



7839 Amestoy Ave.  
Van Nuys, CA 91406  
Tel: (818) 8819850

Lisa Gaboudian, Principal  
Aleta Johnson, Asst. Principal

# Stagg School News

November-December  
2006

## Principal's Message

### **Why Banked-time Tuesdays early dismissal?**

Teachers are more likely to improve student achievement when they themselves are provided professional development opportunities to improve their teaching skills. Effective professional development requires extended time, for initial planning that includes discussions of research on how children learn, as well as specific instructional strategies. Professional development is a never ending process that involves the entire school staff.

At Stagg our professional development topics are based on our school wide academic goals. For the 2006-2007 school year, our goals are as follows:

#### **Reading**

By the end of the year all students will work towards reading grade level text accurately as demonstrated by fluency, prosody, word knowledge and comprehension.

#### **IWT**

During Independent Work Time, students will receive on-going, targeted instruction based on individual student needs and strengths.

#### **Academic Rigor**

Students will be provided daily oral opportunities to engage in higher level critical and creative thinking and develop questioning skills across the content curriculum.

#### **Math**

By the end of the year 90% of all students will achieve automaticity in grade level appropriate computational/math facts.

To support our efforts in achieving our goals, here are a few examples of our planned training for this year:

General Guidelines for Effective Team Meetings

Questioning Techniques

Automaticity in Math Facts

Review Teaching of Writing

Differentiated Instruction

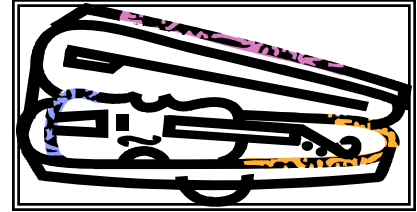
Reading Comprehension Strategies

The Teaching of the Arts

Analyzing Assessment Data

The more we learn, and keep up with the latest research in education, the better we can meet the needs of **all** our students. After all, as the saying goes, "*Learning from a teacher who is not learning, is like drinking from a stagnant pond.*"

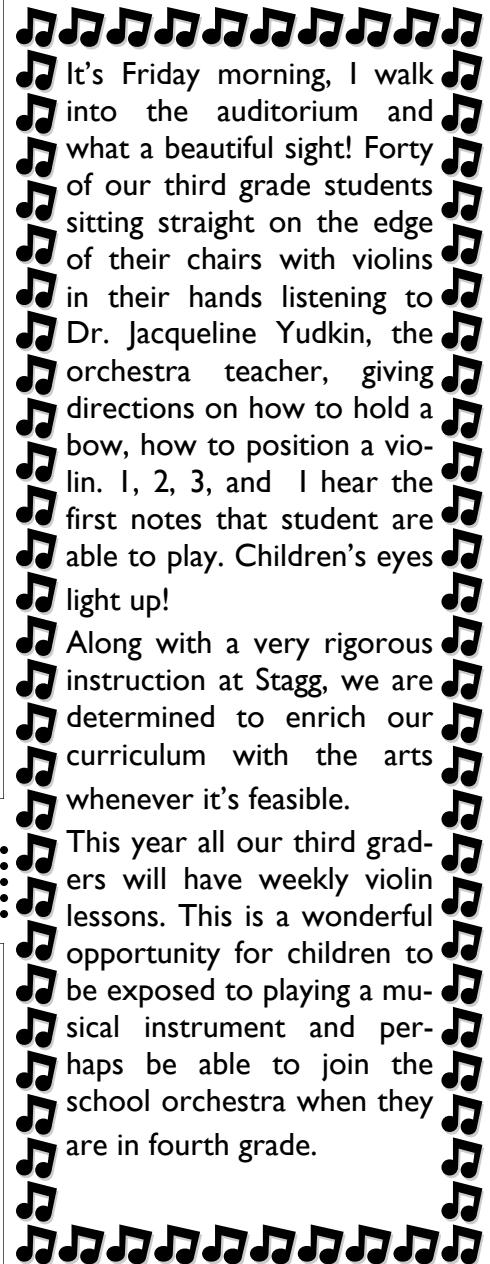
**Listen Better, Learn More**



*Do Listening Skills Affect Learning?*

Research has shown that over 50% of student's school day is spent listening to teachers or to other students. Children who have good listening skills can focus their attention on the speaker and review information. We are making a school wide effort to teach students listening skills which are imperative to their learning. As parents you can reinforce our efforts by doing your share at home. Here are a few strategies:

- Be interested and attentive. Children can tell whether they have a parent's interest and attention by the way the parent responds. Maintain eye contact to show that you are really listening.
- Listen patiently. With limited vocabulary and experience in talking, children often take longer than adults to find the right word. Listen as though you have plenty of time.
- Hear children out. Avoid cutting children off before they have finished speaking. It is easy to form an opinion before they finish what they have to say. Respect their right to express their opinions.
- Encourage talking. Some children need an invitation to start talking. You might begin with, "Tell me about your day at school." Children share their ideas and feelings when others think them important. *(Carl Smith)*



It's Friday morning, I walk into the auditorium and what a beautiful sight! Forty of our third grade students sitting straight on the edge of their chairs with violins in their hands listening to Dr. Jacqueline Yudkin, the orchestra teacher, giving directions on how to hold a bow, how to position a violin. 1, 2, 3, and I hear the first notes that student are able to play. Children's eyes light up!

Along with a very rigorous instruction at Stagg, we are determined to enrich our curriculum with the arts whenever it's feasible.

This year all our third graders will have weekly violin lessons. This is a wonderful opportunity for children to be exposed to playing a musical instrument and perhaps be able to join the school orchestra when they are in fourth grade.

**College Day**

Thinking about going to college and preparing students to be college bound begins in elementary school. The banner hanging in our school's quad area, "College Begins at Stagg Street School" is a daily reminder to our students that just like their teachers, they can go to college too. Our college awareness theme this year again will be,

**"We graduated, you can too!"**

Our teachers will hold conversations with their classes about what it takes to go to college. How being responsible for homework and attending school regularly, and on time, prepares students to be successful in college. On November 22nd, teachers will plan grade level appropriate college awareness activities for their students. Have discussions at home. Ask your children to tell you why they need to go to college after they graduate from high school.





# READ ALL ABOUT IT!



Our newly organized Journalism Club consists of 10 enthusiastic, ambitious students who are eager to inform their peers about events occurring at Stagg Street School. The purpose of the Journalism Club is to enrich the students lives academically and socially. This will be accomplished by having weekly meetings where students will discuss current events, make decisions about what they feel is important, and report their ideas to their peers. Just like any good reporter, though, they will create a plan of action regarding the best methods for gathering the information. These will include, but not limited to interviewing people, taking pictures, and observing. Once they have collected the information, they will draft their findings and publish them for all to read.

We thank Ms. Danielle Belsey, our Resource teacher, for volunteering her time organizing this club.

## Parent Involvement

*Research supports:* “There is no longer any doubt: when parents are involved in their children’s learning at home and at school, children’s achievement goes up, teachers have higher morale, and schools improve overall.”

### Benefits of Parent Involvement

- Higher grades and test scores
- Better attendance
- More homework completed
- More positive attitudes and behavior
- Higher Graduation rates
- Greater chance of students attending college

The week of November 27th, is parent conference week at Stagg. Teachers will be sending appointments to all parents. Please make every effort to attend. This is your private time with the teacher. Come with questions or concerns. Share with the teachers any difficulties you might be experiencing at home. Be ready to take on responsibilities to work with your child to improve achievement. When school and home are on the same team, students win.

*From Stagg’s Literacy Coach, Mrs. Harrison-*

### What is fluency?

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly.

Fluent readers:

- Recognize words automatically
- Group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read
- Read aloud effortlessly and with expression
- Sound natural, as if they are speaking.

Readers who have not yet developed fluency read slowly, word by word. Their oral reading is choppy and plodding.

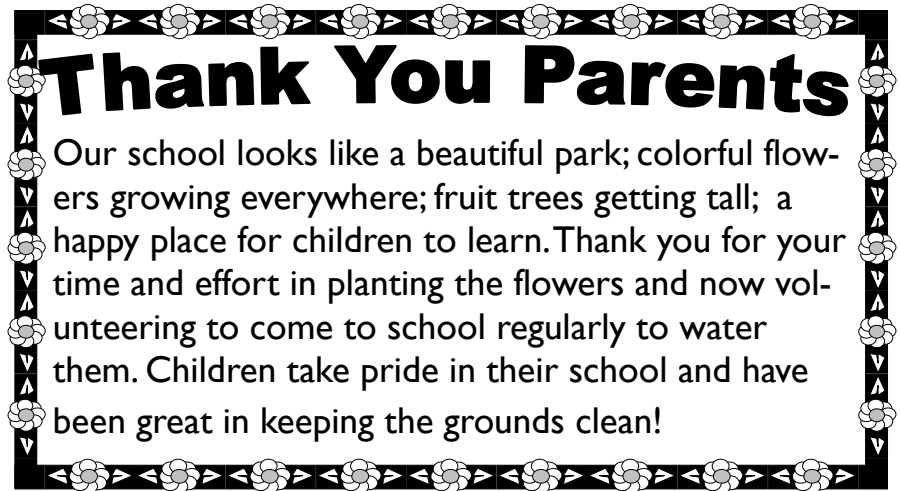
- **How can I help my child read fluently?**Have your child read out loud and correct mistakes immediately.
- Read the page first to model good reading then, right away, have your child read the same page.
- Have your child read the same page three times in a row.
- Encourage your child to look ahead to see how the sentence ends. For example: Does the sentence end with a period (.), an exclamation (!), or a question mark (?). This will help your child read with expression.



### CALENDAR:

- 11/6 Monthly Citizenship Assembly
- 11/10 Veterans Day; Holiday
- 11/15 Child ID Pictures
- 11/17 ELAC/CEAC Meeting
- 11/27 Parent Conferences start
- 12/1 Report Cards are sent home
- 12/4 Quarterly Awards Assembly
- 12/12 Winter Holiday Program
- 12/15 Minimum Day 12:25 Dismissal
- 12/18 through 1/5  
Winter Break
- 1/8 Classes Start

Mrs. Santiago informs me that soon we will resume our School Savings program once again. For our new parents, with your approval your children may open a saving account and they may do weekly deposits at the school. A parent volunteer takes all the deposits to the bank the same day. The accounts stay with the children even when they leave Stagg. We would also like to remind our parents that there is no limit to the number of "Wamoola for Schools" program points our school can earn. The more people who enroll and select our school, and the more they make purchases with their Washington Mutual Debit Card, the more points our school will earn. At the end of the calendar year Washington Mutual will convert points earned into cash donations. Find out more, visit [wamoolaforschools.com](http://wamoolaforschools.com) or your Washington Mutual Branch and raise the spirit of our school today.



### Emergency Preparedness

Children's safety is of utmost importance. As such schools have regular safety walks, checks and drills to make sure that our safety plans are updated and that the staff is well trained and aware of all procedures. Twice a year, our students and staff hold a predetermined exercise that includes a different threat. This year, our fall exercise will be a particular scenario, "Shelter-in-Place." This is a scenario when students have to be kept indoors, when it required that staff be able to close all windows and doors, turn off air conditioners, and keep the outside air from entering the buildings.

The goals of the training drill are to improve our ability to protect students, and reduce injuries, in case of a real threat. You may want to discuss with your children you family's preparedness plan at home.

Just as in previous years, our spring emergency exercise will be an earthquake drill.