AVAXAT ELEMENTARY

Gator Gazette

October

"A Message from our Principal"

Dear Parents,

We want to provide you with some information in regard to changes in the report cards this school year. Our district is in a transitional phase with our elementary report cards and will have a newly developed report card next school year that will align with California's new state standards.

In the meantime, we have taken some steps that will impact your child's current report card that we want to share with you so that you will be aware of the changes when you receive the report card at parent conferences.

- Our district is transitioning to a purely standards-based report card. While we used to have letter grades for students in grades four and five, this will no longer be the case as of the 2016 – 2017 school year. To ease into this transition, fourth grade will not have letter grades this school year. This will be the last year that fifth graders will receive letter grades.

This decision was made based on best grading practices for the elementary years. A standards-based report card gives parents focused information as to how their child is performing on the learning standards. Parents will also receive information about their child's work habits and effort, but these items will be reported out separately from the standards scores. This type of reporting system provides students and families with specific information that can guide efforts to support individual needs.

- A second part of this transition is the change from a 5-point to a 4-point scale to assess student understanding in grades K - 5. The 4-point scale that our district will begin using this year is aligned to the scale used on the state test, the CAASPP. The descriptors are as follows:

4 – Standard Exceeded
The student consistently exceeds grade level standards and expectations. Performance is characterized by the ability to apply the skills with consistent accuracy, independence, and a high level of quality. The student demonstrates in- depth inferences and applications beyond what was taught. Students demonstrate an ability to work on grade level content at a greater depth and complexity than is required for a 3.

3 – Standard Met
The student consistently meets grade level standards and expectations. Performance is characterized by the ability to apply skills with accuracy, independence, and quality with minimal assistance.

2 – Standard Nearly Met
The student is progressing toward grade level standards and expectations. Performance varies in consistency with regard to accuracy and quality, and additional practice and support is required.

1 – Standard Not Met
The student is not meeting grade level standards and expectations. A significant level of additional instruction, practice, and support is required to move the student toward grade level standards and expectations.

NA – Standard Not Assessed at this Time
The content and skills listed are not a major focus for instruction and assessment during this reporting period.

This scale will be used on the upcoming report card as we transition to next year's new report card. Teachers are beginning to utilize the four-point scale and to norm themselves in grading practices using this tool. Aligning our scale to the CAASPP reporting system creates consistency and a shared understanding of student achievement.

We hope this communication will support you in understanding your child's report card and the progress they are making this school year.

As we develop our new report cards, the district will provide a series of parent meetings for you to learn more about standards-based grading practices and how to understand the feedback provided to you by the classroom teacher. We hope you will join us for these forums during the second half of the school year.

Please feel free to contact administration with any questions in regard to these changes. We appreciate your patience as our district works to develop an effective and meaningful report card for our students and families.

Respectfully,

David Ciabattini

October

10/06 Lunch with the Principal Grades 4/5
10/08 Fifth Grade International Food Festival 5:00 in the MPR
10/09 Coffee with the Principal 8:30 MPR
10/15 Make up School Pictures
10/16 PTA Movie Night
10/22 Read for the Record "Not Norman"
10/26 Professional Development Day– ***No School Today***
10/27-10/30 Red Ribbon Week
10/27 PTA Magic Show Assembly
10/30 MMHS Red Ribbon Rally

November

11/03 Lunch with the Principal Grades 1-3
11/06 Military Breakfast 8:30 in the MPR
11/06 Coffee with the Principal 8:30 in the MPR
11/11 Veteran's Day—No School today
11/19 Spelling Bee 8:00-11:00 in the MPR
11/19 Fourth Grade Thanksgiving Feast 6:00-6:45
11/20 Fifth Grade Turkey Trot
11/23-27 Thanksgiving Break—NO School

Picnic Days

During the month of October we are inviting parents to come have a picnic lunch with your child during their lunch time. There is grass space and some shady trees near the lunch area where you can sit with your child and enjoy an outdoor lunch. All you need to bring is a blanket or chairs, lunch, and yourself. You are welcome to bring a beach umbrella which we can help set up for you. Bon appétit!

Lunch Schedule

Kinder AM	9:15—9:45
Kinder PM	12:15-12:45
1st Grade	11:10-11:50
2nd Grade	11:30-12:10
3rd Grade	11:50-12:30
4th Grade	12:10-12:50
5th Grade	12:30-1:10

Parent Conference Schedule

Monday, October 19th Early Out Monday – No change in dismissal times

Tuesday, Oct. 20th – Friday, Oct. 23rd.
Both AM and PM TK/Kindergarten will attend school at the same time: 8:00 – 11:20.
All 1st – 5th Grade students will start at 8:00 and dismiss at 11:50.

Also, Monday, October 26th is a Staff Development Day. No school for students.

Teachers will be sending home schedule dates and times to parents. Please attempt to attend the scheduled appointment or contact your child's teacher if you are not able to attend the conference.

Military Family Breakfast

On Friday, November 13th PTA will honor our Military Families with a special breakfast for them in the MPR at 8:30 a.m. PTA will provide breakfast and there will be resources available for our families. Thanks for all you do for us!

Spirit Days

Fridays are our spirit days! Show your school spirit by wearing one of the Avaxat shirts or wearing blue and gold. Please contact our PTA @ avaxatpta@gmail.com if you would like to purchase a t-shirt.

Sprigeo

This is a bullying reporting system that allows students to report bullying incidents and school safety threats anonymously.

All information sent through the Sprigeo system goes directly to our school administrator through a secure online connection.

For more information please visit www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/avaxat

Please visit us at the Avaxat Elementary School Facebook page. Look for the "Mindset Message" that Mr. C. will post each Monday. Check it out!

Find us on Facebook

Red Ribbon Week

Our Red Ribbon Week is scheduled for October 27th—November 2nd. There are many activities scheduled to encourage our students to stay "Drug Free"!

Avaxat Elementary School
School Site Council

September 24, 2015
Room 201 2:30

Agenda:

1. Welcome—Approve minutes
2. Review Proposals—Updates
3. LCAP—Four Goals
4. Review Parent Survey Results
5. Other

Action Items

1. Voted and approved expenditures in the amount of $103,625 to support improving student learning.

Future Meeting:

October 29th

Meeting Adjourned at 3:30 P.M.

"Spotlights on "Reading"

Kindergarten

Two terms you will hear about and see printed on your child's report card this year are PHONICS and PHONEMIC AWARENESS. Here is a brief explanation of these terms.

Phonics: Most people are familiar with the term phonics. Phonics is the study of letters and the sounds they represent. In kindergarten we teach students to quickly name letters - both lowercase and capital. We also teach students to quickly say the sound the letter represents. We use a program called **zoo-phonics** to help students learn this letter-sound relationship. In the beginning of the year we use alphabet charts and the alphabet song. Later, students will be able to quickly give names and sounds to letters when they are presented out of order.

Phonemic Awareness: A **phoneme** is the smallest unit of sound within spoken language. Phonemic awareness is the careful study of the sounds within spoken words. When a child can accurately distinguish between the different sounds within spoken words, phonics begins to make sense.

Phonemic awareness is about sounds in spoken language.
Phonics is about letters and the sounds they represent.

About Reading:
Toddlers learn to walk at different times. Some walk at nine months. Some walk at 13 months. Babies begin to talk at different times too. Children also learn to read at different times. Our babies' first steps, first words and first books are precious whenever they occur.

More About Reading:

Teaching reading is like teaching a child to ride a bike. If you help too much, they won't learn to ride. If you don't help enough, they won't feel safe enough to try. Hold on to the seat and let your child do the peddling. In the beginning you are doing most of the work, but as you feel their confidence growing, you start to let go for short periods of time. Pretty soon you are just running beside them and they think you are holding on. You help them up when they fall. Dust them off and help them get back on the bike…*I mean book*.

1ST

This month first graders are learning to read CVC words fluently. (CVC = a consonant, a vowel, and another consonant. Examples: can, dig, log.) This means that they read the words without stopping to sound them out. Many of the first graders are phonetic readers at this point. If your child is sounding out words, encourage smooth blending to increase fluency. For example, c-a-t should become cat. Sight word memorization is very important to becoming a reader.

Reading with your child each day and asking them questions is so valuable. Here are some things you could ask during your reading time with them:

- Are there any words in the story that rhyme?
- Did you see any of your sight words in the story? If so, what are they?
- Can you find 3 words that have a short vowel?
- What happened in the beginning, middle and end of the story?
- Who were the characters in the story?
- Where did the story take place? (The setting.)

Your child may be bringing home their black and white paper books (phonics readers). Ask them to point out their sight words for you and have them read the book to you. They will be so proud to show you how much they have learned already!

2ND How do children become better readers? You guessed it – by reading! Second graders continue to develop their foundations in reading by recognizing and using their knowledge of spelling patterns (phonics) when reading both fiction and non-fiction text. Also, for smoother reading and quicker recall of words in a story or passage, second grade students practice high frequency/sight words that do not necessarily follow a phonetic spelling pattern. In addition, second graders learn to use more sophisticated reading strategies to "attack," or figure out, unfamiliar words in text. For example, students learn to "chunk" bigger words into smaller parts, and they learn to lean on other words in the text to help them figure out a word they may not know. At this time of year, second grade students are encouraged to read fluently and accurately with appropriate intonation and expression at a rate of 65-80 words per minute. This is achieved via daily reading practice with timed-fluency passages, and with a defined time at school and/or at home where the student can practice reading independently. With improved reading fluency, second graders are then able to develop the comprehension skills necessary for learning in all areas of the curriculum.

3RD Third grade is the year that students are transitioning from "learning to read" to "reading to learn". Therefore, third grade teachers focus most instruction on comprehension and vocabulary. However, we continue to address the needs of students who still need additional phonics and decoding. In order to meet the needs of all students, in addition to our regular reading/language arts instruction, we meet the leveled groups of students during the last hour of the school day. We call this time "UA", which stands for "universal access". During this block of time, all third graders are organized into groups and each third grade teacher is meeting with a different group. Mrs. Hosfield, Mrs. Petchers and Mrs. Discartin also meet with students at this time. While some students are working on decoding skills, other are working at higher level comprehension skills. In this way, we meet the needs of all learners, whether they are struggling or advanced students.

4TH "Reading is to the mind as exercise is to the body." - Richard Steele

Just as physical fitness is crucial to a child's health, the fourth grade team encourages students to spend quality reading time each day, and we are working to lay a foundation for increased comprehension through application of reading strategies. We are introducing students to a diverse range of high interest expository texts and classic novels to cultivate a love for reading, and ultimately to foster a joy for learning. Specifically, knowing how to paraphrase information, make inferences, and utilize context clues to decipher a passage. Along with the Houghton Mifflin language arts curriculum, we will also be using digital resources, including lexile.com, easycbm.com, and Thinkcentral.com. An increased level of reading comprehension will benefit students in all academics areas.

5TH Reading in fifth grade emphasizes deeper analysis and understanding of text. We are focusing on predicting, inferring, author's purpose/point of view, figurative language, and contrast and comparison in fictional literature. Within expository/informational literature, students are required to read and understand, find information, formulate opinions offering supporting proof from text.

Counselor's Corner

Dear Parents and Students,

I hope you all had a fabulous first month and a half of school. We first want to celebrate Avaxat this year for doing a really great job with attendance. This month we have seen a marked improvement in attendance school wide. Our school wide attendance campaign "Allie's A-List" has seen many winners including 2 six way ties in both K-2 and 3-5. It's very likely that I have come in to one of your children's classrooms with a big alligator congratulating your child's class attendance. Additionally in September we celebrated three students for their effort in getting perfect attendance Matteo, Nicholas, and "CJ". This month we are celebrating Cody, Samantha & Amaya for their commitment to coming to school on-time every day this year! Lets keep getting all of our children here on time, every day! Remember if you are not here, you are not learning!

October is national bullying prevention month and at Avaxat we want to make sure our young alligators are never using bullying behavior. Bullying directly affects a student's ability to learn. Students who are bullied find it difficult to concentrate, show a decline in grades, and lose self-esteem, self-confidence, and school attendance. Eliminating bullying behavior is a barrier to learning that we can all work towards. First and foremost if we treat each other with respect, we are all doing our part to end bullying. When we do this we learn more and respect all.

In order for us to be respectful to one another, it is important that we focus at home and at school on life skills. These skills can impact all students from the ones with bullying behavior, to the bystanders that watch it and the students who feel victimized by it. If your child gets accused of using negative behaviors, talk to them about skills like accepting differences, expressing empathy and making apologies. For all students who feel like they are targets of bullying behavior, talk this month about making friends, asking for help and stopping negative thoughts.

Finally for all students this month let's discuss resisting negative peer pressure, showing concerns for others and reporting dangerous behavior. When we use these life skills, we can all do an active part in eliminating bullying not only from our school but in our society. Silence is no longer an acceptable response to bullying. Adults, students, and educators can no longer look away when they see bullying. Ignoring it doesn't work. Everyone needs to be empowered with options to respond.

Thanks to everyone for your ongoing support to our school. If you need to reach me for anything email me at fzanartu@murrieta.k12.ca.us or you can call the school and ask for extension 2198. Please leave message and I'll get back to you with in one business day!

Best,

Felipe Zañartu
Avaxat's Professional School Counselor