

# the Maury Messenger

Monthly Newsletter of the Parent / Teacher Association

Home of the Cougars



April 2016

## WHAT'S INSIDE

### Maury at the Market 2016: Another Smashing Success

This year's MatM fundraiser was a record-breaking success thanks to the leadership of Kenyon Weaver and the event planning committee. Our flagship fundraising event earned over \$90,000, which will go towards the hiring of 5 additional staff members, materials that teachers need, programs like Roots of Empathy and Mindfulness, professional development for staff, Singapore math materials, leveled libraries in all K-5 classrooms, and more! Several innovations were introduced this year including the Maury Store, the games station, the Maury Dining and Shopping Guide, mobile bidding, and more active social media presence. Congratulations to all those who helped to organize, contribute, and participate in the event.



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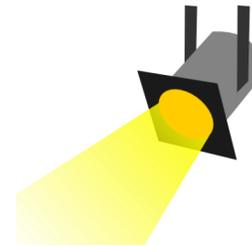


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# Spotlight on Instruction

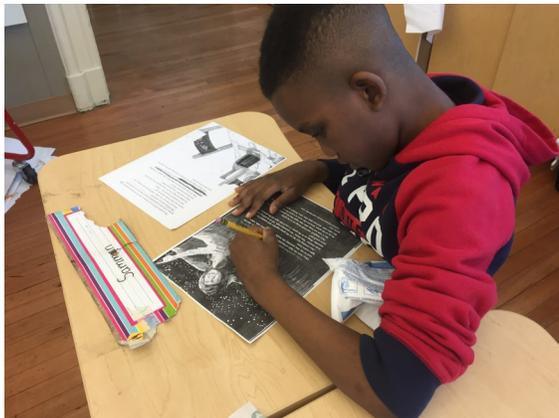


## Growing Stronger Readers through Close Reading

by Norah Rabiah and Rebecca Sanghvi

### HOW IT STARTED

Mid-way through the school year, we reflected on the third graders in Ms. Sanghvi's room. It was obvious that they were deep thinkers! They inferred, they predicted, they made connections, and they loved to talk about books. We also noticed, however, that when it came to direct questions about a text, the students often struggled with using the evidence in the text to correctly answer a question. After pondering this together, we realized that we needed to do more close reading with our students.



### WHAT IS CLOSE READING?

With the demand of the Common Core Standards came the need for students to study complex texts across multiple reads to not only make inferences, but show literal comprehension using evidence from the text. Close reading offers readers an opportunity to do both. During the close reading process, readers study a text over multiple readings, first understanding the gist of the text, and then diving deeper into layers of meaning. We often look through a particular lens, such as the study of a character, setting or imagery. Through these multiple reads of one short text or excerpt, readers grow new ideas about the text.

### WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE IN MS.SANGHVI'S CLASS

For our close reading work, we used a structure in which we read each text three times. The first reading, we read for literal comprehension. Students answered text-based questions, finding the answers by underlining evidence in the text. They discussed their answers with the class, as well as debated the best evidence to support their understanding.

On the second read, students reread the text through a lens. In one text, we looked at a character's traits by studying what he said in the text. In another, readers studied the relationship between characters by analyzing their actions and conversations. We then sorted these details to look for patterns and grow theories.

Finally, students read the text a third time to grow their theories and find the strongest evidence. After this third read, they wrote a response about their theories, using text evidence to back them up.

### RESULTS

After just two close reading sessions, our third graders had made huge improvements in looking back into the text to find the specific evidence to support their answers. Rather than relying on their memory or their own personal experiences, the students were now citing specific lines and annotating the text. Even more importantly, the students were using text-specific evidence to strengthen their ideas about a text, look for patterns and grow theories. As we continue to thread the structure of close reading throughout class work, students are becoming even more adept at these skills.

### GROWING STRONGER THINKERS

When we first embarked on this work, we were concerned that we were stifling our students' creative thinking by forcing them to answer text-dependent questions, or questions with the answers found in the text. After our work, we realized that the gained ability to analyze evidence in a text can actually lead to deeper, stronger thinking.

## Building Grade Level Classes for SY16-17

By *Carolyn Albert-Garvey*

Each spring, there is considerable discussion about placing children in classes for the next school year. This is a matter that we do not take lightly at Maury. The teachers and I will spend many hours forming well-balanced classes in which all children will have an opportunity to learn and to grow in their academic and social skills.

We hope that a frank review of our procedures for class placement of students will reduce the need for parents to make requests for specific teachers.

When classes are structured, we follow a clear set of guidelines. Classes are formed into deliberate heterogeneous groups with the following in mind:

- An even gender and racial balance
- A full range of aptitudes within each class
- An even proportion of achievement levels and learning styles across the classes at each grade level
- An equal number of students in each class on a grade level

Once these factors have been considered, teachers begin to build classes of children who show promise of working well together. Attempts are made to match pupil and teacher personality and style. Quite understandably, these decisions are based upon observations made by the teachers during the course of the year.

While we review additional input about your child's individual learning needs, such as your observations shared at parent-teacher conferences, any such input will be considered in the context of the guidelines above. Additional comments are entirely optional, but if submitted to me, must be written and received via email no later than May 13, 2016 – EMAIL SUBJECT: Placement 16-17. We also trust that you will understand that parents' comments constitute one of the many factors that we consider in forming classes. The final decision on class placements resides with the principal.

### Recognizing Our Amazing Staff

By *Heather Bonome, Chair of the 2016 Maury PTA Staff Appreciation Committee*

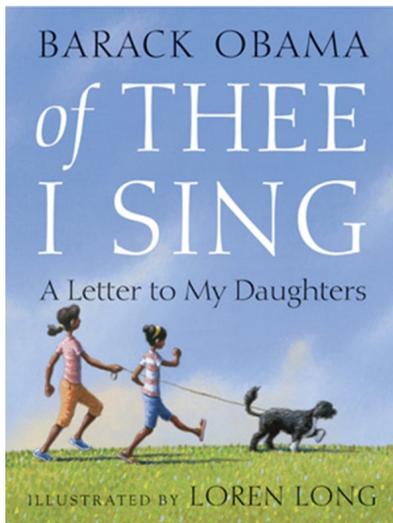
The mission of the Maury PTA Staff Appreciation Committee is to thank our wonderful staff for their contributions to our school and our community. While the Committee has made some small recognitions throughout the year, such as organizing treats for the Staff on the first Monday of each month, the real celebration is yet to come.

Staff Appreciation Week is officially scheduled for May 2-6th, but we started our recognition early by holding a luncheon catered by the Tortilla Cafe for the Staff on Friday, April 8th. The Committee decided to take advantage of the ½ day for students (record keeping day) so that the Staff could relax and enjoy each other's company.

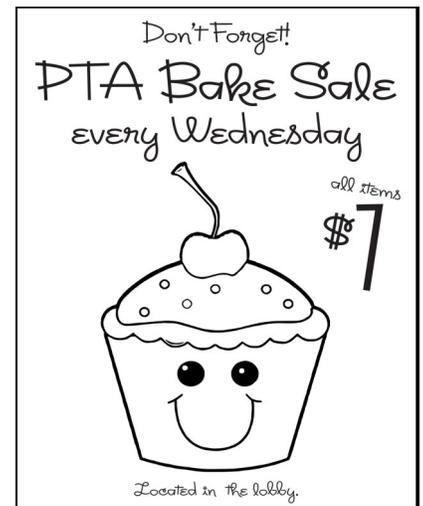
The Committee is working on the schedule for additional recognition events during Staff Appreciation week. **Stay tuned...more information to come in the Tuesday folders about how you can contribute!**



## Principal's Book of the Month



In this tender, beautiful letter to his daughters, President Barack Obama has written a moving tribute to thirteen groundbreaking Americans and the ideals that have shaped our nation. From the artistry of Georgia O'Keeffe, to the courage of Jackie Robinson, to the patriotism of George Washington, President Obama sees the traits of these heroes within his own children, and within all of America's children.



### PARCC DATES – 100% attendance for students and staff is our goal! Let's do it!

ELA—Grade 4 students Monday-Thursday April 11-14

ELA—Grade 5 students Tuesday-Thursday April 12-14

MATH—Grades 4 and 5 students Tuesday-Friday April 19-22

ELA—Grade 3 students Tuesday-Thursday April 26-28

MATH—Grade 3 students Friday April 29, Tuesday-Thursday May 3-5

### A Good Day For A Ride

By George Blackmon

The weather is getting warmer and soon there will be an increase in traffic from bicycles and scooters. If you are planning a good day for riding, circle **Wednesday, May 4th** on your calendar. That is the date for the annual Bike To School Day event, which will take place at Lincoln Park prior to the school day. Several school from the Capitol Hill community will be in attendance along with representatives from national organizations whose focus is on bicycle safety.

Come out, wear your Maury apparel and let's get those wheels rolling.



## Upcoming Events

### April

- 15 Emancipation Day, no school for students, teachers, staff.
- 16 Maury Cheerleading Team Car Wash, Eliot Hine MS, 10:00am
- 21 Maury Volunteer Reception/PTA meeting, 6pm
- 22 Picture Day: in school uniform, individual and class portrait
- 25 4th Grade Families meeting with CAG 6pm (library)
- 27 Whole School Morning Meeting, 9:00am  
Administrative Professionals Day (Maury Office Staff)
- 28 Operation: GRAND (parent), 6:00pm

### May

- 4 Bike to School Day
- 6 Professional Development Day –No school for students
- 9 APPT1 (Grades 4-5)
- 10 Sneak Peek Day—PS-Grade 2—Schedule coming soon
- 16, 18 APPT (Grades 2-3)
- 17 APPT2 (Grades 4-5)
- 20 International Night

### SAVE THE DATE!

### June

- 14 5th Grade Promotion, 9:30am
- 15 Kindergarten Celebration, 10:00am
- 16 Full day of school
- 17 Last day of school-Half day

