

Dear Parents,

We are always looking for new and fun ways to challenge our students in the area of math. However, in order for students to be accurate and efficient in their math and computation skills, they need to have first mastered the basic facts. In first grade we work on a program called “Mastering Math Facts” to help all students learn the basic facts at their individual levels of ability. This program takes no more than 6 minutes of classroom time to focus on fact practice each day. The remainder of our 45 minute math time will be spent working on problem solving strategies and other first grade math concepts. **All students will begin the Mastering Math Facts program in January.** This is the procedure:

1. Students will be given the program’s placement test and a starting level/goal assigned to each of them according to the results of this placement test. Because all students are at various levels of computation ability, not all students will be starting at the same level or with the same goal.
2. Students will spend 1-2 minutes a day studying the facts at their level in the classroom. They will be given a study sheet and instructed to repeat **orally** the **entire** fact. For example, they would say “six plus four is ten”. This helps the brain retain the information by making use of both the visual and oral modes. Students will also be bringing a study sheet of their level home to **practice each night**. Please **DO NOT WRITE ON THE STUDY SHEETS** as these are used from year to year. If you want your child to practice writing their facts quickly, a dry erase marker wipes off of the study sheet cover easily or you can print off study sheets at their level from the first grade webpage.
3. After a short time of studying their level at the beginning of math class each day, the students will all take a 1 minute **WRITTEN** timed test with each child working at his/her own level and goal.
4. Once a student has met the individual goal we have set for him/her (the highest goal is 40 problems answered correctly in 1 minute) he/she will move on to the next level.
5. When your child moves on to the next level, he/she will take the new study sheet home. These sheets have both a form with answers and one without. If your child studies alone, the portion with the answers should be used. If your child studies with an adult (this is highly recommended) then the sheet without the answers should be used. You might even want to use the top half as a 1 minute timed test. **IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT YOUR CHILD STUDY THIS SHEET EACH DAY.**

All first grade students will begin the Mastering Math Facts program in January, focusing on addition facts first. Once they have met their goal at all the levels for addition, they will begin working on the subtraction facts following the same format. Both addition and subtraction levels start at A and move through the alphabet to Z.

We will be continually monitoring the effectiveness of this program. Our expectation is that this differentiated approach to learning math facts will help students memorize facts at their individual ability levels so that other math work can be completed more efficiently.

Because this program is differentiated, meaning students are placed at a level where they feel successful yet challenged, **not all students will begin at the same level with the same goal**. Students will also not move through the levels at the same speed. This may cause some frustration or discouragement for some students when they see their classmates advancing through levels at a quicker pace than they are. Please reinforce with your child that **this is OK** – each child learns at a different speed and it is perfectly fine to remain on a level for more than a few days. We always tell our students that as long as they are moving up levels, no matter how long it takes them or what level they are on, they are doing exactly what we expect of them. We have found that once the students get into the routine of the program and practicing their facts each day their initial frustrations do turn into a very positive form of self-motivation.

We thank you for taking the time to help your child learn their math facts through this program each day.

Mrs. Curtin

Mrs. Gaul

Mrs. Murphy