

May 9, 2013

Dear Families and Friends of the Fort Atkinson School District,

A Mother's Love

"Your arms were always open when I needed a hug. Your heart understood when I needed a friend. Your gentle eyes were stern when I needed a lesson. Your strength and love has guided me and gave me wings to fly."

Sarah Malin

With the quote above, Happy Mother's Day to all of our moms! As I was researching for a good quote to kick-start this letter, I ran across a number of thoughts about mothers that I thought you might enjoy:

- *A mother is not a person to lean on, but a person to make leaning unnecessary.*
- *More than in any other human relationships, overwhelmingly more, motherhood means being instantly interruptible, responsive, and responsible.*
- *Mothers hold their children's hands for a short while, but their hearts forever!*
- *AS is the mother, SO is the daughter.*
- *Men are what their mothers made them.*
- *Most mothers are instinctive philosophers.*
- *The heart of a mother is a deep abyss at the bottom of which you will always find forgiveness.*
- *A mother is a person who seeing there are four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie.*
- *It's not easy being a mother. If it were easy fathers would do it!*

That mothers are instinctive philosophers and put everyone else in the family first is exactly how I would describe my dear mother of 88 years. I am one of eight and you could never put a "Poker face" on that she could not read right through, regardless of how hard you tried to put up a front. She could always tell when something might be bothering you or something was not quite right. I suspect a lot of moms reading this have that same instinct with their children.

As I close this opening piece, I think the quote leading off this letter captures the love and sentiment we all have for our mothers. So to all of our special moms out there....Happy Mother's Day ☺!

2013-2014 Budget: At our May Board Meeting, we have our first reading of our budget for next year based on the best information we know at this time. In June, the Board approves a budget to take to our Annual Meeting in July where it is then presented to the electors for approval. In mid-October, and after the third Friday count in September, we learn of our final state aid revenues. Our budget then must be certified by November 1st. We are cautiously optimistic that there may be some movement away from the Governor's proposed zero revenue limit increase he proposed in February. At the end of June, the deadline for the legislature to approve the 2013-2015 biennium budget, we should know more about our funding. Upon the legislature finishing their work on the budget, they then forward it to Governor Walker for his approval or veto of all or portions of the biennium budget bill.

Teacher Appreciation Week May 6-May 10: Below is a message I sent out to our teachers May 6 that reflects the thoughts I also shared in a letter to the editor this past week. In Fort Atkinson, we are truly blessed to have a great team of professional educators.

Dear Faculty,

“The greatest good you can do for others is not just to share your riches but to reveal to them their own.”
Benjamin Disraeli

On this Teacher Appreciation Week, I want to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to all of our teachers and certified professionals who work so hard to make our learning community a vibrant and stimulating environment for teaching and learning. While a week dedicated to honoring our professional educators is only a small gesture per the magnitude and impact of the roles and relationships educators play in our society, it at least gives the public pause to reflect on where our country would be if it were not for those who have answered the calling to teach, guide, mentor, and influence our youth.

Saturday night I stopped in at the Prom. We have a ritual that is part of our school culture called the Grand March, where each attendee if they choose, is introduced with their dates or friends if they came without a date. Maybe because this was my last Prom in Fort Atkinson, I was more reflective than any other time I attended a prom in my 38 years. It struck me how these juniors and seniors looking beautiful and handsome had grown up. While their outward appearance that night reflected the physiological transformations from toddler to high school that seemed so stark, the even greater transformation is how they have grown intellectually, socially, and morally per the role models you have been. Your investment in putting your heart and soul into our learning community is never in vain. Your influence lasts forever.

On this week teacher appreciation week, I extend my thanks on behalf of the Board of Education and Administration for your great efforts. I also wish to thank all of our employees. In a great learning community as is the case with any great team, every role and contribution is critical and to be valued for how it advances the entire organization. Even as you begin your work today, be mindful that somewhere a young mind is watching, listening, and learning from your example. Be assured you make a difference! Thank you—if

Board of Education News – Our Board of Education recently held its annual reorganization meeting April 23. For the 2013-2014 school year, Bob Chady will serve as President, Roger Thomann, Vice-President; Scott Johnson, Treasurer; Kristin Wallace, Clerk; and, Bob Vincent, Member. We thank these Board Members for their dedication to our School District. They devote many hours to meetings and attending school events and activities.

Retirees To Be Honored May 23– After many dedicated years of service to the School District of Fort Atkinson, those retiring this year will be recognized and thanked for their many years of service at our Retirement Reception on May 23:

Dr. James Fitzpatrick, Superintendent, 14 years
Nancy Newman, Barrie Elementary School Psychologist, 26 years
Kim Patrick, High School Principal Secretary, 23 years
Martha Pranga, Director of Instruction Secretary, 21½ years
Jerry Searing, Middle School Language Arts Teacher, 25 years
Susan Urben, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Secretary, 21 years
Melody Wachter, Middle School Careers/Life Skills Teacher, 20½ years
Robert Wicklund, Rockwell/Barrie Custodian, 12 years

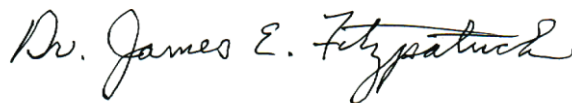
Dates to Put on Your Calendar – The next couple of weeks will seem like a whirlwind. I strongly suggest you visit our website www.fortschools.org for daily and nightly activities affecting your children at our schools. As sports wind down, WIAA tournaments are noted on the district calendar. Below are a few big dates you will want to have on your calendar:

- Thursday, May 16 – School Board Meeting, 7:00 PM
- Thursday, May 16 - High School Band Clinic/Concert, 7:30 PM
- Monday, May 20 – Middle School Band Concert, 7:00 PM
- Tuesday, May 21 – 5th Grade Band and Orchestra Concert, 6:30 PM
- Wednesday, May 22 – Senior Scholarship Awards Night, 6:30 PM
- Friday, May 24 – Rock Day at the High School, 9:30 AM
- Monday, May 27 – Memorial Day Parade with Fort Atkinson High School Band, 10:00 AM
- Thursday, May 30 – Grades 5-12 Orchestra String Festival, 7:00 PM
- Saturday, June 1 - Jazz Di Pasta at the High School, seating at 5:00 PM
- Monday, June 3 – High School Spring Athletic Awards Ceremony, 6:30 PM
- Sunday, June 9 – Graduation, 1:00 PM
- Monday, June 10 – Middle School Promotion, 7:00 PM
- Tuesday, June 11 – Last day of school, dismissal at noon
- Monday, June 17 – Summer School begins!

Memorial Day on May 27th: I close this letter reminding all parents and community members we celebrate Memorial Day on May 27th. On that day, there will be the Legion Breakfast at the Dugout beginning at 6:30 AM. The parade in which our Marching Band will participate begins at 10:00 AM beginning at South Water Street proceeding down Main Street to the Evergreen Cemetery where our veterans will be remembered in a closing ceremony.

In closing, I will write my final letter to you as Superintendent of Schools in Fort Atkinson in June. I look forward to seeing many of you at our remaining spring activities and at Graduation. It has been a great 14 years serving as your superintendent. I want to extend my sincere gratitude to all who have sent me kind notes or contributions to the Dr. James and Therese Fitzpatrick Scholarship. We are honored and delighted that it will be given to a worthy graduate choosing the field of education as a career in carrying on the good work we must do with our youth. Thanks so much for your kindness and support over the years.

With kindest regards,



Dr. James Fitzpatrick
Superintendent
School District of Fort Atkinson