



# LaRue Miller Elementary



January 2010

"Maximizing Foundations for Future Leaders!"

Volume III



## Van Am Gram

Happy 2010! It's the time of year we reflect, revisit, review, and plan for the coming calendar year. In the school world, we are mindful of the increased rigor and relevance required during the second semester as we prepare for required state assessments. Most importantly, we celebrate National Math, Science, and Technology Awareness Month in January! These areas are naturally woven into the daily fabric of learner's lives since we are charged with raising global-minded, productive citizens in the second decade of the 21st century. Not only does the state curriculum (TEKS) mandate certain goals and objectives for each grade level in these important areas, our own MISD staff carefully correlates state TEKS both vertically and horizontally to ensure proper grade level alignment for mastery learning.

As learning partners and participating members in the educational process, what can you do to assist your child?

- Sharpen observation skills:** In math and science, keen observation is the beginning of true understanding. Take a nature walk to observe and record interesting sights and sounds. Share routine tasks such as grocery shopping and running errands while orally observing. Explore sites on the Internet with intriguing facts and figures regarding topics of interest in your home.
- Estimate and experiment with everything:** Ask the "w" questions all the time (who, what, where, when, why, how?). How heavy is this bag of groceries? How tall are you? Will this egg float in water? How much cheese will it take to cover our pizza? Prediction and authentic engagement enhance active critical thinking and create problem solvers for today and tomorrow!
- Face the brutal facts:** Whether working on basic math facts (let's face it, they are the math building blocks), science facts (vocabulary is critical), or studying research on the Internet, factual information can be fascinating! Learners are especially impressed by the fantastic feats in the Guinness Book of World Records. Share ideas and begin a family book of fun facts, astonishing achievements, and daring deeds (nothing dangerous, of course). You will notice observation and estimation skills "multiply" as you face the brutal facts together.
- Stress importance:** Frequently point out how often math, science, and technology are used in our daily lives. Explore, wonder, ask lots of questions, and experiment to help build curiosity in the world and how it works.

Throughout 2010, I challenge you to take the ordinary daily math, science, and technology of your world and make it truly extraordinary for your learner. As always, we are here to serve our learning community; please let us know what we can do to assist you. Thanks for sharing your most valuable resource with us each day--your child!

Respectfully,  
Beth Van Amburgh, Principal  
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[www.midlothian-isd.net/lmiller](http://www.midlothian-isd.net/lmiller)

[http://twitter.com/lmiller\\_elem](http://twitter.com/lmiller_elem)



## Mach's Message

In Midlothian I.S.D., we are proud to say that we have strong core principles which keep us grounded to the reasons we are here and why we do the job we do daily. Three of our core principles that stand out to me are: 1. Students are the priority in all decisions. 2. Good communication and collaboration builds trust. 3. Everyone is a learner and can learn. As your Assistant Principal, one of my responsibilities is to ensure that individual learner academic needs are met. A key in supporting this is the communication and collaboration between myself and teachers, teachers and parents, and most importantly teachers and learners. It is often easy to focus on what we have to say, rather than to actively listen to others. A quote by an unknown author says, "The courage to speak must be matched by the wisdom to listen." We pledge to provide successes in each learner while they are here at LaRue Miller Elementary, and our wish is to do so with your support and contribution. How can you contribute? Communicate and collaborate with your child's teacher.

Ask yourself the following questions and see if you are assisting in promoting a positive educational experience for your child:

- When you ask your child what they did during the day, do you settle for, "Nothing" ?
- If your child tells you his or her teacher doesn't like them, do you automatically assume the teacher doesn't like your child?
- Have you sent your child's teacher a note just to say, "Thanks" for all they do on a daily basis?

Please know we do not take educating learners lightly. If you have concerns regarding your child, please start with the classroom teacher and communicate these to them while actively listening to their response, approaching the teacher with an open mind and the realization that there are two sides to every story. This will assist going into the conversation. In addition, if you are pleased with your child's educational experience, communicate this also to the teacher. Everyone enjoys a pat on the back and words of encouragement! Communicate to your child that you and their teacher are working together to help them be more successful. Engage your child in conversations about school to show them your interest. Meaningful and engaging conversations build trust amongst all involved, and also provides for a positive learning experience.

Thank you for your continued support and your willingness to share and listen, while providing a positive educational opportunity for all involved.

Respectfully,  
Robin Mach  
Assistant Principal



**PLEASE NOTE:** Midlothian I.S.D. will use Tuesday, May 4th as our weather make up day. This is now a regular school day.



## Counselor's Corner

Well we ended the year talking about the character quality of being a good citizen. It was very evident that these students understood the meaning of that with the great outpouring of support for the angel tree. I appreciate your help in assisting Manna House with families in need within our own community. Along those same lines, we have received thank you notes from some of the military personnel that were the recipients of the supplies we gathered during Red Ribbon Week. The letters are very touching and are posted in our main hallway if you would like to read them. What a great honor to support our military troops.

Now we will change our focus to the character quality of being caring. We are doing a building wide project to illustrate the concept of "paying it forward." Each child will be given a package of sunflower seeds to give to someone who in turn will do a kind thing for someone else. Look for information regarding this project to come home in the next few weeks.

By now you should have seen the many postings regarding GT testing. The posting is on the Miller and MISD websites or you can call with any questions you might have if you are interested in your child being tested for that program. Kg testing is in February and 1-5th grade testing is at the end of the year. There is an informational meeting on Jan. 19th at the administration building @ 6:30 to explain the program in more detail.

If there is anything I can help with, please don't hesitate to call.

Carri Wilson, LPC  
LaRue Miller Elementary Counselor



## Notes from Nurse

Breakfast is really an important part of your child's day. I know that there are many children that do not like to eat breakfast, but many more who just say that they do not have time. Here are some quick tips that might help incorporate some extra time in the morning to ensure time for breakfast.

Prepare for school the night before by preparing the next day's clothes, lunch and backpack.

Say no to TV, video games and computers in the morning.

Choose foods that require little preparation such as fresh and canned fruits, milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, hard-boiled eggs, whole grain cereals or instant oatmeal.

Eat on the run with celery stuffed with peanut butter or cream cheese, dried fruits, string cheese, juice boxes, milk cartons, or breakfast bars.

For those with little hunger in the morning, offer juice, milk or a fruit smoothie made with skim milk and fruit.

For those who dislike breakfast foods, offer something non-traditional like cold pizza or leftover chicken.

For more information about how important breakfast is see:

<http://www.thedietchannel.com/5-Important-Reasons-Your-Child-Should-Eat-Breakfast.htm>

Melanie Miller, RN  
School Nurse



## Library

We have had a very busy six weeks in the library media center. Mrs. Blair's 5th grade social studies classes created their own version of "Who Wants To Be a Millionaire." Students composed their own questions, input the data into the computer, decorated the set, and then "ran the show." A big thank you goes out to all of our brave contestants - Mrs. Van Amburgh, Mrs. Mach, Nurse Miller, Mrs. Worley, Mr. Fiorenza, Mrs. Cameron, Mrs. Gunter, Mrs. Garippa, and Mrs. Lassetter.

Kindergarten and 1st grade classes enjoyed seasonal stories including a Polar Express storytime in the library on Polar Express Day, while 2nd graders learned about the book's author, Chris Van Allsburg. The Walnut Grove speech class came and performed a Readers Theater for some of our younger students. Kindergartners have also learned how to use a shelf marker to help them when they are looking for books on the library shelves.

In December, 3rd graders explored websites to discover the origin of some popular toys. This month they are conducting research on various inventors.

3rd, 4th, and 5th graders have been busily reading books from this year's Bluebonnet nominees list in order to participate in the Bluebonnet Voting Day, which will be held in the library media center on January 25.

Melissa Bolgiano  
Media Specialist

### SPOTLIGHT GT - 1st Grade

The 6 weeks in 1st grade the IMAGINE students studied and performed the popular Christmas poem 'Twas The Night Before Christmas. Students studied each section of the poem and discussed what each section meant, studied the vocabulary, and was able to describe so vividly what the poem was talking about so the other students were able to place themselves in that very situation on Christmas Eve. The IMAGINE students did a magical job of explaining to their peers the classic poem to the rest of the jolly, happy souls.

**Cell Phones:** Thanks for remembering to refrain from cell phone use while in our school driveways. We appreciate your continued cooperation. Our learners and leaders are much safer this way!

### Wonderful Writing Wednesdays come to LaRue Miller Elementary!

Learners and leaders are invited to join us each Wednesday in January and February as we "Warm Up to Writing." Wear your school-appropriate warmups and be prepared to share your wonderful writing ideas throughout the day!

### Crisis Response Update

Please be aware we continue to practice and drill various scenarios on campus regularly. We will not send home notes about these drills (only in a real situation), however, if your child speaks about participating in a "lockdown," "shelter-in-place," or "evacuation," you will know we most likely rehearsed a drill. If you are on campus visiting when a drill is called, you are expected to follow the directions of staff on duty for your safety as well. Thanks for your continued cooperation.



## Head Start

Head Start had a very fun and busy 3rd six weeks! Students took delight in the changing colors of fall and in observing one special tree on the playground. We plan to watch the same tree all year long to observe and record the pattern of the seasons. Family traditions were highlighted in both November and December as families and students shared special things they did together to celebrate the holidays. We continue working with our students on alphabet recognition and letter sounds. We are happy to share that most of our students are writing their names or at least part of their names! We are so proud of them and really encourage students to write everyday. Thank you to everyone who volunteered in our classroom this six weeks. The Winter Party and Field Trip were both a huge success due to the involvement of our Head Start families. We are excited to welcome a new Head Start classroom to our school family in January... 2010 is off to a great start!

Adrienne Mitchell, Jurae Greiten & Michelle Lewis



## Kindergarten

“Kindergarten Kapers”

Kindergarten has had many fun-filled learning experiences this six weeks! Our Christmas unit of study was exciting as we had fun making ornaments from different countries and talking about Christmas customs in far away places. We were also busy learning to recognize, count, and write numerals 0 - 20. Our Christmas party was a huge success! The students had a wonderful time. Thank you so much to all the parents that helped make our day so great!

The new year began a study of seasons, and winter, and culminated with a science study of penguins. We are halfway to first grade and speeding ahead with great enthusiasm!



## First Grade

As hard as it may seem, we have completed 1/2 of our school year. The days seem to slip by so quickly. We have been working hard in 1st grade this past Six Weeks. In Language Arts we have learned about nouns, verbs, and contractions. We kept everyone busy by letting them act out different verbs. We also discussed verbs in the present and past tense. Our learners are doing so well on their reading. We look forward to more success. In Math, we have worked on telling time to the hour and half hour, adding and subtracting, doing our Mountain Math, and working in our Math Journal. Those math skills just keep getting better and better. We have traveled the world in Social Studies. We visited several countries during December. We also learned about our Native Americans and our Pilgrims. We had a very exciting Science day where we participated in many different Science experiments. In Writing, we have been learning about Circle Maps and Tree Maps. We also learned how to put more detail into our writing. We had a great 3rd Six Weeks. Our thanks go out to all of you parents who support us in so many ways. We are looking forward to an even better 2nd semester!



## Second Grade

Second grade had a great time working together this third six weeks. We got real life experience with our social studies unit on goods and services during our Trade Days. We learned how butter is made and went digging for fossils during Super Science Day. We learned about the different systems of the human body and we traced ourselves and measure our height. We also wrote many wonderful things in anticipation and celebration of the holidays. It has been a busy and wonderful six weeks!



## Third Grade

The Third Graders have had a very busy 3rd Six Weeks. We began the six weeks with our multiplication silly string and bingo parties. The students had a great time celebrating their success in memorizing their facts. In math, the students learned about measurement, division, graphs, geometry, and continued to work on problem solving. The students really enjoyed reading The Best Christmas Pageant Ever and made a wanted poster for one of the characters in the story. Matter was the big topic covered in science this six weeks. In Social Studies, the students learned about communities. The highlight of the third six weeks was the field trip to Main Stay Farms. It was cold, but we still had a great time. Thank you to those parents who joined us.



## Fourth Grade

Fourth grade is shaping up this six weeks with Geometry! We are learning about 3-D shapes, transformations, symmetry, and many more interesting aspects of Geometry. We are embarking on Wonderful Writing Wednesdays where we will learn to fine-tune our writing pieces and practice the grammar rules we have been learning all year. Earth Science is the topic in Science. Students are learning about the Earth's crust along with how rocks and minerals are formed. We will be exploring novels of all kinds to gain a deeper insight while we hone our reading skills.



## Fifth Grade

5th grade reading students have been comparing and contrasting characters across genres and have completed two novels and a non-fiction study, utilizing historical fiction, realistic fiction and biography this six weeks. We are now ready to embark on a Literature Circle unit using Newbery novels with listening CDs. In science, students were busy investigating during Super Outrageous Science Day, and made edible rocks while learning about the rock cycle during Polar Express Day. In social studies, students learned about economics and created their own version of "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" Fractions! Fractions! Fractions! We have been busy studying fractions by comparing, adding, subtracting, converting mixed numbers to improper fractions, and finding equivalent fractions.

**Attention parents** of our GT 5th graders....There will be a meeting for parents of GT 5th graders, January 26th at 6:30 in the boardroom of the administration building, 100 Walter Stephenson Rd. Ms. Christina McDaniel, the GT Specialist for WGMS and FSMS will be discussing the GT program your students may be interested in for next year. Many of your questions will be answered. Hope to see you there!



## ESL

This six weeks, young ESL students have been learning about animals and their babies, nouns and verbs, and writing questions and personal letters. Older students in ESL have been reading poetry, building comprehension and vocabulary, making comparisons, and learning social courtesies.

Bethany Griffin-Loftis

It is the policy of the Midlothian Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, race or color, and national origin in its educational and vocational programs, activities, or employment as required by Title IX, Section 504, and Title VI.



## Music

Music at Miller is an exciting place to be. Kindergartners are working on their program songs, students are composing their own music and fun is being shared by all! It won't be long and our 3rd graders will be purchasing recorders to start their instrument playing unit. Spring choir auditions for all 4th and 5th graders will be coming up soon, so look for a note about this exciting group!

Lindley Cameron  
Music Teacher



## Art

The first semester of school has been great. The students have done some excellent work and are really working hard to improve their artistic skills. As we head into the second semester of school, we will be focused on the LaRue Miller Art Show which will be held on April 22nd. Every student in the school will have a personal display of their work that they have completed throughout the year. So far, the artwork that has been completed has been great. We will use the second semester to build upon what we have already started.

Scott Fiorenza  
Miller Art



## Miller Physical Education

We have had a great first half of the year in the Miller Gym and the fun is just beginning! February is National Heart Healthy month and Miller Elementary is about to begin our second annual Jump Rope For Heart Fundraiser! We really did our part last year to support the American Heart Association and raised over \$11,500! We hope to top that this year and we can only do it with the help of our great students and families. Students will be receiving the fundraiser packets the week of Feb 1 and the fundraiser will continue through Feb 19. We are going to have our "Turn Off Your T.V. Thursdays" in February again. There will be many exciting things going on in the Miller Gym during the month of February so watch for upcoming events.

Coach Rogers and Coach Martin



## Computer

Our younger students are learning to use Kid Pix. They drew a Christmas tree and snowman using their shapes and colors. We are also learning how to create power points. Here are few websites we visited this six weeks:

<http://www.primarygames.com/holidays/christmas/games.htm>  
<http://www.eduplace.com/tales/>  
<http://www.multiplication.com/>  
<http://www.starfall.com/>  
<http://pbskids.org/>  
<http://billybear4kids.com/jigsaw-puzzles/animated/Online.html>

Keyboarding is very important and the students are doing very well using home row. Please continue using home row when typing at home.

If you are interested in visiting [www.brainpopjr.com](http://www.brainpopjr.com) or [www.brainpop.com](http://www.brainpop.com), our User Name is Miller01 and the password is learn. Brainpop can be used from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Study Island is available for 2nd grade to 5th grade. This program is website based and is used to prepare students for the TAKS test. Go to [www.studyisland.com](http://www.studyisland.com). Your user name would be your first name last name.lm (i.e. Joe Smith.lm) password is bell.

Tammie Thompson  
Computer Lab Aide

Important  
DATE!

## Upcoming Dates

**Thursday, Jan. 28** - Pentathlon Game Night at 6:00 p.m.  
**Thursday, Feb. 4** - General PTO Meeting to discuss upcoming Carnival/Auction & BINGO in the GYM at 6:30 p.m.  
**Thursday, Feb 11** - 6:30 p.m. GYM night, activities and stations in the Gym  
**Friday, Feb. 12** - Valentine Parties - KG/1/2 @9:00 a.m  
 3/4/5 @ 11:00 a.m.  
**Tuesday, February 16** - Pentathlon Game Night at 6:00 p.m.  
**Thursday, Feb 18** - C.A.T.C.H is offering a CPR class-more details to come and Don't Get Board! (board games in the Gym) at 6:30 p.m.  
**Friday, Feb. 19** - Jump Rope For Heart Event all day  
**Thursday, Feb. 25** - Kindergarten Program in cafe @ 7:00 p.m.  
**Saturday, Feb. 27** - PTO Carnival & Auction 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
**Wednesday, March 3** - Grade 4 TAKS Writing Test  
**Thursday, March 4** - Pentathlon Game Night at 6:00 p.m.  
**Friday, March 5** - Bluebonnet Bowl at MHS  
**Monday, March 8** - Student Holiday; Staff Development  
**Friday, March 12** - Miller Marvelous MATH Day Event: Shade Structure Dedication @ 10:15 a.m.  
**Spring Break:** March 15 - 19; classes resume March 22  
**Tuesday, March 23** - Pentathlon Game Night at 6:00 p.m.

## Assessment Time is coming!

As upcoming assessment days approach for our 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders we would like to provide you with the dates for testing:

March 3: 4th grade Writing  
 April 6: 5th grade Math  
 April 7: 5th grade Reading  
 April 27: 3rd grade Math; 4th grade Math  
 April 28: 3rd grade Reading; 4th grade Reading  
 April 29: 5th grade Science  
 May 18: 5th grade Math re-test  
 May 19: 5th grade Reading re-test

Also, on the above-mentioned days, the cafe will serve sack lunches to all grade levels. During testing days we ask you NOT to make food deliveries to the front office, to volunteer in classrooms, or to plan to eat in the cafe with your child (regardless of your child's grade level). Please remember, we are considered a "closed" campus on testing days; we will honor a secure testing environment. We greatly appreciate your understanding and support as we complete state-mandated testing on all assigned testing days.