



From the Principal

John Stanford International School

March 17, 2010

Dear JSIS Families,

The **International Performance** this past Friday was such a wonderful event! Great job to all of the students who participated. And a big thank you to the parents and staff who helped to make the performance a success. Even without the potluck, it was a grand celebration of our international program, our community and our diversity. Also that evening, we had two exciting updates to share – one regarding the JSIS playground renovation plans and the other regarding the Annual Fund:

- **An Annual Fund Donor Has Inspirational Challenge!** For every 10 families that contribute AT ANY LEVEL, an anonymous donor will add \$1000 to the fund, up to a total of \$20,000, or 200 families contributing. All contributions given to date count toward this effort, so already, the donor is giving \$4000, based on the 46 families who have already contributed.
- **The Playground Renovation is About to Begin!** Mrs. U announced that we will be starting our playground renovation this spring. Work over the next few months will include the moving of part of our fence to make our playground larger, the recoating of our playground, and the painting of lines for a soccer field, kickball field, four square courts, volleyball court, etc. This summer, we plan to add a new play structure in the southwest corner. For more information and opportunities to volunteer, please read the next issue of Our World, the PTSA Newsletter.

Lastly, the following is a very brief (very brief) **summary of our current budget and staffing situation** at JSIS. As you are well aware, we are in a tough economic time here in the Seattle Public Schools. The most recent news that you may have heard was that all elementary schools in Seattle were losing their funding for counselors. Similar to what you are having to do at home and similar to what the local and national governments are having to do, the JSIS staff and the Building Leadership Team (made up of parents and staff) have been working hard to create a budget and staffing plan that maintains our level of excellence while using fewer and fewer resources. Here's a comparison table of what we have this year and what we are anticipating for next year:

Current Year's Staffing & Services	Next Year's Staffing & Services
Reading Support Teacher at 2.5 days/week	No change (support will continue to be provided by a reading specialist)
Counselor at 2 days/week	No change (discretionary funds from the district will be used to fund our counselor)
Math Support Teacher at 2 days/week	In order to maintain counseling support, math support will not be provided by a math specialist, but instead will be provided in class by teachers and IAs. Math enrichment opportunities will be pursued through in-class activities as well as after-school math clubs.
Computer Support Person at 2 days/week	Due to lack of funding, computer support will be district-based rather than school-based.
Instructional Assistants (current full-time in grade K-3; part-time in grades 4 and 5)	Instructional Assistants (part-time in all grades with focus on core academic areas)

Counselor versus Math Support – With the cutting of funding for our school counselor, our staff had to make the tough decision about whether or not we should reallocate resources in order to keep a school counselor. In the end, with more and more students needing social and emotional support especially during these tough economic times for families, the staff and BLT decided that it was important to find a way to keep the counselor. This means that math support at JSIS will need to be shifted from a specialist back into the classroom. The BLT approved this reallocation of resources with the understanding that we would pursue other means to provide extra math support and enrichment either through the classroom or through after-school clubs (similar to what other schools are doing).

Instructional assistants, funded primarily by grants when the school first began, are now supported primarily by funds raised by families through the Annual Fund. Anticipating that we raise \$160,000 from the Annual Fund, we will continue to be able to provide critical support by instructional assistants in every classroom; however, we are still looking at a reality of fewer IA hours at each grade level. Although we'd like to sustain the level of IA support we've enjoyed the past ten years, with fewer dollars available from the district, higher costs for IAs including benefits, an increasing number of classes at JSIS, and shrinking school reserves, we are having to be more efficient with less IA support. Our current level of IA support costs roughly \$310,000 – an amount that is tough to sustain and irresponsible to try to meet at the expense of sustainability. With the \$160,000 from the Annual Fund to support IAs this coming year, the JSIS staff believes that we can maintain a strong immersion program using efficient and creative scheduling of IA time. In addition, the Spanish and Japanese teachers are currently pursuing international internship opportunities where education students come to the United States to work in schools just like ours.

I know this is a lot of information – way too much for some and not nearly enough for others. I will do my best to continue to update you all about our budget and staffing plans in my newsletters through the end of the year.

Sincerely,

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

Announcements and Reminders:

- **Rumor or Fact - Four Kindergartens at JSIS?** This is a fact. Based on district projections, we are anticipating four kindergarten classes this coming year – 2 Japanese and 2 Spanish. Under the new assignment plan, we serve the students that live in our service area which means that we don't necessarily have control over the number of classes we offer. And it looks like there are quite a few neighborhood kindergarteners already registered for our school with even more on their way. Where is the space for this many classes? That is a great question and one that you can bet I'm working on. Despite the logistical challenges we may have in adding a fourth kindergarten, we are absolutely excited to offer as many students as possible the opportunity to learn at our school!

Calendar of Events:	
March 8 – April 4	Read-a-Thon
March 17	9:30 – 10:45 School Tour for Incoming Families
March 19	No School – Professional Development Day for Staff
March 24	9:30 – 10:45 Final School Tour for Incoming Families
March 29 – April 2	No School – Spring Break