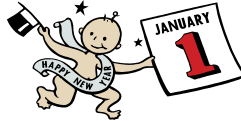




Bobcat Brief



Happy New Year!



Dear Bobcat Parents,

How wonderful it is to be back at school after a relaxing winter holiday! Our vacations are well deserved, but it's now time to pull up our sleeves and get ready for a busy Spring semester.

As many of you know there have been a couple of concerns spreading throughout the Pease community during the last month. My hope is to keep everyone informed about these concerns and to provide resources so that our community can advocate responsibly for Pease.

One major concern came to our attention when a parent was completing the AISD survey regarding budgetary reductions. In the survey,

one question asked if the Austin community supported consolidating six schools with low enrollment. We know that Pease fits in the category of low enrollment. We are one of the smallest schools in our district, but we are at capacity. Our school is small, but not under-utilized.

Because of our concerns, I e-mailed Dr. Carstarphen, our superintendent, asking for information. She explained that the question in the survey was based on an efficiency study released in May 2009. (I have included a PDF of the study for your reading pleasure.) The study did not name any schools specifically. Currently no policy or criteria has been deter-

mined for choosing which schools would be consolidated if that indeed becomes a decision that AISD chooses. Dr. Carstarphen stated that she is trying to work with the board to create policy first before naming schools. She believes this will create a structure that is fair and transparent.

An upcoming facilities assessment that should be completed in May of 2010 will also provide additional information to the board. Dr. Carstarphen believes that just because Pease is "small" mean that we are automatically slated for closure. Other things must be considered

Continued on p. 4

Seeking Connections

Do you play in a band? Does your auntie own a bakery? Does your dad have an inside line on catering companies? Do you know someone at a foundation that supports educational programming? Does your brother work at a store that provides raffle gifts to local organizations and schools?

Pease Elementary is looking to

tap your connections to help support the school and obtain donations of goods and services for Hootenanny, May Fete, and other school needs.

We are pulling together a list of connections that we can call upon for these occasions. If you are willing to volunteer yourself or a friend/family member as a potential source of support, please email Pease parent Jennifer Peters at jbookhartpeters@gmail.com

with your name, your phone number, and the service/good/referral you can provide or connect us to.

Thank you for supporting our school!



Pease Elementary School
A TEA Exemplary Campus

Volume I, Issue 5

January 12, 2010

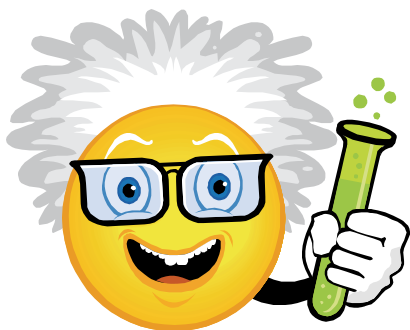
Upcoming Dates

- January 4 - Student Holiday
- January 5 - Classes Resume
- January 12 - PTA Meeting—City of Austin report regarding Bicycle Boulevard @ 5:45
- January 13 - City of Austin Bicycle Boulevard Meeting, Pease @ 6:00
- January 18 - MLK Jr. Day—Student and Staff Holiday
- January 26—Glass Harp Presentation provided by PTA
- January 28—4th Grade Writing Release TAKS Test
- January 28—CAC Meeting @ 4:00, library
- January 29—Science Fair Day
- February 1—Metro Rail Presentation for 2nd—6th Graders @ 7:35
- February 4—Principal's Coffee @ 7:30 in the library
- February 10—Vision and Hearing Screening
- February 12—Student Holiday, Staff Development
- February 15—President's Day, Student Holiday—Parent Conferences
- February 16—5th Grade TAKS Math Release Test
- February 17—5th Grade TAKS Reading Release Test



Science Fair News

The Pease School Science Fair will take place on Friday, January 29th, 2010 in the school gymnasium. Science Fair projects from 2nd through 6th grade will be judged that Friday morning. Parents, teachers, and students will have an opportunity to view all projects in the gym that afternoon. Science Fair projects will remain on display in the gym until 4:00 pm for anyone who is interested in checking them out. First and second place winners from 2nd through 6th grade will compete in the Austin Energy Regional Science Festival on Saturday, February 27th, 2010.



Library News



The Accelerated Reader program is a computerized reading management program produced and sold by Renaissance Learning, Inc. We have had this program at Pease for 19 years. Over the years we have purchased quite a few tests until we now have approximately 1500. The tests consist of 5-20 comprehension questions and the program is available on the library computers. Books in the Pease Library that have tests are marked with blue dots, and, early on, the students started referring to "blue dot books" and "blue dot tests."

Many students in grades K-6 take these tests. In the early grades, teachers often use them as extended learning opportunities for higher level students. In the upper grades, teachers may require tests to be taken for grades. It is up to the teacher.

Each book with an Accelerated Reader test is marked with a grade level. Renaissance Learning developers suggest that students should be reading books on which they can score 9 out of 10 or 10 out of 10 correct. If a student scores lower, they say the book is too difficult for the student.

I think the tests have value in that they show students what careful reading looks like, and they teach students to read for detail. There are 9000 books in the library that do not have Accelerated Reader tests, and, obviously, I think it would be a great loss if students restricted themselves to only reading the books that have tests.

If anyone has questions about the program, or would like to look at the binder that contains lists of our tests, please come by the library.

Maureen Slocum, Librarian

Know the Law

The Texas Education Code contains a newly updated compulsory attendance law.

Some things parents should keep in mind:

The law requires that children attend school every day it is in session. (§ 25.085)

A student may not be given credit for a subject unless they have attended 90% of the classes for that year. (§ 25.092)

If a student is absent without excuse for three or more days **or parts of days** within a four-week period, the school must send a warning letter to the parents stating that they **may** be filed on in a court of law for a criminal truancy charge (filing is still optional). (§ 25.095)

If a parent does not respond to warning letters, that parent may be charged with a criminal offense. (§ 25.093)

If a student is absent without excuse for ten or more days **or parts of days** within a six-month period, the school **must** file criminal truancy charges on the parent(s) and student. (§ 25.094)



Controlling Our Impulses

Getting back into the swing of things can be very difficult after the holidays, for children and adults alike. Below is a segment from the article, [Teaching Children to Control Impulses](#), by Shari Steelsmith. She offers a few good reminders to help children (and their parents) control those impulsive urges.

Pediatric nurse Helen Neville, author of [Is This a Phase? Child Development & Parent Strategies, Birth to 6 Years](#), points out that the part of the brain that controls impulses matures significantly later than the part of the brain that has impulses. In fact, the impulse control portion of the human brain (in the frontal lobes) does not fully mature until we are in our early twenties. So learning to recognize and control strong impulses is a task that children assume early and work on until early adulthood. In fact, most of us seasoned adults still struggle with this issue. (I'm experiencing a strong impulse to eat chocolate at this very moment.)

Neville describes young children's impulses as varied as a sudden wish to throw a spoon, pull someone's hair, or give Mom a hug. Before age four, children need to be supervised carefully so that they do not hurt others or themselves. At four, however, the majority of children begin to learn to control strong impulses. Neville says that one in ten, however, will still give in to less acceptable impulses like throwing toys, screaming, hitting people, or grabbing fragile items in stores. "They know they should stay near Mom in the store. However, they don't yet have brakes strong enough to stop themselves every time," says Neville.

Tools—With immature impulse control, it's constant hard work to do the right thing. Neville offers parents the following tools for encouraging their children to control their impulses.

✦ **Provide a few clear rules.** For example, when I have a strong impulse to eat chocolate, I have a better chance of controlling myself if I know that I am only allowed to eat fruit or crackers as mid-afternoon snacks. If a five year old has the impulse to race across the street, he may check himself if he knows the rule, "Don't leave the yard without telling Mom first." If that five year old has broken this rule in the past and experienced a consequence (such as losing front-yard play privileges for a couple days), then he is even more likely to control the impulse.

✦ **Provide reminders.** You can help children be more aware of their impulses by reminding them gently of rules you think they might be tempted to break. "Remember, you both need to take turns with the ball. If only one person gets to kick it, is that fun for everyone?" A reminder such as this can help a child who is prone to dashing off with the game ball to control her freewheeling impulses.

✦ **Provide Support and Forgiveness.** Learning to control impulses is hard work and even the most self-aware child will fail at this from time to time. Provide fair consequences where necessary, but focus on teaching. For example, instead of saying, "Don't hit your brother!" you can comment, "You felt frustrated when Tanner wouldn't give you the truck. Our rule is to touch gently. Next time try trading for the toy." Assurances that you know he'll do better next time and then the opportunity to do so will provide a secure base from which he can go on learning.

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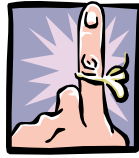
At Pease, we believe in affirming each other for a job well done! Each month, this corner of the Bobcat Brief will be used to appreciate Pease community members for their contributions to our school! Please e-mail Mrs. Martinez with any appreciations that you would like published in our February issue.

A Big Thank you to—

- The Pease community for their wonderful participation in the Food Drive. Working with our partners, the DoubleTree Hotel, we collected a combined total of 1,585 items for the Capital Area Food Bank. Maya Lawrence collected the most items and won second place in the raffle drawing. The prize was dinner for 4 at the DoubleTree Hotel. Audrey Loya won the first place drawing, a one night stay at The DoubleTree Hotel and Desi Crothers won the third place drawing, a DoubleTree gift basket.
- Mrs. Adams for chairing the food drive. Your hard work coordinating this event truly added to its success!
- Bill Brice for working to find community partners to support our Campus Beautification efforts with the Seedling Foundation. Mr. Brice has secured donations from the DoubleTree Hotel, Park Place Publications, and Mr. Sady.
- Our fabulous tutors and mentors. Your support of our students deeply impacts their success!
- The many parents who assisted in making the holiday parties a success. Our students and teachers had such a lovely time!
- Dianna Perez for providing breakfast to the Pease staff on our staff development day. It was tasty!



Dates to Remember



March 9 - PTA Meeting
March 10 - Group Photos
March 11 - Used Book Sale
March 12 - Track and Field Day
March 12 - End of 3rd Nine Weeks
March 15 -19 - Spring Break
March 22 - Classes Resume
April 2 - Student and Staff Holiday
April 13 - PTA Meeting
May 11 - PTA Meeting
May 14 - May Fete
May 28—6th Grade Graduation
June 2 - Last Day of School

Bobcat Letter continued...

as well. For example, our district has 20,000 students in portables.

Another issue that is of concern to our community is the creation of a bicycle boulevard that was initially proposed for Nueces. On Tuesday, the City of Austin will present information to our PTA at 5:45 in the Pease cafeteria. In addition, on Wednesday at 6:00, the City of Austin will hold another community meeting at Pease regarding the proposal. Please try to attend one of the meetings. We need to become informed as to how this may impact the safety of our students. These forums provide opportunities for our community to have a voice in the process.

Lastly, I have included a copy of the AISD Strategic Plan for 2010—2015. Please take time to read over the plan as it will guide our work as a district and a school for the upcoming years. More information will be shared at PTA regarding the plan with a follow-up next Tuesday in Tuesday folders.

Please feel free to e-mail or call me with any questions or concerns. I am here to get answers.
Sincerely, Donna Martinez

A Note from the Reading Room

Have you ever gotten to the end of a page and can't remember what you just read? That happens to students, too, and it happens for a number of reasons. Sometimes it's because the vocabulary is unfamiliar, and sometimes it's because the text itself is challenging. Reading comprehension is the goal of all reading instruction, and of all the components of reading instruction, it is the most complex. That's because reading comprehension requires deep thinking about what is being read, and if the brain's working memory is so busy decoding the words on the page, it's difficult to make meaning of the text.

You can help your child develop reading strategies that will improve his or her text comprehension. Instead of waiting until the end of the chapter to ask and answer questions, try the *Click & Clunk* strategy during reading. We use the analogy of riding a bicycle when we teach students this strategy.

"You know what it's like when you're riding along on a smooth surface and your gears are *clicking* along. Then you hit a rough patch in the road, and *Clunk* your bike goes. So in other words, when you are clicking, you understand what you are reading. When you come to a difficult part, you hit a *Clunk*."

We teach students to use *Click & Clunk* while reading each section of a passage. The goals of *Click & Clunk* are:

- For students to monitor their reading comprehension.
- For students to identify when they have breakdowns in understanding ("*Clunks*").
- To use "fix-up" strategies to figure out clunks.
- To identify and explain which fix-up strategy was used and why.

You can use this strategy to help your child at home, too. Ask your reader to stop at the end of a section or page and answer these questions:

- Were there any parts that were hard to understand (*clunks*)?
- How can we fix the *clunks*?

Here are some *Fix-Up* strategies you can help your child use to fix the clunks in their reading:

1. Reread the sentence and look for key ideas to help you understand.
2. Reread the sentences before and after looking for clues.
3. Look for a prefix, root word, or suffix in the word.
4. Break the word apart and look for smaller words.

Continued on p. 5

Art News

We have had a great start to the beginning of the year! We continue to learn about artists and their styles, and demonstrate in our own individual ways.



Kindergarten is currently learning about artist Joan Miro, the artist who got many ideas from his dreams. First grade is currently making winter snowglobes. Second grade will be learning about Daruma's and understanding their meaning in China when they celebrate the new year. Third grade is drawing and painting illustrations of where they would go if they could fly anywhere in the style of the artist, Faith Ringgold. Fourth grade is learning about Zuni animal fetishes and creating their own animal out of clay. Fifth grade is creating their own rainforest. Sixth grade is currently studying artist Frida Khalo and creating their own self-portrait, Frida style!



Musical Notes

Winter Musical at Delco

I'd like to thank the parents of our wonderful students who brought their children to Delco Center December 11th for our annual Pease Winter Musical. All the classes performed very well and we were able to hear them and enjoy what they had prepared in their music classes. The opening number was sung by our entire student body, America the Beautiful partnered with Let Freedom Ring. This was a difficult piece to perform, for the upper grades because Let Freedom Ring is so high and takes a lot of breath control. For the primary grades to sing a song, memorized while something else is being sung takes a lot of concentration. Kinder and 1st graders sang joyfully about the gifts they made themselves. 2nd graders danced with them on Jingle Bells. Our hearts were touched as the 2nd graders sang of what they are grateful for. 3rd and 4th grades accompanied a return alumni, Ismael Flores who sang a solo, Peace on Earth. Very beautiful, Ismael! 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th performed amazingly on their recorders and the Bobcat Singers were just having a great time and singing their best as well! And I must commend the 6th graders for their performance on the Band and Orchestra instruments. And to finish the program we were really swinging with 5th and 6th on Teach Me to Swing. What a fun evening! Thanks students for all your hard work! We need to thank Bobbi Melder and Christy Medina for decorating Delco. The new wreaths were beautiful. Also, thank-you to parents who stayed to take things down and help return things to Pease. What a happy way to end 2009.

Bobcat Singer at The Domain

On December 14th the Pease Bobcat Singers enjoyed a pizza lunch at the California Pizza Kitchen before they went Christmas Caroling in the mall at The Domain. We were merrily strolling along, singing a song when we ran into Santa! He stopped to have a picture taken with us, then we continued on our way. I hardly had to give any direction to these singers. They just love to sing! What a good time we had at the mall singing to shoppers.

A Big Change in my Life!

I just want all of you to know, in case you have not heard already that I got married on December 18th!! My husband's name is Ron Burgner and he runs a family home center for elderly people in Everett Washington. We had a lovely honeymoon in California and the San Juan Island off the coast of Washington. So please help me get used to my new name by calling **Mrs. Burgner!**

From the Reading Room, continued

Strategies #1 and #2 use *context clues*, and Strategies #3 and #4 use *word analysis*.

Click and Clunk FAQ's:

1. Does a clunk have to be a word?

No. A clunk can be a word, phrase, or sentence.

2. Which fix up strategy is usually used for a phrase or sentence?

Fix up #2: Reread the sentence with the clunk and the sentences before and after the clunk, looking for clues.

3. My child doesn't know much about prefixes, suffixes and root words. What should I do?

Ask your child preview the passage and find the vocabulary words that are unfamiliar before reading the text. Talk about what these words mean and use tools such as the glossary, dictionary, or the Internet to find out more!

2010-2011 SCHOOL TRANSFER REQUESTS PROCESS

The Austin School District will accept requests for school transfers for the 2010-2011 school year beginning at 7 a.m. until noon on Saturday, February 6, 2010 in the Auditorium (Room B100) of the Carruth Administration Center, located at 1111 West Sixth Street. Staff from the Office of Student Services/Records will be available to accept requests and answer questions.

Beginning on Monday, February 8, 2010 requests may be submitted to the Office of Student Services (Room A200), Carruth Administration Center, during regular business hours, 7:45 a.m. until 4:45 p.m.

Priority transfers

It is not necessary to stand in line on Saturday, February 6, 2010 to submit a request for a priority transfer, but it is necessary to submit the request no later than Friday, February 19, 2010 to be eligible for such a transfer. Types of priority transfers are:

Sibling Transfer - A sibling transfer request can be made for siblings of students who are, or will be, attending the requested school at the same time on an approved transfer. The transfer to that school shall be allowed if space and staff are available. To receive priority consideration for a sibling transfer, the request must be received no later than the tenth school day after the first Saturday in February of the prior school year.

Tracking Transfer - Students who have transferred to another school and who have a history of at least two unbroken years of attendance in the two highest grades offered at the school, may request a tracking transfer to the next level (i.e., to a middle school from an elementary school or to a high school from a middle school) in order to remain with their peers. The transfer to that school shall be allowed if space and staff are available. To receive priority consideration for a tracking transfer, the request must be received no later than the tenth school day after the first Saturday in February of the prior school year. This provision does not apply to a student who has moved who wishes to seek a transfer back to the same school. In this case, the student should seek a general transfer, and all requirements of the transfer policy shall apply.

Majority-to-Minority Transfer - Students may transfer from a school where the student's ethnic group is over 50 percent of the school's population to a school where the student's ethnic group is less than 50 percent of the school's population. The purpose of the majority-to-minority transfer is to complement the District's student assignments and promote diversity throughout the District. The transfer to that school shall be allowed if space and staff are available. To receive priority consideration for a majority-to-minority transfer, the request must be received no later than the tenth school day after the first Saturday in February of the prior school year. For the purpose of majority-to-minority transfers, two ethnic groups are defined:

- Black (and not of Hispanic origin) and Hispanic students.
- American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander and White (and not of Hispanic origin) students.

After February 19, 2010, all transfer requests will be processed in the order received. The deadline to apply for transfers for Fall Semester is August 10, 2010.