



Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024



Principal's Corner

It's crazy to me that 2024 is already wrapping up! I know a lot has happened over this year but it feels so recent that my family watched the ball drop in Time Square.

As we approach 2025 we have had a VERY busy, productive, and fun month here at Mount Arlington Public Schools. It was great to see the many presentations our students and staff put on, such as our Winter Concert, 2nd Grade Winter Readers Theatre, and 3rd Grade Thanksgiving Day Parade, just to name a few.

We are excited to share these moments, along with a number of other classroom activities and lessons our students and staff have been working on in this edition of Laker Insider.

I know I speak on behalf of everyone here in the district when I wish you all an amazing holiday break and hope you have a safe, relaxing, and festive time with your friends and family.

We look forward to seeing you in 2025!

Notes from the Superintendent

This is certainly a busy and exciting time of year as we head into our Winter Break. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my warmest wishes to all Mount Arlington families for a relaxing and enjoyable break spent with family and friends. We look forward to seeing everyone in the New Year!

Upcoming Events

12/20-1/1 - Early Dismissal (12:50)

12/23-1/1/25 - Winter Break

1/2/25 - School Reopens

1/2/25 - Board of Education Reorganization Meeting - 7:00pm

1/20 - MLK Jr. Day - Schools Closed / Teacher In-service



Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

Winter Concert

Congratulations to the Percussion Ensemble, Concert Band, Concert Choir and Honors Choir on a great performance at the Winter Concert last week! Everyone sounded fantastic! The Beginning Band and Third and Fourth Grade Choirs will have their winter concert on Thursday, February 6th.

Thank you to Mrs. Van Dongen and Dr. Aberback for leading the students to perform such an amazing concert. Also, thank you to Mrs. Wassel for the wonderful snow globe painting and the decorations for the concert. We also appreciate all the work put in by our excellent custodial staff for setting up and breaking down the chairs, risers, and other equipment to make this possible.





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

VFW Patriot's Pen Essay Competition

In October, 7th and 8th grade students had the opportunity to participate in the Patriot's Pen Essay Competition held each year. This year's theme was "My Voice in America's Democracy." The local VFW Post 2833 reads the essays and scores them using rubric without knowing the grade level or names of the student authors. VFW members explained how impressed they were with our students' essays and that they were the clear winners across several schools. The three winners from Mount Arlington were recognized and received their awards at the Board of Education meeting this month. Congratulations to Katey Thurman (1st), Natalie Fernandez (2nd), and Sophia Santos (3rd)!



Honors Choir

Congratulations to two of our choir members! Sixth grader, Hannah Philip, and 7th grader, Alaina Furman, have both been accepted into the Morris Area Honor Choir! At the end of January they will perform in a concert with other selected middle school students from several area school districts. This is a great and exciting accomplishment.

Congratulations, girls!



Mount Arlington Public School District

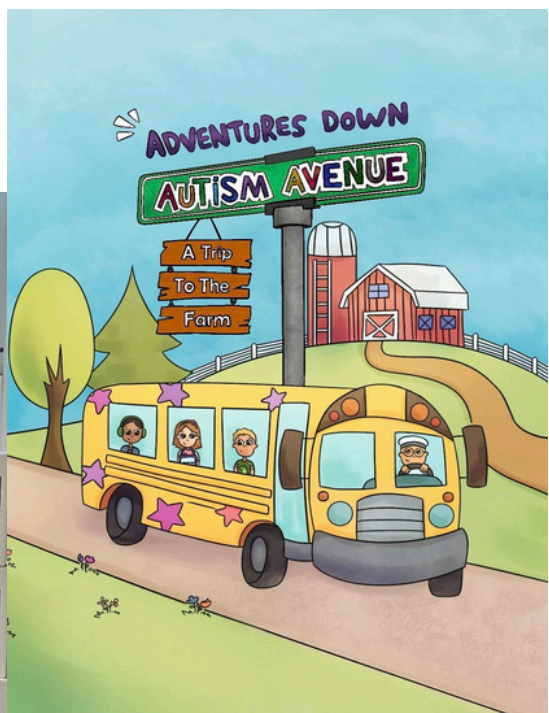
LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

Author Visit With Chelsea Bray

On December 6th, Chelsea Bray, a parent in our district, graciously came in and read the book she authored, *Adventures Down Autism Avenue: A Trip to the Farm*. Chelsea discussed the book with each class at Decker and brought more understanding of Autism to our students and staff. We thank her for her time and dedication to helping our school community!





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

Pre-K

The students in Mrs. Shapiro's preschool class roleplayed being bakers in a gingerbread bakery dramatic play center. The students took turns rolling out gingerbread cookie dough, cutting out various shapes using cookie cutters and baking and decorating their "cookies."





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

1st Grade

First grade students spent the month of December learning about consumer economics: needs/wants, earning/saving/spending money, and making choices. The students then applied their knowledge by earning Ginger Bucks in the classroom, which would be used to purchase items they needed and wanted for building a gingerbread house. Students created a shopping list and made choices based on the amount of Ginger Bucks they had earned.

After buying their supplies and building their houses, the students created a community filled with houses, streets, a school, and even a park. The students named their community as well as the streets and each students' house was given an address in the community. The students loved this fun, engaging activity and have truly learned about the importance of making choices when it comes to earning and spending money.





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

2nd Grade

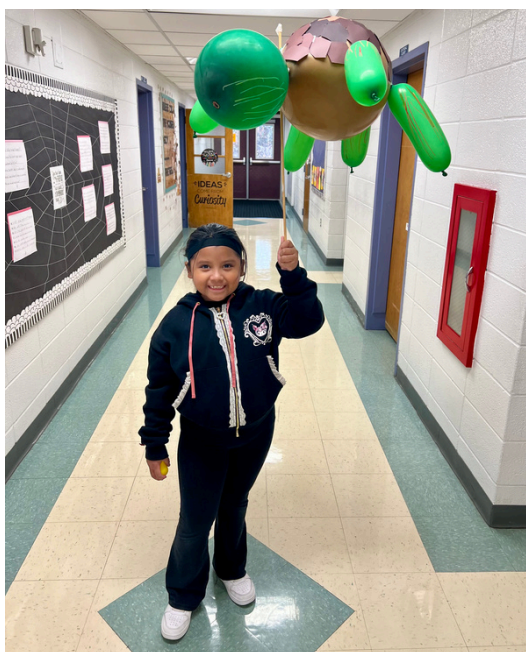
The second graders performed their annual Winter Readers Theater for their families and schoolmates, and they did an amazing job! They brought six seasonal stories to life using just their reading voices. Instead of relying on costumes, props, or memorized lines, they focused on reading at the right pace, reading with accuracy, and using meaningful expression. The audience left feeling the warmth and joy of the season. Great job, Second Grade!





December 20, 2024

The winter festivities are in full swing! Third grade loves to celebrate the holidays by kicking off the season with our annual M.A.P.S. Thanksgiving Day Parade and Grinch Day. The Thanksgiving Day Parade is a hands-on STEM and Social Studies lesson inspired by Melissa Sweet's book, *Balloons Over Broadway*. After learning about the history of The Macy's Day Parade, students create their own parade balloons through design, collaboration, problem-solving and engineering. When the big day comes, 3rd grade parades throughout the school showing off their extraordinary creations.





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

3rd Grade....continued

In addition, Grinch Day is a fun filled day that focuses on Grinch themed lessons and hands on activities such as character trait analysis, figurative language, and analyzing the effects of mixing vinegar and baking soda that cause the Grinch's heart to grow through the creation of carbon dioxide.





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

5th Grade

The fifth-grade students were excited to learn about and share each other's cultural holiday traditions with Jonah's mother, Jessica Price. Mrs. Price also educated the fifth graders on the history of Hanukkah and the traditions surrounding the holiday. What a rewarding experience!

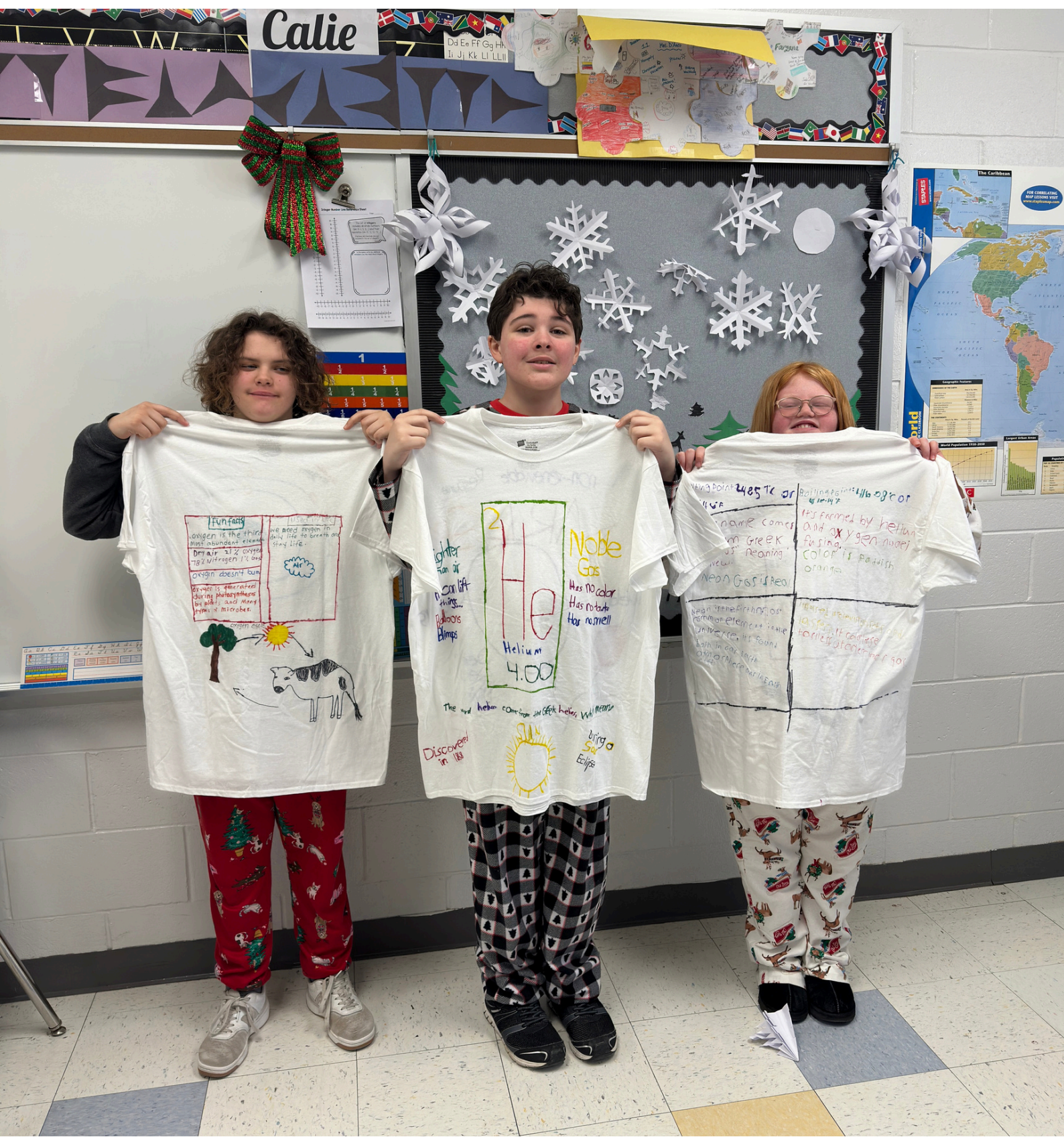




Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

Students in Science class working on their "Periodic Table Element T-shirt" project.





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

Middle School Science

This month, our middle school science students participated in an exciting Mini Skyscraper Challenge, combining creativity, engineering, and teamwork to build their own tall and stable structures. Using materials like popsicle sticks, cardboard, and tape, students designed and constructed skyscrapers that met specific criteria: standing at least 30 cm tall, supporting a small weight at the top, and withstanding a "wind" stability test. Through this hands-on STEM activity, students explored concepts like material properties, stability, and structural design while applying critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The challenge encouraged innovation and resilience as students reflected on their designs and tested ways to improve their structures.





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

Locker Decorating Contest

The annual Holiday Locker Decorating Contest brought festive cheer to the hallways as students in grades 6 through 8 showcased their creativity and holiday spirit! With just one week to transform their lockers into magical displays, the results were truly dazzling. Congratulations to our winners: Esteban Mendoza from Grade 6, Calie Foit from Grade 7, and Brianne Pawlowski from Grade 8, whose decorations wowed the judges and captured the holiday vibe perfectly. The event was filled with fun, laughter, and friendly competition, leaving everyone in high spirits. Happy Holidays to all!





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

Art Club

The Art Club meets weekly, offering students in Grades 5-8 the opportunity to explore a wide variety of ways to express themselves in a creative environment. The students had great fun creating winter art for our school.





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

Snow Globe Photos

Another HUGE Thank You to Mrs. Wassel for painting the beautiful snow globe!





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

Snow Globe Photos.....continued





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

Caroling

Dr. A. and Mrs. Van Dongen led caroling throughout the hallways with students on the last day before break





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

MAPS Athletics

As the middle school basketball season reaches its halfway point, the Lady Lakers and the Lakers are making waves with their dedication, teamwork, and grit. Both teams have shown incredible growth and determination, making their coaches and fans proud. MAPS staff, family, and friends are encouraged to keep showing their support and cheering on our student athletes as they fight for a strong finish to their seasons. Check out the Live Calendar on the school website for information about upcoming games. GO LAKERS!





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

December 20, 2024

MAPS Athletics....continued





Mount Arlington Public School District

LAKER INSIDER

Issue No. 24-25-5

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

From all of us at Mount Arlington Public Schools!!!!

