



# UPDATE

February 1, 2010

## Pathway to *Excellence*: KEEPING OUR CHILDREN A STEP AHEAD

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### 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Enrichment Clusters Are Going Strong!

by Nicole Levitan, LME Enrichment Coordinator

Friday is always exciting at Laurel Mountain because it's E-slot day! However, now there is even more eagerness since our 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders started their enrichment clusters on January 15. These enrichment cluster groups have met three times and will continue until March 5, wrapping up with the Enrichment Cluster Showcase on March 12. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders chose from 15 different enrichment clusters:

Clay Creations • Quick Quilters • Paws and Claws Society  
Mask Mania • You've Got Me in Stitches!  
Future Change Makers • Dynamite Drawers • Mad Science  
Hocus Pocus! • Jewelry Team • Boy Inventors Mania  
Brilliant Brain Teasers • Dessert Disasters  
Outer Space Exploration • Talent Time!

As in previous years, students ranked their top four cluster choices during class time. LME Enrichment Coordinator Nicole Levitan entered the preferences data into a spreadsheet which LME dad Eric Deal then uploaded into his program for sorting students into clusters based on their preferences.

The program randomly assigns students to the enrichment clusters, ideally matching every child to his or her first choice. When that's not possible, the program then places students into their second choice, then third, and finally fourth choice, if needed. We are very excited to report that no 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student was assigned to their 4<sup>th</sup> enrichment cluster choice this year! 191 students are in their 1<sup>st</sup> enrichment cluster choice, 38 are in their 2<sup>nd</sup>

choice and 21 are in their 3<sup>rd</sup> choice. Even though it's not a perfect system, we feel it's the fairest way possible to sort the students. The sorting program also allows us to track student choices throughout their years at LME.

Please look for the E-news updates sent periodically throughout the enrichment cluster meetings. Also, next time you are in the building, check out the enrichment bulletin board located by the front office for pictures and summaries from our 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade enrichment clusters.

### Enrichment Clusters in Action

by Nicole Levitan, LME Enrichment Coordinator

Does your child come home Fridays brimming with excitement over their enrichment cluster or E-slot? Wouldn't it be great to see first-hand what the buzz is all about so you can better share in the excitement? We have a solution...join us for a Parent Enrichment Cluster Tour!

Nicole Levitan and other Laurel Mountain staff will tour parents around our 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Enrichment Clusters from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. on February 5 and February 19. During the tour, you will briefly stop by each enrichment cluster to witness the exciting activities taking place Friday mornings at Laurel Mountain.

Four interested parents participated in our first tour on January 22. They enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about LME enrichment clusters and observe how the students are involved in the activities.

The upcoming tours are open to all LME parents of any grade level. Tours of our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade clusters have already taken place; Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade enrichment cluster tours will be available later in the school year.

If you would like to join a tour, go to the Laurel Mountain homepage at <http://schools.roundrockisd.org/laurelmountain/> and click on "2nd and 3rd Grade Enrichment Cluster Tours for Parents". Then click on the pull-down menu and select "2nd and 3rd Grade Enrichment Cluster Tours for Parents". Finally, sign up under the date that works best for you. Your RSVP will save you a spot and guarantee adequate staffing for tour guides.

Plan on meeting in the front office by 8:00 a.m. on your tour day, and remember to sign in at the Raptor station.

## Enrichment Keeps Going and Going and Going...

by Nicole Levitan, LME Enrichment Coordinator

LME's 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders participated in their enrichment clusters during the fall 2009 semester, culminating with the showcase on December 18. However, just because enrichment clusters wrapped up in December doesn't mean choices for enrichment ended for these students...

This year, we are excited to offer E-slot electives to all our students, in addition to the enrichment clusters. E-slot electives are different than clusters but the idea is to provide students with another opportunity for enrichment in areas of student interests. E-slot electives last five to six weeks while enrichment clusters stretch over six to eight weeks. During E-slot, students are not expected to make a product or service as during enrichment clusters. The E-slot electives are similar to mini-courses or clubs.

In grades 2 through 5, students have a choice of which E-slot elective to attend. In a process similar to selecting enrichment clusters, students review E-slot electives from a brochure, rank their top 5 choices (every student is guaranteed placement in one of their 5 choices), and the data is entered and crunched by Nicole Levitan and Eric Deal. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade E-slot electives kicked off on January 15 and will continue for six weeks through February 19. Students chose from 15 E-slot electives:

Painting Pals • Chess Fanatics  
Presenting Your Research Through Podcasting  
Books Rock Book Club • Read-a-thon Rally  
LME Doodlers • Long Jump Roping Lions • Origami Fun  
Preserve Work • BOARDWALK • Yearbook  
NXT Robotics • Watt Watchers • Spanish Club  
2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Enrichment Cluster Helpers

Out of all 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, 132 are in their 1<sup>st</sup> elective choice, 58 are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice, 28 are in their 3<sup>rd</sup> choice, 21 are in their 4<sup>th</sup> choice and 19 are in their 5<sup>th</sup> choice.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders will start their E-slot electives after Spring Break, when their enrichment clusters are complete.

Their electives will be set up and run very similar to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

In kindergarten and 1st grade, E-slot electives look a bit different, but the purpose is the same. Kindergarten started their E-slot electives on January 15. Their electives are centered on science experiments, a high area of interest for kindergarteners. Each kindergarten teacher demonstrates and leads one experiment. Kindergarten classes travel to a new classroom each week and participate in the hands-on science experiment. By the end of five weeks, kindergarten classes will rotate through all five classrooms and participate in five new science experiments.

First grade's E-slot electives will center on areas of student interests and will be set-up very similar to kindergarten. The classes will rotate to a new classroom for six weeks and experience different hands-on enrichment activities. First grade's electives will take place before and/or after their enrichment clusters.

We are very excited about the continuation of enrichment beyond the enrichment clusters. E-slot electives are another terrific way to encourage enrichment during the school day.

### Thank You to our Family and Community Enrichment Supporters

**NORA CHUO, MONICA DEAL** and **BEATRIZ GUNZ**, LME parents and helper/facilitator/presenter for *Dynamite Drawers*, a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade enrichment cluster

**JOE MORRIS**, Amy's Ice Cream, a presenter for *Dessert Diasters*, a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade enrichment cluster

**CHIKKI VENKAT**, former LME parent and facilitator for *Future Change Makers*, a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade enrichment cluster

**KURT WHEELER**, LME parent and presenter to *Mask Mania*, a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade enrichment cluster

**ANNE WEBSTER**, LME parent and facilitator for *Read-a-thon Rally*, a 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade E-slot elective

**ANGELA EBERT** and **VERONICA PERALTA**, LME parents and facilitators for *Yearbook*, a 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade E-slot elective

**ALEJANDRA MCGUIRE**, LME parent and facilitator for *Spanish Club*, a 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade E-slot elective

**BRAD HENDERSON**, local magician and presenter to *Hocus Pocus*, a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade enrichment cluster

**JEANNE ARONOFF**, LME parent and E-slot presenter on Hanukkah to Ms. Peters' 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class

**CLAUDIA SANCHEZ**, LME parent and E-slot presenter on holiday customs in Mexico to Mrs. Prentice's kindergarten class

**SAMMIE GRAY** and **MARY MICHAUD**, Williamson County Animal Shelter and presenters to *Paws and Claws*, a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade enrichment cluster



