



Jamie Dudley, Principal

Studies continue to show that the value of education is impressed upon students when they see their parents and other family members actively engaged in support of the school and the school program. Some of the benefits include:

- Higher student achievement
- Improved school attendance
- Stronger sense of well-being
- Improved student behavior
- Better perception of classroom and school
- Assignments completed and turned in more regularly
- Students set higher academic goals for themselves
- Improved student grades
- Greater parent satisfaction with teachers

The power that family involvement has to positively influence students success is without question. That is why we at Ballinger Elementary continually invite you to be an active part of this school. As we approach the final days of the school year, I encourage you to take an interest and to get involved with your child's educational experience.

Mike Nuñez, Assistant Principal

Hope all is well with your family! The spring semester is the time for state testing and completing the 2017-18 school year. Teachers will be having parent conferences/phone calls to discuss student needs and successes. I would like to take this time to provide a few questions that help student/parent school relationships. This allows for parents to have conversations to help the student with reflection and communication on the school day activities. These discussions have been proven to aid in student success in the school house.

1. Tell me about the best part of your day.
2. What was the hardest thing you had to do today?
3. Did any of your classmates do anything funny?
4. Tell me about what you read in class.
5. Who did you play with today? What did you play?
6. Do you think math [or any subject] is too easy or too hard?
7. What's the biggest difference between this year and last year?
8. What rules are different at school than our rules at home? Do you think they're fair?
9. Who did you sit with at lunch?
10. Can you show me something you learned (or did) today? (10 Questions)

10 Questions to Ask Your Child about His Day at School, Scholastic/Parent & Child Magazine, 29 Jan. 2018, www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/motivate-school-success/10-questions-to-ask-your-child-about-his-day-school.

Jennifer O'Donnell, Elementary Counselor

The "Bearcat Spotlight" is a new way we showcase students and staff that display leadership qualities. Each morning during the morning announcements in a segment called, "The Bearcat Spotlight," we recognize qualities such as being a good helper, working hard, bringing a smile to a sad friend, or simply by being nice to others.

Part of my job is to guide students on a path of academic and social success. This path includes making good choices, making and keeping friends and setting academic priorities. The state test, also known as STAAR, will be taking place for some grades in April and in May. This is a time for student to showcase and show off their hard work. Attendance is very important to student success. Thank you for being part of their success by bringing them to school and being involved in their academic journey. We appreciate you.

If I can be of assistance to you or your family, please call the office so we can visit. I look forward to working with you and your child to help meet your needs.

Pre Kindergarten- Mrs. Faubion and Mrs. Skelton

Wow! The first semester flew by! We are excited to be back and hope you all had a great Christmas break. We will continue to work on letter recognition, sounds, number recognition 1-10, rhyming words, and recognizing color words. If you have questions about how to help your child, please feel free to contact us.

Important Dates:

100th Day of School-Feb. 1st

February 14th Pre-K Parties 1:45-2:15

February Birthday Table-February 13th PK lunch is @ 10:45

End of 6 weeks-Feb. 16th

Feb. 19th-staff development-no school for students

Kindergarten- Mrs. Bean, Mrs. Drennan, Mrs. Jarvis, Mrs. Smith

Wow- it is 2018!! We had a busy couple of months in November and December. A big thank you to all who helped with our parties and joined us for our Thanksgiving Lunch and Christmas Program. We had a great time! Believe it or not- in between all these special activities, a lot of learning is taking place. We are blending sounds to form words and are actually reading. We have been practicing hard at home and at school and have become awesome readers! We are so excited about our progress. Way to go, Kindergarteners!!!!

Make sure you have joined your teacher's Remind 101 text messaging service so that you will be updated about upcoming events. If you have not joined the service, contact your child's teacher for information on how to do so. Thank you, parents, for all the help and support you give your child with their academics. The foundation being set these first years is so important to their success. Keep up the hard work at home!

Coming up:

*Phonics: letter identification and sounds for all 26 letters, the long vowels, and some blends. All high frequency words have been introduced, so keep practicing. Practice the word lists and readers every day.

*Math: calendar concepts, counting to 100, writing numerals to 20, model addition and subtraction problems, identify coins and 2D & 3D shapes.

*Science: sort picture cards to identify day/night, differentiate between living and non-living.

*Social Studies: identify the United States and Texas Flags and recite the pledges. We will also learn about citizenship.

Be looking for notes about the end of the year field trip and Kindergarten Graduation!

First Grade- Mrs. Stapper, Mrs. Ueckert, Mrs. Cavazos, Mrs. Gunyon

Math: We have spent a lot of time on place value up to 120. The students have used base ten blocks to make numbers, looked at models of base ten blocks to identify numbers, and written the numbers in expanded form. We have played games, used the computer, and completed many hands on activities to reinforce place value skills. We have also spent time counting by two's, five's, and ten's as well as forward and backward, and adding and taking away ten from a number. These skills helped prepare us to work with money. We have concentrated on pennies, nickels, and dimes, but we have also talked about quarters, half dollars, and dollar coins. The kids have sorted and identified coins as well as counted them. It would be great to have you practice counting combinations of pennies, nickels, and dimes at home. Next, we will be reviewing making and using graphs to represent information. Beginning the 5th Six Weeks, we will be studying two and three dimensional shapes, fractions involving halves and fourths, and telling time to the hour and half hour.

Science: The students have enjoyed talking about different kinds of weather and clouds. We have talked about paying attention to the weather forecast and how it helps determine the type of clothing we wear, as well as if we might not be able to go out for recess, and what type of activities are best for a particular type of weather. We also discussed weather tools, such as: thermometers, rain gauges, windsocks, and anemometers. Of course, they are all interested in tornadoes!! We have also learned about the four seasons and the different types of weather that are associated with the different seasons. Next, we will be talking about objects in the sky, such as the stars and the moon. We will also be investigating living and non-living things and plants.

Reading/Language Arts: We have completed our Middle of the Year testing and will have parent conferences soon. Look for a conference note/appointment in your child's folder. It is important to meet with your child's teacher to keep track of your child's progress. The 4th 6 weeks will feature a focus on non-fiction materials. We will compare the features of non-fiction to fiction material in reading. The students enjoy learning facts about many things and tend to have a high interest level with non-fiction stories. Encouraging them to express a response to what they have read will be their next challenge.

First Grade (Continued)

We continue to monitor your child's fluency rate (accuracy and speed in reading). The expectations will increase with each grading period to ensure that your child is reading at the rate expected for 2nd grade. Spelling tests feature new phonics elements that have been studied in class. Students are expected to apply what they have learned to spell words and sentences. Many of our first graders have performed extremely well on these assessments---maybe some future U.I.L. team spellers?

In Language, we continue to practice daily language skills including punctuation, spelling, rhyming, ABC order, and grammar. Daily practice helps to strengthen these language skills!

Social Studies: We have been studying the past in Social Studies. Comparing how things were in the past to how they are in the present will help your child think critically about how things have changed over the years. Areas of comparison include: transportation, schools, technology, clothing and homes. We also studied the important contributions of Martin Luther King, Jr. in our country's history.

Second Grade- Mrs. Schaefer, Mrs. Holden, Mrs. Pelzel, Mrs. Lange

Can you believe how fast this year has flown by? It seems like we were just getting started and here we are in the 2nd semester. We are currently finishing up middle of the year testing and will be scheduling your second conference this year very soon. Please make sure to meet with your child's teachers to discuss their testing results. The students have been working hard not only at school, but also at home, so thank you for your help! Please continue to keep them motivated on their school work. Also, please be looking for information about our Valentine's party on Tuesday, February 14th. We will be getting in contact with you soon.

Math: The students continue to work on their adding and subtracting skills. We have been adding and subtracting with regrouping up to three digits. This can be challenging, so please review the graded papers sent home in their Thursday folders. Next, we will be working on graphing. This is a fun unit! We will be making pictographs and bar graphs, as well as learning how to answer and ask questions about the graphs.

Science: We have just finished up our study of the weather. Your child should be able to identify the different cloud types, how to read the forecast on weather.com, and hopefully tell you about the water cycle. As we continue, we have some fun things planned for learning the solar system along with the sun and moon. I hope your child has as much fun learning science as we do teaching it!

Reading: This semester started off with a bang! The students are comparing different versions of stories and exploring story elements. We will be reading more expository texts as the semester continues. We also just finished our middle of year testing. The TPRI testing shows that the students have made a lot of gains in their spelling and reading. Conferences will be scheduled soon, and we are looking forward to sharing the test results with you. Please continue having your child read to you several times a week as this is very beneficial to them.

Social Studies: We are learning about the world around us. The students will be learning about and making different types of maps. They will learn how to read grid maps, physical maps, political maps, map legends, and use cardinal directions. They love creating their own maps! We will also learn about continents, oceans, and the different landforms found on Earth.

Third Grade Reading/Language Arts- Mrs. Hatler

The third six weeks we studied non-fiction texts. We learned about text features, such as: photos, captions, bold print, maps, and graphs and how to use them to aid use in reading comprehension. We learned a variety of facts about "Owls" and "Reindeer" and wrote some fantastic non-fiction compositions on both of these unique animals. For the holidays, we read Horrible Harry and the Holidaze, by Suzy Kline. The students learned about five winter holidays that are celebrated in the United States including: Three Kings Day, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Korean New Year, and Christmas.

This six weeks we have been focused on procedural text, how to do or make something. In our Valentine Box project the students created a container to hold their valentines out of recycled materials and then wrote their own procedural text including the materials and steps they took to make it.

In celebration of Black History Month, we read Follow the Drinking Gourd, by F.N. Monjo and Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt, by Deborah Hopkins. These are stories are about the Underground Railroad. The students learned about stories written from both the perspective of the slave and the conductors. We will also read Stone Fox, by John Reynolds Gardiner, and watched the movie. The students identified the similarities and differences in the cinematic version and wrote about their observations. We finished the six weeks with a unit on establishing a position and persuasive texts.

(Third Grade Reading/Language Arts, cont'd)

We are continuing our poetry practice with the Weekly Reader Homework and will be working more on figurative language in the weeks to come. Please make sure your child is completing their homework each week and doing the practice spelling test. They also have a fluency passage to read on Monday through Wednesday nights that you need to initial when they read. Practicing their reading each night is crucial to becoming a more fluent reader.

Please encourage your child to be reading and testing on their AR books. Most of the third graders did an awesome job of meeting their AR goal last six weeks. This six weeks goal is 8 points.

Third Grade Math Blasters- Ms. McNaley

It's a great new year! Students are rested and ready to learn. The classes have been working on patterns and multi-step word problems. We are continuing to work on multiplication, subtraction with regrouping, and money. Students learned that multiplication is repeated addition, but memorization of multiplication facts is very essential to life. So with that being said, please continue to work with your child at home to memorize the multiplication facts. Weekly fact tests are given on each fact family.

Third Grade Science and Social Studies- Mrs. Wilson

In Science, we are exploring the solar system! Students have studied the Sun and each one of the planets. We are currently studying how the Earth, Sun and Moon work together to give us years, days, and seasons. Ask your child to explain something new they have learned!

In Social Studies, we are learning about our Government. Students know the 3 branches of government and the 3 levels of government. We are continuing on to the "consent of the governed" and civic duties. This topic is challenging for the students to wrap their heads around. I challenge you to have a conversation with your child about how important it is to get out and vote!

Fourth Grade Math- Mrs. Dankworth

Up to this point in time, we have covered a lot of math objectives. Fourth Grade has survived through two digit multiplication, long division, interpreting remainders when dealing with a division problem, and now on to fractions. By the end of this 4th six weeks, we should be finished with fractions and working our way through different types of data charts and measurements. One of the most important things to continue to do is review multiplication facts and always ask your child questions about what they are learning. If they can explain to you what they are doing then they are grasping the concepts. By the time you get this newsletter, we will have just completed our practice Math STAAR Test. Be looking for notes to come home soon for parent conferences to discuss results from all practice STAAR Tests.

Fourth Grade Science- Mrs. Freeman

Oh my goodness, this year is flying by! During the third six weeks, our fourth graders learned all about how the Earth's surface continues to change due to weathering, erosion, and deposition. They discovered which landforms are built up due to deposition and those that are formed due to the weathering away of rock by wind, water and ice. This six weeks, we have jumped right in to exploring the processes in the water cycle and learning all about weather. The students travelled as a water droplet to see the journey it takes through the water cycle to better understand how water moves in our atmosphere and on Earth. We are currently learning about weather tools and how meteorologists use these to predict weather. Once we have finish this unit on weather, we will move right into the Sun, Earth, and Moon system and learn how the rotation and revolution causes patterns to happen on Earth, such as tides, moon phases and seasons. We have some fun projects and labs coming up with this unit that the kids will be excited about!!

Fourth Grade Reading/Language Arts- Mrs. Burrell and Mrs. King

Fourth Graders are continuing to work very hard to become fluent readers and expressive writers. We are amping up our practice for the Writing STAAR test (which is new for fourth graders) on April 10. This test will consist of revising and editing passages as well as a written composition. You can help your child prepare by having them read unpolished works and try to find grammatical errors in them. You can also help your child by having them write as much as possible!

We are also continuing to prepare to ace the Reading STAAR test on May 15. We are preparing through passage practice, and learning key strategies to be a successful life-long reader and test taker. You may help your child to prepare by reading with them as much as possible and asking them questions about the text as they read. We are having a great year in 4th grade reading!

Fifth Grade Science- Mrs. Busenlehner

For the past week the students have been learning about weather and climate. They have discovered that without the sun and the water cycle there would be no weather. Our next unit of study will be the Sun, Earth, and Moon Systems. The students will explore each celestial object and compare the properties of each one. A huge part of this unit is for the student to master what revolution is compared to a rotation. Please quiz your kiddo about these concepts at home. The more they hear and talk about these concepts, the more it will help them to be successful in the classroom.

Fifth Grade Reading and Social Studies- Mrs. Cook

The students in fifth grade had a very productive first semester, and the students have improved since the beginning of the school year. I want to thank the parents for their support throughout the semester!!

We are working diligently on reading skills in order to prepare for the upcoming STAAR Test in the Spring.

The student's AR goal is 10 points with an 85 % average. Each student can meet his or her goal if they read at school and at home. Please encourage your child to read each night.

In January, we have also studied the life of Dr. Martin Luther King. The students researched his early life and impact on America. I am looking forward to the rest of a great second semester!!

Fifth Grade Language Arts and Social Studies- Mrs. Phillips

Fifth grade writing continues to study the world of grammar rules! Our focus has been on dialogue, comma rules, and STAAR revise/edit questions so we can apply our knowledge of grammar rules. On Friday, we have a free journal topic, and then students have the opportunity to share their writing with the class. After Spring Break, we will spend more time on different styles of writing.

In homeroom Social Studies, we began using the USA Studies Weekly newspapers. This program allows us an opportunity to study on line and use a paper copy of our weekly newspaper. We are looking forward to studying the Civil War and Reconstruction periods.

Fifth Grade Math- Mrs. Tucker

Our 5th grade mathematicians jumped right into multiplying and dividing fractions when we returned from the break! We are masters at creating and interpreting models to solve all sorts of fraction problems. We will soon begin studying Geometry including perimeter, area, and volume, as well as learning how to solve problems that require us to convert within a measurement system.

Be looking for your student to be watching a math video on their laptop approximately two to three nights a week. They do not need internet access to watch the video. However, the video must be downloaded to their desktop while on school campus.

Physical Education- Coach Hope

PE for Ballinger Elementary kids have now moved back into the gym after two very long years. It is still not complete, but we are excited to at least be inside. We're hoping the goals will be in by the end of February, which is when they will mark the floor. There are several other things that need to be completed that we are hoping will be finished soon.

We will be doing our FitnessGram testing in the next couple of months for our 3rd-5th graders. We will also be doing our Jump Rope For Heart/Hoops For Heart fundraiser sometime this Spring, as soon as the gym is complete.

Since we are back in the gym, it is very important that the kids wear tennis shoes to PE, for their safety and also to keep the floor in good shape.

We started Workout Wednesdays this week, and it's very obvious that many of our students are not getting exercise outside of my 30 minute PE class. Please encourage your children to get outside and play when they can, and I encourage you to spend some quality time as a family as well. There are lots of different things that you can do as a family that would encourage health and fitness. I'm looking forward to this Spring semester, things will get very busy!

Head Start News- Julie Collier

Head Start is currently accepting applications for the 2017-2018 school year. Registration for the 2018-2019 school year will begin in April. Children must be 3 years old by September 1, and meet income and/or disability requirements. For more information, call Julie Collier at 325-365-3527 EXT 3058.

Accelerated Reader and BoxTop News- Mrs. Duke

Accelerated Reader News: AR Trips will be here before you know it! Trip requirements:

First Graders: become an independent reader and earn 25 points

Second Graders: earn 50 points

Third Graders: earn 85 points

Fourth Graders: earn 100 points

Fifth Graders: earn 120 points

** All students must have an 85% average on AR tests to qualify

(Accelerated Reader and BoxTop News, cont'd.)

BoxTop News: It is contest time! Each week during the month of February the class that turns in the most BoxTops will receive a prize. This money will be used to help pay for the AR prizes and the end of year field trips. Also check out the BoxTop app, and help BES earn money that way.

As you continue to save BoxTops please remember to:

1. Cut out the BoxTop along the dotted line.
2. Check the date.
3. Place BoxTops in a snack baggie. Remember to include your child's name and homeroom teacher.
4. Place Bonus BoxTops in a separate baggie.
5. Place them in the grade level box outside the cafeteria.

Library- Mrs. Pratt

It is hard to believe that we are already into our 4th six weeks of school. The first semester literally flew by. We are seeing a great deal of interest among our students to reach personal goals for the AR Reading Program that exceed the grade level goals set by their teachers. It is very encouraging to see them pushing themselves toward excellence!

We have received several new book orders which include this year's Bluebonnet Books. This is a collection of 20 new books that are being considered for the prestigious Bluebonnet Award. The fun part is that the winning book is selected by students from all over the state of Texas. If a student has read at least five of the twenty books, then they are eligible to vote. We will be conducting our election Wed., January 31st. We will be anxiously awaiting the announcement to see if our BES students picked the winning book.

Coming up this Spring, we will again host the Scholastic Book Fair. The dates are March 5th-8th. This event is the highlight of the year in the Library. Students will be able to make purchases from a wide variety of popular books. We always appreciate the overwhelming support for the Book Fair. This is an excellent opportunity to get good books in the hands of our students while raising money to help support our BES Library.

Again, let me tell you how much I enjoy serving your children in the Library. Please encourage them to keep up the good work through this last semester. Remember, reading is one of the most important activities you can share with them.

Three-Tier Math- Mrs. Cauley

FUN WAYS TO BUILD NUMBER SENSE AT HOME

Looking for ways to help your child in math? Using math in our everyday routines can help foster a love of numbers and help your child cultivate a sturdy foundation of number sense. As they develop an understanding of how numbers work, they become confident and reflective mathematicians.

Below are 5 fun ways from www.familymathnight.com to effortlessly incorporate number sense activities while driving in the car, cutting vegetables, waiting in the doctor's office, etc.

1. What's the Question?

Give your kids the answer and have them come up with the problem. For example: The answer is seven.

Sample answer: I had ten grapes and then I ate three. How many grapes are left?

2. Who Am I?

Not only are these perfect for mental math practice but also a great way to reinforce math vocabulary.

Sample: I am an even number greater than ten but less than twenty. The sum of my digits is nine. Who am I?

3. Which Number Does Not Belong?

This is a pre-algebra activity where kids sort and classify numbers into categories. Example: Which number does not belong: 4, 12, 17, 8, 20? Answer: The number 17 does not belong because it is an odd number (or... 17 is not a multiple of 2).

4. Which Has More?

A great mental math activity that gets kids to compare several quantities at the same time. Example: Which has more, the number of wheels on two cars or the number of eggs in a dozen?

5. And the Answer is...

For this activity, kids need to compute a series of quantities in their head. Example: Start with the number of days in a week. Subtract the number of wheels on a tricycle. Double that number. And the answer is...

UIL News- Mrs. Kvapil

On December 4, 2017, seventy-seven Ballinger Elementary students participated in the Elementary UIL District Meet. The meet was held in Wall, Texas. Below are the students who participated and awards received. The students will be recognized at the BISD School Board Meeting on February 12, 2018, at 5:30 pm.

Second Grade:

Oral Reading

Zach Grimes 5th

Lyla Aguero

Paityn Lange

Parker Pruett

Spelling:

Corbin Urbanek 6th

Alex Weng

Brenna Herridge

Storytelling:

Tyler Busenlehner 4th

Kenya Boone 6th

Asia Cochran

Clara Hoelscher

Music Memory:

Music Memory Team 2nd

Dylan McNally 3rd

Travis Cutter 6th

Brenton Valenzuela

Caden Wilson

Rylan Quiroga

Creative Writing:

Lyla Aguero 5th

McKenna Smith

Keelen Newton

Third Grade:

Spelling

Dylan Page

Braylin Quiroga

Pierson Nord

Kynlee Palmer

Music Memory

Alana McDuffee

Alexis Vargas

Christian Sanchez

Jayden Brown

Alivia Jalomo

Storytelling

Miguel Avila

Brody Wilde

Kyndall Weathers

Kyndal Rollwitz

Oral Reading

Zac Harrison 3rd

Ava Aguilera

Harlem Mikalik

Deesa Drennan

Ready Writing

Zac Harrison

Riley King

Kynlee Palmer

Evan Cave

Fifth Grade:

Chess

Jaclynn Dankworth 6th

Elaine Zhuang

Desiree Flores

Olivia Aguilera

Art

Miriam Oden

Eracio Garza

Aerith Quiroga

Nicole Maas

Ivery House

Dictionary

Bryce Lopez

Kambri Keese

CJ Moreno

GiGi Martinez

Fourth Grade:

Spelling

Brianna Strayhdorn 6th

Jeyton Herring

Kristy Rangel

Marisol Lopez

Number Sense

Oscar Herrera

Jack Robertson

Aden Sanchez

Music Memory

Kristy Rangel

Wyatt Rutledge

Jude Luna

Hayden Conger

Scarlet Klaras

Chess

Ali Goetz

Oscar Herrera

Ethan Havlak

Art

Kristy Rangel 5th

Brianna Strayhdorn

Oral Reading

Ashtyn Wilson 3rd

Eva Burrell

Kira Mata

Jayli Whitten

Ready Writing

Ali Goetz 6th

Kristy Rangel

Natalie Quiroga

Divine Fuentes

Fifth Grade:

Oral Reading

Olivia Aguilera

Aubrey Prieto

Jesse Battle

Elaine Zhuang

Maps

Desiree Flores

Jaylen Hernandez

Creative Writing

Olivia Hoelscher

Kylie Sivley

Miriam Oden

Fifth Grade:

Music Memory

Bryson Lange 1st

Paige Sehon

Kylie Sivley

Corbyn Hurt

Listening

Ivory House 1st

Olivia Tucker 3rd

Aerith Quiroga 6th

Number Sense

Charles Holder

Collin Cook

Nishant Patel

Spelling

Nicole Maas

Miriam Oden

Jaylin Washington

Social Studies

Brady Clinton 6th

Jaclynn Dankworth

Desiree Flores