the PreK students have continued working on their back float. They have also started to work on a new swim stroke, the elementary back stroke. They are back floating for 3 to 5 seconds 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. The students have been doing a good job. The kindergarten-2nd grade students have continued to work on their elementary back stroke but have been focusing on the legs. The whip kick is the name of the kick they are learning. The cue words we use are bend, duck, and whip. They are learning the kick on their belly using a kickboard. Hopefully next month we will be putting it all together and doing the arms and legs together. The 3rd-5th grade students have started to also work on their elementary back stroke. They are working on the arms. The students are really focusing on the glide, holding soldier for at least 2 seconds. All the students are learning that the elementary

back stroke is a resting swim stroke which does not use a lot of energy and can be done for a very long time. This is an important safety swim stroke for the students to learn.

Community open swim

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! First graders and under must be accompanied by an adult. Also, please note that small children (kindergarten and under) must have an adult in the water with them.

-Mrs. Sheldon

STEAM

Hello Afton Families!

Our young engineers and scientists have been hard at work learning, exploring new technology, and strengthening their keyboarding skills in STEAM class.

- **1st Grade** has been practicing coding and building their storytelling skills by programming a robot to tell a story.
- **2nd and 3rd Grade** students have been discussing artificial intelligence and learning the differences between smart technology and simple technology.
- **4th Grade** has been coding drones and has even started working with PowerPoint to create their own slide shows.
- **Pre-K and Kindergarten** students have been learning the keyboard—spelling their names, identifying letters, and even beginning proper hand placement.
- **5th Grade** students are officially underway with building their robots!

There's a lot of exciting learning happening in STEAM class. I hope everyone is staying warm!

Happy January,

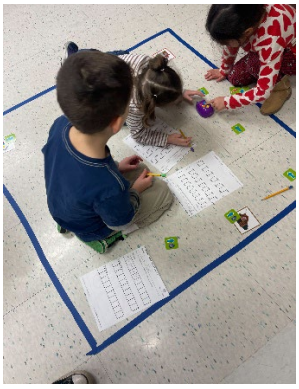
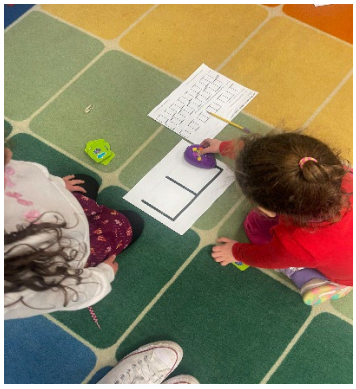
-Ms. L









ART

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

Afton Elementary School is excited to participate in the 16th Annual **P.S. I Love You Day** on **February 13, 2026**!

Show your support by wearing purple and help us spread kindness while raising awareness for anti-bullying and mental health. Let's fill our school with love, positivity, and purple! 💜



Be the Light

P.S. I LOVE YOU DAY 2026

February 13th, 2026