



Parent
LAKE ORION COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
TEACHING AND LEARNING NEWSLETTER
2017/2018 ~ March—April



Message from Heidi...

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Happy Spring! It is exciting that spring is finally here, now we just need the weather to go with it. 🌸🌸🌸🌸🌸🌸🌸🌸

As the fourth quarter draws near, there is still a lot to learn and a lot to teach. We also have state testing that will be taking place after spring break.

Please take a few minutes to read this Parent Teaching and Learning Newsletter which also contains several parent resources.

I wish you a fun and safe spring break.

Heidi Mercer
Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

INDEX

Spring Assessment Info.	2
ELA Department	3
Elementary Math	4
Secondary Math	5
Science Department	6
Educational Technology	7
Special Education Dept.	8
English Learner Dept.	9

**DRAGON
COUNTRY**



**PARENT
UNIVERSITY**

Seeking parent input on Parent University topics for the 2018-2019 school year. Please email Kerri Anderson, Director of Curriculum, at kerri.anderson@lok12.org with any event topics you would like the district to potentially host an evening event on in the next school year. All topic submissions are due no later than May 1, 2018.

ELA Department News

Kelly Day, Kate DiMeo, and Kevin Kast

6th Grade Launches Non-Fiction Book Clubs



6th graders in Becky Allen, Kevin Kast and Colleen McGran's classroom launched a new unit earlier this semester. In this unit, students take the book club skills developed in fiction units in elementary school and apply those skills to narrative nonfiction. Students are grouped by interest and level band, reading 1-3 nonfiction novels in two weeks. After they read a novel, the unit launches into research groups on nonfiction topics such as space, the Titanic and GMOs. The unit finishes with a study of social issues and how teens can make change in the world. This unit is one the TCRWP (Lucy Calkins) reading units that will be phased into middle school over the next three years.



From Our Bookshelf to Yours . . .



Charlie is Big and The Tooth Hairy

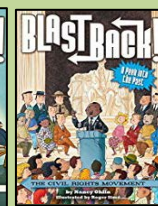
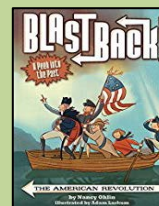
Levels A-H

Meet Charlie and Fluffy! These charming new leveled book characters are available through Blueberryhillbooks.com. Many titles from this company are on the national reading recovery list.

Blast Back! Books, by Nancy Ohlin

Levels NOPQ

Nancy Ohlin is masterful at matching low readability with high interest nonfiction topics. The content of the books brings the reading level up, but the text is very accessible with the right support to a reader as low as level M. It has been a great ramp for older readers with low reading levels.



Heroes in Training By Joan Holub & Suzanne Williams

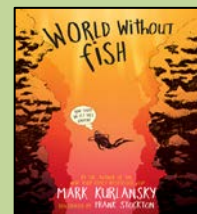
Level NOPQ

Meet Zeus and the other Olympian heroes as kids! This is perfect for kids who will read Rick Riordan next. With over 12 books in the series so far, this is a great option for Greek mythology lovers.



World Without Fish By Mark Kurlansky

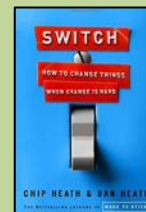
Fish are often small and overlooked, but fish are vital to Earth's existence. Author Mark Kurlansky explores in his book, *World Without Fish* what could happen to Earth if fish no longer exist. While raising the alarm, Kurlansky also gives key things that each of us can do to help restore our ocean planet.



Switch

By Chip Heath & Dan Heath

According to psychologists, our minds have two different systems – a rational mind and an emotional mind. In order to make change happen (whether it is in our own lives, in society, etc.), we must tap into both of those systems. Chip and Dan Heath explore this idea and present very logical scenarios and tips for how to make successfully make change so that it sticks.





ELEMENTARY MATH DEPARTMENT

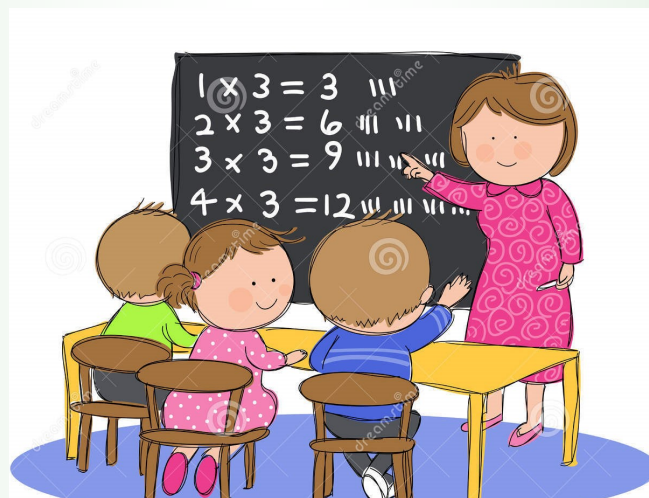
Emiliy Schiff

How Students Should be Taught Mathematics: What should my child's math class look like?

Jo Boaler, Professor of Mathematics Education, Stanford University

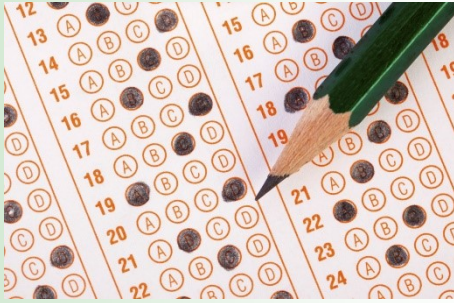
Mathematics classrooms should be places where students:

- Develop an inquiry relationship with mathematics, approaching math with curiosity, courage, confidence & intuition.
- Talk to each other and the teachers about ideas – Why did I choose this method? Does it work with other cases?
- How is the method similar or different to methods other people used? Work on mathematics tasks that can be solved in different ways and/or with different solutions.
- Work on mathematics tasks with a low entry point but a very high ceiling – so that students are constantly challenged and working at the highest and most appropriate level for them.
- Work on mathematics tasks that are complex, involve more than one method or area of mathematics, and that often, but not always, represent real world problems and applications.
- Are given growth mindset messages at all times, through the ways they are grouped together, the tasks they work on, the messages they hear, and the assessment and grading.
- Are assessed formatively – to inform learning – not summatively to give a rank with their peers.
- Students should regularly receive diagnostic feedback on their work, instead of grades or scores.
- Summative assessments are best used at the end of courses.
- Mathematics classrooms should be places where students believe: Everyone can do well in math.
- Mathematics problems can be solved with many different insights and methods.
- Mistakes are valuable, they encourage brain growth and learning.
- Mathematics will help them in their lives, not because they will see the same types of problems in the real world, but because they are learning to think quantitatively and abstractly and developing an inquiry relationship with math.



SECONDARY MATH DEPARTMENT

Missy Butki



SPRING Into Testing

Parent Tips: How to Help Your Child Prepare for Standardized Tests.

While many students and parents (and teachers) are looking forward to a much-needed Spring Break, students will be faced with a standardized test when they return to school. These tests are crucial not only to you and your child, but also to the teachers, administrators, and the school your child attends.

Students may feel the pressure of performing well on these tests, especially the SAT, which is now the assessment that juniors take and is considered in college applications. The following test-taking tips are suggestions to assist your child to perform well on the day of the test.

Before the Test

- Know the test your student is taking. What is the name of it? When are they taking it? Is it timed or not timed? Talk about the assessment with your child. It's helpful for your child to understand why schools give standardized tests and why it is important to try your best.
- Are there practice tests? The PSAT and SAT have practice tests through the College Board website (www.collegeboard.org). Create an account or log into an existing account to utilize the practice and partnership with Khan Academy. If you do not have access to a computer, your child's school can hand out copies of practice tests for PSAT and SAT.
- Ensure that your child gets a decent amount of sleep the night before the assessment and a good breakfast the morning of the assessment. Not having these essentials can cause them to lose focus.
- Make sure your child dresses in comfortable clothing. Students will need to sit for a long period of time and it's important that clothes are comfortable. Also, be prepared that the room may be warm or cold, plan accordingly. You may even consider laying these clothes out the night before.
- Get your child to school on time the day of the assessment. You may need to give yourself extra time to get to school that morning. Getting them there late will throw off their routine and add stress as the test begins.
- Make sure your child is prepared with supplies. Some schools will provide the tools needed such as pencils and calculators. If your child has a particular pencil/pen they prefer, make sure that it is packed and a backup is packed in case it runs out of ink or the pencil breaks.

After the Test

- Know when the results will be shared with you and your child. This varies from test to test, but check with your child's teacher or school administrator for this answer. If you have created an account with College Board, your student will receive their PSAT or SAT results prior to the school receiving the results.
- When you get the results, review them with your child. Find out if the assessment can be taken again. If so, when are those opportunities and how can they better prepare?

On Test Day

- Make the morning of the assessment a pleasant one. Do not add to your child's stress. Do not argue or bring up a touchy subject. Try to do extra things to make them laugh, smile, and relax.

Resources

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/parent-tips-how-help-your-child-prepare-standardized-tests>

<http://www.metrofamilymagazine.com/April-2013/Advice-to-Help-Children-Prepare-for-Standardized-Tests/>

<https://www.thoughtco.com/essential-standardized-test-taking-tips-for-parents-3194598>

SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Jamie Kimber



TIPS FOR BUSY PARENTS—NSTA

Do you panic when your child comes home from school asking for help with his or her science fair project? Do you ever wonder how you can help your child learn science? You are not alone. Many parents—especially those who didn't pursue careers in science—may be apprehensive, sometimes even fearful, about this endeavor.

We commend you for your desire to help guide and support your children in their education, specifically in the field of science. Science is a way of understanding the world, a perspective, and a pattern of thinking that begins in the very early years. That is why parent involvement is so important in a child's science education.

Families who explore together nurture great young scientists! Studies show that the family experiences that students bring to school are some of the biggest predictors of success (Hazen and Trefil 1991). With this in mind, the National Science Teachers Association has created a set of resources for parents—[Help Your Child Explore Science](#).

Here are some additional tips:

See science everywhere. Parents can take opportunities to ask "What would happen if ...?" questions or present brainteasers to encourage children to be inquisitive and seek out answers. Children need to know that science isn't just a subject, but it is a way of understanding the world around us.

Lead family discussions on science-related topics. Dinnertime might be an ideal time for your family to have discussions about news stories that are science based, like space shuttle missions, severe weather conditions, or new medical breakthroughs. Over time, children will develop a better understanding of science and how it affects many facets of our lives. Movies and TV shows with science-related storylines are also great topics for discussion. *For example:* After watching *Jurassic Park*, you might want to discuss with your children the significance of the name of the movie or how human involvement in natural processes can cause drastic consequences.

Encourage girls and boys equally. Many fathers might be inclined to fix a problem for a daughter without challenging her to find the solution on her own. Many girls are left out of challenging activities simply because of their gender. Be aware that both girls and boys need to be encouraged and exposed to a variety of subjects at a very early age.

Do science together. Children, especially elementary-age children, learn better by investigating and experimenting. Simple investigations done together in the home can bolster what your child is learning in the classroom. Check with your child's teacher on what your child is currently learning in class and what activities you can explore at home. There are also many books on the market and [numerous websites](#) that present ideas for investigations. *For example:* Using a penny and a water dropper, ask your child to guess how many drops of water will fit on top of it. Ask your child to count the drops as he or she drops them on the penny. Why doesn't the water spill off after a few drops? Water molecules across the surface are attracted to each other. The attraction is strong enough to allow the water to rise above the penny without spilling. At some point, the molecules of water can no longer hold together and spill off the penny.

Obtain science resources. Follow up science discussions, home experiments, or classroom lessons with books, magazines, CDs, and other resources. Science themes will be reinforced through further exploration, and over time your family will have plenty of resources on which to draw.

Explore nonformal education sites. In an informal learning situation—the kind of learning that happens outside the traditional confines of the classroom, at science centers, museums, zoos, and aquariums—children are encouraged to experiment on their own and ask questions about what they are experiencing.

Connect science with a family vacation. Family vacations are a great way to explore science. It could be a hiking trip where you explore nature or a discussion on tides during a beach vacation.

Become active in your children's formal education by getting to know the teacher and the curriculum. Refer to our [checklist](#) for a high-quality science education. Participate in your child's school science program by locating scientists and others to be guest speakers, or accompany your child on a field trip to a science-related place.

Show excitement for science. Model the behaviors you want to see in your child(ren). If your child(ren) sees that you value and enjoy science, he/she will begin to see the importance and excitement of making new discoveries, building new ideas (or building upon existing knowledge), or figuring out puzzling phenomena.





Why You Probably Shouldn't Take That Facebook Quiz

Your personal data, and your friends' personal data, can be used for all sorts of things -- even influencing a presidential election. By [Caroline Knorr](#)

Quizzes are all over Facebook and other social networks. For kids, online personality tests are as compelling as the Hogwarts Sorting Hat: They define you at the precise moment when the most important thing is knowing who you are. And, whether you're a Slytherin or just shy, personality quizzes sort us into social groups where we feel safe knowing that there are others just like us. But, [as the Cambridge Analytica acquisition of millions of Facebook users' data reveals](#), online personality quizzes can be used as a tool of the dark arts of politics. While it's far from being a comprehensive solution, knowing how to avoid the risks of these super popular tests can help you and your kids tighten up your online privacy. Here are five ways to make your family's use of social media a little safer.

Be careful with quizzes. To be super safe, just say no to online personality tests or any seemingly innocent game that asks questions. All those clicks and taps give the company information on you. While not all online tests misuse your data, you usually have to go into the quiz's terms of service to find out which information they collect and how they use it.

Take a look at the information you're sharing. When you click on a quiz or any other plug-in or applet in your feed, you should see which information it's requesting from your profile, including who your friends are. Some apps let you edit this information on the spot. But even if you opt out of sharing certain information, you may still be giving up more than you intend.

Use privacy settings and review them frequently. All social media offers privacy settings. The companies usually keep them off by default, so you have to go in and enable the ones you want. This is a good time to sit down with your kids and go over their privacy settings. Facebook, for example, offers many levels of privacy for each piece of information it stores. The safest setting to use is "Only Me," which means you're the only one who can view it and Facebook is not allowed to share it. [Also, check your app settings on Facebook to see what you've agreed to share with each app.](#)

Use two-factor authentication. Most social media offers two-factor authentication, which allows you to authorize only certain devices to access an account. It increases your security because it prevents people from logging into your account even if they have your password.

Do a little housekeeping by deleting old accounts and updating your passwords. Hackers can get to you by going through your defunct social media profiles. To find old accounts, Google your name; you might be surprised at what you find. And if you can find it, anyone else can, too. Also, update your passwords. [Use these tricks to create new passwords.](#)



SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT NEWS

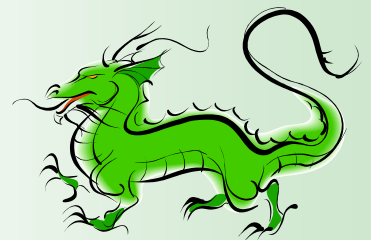
Julie Gutman

10 Reasons Why You Should Turn on Closed Captioning Today

Did you know that there are many benefits to using the closed caption feature on your television set? In a fast-paced world, it is important to utilize any strategies to help our children learn. There are obvious benefits to using closed captioning such as to assist the hard of hearing but there are many other surprising benefits. Benefits may include but are not limited to:

- 1) Increases child's engagement
- 2) Creates an interactive experience
- 3) Increases literacy and language comprehension by making vocabulary visual
- 4) Increases accessibility to verbal language
- 5) Increases test performance for all students (Robert Keith Collins, professor of American Indian studies at San Francisco State University)
- 6) Helpful for those learning English as a second language
- 7) Aids children who have difficulty processing speech and auditory components in the media
- 8) Is eye catching
- 9) Provides a multi-sensory experience
- 10) Is simple to add to your daily routine

Now it is time to turn on your closed caption at home!





Update from the English Learner Department

Sarah Perry

Effective January 2018, Michigan joins nearly thirty states in the United States in offering the Seal of Biliteracy. The Seal recognizes graduating seniors who have met ELA graduation requirements and demonstrated Intermediate High proficiency in one or more languages by high school graduation. Students earning the Seal of Biliteracy will be recognized at an academic awards night, and can use the Seal to demonstrate strong language and biliteracy skills to employers. Language and biliteracy skills are 21st century skills which will benefit students in all career pathways. There is no cost to students to apply for the Seal of Biliteracy, however, students may be responsible for assessment fees to demonstrate proficiency.

A majority of students will be able to verify proficiency through designated tests. A list of acceptable tests is available in the Michigan Department of Education Policy, found on the MDE website. Students who hope to be recognized at academic awards night should complete testing by the second semester their Junior Year. Two of the more commonly used assessments will be the AP Exam and the Stamp Exam. Those students who may not have a test available for their language will be required to provide district-defined evidence of proficiency.

The Seal of Biliteracy will give Lake Orion students an added advantage in career readiness. Many companies give preference to candidates with second language skills because they do not need to provide these employees additional training. They acknowledge these candidates have priceless workplace skills with their tendency to relate to others effectively

due to their enhanced cultural sensitivity. "In a recent survey of U.S. employers, 66% reported valuing foreign language skills in the hiring process, and 41% reported giving preference to multilingual job candidates (Damari et al., 2017). In Michigan, international trade-related jobs grew 17% from 2004 to 2014 while total employment declined 1% (Business Roundtable, 2015). There is also a growing need for bilingual employees across a wide range of occupations, regardless of educational requirements or salary (New American Economy, 2017). The Michigan Seal of Biliteracy serves as an endorsement to employers that a high school graduate enters the workforce with highly-desirable skills in more than one language." (Seal of Biliteracy Policy, pg. 6)

The process for identifying potential Seal recipients in Lake Orion will involve close collaboration between the ELL and World Language Department. It will serve as a positive catalyst for English Language Learners, as well as students of World Language. Both groups of students will achieve an Intermediate High proficiency level in a second language. Not coincidentally, Intermediate High is a level designated as a starting point for necessary language competency to function in basic employment situations. Students entering the workforce at this level have the optimum potential to continue to enhance communication once immersed in a career utilizing the language. Given the wealth of global businesses in our vicinity, this new layer of recognition will soon prove to be a valuable asset in our overall global competitiveness as a community and provide employers with desirable job candidates educated right at their doorstep.

