From the Principal ~

Happy February Alamo Eagles!

Math Facts

In meeting with parents and teachers, I am hearing a common theme regarding many educational concepts: “I don’t understand, they know how to do it at home…” Very often, this discussion is around the concept of basic math facts. The disconnect between home and school regarding math facts is due to the focus of the teachers on recent educational research and the definition of “know.” Teachers define math fact success with the “fluency” or “automaticity” that the student shows, not on simply getting the answer correct. For a 2nd or 3rd grade teacher, a student has mastered math facts only if they know them at an unconscious level—no counting of fingers or imagining numbers in their mind. This is the definition of “fluency” or “automaticity” that teachers are focused on for many educational concepts. Students that know their math facts at this unconscious level can answer 25 math fact problems in 1 minute (hence, “automatic”).

Obviously math facts are an important educational standard/concept, but why the push for speed? As an example that I often use to illustrate this importance, let’s look at long division which begins in 4th grade. Long division is a one of the first concepts of multiple step problems (divide, multiply, subtract, bring down, do it all again…). Consciously, the student needs to focus on these steps so that confusion and mistakes are minimized, but if the student has to consciously worry about the math facts embedded in this multi-step problem, success will be difficult. In fact, this is the conclusion of education research: Students that fail to master their math facts to automaticity struggle with math throughout their school experience.

Safety

Another thank you to the parents that showed up for our coffee with the principal meeting. A summary of the concerns and ideas from that meeting is on our website and has been featured in our e-news (If you haven’t signed up for e-news, I would highly recommend it as a great reminder of activities to come). For those parents that were unable to attend the morning meeting, we will be having an evening meeting focusing on Alamo safety on Thursday, February 7 at 7:00 pm. I look forward to prioritizing the ideas presented to date and to hear your concerns and ideas!

Scrub is available in the office

Tasty Tuesday ~
Please join us on February 12th ~ 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. at both Murillo’s locations in Vacaville. Don’t forget your flyer.

Valentine’s Balloons ~
The PTA is selling Valentine’s balloons to be delivered on February 14th. They are available for only $2 each.

NO SCHOOL ~
February 18th – 22nd

Online Scholastic Book Fair: (February 24th ~ March 16th)
http://bookfairs.scholastic.com/homepage/alamoelemsch

Upcoming Dates to Remember

February 6th ~ PTA Meeting 6:30 p.m. – Staff Rm.
February 7th ~ Parent Meeting about Safety Concerns ~ 7 p.m. – MF Rm.
February 12th ~ Tasty Tuesday at Both Murillo’s Locations 11:00 a.m. ~ 9:00 p.m. ~ Bring your flyer!
February 12th ~ 6th grade band concert ~ 7 p.m. ~ VPAT
February 13th ~ 6th grade strings concert ~ 7 p.m. ~ VPAT
February 13th ~ Last day to preorder Valentine’s Balloons
February 18th – 22nd ~ No School!
February 28th ~ Coffee with the Principal ~ 8:45 a.m.
Book Fair Coming to Alamo: March 4th – 8th
Online Scholastic Book Fair: (February 24th ~ March 16th)
http://bookfairs.scholastic.com/homepage/alamoelemsch