



Little Red School House & Elisabeth Irwin High School

May 6th, 2008

Dear Families,

In math class, the 5th grade has begun to study *Shapes and Designs*. The focus of the unit is 2D geometry, specifically the properties of shapes, angles, and their relationship. We began by classifying polygons using names such as *trapezoid*, *pentagon*, and *parallelogram*, and identifying which categories are embedded in each other. The students explored questions such as: Is a square a rectangle? Is a rectangle a square? Is a rhombus always a parallelogram? After learning to name and categorize shapes, we will spend time talking about angle measures—how to estimate angle sizes and solve for unknown angles in a design.

You can reinforce this work at home by pointing out shapes to name when you are with your child or by estimating basic angle measures around you. (Equilateral triangles have  $60^\circ$  angles. A diagonal across a square forms a  $45^\circ$  angle). In addition to discussing the mathematical properties of 2D geometry, we will be discussing how certain properties of shapes and angles are important in life. For example, most of the angles in our rooms and on our furniture are right angles ( $90^\circ$  angles). Why is this? Why are certain shapes, such as triangles, used more in architecture and engineering than others?

A large part of the unit and unit project will be done on the computer, using LOGO to program “turtles” to create shapes. By drawing and tessellating regular polygons on the computer, they will learn strategies for calculating and solving for specific angle measures.

Thank you for your support and let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ana