



Clusters Get Going for LME's 4th and 5th Graders

Laurel Mountain 4th and 5th graders participated in their first enrichment cluster meetings on Friday, October 17. These clusters will last for eight weeks leading up to an Enrichment Cluster Showcase on December 19. This year we were able to offer 19 different enrichment clusters to our students:

- Scraps of Cloth
- Animal Home Builders Association
- Fitness 101
- The Computer Connection
- Where is Zeek This Week?
- Movement in Dance
- LME READ-A-THON ASSEMBLY
- The All-Star Ad Agency
- Clay Creations
- Art from the Heart
- So You Want to Rule the World...
- Calling all KPAW Correspondent Colleagues!
- Engineers for Tomorrow
- KITCHEN CHEMISTRY!
- Solar Pioneers
- The Scene Scene
- Puppet Producers
- Speed Racer
- Theatrical Lions Guild - Read-a-Thon Edition

During class time, the 4th and 5th graders ranked their top four cluster choices. Mrs. Levitan took their preferences and entered that data into a spreadsheet which she sent to Eric Deal, a Laurel Mountain parent. Mr. Deal wrote a computer program to sort all of the students into their clusters based on their preferences.

The computer program randomly assigns the students to their clusters and tries to give every child their first cluster choice. When that is not able to happen, it then moves the student to their second choice, then their third choice and finally their fourth choice. Also, the

program takes into account the number of students per cluster, trying not to assign more than 15 students per cluster. This helps keep the facilitator to student ratio low.

With our 4th and 5th grade group of students, 171 students are in their first cluster choice, 63 are in their second cluster choice, 24 are in their third cluster choice and 10 students are in their fourth cluster choice. Even though this is not a perfect system, we feel it is the fairest way possible to sort the students. Using the program will also allow us to track student choices throughout their years at LME.

Please look for the ENews updates sent periodically throughout the cluster meetings. If you are not signed up on ENews, please visit the Laurel Mountain PTA website and click on "Mailing Lists." Then, scroll down for more information on how to sign up for "Round Rock ISD ENews." Furthermore, please check out our enrichment bulletin board from the front office which displays the pictures and summaries from our 4th and 5th grade enrichment clusters.

Dr. Renzulli Visits LME

Laurel Mountain teachers and staff were honored to have Dr. Joseph Renzulli visit our campus on Monday, October 20. Dr. Renzulli was accompanied by Paul Rector, Vice President of Renzulli Learning Systems, and Kimberly Thornton, regional sales manager of Renzulli Learning Systems.

Dr. Renzulli is recognized around the world as an authority in the field of gifted education. He is the Director of The



National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented and is the creator of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM), just to name a few of his many accomplishments. Dr. Renzulli began the SEM in the mid-1970s with the belief that all students are gifted in their own way. By teaching curriculum that is matched with students' own particular gifts and interests—music, sports, animals, photography, botany, etc.—they become more engaged in school and learn necessary skills through practical applications within an area of their own particular interest. The primary goal of the SEM is to provide both challenging and fun learning across a wide range of education levels and demographic differences. The idea is to create “a rising tide lifts all ships” approach for all students in school.

Dr. Renzulli spent the day touring Laurel Mountain, visiting classes and talking with students. He observed all kinds of wonderful enrichment teaching and learning that takes place each day at Laurel Mountain. He saw students learning about spiders, researching on Renzulli Learning Systems, building simple machines using our Robo-lab kits, creating new math games and giving a tour of their gardens. Dr. Renzulli got to sit down with a few students and listen to what they think of enrichment, clusters and SEM at Laurel Mountain. Some students were able to ask him questions about how and why he created Renzulli Learning Systems. Several teachers that either attended Confratute or serve on LME's Enrichment Team enjoyed a BBQ lunch and visit with Dr. Renzulli on a more personal level.

Later in the afternoon, Dr. Renzulli presented to Laurel Mountain staff, parents, Round Rock ISD personal, including our Superintendent Dr. Jesus Chavez, several RRISD school principals, several other local area superintendents and other visitors from the area. Dr. Renzulli's presentation focused on his belief that all children are gifted. It is up to the schools and teachers to find those gifts and develop them into talents. He talked about the way to engage and motivate students in school is to focus on what students are interested in. That is where real-life learning will take place because the students are truly interested and involved in what they are studying. Dr. Renzulli mentioned what a great day he had at Laurel Mountain visiting with the students and teachers. He commented that we are a great example of what SEM can look like in elementary schools. He was impressed by the learning and activities that were taking place in the classroom and he witnessed the enthusiasm of our learners.

All of the Laurel Mountain staff were excited and honored to “show-off” our exceptional school to Dr. Renzulli. The students were excited as well. Throughout the day, many students introduced

themselves to Dr. Renzulli and asked him, “So you are the man that made enrichment clusters? You are the one who made Renzulli Learning Systems? Thank you!”

Overall, it was a wonderful day and we look forward to continuing Dr. Joseph Renzulli's vision for education in American schools.

Thank You to our Family and Community Enrichment Supporters

Anne Webster, Laurel Mountain parent and 4th and 5th grade enrichment cluster facilitator

Cyrus Bavarian, University of Texas Solar Racing Club

Dave Jernigan, Laurel Mountain parent and 4th and 5th grade enrichment cluster facilitator

Eric Deal, Laurel Mountain parent and enrichment cluster sorting program creator

Erica Thorson, University of Texas Solar Racing Club

Ilker Ozsaracoglu, Laurel Mountain parent and 4th and 5th grade enrichment cluster facilitator

Jacob Overstreet, Canyon Vista 8th grade student

Janet Marek, Canyon Vista 8th grade Leadership teacher

Kasey Kamerman, Media Supervisor for McGarrah-Jessee

Lane Holmstrom, Laurel Mountain teacher and Ocean Day musical composer

Larry Barnett, RRISD Video Services Department

Lindy Buckley, Laurel Mountain parent and Excellence Fund Newsletter Editor and Publisher

Mad Science

Mithu Deb, local potter and art teacher

Monica Deal, Laurel Mountain parent and 4th and 5th grade enrichment cluster facilitator

Scott L, Central Market Seafood Department

Scott Wenum, scuba instructor

Stephanie Sabatini, The Linus Connection

Sumana Mandala, Laurel Mountain parent and 4th and 5th grade enrichment cluster facilitator

