



The Monthly Plunge

October 2009

A Note from the Principal's Desk

Wow! What a terrific opening of school we have had this year. The students are already hard at work and have settled into their classes quite nicely.

Each school year, I spend numerous hours surveying the teachers, staff members, parents, and students in order to identify our school's areas of strength and those areas that need to be improved. Many changes that are made are a direct result of those conversations and the feedback given to me by the College Park staff and community. Adjustments continue to be made as necessary in order to provide a safe campus, an optimum learning environment, and a balanced, well-rounded educational experience for our students.

One significant change taking place this year is the implementation of an instructional process called *Response to Instruction* at every grade level 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. 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.

As always, our staff will continue to look for ways to improve student learning and the overall education each child receives. If my staff or I can be of service to you or answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Alan Battenfield, Principal

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Academic Performance Index

Awesome! Terrific! Exceptional! As you may have read, the California Department of Education recently released our Academic Performance Index (API) score for the 2008-2009 school year. The state target score is 800. The score is derived from a complex formula that includes a school's scores on the California State Standards tests. A school is considered "high performing" if it has an API of 800 or above. We scored **922** this year! This score continues to be among those schools considered elite.

Our API score of 922 is particularly impressive considering that College Park experienced a significant increase in student enrollment and the amount of students who are still considered to be learning English over the last few years. In addition, students new to our school, on average, generally score lower on the California State Standards tests than their counterparts who have attended College Park for a minimum of 3 years.

Although we recognize that an API score of 922 is exceptional, the staff will continue to fervently analyze the data and develop strategies that attend to any areas needing improvement. Our staff also understands that a strong API score is not the only important indicator of an excellent school. We also value character development, the appreciation of the arts, physical fitness, and the development of the skills necessary to work cooperatively with others.

Walk to School Day

The International Walk to School Day began in 1997 as a day to bring community leaders and children together to create awareness of the need for communities to be walkable. By 2006, more than 2,294 schools from all 50 states participated in Walk to School Day.

College Park is excited to be continuing our participation in this Irvine Public School Foundation sponsored event. It will be held on Friday, October 23, 2009. Every student is encouraged to walk to school. Parents are invited to join them.

The benefits of this program are numerous. Walking or bicycling to school gives children:

- Time for physical activity.
- A sense of responsibility and independence.
- Allows them to enjoy being outside.
- Provides them time to socialize with their parents and friends and to get to know their neighborhoods.

Cash for Cans

The City of Irvine will once again be competing nationally against similarly-sized cities for up to \$10,000 in award money that the City has pledged to donate to the Irvine Public Schools Foundation. By working with the Irvine Unified School District, businesses, and area recycling partners, Irvine aims to collect one million cans.

College Park and other Irvine schools will benefit from this opportunity to raise funds through recycling. Each pound of cans recycled by our College Park school community equals one dollar back to our school.

Throughout October, here is how you can participate-

- Collect aluminum beverage cans.
- Place aluminum beverage cans in plastic bags. Remember to rinse and crush your cans.
- Drop off your cans at College Park at the designated area near Rainbow Rising and the school parking lot entrance. Kindergarten families may drop them off in the designated area near the kindergarten gate entrance.

Student Council

Our student body will be voting in an election to select our student council officers in October. Our Student Council is responsible for ice cream sales, school spirit wear, spirit days, and many other activities. The Student Council is led by Mrs. Stacy Sundstrom, Ms. Katie Porto, and Ms. Megan Cline.

Reflection Program

Have you ever dreamed of having your child's drawing or photo framed and hung in a special art exhibit at their school? Can you imagine what it would be like to have his/her story or poem published in a school or PTA newspaper, or to play or sing in front of an audience a song he/she has written?

If your child participates in the PTA Reflections Program, those dreams may become a reality. More important, your child will have an opportunity to demonstrate his/her creativity and express his/her artistic talents. Please encourage him/her to participate this school year. The rules and theme have already been provided to each of them at school.

Parent Conference Week

Soon you will receive a letter from your child's teacher inviting you to attend a goal setting parent conference. Conferences are a wonderful opportunity to establish clear, meaningful home/school communications. All children learn in different ways. Each has his/her own unique personality, interests, likes, hopes, dreams, and fears. To aid their students in acquiring new skills and knowledge, teachers need to be aware of each child's special interests, concerns, and learning style. No one knows a child better than his/her parents. Teachers have valuable information about how your child works in a group setting, and how well they are mastering grade level standards and skills. The parent conference is a great way to encourage two-way communication. Conferences

are meant to facilitate parent involvement in students learning. At College Park, we believe students whose families are directly involved in their learning do better in school. Research supports this belief. A 1994 compilation of research entitled, "The Family is Critical to Student Achievement" edited by Henderson and Berla states:

"..... the evidence is now beyond dispute. The most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to:

1. Create a home environment that encourages learning.
2. Express high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children's achievement and future careers.
3. Become involved in their children's education at school and in the community."

This year's first parent conference will be held October 23 through October 30. In collaboration with you, teachers will be setting goals for your child's learning. In addition, you will receive a report of your child's progress, but no report card. The first trimester report card will be sent home in December following the end of the first trimester.

Fall Picture Day

Picture day is Wednesday, October 28, 2009. To receive a picture package, the payment must be made on picture day. The students must present his/her picture payment envelope to the photographer. Please make checks payable to Cantrell. For detailed information, please refer to the picture package brochure that will be sent home. Additional brochures will be available in our school office.

Classroom Interruptions/Visitors

Visitors are always welcome at College Park. In the interest of safety, we do ask that all visitors report to the office to sign in. At that time, visitors will be

issued a sticker to wear, indicating to the students and staff that they are authorized to be on campus.

The College Park staff makes a concerted effort to establish a learning environment that is conducive to the development of good study habits and uninterrupted academic learning time. We seek your cooperation and assistance in this effort. You can help us by:

1. Sending the teacher a note should you need to pick up your child early, thus eliminating the need for us to call the classroom.
2. Avoiding calling school and leaving messages for your child, unless it is an emergency. The telephone is made available to students only for emergencies.
3. Establishing a system that helps eliminate forgotten lunches, homework, money, musical instruments, etc. Parents bringing forgotten items to school should place them in the baskets located in our office. Children are encouraged to check these baskets for forgotten items throughout the day.

Please do not interrupt the classroom for any reason unless you are scheduled as a classroom volunteer or have an appointment with the teacher.

At dismissal, we ask that parents please wait outside the building until the bell rings and do not enter the building unnecessarily. Because of our staggered dismissal schedule, we often have students still receiving instruction in class or participating in a specialized program. We do not want them to be disturbed. In order to avoid entering the building, please set up a place outside the building to meet your children after school. This will reduce the end of school disruptions to our classrooms.

Upcoming Events

October 5	PTA Meeting & Internet Safety Training for Parents
October 9	Kindergarten Centennial Farm Field Trip
October 14 & 16	CELDT Testing
October 18	Harvest Cup Soccer Tournament
October 19	Staff Development Day- No School for Students
October 20	5 th Grade Ocean Institute Field Trip
October 23	Walk to School Day
October 23	Grades 4-6 Minimum Day
October 26-30	Parent Conferences & Minimum Days
October 27	Parent Conference Day- No School
October 28	Fall Picture Day
October 30	Retro Bill Assemblies
October 31	Halloween

