

Newsletter-December 2008

Thadine Wright  
Principal

JENIFER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Karen Lewis  
Vice Principal

2820 Jenifer School Lane  
Waldorf, MD 20603  
(301) 932-9603 (301) 753-1768

### Principal's Message

Thank you, thank you, and thank you! To all of our parents and family members who have provided support and encouragement to our students. We had a marvelous first quarter of school because of the positive connections made between our families and teachers. Nearly 80% of our families met with our teachers for parent conferences during the month of November. That's incredible! These meaningful interactions guarantee the academic, social, and emotional growth of each of our students.

We had the honor to connect with many parents, guardians, and extended family members during American Education Week. This special week provided the opportunity for classroom visits, awards assemblies, and a very meaningful American Freedom celebration. Our celebration included a presentation of flags by the Westlake High School JROTC, recognition of community members and school staff who are veterans, and a musical selection performed by the entire school led by Mr. Cusack, our music teacher.

**PLEASE note a school calendar change:** in order to give our students and staff members the opportunity to participate in our upcoming historic inauguration, Mr. Richmond, our superintendent and the Charles County Board of Education will *close schools on January 20, 2009*. To accommodate this change, *schools will be open on January 23, 2009*, which was originally designated as a semester break with no school for children. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to give the school a call.

Our teachers and staff wish the entire Jenifer school family a safe and happy holiday season.

### Compassion

During the month of December we will focus on "compassion" as the character trait of the month. The holidays are a perfect time to stress the importance of giving and sharing. Students can show compassion in many ways by displaying small acts of kindness throughout the month and the rest of the year.

### **Important Numbers & Contact Information**

Jenifer Elementary School            301-932-9603  
2820 Jenifer School Lane            301-753-1768  
Waldorf, MD 20603                    Fax - 301-374-9496  
Charles County Board of Education  
P.O. Box 2770                            301-932-6610  
La Plata, MD 20646



### **Want quick access to closing information?**

- Call the 24-hour information line at 301-932-6656
- Receive email notification from [www.schoolsout.com](http://www.schoolsout.com)
- Check the web site at [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com)



## School Closures

December 9- 2 Hour Early  
Dismissal  
AM Pre-K Attends

December 19- 2 Hour Early  
Dismissal  
PM Pre-K Attends

December 22- Winter Break

January 2 School Closed

### Congratulations! Jamal Murphy

Our top seller,  
Party in addition to  
Thank you, Jamal  
and for the



Jamal has earned every category for the Big Blast  
a \$50.00 American Express Gift Card.  
for your efforts with supporting the PBIS Program  
purchase of supplies for our Risograph machines.



We would also like to acknowledge Dominique Marsh and Amber Wills for  
their support with coming in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

And to our many families who supported this fundraiser, a huge thanks to  
you, we could not have done it without you.

### Big Blast Party

Due to a medical emergency with our Cherrydale representative, our Big  
Blast Party, scheduled for November 17<sup>th</sup> was cancelled. Our celebration  
will be rescheduled for a date in January.



# The Reading Corner

by Tammy Barnes  
Reading Resource Teacher



"The more that you read,  
The more things you will know,  
The more that you learn,  
The more places you'll go!"  
- Dr. Seuss

Readers use certain strategies before, during, and after reading to assist them with understanding the text. Discussing these strategies with your children will help them to become better readers. Our goal is for these strategies to become automatic as students read:

## BEFORE READING

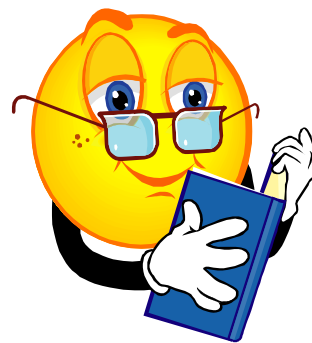
- ☆ Have your child look at the title, illustrations, and captions.
- ☆ Discuss what you already know about the topic.
- ☆ Make predictions.
- ☆ Decide on the purpose for reading. What do you hope to find out?

## DURING READING

- ☆ Think about your predictions and make new ones. Think about what will happen next.
- ☆ Visualize/picture in your mind what is happening.
- ☆ Identify new information and important vocabulary.
- ☆ Reread any unclear passages.
- ☆ Think about how you feel about what you are reading.
- ☆ Make connections within the text and your prior knowledge.
- ☆ Make inferences. What conclusions can I make from what is stated in the text?

## AFTER READING

- ☆ Confirm or refute predictions.
- ☆ Discuss any unclear parts with someone.
- ☆ State the main idea.
- ☆ Decide the most important parts of the story.
- ☆ Think about how you will use what you read.



# Mental Math vs. Paper / Pencil

by Lisa Wehausen, Instructional Specialist

Instructional programs from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 should enable all students to—

- understand numbers, ways of representing numbers, relationships among numbers, and number systems; understand meanings of operations and how they relate to one another; compute fluently and make reasonable estimate

- **Principles and Standards for School Mathematics, NCTM**

**How would you solve the following problems?**

$$38 \times 7 =$$

$$98 + 213 =$$

What if I asked you to solve these problems without paper and pencil or a calculator. Would you still use the traditional methods of adding or multiplying the ones first, regrouping, etc.?

One of the areas that is often overlooked in mathematics is mental math. Doing math mental or 'math in your head' requires not only mastery of basic facts, but fluidity with numbers as well. For example, someone with a solid understanding of our number system might think of solving the problem this way:  $98 + 2 = 100$  (100 being easier to work with), so I must take 2 away from 213 which is 211, and  $100 + 211 = 311$ . This is a more efficient mental approach to the problem, rather than  $8 + 3 = 11$ , regroup one ten, 9 tens + 1 ten + 1 ten = 11, etc. Doing the standard algorithm may be efficient when using paper/pencil, but it becomes cumbersome when trying to solve problems mentally.

You can give your child sample problems like these and ask him/her to solve them mentally for you. This will allow you greater insight about how well your child is able to make sense of our number system and the ease with which they can decompose and recompose numbers to solve problems mentally.