



From the Principal

John Stanford International School

September 30, 2009

Dear JSIS Families,

Tonight is curriculum night! You can find the schedule for curriculum night at www.jsisweb.com or in last week's newsletter. Parents/guardians are encouraged to attend (childcare is not provided).

Parent~Teacher Conferences Are Changing This Year

As some of you know, this year the school district has created a **common conference schedule** for all elementary schools. Instead of half-days across two weeks, all elementary schools have three full-day conference days on **Monday, November 23rd, Tuesday, November 24th and Wednesday, November 25th**. On those days, there will be no school for students. One challenge that this has created for us at JSIS is that we are no longer allowed to add additional conferencing days so that teachers can meet with both of their classes. Therefore, this year, we have to fit all of our fall conferences into the three-day schedule. To do this, here's how conferences at JSIS are going to be organized this year:

Who: Parents/guardians will have conferences with their child's **homeroom (AM) teacher only**. This is a change from previous years when parents met with both morning and afternoon teachers. Prior to the conference, your child's teachers will share information with each other regarding your child so that the homeroom teacher has information about your child from both classes. After the conference, your child's teachers will again meet together to share information gleaned from the meeting.

What: The fall conference is the one structured, set-aside time for you to have conversations with your child's teachers around your child's strengths and areas of growth, how your child is doing in school academically, socially and emotionally, and what we can do as partners to better meet your child's needs. Parents are always welcome throughout the year to communicate with teachers about their child's progress, but this is an important first conversation.

When: November 23 – 25. Please do not schedule extended Thanksgiving vacations during conferences. As you know, teachers at JSIS work many hours to prepare and plan for each day. Thus, it would be too difficult for teachers to schedule conferences with families before and after school outside of the conference window to accommodate families on extended vacations.

Where: Conferences will be held in the homeroom (AM) teacher's classroom.

The staff spent a lot of time crafting the very best conference schedule given our parameters. In the end, we acknowledge that this plan has its upsides as well as its downsides. One positive point of this plan is that the impact on families and class instructional time due to conferences is limited to three days. Previously, we would extend ½ day conferences over 9 days which made it complicated for working families to find that much daycare coverage. Another positive is that you will have 20 minutes with just one teacher which will give you more time to have a two-way conversation with the teacher about your child. Previously, 20 minutes would be split between AM and PM teachers which prevented more in-depth conversation. The obvious downside of this plan is that parents won't be able to meet with the afternoon teachers during the conference window. However, JSIS teachers are always

accessible to you and your child when needed, and we are confident that the homeroom teacher will be able to represent both teachers well.

Thanks for your flexibility as we make the best of the new district conference guidelines. You will be able to sign up for conferences starting this evening at curriculum night. Have a great time meeting your child’s teachers and hearing about what your child will be learning this year! We appreciate your participation in your child’s education very much.

Sincerely,

Mr. Aramaki ~ Señor Aramaki ~ あらまきせんせい

Announcements and Reminders:

- **PTSA General Meeting** – Our first PTSA meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 6th from 7 – 8:45pm in the Library. Please come as we talk about JSIS entering its 10th year of excellence. We will have conversations around where we’ve been as well as where we’re headed. You will also hear about the district’s *New Student Assignment Plan* which will be implemented in September 2010 and the important next steps which include the drawing of attendance area maps and community feedback sessions.
- **The Move-a-Thon (PTSA activity & fundraiser)** – The JSIS Move-a-Thon is on Saturday, October 17 from 10 am to 2 pm. Mark your calendars now for this fun event and get ready to help support JSIS PTSA scholarships and other vital programs. Complete info and pledge sheets are available at www.jsisweb.com.
- **Adult Sexual Misconduct Training for Parents**– Each staff member in the Seattle Public Schools is required to take an Adult Sexual Misconduct Training. Starting this year, a similar training is also being offered to parents who volunteer in schools. At this point in time, it’s not a required training, but it is one that I recommend for all parents who volunteer. This training which was eye-opening for staff members provides insight and clarity regarding how to work with kids in a safe and appropriate way. I will be offering the training at JSIS a couple of times this year. The first offering will be during the day on **Tuesday, October 13th at 1:30 pm in the library**. Please e-mail me at kearamaki@seattleschools.org if you are planning to attend.
- **The Water Balloon Drop** – Our much-loved, annual Egg Drop is happening this Friday at 9:55 on the playground, but with one significant change. Instead of dropping eggs, we will be dropping water balloons! We made this change after having had extensive conversations as a staff. The past few years, a number of students have approached us about how we could be throwing up to 400 eggs off of our roof when there are people around the world who are hungry or starving. Each year, many of our BOC students who have left family, friends and neighbors in high-poverty countries to immigrate to the United States have asked their teachers, “Why do you throw food off of the roof in America?” These kids, both in our immersion classes and in our BOC, reminded us of our mission to raise responsible and caring global citizens and that we must stay true to that mission. So, parents and families – we hope you can join us for this slightly-altered-but-still-bound-to-be-a-blast all-school event.

Calendar of Events:	
Wed., Sept. 30	2-Hour Early Dismissal – School dismisses at 1:30 6:15 – 8:00 CURRICULUM NIGHT
Tues., Oct. 6	7:00 – 8:45 PTSA General Meeting (see announcement above)
October 6 – 8	5 th Grade Camp at Camp Kirby
October 9	No School – Teacher Professional Development Day
October 17	PTSA Event: Move-a-Thon (See announcement above)