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Highlights

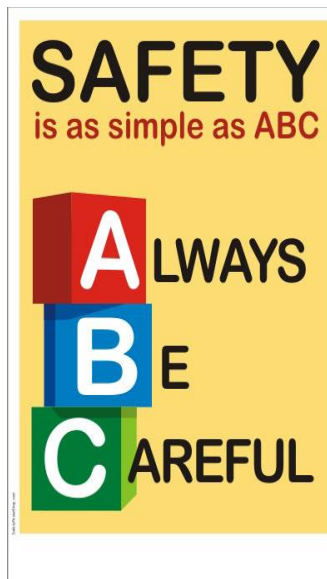
Athol-Royalston Regional School District

Walkout Against Gun Violence

As you may be aware the students of Parkland, Florida have called for a school walk out on March 14, 2018. In response to their call both the high school and middle school have scheduled events. At the middle school, each grade will take a walk around the school and then meet in the cafeteria for refreshments. Once there, students will be invited to write down messages of support and/or thoughts on how to effect positive change in school and in society. Messages will be displayed in the main lobby. At the high school, the Youth & Law class has organized the event, which includes encouraging the students to walk out and gather for the purpose of paying tribute to the 17 people who died. The schools will provide a space for these students during the events.



ARRSD SAFETY PLAN



The district was given kudos by the Town Manager and Police Chief for the response to the threat made at the high school this week. I want to personally thank all teachers and staff for the calm way in which you approached the incident and the appropriate way in which you responded to students. After having a debrief with high school staff and hearing from several parents the Athol-Royalston Regional School District has reviewed and revised the school districts safety plan. Revisions to the plan are scheduled to be presented to all teachers and staff, Wednesday, March 14, 2018 during the half-day professional day. There will also be a session for parents on the revised plan. The session will take place prior to the school committee at 5:45 PM in the middle school library. All are welcome to attend. Students in the district will be orientated to the plan as soon as parents and teachers have been orientated. Feedback on the plan will be taken at each session.

Superintendents Schedule

3/12/2018

- Natures Way Meeting
- AHS Visit
- ARMS Visit

3/13/2018

- RCS Visit
- DILT

3/14/2018

- Stop Gun Violence Walk Out
- CAPS Board Meeting
- Royalston Town Meeting

3/15/2018

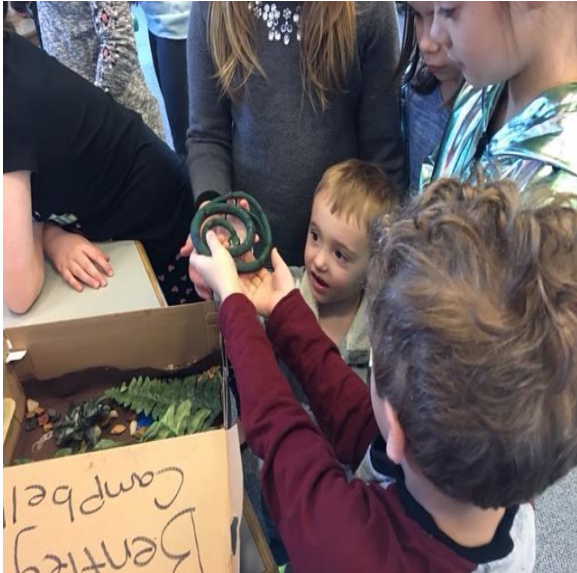
- Directors Meetings
- ACES Visit
- K Registration
- Guidance Meeting

3/16/2018

- ILT Meeting

Picture of The Week

Royalston kindergarten students show off their non-fiction book projects in the library.



DID YOU KNOW?

There are seven languages that bring about a culture of thinking in a classroom. They include the following:

- **Language of Thinking** - assists students with metacognition. Labeling it and modeling it will help students grow as thinkers.
- **Language of Community** - uses language to promote learning with and from each other.
- **Language of Identity** - seeks to learn the process and ways of thinking for people in the field being studied and becoming one of them not just an observer of their work
- **Language of Initiative** - sees self as a participant; identifies possible action, weighs the potential, directs attention, understands casual relationships, sets goals, enacts
- **Language of Mindfulness** - can be open to new ideas and not closed to new notions. Teacher uses language that is conditional allowing students to remain open. Example, what might be going on?
- **Language of Praise and Feedback** - words of teacher provide specific feedback that is descriptive and informative. Praise is focused on a students efforts and actions
- **Language of Listening** - seeks to explore further some ones idea. Does not judge if correct or accurate.

Using Language to Promote Thinking

Ron Ritchhart believes that classrooms can be rich with deep thinking when teachers are able to identify, model and praise the language of thinking with students. He believes it is a learned behavior. The subtle approach of teachers is imperative in building deep thinking skills. Asking students questions through low level thinking tasks to scaffolding to deeper thinking tasks is what works. As an example, teachers will ask students, what do you see in a picture, what are the specific details you see, make interpretation of what you see, build evidence to support this interpretation, ask yourself is the thinking sound are reasonable, generate other alternative thoughts, provide evidence, make connections, raise questions. These question prompts can work to help students to think more deeply. Ron Ritchhart believes there are lots of words that promote thinking. His big questions; are teachers preparing to model and use this language with students as part of a lesson? Do teachers have an expectation that students will meet the expectation? Will the teacher help students to meet expectations through coaching them along and not giving them the answers? Other examples of thinking words that he suggests using are

- Example, Justify, Examining, Reasoning
- Hypothesize, Question, Judgment
- Agreement, Doubt, Confirmation
- Confusion, Awe, Wonderment
- Alternative Actions, Make Predications, Motives for Action
- Make Connection, Sort what is the same and different, what do we believe caused the change?

Planning ahead the thinking you will promote, modeling the thinking, praising students for applying the thinking and probing students to help them see what the thinking looks like will bring about a thinking classroom.

Looking to the 2018-2019 School Year

Data Decision Making

- **Benchmark Testing** - This year several classrooms are piloting the NWEA Map exam in math and ELA. Next year the district will purchase the exam and all classes in grades 1-8 will take the test three times a year. The test will be used to help determine which students are in need of extra support as it relates to the state standards.
- **Literacy Exam** - The district is currently piloting several literacy exams to see which will be best for initial screening of all students each year in grades K-10 and which will give the district a deeper understanding of what may be causing some students reading issues.



Focus

The District Instructional Leadership Team (DILT) has met and reviewed the district entry plan. The team has used the plan to identify three areas to focus on next year. They are:

- Special Education Inclusion
- Research Best Practices
- Literacy Instruction Across the Curriculum

The next step of the DILT will be to analyze each of these areas and identify the root cause of the issues, narrow the focus and set a plan for change.



Family Connections

The state of Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Standard III calls for family and community involvement, which is part of the district strategic plan. Moving forward school administrators will be working with teachers to create a comprehensive strategy that all teachers will take part in to raise family involvement across all schools. The rubric calls for an action plan for each school. Next year, schools will be required to develop and implement a plan as part of their School Improvement Plans (SIPs). A major focus of the plan will be creating regular two-way communication with families about student performance and learning and responds promptly and carefully to communications from families.

