

July 15, 2011

Dear Families and Friends of the School District of Fort Atkinson,

“Sun is shining. Weather is sweet. Make you wanna move your dancing feet.” — Bob Marley

I hope this letter, the first of the 2011-2012 school year, finds all of our families enjoying the beautiful summer days we have experienced since the beginning of July. Now we need some nice evening rains to help the farmers out!

The lyrics quoted above from Bob Marley, the revered performer of reggae music, plays well in the I-pod on a summer day walk. I have been taking a number of long walks lately with my new puppy *Lily*, a three-month-old golden retriever. My wife, Therese, and I are getting a healthy reminder of the energy it takes to train a puppy. Back in January, we had to put *Fitzie*, our 13-year-old golden down, after she became very ill and weak. Those who have gone through this know how difficult it can be to have to part with a faithful pet you have had for years. This was our second experience in having to put down a dog, and you vow that you will never put yourself through it again. However, after several months we decided we really missed not having a dog around. *Lily* has been good therapy for me, she gets me out walking, and that gives me time to think while it takes a little bit of “*puppy exuberance*” out of her—so it is good for both of us!

Before continuing, I wish to extend a welcome to all of our *new families* to the Fort Atkinson learning community. This is your first letter from me. My letters generally arrive the second weekend of each month. They are also posted on our district website www.fortschools.org. I think you will enjoy our schools and getting to know our staff. Our mission is to provide programs and services to help students reach their academic and personal potential. To our returning families we look forward to our continued relationship. We are fortunate to have supportive families and citizens who value education and have demonstrated their support for finer education in this community. The Board of Education, administration, teachers, and staff look forward to a fantastic 2011-2012 school year!

The School District of Fort Atkinson Annual Meeting on Monday, July 25 at 8:00 PM: Our annual meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 25, at 8 PM in the Luther Boardroom. At this meeting, citizens approve the levy for the 2011-12 school year. This meeting also provides us with an opportunity to give a “state of the schools” update to citizens. Our regular monthly board meeting will precede our annual meeting at 7 PM.

Fall Registration Dates: Registration at the elementary schools will be Monday, August 8, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Middle and High School registration will be Monday, August 8, from noon to 7 p.m. and Tuesday, August 9, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fees are \$35 for K-5 children, \$40 for 6-8 and \$50 for 9-12 pupils. Four-year-old kindergarten fees are \$15 as are early childhood fees.

School Meals: I am very pleased to inform parents that despite the increases in food prices you are seeing at the grocery stores, we will be keeping our lunch prices the same as last year!

Per our wellness efforts and serving healthy and nutritious meals, we will continue to serve chocolate milk at lunch times and at the elementary morning break. However, we will not be serving it at breakfast meals in an effort to provide a more balanced offering. While our wellness committee has concluded chocolate milk is better and more nutritious than no milk at all, or unhealthy beverages, three servings before lunch time for elementary children is more than we should be serving, if we are sincere about helping children make healthy food and drink choices.

A recent study released last week stated only Colorado has an obesity ratio below twenty percent of its population. That means one in five of us is obese! If this goes unchecked, it leads to more serious health complications including diabetes and heart disease. Our efforts in the district have been focused on making changes in reasonable phases, until we get to a place where we are very “wellness minded” in making healthy food choices and promoting physical activity. We need to do both to live longer and healthier lives. At fifty-eight, I am finding the better I adhere to making good choices on what I eat and in portion control, combined with exercise, the better I feel. The key is finding *balance* and that is what we hope to do with our students in our wellness efforts.

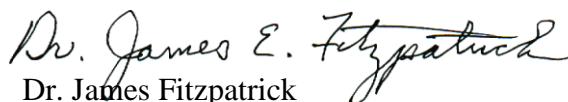
The Beginning Dates for Fall Sports: Before long, fall WIAA sports programs will be starting. We encourage students to be involved in sports and co-curricular activities. Most of these sports begin practice sessions in mid-August. Football fees and forms are due prior to August 3 to the high school office. All other forms and fees can be turned in at registration, on August 8 and 9, or prior to the first day of practice. Below is a list of starting dates and information for our fall sports programs:

- Football – The first day of practice is Wednesday, August 3, from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. Players will fit equipment and then practice.
- Girls’ Golf – The first practice is Monday, August 8, 8:00 a.m. at Spring Creek.
- Boys’ Soccer – Practice starts on Monday, August 8, 8:00 a.m. at the high school.
- Girls’ Swimming – The first practice is Tuesday, August 9 from 8:00 – 11:00 a.m. at the high school. There is a parent meeting on August 8, 7:00 p.m. in the high school library.
- Girls’ Tennis – Practice begins on Tuesday, August 9, 8:00 a.m. at Rock River courts.
- Girls’ Volleyball – Practice starts on Monday, August 15, at the high school gym at 10:00 a.m.
- Cross Country – The first day of practice is Monday, August 15, at 8:00 a.m. Meet in the high school commons and be ready to run.
- Boys’ Volleyball – The first practice is Monday, August 22, at 8:00 a.m. in the high school gym.

Relay for Life, July 15 and 16 at the Middle School Track: This event takes place this weekend at our middle school track. The Relay has been a sacred event in Fort for many years. Most of us have lost loved ones or know of someone special to us who has succumbed to Cancer. The good news is due to research supported by events like our Relay, more lives are being saved due to advances that have been made the past decade. The event runs from Friday afternoon until Saturday. You likely saw many of the headline events for the Relay in the paper this week; hopefully so, in the event this letter does not reach you by July 15.

In closing, the *Brewers* have been playing some good ball with some exciting “walk off” victories going into the ALL-STAR break. I wish I could say the same for my beloved *Cubbies*. I look forward to seeing you at various summer events around town and of course as we begin the 2011-2012 School year in a few short weeks.

With kindest regards,



Dr. James Fitzpatrick
Superintendent
School District of Fort Atkinson