

Abingdon Third Graders Score Above 97% in All Areas



For the second year in a row, Abingdon Elementary School students scored in the superior range on Virginia's standardized tests called Standards of Learning (SOL). Last year's results were even better than the previous year with third graders scoring 97.1% in English, 97.6% in Math, 97.4% in History, and 97.5% in Science. The previous school year (2004/05), third graders scored 95.3% in English, 97.8% in Math, 97.9% in History, and 93.3% in Science.

The SOL's for Virginia Public Schools express the state's expectations for student learning and achievement. These standards represent a broad consensus of what parents, classroom teachers, school administrators, academics, and business and community leaders believe schools should teach and students should learn. Performance on these tests is used to determine whether a school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) according to the federal No Child Left Behind Act. For the past two years, Abingdon has met all the benchmarks and made AYP.

In addition to the core subjects of English, math, social studies and science, Abingdon is unique in that it offers extra hands-on classes that help reinforce academic concepts by applying them to real-world projects. These classes – Architecture, Communications, Science Lab, and Instrumental Music – have been

added to Abingdon's curriculum by eliminating almost all early-release Wednesdays and adding approximately three

weeks of instruction time to the school year.

To find out more about Abingdon, interested parents and community members can attend one of the school's remaining official orientations: Thursday, March 8 at 12:45 PM to 2:15 PM and Thursday, April 12 at 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM. Orientations are held in the school library and begin with a slide show presentation by Principal **Joanne Uyeda** about the school and its special programs, followed by a question and answer session. Information about how to register and registration packets will be provided. Parents will also hear from a member of the Abingdon PTA as well as kindergarten teachers, who will wrap the sessions up by leading tours of the school. For more information, call the school office at (703) 228-6650.

Abingdon to Celebrate Read Across America Day

On Friday, March 9th, Abingdon will celebrate the national literacy day known as Read Across America Day. This annual event was created ten years ago by the National Education Association (a national teachers' union) to promote literacy and a love of reading. The theme is cen-

tered on beloved author/illustrator Dr. Seuss, who was born in March 2nd. Abingdon will celebrate this auspicious day on March 9. Guest readers will come to the Abingdon Library to read aloud to classes from Dr. Seuss's books as well as other notable authors' works. Invited guest readers include senior APS staff, the local NEA (known as AEA) leadership, a school board member, and our own PTA Co-Presidents.

Annual Book Fair

The annual Scholastic Book Fair will be held March 19-23 in the Abingdon Library. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Abingdon PTA and the Abingdon Library. Members of the Fairlington Community are welcome to shop at the fair on the evening of Tuesday, March 20 from 5:30-8:00 p.m.

For more information, please contact Abingdon PTA co-president Tina Masciaglioli at 703-931-7086 or tina.masc@verizon.net, or visit Abingdon Elementary on the web at: www.arlington.k12.va.us/schools/abingdon/index.html

Award-Winning Author Comes to Abingdon

Award-winning author and illustrator, Janet Morgan Stoeke, wowed children and adults from the Abingdon community on the evening of

January 18 with a lively interactive presentation. Stoeke, creator of the popular series about an adventurous

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hen called Minerva Louise, talked with the children about her writing process and how she got started as an author of children's books. (She entered a contest ten days before the deadline based on a single image from a dream: a chicken sitting on a windowsill.) After reading some of her books, accompanied by lots of giggles from the audience at the antics of Minerva Louise, she walked the children through the steps of making a story.

The children came up with three animals, and they voted to determine the best one (a lion). They also voted on names (Emmett) and special characteristics (he flies and is courageous). When Stoeke began drawing Emmett, the children were amazed to see their character come to life on the board in front of them. Stoeke then encouraged the children to come up with plot action, and drew the finale of Em-

mett bumping noses with a dragon and saying "ouch!" Children experienced first-hand the possibilities and fun of creating a story.

Stoeke rounded out her presentation by showing the audience a few of her art samples in various stages and explained her illustration style. Children asked the author questions like, "Is it hard being a writer?" and "What kind of paint do you use?"

Afterwards, hardcover editions of Stoeke's books were raffled and the author personally dedicated copies of *A Hat for Minerva Louise* for each family in attendance. Janet Morgan Stoeke is based on Northern Virginia. To find out more about the author and her books, visit <www.minervalouise.com>.

Stoeke's visit was the first of a series of four Library Nights held at Abingdon. (The second one was a mys-

tery-themed evening on February 8.) The popular literary events, which include a light dinner, free books, and bonus library check-outs, are put together by the Abingdon Literacy Team. The team is comprised of Kristy Nienstedt (Library Media Specialist), Bobbie Moyer (Lead Reading Teacher), Susanna Smith (Title I Teacher), and Carla Reissman (Title I Teacher).

If you are interested in staying updated on these and other activities at Abingdon, you can join the FANS network (Friends of Abingdon Neighborhood School). The group distributes a monthly e-newsletter and also exchanges information via an email group. To find out more, visit their Web site at <www.friendsofabingdon.org>.

Contributed by Amy Suardi and Tina Masciangioli.

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