

April 13, 2012

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

When you blame others, you give up your power to change.
Anonymous

I write this letter following a beautiful Easter Sunday spent in Chicago, where my sister, Kay, was the brave soul who offered to host over forty of us for dinner. It was a nice sunny drive in as we listened to my Cubbies on the radio. Even they came through salvaging the final game of the opening series of the season! A rarity at one of our family dinners but something I found refreshing was there was absolutely no discussion about politics. Even more amazing is it happened without someone making the suggestion. My mother of 87 years usually is the first to speak up asking for a truce! As the upcoming elections approach in the weeks ahead, I think everyone is tiring of the constant negativity and the polarization that is the result of the long, drawn out campaigns so it was relaxing to break bread with the family and enjoy a beautiful day.

The quote above was something I thought about during the past Lenten season. It can be easy to blame others for things rather than look for an opportunity to use our own imaginative powers to accept challenges and find a way to better outcomes.

I have been reading a book written by Martin E.P. Seligman entitled *Flourish*. Seligman is also the author of the best seller *Authentic Happiness*. He reminds us that we think too much about what goes wrong and not enough about what goes right in our lives. He does not dismiss it makes sense to analyze bad events so we can learn from them and avoid them in the future, but he submits that people unfortunately can spend more time thinking about what is bad in life rather than what is helpful.

Seligman suggests instead of focusing on negative events that can set us up for anxiety, we have to get better at thinking about and savoring what went well. A suggestion Seligman makes and one that I am trying is to write down in a journal *three things that went well today and why they went well*. What I am finding is even on your toughest days it does help your outlook, and you begin to realize the good in each day far outweighs the bad. It has been sort of a cathartic activity amidst a climate and atmosphere where people seem to be walking on eggs around each other for fear of saying something that might politically offend someone else. At first it seemed like a corny idea, but if you stay with it for a while, you realize that life is really good for us on most days. In short, much of our outlook comes down to attitude, and as I have often heard it said, “nobody can compose your thoughts for you.”

Board of Education Election: Mr. Scott Johnson was re-elected to the Board of Education on April 3. We congratulate him and Mrs. Sarah Hammer, a first time candidate running for the Board who had a very fine showing. We thank both of these fine individuals for their interest in serving on the Board of Education.

Open Enrollment Application Window Now Open until April 30 at 4 p.m.: I want to make sure families are aware of the open enrollment window and the *later date* signed into law by the Governor. For families now living in our District who may be considering moving out of our District but wish for their children to remain in the Fort Schools or for parents from other districts wanting to enroll their students in our District, you may apply on line at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/psctoc.html> until April 30. We also have hard copy applications available in our office at 201 Park Street.

Please contact my assistant, Debbie Kopps, at 563-7807, for information on open enrollment. The process is very simple and painless; it is just a matter of doing it within the timeline noted above. Any applications coming in after the deadline cannot be accepted per the open enrollment laws. So please mark your calendars and let us help you if you need our assistance.

Badger Conference Art Show: The Badger Conference Art Show was held at the Monroe Arts Center in Monroe, Wisconsin, on March 24. Congratulations to the following students for having their work chosen for the show: Pinky Prateep, Victoria Bobholz, Andy Schrantz, Molley Sawyer, Jordan (JJ) Scolman, Zack Manley, Abby Knowicki, and Sarah Weaver. For more information, check out the following link:
<http://www.monroeartscenter.com/eventdetails?eid=33>

Employee Recognition Reception and Program: On Tuesday, March 27, we recognized honorees that have reached a milestone in their careers in Fort Atkinson. Without a doubt, our community has been blessed to have devoted and caring staff members who leave an imprint on the hearts and souls of those they teach and work with in our learning community. Listed are our 2012 honorees who per our ritual in recognizing their service received the *Fort Coffee Mug*.

Ten-Year Honorees:

JoEllen Arnett is our guidance counselor at Luther and Purdy.
Karla Beyer is our piano accompanist for our middle school students.
Kimberly Brock works as our attendance secretary at the high school.
Christine Cluver works as our office para-professional at Rockwell.
James Dorn is a special education teacher at the middle school.
Samuel Fettig is our middle school band director.
Debbie Kopps is my secretary as well as the Board of Education's.
Barbara Martin is a reading specialist at Luther Elementary.
Marcia Rader is a cook at the high school.
Elaine Spata is a kindergarten teacher at Luther.
Linda Straub teaches high school Family and Consumer Education.
Laurie Strom is one of our high school guidance counselors.

Fifteen-Year Honorees:

Dr. Rob Abbott is our middle school principal.
Wayne Clark is a member of custodial team at the middle school.
Bette Delsarte teaches social studies at the middle school.
Connie Kopetsky is our laundry aide at the high school.
Sara Lastusky works in our main office at the high school.
Todd Macklem is a 4th grade teacher at Purdy.
Martha MacWilliams teaches 3rd grade at Luther.
Dennis Schwedrsky teaches social studies at the high school.
Jeff Streich is a member of our maintenance department.
Tony Swantz teaches Government and Career Pathways at our high school.
Tammy Telfer is a special education aide at Purdy.
Chick Westby is a science teacher at our high school.
Katherine Wixom is a reading specialist and kindergarten teacher at Rockwell Elementary.

Twenty-Year Honorees:

Cindy Ament is a special education aide at the middle school.
Kathleen Brown-Kurtz is our school psychologist at the middle school.
Todd Carter is a social studies teacher at the high school
Denise Engstrom teaches 3rd grade at Barrie.
Betty Herdendorf teaches 1st grade at Purdy.
Barbara Streng is our cook helper at Luther.
Deborah Sykes teaches business education at the middle school.
Jean Temperly is our guidance counselor at the middle school.
Melody Wachter teaches career and life skills at our middle school.
Lucy Walter is a special education teacher at the middle school.

Twenty-five Year Honorees:

Linda Banker is our Business Services Department payroll clerk.

Nancy Istvanek is a cook at the high school.

Todd Linse teaches social studies at our middle school.

William Rowlinson teaches industrial technology education at the middle school.

Connie Swantz is a special education teacher at the high school.

Ann Wagie is a kindergarten teacher at Barrie Elementary.

Thirty Year Honoree:

Bill Sullivan is in our maintenance department.

WKCE Scores: We received the results of our WKCE exams that were administered to our students last fall. As in the past, our students performed well above the state level of their peers in all but three of the twenty-seven sub-tests. In two exams we scored at the state level and in one area, we were below the state average. These exams attempt to measure reading, mathematics, science, and social studies proficiency.

WKCE exam results are only one data point of many that our Board of Education reviews. Between now and August we take the time to study these results and compare them with our other assessments in analyzing and measuring the attainment and growth of our students. It is from such study that we develop interventions in addressing the needs of our learners.

We do take pride in the fact, in the early 2000's, we often scored below state averages in several test areas. Not the case anymore and that can be attributed to our Strategic Plan, where our academic agenda has focused on our three guiding questions:

1. What is it we want our students to learn? (our curriculum and content)
2. How will we know they learned it? (our assessments)
3. What will we do if our students need more help or more challenge? (our interventions).

Below is our timeline for establishing the 2012-2013 District Budget:

- Wednesday, April 19 Regular Meeting of the Board of Education: The Board reviews and considers staffing requests and reductions.
- Thursday, May 17 Regular Meeting of the Board of Education: The Board receives a first reading of the 2012-2013 Budget presented by Mr. Demerath, Director of Business Services.
- Thursday, June 21 Regular Meeting of the Board of Education: Second reading of the proposed 2012-2013 Budget for the Board to approve and take to the Annual Meeting.
- Monday, July 23 Annual Meeting at 8 PM to approve 2012-2013 school tax levy. The Annual Meeting will follow the regular July Board Meeting that begins at 7:00 PM.

Sponsorships (*This is a second printing as I want to make sure parents and community members are aware of our efforts to seek sponsorships*). In April of 2008, our School Board, like many in our state, approved a policy to accept sponsorships that would benefit the district, its schools, employees, or students by accepting money, goods and/or services in exchange for the District acknowledging the sponsor's contribution.

The impetus for approving such a policy came on the heels of the *2006 District Task Force Study* that recommended the District seek creative ways to raise revenues. Admittedly, we have been a little slow out of the starting blocks in getting this policy off the ground. Partly because we are novices in the marketing field and we have wanted to be cautious in doing this right and never wanting to jeopardize the wonderful relationships we have always had with our local business community.

At the March 15 Board Meeting we rolled out our plan to solicit partnerships. While most associate such ventures with athletics and gyms, fields, and scoreboards; in addition, we also want to offer what we would consider *Academic Sponsorships* that may include music, the arts, and even classrooms. Examples might be an Early Childhood wing, school libraries, auditoriums, computer labs, science wings, playgrounds, multi-purpose rooms and cafeterias.

If you visit our beautifully remodeled Dwight Foster Library, you see evidence of sponsorships and naming rights that were secured to make the project possible. Sponsorships could help us significantly in relieving us of expensive upgrades or replacements of score boards, computer labs, auditorium sound and lighting panels, gym floors, and any number of examples, where one time non-recurring expenses hit us hard with an already strapped operating budget.

In April, we hope to roll out a more extensive communication plan on how businesses or citizens may wish to become a sponsor. We plan to have meetings with the Chamber Board of Directors, our business community, and our local media partners to communicate widely of the sponsorship opportunities that will be available.

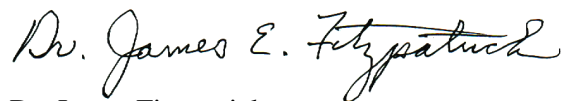
We are in the process of developing a guide. The purpose of this *guide* is to provide information regarding the sponsorship opportunities within the School District of Fort Atkinson and the process by which those opportunities can be taken advantage of by interested parties. These sponsorships are a way for businesses to gain exposure in the community, for individuals to dedicate a specific facility that holds a special place for them, or even for an organization to assist our District in achieving its academic goals! There will be many varied and valuable opportunities contained within this guide. However, these are not the only opportunities available. If you have a sponsorship idea outside of those contained within this guide, you may propose such in an application thus making the proposal your own. In the guide, we will have all application forms and information related to the process of applying and being selected.

Rotary Pancake Breakfast is this Sunday, April 15, 2012 from 7 AM to 12:30 PM at the High School—Bring your appetite! The proceeds of this fundraiser benefit the many programs Rotary supports in our school district.

Early Dismissal April 27: Just a reminder this is our last early dismissal for this school year for curriculum development.

In closing, I look forward to seeing you at the many spring events coming up as we get into the fourth quarter of the school year.

With kindest regards,



Dr. James Fitzpatrick
Superintendent
School District of Fort Atkinson