

RIVER OAKS ELEMENTARY

“Where Discovery is Elementary”

August 25, 2009

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

School Phone:	(713) 942-1460
After School Program:	(713) 524-8430
Office Hours:	7:15 am – 4:15 pm
Web Site:	http://es.houstonisd.org/riveroakses
E-mail:	sgolden@houstonisd.org
PTO website:	http://www.riveroakspto.org

CALENDAR ITEMS

August 31	Meet and Greet, 6:30 pm
September 1	K-2 nd Open House, 6:30 pm
September 2	3 rd -5 th , Open House, 6:30 pm
September 3	Volunteer Expo, 7:45 am

WELCOME, SUSAN GOLDEN SHENKER!

River Oaks is proud to welcome Mrs. Susan Shenker as our new principal. She comes to us with several years experience as the Assistant Principal of The Rice School. Susan is a native Houstonian and has a strong math and science background as her first career was in the engineering field. Her knowledge of middle school curriculum as well as her background in business will bring a unique perspective to our school. Please join us in welcoming her at our community Meet and Greet on Monday, August 31st at 6:30 P.M.

FABULOUS FIRST DAY!

Our thanks go out to everyone for making our first day of the 2009-2010 school year a rousing success! We sincerely appreciate everyone's support of our school and the orderly way you all worked together for a smooth arrival and dismissal. It is important that we all help the little ones become acclimated to their new routines as quickly as possible, so the sooner we let them develop independence, the better off they will be. Our teachers appreciate everyone's help the first few days of school and ask that we begin letting them operate their lockers themselves tomorrow. By the end of the week, we expect them to be able to handle the tasks by themselves, so that next week they are independent in this function. Thanks for understanding and for encouraging the children in their independence.

2009-2010 CURRICULUM FOCUS AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Our teachers and staff had a fabulous two weeks of staff development and curriculum work prior to our children's arrival. In the area of mathematics, our teams analyzed the Everyday Math curriculum materials in conjunction with the state standards for each grade level and the district curriculum guide to determine the scope and sequence for our math instruction. Supplemental materials were identified to fill any gaps that were found in the Everyday Math curriculum so we insure that all objectives are thoroughly covered. We will continue to refine our scope

and sequence throughout the year to fine tune our offerings in the area of mathematics.

Another curricular focus for this year involves our spelling curriculum. Our staff took a look at our baseline data regarding classroom instructional strategies, resources, and assessments, compared those to their identified needs, and determined our path for spelling instruction this year. We will be implementing the Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction method in grades one through four. This is based on over 30 years of research and is developmentally appropriate and works in tandem with a balanced literacy plan. We are starting with an assessment for all first through fifth graders to determine the specific features students are using and confusing and in which of the five specific spelling stages they are functioning. From there, first through fourth grade students will work on word lists determine by the research-based progression of skills from their entry point and moving them forward. Word sorts, analysis, and inquiry are at the heart of the program allowing them to organize what they know about words to construct meaning and form generalizations they can apply to unfamiliar words they encounter in their reading and writing. Our fifth grade classes will be piloting the Spelling for Writers program, which is a fifth grade specific kit based on these same principles and research. A consultant will be meeting with us as we implement this pilot program. We are systematically approaching our spelling curriculum to see where our students start, as measured by the spelling inventory, and then will assess them again at the end of the year. We are in effect performing Action Research to determine what works for our students and to provide the best spelling instruction possible. The training and implementation strategies will be continued and evaluated throughout the year.

A NEW YEAR IN THE IB PYP

During our staff development days, we set our goals for the year and began our work for IB. When our school was evaluated in 2008, a team came to River Oaks for several days to look at our IB curriculum and the school's systems and structures that are in place to evaluate effectiveness and determine the level to which we meet the IB philosophy and program requirements. The report is divided into three sections: areas that are Commended, areas that are Recommendations, and Matters to be Addressed. Although River Oaks met all the criteria with flying colors and has been named a model school by the Director of the entire IB Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, we continue to work hard as our staff is always driven to improve. We had no matters to be addressed, but we have started to look at the recommendations more closely. After articulating our grade level philosophies and our teams' visions for the school year, we began work in three

areas: continued effort and connection between our planners and the specialist classes, evaluation of the Program of Inquiry for vertical and horizontal alignment, and goal-setting for the continued refinement and implementation of our Spanish program. We intend to maintain our status as an exemplary IB PYP and will continue to work hard to use these best practices for the development of our students.

FROM NURSE PETNER

We need to be careful about fevers and students staying home when they are ill. Your child must be free of fever for 24 hours without having received medication to lower the fever. A fever is considered a temperature of 100.

Also, we have many classes with students with nut allergies. Please do not send treats or snacks with nuts or peanuts to:

Kinder – Ponder, Rome

1st – Heitke, Henry, Van Haselen, Woods

2nd – Copeland, Engstrom, Stokes, Thornton

3rd – Sun

4th – Corzine, Waugh

5th – Beery, Vialard, McLaughlin

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

The PTO has purchased school supplies and delivered them to all the class rooms. This is not a fundraiser but a service provided by the PTO in an effort to ensure that all students have the supplies requested by the teachers on the first day.

If you have not already done so, please submit your payment. You may pay online at www.riveroaksppto.org/theroestore or mail a check/money order made payable to ROE PTO. If you are sending in a check, please complete the School Supply Order Form you received in summer mailer package. Extra forms can be found on the shelves outside the After School Program office in the Kindergarten hallway. The check should be mailed to Anju Varadhachary at 4416 Valerie Street, Bellaire, TX 77401 or dropped off in the front office.

I would like to convey a big “thank you” to the parents who helped with the distribution of supplies. An extra thanks goes out to Pam Jenkins and Jennifer McCormick who flexed their muscles to move what seemed like a million boxes at delivery and distribution.

If you have any questions, please contact Anju at anju12@gmail.com or (713) 592-0462.

ROE DIRECTORY

The ROE Directory is under construction! Please login to the ROE Store and verify (or enter, if you haven't already) your directory listing for this year. Spirit Ads and Business Ads must be purchased by September 2 to have a guaranteed spot. Ads received by Sept 11 will be considered on a space-available basis. Don't delay, do it today! -Maria Onufrow and the Directory team.

SCIENCE LAB

Dear ROE Community, I am very happy to begin my third year as ROE's Science Specialist. I have already met the first group of learners, and by the end of the week I will have seen everyone! Each year has been different but rewarding, and this year looks to be even better all around! There's always something new, exciting, or groundbreaking in the world of science and our kids at every level have demonstrated that they truly belong in a learning community such as ROE. Looking forward to working once again with our curious, talented, and wonderful K-5th graders!

- Paul Rainn, Science Specialist

MEET & GREET

We had a great turnout at the annual Meet & Greet. Thanks to all the families who joined us for this fun night!

A special thanks to our Hospitality Chair, Teri Gerber, and our School Life Chair, Jennifer McCormick, for organizing this outstanding event. The evening provided everyone with a warm and welcoming vision of our ROE school community. Additional thanks to Janine Cashin and her team for providing our parents and students with fabulous ROE gear to purchase at the Spirit Store. If you missed getting a chance to shop at the event, make sure you check out the new ROE Spirit Shirt available now!

Thanks also goes out to the committee chairs, PTO Board members and numerous volunteers that helped set up, man tables, greet parents and clean up at the event.

Finally, the largest thanks goes out to the ROE staff and teachers for hosting the Meet & Greet. We are so fortunate that our school allows us to gather and meet our teachers on campus prior to the first day of school!
-Diane Cimino, PTO President

SALLY FOSTER VOLUNTEERS NEEDED THIS WEEK

The Sally Foster fundraiser starts next week. It is the 2nd largest fundraiser at ROE. This year we have included Otis Spunkmeyer cookie dough. We need help on **Thursday morning** after the bell to prepare the packets for delivery and on **Friday afternoon** starting at 1:30 to deliver the packets to the class rooms. Any amount of help will be greatly appreciated. Please contact me with any questions, murphtak@comcast.net
-Laura Fertak, Sally Foster Chair

JOIN US FOR THE VOLUNTEER EXPO AND ORIENTATION

Looking for a way to get involved? New to the school?

Or are you already part of the ROE community but still looking for just the right spot to make a difference?

Here is your chance! Come and join us on Thursday, September 3rd at 7:45 am in the Cafeteria to learn how to get registered as a Volunteer with HISD and to meet many of the Event and Committee chairs. This is a great opportunity to peruse all the volunteer needs at ROE and find the one that best fits your talents and your schedule.

-Sara Bloome, Volunteer co chair

SECOND GRADE GET TOGETHER, SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 12TH

Let's meet at the park! Please join us to see old and new *Second Grade* friends. We will meet at Karl Young Park (at Stella Link and Tartan) on Saturday September 12th, from 8:30 until 10 am. The rain date will be Saturday September 19th. There will be doughnuts, while they last, and please plan to bring your favorite morning beverages. Hope to see you then. -Nguyet and Janann, Second Grade PTO Reps

NEW CELL PHONE LAW STARTS SEPT. 1ST

A new state law that goes into effect on Sept. 1st bans the use of cell phones while in a school zone unless the vehicle is stopped or a hands-free device is used. For more information you can read the complete text by going to House Bill #55 at www.legis.state.tx.us/tlodocs/81R/billtext/pdf/HB00055F.pdf

VIOLIN CLASSES STARTING SOON

ROE will once again be offering Suzuki violin lessons at school. Mr. Andrew Meyer is returning and is anxious to get started on a new year of music with our students. Students who participate are scheduled so that they don't miss core instructional time and parents are encouraged to participate with their child if at all possible. Two recitals a year are scheduled for our students so they can showcase their achievements. If you are interested in participating, please call the school and speak with Michele Dahlquist. These classes are tuition-based, and schedules are currently being formed. New students are always welcome!

CIRCLE DRIVE NEEDS YOU...

We need willing and able bodied moms and dads to open car doors at circle drive in the mornings. If you have 30 minutes to spare your help would be greatly appreciated. Contact Lisa Allen in the front office for details.