

# IDAHO DISTANCE EDUCATION ACADEMY

Planting the seeds of tomorrow, TODAY.

September 2010

Northern Region Newsletter

Issue 2



## From Laurie Wolfe, Director of Curriculum, Boise

As September is rapidly approaching I find myself eagerly anticipating the new school year while at the same time trying to enjoy every last moment of summer. I love the long summer days, relaxed schedules, and different focus that summer offers. I also love the smell of new crayons and the promise of exciting things to be learned that a new school year offers. With summer winding down and fall looming on the horizon this is a wonderful time to prepare for the upcoming school year. There are a number of things you can do now to help ensure you have a successful school year. Planning is the most important step you can take to prepare for a successful school year.

Most of you have begun your academic planning. You have worked with your contact teacher to complete an individual learning plan for each child and you have chosen and ordered curriculum. When your curriculum arrives set aside time to review each subject, learn how the

teacher's manual is organized, determine which chapters or lessons align to state standards and develop a plan to pace your child's learning. If you ordered an I-DEA Top Pick please ask your teacher about the pacing guide that is available for that curriculum. Now is a great time to review Idaho State Content Standards so that you understand what is to be taught in each content area.

Next develop a school schedule/ routine that works for your family. One of the greatest advantages of schooling at home is that you and your child can determine the best time for learning. Establish a routine that is flexible enough to allow time for great teaching opportunities that you weren't expecting and time to meet the pacing goals you established for each content area. Have a backup plan for makeup days in case your child is sick or an emergency arises.

Do you have a good support network?  
Have you met your contact teacher

face to face? Have you met your Community Coordinator? Have you met other families who have chosen to school at home? Are you aware of the community activities and outings offered by I-DEA in your area? I-DEA has a regional calendar on the website with information about opportunities for our students and families. We encourage you to get involved in the school!

Have you developed a calendar for this school year? Did you know that you can merge the I-DEA school wide and regional calendars in to your Google e-mail account so that you are reminded about important due dates and school activities?

Taking time to plan and prepare for the upcoming school year now will ensure success later. We are excited to partner with you and your children this school year! If there are things we can do to help support you please let us know.

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### Important Dates:

September 6, 2010  
Labor Day

September 7, 2010  
School Starts

September 30, 2010  
Monthly Progress Updates Due

## Parent to Parent by Karen Ashenbrenner, Community Coordinator

Hello, new and returning I-DEA families! I am Karen Ashenbrenner a home educating parent, with two children enrolled in the school. I am also the Community Coordinator for the North Region. As Coordinator I assist and support parents with their questions, offer Info Sessions, Orientations, as well as Workshops that offer hints, tips and shortcuts that can help parents settle into I-DEA. As Coordinator, I also plan various

activities and outings for students, and serve as the Advisor to IDFY students. I am available by phone or e-mail; you can find my contact information on the web site, and within this newsletter.

I have a few quick tips for you.

The first is for you to consider looking for ways to involve your kids in the process of gearing up for the new school year. Planning and scheduling is a great

place start. Allow lots of opportunities for your kids to give their input and to share their ideas. Kids can come up with some very creative, fun ways to help them transition from lazy summer days, to energetic school days! If your kids don't want to start the day out with the most challenging subject, it can save lots of headaches and tears to allow them to give their input on the order of study. Don't be

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## Books! Books! Books! By Stephanie Childress, Contact Teacher, Post Falls

Books are an integral part of any student's education. Some parents want to have their students read, read, read. . . and there is value in volume, sometimes. In *Hamlet*, Polonius asked, "What do you read, my lord?" In all seriousness, Hamlet responded, "Words, words, words."

There is also value in being able to digest and interpret what is being read. In order to make your student's reading more meaningful than just "words, words, words," it is important to use a few literary teaching strategies.

First, have the student gather information about the book, the time period, and the author before he reads. These are pre-reading strategies.

Then, while reading, have him interact with the text. Have the

student keep a vocabulary journal of new words, write brief chapter summaries, or verbally explain to you what is happening in the book. Be sure to discuss the significance of what he is reading; in the book *Huckleberry Finn*, for example, you could discuss the river and how it symbolizes life. Use a theme from your student's book as a basis for ongoing conversation to really engage the text.

For post-reading, after the student finishes the text, have him analyze it as a whole. He can answer questions from a teacher's guide or a website, use a book report form (available on the web), or prepare a presentation.

He could watch the film version of the story or write an essay about what he learned or how it fits in with the history of the time.

MyAccess! also has excellent resources. Look in the [Resource and Training Center/ Instructional Tools / Activities for Literary Writing](#). One of my favorites is the *Elements of Literature* worksheet; it helps students to quickly analyze the work they've read and break it down into key parts. It also gives students the key vocabulary terms (setting, plot, characters, theme, style) that are used when discussing literature.



The importance of interaction with your chosen literature is nicely summarized by British historian James Bryce, "The worth of a book is to be measured by what you can carry away from it."

There is more  
treasure in  
books than  
in all the  
pirate's loot on  
Treasure  
Island.

~ Walt Disney ~

## From Melissa Johnson, Counselor

Welcome to the 2010-2011 school year.

There are many challenges to schooling at home and I have jotted a few tips to assist with your organizational strategies. For starters you may want to develop a mission statement for your home learning environment. A mission statement may convey your philosophical ideas and your educational goals, including: your schooling plans, expectations/desires and strategies, and desired outcomes and/or academic goals. This mission statement works best if all invested individuals are involved in designing the wording. You can post the mission statement in a visible loca-

tion.

Other organizational tools include:

- Begin the semester by reviewing each course syllabus and standards which will be covered through the semester.
- Create student timeline and lesson plans so students have an idea of what's ahead and how much time can be devoted to specific goals.
- Create daily learning schedule
- Have a specific area to study and maintain a whiteboard which displays projects, weekly assignments and deadlines for work completion. Students can then at a glance are aware of expectations and learn to

schedule their day accordingly.

- Create a routine and be consistent.
- Model to your kids the use of planners, list and other daily organizational methods.

At any time throughout the school year please do not hesitate to contact me for any issues you may be struggling with in regards to your children and personal/social/academic needs and skills.

Please be aware that my next newsletter section will contain information about PSAT, SAT and ACT. I will also be calling high school families in regards to college readiness.

Education is  
not filling a  
pail but the  
lighting of a  
fire.

~William Butler  
Yeats ~

## Parent to Parent by Karen Ashenbrenner, Continued from Page 1

afraid to change things up, or add little splashes of the unexpected! The more kids invest into their education, the more they will value their education.

It is important for you to be informed! By becoming familiar with the I-DEA web site, checking your I-DEA e-mail regularly, and looking over the newsletter each month will keep you up to date with news, activities and events. Outings and workshops fill up fast, please RSVP by the due date requested.

If you have questions, or need assistance I am only a phone call away. I am looking forward to another successful school year, and supporting you in your home education endeavors!

## Community Events

### POST FALLS ACTIVITIES:

September 10, 2010

#### Back To School Park Day

Park day will be at Kiwanis Park in Post Falls from 11-1pm. Bring a picnic lunch and join staff and families at this quiet little park at the end of Ross Road. The park has a play ground, covered picnic area, and sits quietly on the Spokane River.

September 21, 2010 3-5PM

#### IDFY- Idaho Drug Free Youth

This student lead organization is open to all 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students. The chapter meets the third Tuesday of each month; students plan and organize community service projects, support each other in the choice to lead a drug, tobacco and alcohol free life style.

September 21<sup>st</sup> 6:30 PM

#### Info Session/Orientation .

If you have not yet attended a session I would encourage you to attend. The details are on the calendar on the web site.

### MOSCOW/LEWISTON ACTIVITIES:

#### Beginning of the year party:

**When:** Friday, September 10th  
1-4 pm

**Where:** Hereth Park  
1534 Powers Avenue  
Lewiston, Id.

Visit with your contact teacher and other home educating families. Amy Clark will be there to do games with the kids.

#### LCSC Tennis Field Trip

**Who:** K-6

**When:** Tuesday, September 21<sup>st</sup>  
11 - noon

**Where:** LCSC Tennis Center (at the end of the cul-de-sac on the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> Ave and 4<sup>th</sup> St.  
Lewiston, Id.

**Cost:** Free

**RSVP:** 208-596-2739

### IDAHO DISTANCE EDUCATION ACADEMY

North Community  
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Getting involved in  
Community Activities  
helps students stay  
interested in

