

IDAHO DISTANCE EDUCATION ACADEMY

Planting the seeds of tomorrow, TODAY.

September 2010

Southeast Region Newsletter

Issue 2



From Laurie Wolfe, Director of Curriculum, Boise

In This Issue:

From the Director	1
Parent to Parent	1
Lesson Idea	2
From the Counselor	2
Community Events	3

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.

Important Dates:

September 6, 2010
Labor Day

September 7, 2010
School Starts

September 30, 2010
Monthly Progress
Updates Due

Parent to Parent by Karen Bartlett, Community Coordinator

Several parents have had some concerns about ordering and using the teacher edition. I understand, I wasn't really sure about using them either. In the past I have spent a lot of time planning out my lessons, using websites and other activities to make each subject complete for our school year. With the new curriculum I am using with my 6th grader this year, I need to use the teacher's edition and I thought I was going to have a lot of extra reading to do so.

Then, half heartedly, I looked through the teacher edition for science the other night. WOW! I was amazed at how much information was in this book. In addition to the lessons I already had planned, there are websites, activities, and a weekly pacing guide that also included the materials I would need. This book has ideas to help me if my son is reading below grade level, at grade level, or above grade level. I am so excited to use my teacher's editions this year. It is a lot of time and work to plan out our

school year and sometimes we miss things. This will make things a little easier and save us some time.

There is a lot great information in these teacher's books. It will be so nice to have all the extra ideas at my finger tips to work with and without a lot of preparation time. If my boys want to spend extra time on a unit this year, I will have more time to spend with them on it without having to do a lot of extra research. Using teacher editions is time, well spent.

Continued on Page 3

Books! Books! Books!

By Stephanie Childress, Contact Teacher, Post Falls

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

~ Walt Disney ~

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."



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 location.

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 a 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, be aware of expectations and learn to schedule their day accordingly.
- Create a routine and be consistent.
- Model to your kids the use of planners, lists 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 ~

Community Events

Back to School Picnic - Twin Falls

Where: Harry Barry Park
When: September 9, 2010
Time: 1:00 pm

All grades are welcome to attend. Families bring a sack lunch and a treat they would like to share. Also bring a white cotton t-shirt to tie-dye in our school colors along with a bag to put your dyed shirt in to take home. Dye will be provided. There will also be a book exchange during these picnics. Bring a book you read over the summer you would like to trade for one we have. No curriculum please.

Back to School Picnic - Blackfoot

Where: Jensen Grove Park
When: September 10, 2010
Time: 1:00 pm

All grades are welcome to attend. Families bring a sack lunch and a treat they would like to share. Also bring a white cotton t-shirt to tie-dye in our school colors along with a bag to put your dyed shirt in to take home. Dye will be provided. There will also be a book exchange during these picnics. Bring a book you read over the summer you would like to trade for one we have. No curriculum please.

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Community Events Coming Soon...

Harvest Help Days

October 13 - Idaho Falls
October 21 - Jerome
October 22 - SERC

Need help harvesting work samples for your upcoming portfolio conference? Come by our Harvest Help Day. Karen and teachers will be available to help you put together your portfolio.

I-DEA Craft Fair & Open House

November 13 - SERC

Are you looking for a special gift for the Holidays? Various vendors will be at I-DEA to help you with finding that special something. Know someone that may be interested in our school. We will be hosting an open house for anyone looking for more information about us. If you are interested in having a booth at the craft fair, please send Karen an email and she will give you the details.

Love & Logic Classes

January 12 & 26 - SERC

Back by popular demand are the Love & Logic classes. Karen will be guiding you through the ideas behind Love & Logic in several classes. These are the first two class dates, more will follow.

Getting involved in
Community Activities
helps students stay
interested in

Parent to Parent by Karen Bartlett

Continued from Page 1

Here are some tips to get started with your teacher editions (TE):

1. Start with the TE you need first (put the rest away in a closet so you aren't overwhelmed by them)
2. Plan ahead—set aside time to look over the TE weekly plans (familiarize yourself with the teacher editions and upcoming material)
3. Buy a plan book or make one yourself
4. Realize you won't have everything your teacher edition talks about (big books, leveled readers, etc.)
That's okay, just do the activities that go with the material you were able to order.
5. Use the daily planners in the books to help plan out your week. Many of the editions also have on-line planners you can use.
6. Don't skip over the Theme Launch, especially with reading. Also, don't skip the pre and post reading.
7. Make use of the on-line resources that are available.

