



*Weekly News Letter from The Principal's Corner  
April 30, 2021*

**Math and Science Connection**

I have attached a two page educational newsletter called the Math and Science Connection, which is filled with excellent tips for parents. Enjoy!

**SBAC and VT Sci. Assessment Testing Information and Test Taking Strategies**

This May, our school will join thousands of schools across the United States in the administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC). These tests are designed for students in grades 3-8 and 11, and will measure achievement in English Language Arts and Mathematics. We are asking for perfect attendance and by giving these dates early, we are hoping you can avoid doctor and dentist appointments during testing times. Our SBAC schedule for testing is as follows:

**SBAC for Grades 3-8:**

**Tuesday, May 18, 2021 8:20 to 11:30 am - ELA Computer Adaptive Test (CAT)**

**Wednesday, May 19, 2021 8:20 to 11:20 am - ELA Performance Task (PT)**

**Thursday, May 20, 2021 8:20 to 11:20 am - Math Computer Adaptive Test (CAT)**

**No testing on Friday, May 21, 2021**

**Tuesday, May 25, 2021 8:20 to 11:30 am - Make up testing for students absent last week**

**Wednesday, May 26, 2021 8:20 to 11:20 am - Math Performance Task (PT)**

**Thursday and Friday, May 27 and 28, 2021 are make-up testing days**

**Students who have not completed testing during the morning will be able to continue in the afternoon after lunch and recess.** The Smarter Balanced tests are not timed. However, the total time students will be involved in the testing is estimated to be about 6 hours which will be spread out across several days. The new tests employ a variety of innovations, including the following:

- All testing is administered using a secure online assessment system that includes a variety of tools and technology enhanced test questions that will improve the assessment experience for our students
- Foremost among the new technologies is Computer Adaptive Testing or CAT. CAT selects a unique set of test questions for each student that will produce very precise results in less time than the last generation of pencil and paper tests.
- In addition to the CAT portion of the test, students will also participate in a hands-on, minds-on performance task that permits students to use their skills on an authentic and engaging challenge.
- The assessment also includes an array of embedded accessibility tools for special populations – features such as read aloud, color and contrast choices, expandable reading passages, key word translation glossaries, American Sign Language translation, Braille, and many others
- Because the test is administered on computer results will be returned to schools very quickly. We can expect school scores by early July, and individual student scores before that.

To learn more about Smarter Balanced, log on to the VT Smarter Balanced Assessment Portal where you will find additional information for parents, as well as practice tests that will allow you to try out the test your student will be taking this spring. Here is the link: <http://vt.portal.airast.org/>. Please note that Vermont's test delivery system uses state of the art security features that will protect our students' privacy, and will adhere to all federal and state confidentiality regulations, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

**The VT Science Assessment will be given this year to Grades 5 and 8, using this schedule:**

**Tuesday, May 4<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 8:20 to 10:20 am**

**Make up testing dates are May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.**

Here are some very good test taking tips. It would be very helpful if parents reviewed these strategies with their children before the May tests begin.

**SBAC and VT Science Assessment Test Taking Tips for Grades 3-8**

**Here are some common sense test taking strategies:**

- Read all questions carefully and follow directions; if you must guess, go with your first response
- Leave nothing blank; look for the "best" answer
- Answer the questions you know first, then go back and try your best on other questions – take your time, these are not timed tests
- SBAC will allow you to go back and check answers and respond to skipped ones if you do so within 20 minutes, so be aware of this time constraint; as long as you do not end the testing session you can go back to questions you have flagged for review
- If unsure, narrow your answer to two choices and then guess
- Look for key words in the question to help you select the response
- Check your answers if time permits
- Use tools like scratch paper
- Do not exit the SBAC test without checking with your teacher first

**Time-honored ways to prepare students for any important event or test:**

- Get lots of sleep so you are rested and ready
- Eat a healthy breakfast so a grumbling tummy will not interfere with concentration
- Have a relaxing and calm day (no sibling or bus ride squabbles)
- Drink lots of water as it stimulates the brain
- Have a positive attitude about the test; it's just another tool we use to measure learning so we can better help students.
- Talk about the test; share your concerns and fears with someone you trust; it helps to get it out there- then go do your best!
- Come to school on time to avoid any anxiousness or stressors
- Have perfect attendance during testing week
- This is good practice for all the tests we will encounter in life, from getting a driver's license to earning the right to hunt. Embrace it and acknowledge it as just a part of life

We have purchased gum for students who select to chew during tests, (check out the research on gum and test taking). If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call. TEAM WORK....we can do this!

Have a spectacular weekend,

*JeanMarie*

JeanMarie K. Oakman, WS Principal

# Math+Science Connection

April 30, 2021  
Intermediate Edition  
Jmo

Building Understanding and Excitement for Children

Weathersfield School  
Ms. Jeanmarie Oakman, Principal



## INFO BITS

### Open-door angles

Doors in your house are the perfect place for hands-on practice with angles. Take turns opening or closing a door and asking, “Acute, right, or obtuse?” Partially open a door, and it’s an acute angle. Open it straight out, and it’s a right angle. Open it wider, and it’s obtuse.

### Habitat for rent

Help your child think about what animals need to survive (shelter, food, water). Then, have her choose an animal (monkey) and write a classified ad for a home that will meet its needs. *Example:* “Tall tree in a tropical rain forest. Large river nearby for drinking. Plenty of leaves, fruit, and insects to eat.”

### Book picks

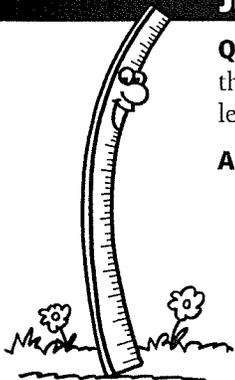
▣ *The Man Who Counted: A Collection of Mathematical Adventures* (Malba Tahan) combines an adventure story with interesting math puzzles.

▣ Learning about the solar system is fun when planets tell the story themselves. Dan Green’s *Astronomy: Out of This World!* contains fascinating facts and details along with cartoon illustrations your youngster is sure to love.

### Just for fun

**Q:** What has three feet but no legs or arms?

**A:** A yard.



## Fractions of fun

Understanding fractions is much easier when your child can visualize them. Here are ideas to help her see—and use—fractions.

### Keep a diary

Show your youngster that fractions are a part of everyday life. For a week, have her record and illustrate each one she notices. For instance, she might write, “We had a half day of school today,” or “Mom asked me to measure  $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups of flour when we baked cookies.” How many examples can she find and draw?

### Play a game

Have each player cut a sheet of construction paper into six horizontal strips. She should leave the first one whole and then cut the second one in half (fold it, and cut along the fold), and the others into thirds, fourths, sixths, and eighths.

With bits of masking tape, label a die:  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,

$\frac{1}{3}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{6}$ ,  $\frac{1}{8}$ , and “wild.” To play, roll the die, and lay the matching piece of paper on your whole strip (for “wild,” choose any piece). The goal is to be the first one to fill your strip without overlapping any pieces (*example:*  $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4} = 1$  whole strip).

### Put in order

Together, make a set of fraction cards, with one fraction per index card ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , 1,  $1\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $1\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $1\frac{3}{4}$ , 2). Shuffle the cards, and see how quickly your child can put them in order. Then, while she closes her eyes, lay the cards in order but leave out a few. Give her the missing cards, and have her put them where they go. ▣



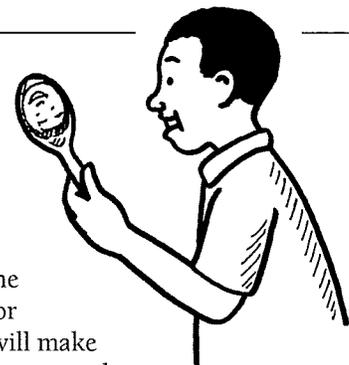
### Look at me!

Help your youngster learn about the science of *optics* with this mealtime activity.

Have him look at himself in a clean spoon. What happens if he looks in the bowl of the spoon? (He’s upside down.) What happens on the other side? (He’s right side up.)

Next, have him bring his finger toward the spoon and watch what happens on each side. The bowl (the *concave* side) will magnify his finger, or make it look larger. The back (the *convex* side) will make his finger look smaller. Ask your child how scientists might use this information to make eyeglasses, cameras, or telescopes.

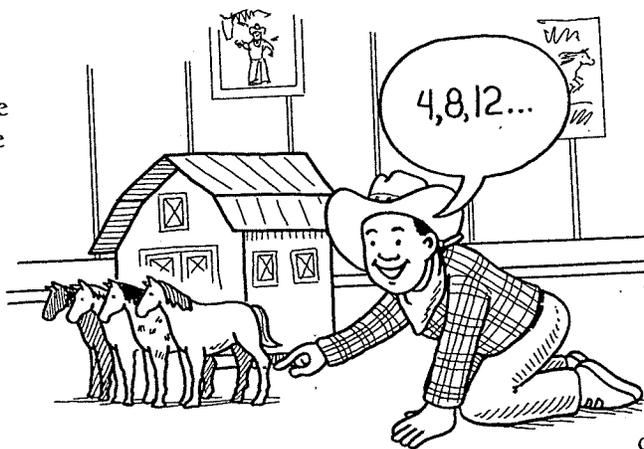
**Tip:** He can remember which side is which by thinking of concave as “caves in.” ▣



# Multiply and divide

Learning to multiply and divide can be more about *thinking* than memorizing. Strategies like these will help your youngster practice.

**Make it fun.** If your child collects toy animals, you might ask, “How many legs do 4 horses have?” He can *skip count* the legs by 4s (4, 8, 12, 16) to see that  $4 \times 4 = 16$ . Or if he wants to divide 17 pretzels equally among three of you, he can “deal them out.” He’ll see that each person gets 5, and there are 2 left over. ( $17 \div 3 = 5$ , remainder 2)



**Use what you know.** Encourage your youngster to look for clues to help him solve problems. For  $8 \times 7$ , he could consider other math facts he knows. “I know 4 groups of  $7 = 28$ . I need 8 groups, so I can double that answer. If  $28 + 28 = 56$ , then  $8 \times 7 = 56$ .” For  $30 \div 5$ , he might say, “I know  $10 \div 5 = 2$ . There are three 10s in 30, and  $3 \times 2 = 6$ . So  $30 \div 5$  must be 6.”

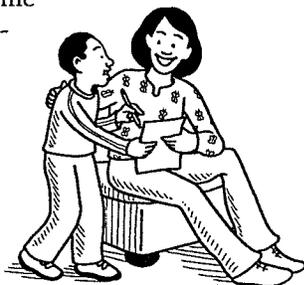


## Q & A Talk up math

**Q:** I've never felt comfortable with math. How should I talk to my child about what he's learning in math class?

**A:** Try to show enthusiasm for what your youngster is doing in math. You might ask him each day at dinner or homework time what he studied in math that day. Let him explain the concepts he's working on, and follow up with questions. For instance, if he's learning about decimals, you could ask how decimal points are used in money (they separate the parts of a dollar from the whole dollar).

Then, when your child finishes his homework, have him show you how he solved a few problems. As he explains his methods to you, he'll be reinforcing his own skills. And he'll be proud to be teaching you something!



## MATH CORNER

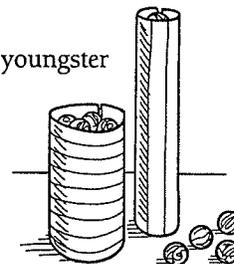
### Measuring volume

Which popcorn container does your youngster want to eat from while watching a movie? Have her do this activity to find out!

Ask her to roll two index cards into cylinders—one vertically and one horizontally—so the edges just touch, and tape them closed. One cylinder will be tall and skinny, and the other one short and wide.

Then, have her predict how many (same-size) marbles each tube could hold. Will the totals be the same? To test her prediction, let her fill each tube with marbles and count. How can she explain the result?

Your child may be surprised to find the shorter, wider cylinder holds more. That's because the radius of a cylinder has a greater effect on its *volume*—the amount of space inside a 3-D object—than its height does. So when she's fixing popcorn, she might prefer the shorter, wider cylinder to the taller, skinnier one!



## SCIENCE LAB

### Where did the green go?

This experiment uncovers a surprising fact: When leaves change color in the fall, it's really the green going away and the colors that were there all along coming out.

**You'll need:** green leaves, small jar, rubbing alcohol, wooden spoon, foil, small bowl, water, coffee filter, scissors

**Here's how:** Have your child tear the leaves into the jar, cover with alcohol, and mash with the spoon. Seal with foil, and place the jar in a bowl filled

with hot water. After 30 minutes, she should cut a strip from the coffee filter, remove the foil, and dangle the filter into the alcohol. Let it sit for an hour.

**What happens?** Lines of different colors will travel up the filter.

**Why?** Green leaf color comes from the chemical *chlorophyll*, which helps make food for trees in spring and summer. In fall, chlorophyll is no longer produced, so the hidden colors (yellow, orange, red) can be seen.



## OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children's math and science skills.

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