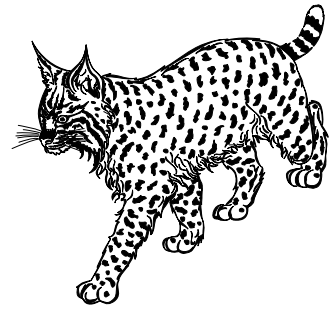


# MAYER'S MONTHLY MEMO – CHABOT ELEMENTARY

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2008



As we roll into earlier evenings of winter and the start of the winter holiday season, I am happy to report that there are wonderfully bright spots for Chabot.

**Shining Academic Success...** Chabot was recently awarded top honors in Oakland Unified's *Expect Success Awards*. Chabot received special recognition for academic excellence as one of the program's blue ribbon schools. This award highlights our hard work and success in raising performance and narrowing the achievement gap. We share this award with our teachers and students alike. We are honored and proud of the Chabot learning community and all the work they do to ensure a quality education for all of our students.

**What a carnival!** Students, staff and parents all seemed to have a terrific time at Claremont last month as the Chabot Fall Carnival rolled over to a new venue due to the construction. The sunny day and happy people exemplified the Chabot community. What a great time. Special thanks to **Todd Morrish** and **Carroll Moore** for their extraordinary energy and creativity. Of course, we also appreciate all the parents, teachers and students who stepped up to make it a great success.

**We've completed our first round of construction.** Thank you all for your patience and flexibility as we started off the school year with a reconfigured campus and a much smaller playground. The students and teachers have been heroes in adapting. We're into round two now with all sorts of exciting equipment on campus to intrigue and excite the kids. The teachers are looking at fun and creative ways to integrate the construction activity into classroom learning. We'll have more to report on that later.

I really want to gratefully acknowledge **Shelly Fierston** and Chabot's Long Range Planning committee for their support and positive attitude. Their consistent focus on the details and communication with me and our OUSD project manager is incredibly important. It is allowing me to keep my focus on the academics of the school, support teachers and students to achieve, and ensure an effective and exciting learning environment for the students. **Thank you!**

## THIS MONTH'S ACADEMIC FOCUS: CALENDAR MATH

**Background:** Our teachers first got excited about Calendar Math two years ago when they went to the annual teacher math conference in Asilomar and approximately half of the teachers went to the two hour training.

There was so much enthusiasm from both primary and intermediary teachers that we voted as a staff to try Calendar math in the middle of the year, two years ago. We brought in the presenter from Oregon and had several days of training and follow up. There are several aspects of Calendar Math that make it a fantastic supplement to our Harcourt Brace text book and math program.

- It focuses on key elements each month that relate to the calendar and the patterns created by the calendar, providing daily exposure to critical math concepts such as place value, mental math, measurement, time, money, geometry, estimation, patterns and algebraic thinking, graphing, and statistics.

- It appeals to the natural way children learn math—building on concepts a little at a time, every day. Students have the entire year to explore critical concepts through multiple experiences giving them the opportunity to learn at their own pace over time.
- The program is based on best classroom practices for teaching mathematics, including daily class discussion, real life data and continuous exposure to critical math concepts.

The most important thing for our students, though, is that it builds their mental math computational skills and provides one of the most meaningful and authentic opportunities to teach math on a daily basis. Done consistently, Calendar Math supports our students to move from a more concrete understanding of math concepts to a more abstract thinking as they develop their math problem solving and reasoning skills.

Our teachers meet at the end of each month to discuss which key elements they will focus on and reflect upon how the activities for the past month have gone. They also share their best practices, so that their professional learning can extend beyond their classrooms. In addition, teachers visit each others' classes to observe how they use the Calendar Math materials.

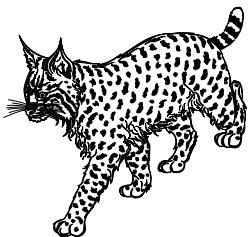
I believe that we have already begun seeing an increase in our math fluency from Calendar Math across the grade levels. The kids seem to really enjoy the discussions around math every day.

There are many ways that parents can easily support their child's math skills.

- Talk in the car. Make a game of doing age-appropriate calculations. For instance, *say I'm thinking of a number that when you add 7 to it, equals 14. What number am I thinking of?*
- Use grocery shopping for fun. Ask your child to estimate the total of two or three items. Or more if they are more advanced. Give them a budget number (i.e., \$5, and ask if there is enough money to purchase them with that amount.
- Beginning in January 2009, each grade level will send home a flyer each month explaining the key essential standards that are being taught. Work with your child on the key skill.
- Finally, knowing the math facts are as important to learning math as knowing the letter sounds is to reading. You can't read without knowing phonics and you can't do math if you are still counting on your fingers in fourth and fifth grade. Whether you are in the lower grades memorizing your doubles or your doubles plus one ( $8 + 9$  and  $6 + 7$ , etc.), or in the upper grades memorizing the times tables – practice, practice, practice.

As we get ready for the upcoming holiday season, I hope you will take time to enjoy the spirit in the air. Regardless of your religious affiliation and the commercialism in our streets and stores, a spirit of joy and sharing seems to prevail during the holiday season.

***Remember to tell your kids: learn a lot and have fun!***



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