



LEWIS AMES ELEMENTARY HAPPENINGS

Published the last Thursday of every month

Soaring Into Excellence

Ames Academic Goal:

90% of our students will demonstrate proficiency in writing within three years as measured by a body of evidence.

Ames Equity Goal:

90% of students will demonstrate proficiency in writing with the discrepancy between males and females being within 10 percentage points within three years as measured by a body of evidence.

Ames Community Culture Goal:

A culture of writing will be prevalent by 2009 with 100% of the staff involved in writing opportunities and 100% of certified staff engaging families in writing opportunities as demonstrated through multiple measures.

MARCH 19, 2009

Office 303-347-4400

Attendance: 303-734-3000

2008-2009 Volume, Issue No. 8

Website: <http://ames.littletonpublicschools.net>

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The other day I was asked what words come to mind when I hear the name Ames. It was like a game of free association where within seconds and without needing to even think I had a string of descriptors –any one of which is a source of pride. But four days later, I find the word *compassion* still cycling through my brain. I am compelled to write to you this month about compassion.

Our staff has felt the compassion of our Ames families in so many ways. As families have made decisions about a new school home, you have demonstrated your support and appreciation for the work we have accomplished at Ames. Your worry over where employees will go from Ames and your testimonials to the fine qualities you see in our educational team is uplifting. You are marvelous role models in caring for others. The way you treat each other, the kindnesses you display, the joy you bring into the building every day: I marvel over the parent community we have.

Our staff not only feels your compassion, but demonstrates compassion for our children, parents, and each other as they remain dedicated to the joyful learning environment we celebrate. They continue to be deeply present for the children's social, emotional, and academic needs, even as their own lives are thrown into disequilibrium concerning future work opportunities. A new wrinkle—and challenge to integrity and empathy--was introduced with the recent interviewing for available jobs within the district. Our staff has become a tight team with common purpose. How difficult to interview now in competition with coworkers who you admire and love as dear friends. How difficult to be a tenured teacher who has a secure position within the district when your colleague is a probationary teacher with no guarantees for placement. How difficult to find placement when others still live with the unknown. Two job offers, one job offer, no job offer, no job available... where does the spinner land? How do you navigate the waters of this passage with confidence, confidentiality, camaraderie, compassion? The past weeks have been a

study in caring deeply for each other. The sensitivity all have displayed, the positive attitudes, and genuine joy in another's good fortune are a testament to this fine group of people.

But it is our children-- our common thread, our purpose --which I devote the remaining space of this piece to. I want you to celebrate with me what fine human beings they are. Each child is a treasure who continues to shine brighter as he/she learns to take responsibility for his affect on others around him. We have a positive behavior program that we call Strong Citizens of Ames. We also have a buddy system which is similar to a "big brother" or "big sister" mentor program. We refer to "filling a bucket" as people receive positive strokes when their inner reserves run low. And we have a "recovery" system when poor choices result in conflict.

We all make mistakes, but to see a child honestly state what he did, work a plan for improvement, and maintain respect for others is to see the working process of character building. I want to share with you what we teach school wide so you can utilize the same process in your family life and build upon this foundation for teaching compassion out of conflict.

We call it the SORRY process. When there is conflict, the parties involved are asked to write down their recall of the event. This eliminates the "he said, she said" verbal arguing and escalation of emotion. It allows a calming atmosphere while still providing each person a voice in sharing his perspective. The S stands for *say what you did*. The expectation is that this—like all writing—includes important details. The O begs the question, who do you owe an apology to? This would be anyone who was hurt emotionally, physically, educationally, or was in any way affected by the behavior choice. While the other party involved in the conflict is the usual response, the list grows as the writer discovers this action also affects the other learners in the class, the teacher who loses teaching time, the principal who loses work time to settle the dispute, parents who are unhappy to hear about the trouble in school, etc. R initiates the thinking around the question, what will you do to make it *right*? This requires thinking about each person in the list above, getting "in their heads" enough to know what might make their day better, and offering an act of kindness. This is a difficult step, as it is so much easier to say sorry, promise never to do it again, and move on. Having to think about what would make a person's day better to cancel the fact that the child made it a bit worse with the action stated becomes a lesson in empathy. The second R stands for recommit and requires the writer to think of a plan to prevent this action from occurring again. Y means *you make a difference in the lives of others* and reminds children they have the power to make someone's day better or worse by their own actions. We choose to make the world a better place by filling buckets rather than emptying them.

This SORRY process is just that—a process. It provides a framework for conversation in helping formulate a plan. It provides a plan to refer back to which holds the writer accountable. It's a mental cool-down that causes the writer to stop and think about the action, consequence, and affect on others. It causes children to see beyond themselves and become more aware of interpersonal actions/reactions. Responsibility and accountability—we begin this process with our kindergarteners with pictures and letter labels and carry it through every grade. It is consistent and it is effective. It is time consuming and it is worth it. Just look at our children. I am proud of every one of them. I will be watching them from afar as they grow into responsible, compassionate adults—which is exactly where this essay began.

Thank you for the models you are in respectful, compassionate living.

Sincerely,

Nancy Klinedinst

Principal

CHECK OUT THE AMES
WEB PAGE

<http://ames.littletonpublicschools.net>

LEWIS AMES ELEMENTARY 2008-2009 DATES TO REMEMBER

MARCH		
23-27	SPRING BREAK	
30	School Resumes	8:31 a.m.
31	Internet Safety Presentations Grades 4 & 5 12:45 Grades 1-3 1:45	
APRIL		
1	Class Pictures	
2	5 th Graders - Attend Concert at Newton	10:00 a.m.
6	Newton Counselors visit 5 th graders this week	
8	PLC Late Start	10:31 a.m.
9	2 nd Grade Field Trip - Heritage High School	12:15 - 1:50 p.m.
13	4 th Grade Field Trip - Arapahoe High School	9:10 - 10:40 a.m.
14	5 th Grade New Me Program	12:15 - 2:30 p.m.
15	All School Free Skate City - see information on PTO page Bus will leave Ames at 5:30 p.m. Parent must sign permission form to allow student to ride bus.	6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
23	Art Festival at Franklin	
24	Early Dismissal	12:33 p.m.
27	Teacher Inservice - NO SCHOOL	
27	Hawk Qwest Assembly	2:00 - 3:00 p.m.
29	Art Festival at Peabody	

MISSION STATEMENT

Littleton Public Schools is dedicated to continuous improvement of academic achievement and to the realization of individual student potential.

FOCUS ON LEARNING

by Rhonda Knoop
Instructional Coach

PERSISTENCE

"It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer." Albert Einstein

The ability and willingness to *persist* is one of the 16 Habits of Mind identified by Arthur Costas and Bena Kallick. They describe the Habits of Mind as behaving intelligently by not only having information, but also knowing how to act on it.

According to Webster one definition of persist is *to go on resolutely or stubbornly in spite of opposition, importunity, or warning*. I like to think of persistence as the determination to stick with a task and trying different solutions until the task is complete. I'm sure Albert Einstein's persistence had a lot to do with his success.

It's pretty evident which students have developed the quality of persistence. As students encounter questions or problems that may be beyond their immediate ability to solve, they don't get frustrated and give up. Those with persistence stay focused on the task at hand. They are not careless and don't hurry just so they can be

finished. They take pride in their work and it shows.

As I observe students taking CSAP, I'm noticing that some persist more than others. Those who persist work carefully, check their answers and often go back to see if they're correct. Students with persistence read the question over and over again until it starts sinking in. They look back at other questions that might give them a hint or a clue as to what they should try. They try to solve the problem and may try several different strategies until they are satisfied they are correct. Persistent students look at problems as a challenge to be conquered - they persevere. I predict these students will do well on CSAP.

Persistence is a skill that will help students succeed in school and in life. The good news is persistence can be developed by teaching children how to analyze a problem and develop more than one strategy to solve it. They can learn to recognize what's working and what's not working. Often trying harder using a faulty strategy just leads to frustration. Persistence involves staying with a problem longer, not giving up. Albert Einstein certainly understated his genius, but I'm sure he accurately stated his determination to stick with problems - to persist.

It's quite interesting to learn about the Habits of Mind. If you would like more information on the Habits of Mind go to: <http://www.habits-of-mind.net/>

STRONG CITIZENS OF AMES

by Jill Lewis
School Psychologist
Ed.S., NCSP

Teaching Children to Understand and Respond to Feelings

Children often struggle not only with understanding their feelings, but also relating to other people's feelings. These skills are critical

for personal well being and building relationships. The following, adapted from the Sandbox Learning Company, includes steps for teaching children to understand and manage their feelings as well as identify and respond to other people's feelings.

1. Identifying Feelings - Teach children to recognize when they have a specific feeling. Whether happy, sad, or angry the first step in coping with a feeling is identifying it. Help children identify feelings by discussing emotions when they occur. If a child is angry say, "I see you are angry. You have your arms crossed and are stomping your feet." Another tool is to role play times when specific emotions surface. Use novel examples as well as recent experiences for the child. Discuss and write about different feelings in a feelings journal. Use the journal to write about events and the emotions, responses, and consequences the events elicited.

2. Planning for Strong Feelings - Help children cope with intense feelings by creating coping strategies. Have a quiet place for children to take a break when angry or sad. Give children tools and teach them how and when to use them such as a stress ball or a trampoline. These tools help children release energy in a positive way. Encourage children to use words or write about their feelings. Establish a phrase the child can use to remove themselves from stressful or upsetting situations. The phrase gives children a way to politely excuse themselves, regain control, and then return to the situation. Select a short phrase that can be used in a variety of situations such as, "Excuse me. I need a minute to think."

3. Recognizing Other People's Feelings - Learning to empathize with other people and respond appropriately to another person's feelings, is an important skill for building relationships. Show pictures and drawings or role play situations to discuss the words, body language, and experiences that indicate a person's feelings. When discussing a child's own feelings, incorporate the concept that peers and adults have similar feelings in the same situation. This helps children develop empathy. Read stories where characters experience events that are happy, sad, surprising, or frustrating. Discuss why the characters felt

the way they did and what they said or did to indicate their feelings.

4. Responding to Other People's Feelings - Not only do children have to identify other people's feelings, but they also need to learn how to respond when someone is angry, sad, or excited. Teach children appropriate responses through role play and reviewing past events. Discuss how different people in the role play feel, how their body language and words show their feelings, and the best response for the situation. Also discuss how the child would feel if this happened to them and how they would like other people to respond. This helps children learn to empathize with other people.

On May 11th we will be audience to a poignant children's play presented by the Denver Center for the Performing Arts. Entitled *New Kid*, the play speaks to anyone who has ever felt like an "outsider." With every one of our children facing a new beginning in a new school this coming year, we hope to ease the transition with discussions that will grow out of this performance.

Both of these programs will benefit every child at Ames, and we are so appreciative for the opportunity made possible by the LPS Foundation and Finley Voss, our living lucky charm!

LOOKING FORWARD TO UPCOMING EVENTS

Two upcoming events that we are looking forward to are special programs to be performed on-site funded by the Littleton Public Schools Foundation. You may recall an earlier newsletter article in December referring to Finley Voss and his lucky day at the Littleton Stride on November 2nd. Finley was the grand prize winner of the LPS Foundation drawing, bringing \$1,000 to Ames to support student programs. Mary McGlone and Bob Young presented this monetary award to our school during a Kid's Learning Community (KLC) gathering in November.



HAWKQUEST
Supporting 4th & 5th Grade

On April 28 we are bringing Hawk Quest to

our K-5 community to expand our learning about wild living things in their natural environment and preserving the world in which they live. This follows closely on the heels of Earth Day activities, and is another layer in our mission to be good stewards of our planet.

EAGLE'S NEST SUMMER CAMP UPDATE



Eagle's Nest would like to inform Ames parents that we *will not* be operating a summer program. The decision was made in late February based on your responses for need. We did not have enough children enrolled to support the program. However, area schools do have available space.

If you are in search of care for the summer, listed below is contact information for other district SACC programs in the Ames area:

Franklin SACC - Franklin Friends Club
Serena Ritchie - 303-347-4220

Peabody SACC - Panther Pride Club
Mary Lloyd - 303-347-4635

Lenski SACC - Super Stars Club
Beth Fahlstedt - 303-347-4285

Sandburg SACC - Mountain Lion Club
Loretta Collins - 303-347-4695

KIDS LEARNING COMMUNITY

The following groups of students are recognized for joining the 90% Club:

- Mr. Kilmeyer's 1st graders in Ms. O'Hara's class - 93% proficient or advanced in reading, notating and analyzing first grade rhythms
- Ms. O'Hara's class - 90% of class scored above 91% on their mid-year Spelling Test of 35 Core Words
- 90% of ALL second graders were proficient or advanced in organization in writing on the last common assessment
- Mrs. Dean's class achieved a "4" for Effort day in and day out every day while taking CSAP tests

What Makes Me Happy

by Morgan M
3rd Grade

Do you have something that makes you happy? Something that makes me happy is my family. One reason they make me happy is because they are very caring. For example, one time my gums were aching so my mom called the dentist and set up an appointment the next day. Another reason my family makes me happy is because they are all very loving because every day after school my brother, my sister and my mom come running and give me a bear hug. The final reason my family makes me happy is that I feel in some way we are all connected or linked together and it has something to do with our loving and caring. That is what makes my heart swell with happiness.

Morgan's goal: To write juicy details.

GYMNASTICS OPPORTUNITY SESSION 2

Included in today's Thursday folder you will find a flyer announcing the second and final session of gymnastics for the year. This session will be offered on-site in the Ames gym, and will run five consecutive weeks beginning Tuesday March 31st. Students K-5 are eligible to participate. Please read the flyer carefully for details concerning registration, fees, schedules, and procedures.

A CARING GESTURE

Mrs. Lillie, Rachel Parker's grandmother, has toiled lovingly again this year making milk carton baskets for each child to celebrate the return of spring. We appreciate the thoughtfulness in giving from the heart and the caring for every child in the community.

MARCH IS

**American
Red Cross**
MONTH

Change a Life, Starting with Your Own

To the world, the American Red Cross is the helping hand at times of disaster, but our foundation is made up of the millions of individuals who give of their time, money, blood, sweat, and tears. Whether through CPR training, medical transportation, emergency military communication, or disaster assistance, we are simply the vessel that gives people the opportunity to perform extraordinary acts of compassion. This March is Red Cross Month. Support the Red Cross by making a donation or volunteering, and change a life, starting with your own. Go to www.denver-redcross.org or call (303) 722-7474.

**NEWTON MIDDLE SCHOOL
BECOMES AN AUTHORIZED
MYP PROGRAM**



Exciting News! Newton Middle School has received official notice of its formal authorization as an International

Baccalaureate Organization World School. Site visitors from the IB organization noted that the school shows significant development and understanding of the Middle Years Program (MYP). IB is confident that the instruction, philosophy, and program offered by Newton for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students meets the international standards expected by the MYP.

Being an IB MYP school assures that each school year students will have a minimum of one semester of instruction in each of eight subject areas: Arts (visual and performing), Humanities (social studies), Language A (language arts), Language B (world language), Mathematics, Physical Education, Science, and Technology. But more than this, the MYP seeks to develop students who have the skills and attributes necessary to become successful 21st century world citizens. Ultimately, the IB philosophy seeks students who question, learn, think, care, and act on their learning and contribute to their community for the betterment of others. We are honored to be recognized as educators who will contribute to this mission.

You can find out more about the MYP program at Newton by going to the Newton website at www.newton.littletonpublicschools.net or contacting the IB coordinator, Julie Lacey at 303.734.6254.

**Join us for a
School Finance
Symposium**

(Everything you may not want to know)

Thursday April 2nd, 2009 -7 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

ESC Board of Education Room

Sponsored by

***Littleton Public Schools Board of Education
District Financial Advisory Committee***

7:00 p.m. Welcome – Board of Education and Superintendent

7:05 p.m. The Basics – Scott Myers, CFO, LPS

- School Finance Program Funding – Impact to Districts

7:20 p.m. The Tangled Web – Carol Hedges, Senior Policy Analyst, Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute

- Gallagher, Arveschoug-Bird, TABOR, Amendment 23, and Referendum C

7:45 p.m. How Does Colorado Stack Up? – Tracie L. Rainey, Executive Director, Colorado School Finance Project

- Regional and National Picture
- What Could the Future Hold?

8:10 p.m. Open Discussion

Dear Future Peabody Families,

I know this spring will bring mixed feelings for all of you. Closing a neighborhood school that you all love will be difficult at best. I know you will be celebrating the wonderful accomplishments that have made Ames Elementary the unique community that it has been for many years. We at Peabody send our support as you go through this challenging time.

In an effort to provide opportunities for you to become acquainted with your new home school of Peabody Elementary, we are extending an invitation for you to join us in any of the following activities yet this spring:

April 7 th	PTO Meeting 6:30 – 8:00 pm	Regular monthly meeting
April 13 th	PAC Meeting 6:00 – 8:00 pm	Peabody Accountability Meeting -Regular monthly meeting to review building budget for 2009-10, review annual community survey results and discuss RTI – Response to Intervention.
April 14 th	Breakfast Buzz 9:00 – 10:00 am	Informal coffee for parents to talk with building principal. The focus topic for this Buzz will be parent leadership for 2009-2010.
April 21 st	Kindergarten Visitation 9:00 – 9:45 am 1:00 – 1:45 pm	A time for parents and their children to visit Peabody. Children will be in the kindergarten classroom with current students and teachers. Parents will receive information from principal and others about what to expect next year.
April 29th	Peabody Arts Night	This evening is a showcase of art and music within our school community. This is an opportunity for you and your child to interact with other Peabody families. Wander the halls, listen to musical groups, meet our staff and become familiar with what makes Peabody a place where kids come first!
May 5 th	PTO meeting 6:30 – 8:00 pm	Final PTO meeting of the school year.
May 11 th	PAC Meeting	Final PAC meeting of the school year

While you will be finishing your school year with many activities at Ames, we invite you to join us for any of our activities that might help your family make the transition to a new home school. If you have questions please call Lori, Shelly or me at 303-347-4625.

We look forward to getting to know you and together working on building a new school community for all our children.

Warmly,

Kristin Ryan
Principal

Dear Future Franklin Families,

I would like to take this opportunity to send spring greetings to all of you. We are in an exciting time of year as we look forward to end of year activities, but also look ahead with great anticipation to the next school year. Much planning goes on in the spring to prepare for events and programming for the following year. Franklin is *very excited* to welcome the new families that will be a part of our community. We want to extend an invitation to you to join any of the upcoming spring activities that Franklin is hosting:

April 14	PTO Meeting 7:00 p.m.	Planning for next years' officers, committee chairs, and events.
	7:30 p.m.	Mike and Cassandra Harris, investigators for "Crimes Against Children" cases with the Jefferson County District Attorney's Office, will host a special presentation for parents only on Internet Safety. Franklin, along with Ames, Twain and Field parents are invited to attend for an eye-opening important presentation to build parent awareness related to the Internet.
April 18	Spring Auction 6:00 p.m.	PTO major fundraising event; dinner buffet and auction; The Island, 2233 S. Geneva Street, \$25 per person. This is a parent only event that will give parents time to socialize with each other while supporting the PTO committee to supporting Franklin Elementary financially for the 2009-2010 school year. The first 2 Ames parents to contact the office will receive a free ticket!
April 23	Family Art Night 6:00-8:00 p.m.	Families come together and experience hands-on art projects, musical entertainment, and laughter. A great family night of fun. This event is a great opportunity for you and your child to see Franklin parents, students and teachers in a socially engaging event for the whole family. We hope you join us!
April 28	5 th Grade Parent Meeting	All 5 th graders attend a three day outdoor education field trip to Snow Mountain Ranch near Winter Park in the fall. This is an informational meeting for <u>incoming</u> 5 th grade parents.
May 12	PTO Meeting 7:00 p.m.	Final PTO meeting of the year to finalize budget and committee chairmanship.

Please join us for any or all of the above mentioned activities. You can also call our main office at 303-347-4500 for more details.

There is much to celebrate as we plan for the future and **our celebration includes you!**

To the newness of spring,

Janie Youderian,
Principal



LEWIS AMES PTO

Your PTO Board Officers
For Ames Elementary
2008-2009

Co-Presidents

Lisa Morgan	(720) 482-6659	lalonge@comcast.net
Ann Warner	(720) 482-9365	mawarner5@netzero.net

Vice-President:

Nancy Klinedinst	(303) 347-4400	Nklinedinst@lps.k12.co.us
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Treasurer:

Carolyn Wieber	(720) 489-0150	wieber-tex@comcast.net
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Secretary:

VIPS:

(Volunteers in Public Schools)

Becky Perez	(720) 529-0751	becperez@hotmail.com
Renee Ashcraft	(720) 488-0609	reneelashcraft@yahoo.com

The PTO will be providing an AMES yearbook for all students and staff during the last week of school. The project is currently being handled by a great team of talented and dedicated volunteers that are creating a spectacular memory book.

All families that paid for books in the beginning of the year will be provided a refund. Please continue to review the Thursday folder for announcements on the details, process and dates refunds will be issued.

We look forward to adding to another memory of our time at AMES!

ALL SCHOOL SKATE CITY EVENT

Wednesday night April 15th. **FREE** skating for Ames students only. 6-8 p.m.
PTO to buy \$3.00 dinner deal for Ames Students only.
The bus will still be available with the usual sign up/permission procedure.