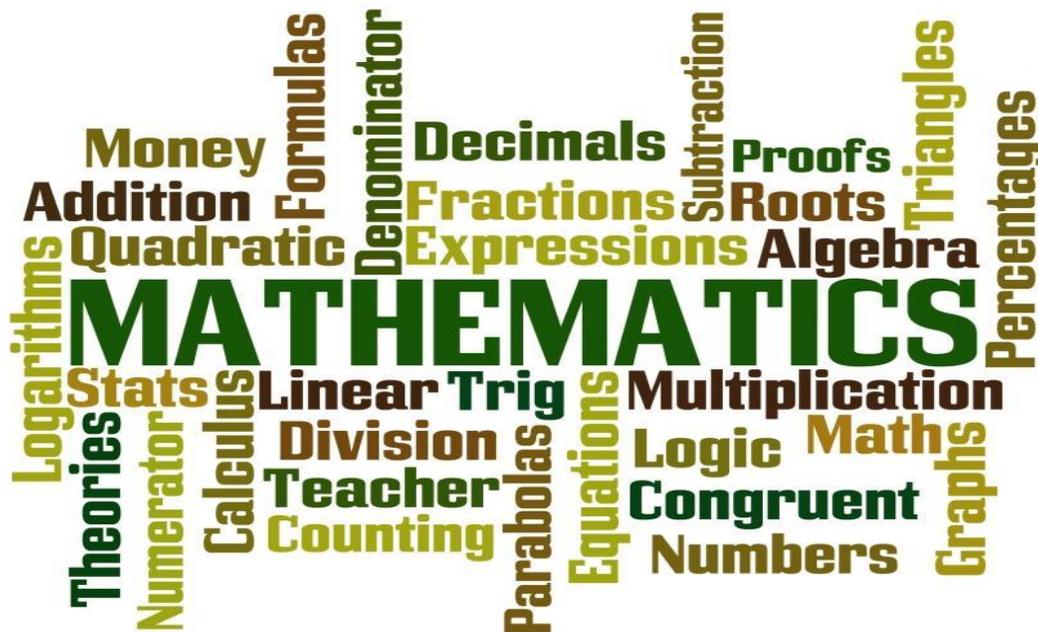


The News That Counts



Grade 5 –The students have successfully completed 4 units so far: Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Place Value, Computing with Whole Numbers and Decimals, Adding and Subtracting Fractions with unlike denominators. They have just begun Multiplying and Dividing Fractions and then will move on to Geometry and Statistics. Some skills we have been working on in our SRBI groups are basic facts, long division, factors, divisibility rules and multiples. SBAC is only a couple of months away. Help your child prepare by reviewing previous concepts and skills learned in past units.

Grade 6 - 6th grade is moving right along. As of this newsletter, they have completed units 1-Operating with Positive and Rational Numbers, Unit 2-Expressions and Equations, Unit 3-Expressions and Equations, and Unit 4-Positive and Negative Numbers. Each unit also had a performance task that went along it. They are now studying Unit 5-Algebraic Reasoning which is a continuation of Unit 2. They have also taken two IAB's (Interim Assessment Block) on the computers. The results from the entire unit CA's and IABs are being used to drive our SRBI instruction.

"Struggling in mathematics is not the enemy any more than sweating is in basketball, it's a clear sign you are in the game." - Kim Sutton

Supporting Your Child in Math

Before you can help your child, it's important to understand what is happening (mathematically) to the adolescent brain. Fifth and sixth grades are exciting times; adolescents' brains are transitioning from reasoning in a concrete manner to understanding abstract concepts and ideas. According to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Intermediate math typically begins with concepts such as fractions and decimals, and by the time students' move on to high school, they have learned pre-algebra concepts, such as manipulating variables and solving or writing equations to find unknown values—ideas that cannot easily be visualized or explained with physical objects. Keep in mind that this is particularly hard for students stuck in a concrete state of mind; they tend to rely on memorizing steps or procedures to solve problems, which can lead to more difficulties later on.

Here are some useful tips on how you can support your child in math:

- **Always have notes** from class, a textbook or other resources **right next to a homework paper**. If your child gets stuck, she is likely to find a similar problem in one of these resources that can help her move forward.
- Ensure the **student takes responsibility** for her own learning by **finding assistance independently**; the ability to access help on your own is essential for student success in all areas of academics.
- **Never give children the answers** to problems! By giving away answers, you're depriving your child of the chance to develop the mental processes required to learn a new concept. No parent enjoys seeing their child struggle, but providing answers could set them up for frustration when they have to tackle more difficult problems and might even stunt their progress as classmates move to more advanced lessons. Furthermore, your child's teacher will not be able to address the misconceptions or areas of weakness that should be targeted in school if homework assignments do not reflect the student's level of understanding.
- Encourage your child to **underline or highlight key words or phrases** in situational problems, as these often help students set up a solution.
- Realize that **your child may struggle** with abstract concepts if his or her brain is not quite ready to reason at an abstract level. Your child's brain will mature in time, and success in math class is likely to accompany this development.

If your child is frustrated by mathematics, show him how to focus on *concepts* rather than *procedural knowledge*. This might help some students approach and solve problems in a different way—one that makes more sense to them. For instance, ask your child to explain one problem in their assignment each night. If possible, choose one that incorporates both words and computation. If your child is simply reciting step-by-step instructions, encourage her to elaborate by asking questions focusing on the “why” of the problem:

- What is the goal of the problem?
- Why does that step work?
- Why would we want to do that next?
- What does this step in the process accomplish?
- How do I know if my answer is reasonable?
- Can I check my work to make sure it makes sense to me?

Strategy of the Month

The wage rate for a salesperson at Macy's is \$8.60 per hour for a 40 hour week and 1.5 times the base pay ("time and a half") for overtime.

If a salesperson works 48 hours in one week, how much is the gross salary she or he earns?

Solution:

Student name: _____ Room # _____

Parent
Signature _____