

July 13, 2012

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

“The mission of the School District of Fort Atkinson is to provide programs and services that will allow each student the opportunity to develop his/her personal potential!”

Mission Statement for the School District of Fort Atkinson

With this July letter, we officially begin the 2012-2013 school year! I wish to extend a warm welcome to all of our *new families* to the Fort Atkinson Learning Community. While this is your first letter from me, like our returning families you will receive my District newsletter usually the second weekend of each month. I also post this on our district website at www.fortschools.org. The purpose of this communication is to keep you informed from a district perspective of important developments related to our operations, events and activities, and hopefully an inspirational message from yours truly that might resonate with you as something worth reflecting upon as it relates to education or life and living in general.

Let me also take this opportunity to wish our *returning families* our best summer wishes. The summer time is a nice break from the routine of the school year, but when I see families at various community events or just around town, I have come to realize that with children and all they might be involved in – summers are not always easier! But hopefully everyone finds a little time to relax, decompress, and enjoy something you like—maybe fishing, reading, biking, a nice walk, a relaxing vacation or whatever helps you forget for at least 36 hours to a week the pressures and stress of your normal life routine. I am kind of doing that right now. While I love to write as I am now, I am anxious to get into a Pat Conroy book and a Michael Connelly novel after that. In short, I hope this summer allows you some time to refresh—it is good for the mind and the soul!

Our mission is to provide programs and services to help students reach their academic and personal potential. 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 2012-2013 school year!

Annual Meeting on Monday, July 23, at 8 PM. Following our regular Board Meeting that evening (beginning at 7 PM), we will host our Annual Meeting. Our preliminary notification of state aid released in early July indicates we will receive an 8% increase over last year’s state aid. This is a result of property values decreasing in this tough economy and our enrollment increasing. If it holds (through October) when we get our final notification of state aid it means that our property tax levy in the School District of Fort Atkinson will be lower than we projected (our projection is a 1.99% increase). What is confusing to some when they hear state aid has increased is they believe then the district has more money to work with. Well, with a REVENUE LIMIT, which we are under, we are entitled to spend only at our revenue limit, which means the more state aid the less in local property taxes, or conversely the less state aid the higher your property tax levy will be to reach your revenue limit. So in short, this early news looks to be good news for our district taxpayers! Again, this is a preliminary projection. In October, we receive our final state aid notification after our third Friday student enrollment count is in. Thanks to the support of our citizenry, we are allowed to spend above the revenue limit through the 2013-2014 school year to maintain the excellent programs and services we can offer that make us a “Beacon” district in this state!

The annual meeting also affords us an opportunity to give a “state of the schools” update to citizens. Thanks to the Daily Union coverage of this meeting, we are able to share information as transparently as possible with all of our families and citizens!

Graduation – June 9, 2013. Next spring we will hold graduation on the second Sunday of June, which will be the 9th. We had been slated for having graduation on June 16, 2013. This will necessitate letting the seniors out one day and a half earlier than the rest of the 4K-12 student body. This would be a “one time” occurrence. As it is now, the second Sunday of June is the latest date for graduation of any schools nearby! The third Sunday of June (which is too late) runs into Father’s Day every year, the start of summer school, and Fort events like the Annual Baseball Fest and the Fort Half Marathon. I wanted to get this information out to families well in advance, as I know people make plans around graduation dates. So please mark your calendars!

Strategic Planning for 2013-2018. We are in our fifth and final year of our current Strategic Plan. As I have shared in the past, I believe our strategic planning has positioned us well programmatically and fiscally, as we have become a district of choice in our area. Our hope in the next strategic plan is to continue our efforts toward *balanced excellence* that meets the needs of all learners, knowing we will have to evolve and reinvent ourselves in many ways per the fast changing times. I look forward to sharing with you our timelines for putting together our 2013-2018 five-year plan. Your feedback and thoughts throughout the entire planning process will be most welcomed and helpful.

Fall Registration Dates. Registration at the elementary schools will be Monday, August 6, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Middle and High School registration will be Monday, August 6, from noon to 7 p.m. and Tuesday, August 7, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration fees are \$15.00 for 4-year-old kindergarten and Early Childhood, \$35 for K-5, \$40 for 6-8 and \$50 for 9-12 students.

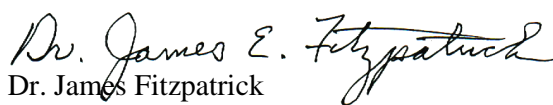
Student Meals. I am very pleased to inform parents that despite the increases in food prices that you are seeing at the grocery stores, we will be keeping our lunch prices the same as last year! Elementary student breakfast is \$1.40 and lunch with milk is \$2.35. Middle and high school student breakfast is \$1.45 and lunch with milk is \$2.55.

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 the first day of practice. Forms can also be turned in at High School registration, on August 6 and 7. Here is a list of starting dates and information for our fall sports programs:

- Football – Equipment hand out is Monday, August 6 at 8:00 a.m. Practice begins on Tuesday, August 7 at 7:00 a.m.
- Girls’ Golf – The first practice is Monday, August 6 at 8:00 a.m. at Spring Creek.
- Boys’ Soccer – Practice starts on Monday, August 6 at 8:00 a.m. at the High School.
- Girls’ Swimming – The first practice is Tuesday, August 7 from 8:00–11:00 a.m. in the High School pool.
- Girls’ Tennis – Practice begins on Tuesday, August 7 at 8:00 a.m. at Rock River courts.
- Girls’ Volleyball – Practice starts on Monday, August 13 at in the High School gym at 10:00 a.m.
- Cross Country – The first day of practice is Monday, August 13 at 8:00 a.m. Meet in the High School commons.
- Boys’ Volleyball – The first practice is Monday, August 20 at 8:00 a.m. in the High School gym.

As I end this letter on July 3, there is a nice soft rain falling on Fort Atkinson—finally! Of course, we need much more to help all of our families and friends in our farming community. Here is hoping for the heavenly rains to open up and saturate our fields in the upcoming days!

With kindest regards,



Dr. James Fitzpatrick
Superintendent
School District of Fort Atkinson