



The Rising Star

Swarthmore-Rutledge School

Home of the Panther Cubs!

Volume 15, Issue 1

September 2008

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

Dear SRS Families:

Welcome to the new school year! We are all very excited that a new school year is upon us, and we are looking forward to the challenge of making it a wonderful experience for your children. Those of you who are new to SRS are about to experience the kindness, warmth and educational excellence for which SRS is known.

As an elementary principal, I am proud to be part of a school district where students, parents, teachers, support staff, board members, and administration continue to strive toward providing our students with the best education we can give them. We continue to examine best practices so that we can maximize our students' learning during their elementary years.

This year our professional development focus will be on differentiating instruction and the Response to Intervention model. The SRS faculty will study this model so that we can use it to better meet the academic needs of our students. (If you are interested in learning more about Response to Intervention see the section below that provides more details about this model.)

Good instruction begins with good teachers. I believe that our school has some of the finest teachers in this country. Please join me in welcoming the newest members of our faculty. Randi Gaier is taking over for Kate Friel this year while Kate is on a leave of absence. Randi will serve as a part-time Reading Specialist this year. Kim Aronovitz will serve as a fulltime Special Education Inclusion Teacher. She is taking over for Tara Irely and Marc de Jong who shared this position at SRS last year. Karen Winward is replacing Rebecca Fiske. She will be sharing the SRS Art position with Teacher Helen.

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***“There are
hundreds of
languages in the
world, but a smile
speaks them all”
- ANONYMOUS***

Good teachers need support from our parents and community in their efforts to provide for their students. Parent involvement is one of the key factors that makes SRS such a successful school. All parent members of the SRS community are encouraged to be active members of our Home and School Association and to seriously consider volunteering your time and ideas to make SRS even better!

The most important element of SRS is our students. This lovely building is a pretty lonely place to be during the summer months. We welcome our students back, hoping that they had a great summer and are ready for an exciting school year.

We give a special welcome to the students who are new to SRS this year. We will strive to make their transition as easy as possible. I look forward to getting to know all my students and making sure that they feel welcome and part of the SRS school community.

Our 2008-2009 SRS Staff Members

I am especially proud of the SRS faculty and staff. Their hard work and willingness to put in that extra time and effort for our children is impressive. SRS has a dedicated and caring faculty and staff who work collaboratively to make our school a stimulating, exciting and safe place for kids.

Please join me in thanking each of the following members of the SRS staff for all they do for our students and school:

1st Grade

Jennifer Connolly
Billie Jo Fries
Jennifer McDonnell
Ellen Valentine

2nd Grade

Erika Benson
Ellen Gidaro
Michael Haines
Tina Smart

3rd Grade

Pat Cronin
Noreen Gaynor
Pat Hacik
Jennifer Kennedy
Eric McElroy

4th Grade

Jill Brook
Irene Buecheler
Ed Gaynor
Cheryl Knox

5th Grade

Liz Corson
Carrie Saunders
Renee Strehle
Bridget Welsh

Special Education

Kim Aronovitz
Dorri Brooke
Katherine Lord
MC Petras
Carol Prendergast
Kevin Stahler
Sue Vatronick

Special Subject Teachers

Bill Kane, P.E
Helen Mangelsdorf, Art
Jeff Shaull, Instrumental Music
Renee Stroback, Library
Kara Suarez, Choral Music
Karen Winward, Art

Reading Specialists

Randi Gaier
Elma Jones
Jeanette Lynch

Other SRS Faculty

Jennifer Cichowski, Teacher on Special Assignment
Randie Gallagher, Gifted Coordinator
Kathy Gemberling, Guidance Counselor

Other SRS Faculty (cont.)

Maria Klumpp, School
Psychologist
Mary Kristal, Nurse
Carolyn Macrina, Speech
Claire Righter, Speech
Judy Young, Nurse

Secretaries

Sharon Artingstall
Anne Marie Damiano

Technology

Judi Taylor

Custodial

Pat Miles
Wende Trusty

Instructional Support Staff

Marcie Adams
Theresa Anderson
Sandy Bucci
Sonya Crew
Joanne Fender
Karen Flynn
Trish Golden
Judy Jones

Leesa Jones
Andrea Kanavel
Beth Kennedy
Mary Magerr
Toya McDougal
Greg Mercier
Deb Morici
Ruth Nonack

Donna Puscian
Peacelyn Rajeswaran
Sue Riches
Melanie Smythe
Kathy Swierczek
Julie Weaver
Peg Weber
Kate Wise

School Safety Procedures

I would like to stress a few safety procedures to ensure the safety of our students. Please follow the requests of our supervising staff and keep your speed to a minimum.

PLEASE DO:

- Drive slowly and always yield to people in the crosswalks.
- Use College Ave. for drop-off/pick-up purposes.
- Please give any notes, lunch money, etc. to students prior to arrival.
- Let the children in and out of your cars on the RIGHT side to assure they are safe from passing cars.
- Unload students by 8:40 AM to make sure they are on time for school.
- Carpool whenever possible.

PLEASE DO NOT:

- Drop-off/pick-up in the faculty parking lot.
- Wait in the fire lane or handicapped parking areas.
- Stop in the middle of the road.

Important Reminders

At the beginning of each year I like to remind us all of the little, yet very significant, things we need to do in order to make SRS a safe place for everyone.

1. **Sign-in at the Office:** While volunteering and/or visiting SRS during school hours you must first sign in at the office and wear a name tag.
2. **Arrival:** School hours are from 8:45 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. Students are considered late if they arrive after 8:45 A.M. We believe that being on time is a lifelong skill. We appreciate your efforts to get your child to school on time.
3. **Before School Supervision:** In order to keep our students safe, they must not arrive before 8:20 A.M. Support staff is not on duty prior to that time.
4. **Early Dismissal:** Parents must sign their child out in the office whenever they are picking them up for an appointment. We will call the child down to the office via the intercom. This provides us with a safety check on the whereabouts of our students and minimizes disruption to classroom instruction.
5. **Absent/Late Arrival:** When your child is absent and not attending school, or has an appointment and will be arriving late, please call 610-544-5702. This enables us to keep better tabs on who is on/off campus for their safety.
6. **Transportation Change:** When your child is riding a different bus or has a change in their normal dismissal routine, please send a note with them to school that day. Also, please include last names on the note.
7. **Dogs:** Please do not bring dogs onto school property during the school day. They can be a safety hazard.

Our **Parent-Student Handbook** will again be included in the Swarthmore-Rutledge School Directory. Please review the information in this handbook. If we are on the same page, we'll have a wonderful year at SRS!

Thanks to all of you who have helped to make this a very successful opening of school.

Special thanks to our HSA officers who have planned exciting activities during the school year for both parents and students.

Hope to see you all at our Back to School Picnic on September 18th and at our Back to School night on September 25th.

Sincerely,

Gary Davis

Principal

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

Response to Intervention is a three-tier approach with varying levels of support beyond the use of the core curriculum. In the first tier the classroom teacher will use different strategies and may use additional or different materials so that each child is successful. In the second tier a plan that provides supplemental instruction will be developed for those students who require additional instruction using scientifically based materials and strategies.

Most children will respond well to Tiers I and II. They will be able to meet the educational standards for their grade levels; however, those children that require additional or more frequent assistance will require a third tier. At this tier, an intervention team consisting of grade level teachers, reading specialist, school psychologist, instructional support teacher, special education teacher and principal will meet to review the progress of all students. Parents will be invited to be members of this team when children are identified as in need of intervention.

The focus of the approach will be on making sure that all of our students are successful.

WSSD Student Wellness

In the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, the U.S. Congress established a new requirement that all school districts with a federally-funded school meals program develop and implement wellness policies that address nutrition and physical activity by the start of the 2006-2007 school year. In response to this request, the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District created a district Wellness Committee to develop a wellness policy.

A WSSD wellness policy was developed during the 2005-2006 school year and adopted in June of 2006. This policy recognizes that students' physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn are directly related to student wellness and proper nutrition. This policy further states:

- All district students shall be provided nutrition education that will give them the knowledge and skills to lead healthy lives.
- All students shall be given opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity during the school day, and quality physical education that promotes lifelong physical activity.
- All school fundraising projects shall be supportive of healthy eating and student wellness.
- All foods served to district students shall comply with the Guidelines for Nutritional Standards for Competitive Foods in Pennsylvania Schools.

The Wellness Committee is comprised of building principals from each district school, a School Board member, a district food service representative, teachers, school nurses, parent/guardians, and

members of the public. Through this committee, the Superintendent is responsible for monitoring district schools, programs, and curriculum to ensure compliance with this policy.

WSSD Wellness Goals for 2008-2009

- To determine what elementary students are learning about nutrition in their schools
- To implement year three of the Guidelines for Nutritional Standards
- To conduct five District Wellness Committee meetings; monthly School Wellness Committee meetings; and two Wellness Fair meetings
- To sponsor a WSSD Wellness Fair in November of 2008
- Analyze trends in student Body Mass Index data
- Explore issues related to risky student behaviors (SHHS/SHMS)
- To form a Risky Student Behavior Subcommittee to look for effective programs/initiatives to counteract risky student behavior
- To explore the possibility of establishing a district Fitness Challenge Awards program and to share Wellness Best Practices district-wide

The first District Wellness meeting for the 2008-2009 school year will be on Monday, October 6, 2008 at 3:30 p.m. in the SHMS library. All are welcome.

Gary Davis
SRS Principal\
Wellness Committee Chairperson

Home & School Letter - September 2008

Dear SRS Community,

Linda Armour and I are the co-presidents of the SRS Home and School Association for the 2008/2009 year. In that capacity we would like to extend a warm welcome to all new and returning SRS families. We hope that you had an enjoyable summer break and that you are looking forward to a great year. We welcome your participation in H&S and hope to see you at our meetings and upcoming events. H&S is a great way to stay connected to the school community.

Over the summer we have compiled the results of our online survey, in which we solicited your feedback about H&S. Thank you to all who took the time to participate. We appreciate your feedback and constructive suggestions. These suggestions will help improve the effectiveness of our H&S organization.

In our initial communication, we have highlighted the results of the survey and any planned actions around these items. The full survey is available for your review on the SRS website. We have also had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Davis and discuss these survey results. The summary below includes the feedback we received during this meeting.

- There appeared to be considerable interest in the air conditioning situation within the classrooms (particularly those on the upper floors). As most of you know, the school district is aware of this situation. The current plan is to continue to deal with the heat issue through the use of fans. The administration does not believe the district has the financial capability to support air conditioning in each classroom. This issue will continue to be reviewed and as the district's financial situation improves the feasibility of air conditioned classrooms will again be reviewed. As with any significant issue we encourage you to voice your concerns directly to the school board, realizing that they are balancing many competing projects within the district on a limited budget.
- There were many comments concerning technology at SRS – from smart boards, digital microscopes, and laptops to software, wireless technology, and video-conferencing capabilities (please refer to the Take 5 Survey results on www.srskids.org.) There appears to be a general feeling that the school district could be more proactive in the area of technology. H&S seeks parents who are passionate about technology to assist with achieving technology objectives at SRS. Parents are needed to lobby for better technology at the school district level. Parents (through the H&S's Dimensions in Technology committee) are also needed to collaborate with the teachers and staff at SRS to coordinate useful technology-related purchases.
- The issue of outdoor recess and the inclement weather policy was also mentioned. Dr. Davis indicated that SRS follows the school district guidelines in terms of allowing outdoor recess during the cold weather. He also reiterated that this policy is revisited by the administration annually and that every effort is made to allow the kids as much outdoor time as possible. The SAC (School Advisory Committee) of SRS has adapted this policy for SRS with input from parents and teachers. Again the attempt was made to accommodate the input of parents, teachers and support staff in developing a workable strategy for as much "outdoor" time as possible. This policy is available in the SRS Directory and hopefully will soon be posted on the website.

- Nutrition was also a big topic. Dr. Davis is the representative on the district Wellness Committee and will provide an update on the district-wide initiative in this issue of the Rising Star. Given the level of interest in this topic, if there is a resource in our school community with a nutritional background who would be willing to speak at a H&S meeting, we would welcome your input. Many parents are looking for advice on the integration of healthy foods into their children's diets. New guidelines around snacks at school activities will be included in the school directory and posted on the SRS website.
- There was also interest in an opportunity to meet with Dr. Rubeis. It appeared that a number of the points raised in our survey have district-wide implications and extend beyond individual school policies. Dr. Rubeis has accepted our invitation to attend the October 8, 2008 Home & School meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the SRS Library. We encourage parents to attend and have an opportunity to have a dialogue with Dr. Rubeis.
- We touched on the issue of fund raising and received several suggestions for new fund raising activities. In any new activity that is undertaken we would need a community volunteer to lead the effort. We did discuss with Dr. Davis the possibility of allowing the kids to provide input on the planned addition to the playground equipment. As you know this school year we are planning a Silent Auction for March 20, 2009. The proceeds will go toward new playground equipment. The SRS Student Council intends to solicit feedback about what new equipment the kids would like to see on the playground. This is part of our effort this year to tie fundraising to specifically identified projects.
- One final topic of interest was the subject of communication between parents and teachers. Dr. Davis will be discussing this issue at Back-to-School night and will also be encouraging teachers to explain their preferred method of communication at their parent meetings.
- The results of the survey serve to identify objectives that H&S intends to focus its efforts during this school year. The objectives require assistance from parent volunteers. Consequently, H&S has created a "Wish List" – a list of objectives requiring parents to coordinate and/or facilitate. Please review the Wish List below and consider donating your time and services in one of these areas:
 1. **Writer** – To highlight SRS families from diverse cultures. Select, interview, and write about an SRS family from another culture or background. Submit written article to the Rising Star and to the SRS website monthly.
 2. **After-School Science Program Coordinator** – Research, recommend, select, and coordinate an after school science program for SRS students. We encourage sharing this responsibility with at least another parent, so talk to your friends!
 3. **Green Project Coordinator** – Select and coordinate a green project(s) at SRS to improve environmental awareness and responsibility within the SRS community.
 4. **Community Service Day Coordinator** – Organize and coordinate a community day of service at SRS during the Martin Luther King school holiday on January 19, 2009.
 5. **Grant Writer/Researcher** – Research and submit grant applications for the benefit of a variety of SRS programs.
 6. **Educational Workshop Coordinator** – Organize one evening (or Saturday) of several workshop sessions featuring parent and community volunteers who have a background in areas that parents are interested in learning more about. (Please refer to the Take 5 Survey results on www.srskids.org for a list of topics of interest to parents.)
 7. **Publicity Writer**– Provide periodic articles to local media informing community of SRS happenings.

Again we appreciate the time spent by people to respond to the survey. Please feel free to contact Linda Armour (lfarmour@comcast.net) or Mary Murray (mogorman220@comcast.net) if you have questions or additional input. We look forward to working with the SRS community on the coming year.



The Rising Star

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Submit materials to:

Robin Boyer

Rdgenter@aol.com

Swarthmore-Rutledge School

100 College Avenue
Swarthmore, PA 19081
610-544-5700

Attendance Line:
610-544-5702

Check out our Website!

<http://wssd.org/>

(click on SRS)

A

*A proud member of Wallingford-
Swarthmore
School District*



Dates to Remember

**** PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ALL ENTRIES FOR THE RISING STAR ARE DUE IN BY THE 20TH OF EACH MONTH.**

BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT MEETING DATES:

The Kids' Place: September 8th-7:00 pm

NPE: September 9th-7:00 pm

SRS: September 25th-7:00 pm

WES: September 4th-7:00 pm

SHMS: September 15th-6th Grade-6:30 pm;

September 17-7th & 8th Grade-6:30 pm

SHHS: September 18-7:00 pm

- *9/9: School Advisory Committee Mtg – 7:30am
- *9/10: H&S Mtg – 7:00pm
- *9/18: Back to School Picnic – 5:15pm
- *9/19: Sally Foster Gift Wrap Sale Starts
- *9/23: Picture Day – Grades 3, 4, 5
- *9/24: Picture Day – Grades 1, 2
- *9/25: Coupon Book Sale Starts
Back to School Night – 7:00pm
- *9/30: Rosh Hashanah – NO SCHOOL

Spotlight Editions for 2008-2009

This year in addition to interviewing the teachers and employees of SRS, we are looking to highlight families with diverse cultures. If you would like to interview a teacher or other staff member or a family, please do so and send the information by the 20th of the month to be included in the Rising Star. Also if you are the member of a diverse culture family, you can also send in a piece on your family directly. Entries can be sent to me, Robin Boyer, via email (rdgenter@aol.com). If you have any questions, I can be reached at (215) 327-7866.