

The Pony Express

November 28, 2007

Rita Ashley, Principal

Tara Sublette, Vice Principal

Elizabeth Smith
ELEMENTARY



Principal's News

Stallions,
Now we are approaching the third six weeks of school and our staff is in high gear to provide our students with meaningful instruction. We now have many tutoring sessions for students including before school, during the school day, and after school. Each morning 3rd grade students are allowed to complete 10 minutes of Fastt Math in the computer lab with me. I normally average 60 students per day. Other students are allowed to complete their ten minutes of Fastt Math on the computers in the classroom. My vision is for every student to use the program every day for 10 minutes. Thanks again to our PTA for their generous contribution to make this program possible for all students at Smith Elementary. Parents can help at home by having students practice math facts, read every night, complete a journal entry each day, or assist with measurement during cooking or building projects. The more real life experiences we can give our students, the better problem solvers they will become as adults. I am also pleased to announce that Smith Elementary received a grant from the Education Foundation in the

amount of \$4199.96. The funds received will be used to purchase literature related to math, materials from Motivational Math that incorporates vocabulary and problem solving activities, and math centers with activities for "hands on" instruction. These materials will be placed in the Math Lab. The funds will become available in late December.

We are refining our procedures to make sure we are time efficient, and our students are always safe. When performances are added to the awards assembly, time becomes a factor. One change we want to implement will affect our Awards program dismissal. In the past we have given the parents the opportunity to hug children before the class leaves the cafeteria. During this window of time student management becomes questionable. At our next assembly the classes will be dismissed in the line with their teacher. After all the students exit the cafeteria, parents will be allowed to leave, as well as, enter for the next assembly. We look forward to celebrating our students' accomplishments at our next Awards assembly on November 29th and 30th.

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Award Assemblies

November 29th

8:15 1st grade

9:00 2nd grade

November 30th

8:15 3rd grade

9:00 4th grade

Vice Principal's News

Attendance

School begins at 8:00am and ends at 3:15pm. Students are allowed to enter the classrooms as early as 7:30am. Please do not drop your children off before 7:30am. Teachers are not on duty until that time. Students are considered tardy after the 8:00am bell rings.

Wanted: Box Tops

Please collect Box Tops and turn them in at the school.

Homework Tips

Helping children develop good study habits is a vital part of any parent's job.

1. Find a quiet area for your child to work.
2. Find a consistent time.
3. Have all the necessary supplies ready for use.
4. Encourage and praise your child's efforts!

Kindergarten News

We are having a fantastic time in Kindergarten! We have many new things to learn and explore in our third six weeks of school. When we get back from the Thanksgiving break, we will begin our Holiday ABC's book and will be very busy making it look wonderful for all our families to see. In Math, we will be working on separating whole objects into equal parts and measuring and comparing and ordering. We will also be continuing with our Reading groups and our

writing workshop. Also, please keep working on our sight words for this six weeks: big, do, will, with, so, what, did, not, in, out, are, up. In addition, to all the fun and exciting things we have going on, we will have Polar Express Day on December 18th. There will be more information to follow. Keep up all of the good work. We appreciate all that our families do for the classrooms and students.

First Grade News

This is a busy time for first graders! We have learned many things about Pilgrims, and how the Native Americans helped them reach the New World. The students did an awesome job on their Native American homes. The presentations they gave in front of the class were impressive! December will be just as exciting as we learn how the different cultures celebrate Christmas through our unit "Christmas Around the World."

Last, but not least, we will have fun on the "Polar Express" as we get ready to break for the holidays. Keep reading, first graders!

Second Grade News

The Mail Must Get Through!
The next stop? The Pony Express! The 2nd grade students will be learning about the history of communication. During the unit, the students will read a historical fiction piece on the Pony Express. Using technology, they will create a communication time-line, starting with the telegraph and ending with e-mail. The students will then be asked to create their own life time-line.

What's the Matter?
Starting in January, the 2nd graders will be examining solids, liquids, and gases to learn about the attributes of each type of matter. We will also find the mass of different solids, liquids, and even gases. Another topic in this unit is the water cycle. When you meet a 2nd grader, ask him or her to sing our water cycle song. In our exploration of water, we learn how molecules bond together, how ice reacts to salt, and how pennies can be added to a full cup of water without spilling.

Third Grade News

Third grade is celebrating the start of winter with wishes of snowflake groups in multiplication and division. We are practicing our multiplication facts and working on our fast facts all through the blustery season to keep us warm! In Language Arts, we are using our "voice" in writing narratives and great holiday stories. Reading is a blast as we breeze through our holiday novels and find the main idea and summary of the stories our small groups share. Social Studies is filled with famously jolly people in our study of biographies. During our Wax Museum

Day we will be dressing up as a famous person from a biography we have read. Look for more information to come on this fun-filled event! Science is a blast with the Scientific Method and experiments that teach us the processes scientists go through when they are doing research. Be sure to ask a third grade student about all the really "cool" things they are learning this winter in their classrooms!

Fourth Grade News

Fourth graders are very busy this time of year. We had pumpkin surgery in October. Students used the Scientific Method to predict and discover the number of seeds in each pumpkin. The students then made graphs about their findings. In November, students wrote stories about the Turkey that didn't want to be eaten. Many turkeys disguised themselves as the chef, himself.

In Math students are learning to divide. You will hear

us all singing "Divide, Multiply, Subtract, and Bringdown". We are all eagerly waiting to find out who stole the Krabby Patty recipe on Mysterious Lane. In Social Studies we learned about the Native Americans of Texas. Texas is a Caddo word that means "friendship".

Students look forward to all the Holiday celebrations. We will be having a holiday party in December.

Happy Holidays!

Librarian's Lore

We have been very busy in the library this year. The lower grades are learning all about titles, authors, and illustrators, while the upper grades have had some of the Bluebonnet nominees read to them so they can be eligible to vote for their favorite Bluebonnet book in January.

Pre-K and K students will begin checking out books soon, while all other grades have quickly learned how to check out their books by typing in their student ID numbers (lunch numbers) and scanning the book's bar code. The upper grades are becoming quite good at using the computers to look up and find books that are of interest to them. Everyone seems to enjoy being independent library patrons. By the way, our library uses the same

system as the public library, so feel free to visit if you have not already done so.

Our Reading Counts program is up and running. You may have noticed your child wearing a necklace with a charm (an open book, bookworm, or star). The chain is given to all the students upon earning their first charm and additional charms can be earned throughout the year/s. The students work hard to read books and take quizzes on them. Once they have accumulated a certain number of points from the quizzes, they earn charms. If you are unaware of any of this, come by the library to learn more about it or ask your child's teacher.

It's been a great year so far, and I look forward to the rest of the year. Keep on reading, everyone!

From the Nurse

It is sometimes hard to decide whether to send your child to school when he or she doesn't feel well. It is seldom a convenient situation; often work schedules, child care arrangements, and transportation factor into the decision.

E. Smith feels very strongly that good attendance is important to your child's success at school. Students must be here to learn. There are **also** some important health reasons to keep your child at home. Here are some of them: fever of 100, vomiting or diarrhea, red eyes that include drainage and crusting, a rash that includes drainage or pus, or strep throat. These students should stay home until they are free of symptoms for 24 hours. Students who are sick will heal better and faster when they have proper rest at home, with lots of fluids for hydration and healthy nutrition. Please feel free to contact the clinic for any health information.

Medication Administration at School

Please do not send medication to school in plastic bags or unmarked bottles for the student to self medicate at lunch or any time during the school day. No medication can be given at school by a student. No medication can be given at school without a parent's handwritten permission.

Please provide handwritten permission along with the medication in a correctly labeled container for administration at school. There are forms in the clinic, as well as, online on the Health Services link at www.mansfieldisd.org. Prescriptive medications must also have a physician's signature.

Please be mindful of the district's policy in regard to this matter. The safety of all students is the number one priority. Medications that do not follow policy will be confiscated from the student and available for parent pick up in the clinic.

“Sporty” Stallion Stats

This six weeks in Kindergarten and 1st grade, we will continue to work on a variety of motor skills, as well as, cooperative games and parachute games. In 2nd through 4th grade, we will be working on our basketball skills and hula hoop skills. We will also be playing some parachute games. We will be holding Stallion Stackers Demo Team tryouts for 1st through 4th grade in December. There will be more detailed information sent home soon. For information on a personalized eating plan and physical activity

plan, check out the website www.MyPyramid.gov. We also had 537 stackers who helped us break the Guinness World Record for the “Most People Sport Stacking in Multiple Locations in One Day”. Thanks to all the parents and family members who joined us to help make that happen!! We had a great time!

Sincerely,
Coach Cain, along with Coach Gowins and Coach Grant
Physical Education

Musical Notes

Congratulations to the ESE Kindergarten students! They performed a square dance on Monday, November 19th for the PTA, family, and friends. Their program was a huge success. Way to go!!!

Important Dates

Friday, November 30th 3rd grade will perform at their Awards Assembly.

Saturday, December 1st Choir will perform at the Mansfield Activity Center at 12:30 pm.

Thursday, December 13th Choir will perform “A Penguin Christmas” at 6 pm in the ESE Cafeteria.

Friday, December 14th Choir performs “A Penguin Christmas” at 9 am at the ESE Cafeteria.

Shawntee’ Cowan
Music Teacher

From the PTA President

Happy Holidays to all!!

The PTA has been very busy the last 6 weeks. We had the most successful Fall Festival ever! Thanks to everyone for their support and to Anne Vazquez, who was the Chairperson of the event. Congrats to Natasha Melton for winning the Wii raffle!!

Also, we had a record number of Dads sharing Donuts with their children on November 20th. Congrats to Jackie Garth for being our Volunteer of the Month for November!

Our Holiday Shoppe will be open from December 10-14 for the children to purchase inexpensive gifts for people on their list.

Please let me know if you did not receive your Spiritwear or Directory (if you are a PTA member).

Lori Marquardt PTA President
lorimarq@sbcbglobal.net

From the Sketch Pad

December in the Art room will be full of chilly scenes of cool colors, portraits, and how artists show feelings in their work. Students will show landscapes of glittering snow while learning about the animals of the Artic. Art students will learn about Pablo Picasso, and how certain colors can be used to communicate different moods to the viewer. We will also create exciting night skies lit up with fireworks for the new year!

Debra Clarke
Art Teacher

Getting Geared Up For Reading

Listed below are tips in finding the MAIN IDEA!

The main idea of the text is what the text is mostly about. Sometimes the writer tells you the main idea directly. Sometimes the writer suggests the main idea from information given in the text, and you must put it together. The main idea is what the author wants you to remember after reading.

First Read the Book

Then *what is the story about?

Include-

1. Who is the story about?
2. What happens to the main character?
3. When does it happen?
4. Where does it happen?
5. Why does it happen?

Have fun finding the main idea of the story.

Cordelia Thompson
Reading Specialist