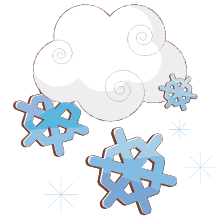


Mallard Messenger

January/February
2011



Important Dates!

Collaboration Days Release at 1:30	Jan 11, 25 Feb
No School Martin Luther King Day	Jan 16th
No School February Break	Feb 20-24

At Murdock it is time for our team to begin practicing for the “big game”... for us that means the April STAR test! We practice by giving students actual STAR test questions that have been released by the state to help them practice and be prepared. To increase confidence and relieve anxiety, teachers often make these questions into a game, while also using them to reinforce the skills and concepts they are testing. In addition, we use these practice questions to teach critical thinking skills for test success. Tests are a part of life the whole way through, almost every occupation involves some type of test for basic skills to gain entry.

At home, you can follow the same format that our teachers are using in the classrooms. We use the website <http://starsamplequestions.org/> (Link also available from the Murdock website). Here the questions are separated into difficulty and specific skills. We give the question to students and then talk about why the right answer is the right answer – and why the wrong answers are wrong. Our goal is that by the time students take the test in April, they have seen and practiced many questions and they will have a sense of confidence and feel prepared.

It is important when working with students, however, that we all understand the design of the test. There is a detailed statistical analysis of every question when the tests are put together. Some of the questions are designated “Advanced Performance Level” and this means that only a small percentage of students will answer correctly. In other words, the question is really hard! It is important to share this with your kids at home also, and teach them how to critically think through difficult questions when the answer is not immediately obvious.

We sincerely appreciate you using this website at home and being a team with us as we work to raise STAR achievement levels for our students at Murdock. We know our students, our school and community are capable of great things and in today’s world we know others look to our test results to find this potential.

Thank You Again!

Holly McLaughlin, Principal

Rainy Day Games!

We are still taking donations for our rainy day game cart. The kids love using these games when they are indoors for lunch recess on rainy days. Some popular items are: Jenga, Legos, and easy board games. Thanks!