



NEWSLETTER

February 7, 2025

Principal: Barbara Gerard
<http://matsuk12.us/acc>

Phone: 907-746-2358
Fax: 907-746-2368

Dear Academy Families,

Another wonderful, extremely busy week has ended!



THANK YOU!

Thank you for the incredibly thoughtful, delicious, and generous assortment of treats, breakfasts, and lunches! Each day, the staff was delighted and amazed by your kindness and generosity. You truly spoiled us, and we are so grateful!

A heartfelt THANK YOU to our wonderful families!

Intensives ROCKED!

Intensives! Academy's unique educational experiences are designed to fulfill our charter's mission, objectives, and goals, and Intensives play a vital role in this. They provide students with real-life experiences, opportunities to explore careers, develop new skills, and grow into knowledgeable, well-rounded young adults.

At the end of Intensive Week, students learn to provide thoughtful feedback letters to the principal, reflecting on the valuable lessons they gained, highlighting what went well, and most importantly, kindly suggesting areas for improvement.

Way to go, Academy staff!

SUCCESS! Academy's Ten-Year Contract Signed!

After nearly three months of intense negotiations, a workable agreement has finally been reached! Birchtree, American, Midnight Sun, and Academy have signed new ten-year contracts, ensuring the continuation of their services, missions, goals, and objectives outlined in each school's charter renewal. This process was long, challenging, and stressful. A question that arose repeatedly was, "Why?" Why did four highly successful, top-performing schools—renowned for their excellence, strong track records, and satisfied families—face such a battle, while many other programs in need of district attention went unchallenged?

Questions? Needs?

Please do not hesitate to reach out. We can generally fix most things if we know early! We all work very hard and do our very best every day. Call, text, email, drop in. We CARE! I CARE!

With Warm Regards,

Barbara Gerard, Principal
907-841-5704

Barbara.Gerard@matsuk12.us



| Date: | Event: |
|---------|------------------------------------|
| 2/12 | 7 th Grade Bake Sale |
| 2/14 | K-5 Valentine's Parties |
| 2/18 | Early Release-12:45pm |
| 2/19-21 | Professional Learning No School |

7th Grade Fundraiser!

7th grade Birthday Box fundraiser
is Feb. 12.

Birthday boxes contain all ingredients for a child's birthday party - cake mix, frosting, streamers, paper products, treats, etc. - needed for a child of a family in crisis. Boxes will be donated to Alaska Family Services and MyHouse to give out whenever a child receiving services has a birthday. To this end, 7th grade students will be hosting a bake sale building-wide at the end of the day Feb. 12. Treats will be \$1-2 each and used to fund the contents of those boxes. Thanks for your support!



Kindergarten



Aesop's fables were on our reading menu this week. Students learned 4 of the possibly 100s Aesop is believed to have written. Each one has a lesson we are to learn from it. Ask your student which was their favorite.

Our trip to the theater was also on Aesop and some of his fables. Thank you to all the parents that drove for us. You are so awesome!

Our spelling words for our book this week were on the 5 jobs of final silent e. Did you know English words don't end in v or u-that's job two.

We continued on money in our math block. We practiced writing dollar signs and amounts of money. We also made our next class made book based on The Big Buck Adventure. One of the authors is from Alaska.

Thank you so much for the yummy treats and thoughtful gifts. We had a great teacher appreciation week thanks to all of you! Please feel free to contact me anytime.

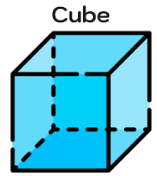
Mrs. Berg Verona.Berg@matsuk12.us



hello FIRST GRADE

- Compound sentences.
- R-blends, silent/final e and comprehension work as well as review of 1-1-1 rule when adding a vowel suffix.
- Lexia motivation is in full force with getting to play Prodigy on Fridays if unit goals are met for the week. Plus, they LOVE getting certificates for moving up a level!

- 3D shapes in math!



Contact us anytime!

Mrs. Mayer & Mrs. Drummond

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Jessica.Drummond@matsuk12.us

Our second graders have been busy learners this week! We reviewed proper and common nouns, focusing on Rule 26 in Spalding, while Mrs. Kramer's group had fun exploring adjectives. Mrs. Saunders' group is continuing their work with nonfiction text features and becoming experts at spotting them in books. In math, we've been collecting and organizing data, and we're getting a sneak peek at our upcoming geometry unit. We are so proud of how hard everyone is working and can't wait for another great week ahead! Plus, we're all enjoying the fact that the days are finally getting longer!

We are looking for lunch monitors in second grade! Please let us know or sign up outside the office if you can help!

Mrs. Saunders and Mrs. Kramer

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2ND GRADE



Kile's Kittlets

LA - we continued with our study on astronomy. We have fun learning about space travel and the brave men who went up into space. Spelling list for next week went out today.

MATH- students completed fractions. We are moving on to measuring. This is always fun. Many have finished or are close to finishing their Alek pie.

Tamela Kile Tamela.Kile@matsuk12.us



Grimes Gambit

Language Arts – This week, we completed Spalding List Q and began List R—an exciting achievement! We also focused on the suffixes *-able* and *-ible*. In Core Knowledge, students read selections from *Native American Stories*, including tales about forest children and a dog trainer. Other stories they explored included a narrative about children at a corn festival, an Iroquois tale of a great bear, and an Inuit myth about how a crow brought daylight to those living in darkness.

Math – We wrapped up multiplication and division facts for 11 and 12—woohoo! Over the next few weeks, students will begin working on area, perimeter, fractions, measurement, and operations.

As always if you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

Thank you!

Mrs. Grimes Austin.Grimes@matsuk12.us



FOURTH GRADE

Benbow's Buzz

Nielsen's News:

We wrapped up our American Revolution unit with a review game of Jeopardy. The class aced their exams! Woot! Woot!

Your children are very eager to share all they have learned about our history of this time period. We are embarking on an adventure next...Treasure Island. In our reading we will focus on inferential information, as well as, predicting and story outlining. This will support our big writing project of our own adventure stories.

In grammar we focused on possessive adjectives. I have seen great growth in Spalding as the year progresses!

Reading goal: They've read 41,550 of the 77,500. Keep reading!!

Math- This week's focus has been measurement of length, mass/weight, and capacity. Students chose best units and diligently converted between units. Review of algebraic patterns is going very well.

Mrs. Nielsen
laurie.nielsen@matsuk12.us



Please make sure that your child is coming to school with appropriate gear every day! As long as there is snow on the ground, snow pants are a requirement. Hats, gloves and boots are also required.

Language Arts - We are learning so much about the American Revolution! This week we finished creating our books, but we still have some information to cover about the end of the war and the beginning of a new country. We will spend next week focusing on this information as well as practicing our cursive while writing excerpts from the Declaration of Rights and the Preamble of the Constitution. We are also down to the last two chapters of Johnny Tremain! Our Daily Language Review this week focused mainly on figurative language; we practiced identifying similes, metaphors and the use of hyperbole.

Math - Our fractions unit is complete! However, we will continue to review these topics throughout the rest of the year. We have been making sure to take time each week to review previous content, and I continue to see students struggling with basic math facts. Automatic recall of the basic multiplication facts is absolutely vital to success in fourth grade math, especially now that we have reached division, fractions and geometry. Although we will practice multiplication facts every day in class, I do encourage you to make sure that your child finds time at home every day to practice as well.

Thank you so much for spoiling me this week! I hope you all know that I definitely felt the love! What an amazing reminder of how fortunate I am to get the honor of sharing your children's lives! It is truly an honor to watch their growth throughout the year and to know that I helped them learn and experience new things!

Please reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns!
cherie.benbow@matsuk12.us

5TH GRADE

The Manley Minute:

Wow! We were *spoiled* with many treats throughout the week! *Thank* you for all of the amazing food that filled the lounge, the beautiful flowers, the coffees, and the handwritten notes. We definitely felt appreciated this week!

Also, thank you to Ms. Irina who covered my 5th grade class while I taught Intensives this week.

Language Arts: We finished our Renaissance reader this week and finished the week off with our unit test. Students also completed a Renaissance Escape Room to apply the knowledge they learned throughout the unit and a WebQuest to learn more about William Shakespeare and the Globe Theater.

Math: In math class, we are near the end of Chapter 7. Students have made hands on models to show patterns, reviewed order of operations and graphed ordered pairs. For our whole group math time, students are creating “Mathopoly” game boards with review problems over topics we have learned so far this year. Students who have their work finished for the week have the privilege of playing Mathopoly with their classmates.

Mrs. Manley Patsy.Manley@matsuk12.us

Sturgis Super Students!

Language Arts--In order to improve writing skills, we've been doing some review on the parts of speech. This week we focused on nouns, pronouns, and are beginning to review possessive nouns.

For our study of the Renaissance, the class has focused on using the text to answer questions. We've focused on analyzing the questions, then locating parts of the text that relate to the question. The final step has been to restate the question and create an answer that is written in a complete sentence. All of this is in preparation for writing a biography about one of the Renaissance artists that we have studied. We are doing some notes this week, then will really focus on our writing next week.

Math--This week we continued to work with fractions and have been practicing how to simplify and compare fractions along with converting fractions to decimals. We plan on reaching the end of this chapter on Friday and beginning the chapter on adding and subtracting fractions next week.

Mrs. Sturgis
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📣 5th Grade Recess Ambassadors in Action! 🎉

Today, two of our 5th Grade Recess Ambassadors visited kindergarten through 5th-grade classrooms to teach students how to play different games at recess! 🏃🏆⚽🎾 Their leadership and enthusiasm are making recess even more fun for everyone.

Way to go, Ambassadors! 🙌

K-5 Lab Classes

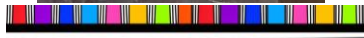


Our 3rd, 4th, and 5th-grade students have successfully completed their air-dry clay picture holders! They carefully shaped their holders and brought them to life with colorful paint.

Students are now excited about their next creative project—Art Trading Cards! These miniature artworks, measuring 2.5" x 3.5", allow them to express their creativity in a fun and shareable way. They can't wait to design, trade, and collect their unique pieces!

Next week we begin glazing!

Mrs. Saunders and Mrs. Grimes



Kindergarten, first grade and second graders have been working on stories. They worked on comprehension and retelling.

Ms. Kile



It has been a great week with Kindergarten, First and Second grades!

- Kindergarten has almost finished their books. This week they learned to dictate and record their narrations. We look forward to sharing them soon.
- First grade is finishing up their last lessons in Fundamentals Course B on Code.org. This week's lessons involved creating stand-alone events that then impacted other events.
- Second grade published their books! Open this page to find your child's link to their book. They did such an awesome job! [Click here](#)

Mrs. Nielsen



3rd grade - Exploration of North America - De Soto, Coronado and Cabot along with El Dorado and Spanish America

4th grade - American Reformation - Suffrage and Civil Rights Movements

5th grade - Civil War - Important people and review with the game, Salad Bowl

Mrs. Mayer & Mrs. Drummond



Robograzers, circuits, and systems!

This week in third grade science after learning about biomimicry in our Environments and Survival unit, the students engineered necks in imitation of giraffes, working to solve the problem of reach in an invasive ivy project.

Fourth grade built simple circuits with solar panels and various devices (including a surprising buzzer!) in exploration of energy conversion and system overload/disruption.

Fifth grade continued our Earth Systems unit by investigating the salt content of our mini-oceans and also discussed science fair proposals individually with Ms. Heppner and Mr. Nick. Projects will be turned in and presented on the day of the science fair (April 1). All papers have been sent home but are also posted on the 5th grade Google Classroom. Let us know if you have questions.

Until next time,

Ms. Heppner & Mr. Nick

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Nicholas.Treinen@matsuk12.us



Middle School Intensive Week!

Academy's Top Chef

Academy's Top Chef had a great week diving into the world of cooking and food! The amazing chef, Dan Holland, helped guide students through the cooking process throughout the entire week and orchestrated a tour of US Foods, where students learned about food distribution. Grape Tap owner Kristin Cook graciously hosted us at her restaurant and taught students about the exciting world of food science. They learned about emulsification and experimented with making salad dressings. Raquel Edelen, VP of the Captain Cook and Executive Chef Patrick, rolled out the red carpet for students at the Captain Cook Hotel. They toured all of their kitchens, learned about cooking for large groups, and picked up some cooking tips. Raquel graciously outfitted the students with their very own chef coats! To wrap up the exciting week, students selected a meal to prepare for a panel of judges. While shopping, students were given a budget for ingredients. Then, they prepped the food and learned how to present it in an aesthetically pleasing way. On Friday, they ended the week by preparing their final dishes and presenting them to our panel of judges; Dr. Trani, Stephanie Nowers, Kristin Cook, Rob Titus, and our very own Mrs. Gerard. This group of students did an amazing job! They worked hard and represented themselves and our school well. I'm so proud of each of them. A huge thank you to all the people who helped make this week truly incredible. Students are bringing home a cookbook from all the recipes they worked with this week. I encourage parents to have their students cook for them. You will be impressed!



Hunter's Quest

“The challenges we face in hunting mirror the challenges we encounter in life. Both require courage and the willingness to step outside our comfort zones.” – Jim Posewitz

This week in my Intensive course, students began their hunter's quest by working on the online portion of the **Alaska Hunter Education Course**, opening the door to safe and respectful adventures in Alaska's wild and beyond. On Tuesday, students learned the basics of **archery** at the [Screaming Eagle Archery Range](#), focusing on safety, equipment, and proper shooting technique. The final days gave students the opportunity to earn a certificate for **NRA's Basic Rifle Course** at [Matanuska Valley Sportsmen's](#) classroom and indoor range. They spent a week practicing the art of shooting, safety, and marksmanship, while building confidence as they learned how to handle firearms and bows responsibly.



Ice Fishing and Rod Building

In this installment of Intensives I chose to teach students how to build their very own fishing rods! With the ice fishing rod making the most sense due to all the lakes being frozen over. Monday, we started out by making decorative diamond wraps on the rods and in this, I saw the individuality of my students flourish with color combinations and styles of wraps. Then after the diamond wraps, we went on to tying on the individual guides on each of their rods. I explained the general premise of spacing out the guides and each student spaced them out how they felt it should look. Once they were done tying on their guides, we put the resin on the rods which takes a full day to dry and even with that wait time we had all 10 rods done by the end of the day Tuesday!

On Wednesday students got their first taste at fishing with rods that they built, and it went great! 7 fish that day and students were hooked, (yes pun intended). Thursday, we went back out and students fished hard all day but unfortunately, we did not catch any, but it was nice to see students persevere through and keep fishing waiting for the first fish that day that never came. Then today Friday we went back out and had a record breaking day! 25 fish total with one student catching 13 of them! At the end of the day today prizes were handed out for the first, biggest, most, and last fish caught. It was an amazing week, and I can't wait for the next time I teach this course.



Science of Gaming

Science of Gaming intensive: This week, students focused on games - online, board and active. They played a variety of strategy games and learned about how to create their own using both theme and mechanics. They practiced coding using Code Combat and GameMaker. We visited Beyond Adventure Gaming in Palmer and heard from owner Garland Brooks about being a gaming entrepreneur. Gaming streamer Stephen Benbow shared with students the business of streaming, how he got his start and advice for wanna-be streamers. The group visited Alaska Escape Room in Anchorage and heard from its owners the ins and outs of building an escape room before experiencing one themselves. On Friday, the group beta tested their own game creations with part of the fourth-grade class. It was a fun week!

THANK YOU for all the yummy lunches and the flowers parents provided for teacher appreciation week! I appreciate your time in blessing all of us.

Mrs. Wright



Tanned and Tooled

It has been a productive week learning all about leather working! A huge thank you to Mr. Steve Phillmore from Eagle River who has joined us each day to share his passion for leather working. We took a field trip to Diamond D Leather in Wasilla to check out their production shop and the rest of the time was in the classroom pounding away. Students were able to create many projects from start to finish using veg tan leather. They traced patterns, cut out their pieces, stamped, stained and sewed their projects to completion! Each student was extremely proud of their finished work that will last a lifetime.



Texture Painting

My classroom was an artistic sanctuary this week as we explored Texture Painting as our intensive focus. Texture Painting involves a technique of creating canvas art using simple materials and techniques. During this intensive, we explored the world of 3D texture painting by first learning to mix a versatile paste which we then applied to a canvas, thus creating a rich, textured surface. Throughout the week, students learned to craft unique, textured designs using a variety of tools, ultimately creating a beautiful, textured masterpiece of their very own! This group created some amazing pieces!

Thank you, Miss Lindsey for joining us & contributing your artistic expertise! We are so very grateful!

Thank you to the amazing 8th graders & their families for your generosity during staff appreciation week. I feel so truly blessed! Have a fantastic weekend!



That's Bad for Me?!

THAT'S Bad for Me?! was intense! Students not only learned *how* to read a Nutrition label, but also what each item means for their daily intake. Each student was required to keep a food journal which allowed them to tangibly see what they put in their bodies. We traveled to McDonald's for lunch on Monday and each student was directed to keep a portion of their lunch...which remained on the classroom windowsill the entire week. It looks exactly the same as it did when we received our orders! They also had to complete a HIIT workout *after* eating McD's to experience how that type of food impacts mobility and activity. A Huge thank you to Brandy May Goodlin for organizing that for us! Brady from Fearless Fitness shared his fitness story with us and even put us through some Posture Therapy; each student could feel the difference in seconds!

They learned through experimentation how glucose affects muscle recovery and what is best post-workout; they spoke to a dentist, Dr. Doug from Valley Pediatric Dentistry, about the effects of sugar and sugar substitutes on teeth. Winona Benson, a Certified Health and Wellness Coach, visited and spoke about "Frankenfoods" and what preservatives and additives actually do to one's body and why. We ended the week with a visit from Sheila Miller, a doctor, who spoke about food choices, how our dietary choices can influence our gut microbiome which in turn impacts mood, learning and memory. Top all of that with intense body weight exercises each afternoon and a few jump rope challenges. It was a great week!



A Heartfelt Thank You
**TO ALL OF OUR
AMAZING VOLUNTEERS!**
We couldn't do it without you!

**YEARBOOK
PHOTOS NEEDED!**

SEND ALL PHOTOS TO
ACADEMYCHARTERYEARBOOK@GMAIL.COM
OR TEXT TO 907-350-8070

**FIELD TRIPS,
CLASSROOM LIFE, ETC!**

Trinkets and Treasures

This intensive explored different types of jewelry and adornment making. We tried our hands at various techniques for creating chain mail. We learned fine Alaska Native beading techniques using indigenous materials such as porcupine quills along with seed beads. We were introduced to the techniques of stone wrapping, macrame and needle felting. We worked with various media including paper, polymer clay, and wool to create adornments. The students enjoyed creating beauty, working with their hands, and were able to sustain impressive amounts of concentration while working on various projects over a sustained period of time.



Winter Adventure Skills

We had a fantastic week in the Winter Adventure Intensive despite the lack of fluffy goodness near campus. Students worked hard every day to read, understand, and apply ideas from our textbooks: Allen & Mikes Really Cool Backcountry and also their avalanche book. We rescued each other from hypothermia, experimented with different layering of clothing, snowshoed across the Little Susitna River, broke off an avalanche block from the snowpack we had studied, used avalanche transceivers and probes to locate an avalanche victim, enjoyed downhill fun at Hatcher Pass, built snow shelters, and learned about overflow at the Matanuska riverbed. We are very thankful to our parent drivers and chaperones for getting us up to the snow in the pass and taking photos for the yearbook. I'm very thankful to be able to teach intensive classes. These are the best weeks of the schoolyear for me!

