

VINE STREET SCHOOL

Academic Excellence *for All*



June 15, 2017

Dear Parents:

The staff of the Vine Street School and I want to thank you for a wonderful year! We have enjoyed working with your children and are enormously proud of the gains they have made. Each child is uniquely special and brings joy in his/her own way.

Summers in Maine are spectacular. They are short, so we have to take advantage of every minute! We are fortunate to live in a state with so many resources for children and their families. I am attaching a list of some ideas of fun, educational activities. I have not visited all of the places on the attached list, so I would love feedback from parents for future years. I do love going to the D.E.W. Animal Kingdom. I take my grandchildren there on my first day off every summer. They love it. We have also visited Acadia National Park and Fort Knox State Park. For older students who love cars and transportation the Owls Head Transportation Museum is impressive. This year, I am hoping to check out an aquarium as well as the free workshops for children at Home Depot and A.C. Moore.

While I enjoy the slower pace of summer, I worry about what researchers call the “summer slide”. It is a well-researched and documented fact that many children lose skills over the summer. It can take weeks or even months to review concepts with some children. This obviously has an impact on a child’s ability to grow academically. I am not asking people to do school work over the summer, but there are some easy things you can do to help your child.

1. Read every day.
 - a. Take your child to the Bangor Public Library or come to our library program here to get new books every week.
 - b. Encourage your child to read independently every day.
 - c. Choose a book to read with your child over the summer. There are many excellent books that are exciting to share. Some to consider are *Charlotte’s Web*, *Mercy Watson*, or for older students, *Dragon Rider* or *The Tale of Despereaux*.
 - d. Encourage your child to participate in the library reading challenge.
2. Write every day.
 - a. Have your child keep a journal about his/her summer experience.
 - b. Write to a friend. My email is lsilk@bangorschools.net I will write back to any student who emails me. 😊

3. Share experiences with your child.
 - a. Check out some of the places on the attached list
 - b. Experiences do not have to cost a lot of money. Take a picnic lunch to Cascade Park or check out the Bangor City/Orono Bog Walk.

4. Practice math facts.
 - a. If you like to play card games, there are many that are a great way to use math in real life situations. I am a big fan of cribbage—it develops math fluency as well as math strategies.
 - b. Get a head start on next year's facts. First and second grade work on addition and subtraction. Third grade adds multiplication and division.

5. Do some science projects
 - a. There are some crazy fun science projects for kids. Google is your best friend here or get a book of experiments from the library.
 - b. Want a sneak peek at next year's science topics?
 - i. First grade will start with a unit on sound
 - ii. Second grade will start with a unit on the effects of wind and water over time (think about how a trip to the ocean would show this!)
 - iii. Third grade will study the life cycle of a plant, electric and magnetic forces, weather and objects, and motion.

6. Play games together
 - a. Family Fun Night is one of my favorite activities. You can do puzzles or board games. Almost every board game incorporates reading, math and/or strategic thinking.

I will be in the office most of the summer. Office hours will be posted on the website and on the main door. My summer plans are to spend as much time as possible with family—on or near water whenever possible. I have several books I want to read and I will take some time to work on art projects for the classes I take in water color painting and sketching. I will also be getting ready for the next year by reading several books and articles on math and literacy instruction.

Enjoy your summer. We look forward to seeing you again at Open House on August 30th at 5:30.

Sincerely,

Lynn Silk