

Siobhan Reid Advances To Regional Spelling Bee

By Amanda Lauster
AE/MS Reading Teacher

On January 16, 38 AE/MS students in grades four through eight participated in the local 2008 Scripps Spelling Bee. This was the first year that the practice words were available online. To see this year's entire list, please go to myspellit.com.

This year's runner up was sixth grader Katelyn Ashburn, who put forth a great effort but was knocked out in the 12th round. Katelyn will

compete at the next level if the winner is unable to do so.

Our AE/MS 2008 Spelling Bee Champion is eighth grader Siobhan Reid. This is Siobhan's second year in a row as champion. This year her championship round word was "relevant."

Siobhan will continue on to the regional level in Plymouth on Saturday, March 15. Good luck, Siobhan! We will be R-O-O-T-I-N-G for you.

AE/MS Teachers Help Students Become Lifelong Readers

By Susan Avis
AE/MS Reading Specialist

The Andover Elementary/Middle School faculty is working together to develop consistent teaching practices in the area of literacy and comprehension instruction.

Since studies point to teacher expertise as the critical variable in effective literacy instruction, teachers meet monthly in small groups to discuss best teaching practices based on current research. Dr. Kim Boothroyd visits the school monthly to lead discussions, conduct lessons in classrooms, and work one-on-one with classroom teachers. As a result of this professional development, teachers from kindergarten to eighth grade are using common instructional language and practices.

"Just Right" Books

Ask your student what a "just right" book is. They should tell you it is text that is not too easy, not too hard. When you read aloud from a "just right" book, your reading sounds like talking, and you only

have to slow down occasionally to fully understand it.

The more time students spend reading "just right" books, the stronger they become as readers. Teachers assist students in selecting "just right" books based on each student's personal interests and reading level.

At a recent presentation to the School Board, Jane Slayton and three Andover teachers invited the board members into a fourth grade classroom to demonstrate what reading instruction may look like in many of the classrooms. They also shared observations they have made regarding the students and staff since starting this professional development initiative in August.

As teachers develop the same instructional language, we hear students across the grades using the same terms. Students are spending a lot more time reading "just right" books. Students are more enthusiastic about reading when they get to choose their own books. Teachers are having more conversations with other teachers; they are collaborating and sharing their understandings as we all learn together to help all students become lifelong readers.



Students from Andover Elementary/Middle School who made either the Honor Roll or the High Honor Roll received a free ticket to attend the Manchester Monarchs vs. Binghamton Senators hockey game during Student Achiever Night on January 5. Among the early arrivals at the game were (l-r) Nicholas Terwilliger, Vincent Bolte, and Adrian Bolte. Other students, parents, teachers, and Andover residents were also in attendance.

The game was very exciting, ending with the Senators taking the win in an overtime shootout. The kids had a great time watching the game.

Photo: Leighton Terwilliger

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asked to allow schools to further disaggregate and understand the responses. The statements probe the conditions that affect students' aspirations and, ultimately, their personal, social, physical, and academic development.

My Voice includes statements like:

- I push myself to do better academically.
- Teachers recognize me when I try my best.
- I feel accepted for who I am at school.
- Students are supportive of each other.
- Teachers believe I can be successful.
- I work hard to reach my goals.
- My classes help me understand what is happening in my everyday life.

Students respond to the My Voice statements on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

By collecting data on how students perceive their school environment, AE/MS is provided with a powerful tool for understanding both what motivates and inspires students to achieve and

how well students believe their school is meeting those objectives. My Voice provides data that is critical for initiating innovative, meaningful reform.

Collecting data for school improvement is not a new concept for AE/MS. We try to reassess the school climate on a regular basis. In fact, it is so important that it is listed as a goal in the AE/MS Long Range Plan as part of the "Promoting a Positive Learning Climate" category.

The AE/MS Student Council will utilize survey data as part of the action plan they have designed to improve the middle school. They are looking at issues of respect and positive recognition.

The New Hampshire Department of Education, under the leadership of Commissioner Lyonel B. Tracy, is dedicated to providing a personalized education that helps New Hampshire students learn today, graduate tomorrow, and prepare for the future by supporting their personal, social, physical, and academic growth.

"Aspiration is the ability to dream about the future, while being inspired in the present to reach those dreams"
- Dr. Russell J. Quaglia

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243 East Main St, Tilton • 286-8907

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