



The Aldrin Buzz

News from the Buzz Aldrin PTA

Making Math Add Up for Every Student

Last week at the monthly PTA meeting, teachers Linda Crittenden and Bobbi Yingling gave parents some insight into Aldrin's math curriculum.

Common Textbook Series for All Grades

Mrs. Crittenden introduced the Scott Foresman math textbooks which are now being used by all grade levels at the school. These texts were selected by the teaching staff because they incorporate both drill/practice exercises as well as math "discovery" work. And for the first time, students at all grade levels will be using a common language in talking about math.



Linda Crittenden talks math.

Both teachers praised the range of material included in the Scott Foresman math series. Each child receives a practice workbook and there are enrichment and review materials for each lesson as well.

Mrs. Yingling noted that each grade level has specific learning objectives but that teachers have the freedom to teach using a style and the supplementary materials they find effective.

"Manipulatives" — items that the students handle in working out math problems — are used at every grade level. "Anything to do with food gets the kids attention," says Mrs. Yingling, who teaches fourth grade. Her students will graph the contents of a bag of candy. This

week, some third grade classes are using Hershey bars to learn about fractions. And younger students manipulate dried beans and fake coins to develop their number sense.

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Everyday Math, Every Day

"Our goal in the earliest grades is to create a love for math. We write about it and talk about math as part of what we do every day — from grocery shopping to estimating how long it will take to complete a task," commented first grade teacher, Mrs. Crittenden.

Aldrin's First PTA Science Fair Big Success!

The first Aldrin PTA Science Fair was a tremendous success! Over 70 students in grades K-6 prepared projects and experiments for the fair held in the school on March 25.



There were excellent research projects on the rain forest, a Mars space station, wolves, ocean life, acid rain, optical illusions and much more. Many students chose to conduct experiments and some of the results were really amazing. The alkalseltzer film canister rocket was a big hit, and who would have thought that three half-eggshells could support 26 books!

Congratulations to all the participants for their hard work and wonderful displays and presentations. Kudos go to their parents for all the support and encouragement!

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Progress Reports Go Home Today

Look for your child's third quarter report in his/her backpack today.



Three Cheers for

Aldrin Volunteers

This week is National Volunteer Week and Aldrin could very well be the "poster school"!

Our school boasts more than 200 volunteers who log 500-600 hours per month of in-school volunteer time.

Then there's all the work that's done at home, at after-school programs and special events.

Every day, all of you help make Aldrin a School of Excellence.

Thank you!

Buzz Aldrin Elementary School
11375 Center Harbor Rd.
Reston, VA 20194
703.904.3800

www.fcps.k12.va.us/AldrinES/



That's a Lot of Box Tops!

The count for the 2003/2004 school year is over!

This year, Aldrin families saved and submitted more than **2500** General Mills BoxTops.

Each of those little bits of cardboard or label is worth 10¢ to the Aldrin PTA.

Mrs. Crittenden's and **Ms. Keyser's** classes each won dessert parties for bringing in the most Box Tops.

Be sure to save those labels over the summer. Every little bit helps!



The Aldrin Buzz is published monthly during the school year to provide parents with school and PTA news.

If you have comments or suggestions, contact the editor, Elaine Kelly, at elainekelly@comcast.net.

▶ PTA News



Presidents' Note

We hope everyone enjoyed the Spring Break. Welcome back!

What an incredible **Science Fair** we had last month! Over seventy students representing every grade level participated. The displays were awesome, the ideas all very different. There were so many things to explore and ideas to share. We are so proud of our Aldrin students for taking time to participate in the Science Fair this year. Special thanks go to **Dr. Tom Killion** for speaking at our event and handing out special "chief scientist" medallions.

The Science Fair would not have been possible without the guidance and support of **Jill Gallagher** and her team of volunteers. They spent many hours planning every phase of the Science Fair. Unfortunately, Jill (and most of her children) was sick the night of the fair and was not able to experience the result of all the planning and hard work. However, Jill's husband, Kevin Gallagher, was brave enough to substitute for Jill and help make the evening such a success. Excellent teamwork, Gallaghers! Thank you, **volunteers** for making Aldrin's first Science Fair an unforgettable experience. Also, thank you to **Mr. Marinoff** and the many **teachers** who came and offered praise and encouragement during the Science Fair. Well done, Aldrin!

Our April PTA meeting was held last week. We were fortunate to have teachers **Linda Crittenden** and **Bobbi Yingling** present Aldrin's math curriculum. It was a great presentation full of hands-on material and demonstrations. Also, thanks go to **Terri Phillips** for arranging this presentation for us. The next PTA Meeting will be held on May 4th at 7:00 in the Little Theatre where we'll have a special presentation of the school's technology plan.

Cheers to our Aldrin teachers, interns and principals for participating in the annual **Aldrin vs. Armstrong Basketball Game**. It was a close one this year! This popular event was organized by **Becky Lowdermilk**. We are so grateful for her willingness to help make this event happen. Great job, Becky! Also, many thanks to **Chris Lopez** for organizing the pep rally at school and the many hours spent coaching our fabulous sixth grade girls cheerleading squad. Awesome job, girls! Kudos, too, to **Dayve For-man** for the fun team member posters that were all over the school last week.

A few months ago, the PTA sponsored a **drug awareness presentation** given by Mr. John Werner, Assistant Principal at Herndon High School. This presentation was so invaluable that the PTA has asked Mr. Werner to repeat the information. Please plan on attending this presentation this Thursday at 6:15. The kids can watch *Finding Nemo* in the gymnasium while you attend the presentation. And since it's also Outback Steakhouse Night, come early and have dinner. It'll be another great family night at Aldrin. Please buy your tickets in advance and we'll see you there!

Also, please plan to come to the **next Town Hall meeting** on May 18 at 7:15 p.m. Mr. Marinoff will be discussing enrichment programs and plans at Aldrin.

It's hard to believe that we are approaching the last quarter of the school year. The PTA has been fortunate to include many hard-working, energetic, thoughtful volunteers this year. Thank you to everyone who made this year such a success. A nominating committee is being formed to help gather the Executive Board members for next year. If you are interested in serving on this committee, or in the VP positions for Ways and Means or Programs, please contact Beth or Jeanne. We appreciate your help!

Stenun and Beth

No Child Left Behind Federal Policy Changes Announced

Recently, U.S. Secretary of Education Ron Paige announced several new policies regarding No Child Left Behind compliance.

Mostly recently, Paige announced greater flexibility in achieving required participation rates of at least 95 percent in standardized tests for all groups of students in order to avoid a "failing school" label. The new regulations require an average participation rate of 95 percent over two or three years. They also permit schools to leave out students who miss tests because of a medical emergency.

Policy changes have also eased teacher qualification requirements (which were deemed a particular burden to rural schools).

Changes for Non-Native English Speakers

Of greater application to Northern Virginia schools, testing requirements for speakers with limited English proficiency (LEP) have been modified.

(In the current school year, approximately 13% of Aldrin students are included in the LEP subgroup.)

Under the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act*, schools must show adequate yearly

progress (AYP) in ensuring that all students achieve academic proficiency. So that every child counts, NCLB requires the academic achievement results of all students, includ-



Ron Paige at recent Limited English Proficiency Press Conference.

ing LEP students, to be included in these calculations.

Now, schools will be allowed to provide an assessment of English language proficiency for the standard reading competency assessment during a student's **first year** in U.S. public schools. The English language proficiency

test does not count toward the AYP goals for the school, but students taking the test **will** count towards the required 95 percent participation rate for their subgroup.

Getting Credit for Making Progress

The second policy change addresses how schools classify students who have made strong progress in learning English.

Now, for AYP calculations, states will be able to include students who have attained English proficiency in the LEP subgroup for two years. Since many schools are constantly absorbing new English language learners, the policy rewards schools for the good work they do to help these students attain language proficiency.

No Ordinary Moments

Wondering how to introduce the topic of substance abuse to your child?

Ever wonder what steps you could be taking to keep your children safe?

Plan to attend a special repeat presentation of *No Ordinary Moments* on Thursday during Aldrin's family event.

John Werner, Assistant Principal at Herndon High School, and Peter Cole, the school's security specialist, will share their insights.

A high school student will provide her perspective as well.

You'll learn what the current drug "scene" is like, but more importantly, you'll hear about steps you can take now to help keep your kids safe later.

Plan to attend:

**Thursday, April 22
6:15 in Little Theatre**



For more information on the No Child Left Behind Act, visit the federal web site at <http://www.ed.gov/parents>

Help Select Textbooks Used in FCPS Classrooms

The School Board invites you to join their textbook advisory committees. The committees include educators and appointed community members. Meetings will be held beginning in June to review and recommend science and social studies textbooks for 5th through 12th grade.

If you are interested, please contact Jane Strauss at Jane.Strauss@fcps.edu.



Next Town Hall Meeting Highlights Enrichment

Join Mr. Marinoff and other parents at 7:15 p.m. on May 18 for a Town Hall meeting on enrichment programs and services at Aldrin.

Learn what's available today and voice your thoughts and questions.

Finding Math Help

Next time your math “helpfulness” is met with your child’s blank stare, one of these resources might help.

www.scottforesman.com/etools

This site is produced by the publisher of Aldrin’s math textbooks.

www.aplusmath.com
www.math.com

Check out the flash cards, printable worksheets, games and links to math sites on cool math concepts such as fractals and tessellations.

Math books than can help.

The books come highly recommended by Mrs. Yingling and Aldrin parents. You can purchase them on Amazon.com, but they’re cheaper if we group-order. If you’d like to purchase a book (they’re about \$14-\$15 each), send an email to **Terri Phillips** at terphilips@comcast.net noting which one(s) you’re interested in:

Math on Hand (grades 5, 6)

Math to Know (3, 4)

Math to Learn (1, 2)

Finding Math in the Everyday

(continued from page 1)

Children ready for more challenges find them in the “Extend Your Thinking” exercises in the Scott Foresman series, in math games and classroom centers, and in special opportunities for the upper grades, including the Math Olympiad and Challenge 24.

Mrs. Yingling also discussed a pilot program that allows children to take a chapter pre-test to determine their knowledge of the material before it’s taught. If they score 90% or better, they “compact out” of the material and are eligible for math enrichment activities conducted by Aldrin’s Gifted & Talented Services Specialist.

“Sometimes one student compacts out; sometimes fifteen. It ensures they stay

challenged,” she said.

Helping Your Child With Math

What can parents do? During the year, ask your child to explain how she arrived at the answer. If she can articulate an answer, she understands the concept.

And both teachers stressed the importance of reinforcing math concepts during the summer. Their advice? Skip the workbooks and work on everyday math. Ask your children to estimate how much the apples weigh in the grocery store. Talk about the shapes in the buildings you pass by. Calculate how many minutes are left before you need to leave the park.

It’s important your child understands how much a part of life math really is.

Turn Off Your TV and Read Some Poetry!

April is National Poetry month and this week marks Turn Off Your TV week. That’s a great combination — when your children start complaining about not watching TV, have them put their time and talents to use reading — and writing! — some poetry. (They can submit their poems to Aldrin’s literary newsletter, *Orbiting Around Aldrin!*)

A great place to find kid-friendly poems is www.gigglepoetry.com. The site has word rhymes and games, oddball poetry contests, as well as fill-in-the-blank poems to get your children started. That’s where you’ll find this very timely poem.

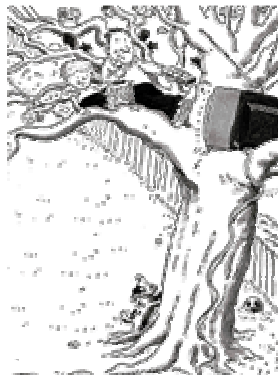
Turn Off the TV!

My father gets quite mad at me;
my mother gets upset--
when they catch me watching
our new television set.

My father yells, "Turn that
thing off!"
Mom says, "It's time to
study."
I'd rather watch my favorite
TV show
with my best buddy.

I sneak down after home-
work
and turn the set on low.
But when she sees me watching it,
my mom yells out, "No!"

Dad says, "If you don't turn it off,
I'll hang it from a tree!"
I rather doubt he'll do it,
'cause he watches more than me.



He watches sports all
weekend,
and weekday evenings too,
while munching chips and
pretzels—
the room looks like a zoo.

So if he ever got the nerve
to hang it from a tree,
he'd spend a lot of time up
there-- watching it with me.

© Bruce Lansky. Reprinted from Poetry Party, published by Meadowbrook Pres

► *Helping Our Children Learn*

Preschool Aims to Give Edge to Special Needs Kids

Around the corner and down the hall from Aldrin's Library is a very special place. Each week, more than 40 children between the ages of two and five who have special needs attend preschool in these classrooms.

Two Preschool Programs

In fact, Aldrin has two distinct pre-school programs. The largest program serves 32 young children with a range of emotional, learning and physical disabilities. Because of the variety of special needs, this program is called the "Non-Categorical" (or "Non-Cat") Preschool. These children attend school for a half-day. Parents of these children benefit from home visits from the teachers as well.

The Preschool Autism Classrooms (PAC) work with children who have moderate to severe autism-related disorders. Ten children attend full-day classes.

The preschool programs at Aldrin draw children from neighborhoods served by a local elementary schools, as well as certain day care programs that feed into Aldrin.

Preschool Activities

All of the classrooms look pretty much like any typical preschool classroom. (Well, except for the tire swing in Ms. Clavio's room!)

And the routine is pretty similar as well. Children gather together first thing for their morning circle, then break into small group activities and centers.

In the Non-Cat classrooms, a teacher and an instructional assistant work with eight children. In the PACs, the teacher-to-student ratios are higher — there is one

teacher and two assistants for every five kids.

"The preschool program gives children with special needs the chance to work early and intensively on their areas of delay. Our goal is get them ready for school age programs with as much inclusion as possible," remarked Gina

Clavio, one of the PAC teachers.

Lots to Learn

As in any preschool, the students work on activities to develop gross and fine motor skills, and their social, emotional and cognitive abilities.

There's a big focus on learning to sit, pay attention and follow the teacher's directions.

So, what's different about these classrooms? For one thing, some of the children communicate

and participate in different ways.

Some sign, use picture symbols or special "augmentative" devices. Many of the children need to work on feeding skills, as well as other self-help skills such as dressing and toileting.

Learning to Play

For some children, learning how to play with others is an ongoing lesson.

"Kids with delayed language skills may have difficulties interacting or playing with others. Preschool gives them a place to develop those skills," says Ms. Clavio.

Stepping Up and Moving On

When the students "graduate" from preschool, some will be integrated in regular elementary classrooms. Others will head to special education programs at local schools. What they all have in common, according to Gina Clavio is this, "They're all just kids. You just have to watch them in the classroom or on the playground to see it."



Teacher Jennifer Rae works with her preschoolers during morning circle.

Become a Virginia Time Traveler!

Put your Time Traveler passport in your pocket and head off to some fun places in Virginia this year.

To encourage students to explore Virginia museums, historical sites and special events, the Virginia Association of Museums has created this nifty program.

Simply visit six or more registered destinations and get your Time Traveler passport stamped. Send in a copy and you'll get a special certificate (as well as a really cool T-shirt for a few dollars).

Plus, when you visit two or more *Virginians in Time* sites, your child will earn a free patch.

There are more than 300 places on the destinations list, with more than 60 just in the Northern Virginia area.

To find out more and to print out your passport, visit:

www.timetravelers.org



Getting Ready for Next Year's Odyssey

The Odyssey of the Mind program is finished for this year, but next year comes awfully fast!

Anyone interested in the program is invited to attend a meeting next month.

We'll talk about what worked and what didn't this year, and how to put together teams, coaches and problems next year.

Plan to attend a meeting on Thursday, May 13 at 1 p.m.

If you can't attend but have some feedback or insight, please email **Danny Burke** at **om@aliburk.com**

Help Design a Science Museum!

A new science museum is being planned for Woodbridge, Virginia.

You and your children can help determine the types of exhibits and facilities the museum will have!

Fill out the survey on **www.bbisc.org**. You'll even find links to fun science sites for kids.

Fundraising Questionnaire Please Share Your Opinions

Although it seems as if we just finished fundraising for this school year, we are already planning for 2004-2005. To aid our planning, we would like your feedback on the types of fundraisers you would support.

We ask that you complete this brief survey and return it to the school by April 30 in an envelope marked **Ways and Means**. Thank you!

Annually, the PTA spends about \$45,000 on programs and materials which are not funded by the county. This includes some field trip bus fees, programs such as GRACE Art and Odyssey of the Mind, special assemblies, and classroom libraries and materials.

The Sally Foster gift wrap program covers about one-third of our expenses. To pay for the remainder of the annual expenses, please indicate which of the following options your family would most likely support.

My family would most likely support:

- A program similar to this year that includes a Direct Contribution Campaign and a Raffle/Auction of class projects and teacher outings.
- A one-time, tax-deductible Direct Contribution Campaign. (To be successful, running only this program would require that families significantly increase their contributions.)
- A Family Fun Dance and Silent Auction that would include items donated by Aldrin families and Reston-area businesses.
- Elimination of the Direct Contribution Campaign and the Raffle/Auction, and the sale of items such as Uncle Ralph's cookies, Market Place foods, gift products, etc.
- A mid-week golf fundraiser with a fee of \$100-\$150 per player, or a golf marathon.
- None of the above.

Amount of Fundraising

Regarding the amount of PTA fundraising, do you think we do:

- Too much The right amount Too little

Timing of Fundraising

Is a particular time of the year better for you to contribute?

- Fall Spring Throughout the year I prefer not to contribute.

Comments

Return this form via backpack mail by April 30 to:
PTA Ways and Means

Thank you!!

First Science Fair Gets Huge Support

Continued from page 1

U.S. Army Chief Scientist Visits

The PTA was also proud to welcome **Dr. Tom Killion**, Chief Scientist for the U.S. Army. Dr. Killion spoke at the Science Fair and encouraged the students to pursue their interest in science and technology. He also donated “Chief Scientist” medallions to the Science Fair which were given to lucky participants in a random drawing.

(Dr. Killion and his wife are active supporters of science programs for young people — and also the grandparents of Valerie Ohm in Ms. Fayed’s class! We are so lucky to have them as part of our Aldrin family!)

The PTA Science Fair Committee would

also like to thank **Mr. Marinoff** and **Mrs. Miller** for their support of the Science Fair! Special thanks go to the teachers who helped promote our first Fair and to the **teachers and interns** who attended and visited the displays! Your enthusiasm and encouragement is appreciated. We

would also like to thank the **office staff** for its ongoing support and the **custodial staff** for helping with set up and clean up!

A Message from the Chair

Lastly, Jill Gallagher, the Chair of the Science Fair Committee would like to thank all the parents who served on the PTA Science Fair Committee. More than 25 parents helped plan the event, review the applica-

tions and forms, put up experiments and posters throughout the school; helped with set up and clean up; served as grade-level parents, wrote announcements, took pictures, and much more. Special thanks goes out to the **Belyavsky family** for designing and printing our beautiful certificates.



An engineering marvel at the Science Fair.

A big thank you goes to **Jeanne Talbot** and **Beth Krauser** for supporting the Science Fair from the very beginning and for “mobilizing the troops” when my troops were down! Thank you to the many parents who stepped up to the plate on the day of the Science Fair.

Gearing Up for Next Year!

The level of interest in science programming at Aldrin has been overwhelming and we want to capitalize on that support.



Generating electricity from a lemon.

The PTA Science Fair Committee will regroup after Spring Break to review this year’s event and begin thinking about next year’s. We will also discuss our science ideas and agenda for the rest of this year and the beginning of next year.

Please consider joining the Science Fair Committee if you would like to help us enhance the science agenda at Aldrin! Simply email Jill Gallagher at kjnjpgal@netzero.com then stay tuned for an email about our next meeting.

Jill Gallagher chairs the Science Fair committee. After months of hard work, she fell ill on the day of the event so she wasn’t able to see the fruits of her vision and efforts!

“Friends” of the Science Fair

Many museums, organizations, non-profits, and local businesses donated prizes that will allow the children to continue their learning beyond the Science Fair. The PTA thanks our generous contributors.

Lake Anne Coffee House

National Wildlife Federation

National Aquarium in Baltimore

Challenger Center for Space Science

Smithsonian Discovery Theater

Capital Children's Museum

Reston Association

Milwaukee Custard

Discovery Creek Nature Center

National Building Museum

WaterMine!

US Geological Survey

National Dentistry Museum

A special thank-you goes out to **Chik-Fil-A** which so generously donated a Kid’s Meal for **each** Science Fair participant as a reward for their hard work!

Please support our donors!



Mark Your Calendars

April 2004						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	Spring Break			9	10
11	12	13 PTA	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2004						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4 PTA	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 PTA	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April

05-09 Spring Break

- 13 PTA Meeting**, 1 p.m. at Aldrin, including parent education workshop on math curriculum
- 16 Faculty Basketball Game**, Aldrin vs. Armstrong, 7:30 p.m. at South Lakes HS
- 20 Progress Reports** go home
- 22 Outback Steakhouse Night**. Dinner begins at 5:30 p.m. *No Ordinary Moments* parent education workshop begins 6:15 p.m. 6th grade musical begins 7:45 p.m. All at Aldrin
- 30 Spirit Day** — Wacky Hair and Favorite Team Jersey Day

May

03-07 Teacher Appreciation Week

- 04 PTA Meeting**, 7 p.m. at Aldrin
- 07 Kindergarten Orientation**, 9:30-11 a.m. at Aldrin. Please let new Aldrin families know!
- 18 PTA Meeting to Elect New Officers**, 7 p.m. at Aldrin
Town Hall Meeting with focus on enrichment services for Aldrin students, 7:15 at Aldrin
- 28 Spirit Day**
- 31 Memorial Day Observed — No School**

Aldrin Eagle Welcomes Herndon Hornet

Late last month, the Aldrin cafeteria was the site of a historic meeting between two local school mascots.

As the theme music from the film “Rocky” pounded, the Herndon HS Hornet and the Aldrin Eagle made their entrances into the Aldrin cafeteria and high-fived each other.

The “meeting of the mascots” was part of a “Character Counts”/School Spirit initiative for the Aldrin SCA.

Representatives from Herndon’s SGA (some of them Aldrin alumni) spoke with Aldrin’s student representatives about how to exhibit good character. Getting good grades, and showing self-



responsibility, good citizenship, school pride and school spirit were the keys the group discussed.

School spirit was where the mascots came in . . . along with a special appearance by members of the Herndon Key/Keyettes Club and the Herndon High cheerleaders.

In preparation for the then-upcoming Aldrin-Armstrong faculty basketball game, the older students coached Aldrin students on the finer points of showing school pride and supporting your team — without disrespecting your opponents.

After teaching the Aldrin kids a cool Aldrin cheer, they helped decorate the Aldrin banner featured at the game.