



UPDATE

October 26, 2009

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

The Totals Are In!

by Nicole Levitan, LME Enrichment
Coordinator

Did you know that 288 Laurel Mountain Lions love cooking? We do because of the interest surveys that all students completed at the beginning of the school year. Children come to school to learn about the world. They also come to school to learn about themselves. Laurel Mountain is committed to helping students develop an understanding of their own interests and talents. Our ultimate goal is to help children develop interests and understand how they can share their talents with the world.

The interest surveys help the teachers focus on the students' interests. The surveys guide the Enrichment Clusters and E-slot activities that take place on Friday mornings. They also help the teachers learn about their students and class, which helps build classroom relationships that we value at Laurel Mountain.

In August, each student at Laurel Mountain was given an interest survey to complete in their classroom. The students were asked to pick their top five to 10 interests. The Kindergarten and 1st grade survey consisted of 19 different pictures to choose from, ranging from pets to outer space. The 2nd and 3rd grade survey had 48 different categories; the 4th and 5th grade survey had 84 categories. The numbers of categories increases as

the children get older and are exposed to new experiences and information.

Top 9 Interest Areas for Kindergarten

1. Legos (43 students)
2. Sports (32 students)
3. Pets (31 students)
4. Wild Animals (30 students)
5. Dinosaurs (30 students)
6. Cooking (29 students)
7. Puzzles (29 students)
8. Outer Space (27 students)
9. Computers (26 students)

Top 10 Interest Areas for 1st Grade

1. Cooking (55 students)
2. Outer Space (55 students)
3. Legos (53 students)
4. Pets (45 students)
5. Arts and Crafts (44 students)
6. Plants (42 students)
7. Dinosaurs (41 students)
8. Puzzles and Games (37 students)
9. Wild Animals (33 students)
10. Computers (32 students)

Top 10 Interest Areas for 2nd Grade

1. Animals (63 students)
2. Clay (62 students)
3. Magic (60 students)
4. Cooking (57 students)
5. Drawing (46 students)
6. Life in the Ocean (44 students)
7. Rocks and Minerals (43 students)
8. Arts and Crafts (43 students)
9. Computers/Technology (39 students)
10. Dinosaurs/Fossils (39 students)

Top 11 Interest Areas for 3rd Grade

1. Magic (77 students)
2. Clay (74 students)

3. Cooking (71 students)
4. Animals (67 students)
5. Drawing (52 students)
6. Sports/Learning New Games (50 students)
7. Monsters/Mysteries (48 students)
8. Dinosaurs/Fossils (46 students)
9. Life in the Ocean (46 students)
10. Rocks/Minerals (46 students)
11. Computers/Technology (46 students)

Top 10 Interest Areas for 4th Grade

1. Clay (63 students)
2. Chefs (43 students)
3. Magic (37 students)
4. Art Projects (36 students)
5. Painting (32 students)
6. Drawing (30 students)
7. Cartoons (30 students)
8. Acting (29 students)
9. Technology (29 students)
10. Knitting/sewing/quilting (28 students)

Top 10 Interest Areas for 5th Grade

1. Clay (61 students)
2. Cartoons (43 students)
3. Sports (43 students)
4. Drawing (40 students)
5. Technology (39 students)
6. Magic (39 students)
7. Movies (35 students)
8. Chefs (33 students)
9. The Future (32 students)
10. Chemistry/Experiments (31 students)

Clusters Get Going

by Nicole Levitan, LME Enrichment Coordinator

We are thrilled that Laurel Mountain 4th and 5th graders participated in their first enrichment cluster meetings on Friday, October 16. The enrichment clusters will last for eight weeks, followed by an Enrichment Cluster Showcase on December 18. We were able to offer 16 different enrichment clusters to our students this year, including:

- Scraps of Cloth
- Kid's Kitchen
- Fitness Fun
- Laurel Mountain's Got Talent!
- Clay Creations
- Movie Magic
- Art a la Carte
- You've Got Me in Stitches!
- Beads, Knots and String – Oh My!
- Friday Morning Knitting Club
- Claymations
- Who can? We Can Use a Webcam!
- Beyond Description
- Time Warp
- Stewards of the Preserve

During class time, the 4th and 5th graders ranked their top four cluster choices. Mrs. Levitan took their preferences and entered that data into an Excel spreadsheet. Then, she sent this information to Eric Deal, a Laurel Mountain parent who has written a computer program that sorts all of the children into their clusters based on preferences.

The computer program randomly assigns students to their clusters and tries to give every child their first cluster choice. When that is not able to happen, the program then moves the students into their second choice, then third choice and finally fourth choice. Also, the program takes into account the number of students per cluster, trying not to assign more than 15 students per cluster. This helps keep the facilitator-to-student ratio low.

With our 4th and 5th graders, 167 students are in their first cluster choice, 68 are in their second cluster choice, 21 are in their third cluster choice and 0 students are in their fourth cluster choice. Even though this is not a perfect system, we feel it is

the fairest way possible to sort the students. Using the program also allows us to track student choices throughout their years at LME.

Please look for the ENews updates sent periodically throughout the cluster meetings. If you are not signed up on ENews, please visit the Laurel Mountain PTA website and click on "Mailing Lists". Then, scroll down for more information on how to sign up for "Round Rock ISD ENews". Furthermore, please check-out our enrichment bulletin board from the front office which displays the photographs and summaries from our 4th and 5th grade enrichment clusters.

Thank You To Our Family and Community Enrichment Supporters

- **Monica Araoz**, LME parent and a presenter for *Art a la Carte*, a 4/5 enrichment cluster
- **Larry Barnett**, RRISD Video Services Department and a presenter for *Picture This*, a 4/5 enrichment cluster
- **Tara Bodwell**, LME parent and E-slot helper with the Keep Austin Beautiful projects in Mrs. Wheeler's 4th grade class
- **Jen Castelino**, LME parent and E-slot helper with landform project in Mrs. Briggs' 2nd grade class
- **Jen Clitheroe**, LME parent and parent assistant for *Picture This*, a 4/5 enrichment cluster
- **Eric Deal**, LME parent and enrichment cluster sorter
- **Monica Deal**, LME parent and a parent assistant for *Art a la Carte*, a 4/5 enrichment cluster
- **Mithu Deb**, Local artist and a facilitator for *Clay Creations*, a 4/5 enrichment cluster
- **Angela Ebert**, LME parent and a parent assistant for *Friday Morning Knitting Club*, a 4/5 enrichment cluster
- **Sean Green**, LME parent and E-slot helper with the Keep Austin Beautiful projects in Mrs. Wheeler's 4th grade class
- **Penny Hannan**, LME parent and E-slot helper with mural painting and the Family History Museum in Ms. Schuster's 3rd grade class
- **Tricia Hoover**, LME parent and a presenter for *Beyond description*, a 4/5 enrichment cluster
- **Jeff Hunt**, Director of the Texas Military Forces Museum and presenter for *Time Warp*, a 4/5 enrichment cluster
- **Dr. Menaka Jayasundera**, LME parent and E-slot presenter on the human body in Ms. Alexander's 1st grade class
- **Rachel Koh**, LME student and E-slot presenter on the violin to Mrs. Miranda's kindergarten class
- **Sumana Mandala**, LME parent and E-slot reader in Ms. Schuster's 3rd grade class
- **Celina McGuire**, LME parent and E-slot helper with the Keep Austin Beautiful projects in Mrs. Wheeler's 4th grade class
- **Neha Mehta**, LME parent and a presenter for *Fitness Fun*, a 4/5 enrichment cluster
- **Paul and Shannon Miranda**, Community member and E-slot presenter on African Djembe Drum to Mrs. Miranda's kindergarten class
- **Colleen Morris**, LME parent and a parent assistant for *Friday Morning Knitting Club*, a 4/5 enrichment cluster
- **Vijayavani Pedapati**, LME parent and E-slot helper with the Family History Museum in Ms. Schuster's 3rd grade class
- **Veronica Peralta**, LME parent and parent assistant for *The Quilting Club*, a 4/5 enrichment cluster
- **Jane Scott**, LME teacher and E-slot presenter on Bearded Dragons to Mrs. Miranda's kindergarten class
- **Carole Stockton**, Community member and E-slot presenter on Hawaiian Dance in Mrs. A. Lee's kindergarten class
- **Constance Thiel**, LME parent and E-slot presenter on Germany and E-slot helper with clay in Mrs. Campbell's 3rd grade class
- **Lakshmy Vaidyanathan**, LME parent, and a presenter for *Fitness Fun*, a 4/5 enrichment cluster
- **Martha Webb**, LME parent and E-slot helper for making dog treats in Mrs. Rung's 2nd grade class
- **Anne Webster**, LME parent and a parent assistant for *Beads, Knots and String*, a 4/5 enrichment cluster
- **Leigh Ann Bonham**, LME parent and a parent assistant for *You've Got Me in Stitches*, a 4/5 enrichment cluster
- **Sharon Deol**, LME parent and E-slot presenter on Rosh Hashannah in Ms. Rumpf's 2nd grade class

