



Riffenburgh Elementary School

Riffenburgh Elementary School Newsletter

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September, 2011

Advertising in this newsletter does not imply endorsement by Poudre School District

Important Dates

- Monday, September 19 – NO SCHOOL, K-8 Teacher Collaboration Day
- Tuesday, September 20 – Vision and Hearing screens for all student except 4th grade
- Thursday, September 22 – 4th grade Flower Show
- Monday, September 26 – PTO Meeting, 6:30 in the Media Center
- Friday, October 7 – Walk –A-Thon
- Thursday, October 20 – NO SCHOOL, K-5 Parent/Teacher conferences
- Friday, October 21 – NO SCHOOL, K-12 Parent/Teacher conferences
- Monday, October 24 – PTO Meeting, 6:30 in the Media Center
- Tuesday, October 25 – PBIS Family Night, 6-8
- Monday, October 3 - Halloween Party
- Tuesday, November 8 – Imagination Makers presents “Our Best Stories” 9:15 in gym
- Tuesday, November 15 – Character Education Assembly, RESPECT, 10:30 in the Cafeteria
- Monday, November 21 – PTO Meeting 6:30 in the Media Center
- Wednesday, November 23 – November 25 – NO SCHOOL, Thanksgiving Break
- Monday, November 28 – NO SCHOOL, K-8 Collaboration Day

Principles Message

PHENOMENAL PROGRESS OF RIFFENBURGH STUDENTS We are very pleased to announce the outstanding growth achieved by Riffenburgh students in Reading, Writing and Math during the 2010-11 school year. The state of Colorado measures the academic growth of all students on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) from 3rd to 4th and 4th to 5th grades. Based on this growth model, Riffenburgh students demonstrated the most progress among 31 Poudre School District elementary schools across the three subject areas which are assessed. These results reflect the combined efforts of teachers, students and parents to maximize learning time and maintain high expectations at our school. Thanks for your support and contributions to success at Riffenburgh!

BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHTS We have completed four Back-to-School Nights within the first two weeks of the school year and appreciate the great parent turn-out and involvement at these orientations. At each evening meeting (Kindergarten, 5th grade, 1st grade and 2nd-4th grades) teachers shared their expectations for the new school year to help parents understand what we hope to accomplish at each grade level. We value the interest and support of our parents as we develop partnerships focused on helping our students to grow academically and socially.

COLLABORATION DAY PLANS The first of PSD’s quarterly Collaboration Days will take place on Monday, September 19. During these non-attendance days for students, Riffenburgh staff members work together to develop our instructional skills and plan for the learning activities experienced by our students. On September 19 we will work on the reflective component related to International Baccalaureate unit planners as part of the continuous improvement cycle designed to refine our thematic units. We will also review and revise the School Improvement Plan that we will follow for the 2011-12 school year to target areas and develop aligned strategies to help students. Staff members will complete preparations for our monthly character recognition activities that reinforce our ROCKS values at Riffenburgh.

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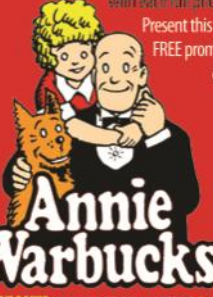
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Kindergartens

At Riffenburgh Elementary in Fort Collins, Colorado the new kindergartners were settling in to the routine on the first day of school. The children often do activities related to the daily read-alouds. On this date, they heard a story about a spunky gingerbread man who thought he could outrun everyone.



The children then proceeded to make their own gingerbread to snack on later in the day. To everyone's dismay, the cookies jumped out of the oven and raced through the building. The sharp eyes and sniffing noses of the five and six-year-olds scoured the school in hopes of tracking down their fragrant snack.

The ever-vigilant principal, Mr. Ryby, came to the rescue! He had seen a group running through the halls (which everyone knows is not allowed!). Mr. Ryby corralled the run-away rascals and returned them to the students. Hooray!

Kindergarten adventures have continued with our celebration of colors during Rainbow Days. We are looking forward to our fieldtrip to Lee Martinez Farm at the end of October.

Kasiah MacDevitt

Kim Baker

Sherry Walker



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BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL

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First Graders

The first graders are off to a great start! We read and acted out the book Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear. Students were the illustrators for the books. We made teddy bears to hang from the ceiling.

Each first grader wrote about what the teddy bear could do. Some bears could touch the ground. Some bears could turn around. We had fun with rhyming words in our writing.

First graders enjoyed many stories about bears. They learned the words “narrative” and “expository” as we read facts about bears and stories about bears. We had fun reading and singing the story Sailor Bear. The first graders had a “beary” good time learning about bears!

Second Grade Students

Second grade students have been busy studying about insects since school began in August. We are anxiously awaiting the arrival of our caterpillars.(so we can watch them turn into butterflies) To conclude our study of insects, both second grade classes will host a “bug” party. During this event students will share poems and information with their parents about the insects they have studied during this unit. This event is planned to take place in early October.

This will be our sixth year in participating in the Paws for Tales reading program. Volunteers and their specially trained dogs come into the classroom and have the children read to their dogs. These dogs have been through various training programs including Delta Society, Therapy Dogs Inc., Guide Dogs for the Blind (career change and retired

guide dogs). The second grade classes are looking forward to reading to these special dogs.

In math our students have been working with counting money, place value, number grids, and tally marks. We have enjoyed using marker boards, calculators, coins, and games to help us understand these concepts.

Finally we are working towards becoming independent readers and writers using the Daily Five. This method involves increasing stamina in our daily reading and writing. We will be using our stamina as we learn about friendships in our first unit of Treasures.

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Choir

Hello! My name is Ms. Bender and this is my second year as the music teacher at Riffenburgh. I am thrilled to be back with your students and to meet the many new students who have joined us! All classes have been reviewing songs, concepts, and skills from last year as well as learning to get into room formations for the many games and dances we will be doing this year.



Choir will be starting very soon with an initial meeting on September 30th and then official rehearsals begin on October 7th. This year, because of the schedule changes, choir will meet on Fridays during recess (12:40-1:10). The choir is open to any 4th and 5th graders who would like to join and commit to being at all rehearsals and performances. More information will be available about specific dates/times of concerts in early October.

Third Grade

Third Graders have been busy getting to know each other, reviewing the ROCKS traits, taking the MAPS tests that will be this year's baseline measure, and learning classroom routines. We are currently investigating earth materials in the form of "Mock Rocks." Students are geologists as they carefully observe and record data related to their individual rocks. We are investigating real rocks and minerals, too, learning about and discussing their properties.

We have an exciting, new way to show how many Accelerated Reader books we've read. Instead of the paper chain from third grade to the main office, standard décor for over 10 years, Second and Third Graders have teamed up to "Travel the World" by converting books

to miles! Our AR airplane will fly from Fort Collins to different cities around the world. We are traveling to South America first, which, coincidentally, will be our first unit of study in social studies. Stop by the 2/3 pod to see our progress!

Our first field trip will be to the CSU agricultural and educational farm. CSU students lead a multitude of "stations," informing our students about such topics as conservation of natural resources to soil types to matching meat to the animal it comes from. We will see horses, a cow with a permanent "hole in its side," the shearing of a sheep, and even Cam the Ram! Our "city kids" always enjoy their day on the farm!



Spanish

¡Saludos! We are having a great beginning to our school year in Spanish classes. The K-5 students are demonstrating what they know and remember as we teach and review greetings, numbers, and feelings. The goal of the elementary Spanish program is to “**Get the ear, lose the fear!**” Our students are risk-takers as they strive to understand the gist of the Spanish they hear, without worrying about each individual word. Parents, whether comfortable with Spanish or not, please join your students in the learning process – even a quick “*Hola, ¿cómo estás?*” (*Hi, how are you?*) after school expands their practice opportunities.

As we move forward, Kindergarteners will be working on classroom com-

mands, numbers and colors. 1st Graders will be learning the days of the week and telling their age. 2nd graders will be using adjectives to describe their family. 3rd graders will be drawing layouts of their homes with the rooms labeled in Spanish. In 4th grade classes, we will be describing the activities we like to do outside of school. Finally, the 5th graders will begin to plan a dream vacation to a Spanish-speaking country. ¡Hasta la próxima!

-Sra. Peacock

Reinforcing Learning Teachers offer strategies for helping kids do better in school

The National PTA asked teachers what they wished parents would do to help their children in school. Here's what teachers said:

- Ask your child about school every day. Check homework and ask him questions about his assignments.
- Set a learning example. When you spend time reading, you show your child that reading is enjoyable and useful. Play games together that build thinking skills. Talk about current events.
- Emphasize academics. Talk about how everyday experiences relate to what your child is learning in school.
- Follow daily routines that encourage healthy sleeping and eating habits.
- Encourage your child to do his best. Show you believe that education is important.
- Take advantage of community learning opportunities. Take your child to the library, museums, concerts, etc. Encourage your child to join community programs such as clubs, scouts and after-school sports.

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October 2011 School News Briefs

For more information, contact:

Deb Hooker, communications specialist,
(970) 490-3549, dhooker@psdschools.org

1. Stay informed - sign up for PSD e-mail alerts!

You will receive updates on your school and the district:

- Emergency/School Closure Information
- District Changes Impacting Your Child
- District News and Accomplishments
- Board of Education Action
- Monthly E-newsletter

You may sign-up for emails by visiting the PSD website at www.psdschools.org > E-mail Alert Sign-up on the home page slideshow.

2. No school

- Kindergarten – 5th grade, October 20, Parent/Teacher Conference Day
- Kindergarten – 12th grade, October 21, Parent/Teacher Conference Day

3. Follow the superintendent on Twitter, PSD on Facebook and Twitter

Follow PSD Superintendent Dr. Jerry Wilson now on Twitter [@JerryWilson2](https://twitter.com/JerryWilson2)! Follow PSD on Facebook and Twitter. Links are located at the top of the new PSD home page at www.psdschools.org.

4. Parents – attend “PSD 101” conference Oct. 3

PSD’s parent District Advisory Board invites parents, community members and staff to a free “PSD 101” conference to learn how the district operates and how to make an impact in the decision-making


process. The free conference will be held from 6 to 9 p.m., Monday, Oct. 3, at Blevins Middle School, 2101 S. Taft Hill Rd. No pre-registration is required. Spanish interpreters will be available.

PSD experts will conduct presentations and answer questions during informational breakout sessions on science, literacy, academics, safety, transitions and the calendar. Informational tables and computer help accessing your student’s information will also be available. For more information, contact Cathy Kipp at kipp_family@comcast.net or John Lynne at akpilot@msn.com.

5. PSD offers computer access at Walmart

You can now access PSD information at a computer in the Walmart SuperCenter, 1250 E. Magnolia, Fort Collins. The PSD computer, which is available during regular Walmart business hours, gives you access to the PSD website that includes the latest district news and events, as well as information about school registration, bussing, calendars and district policies. You also have access to specific information about your child through the Parent Portal on the PSD website.

This computer does not have access to outside email or Internet sites beyond the PSD website. PSD thanks the Walmart SuperCenter for partnering with the district on this project.



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October 2011 School News Briefs, continued

6. Online School Choice application available for 2012-13

The online School Choice application is now available online at www.psdschools.org under "School Registration." The first consideration deadlines for 2011-12 are:

- January 27, 2012, for secondary (grades 6-12)
- February 10, 2012, for elementary (grades K-5)

School Choice applications may be submitted after the first-consideration deadline until the first day of class at the beginning of the school year of requested enrollment. For more information, view the School Choice policy and timelines on the PSD website at www.psdschools.org.

7. PSD shares policy regarding treatment of students, parents

The PSD Board of Education Executive Limitation policy 2.1 assures the proper treatment of students, parents/guardians and the general public. The entire policy can be accessed at: www.psdschools.org/psdinfo/boardofeducation/policygovernancepolicies. To request that a copy be sent to you, please contact your child's school. A summary of the policy includes:

The Board of Education Executive Limitation policy 2.1 stresses the importance for PSD to: obtain public input in decision-making; collecting appropriate information; safely store student information; assure discipline is appropriate and consistent; provide safe and accessible school facilities; provide equitable and reasonable access for non-disruptive activities; provide families with educational choices; clearly communicate student expectations; adhere to consistent and timely grading practices; be responsive to inquiries; never retaliate against students or parents; use written rules that state school expectations, standards and procedures; follow internal

grievance procedures and access the Board of Education if the policy is violated; and provide families with many ways to voice their concerns about the education of students.

8. Volunteers, businesses and community partners wanted in the classrooms

If you have a few hours to share your skills and expertise, you could make a huge difference in the lives of our students. Please contact Cyndi Gile at the Partnership and Volunteer Center at cynthiag@psdschools.org, or 490-3208. Many volunteer opportunities are available!

Also, the Partnership and Volunteer Center is looking for business people to come into the classrooms and talk with students about your career, your day-to-day tasks, and your education. If you'd like to share with students, please contact Jody Margheim at jody@psdschools.org or 490-3207 or Cyndi Gile at cynthiag@psdschools.org or 490-3208.

9. PSD hosts college fairs

Poudre School District will host two free events to help high school students continue their education at a college, university or post-secondary school after graduation.

Out-of State College Fair, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, Oct., 11, Poudre High School, 201 Impala Drive. For more information, contact Kim Wilder, PHS International Baccalaureate counselor, 488-6015.

Family Financial Aid and College Night, 6:00 to 8:30 p.m., Monday, Oct. 17, Fort Collins High School, 3400 Lambkin Way. For more information, contact Tanya Rivera-Vigil at 488-8103.

Please note that the In-State College Fair was held in September.

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Early Childhood Road Runners

The Riffenburgh Community welcomed three Early Childhood classrooms for the 2010-2011 school year. The marrying of the K-5 community with the Early Childhood Program at Riffenburgh has proven to be a strong partnership and has become a great asset to our school. We are sad to say goodbye to one of our Early Childhood teachers, Carol Davis. Carol has transferred over to Putnam this school year to service the K-5 population. Julie Falconer and Kathi Slavik are happy to



welcome *Amy Carter* to the Riffenburgh team. Amy comes to us from Fullana Learning Center. Amy has twelve years teaching experience, including four years as a PSD Early Childhood Integrated Services teacher. Amy is a member of our neighborhood community. You will see her working with our students all day, and walking her dog at Edora park with her family in the evening.



We are excited to have our EC classrooms service ninety-six students this coming school year. Early Childhood teachers are highly certified and trained in PBIS. Amy wanted to share some insight about the Activity-driven teaching we can observe in an Early Childhood classroom.

It may look like play, but we are learning...

- To listen as well as speak
- To express ourselves creatively
- To grow in self-control
- To grow from dependence to independence
- To listen to directions and follow them
- To share our ideas, and invite others to be a part of our learning
- To develop good work habits
- To complete what we start
- To clean up after work time
- To develop problem solving tools
- To participate in group activities
- To enjoy using a variety of materials
- To share toys, equipment and experiences
- To develop an interest in books
- To develop an interest in the world around us
- To improve muscular coordination
- To develop new interest and extend old ones
- To understand new words and be able to use them



The PSD Early Childhood Program uses the Treasures Curriculum's preschool program called "Little Treasures." Look for our next newsletter article sharing more details about the connections of the Treasures curriculums.

Research Shows Parents Influence Children's Views on Math, Science

Building Math Skills

Look at any list of the best-paying jobs. You are likely to see they have one thing in common: they require a knowledge of math and science. People who prepare to become engineers, computer specialists, and doctors find great jobs when they graduate.

So why don't more students--especially girls--prepare for these careers? The answer is found as far back as elementary school. That's when students' attitudes toward math and science seem to be set.

Researchers took a look at how parents influence their children's views on math and science. The study found that, in general, parents are more likely to encourage boys rather than girls to take an interest in science. As a result, girls tend to lose interest in math by high school--even though they may continue to get good grades.

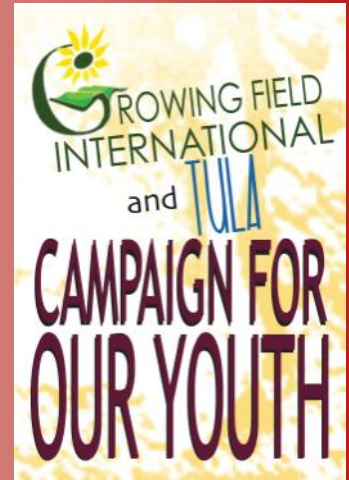
So what can parents do to make sure their sons and their daughters stay interested in math and science? Here are some suggestions:

Play games that encourage math and science. If you're in the car, see who can add the numbers on the license plate in front of you. If you're at the store, see if your child can figure the change.

Help your child see herself as someone who is good in math. Teach her that brains, like muscles, get stronger with practice. Remind her that "smart is something you get, not something you are."

Look for role models. Look for TV shows or news stories featuring a wide diversity of people who are doctors, engineers and scientists.

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