



The Monthly Plunge

April 2009

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A Note from the Principal's Desk

In our quest to meet the needs of every student and improve student learning for each of them, College Park will implement an instructional process called *Response to Instruction* at every grade level next school year in the area of Language Arts. Recognizing that students' needs are best met when we are able to instruct them at their particular learning level, the use of this instructional delivery model will enhance our effectiveness in increasing the level of student learning and the development of their academic skills. *Response to Instruction* is a process by which we use a common tool to assess all students, place them in a classroom with other students with similar skills at their grade level based on assessment data, and teach them at their instructional level. Through this process, students neither become bored or overwhelmed. Their instructional needs are efficiently and effectively met.

Beginning in October next year, each student will be placed in a *Response to Instruction* class for 1 hour a day, four or five times a week for reading. After receiving *RTI* instruction each day, students will return to their homeroom class and continue Language Arts instruction concentrating on the state's grade level standards. As a student's level changes throughout the year, their teachers will make the necessary *Response to Instruction* class changes to continue to meet the child's learning needs.

Our teachers are currently receiving extensive training on the methods and strategies utilized in the *Response to Instruction* delivery model process. As a staff, we are excited to begin using this instructional model and we are confident that we will see an increase in student learning for all students.

Cordially,
 Alan Battenfield
 Principal

Kindergarten Round-Up

Thursday, April 30th has been designated, “Kindergarten Round Up” in the Irvine Unified School District. **Children must be 5 years old on or before December 2, 2009 to enroll in kindergarten.** Parents may begin the pre-registration process for their kindergarten child on-line at <http://www.iusd.org/> beginning on March 13th for the 2009-2010 school year. After submitting the on-line registration, please call the school office to schedule an appointment to complete your child’s registration process. Information required for registration is:

1. County Birth Certificate or Passport
2. Immunization Record Documentation from physician’s office
3. Address Verification in the College Park attendance area. We must see two of the following: current property tax, payroll stub, social services document, income tax document, or any utility bill.
4. Parent Identification
5. Online Enrollment print out

Our Kindergarten Parent Orientation Meeting is scheduled for April 30 at 7:00 P.M. All parents of children entering kindergarten in the fall are encouraged to attend. This evening is for parents only. During this evening parents will be given the opportunity to sign up for a kindergarten classroom visitation and school tour.

Jog-A-Thon

Our entire student body finished our jog-a-thon a couple of weeks ago. It was a rousing success. In addition to improving our students’ physical fitness and emphasizing exercise, its purpose was to raise money to assist the PTA in supporting programs, supplies, and events for our children. Approximately \$20,000 was raised through this event.

A big “Thank You” goes out to our PTA Jog-a-thon Committee for their efforts in leading this event. It was extremely well organized and a tremendous

amount of fun for all. In addition, we are thankful for the many additional parent volunteers who helped set up and take down, marked laps, solicited donations, and cheered on the students.

The Best Teacher for Your Child

As we head into the final few months of this school year, the staff and I begin our planning for the next school year. Soon we will be sitting down to make up classes based upon our best enrollment projections for next year.

Every year about this time, the staff and I begin to hear from some parents who want to request a specific teacher for their child for the next school year. They want “The Best Teacher” at that grade level for their child, and they believe they know who that is, usually based on two factors: (1) a friend or neighbor who has told them who that “Best Teacher” is, or, (2) they believe it is the teacher at the grade level who has the GATE cluster, because the GATE students get the best teachers and are in the best classes.

Please consider these factors. I visit classrooms often for the purpose of observing the teachers teaching and the activities of the students in the classes. I know the instructional skills of every teacher better than anyone else in the school or the community, because I have observed various aspects daily. I could not, in all honesty, tell you who the best teacher on the faculty is, because there is no one teacher who is the best in everything. In talking about “The Best Teacher” one must specify “best in which area?” Teaching is made up of hundreds of sub skills, and no one is best at all of them. Also, I have seen the instructional level of teachers vary significantly depending upon the make-up of the class; the type of children the teacher has to teach. There is no one best teacher.

Some may think that classes with GATE students in them are the best classes, and the teachers who work with them are the best teachers. Teachers are not assigned to work with GATE students because they are more skilled. Most often, teachers with the GATE cluster choose to work with those students because of certain characteristics that are often present in academically gifted children. GATE cluster classes can be very difficult to teach. They may contain students who misbehave, under

achieve, and are unmotivated. There is no guarantee of compliant, obedient, studious children in any classroom.

When we configure individual classes, we try to make them heterogeneous; classes that have a mix of high, average, and low achieving students in them. The major factors that we consider are:

- the child's demonstrated achievement in reading on a daily basis.
- the child's pace of learning.
- the quality of the student's citizenship and effort.
- the student's leadership ability and personality.
- the boy-girl ratio in the class.
- the number of students in a class.

You can see this is a complicated process, and is based upon our best assessment of each child.

College Park recognizes that parents do have valuable information, which could assist, in the class placement of their child. Examples of this may be:

- an unsatisfactory experience between an older child and a teacher.
- neighborhood problems that may necessitate the separation of two children.

We do know that parents sometimes have preferences for teachers and consideration is given to their request. However, we cannot place children in classes only on the parent's preferences or the teacher's reputation in the community. We group children for instructional purposes, and placing them in class for other factors would defeat those purposes.

Occasionally, a parent's request may have been honored in the past and their child ended up in the class of a teacher they requested. Please understand that even though the request will be considered, there is no guarantee that a parent request will be honored for the upcoming school year.

Most parents do not request a specific teacher for their child or have any additional information to give us, and leave it to us to place their child in an appropriate classroom. However, if you have a specific request or pertinent information related to

the classroom placement of your child for next school year, please communicate to me your information in writing or email before May 29, 2009.

So, "How do I get the "Best Teacher" for my child? – provide us with pertinent/compelling information, if necessary, and trust us to place him/her in a classroom where he/she will be successful. Fortunately at College Park, all our teachers are qualified, gifted educators and our students benefit greatly from their efforts.

Remember, because of ongoing enrollment through the opening weeks of school, class assignments are not posted until the day before school begins. If your child is not assigned to a teacher you or he/she wished for, the best thing you can do is model acceptance and tolerance. You can do this by, first of all, keeping an open mind. It is very important that you do not pre-judge the teacher, or the new class. Do not speak of the teacher, or class, in negative terms in front of your child, but instead support the teacher when speaking with your child and encourage him/her to do the very best he/she can at school. While doing this, you are supporting not only the teacher, but also the institution and the concept of learning.

Internet & Computer Safety

As I am sure you all are aware, our children are very technologically savvy. In many cases, children are more advanced than their parents and that can be very intimidating to us as adults. It is vital, however, that we do not allow our fears to interfere with the supervision and guidance of our children as they use this wonderful technology at school and at home. Many students use the internet for school research, entertainment and games, emailing friends and family, as well as other activities. The internet can be a wonderful learning and communication tool, and a way to gain quick information on a variety of subjects. It also can be an open door into your home for uninvited individuals whether known or unknown to the child. In recent years across our country, there has been a dramatic increase in students bullying other students and delivering

inappropriate messages through email and Instant Messaging (IM).

According to news reports on a recent study, teenagers and young adults spend an average of 16.7 hours online weekly—more than they do watching TV. The Internet is now a main source of information for what’s “cool” and current in their world. From music, fashion, entertainment, sports, homework, and instant communication with friends (IM), the Internet is the most popular way among youth to “get connected.” With this much time devoted to online or Web access, it is very important that parents have an idea of what their kids are doing when they are on the Internet. Online tools to keep children from checking out inappropriate material may not be enough. Many activities on the Internet require direct adult supervision and constant awareness by caring adults to avoid possible harm coming to a child. Here are some suggestions for families about internet use:

- Be aware that there is a new type of bullying and it seems to be catching on in our country.
- Check your child’s emails to make sure they are appropriate.
- Talk to your child about NOT working out conflict online.
- Talk to your child about NOT gossiping online.
- If your child finds a bullying message, do SAVE the message on the cell phone, message machine or PRINT a copy of the message online.
- Parents can share information with a teacher/administrator.
- Parents can call other parents if they know them and let them know what is going on.
- Parents will benefit from actively talking about this new bullying with their children.
- Make rules and set limits for Internet use, and be firm with your child about keeping them.
- Keep the computer in an area of the home where everyone can see it and it is used by the entire family. A child may be less likely

to disobey the rules if he is likely to be caught.

- Know the Web sites your child is visiting and what they are about—are they for play, music, or homework?
- Is your child using chat rooms? This activity may not be a good idea, unless you are absolutely sure the people are who they say they are and there is a realistic purpose for the chat room. Be directly involved in this activity, if you even allow your child to participate at all.
- Make children aware of the dangers of giving personal information on the Internet—this shouldn’t be allowed, except with your specific approval. This means no last name, where you live (not even the city), and especially no phone number should ever be given out.

These issues are relevant to elementary age children. Over the last couple of years, I have dealt with a few incidents involving College Park students using chat rooms and the internet inappropriately. In each case, parents were unaware of what their child was doing. The sites MySpace.com, Facebook, and similar sites that allow students to post personal information are of particular concern. Many College Park students are active on these sites. Remember, whatever a person posts on one of these types of sites will be there forever and accessible by others. Please be vigilant. Supervision is a must.

World’s Fair

The PTA is currently in the planning stages for our school’s World’s Fair. It will be held on Friday, June 5th. This event is the highlight of our school year. It involves our entire school population and requires the assistance of many volunteers. Parents are needed to operate game booths, organize food booths, donate food, solicit or donate items for the silent auction, set up and take down, sell tickets, and a multitude of other things. Please contact Kathleen Sarangay, our PTA President, if you can help.

After School Supervision

Please be aware that after school supervision ends at 2:30 p.m. on regular days and 1:30 p.m. on Wednesdays. All students must be picked up by that time. Students are not allowed to remain at school to play without first going home. If a child's parents give him/her permission to return to school to play without supervision, please be advised that the parents are responsible for their child's behavior and may be held liable if an accident or injury should occur.

Dates to Remember:

- Save the date!! The 2009 Donald Bren Honors Concert will be held Tuesday, April 28 at 7:00 p.m. at the Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall. The opportunity for IUSD students to perform in this world class space is very exciting, but it means that ALL concert attendees MUST have a purchased ticket. Tickets are available by contacting the IPSF office.
- IUSD/IPSF Summer Enrichment Program: Summer classes begin June 29, 2009 and continue until July 24 (No school Friday July 3rd.) IUSD, in conjunction with IPSF, will once again provide academic and recreational opportunities for students this summer at sites throughout the city. Additional details regarding course offerings and locations will be available in early March! In addition, beginning this summer, an extended day summer school program will be offered. Elementary students will now have the option to enroll in multiple courses at one of our sites, allowing interested students to enroll in both an academic and an elective course! For more information regarding summer programs please visit www.irvinesummerprograms.org.

Upcoming Events

April 6	Angel Baseball Dress Up Day!
April 6	Sixth Grade leaves for Outdoor Science Camp!
April 6	1 st , 4 th & 5 th Grade Student Recognition Awards Assemblies
April 7	Primary Music Parent Share Day
April 9	5 th Grade Field Trip to Riley Farms
April 9	2 nd & 3 rd Grade Student Recognition Awards Assemblies
April 10	Minimum Day - Last day before Spring Break
April 10	PTA Meeting, 8:30 AM
April 13-17	Spring Break
April 20	School Resumes
April 21	Kindergarten Student Recognition Awards, Mrs. Spencer's Class
April 21	1 st Grade Big Al Goes to Sea Field Trip. Mrs. Saine's & Mr. Tumbaga's Classes
April 21	Venado Drama Performance of "Honk" for 6 th Grade
April 22	Kindergarten Student Recognition Awards, Mrs. Schmidt's, Ms. Kumjian's, & Mrs. Allan's Classes
April 22	1 st Grade Big Al Goes to Sea Field Trip. Mrs. Moore's & Mrs. Whitehead's Classes
April 22	3 rd , 4 th , & ELL 4-6 Field Trip to Downtown Disney
April 22	Mother Daughter Tea
April 23	1 st Grade Big Al Goes to Sea Field Trip. Mrs. Baise's, Ms. Horton's, & Ms. Honeycutt's
April 28	Donald Bren Honors Concert
April 29	"Hats On Day" sponsored by Student Council
April 30	Kindergarten Round-Up, 7:00 PM