

Stafford Primary School Newsletter

WEST LINN-WILSONVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT
19875 SW STAFFORD RD., WEST LINN, OREGON 97068
(503) 673-7150 - www.stafford.wlww.k12.or.us



Dear Stafford Families,

We have been writing in newsletters about mathematics this year and want to take this opportunity to continue the conversation with you. At our last staff development day we spent time digging into mathematics. This gave us the opportunity to explore the development of children's understanding of the number system from kindergarten through 5th grade. When we talk about the number system, we are talking about place value, number relationships that promote computational fluency and the understanding of the numeric properties that are the foundation of algebraic thinking. These are fundamental concepts for children to understand in order to grow as mathematicians.

You have probably noticed that your child is being asked to solve math problems using a variety of strategies. By helping students develop their own personal and flexible strategies, we are building their understanding of the concepts being taught, while at the same time moving them towards more efficient and effective strategies. In the process of developing their own strategies and making sense of mathematical ideas, students develop greater confidence and a positive view of their competence in math.

It is important that students become increasingly effective and flexible in their understanding of the properties of the number system. For example, a first grader experiences this through coming to understand numerical equivalences such as $4 + 5 = 5 + 4$. This forms the basis of the commutative property; $a + b = b + a$. At the upper grades, the understanding of number is taken deeper through the use of the distributive property. For example, when a student works through a problem such as 69×36 , it is important that a student understands that these numbers can be broken down in a variety of ways. It is the ability to break these numbers apart that forms the foundation of the algebraic concept of $a * (b + c) = (a \times b) + (a \times c)$.

We know that the type of mathematical thinking that is needed in an ever changing world requires higher order thinking skills in order to find creative solutions to a wide range of problems. We want our students to approach novel situations with confidence and creativity. When students develop a range of strategies they are not only deepening their understanding of the math, they are also increasing their ability to solve problems accurately. Taking time to develop a variety of strategies rather than relying on rote procedures results in a robust and long lasting understanding of mathematics. The end result is also creating a greater efficiency in mental computation and estimation. As children become flexible thinkers in how they match the most efficient tool to the problem, they truly demonstrate their mathematical understanding.

It is developing a strong mathematical understanding that lies at the center of our work with children. Teachers are doing great work with each other and with their students to continue to foster the environments and practices that press and challenge each student in their classrooms. As the year goes on, we will continue to share thoughts and ideas about our work in mathematics.

Patrick Meigs, Patrick Minor and Nancy Curtis



Messages From The Office



MINOR MOMENTS

Science is a vehicle for learning and knowing about the world around us. Our learning and knowledge of science is acquired through information gathering, observation and experimentation. Children are natural scientists. As soon as they are able to interact with their environment they enter into the scientific process. When an infant makes noises and facial expressions they are experimenting with their social world to see what reaction they get from the people they are connected with. As children grow and begin to explore their physical environment, they continuously interact with it through wondering, hypothesizing experimenting, data gathering and conclusion making. All of this natural curiosity and exploration sets the stage for more formal scientific experimentation in later, more formal academic years.

This year at Stafford, all interested students in grades K-5 have the opportunity to participate in the learning process of conducting a scientific experiment using the formal scientific process of experimentation. Through this opportunity students will learn how to choose a topic, research information about their topic, develop a question, form a hypothesis, design an experiment to try to answer their question and test their hypothesis. Additionally, we will be having guest students from West Linn High School come and give individual feedback to each student who participates. Our annual Science Inquiry Fair will be held on February 25 and an informational meeting regarding our science fair will be on January 7 from 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the library. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me!

GOING ON VACATION OR HAVE A SICK CHILD?

DID YOU CALL THE OFFICE? Please call the office when your child will not be attending school. While teachers might get the information, the office needs to record the attendance for the state and we also want to make sure that absent children are in the safe hands of an adult. Thank you. Kathy Cooley

STAFFORD HAS NEW DIRECT DIAL!

You can now leave a message directly with the teacher. This additional number gives you access to their mailbox 24 hours a day! Leave a message in the teacher's voice mailbox by calling 503 673-7115. Press #5 to reach the directory then enter the last name of the person you are trying to reach and follow the prompts.

Attendance and bus note information still needs to be called into the main office or general mailbox at 503 673-7150. Thank you.

PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE FOR CHOIR CONCERTS NEXT WEEK!

The Jr. Choir concert has been moved to its own date on December 8 at 7:00 p.m. in the MPR. The Senior Choir will perform the next evening on December 9, at 7:00 p.m. in the MPR. This change will help to accommodate the large crowds that attend these popular performances directed by Donna Kagan.

BIRTHDAY BOOK CLUB

The November /December birthday party has been combined and will take place on Dec. 17 at 1:30 p.m. during school hours where your child will receive treats as a thank you. If you'd like to donate a new, hard cover book to the library for your child's birthday, simply turn it in to the library by Dec. 15 with your child's name, teacher and birth date.

STAFFORD YEARBOOK!

A yearbook reminder: Please pass along any photos to your classroom photo representative of Stampede, First Day of School, Art Literacy, Buddy Classes, Field Trips and Halloween. Also, at any time you can order your yearbook at www.myyear.com for \$20.00 (plus convenience fee). If you want to purchase a yearbook by writing a check, we accept those in the spring of 2010. Thank you! Any questions please call Erica Yraguen @ 503-344-4725.

WINTER WEATHER

In case of inclement weather and there is any question about whether school will be open, please tune in to a local radio or television station. They will begin reporting school closures by 6:00 a.m. School closure information is also available on our district website at www.wlwg.k12.or.us or sign up for an **email/text alert** when the school has a closure. Click on the link at the top of the district web page and follow the prompts.

Note: Conditions can change quickly so please stay tuned for closure updates throughout the morning before school begins. **Snow Bus Routes are now available on the district website!**

PLEASE CHECK OUT THE LOST AND FOUND ITEMS!

The Lost and Found is over flowing with nice clothing! We have no more hooks to hold all of the coats and sweaters! Please view and claim lost items before the December deadline. Unclaimed items will be donated during the winter break.

FORMER STUDENT PERFORMS AT NW CHILDREN'S THEATER

Hayley Rouseelle is performing as "Lucy" in *Narnia*, from the stories of C. S. Lewis at the NW Children's Theater beginning December 11 - January 3. For times and ticket call (503) 222-4480 or visit their website: www.nwcts.org When ordering tickets, mention "Code F".

Stafford Scrabble Fest!

Teachers, Parents, Friends and Classmates! Join us for a Fun and Friendly "Scrabble Fest" to end our Fall Stafford Scrabble Enrichment Class.

Questions? Contact Sandy Parker at sandysp@easystreet.net

When: Monday, December 7, 2009

Where: Stafford School, Room 24/25

Time: 2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

\$1

\$1 off any Large or Extra Large

\$1

BELLAGIOS PIZZA will donate \$1.00 for each coupon

Redeemed to Stafford School

West Linn 557-1406 Tualatin 691-7841 Sellwood 230-2900 Sunnyside 698-6699

Beaverton 466-2070 Gresham 465-8000 Goose Hollow 221-0110

Lake Oswego 635-8700

West Linn 557-1460

2008-2009 STATE REPORT CARD NOW AVAILABLE

Attached you will find our state report card from last year. Our report card is one indicator of the great work that teachers and students do each and every day. Stafford has a long history of excellence and we all feel justifiably proud of this work. The report card is only one indicator of the outstanding quality of our teachers, the tremendous efforts of students and the incredible support that each families gives their child and the community as a whole. All one has to do is walk through the halls and peek into classrooms to see all of this in action. It is here that the true evidence of all our efforts can be found. If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call.

LOOK WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

Dance with the Debs: The WLHS Dance Team will hold their annual Dance with the Debs event on Saturday, December 12, 2009 from 12-4pm at WLHS. The cost of \$35.00 includes lunch, a T-shirt, a day of fun and performances! Kids grades K-8 will spend a fun filled day with the Debs culminating in a performance for families at 3:15pm. Register by Dec. 1st to guarantee a T-shirt. Registration forms available at all WL Schools, on the Dance Team Website or email your request for the pdf file to Kerri Miller at skanmiller@msn.com.

4TH & 5TH GRADE BOYS/GIRLS Basketball signups are now open. Sign up today on www.wlhoops.com. Registration for the recreation program will run through November 30. There is a \$20 late fee after Nov. 30th. The season runs from the beginning of the new year to spring break, with one practice during the week and one game on Saturday. All practices and games are held in local school district facilities. Registration is \$80.00 per player. Financial assistance is available. If you have questions, please contact Helen Romero at (503) 866-8466 or email: mercadoromero@hotmail.com.

December

- Dec. 7 Stafford Scrabble Fest! 2:15-3:15 p.m.
- Dec. 8 Jr Choir Concert 7:00 p.m. MPR
- Dec. 9 Sr. Choir Concert 7:00 p.m. MPR
- Dec. 10 PTSA Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- Dec. 21-Jan 4 No School: Winter Break - Happy Holidays

January

- Jan. 5 School Resumes
- Jan. 7 PTSA Meeting, 9:00 a.m.
- Jan. 18 **No School**—Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday Observance

