January 15, 2013

Dear Students and Parents:

It’s time to start work on our school’s Science Fair! Enclosed is a schedule outlining due dates and important information regarding your child’s project. Ample time has been scheduled and work has been spread out, so students can complete the work at a comfortable pace.

This is a major project and will represent a significant portion of your child’s grade for the next grading period(s). The primary objective of this project is to have students approach a problem scientifically. This includes:

Asking questions and forming hypotheses

Creating experiments to test those hypotheses

Organizing data and drawing conclusions

Writing about scientific research

The project must be experimental in nature as opposed to research oriented. In other words, students must do a test, survey, or experiment to determine the answer to their question instead of just looking it up in a book. We encourage students to pick topics that they are genuinely interested in, since they will be working on these projects for the next several months. Topics must also be “original” - something students do not already know. \*\*Please note **FOURTH GRADE WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO BUILD MODELS or EXHIBITS THIS YEAR.**

Students may work individually or with a partner. Each student will be responsible for contributing equally to the project and keep up with the research. Grades will be given individually based on one of the specific tasks below. The three tasks are outlined as follows:

***1. Notebook: This person is in charge of entering data into the project notebook on a regular basis.***

***2. Scientific Paper: The Scientific Paper chronicles how the project evolved, how the research was done, the results, and conclusion. This will be included on the presentation board.***

***3. Display: This includes taking pictures or making sketches of the experimental process, gathering materials, building, and setting up the display for presentation and judging***.

 I will be allowing some class time to help the students get started on their projects. Project guidelines state that all work must be done by the students; however, assistance may be provided by teachers, parents, etc. It is very difficult to work alone without the exchange of ideas, so I encourage you to brainstorm with your child on different ideas and possible topics your child may want to pursue. Students have been given lists of Science Fair Categories and Guidelines and Project Ideas .

In order to do well on these individual tasks, all students must be engaged in the project from the beginning and not wait until the last minute. Please note the schedule below:

***Friday, January 25***: ½ page summary of project idea. Must include problem, hypothesis, materials, and a brief summary of how you will test your hypothesis.

***Friday, February 8***: Notebooks due for 1st check. Each student will turn in ½ page paragraph summarizing their progress or research. This should include background information on topic including key vocabulary words.

***Monday, February 18***: Notebooks due for 2nd check. Each student will turn in ½ page paragraph summarizing their continued progress or research. Students should include data tables or charts that shows data collection from the experiment.

***Friday, March 1***: Notebooks due for 3rd check. ½ page paragraph summarizing your conclusions or findings. Did your experiment support your hypothesis? Were you correct? Why or why not? How can you make your experiment better?

***Friday, March 8***: Science Fair – bring your completed notebook and science fair board

I am looking forward to working with you to make this a valuable learning experience for your child. I appreciate your support on this important project. Although we do not participate in the Austin Energy Regional Science Festival, we follow the same basic grading and project guidelines as set forth by the festival. More information may be downloaded from my website. As acknowledgement and part of your child’s homework, please sign, date, and return the bottom portion of this letter by Friday, January 18.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Braun

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I have reviewed the Science Fair information and calendar with my child, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (Printed Name of Child) and we understand the requirements for a successful Science Fair Project.

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(Parent Signature/Date)

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(Student Signature/Date)