

Chalkboard

By

Dr. Don Rose, Gentry Intermediate School Principal
Gentry Public Schools

We are off to another great year at Gentry Intermediate School. Last year we sharpened our focus on improving reading, writing, and arithmetic by adding an additional one-hour writing block. Our effort showed with improvement in all state testing. This year every class will receive two additional hours in the writing block.

Very few changes were made to our Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP) that we submit to the State Department of Education. Staff development helps us meet state requirements and improve in the areas of literacy and math. Every school in Arkansas added a Wellness Priority in their ACSIP this school year. The Wellness Priority will try to improve student's cardiovascular, muscular strength/endurance, and flexibility.

Parental support of their child's education is very important. What a child has to do to be successful is no secret. I will repeat the "secrets" you were given from last year because this is what will make every student successful.

Reading is one third of the secret. Children must be proficient readers. We ask the children to read at least one AR book a week and make at least 85% on the AR test for that book. Of course children may read as many books as they would like. They are also allowed to read books that are not AR books. Some of the teachers will allow them to answer questions or do a report to get credit for non-AR books.

Another third of the secret is written response. Children must understand what they read and be able to write answers to specific questions concerning what they read. It is very important that they answer the question that is asked of them and not just write a beautiful paragraph. All the children have weekly experience in writing open response answers.

Math is the final part of the secret. Children must be able to perform all types of math procedures. It is also very important they are able to explain, in written form, their understanding of the math principles used in the solution. All of our children have weekly experience in writing answers to math open response questions. Ask your children questions about the math they are doing. Have them explain to you the steps they are using and why they decided to use that process. Let them know how important math is to daily life.

Please encourage your children's reading. Discuss with them the books they are reading and help them make connections in their reading and writing. Connections can be made with other books the children have read. Connections can be made to things that have happened to them. Finally the children can make connections to things that they have observed in the world around them. Children who are good readers and writers will be successful in their life long learning.

Now it is time to celebrate our success. The following is a summary of information as reported in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette – Northwest Arkansas Now* section on November 24, 2006. As you can see GIS fourth graders performed best of all the schools in Benton and Washington counties. We are very proud of everyone who helped support and teach our children to help them be successful.

Arkansas School Report Cards
as reported in
Northwest Arkansas Now on 9/24/06

School District	4th Grade Literacy		Total Lit. P/A	4th Grade Math		Total Mat. P/A	Total Students P/A in both L/M
	Proficient	Advanced		Proficient	Advanced		
Gentry	44	22	66	42	25	67	133
Fayetteville	44	24	68	39	25	64	132
Bentonville	47	22	69	39	23	62	131
Farmington	41	27	68	40	14	54	122
Springdale	40	22	62	35	25	60	122
Siloam Springs	45	13	58	37	26	63	121
Rogers	40	18	58	38	24	62	120
Elkins	46	17	63	39	15	54	117
Prairie Grove	38	14	52	39	19	58	110
Westfork	36	9.3	45.3	28	31	59	104.3
Gravette	38	13	51	32	8	40	91
Lincoln	34	9.8	43.8	29	13	42	85.8
Greenland	37	6	43	24	12	36	79
Pea Ridge	35	5.8	40.8	27	4.7	31.7	72.5
Decatur	22	13	35	0	17	17	52

Thank you for your support of our school. We are proud of our children and will continue to help all children improve their performance. Please come to all the events at our school whenever possible. We would love to see you at parent-teacher conferences, parent nights, and grade level programs.