



SINTON ISD
A TEA
RECOGNIZED
DISTRICT

SINTON ISD PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT NEWSLETTER

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION SHARE THE VISION

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- EMSM TX Challenge
- Family Festival
- 48th Annual Thanksgiving Meal
- PI Conference
- What's on the Community's Mind?
- Internet Safety

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A Note from the Superintendent

The Sinton Independent School District has experienced a definite swing in positive momentum in all facets of operations – from academics to financial management – as evidenced by the following:

- The district's Recognized status, the highest rating the district has ever received during the TAKS testing era;
- Top state ratings in financial management, strong bond ratings, and clean audits;
- \$12.5 million Capital Improvement Project (New Sinton HS Science Labs, New Welder Elementary, New and improved athletic facilities);
- Pirate Academy at Sinton HS, very successful ninth grade initiative;
- Increased and improved safety and security for all S.I.S.D. schools;
- Academic Teaming at Smith Middle School;
- Campus Consolidation, saving the district over \$250,000 in administrative salaries;
- Balanced Literacy Reading philosophy in grades K-6;
- Optional Flexible School Year, very successful incentive and accelerated instructional program;
- Increased Dual Credit opportunities for students at Sinton HS.

Sinton I.S.D. will continue to prosper and keep this positive momentum moving forward with the support of our parents and guardians. I encourage you to be proud of your school district, become involved in your school and *Share the Vision for Excellence in Education* for all children.

SMART Boards: Changing the Dynamics of the Classroom

American poet Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "The great thing in this world is not so much where you stand, as in what direction you are moving." Holmes may not have been referring specifically to education, but his words certainly apply. Education is about movement, not about standing still. Students seem to learn best under circumstances that are not static, but fluid; in classrooms that are not stagnant, but energized; facilitated by leaders who know when to step back and let the learners show the way. Movement keeps their teaching lively and their students engaged.

This is where the SMART Board comes in.

The interactive whiteboard is a large interactive display that connects to a computer and projector. A projector projects the computer's desktop onto the board's surface, where users control the computer using a pen, finger, or other device. The board is typically mounted to a wall or on a floor stand. Quite simply, a SMART Board is a whiteboard that allows your fingers to do what a computer's mouse does!

Now that twenty-two more SMART Boards have arrived, Sinton math and science classrooms are fitted with an Internet connection, a SMART Board interactive whiteboard, and a well-trained teacher. The interactive whiteboard, Mrs. Robin Mounts (Discovery Center Instructor) has found, is a tool of innovation for Sinton teachers. They use it to enhance content by integrating new materials into existing lessons, to create and customize learning objects and to adapt their instruction to the needs of their students. "Moreover," adds Mounts, "our teachers have discovered that interactive whiteboards allow learners to absorb information more easily, to participate in groups, and to work collaboratively around a shared task or work area."

We hear a lot about lifelong learning today. It's true that the world is rapidly changing, including what is needed to survive and thrive. There are no soft landings for those without an education and little opportunity for those who aren't deeply committed to learning and relearning. The greatest skill and attitude that children can learn is *how to learn*. Couple that with the will to learn, and you'll have a lifelong learner!

Professional development

Teachers are also lifelong learners and Mrs. Mounts has offered several professional development opportunities for the district. They are all designed specifically to help teachers in their particular field of study. The number one goal for SMART Board integration is to improve student learning outcomes through great lesson planning.

"Our teachers are fired up about the use of this wonderful technology here at SISD!" Mounts says. This technology involves *and* engages our young learners. Perhaps what is most important about the integration of this tool is the change it allows in teaching and learning styles that often prompt higher level thinking in our learners. The integrated use of computers and interactive whiteboards create a learning environment of discovery and construction of knowledge for 21st century skills.



E. Merle Smith Accepts Texas Challenge



Put on your **Walkin' Shoes** and get moving! Walk across Texas is a program designed in 1996 by the Department State of Health Services. This program was implemented this year at **Smith Middle School** to help promote physical fitness and to fight cardiovascular diseases.

Coach Mounts, Coach Selby and Coach Guerrero integrated Walk across Texas in their P.E. Classes. The students in each class were divided into groups. Generally, the groups were designed to have 8 members, however, some P.E. groups have anywhere from 5 to 11 members on each team. Each group was given materials to create a team name and to decorate a poster to be put on display in the Smith Middle School Gym. The faculty and staff were also invited to participate in the Walk across Texas Program. Pedometers are handy motivational tools used to calculate steps/miles walked per day. The coaches at **Smith Middle School** calculate and record each student's laps completed on the track, convert each lap into miles, and chart the status of each team's location in the state of Texas. Each team "began" walking from El Paso to straight across Texas! It is 830 miles from one point of Texas to the other!

There are currently 19 student teams and 2 Adult Teams at Smith Middle School. Some teams are all "girl" teams and all "boy" teams, and there are a few teams that consist of both boys and girls. The students walk two times a week, during the 50 minute class period. Of these student teams, there is one team leading the walk in first place: **Texas Walkers**, who have accumulated as a whole, **107 miles**. Following close behind them, in a tie is: **Team Dr. Pepper** and **Team Ghost Pirates**. In the Adult division, we have **SMS Team 1** leading the pack. One member from the SMS Adult Team 1, has set a goal to reach 100 running miles in **8 weeks!!** He is over half way there!



Walking Tip: (For stronger abdominal muscles)

While exercising, by holding in your tummy; it takes the place of basic crunches!

Don't forget to BREATHE!



Healthy Holiday Family Festival



The Healthy Holiday Family Festival is a free event for students and families of Sinton Elementary. This festival is put on by Sinton Elementary students, parents, and teachers as well as the Sinton ISD Food Service Department, and the Sinton Elementary P.E. Department. The focus of this event is to encourage student to stay active, and be smart about what they eat even during the holidays. Student- parent teams will be assigned to work the booths. There will be free games, with fruits, and drinks as prizes. Volunteers are welcome. We are looking for door prizes if anyone has anything to donate. Last year the healthy holiday family festival hosted around 300 students and this year we plan to have many more. The festival will take place on November 17, 2009 from 5:30 till 7:00 pm. Some of our activities include, Bowling out sodas, Rocking around the Christmas Tree, Milk Toss, Fruit Toss, Putt-putt, Apple Relay, cereal box race, Fruit walk, and veggie bingo.

Managing Sibling Rivalry

For families with more than one child, sibling rivalry is not just a remote possibility; it is a common experience of family life. Sibling rivalry is the daily push and pulls for acceptance and power by children in the same family. It is a part of the growth process that helps children learn more about themselves and their brothers and sisters and also teaches children to care about each other.

Sibling rivalry can't be totally removed from a family setting, but by careful observation and listening, parents might discover some ways to stop many of the conflicts before they begin.

Strategies to minimize sibling rivalry

Treat children fairly. A great deal of sibling rivalry is based on the perception of unfair treatment by parents. Being fair with children does not mean that they are always given equal shares. Fair treatment means parents give to each child according to his or her individual needs. Children do not really want to be treated equally; they want to be treated as if they are very special to a parent (Howard1997).

Set get-along rules. Don't allow cruel or harmful behavior including hitting, biting, scratching, kicking or hair pulling. Cruel words and unkind tones should also be disallowed. Parents can set expectations of courtesy and hope affection will develop. The example for this kind of behavior begins with the parents taking the lead by their actions, attitudes, and language (Wyckoff and Unell 1991).

Avoid unneeded comparisons. Do not compare children to one another in an attempt to criticize behavior. Use every opportunity to praise each child for the uniqueness the child brings to the family (LeShan 1986).

Raising children involves a great deal of energy, patience, and wisdom on the part of parents. As with other aspects of parenting, how parents manage sibling rivalry in their home can provide many valuable learning experiences for children. They can learn to grow in their relationships with others, in their communication skills, in their problem-solving abilities, and in their understanding of other people.

FOOD SERVICE DEPARTMENT

48th ANNUAL THANKSGIVING MEAL



Can you believe it! Forty-eight years ago Sinton ISD Food Service Department was preparing a Thanksgiving Meal for all the students enrolled at the various school campuses; the only difference is that back then not as many meals were prepared. Today we serve about 2,700+ meals in one day at all campuses; this equals to 475 lbs of Turkey, 180 lbs. of Cornbread, 68 gallons of Sweet Potatoes, 136 gallons of Green Beans, 2, 800 Buttered Rolls, 2, 800 pieces of Homemade Cake. Rolls and cake are baked in our very own Sinton ISD Bakery located at Sinton Elementary Cafeteria. Don't get left behind. Join us for our Annual Thanksgiving Meal on November 13th.

PI Conference at DOLC—Nov. 19, 2009

Parents are a very important part of our team as we work toward continuing *Excellence in Education* for every student attending Sinton ISD. I want to thank and congratulate every parent, guardian and grandparent that volunteers at campuses, attends parent/teacher conferences, assists with homework and the many other ways that each of you encourage your children. You each make such a difference in their educational journeys.

Parents and guardians are invited to the annual Parents Conference November 19, 2009 at the Dave Odem Learning Center Cafeteria from 8:15 am to 2:30 pm. It is sponsored by Sinton ISD and San Patricio AgriLife Extension Service. Breakfast and lunch will be served. The event is FREE. We will have educational exhibits; presentations about services, programs and opportunities provided by the district; and crafts and recipes for the holidays. This will be a fun and informative time where our staff and our parents can have the opportunity to interact for the betterment of our students. I can be contacted at 437-9458 or email etroup@sintonisd.net for more information.

---Eileen Troup School/Community Relations Coordinator

"Too often we give children answers to remember rather than problems to solve."

- Roger Lewin

PI Conference in Robstown—Feb. 16, 2010

The annual Parental Involvement Conference is scheduled for Tuesday, February, 16, 2010 in Robstown, TX. The conference will feature a keynote speaker and three break out sessions. Transportation is provided by the district. Please register and join us for this informative and fun event! Please contact your child's campus secretary or call Amanda Jimenez at 361-364-6838 to reserve your spot.

Welder Elementary

Nov. 4

Picture Retakes

Nov 30 – Dec. 4

Book Fair

Dec. 3

Classroom Group Pictures

Nov. 10 & Dec. 8

PTA Meeting



Sinton Elementary

November 3rd is a big evening at Sinton Elementary. From 5:30-6:30 students and parents may read books and AR Test in the computer lab. Book Fair will also be available in the library from 5:00-7:00. Students may also purchase books from the book fair during their class library time and open -checkout. There will also be a showing of Ice Age 3 from 6:30 to 8. Sure to be a fun evening for family fun!

Middle School

Nov. 5th

PTO Meeting @ 6 p.m. in cafeteria

- 7th Grade Band will perform
- Academic Teams will announce Student of the Month



SINTON ISD

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Upcoming Holidays

Thanksgiving : Nov. 25th–27th

Christmas: Dec. 18th–Early Release

Dec. 21st–Jan. 1st



“What’s on the Community’s Mind?”

Monday, November 19, 2009

6 - 7 pm

Sinton High School Auditorium

400 N. Pirate Blvd.

Your Questions, Comments and Concerns
Mr. VanMatre wants to listen to your views
and comments.

Internet Safety

The Internet is a wonderful tool that has its downside, like predators who roam the Internet in search of children who want and need attention. Many people, adults and children alike, inadvertently supply information about themselves to predators.

Be Aware of the Warning Signs

A child may be involved with an online predator if they exhibit the following behavior:

- Spend long hours on line, especially at night
- Minimize the screen or turn off the computer when adults are nearby
- Receive a gift from someone they are unwilling to identify
- Have a lot of incoming or outgoing phone calls to numbers that are not recognized by a parent or guardian
- Become withdrawn from family and friends
- Begin to exhibit changes in behavior (mention of adults you don’t know, secretiveness, sleeping problems etc.)

Protective Measures Parents Can Take

- Keep the computer in a central location, not in a child’s room
- Limit and monitor the time your child spends on line
- Set guidelines and rules for computer use
- Learn Internet technology and terminology to better monitor your child’s online activity
- Get to know your children’s online friends, just as you would want to know their friends from school

Teach your children to never give out identifying information and be sure they’re dealing with someone both you and your child know and trust before giving out information through email.

Never allow a child to arrange a face to face meeting with another computer user without parental permission, and then only in a public area with a parent present.

The Four R’s of Internet Usage

RECOGNIZE techniques used by online predators to deceive their victims

REFUSE request for personal information

RESPOND assertively if you are ever in an uncomfortable situation while on line. Exit the program, log off or turn off the computer, and notify your ISP or local law enforcement

REPORT any suspicious or dangerous contact that makes you or your child feel uncomfortable to law enforcements authorities