

# Home & School

## CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

Working Together for School Success

December 2011

Mt. Peak Elementary

K. Childers, Principal / L. Slaydon, Asst. Principal



### SHORT NOTES

#### The world is a stage

Acting out stories builds reading skills and creativity. Encourage your youngsters to put on plays for you based on their favorite books. Each child can play a different character, or one could be the narrator. Suggest that they design scenery on poster board, find props around the house, and dig up old clothes for costumes.

#### School clothes

Do you and your child disagree about what he wears to school? Try putting away clothes that aren't appropriate for the weather so he'll always know what his choices are. If he picks out an outfit that doesn't match, consider letting it go as long as it fits him and follows the school dress code.

#### Active apologies

When your youngster accidentally bumps into a classmate, she probably knows to say, "I'm sorry." Encourage her to take the apology a step further by offering her help. For instance, she might pick up books that the other student dropped.

#### Worth quoting

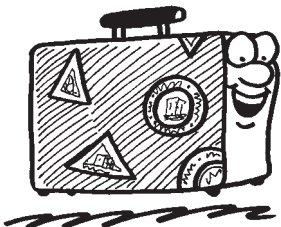
"The beginning is always today."

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

### JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** I'm full when I'm gone, and I'm empty when I'm here. What am I?

**A:** A suitcase.



## Discover the past

Your child can learn a lot by exploring the way people lived long ago. It will help him get excited about studying history and give him a fresh perspective on how we live today. Here are some ways he can look into the past.

#### Famous figures

Did someone in your youngster's history book capture his imagination? Perhaps he liked reading about Benjamin Franklin's inventions or Martin Luther King Jr.'s leadership. Encourage him to learn more by checking out a biography at the library. Often, just one person can spark interest in other famous people from history.

#### Field trips

Visit historic sites in your area, such as battlefields, homes of famous people, and monuments. For ideas, stop by your town's visitors' center or search online (try [www.waymarking.com](http://www.waymarking.com)). Your child might even find a "living history" museum or park where people play the part of historical figures or re-create daily



life by churning butter or using a washboard. Have your youngster compare these activities to his own life.

#### Local flavor

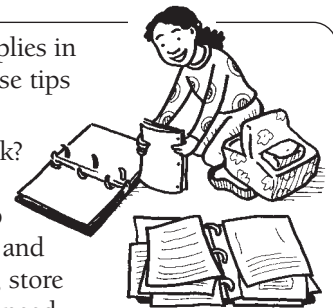
Old newspapers, photographs, and letters offer clues about what your town was like long ago. Stop by your public library's local-history section, and look through items like these with your child. Use what you see to imagine the lives of your town's early residents. You may discover clues about where they came from, how they earned a living, and what they did for fun.♥

### Clearing out clutter

Winter break is a good time to get papers and supplies in order for the second half of the school year. Share these tips with your child:

● Are papers spilling out of your youngster's backpack? It will be easier for her to find materials if she carries only what she needs each day. Suggest that she dump everything out and make three piles: "today," "later," and "never." She can put the "today" pile back in the bag, store what she wants to save, and recycle what she doesn't need.

● Help your child restock homework supplies like pencils and writing paper, and have her throw away dried-out markers and glue sticks. Let her choose a drawer or cubby (or give her a container and lid) to keep everything in one place.♥



# I wish...I will!

What will your child accomplish in 2012? Perhaps she would like to improve her grades or play basketball. No matter what she sets her sights on, here is how she can work to make it happen:

1. Talk about wishes and goals. A wish is something she would like (“I wish I could get a perfect report card”), while a goal is something that’s more specific and doable (“I will get a better grade in math”).
2. Ask her to choose a goal (raising her math grade) and draw a picture of it in the center of a paper plate. For example, she



might draw herself circling a math grade she’s proud of.

3. Help her name the steps involved in reaching her goal (make and use flash cards, find a study buddy). Have her write them around the edge of the plate.

4. As she completes a step, let her use a single-hole punch to poke a hole through its place on the plate. When every step is completed, talk about how close she is to her goal.

*Tip:* Encourage your youngster to celebrate progress toward goals and not to be discouraged by a step backward. This will help her move forward.♥

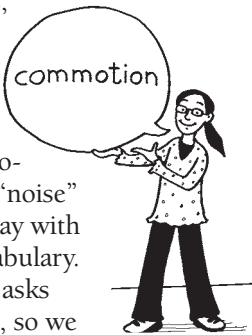
## PARENT TO PARENT



### Using a rich vocabulary

Teachers often comment that my daughter Reena has a strong vocabulary. I think it’s because my husband and I have always used “big” words around her. When she was a toddler, my father-in-law suggested that we just talk to her normally. He would simply say “engineer” instead of something like “choo-choo driver,” for example.

Over the years, I’ve kept his advice in mind. During dinner conversations, I might say “commotion” rather than “noise” or report on my day with my real work vocabulary. Reena sometimes asks what words mean, so we keep a dictionary handy.



I think our daughter’s vocabulary has been a big part of why she does well in school. It also allows her to participate in family discussions and understand more of what she reads.♥

## Q & A

### Drugs: An ongoing conversation

**Q:** When should I talk to my son about drugs?

**A:** Now—and later! You can start talking about drugs, including alcohol and cigarettes, when your child is young, and keep talking about them as he gets older.

You might bring it up by explaining that sometimes kids offer other kids beer, cigarettes, or even marijuana, and you’re wondering if anything like that has ever happened to him. Let him know that if it does, it’s important to say “no” and then tell a trusted adult right away. Assure him that this is not considered tattling, because it’s a serious situation that he doesn’t have to handle on his own.

Be sure to tell him why he shouldn’t try drugs. They are unhealthy for his mind and body, and they can be addictive—once a person starts, it’s hard to stop. That’s why the best choice is to say “no” the very first time, and every time, someone offers him any kind of drug.♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### What’s different?

With this game, players have to look closely to find the part that doesn’t match. You and your child will have fun trying to outsmart each other—and he will build observation skills that are important for science and other subjects.

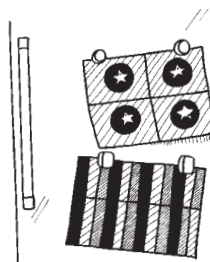
Draw lines to divide a sheet of paper into four equal squares. While your youngster isn’t looking, make an identical design in three squares. For instance, color a tiny green star in

a red circle on a blue background, and put a black dot in the top point of the stars.

Then, in the fourth square, make one small change. You might put the dot in one of the star’s bottom points, for example. How quickly can your child spot the difference? Then, turn the paper over, and

let him make designs for you so you can try to find the unique one.

Play several times, and make the drawings increasingly complicated. You might make a pattern of blue, yellow, and red stripes, but in one of the squares, have a blue and a yellow stripe trade places.♥



## OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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## ART

Hey Everyone!! Another GREAT six weeks. During the third six weeks we have painted, sculpted paper, drawn, colored, the list goes on.... Please do not forget that when your student has a singing program performance they also will have a few pieces of their artwork hanging in the main hallway. You may also see Mt. Peak artwork on my website: [http://www.midlothian-isd.net/~Stephanie\\_Coody/](http://www.midlothian-isd.net/~Stephanie_Coody/). I'm really excited about the fourth six weeks. Fifth grade will paint a ceiling tile for the school, and many of our students will begin a clay pottery project!! Have a great holiday break!



### Ms. Alexander's Class

CBI has had a wonderful six weeks!

The students have been helping to cook wonderful teacher luncheons. They enjoy going to the grocery store and purchasing the food and creating each dish, especially dessert!

The students competed in the Special Olympics Bowling tournament in Dallas. They loved showing off their bowling skills and had a lot of fun.

We will begin Special Olympics basketball practice in January.

Students have recently been turning the gym into a Winter Wonderland - going sledding, throwing snowballs, and taking sleigh rides. We've also spent some time working on our cup-stacking skills. On November 17th, we participated in the Stack Up event, helping set another Guinness Book of World Records (having the most cup-sackers stacking for at least 30 minutes on the same day).

NO T.V. Week 2011 was another huge success as hundreds of students and their families hid the remotes to enjoy time away from the television. Many kids and their parents won some fabulous prizes at our Bingo night to close out the week. Thanks to all those who participated!!!

In Health, we have been discussing topics from grooming

and personal hygiene to nutrition and the influence of media on our health. Next time your child watches their favorite TV show, ask them to show you how to do a Commercial Workout -- you'll be moving in no time!

If you want to see pictures and learn more about the PE program at Mt. Peak, visit our official website at [www.midlothian-isd.net/~william\\_probst](http://www.midlothian-isd.net/~william_probst).



## CHECK IT OUT.....

November and December were great months--we had Field of Readers, a visiting author for Grades 4 & 5, Polar Express Day and the Mt. Peak Library had over 50 people volunteer to help! I can't get more fortunate than that!

January will bring The Six Flags Read to Succeed Program. Students are encouraged to read for 6 hours during the months of January and February. Student reading logs will go home after our Read-In the New Year Event on January 10th. If you need additional reading logs, please send your student to the library for an extra form or use a regular sheet of paper.

3rd, 4th and 5th Grade Readers have only a few more days to read their five Bluebonnet Books in order to vote at the end of January.

# IMAGINE

Third grade Imagine students are stretching their thinking by studying inventors. Students were encouraged to research, write, direct and record their own podcasts about an inventor. These podcasts have been highlighted in the campus daily announcements. Students were excited to hear their podcasts highlighted. Students have also been working on patterns, extending patterns, and algebra-related games. Fun interactive websites have reinforced these math skills. Please check out

[www.mathplayground.com/functionmachine.html](http://www.mathplayground.com/functionmachine.html) and [www.mathwire.com/games/algebragames.html](http://www.mathwire.com/games/algebragames.html).

Language arts skills have also been challenged by integrating technology. A website called: [www.wordle.com](http://www.wordle.com) was used to arrange vocabulary words, synonyms and antonyms in interesting arrangements. Third graders also took a field trip to Mainstay Farms in Burleson. After learning all about pumpkins, students were given a pumpkin to take home. Students were challenged to complete several investigative activities using measurement and weight with their pumpkins.

## Mrs. Howard's Class

It has been a terrific 3rd six weeks. Reading classes have been reading stories from various genres. According to a class poll, humorous fiction is our favorite type of story. Language Arts classes have been writing thank you letters to family and expository stories about person experiences. Math classes continue to tackle multiplication and division as well as working on measurement.

## ESL

Kindergarten ESL students read and learned about different methods of transportation. They read fantasy and informational nonfiction books about transportation. First grade ESL students read about and discussed ways that families and neighbors help each other. They read [The Three Gruffs](#) and learned that the plot is what happens in a story. Second grade ESL students read informational nonfiction selections and identified the main idea and details. They also learned about suffixes.

# MUSIC

What a great first semester! Before music plans for this new "2012" year begin to unfold, I would like to thank the wonderful students, families, and faculty members for the fabulous Fall and Christmas music programs enjoyed at Mt. Peak. The "Fine Arts Spectaculars" by 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, as well as the Mt. Peak City Choir Christmas performances, were each a fabulous success. No doubt, the Mt. Peak students are extremely talented and truly dedicated. [Salute to the these awesome singers!](#) My deepest thanks also goes to the many volunteer moms, dads, grandparents, and guardians who have given countless hours of their time and talents towards decorating the gym and stage for programs, as well as, preparing the programs for parents' memory books.

The dates for the [spring](#) "Fine Arts Spectacular" evenings are as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> Gr. --February 16<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) 6:30 P.M.--Patriotic Review

2<sup>nd</sup> Gr.-- April 12<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) 6:30 P.M. --Animal Theme

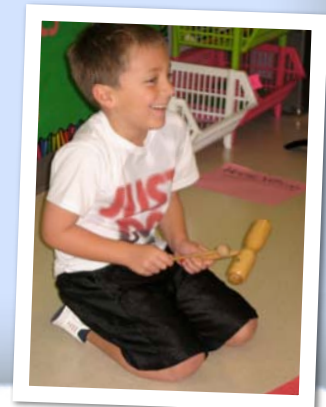
Kinder--May 17<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) 6:30 P.M. --Beach Theme

The Mt. Peak Spring Choir will begin rehearsals. Any 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grader with grades of [E and S](#) in both [academics and citizenship](#) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> six weeks report card can sign up. Also, a sincere desire to sing and work hard is a must for any 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grader to truly enjoy spring choir. [The Mt. Peak Spring Choir will perform May 10th at "Alley Cats" in Arlington and May 21st at the "MISD Showcase Night"](#).

I know the programs by 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Kindergarten, as well as the Mt. Peak Spring Choir, will be just as outstanding as the fall programs. Any parents, grandparents and guardians interested in helping with grade level programs or the choir can contact Ms. Newman or complete the volunteer note soon to be sent home.

My sincerest [THANKS](#) again to the many volunteers who have so graciously given of their time and talents to the beautiful music programs this past year.

Mt. Peak students and families are TOPS!



# Pre-K & PPCD

In Pre-K we have learned so much about our community. We had 2 Midlothian police officers visit our room with a K9 dog. We saw the dog sniff out drugs and we got to sit in their police car. We also visited Midlothian Fire Station #3. We tried on the firemen's suits, we sat in the fire truck and we toured the station. We are learning to identify words that begin with the same sound, we are working with solid shapes and we had a grocery store in our Pretend Center. We are making groups of 5, we are discussing foods that come from a farm and we had a wonderful Thanksgiving feast. We each brought a food to share that began with the same letter as our name. We had a wild assortment of treats from "A"pple tarts to "Z"ebra cakes--Yummy.



# Kindergarten

We are beginning to take off in Kindergarten as we begin to use the skills that we have learned up until this point. We are going to be writing in our journals for longer periods of time each day while we learn how to write more developed sentences. We are getting ready to learn about winter weather and the appropriate clothing that should be worn at this time of year as well as bears and other animals that hibernate in the winter. We are also looking forward to celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school with various activities that allow us to practice counting to 100.

Thank you so much for sharing your precious children with us. We look forward to the second semester and being able to watch them blossom into future first graders.



# First Grade

First grade has been very busy this six weeks beginning with exploring the beautiful season of Fall and pumpkins. We had a class pumpkin that we named, measured, and even put in a bucket of water to see if it would sink or float. After cutting it open we tasted its seeds! What fun we had! In our study of Native Americans we learned about the many tribes that settled in North America. We learned about their customs and the many ways they used the buffalo. We even made a class totem pole! In celebration of Thanksgiving we had a day on the Mayflower where we experienced first hand how a Pilgrim child survived the rough journey. We ended our unit with a wonderful Thanksgiving Play with the cutest Pilgrims, Indians and Turkey ever seen!

December brought our students favorite... The Gingerbread unit. We read and compared our favorite Gingerbread Stories and even made a Gingerbread House! Our first graders love to travel around the world in our "Holidays Around the World." We visited China, Israel, Sweden, Mexico and America learning how each country celebrates the Holidays.

We have been really boosting our math skills in first grade. We have been working hard on our addition and subtraction facts, skip counting, measurement, money and reading graphs just to name a few. Our reading and writing skills are improving daily. We are learning so many skills to help us understand what we are reading and how to express thoughts on paper. Our first graders are awesome and ready to ring in 2012 with a bang!

## 3rd Grade

The third six-weeks has been very exciting in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. We began by experimenting and exploring the scientific method. Students were given the opportunity to use hands on science equipment such as beakers and safety glasses to come to a conclusion and solve a problem.

The following week students learned about natural resources and carried that over into learning how the Native Americans used those natural resources. Second graders discovered some interesting facts about various tribes and how they lived in this country. Students also learned about the Pilgrims and how we should be thankful that Squanto showed them how to survive in the new world.

After Thanksgiving, second grade students discovered the 3 states of matter, including their properties and all about mass and volume. We wrapped up the matter unit with an exciting Oobleck experiment.

In math, students learned how to count money, including half-dollars. Second graders also learned how to add and subtract two-digit numbers with and without regrouping.

Thank you to all of our parents for your continued support.

## 5th Grade

The 3<sup>rd</sup> six weeks in Reading/Language Arts has been full of reading a variety of genres and doing a lot of in-depth, critical thinking. We've worked on reading skills such as: drawing conclusions, predicting, main idea & supporting details and author's purpose. In Language, we have worked with quotations, complex sentences and editing.

We started the big poetry project just before Christmas. The students are reading poetry daily in class, learning several different forms of poetry and writing their own poems. This project will be typed in Word, illustrated by the students, and bound into a book. Be looking for more information to come home or be placed on homework online in the future.

In math our focus has been fractions. Students changed mixed numbers to improper fractions, found equivalent fractions and learned how to simplify a fraction. We continue to use our journal and add important information. It continues to be a resource for everything we do in math. We ended by taking our 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> six weeks benchmark. Have a great break and Happy New Year!

During the third six weeks of Social Studies students continued our study of the American Revolutionary War. We discussed the importance of colonial leaders not believing in "taxation without representation" and how this lead to protests and battles. 5<sup>th</sup> graders mapped out all 23 Revolutionary Battles and learned of the importance of such battles as Lexington and Concord, the Battle of Bunker Hill, and our victory in Yorktown. There were many influential people involved in the Revolutionary War such as George Washington.

To end the six weeks we are taking a close look at our United States Government discussing why the Founding Fathers created a government with 3 branches that have separate powers.

Physical Science has been our topic this six weeks. We have learned about forms of energy, forces and simple machines. Students are making posters with examples of simple machines and starting to notice just how many simple machines we use each day if they just "look"! Soon we will be beginning our study of Earth Science.

## 4th Grade

Mt. Peak's marvelous 4th graders have successfully wrapped up another Six Weeks! The work is getting more challenging and the rigor of our assignments is getting more strenuous. Your children are up to the challenge, however, and we're confident that they will continue to live up to our expectations.

We're delighted that Mrs. Burke has returned to the classroom from her maternity leave! Welcome back, Mrs. Burke! In reading, we've been focusing on the fantasy genre. Our choices for literature have been an attempt to introduce the students to this exciting form of writing. Please remember that the Bluebonnet book voting is in January and your child needs to have read 5 Bluebonnet books in order to vote.

In math, the students are continuing to polish up their multiplication skills. Please continue to encourage your student to practice these on their own. Fractions and decimals (and the relationship between the two) are a big focus this Six Weeks. There are many examples of fractions and decimals in real life; whenever possible, please make it a point to show your student how you use fractions and decimals in your daily routine.

In science this Six Weeks, your child was introduced to the concept of energy and how it functions. They were also shown how electrical currents flow and used this knowledge to show the relationship between science and math.

In social studies, the students have been learning about the early explorers to Texas and the United States. These brave men shaped the history of Texas in many ways; the students seem to really be enjoying their study of the explorers.

We appreciate your continued support of our teaching and your student's learning. Together we can work to create confident 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at Mt. Peak.