



## Little Red School House & Elisabeth Irwin High School

June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Dear Families,

In math this year, your child has deepened his/her mathematical understanding in many areas and has learned several new basic calculation procedures. In order that these hard-earned skills are still at their fingertips when they return in September, it is important that they have opportunities to refresh and practice them in the next three months. We will administer a basic skills test in early September.

Based on your child's *Beat the Basics* assessments this year, he or she may benefit from more paper-and-pencil skill review in a particular area. For more practice-oriented work to remediate and/or maintain basic skills, we recommend the grade-level "Math Skills" workbooks published by Flash Kids (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade) and Spectrum (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade). These can be purchased on Amazon.com and at any Barnes & Noble. Several websites also offer good skill practice opportunities. Some we recommend are:

<http://calculationnation.nctm.org/>  
<http://www.funbrain.com/brain/MathBrain/MathBrain.html>  
<http://www.mathplayground.com/>

While practice of basic concepts and skills is essential, there are several other fun and interesting ways to keep math in your child's life over the summer. Everyday this summer there will be numerous opportunities to reinforce math skills and number sense – from calculating sale prices to planning a barbecue, from estimating the number of people at the beach to estimating whether the cone or cup of ice cream is better for the dollar. Here are some of our suggestions for enrichment:

- In terms of extra challenge for the summer, the Math Forum publishes online **Problems of the Week**. Students write in, and correct answers are published. They also archive old problems if one per week doesn't satisfy you. This is an excellent resource for any student. The web address is <http://mathforum.org/pows>. You can also find good family-oriented math challenges at <http://www.figurethis.org>. The cut-the-knot web site (<http://www.cut-the-knot.org>) is a slightly more advanced resource for challenging math miscellany and games.
- **Games:** Our two favorite math games are *24*, which increases speed and flexibility with calculations, and *SET*, a game of geometric pattern recognition. Both have the benefit of being ever-challenging, depending on your choice of opponent. The web addresses for purchasing your own deck of each are <http://www.setgame.com> and <http://www.24game.com>.



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- **Field Trips:** Many museums, galleries and exhibitions around the city can provide an opportunity to think and talk about mathematical ideas. For example, a visit to the Hayden Planetarium could inspire a conversation about scale – if the earth were the size of a grapefruit, how big would the sun be?
- **Family Math:** The University of California published an excellent resource for doing math at home from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Its emphasis is on number sense and algebraic reasoning and it contains fun and instructive activities for families to do together, both during the summer and over the course of the year. It is available from Amazon. (Family Math: The Middle School Years, by Virginia Thompson and Ann Humphrey Williams)
- **Ken-Ken and Sudoku:** Solving these puzzles helps improve logical reasoning and number sense. They can be found in your daily paper or on the following websites: <http://sudoku.math.com/>, <http://www.kenken.com/>

We hope you and your family enjoy many math moments this summer.

Sincerely,  
The LREI Middle School Math Department

Ana Fox Chaney, Michelle Boehm, Margaret Andrews  
and Mark Silberberg (Middle School Principal)