

# SIXTH GRADE SENTINEL

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FIRST QUARTER, 2003-2004

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### **Language Arts with Mrs. Laughlin**

The first quarter has come to an end, but many new adventures in language arts still await the sixth graders. We have been busy laying the foundation for future writing assignments. We began with sentence structure and subject and predicate identification. Then we studied nouns with the inclusion of some new material: collective and possessive forms. We are currently engaged in the analysis and proper use of verbs. Our next challenge will be the introduction of progressive and perfect tenses, followed by prepositions and adjectives.

We spent some time in the broadcast studio this quarter. Each student presented a commercial for a novel of his/her choice. Everyone also received an introduction to the operation of the studio equipment. Various jobs were assigned, and instructions were provided for cameras, mixer, lights, audio, and stage directions. Excitement was high, and I am currently planning another project requiring the use of the

Quintanilla Perez, to name a few. Our next genre will be mystery, followed by historical fiction, nonfiction and perhaps travel.

Our new reading series is proving to be both interesting and challenging. The stories read thus far have been realistic fiction which has a special appeal to our new middle school students. The vocabulary is rich but very usable, and the activities are quite varied. I will supply additional information and personal comments as the year progresses.

Finally, I look forward to working with your sons and daughters during the next three quarters. We can anticipate continued hard work and new challenges coupled with fun, excitement and ongoing personal growth. Thank you for sharing them with me!

### **Mr. Koenig and Mrs. Kabat: Nature Center Update**

We had three great days for the Nature Center this year. The students first learned about seed dispersal. They then went out into the field to collect as many different kinds of seeds as possible. They then divided them into the four different types of dispersal. They had to use observations to determine which was which. Each group was assigned a prairie plant and a map to find it. They went out to the prairie and collected the seeds. This year's group collected large amounts of seed. The seeds will be used next spring after we burn the prairie to make new sections of quality tall grass prairie.

Brook. Their work showed that an owl could not live there because of a limited food supply. The Nature Center is a raptor recovery center. One of the staff members brought out a live Great Horned Owl and she talked about these remarkable birds.

Mrs. Kabat and Mr. Koenig would like to thank again all the parents who were able to come out and help us.

### Mr. Behrendt's First Quarter Math Report

Our sixth graders have had a strong start to their school year during this first quarter. The advanced class has learned early algebra skills, which they will apply throughout the year. After a short unit on problem-solving strategies, they completed a review of decimal basics and operations. This group of students began the new quarter studying the display and analysis of information by reviewing previously learned graphs and tables, and they will be learning a few new methods, as well. The rest of the second quarter will focus on more problem-solving strategies, a unit on number theory (the foundation of understanding number), and an introduction to integers.

Our other three math classes have finished their unit on statistics, data display, and data analysis, and have begun their study of number theory. I believe that this is the most important

After this unit, we will spend most of the rest of the quarter working with decimal numbers and problem-solving strategies.

For the past five weeks, Mrs. Jennifer Meadows, a student teacher from Roosevelt University, has been working with our sixth graders in math class. Tomorrow will be her last day at Peacock. As she moves on to continue her work toward her Masters Degree in Education, we wish her well. She has worked hard to succeed and has shown great instincts working with your children. I know she will be an excellent teacher wherever she finds her first teaching job. Congratulations, Mrs. Meadows, and good luck!

Finally, I'd like to leave you with a resource for those times when your children are struggling with a skill or idea in math, and you are wondering how to help. The Math Forum at Drexel University has a tremendous web site, [www.mathforum.org](http://www.mathforum.org). From the home page, click on "Ask Dr. Math". There is long list of topics students have asked about over the years. Chances are good that you'll find some help there.

I look forward to meeting you at next month's conferences.