



# The Cougar Chronicle

Colonies North Elementary School

August 28, 2009

## Principal's News

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to the 2009-10 school year! We are eager and excited to embark on another new year of growth and learning at Colonies North—Home of the Cougars. The first week of school went quite smoothly, and we welcomed back over 600 students and more are enrolling daily. We will be adding an additional kindergarten, first, fourth and fifth grade teacher. It was great to see so many of you at "Meet the Teacher." If you haven't had a chance to meet our new staff members, please stop by and introduce yourself.

Our new counselor is Mrs. Stephanie Rigby and our Mrs. Soucie is now the full-time Math Staff Development Support teacher. Other new faculty and staff include Mrs. Erin Schmidt, 5th Grade; Ms. Kristin Sanchez, 5th Grade; Mrs. Geno Vogel, 1/2 time Language Support Teacher; Mrs. Elsa Garcia, Music; and Mrs. Yvonne Page, Speech. New Instructional Assistants (IAs) include: Mr. Robert Alaniz-BMC, Mrs. Nyssa Counts-Pre-K, Mrs. Denise Nester-Speech, Ms. Sonia Sumpter-PE, Mrs. Betsy Thornhill-TLC, and Ms. Sara Watson-Library. New cafeteria staff include Ms. Rosalina Ledesma and Ms. Leticia Thurman. We also welcome our newest custodian, Mr. Art Villarreal.

Our theme for the 2009-10 school year is **Journey to Success**. It comes from the book Inch and Miles: The Journey to Success by Coach John Wooden and delivers a gentle message about the personal greatness that lives within all of us. Throughout the year, your children will learn about hard work, friendship, loyalty, cooperation, enthusiasm, self-control, alertness, action, determination, fitness, skill, team spirit, poise, and confidence.

We are looking forward to another outstanding year at Colonies North Elementary and welcome you to come and be involved in your child's education. Our first PTA meeting is on Tuesday, September 8 at 6:30 p.m. At this meeting we will introduce our specialists and they will speak about their programs. We hope to see you there.

*Mrs. Kirkham*



## Parent Connection



Parent Connection is a "live" grade book, and data for the current year will be viewable in the Curriculum Management System (CMS) beginning Tuesday, September 1st. To access information, all users must sign in as new users upon their first Parent Connection visit for the school year. The Parent Connection link will be found at [www.nisd.net/parentconnection](http://www.nisd.net/parentconnection). A parent help guide, in both English and Spanish, is available on the Parent Connection login page. News and information is added to Parent Connection throughout the year, so parents are encouraged to review the site often.

## Going Home A Different Way



Parents and Guardians,  
Please send a note to your child's teacher or notify the front office no later than lunchtime if your

child is going home differently than his/her usual way. If a student does not have a note, or we have not received a call, s/he will be sent home according to the plan filed with the classroom teacher. Early sign-out is considered a partial day absence.

Please do not email this information to a teacher or leave the message on the teacher's voice mail as the teacher could be absent that day. Substitutes do not have access to the teacher's email or voice mail.

## Staff Birthdays for September

- 2 Dava Bass, Clerk
- 3 Oscar Trujillo, Custodian
- 4 Lorrie Chavez, 1st
- 10 Apryle Fariss, 3rd
- 24 Sonia Sanchez, LST
- 27 Andrea Colwell, 2nd
- 27 Robert Alaniz, IA



## P.T.A. News

Welcome back Colonies North Cougars, parents, teachers and staff!! Hope you have had a great summer. The PTA Board and Committee Chairs are ready to kick off the 2009 - 2010 school year.

The PTA has great things planned for this school year. The key to a successful year is parent involvement and volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please stop by the school office and let us know. Just joining the PTA (paying \$7.00 per member) helps with field trips, bike rodeo, accelerated reader, TAKS snacks for the children and much more.

Our board members this year are Ann Pruski (President), Sean Hoffmann (Vice President - Fund Raising), Michelle Salas (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President - Membership), Ruben Luna (Treasurer), Craig Schiebel (Parliamentarian), and Keri Kinsey (Secretary). Thank you all in advance for participating with the 2009-2010 PTA. We look forward to a great year!!

Thank you,  
Ann Pruski  
PTA President



*"Every job is a self portrait of the person who does it. Autograph your work with excellence."—Author Unknown*

### Safety Patrols



Fifth graders, carefully selected on the basis of grades, character and citizenship, have the privilege of becoming Student Safety Patrols. Their duties are from 7:15 to 7:45 a.m. or from 2:45 to 3:00 p.m.

### Box Tops for Education

Please cut out and save those box tops and send them in to our P.E. teacher, Ms. Villarreal. This really helps us get some great equipment for our students to use during gym time and at recess.



## Policies and Procedures

**ATTENDANCE:** Attendance is extremely important for all students to be successful in school. The school day begins at 7:45 a.m. It is recommended that children arrive by 7:35 a.m. Children arriving after 7:45 a.m. are tardy and must come to the office to get a tardy slip before going to the classroom. For more information refer to the district student handbook regarding "Student Supervision and Dismissal." A child who is not present at 9:00 a.m. is counted absent for the day. A child who arrives after 9:00 a.m. should be accompanied by the parent and provide the school with a written note explaining the reason for the absence.

**HEALTH APPOINTMENTS:** It is recommended that health appointments be made after school releases at 2:45 p.m. However, if a student is absent for part of the school day due to an appointment with a health care professional, and a note from the health care professional is provided to the office upon the child's return, the partial absence will be excused.

**DAY CARE:** Prime Time is a program offered by YMCA. They use the Colonies North's cafeteria to provide childcare from 2:45-6:30 p.m. For information call 520-9700. Several day cares provide transportation to and from school. Day care vans pick up students in the bus loop on the side of the school. In the afternoon they will pull in and park single file behind the school buses.

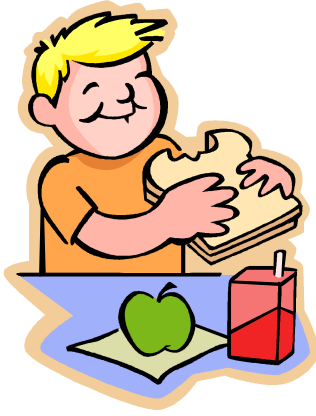


**EARLY PICK UP:** If your child must leave school earlier than 2:45 p.m., parents must come to the school office and sign their child out. Students will only be released to individuals listed on the emergency health card and proper identification will be required. For the safety of all children, we will not release students to individuals who are not on the emergency health card or individuals who do not have proper ID. It is therefore important for parents to update the medical emergency card information as changes occur.

**SECURITY-RAPTOR SYSTEM:** Parents and guests are always welcome at our school. For the safety of the students, **all visitors will need to scan their driver's license or identification card in the office and wear a visitor's badge** while on campus. Badges must be surrendered in the office prior to leaving. This is also required even if you are just walking your child to class. Thank you.

**MORNING PROCEDURES:** Please drop off students at the main entrance of the school, not at other entrances. Students will **only be allowed to enter at the main entrance**, as other locations are not monitored. Students in grades 1-5 will report to the gym. Students in kindergarten will report to the hallway outside of the music room. AM pre-kindergarten and PPCD students report directly to the cafeteria. PM pre-kindergarten and PPCD students report directly to the classroom. If you choose to walk your child into the building, please park in the parent lot located in front of the school. The side lot is for faculty parking. The back driveway is only for day care and school buses. Please never park in the front or rear loop, as these areas need to be kept free for emergency vehicles. Teachers will be in the gym and cafeteria beginning at 7:15 a.m. to supervise students waiting or eating in these areas. Since there are no duty personnel in the school until **7:15**, your child should not arrive on campus before that time.

**AFTERNOON PROCEDURES:** Children leaving at dismissal time are accompanied to the bus area, Prime Time, or parent pick up area at 2:45 p.m. Teachers wait with the students along the walkway for parents or siblings. All children waiting for parents, guardians, or babysitters to pick them up must wait at the parent pick-up covered walkway in front of the school. Parents who wish to pick their child up without exiting their car may pull single file in the right lane along the red curb. The left lane is for moving traffic only, and there is no student pick-up or double parking in the left lane. All children remaining at 3:00 p.m. are brought to the office to contact their parents. We would like to thank you for waiting outside the glass doors for your child in the afternoon, or in the front hallway in inclement weather. If you wish to speak to your child's teacher, please park your car in the parent parking lot.



**LUNCH ACCOUNTS:** A school lunch account is the preferable way to purchase lunches. You may purchase these in any quantity. By placing money in your child's account, your child will not lose lunch money. This should be handled in the mornings, before school begins, with the cafeteria manager, Mrs. Patty DeLeon. Student lunches cost \$1.75. Milk can be purchased for \$.35 and ice cream for \$.50. Breakfast costs \$.90, which can be paid on your child's account, as well. At the end of the school year, any unused money will roll forward to the next year.

**LUNCH TIME VISITORS:** Parents and grandparents are welcome to have lunch with their child. Please remember to scan your identification in the front office and get a visitor's badge. Parents may bring lunch to their child, but due to the state's nutrition policy parents may not bring in food for other students in the class. Special tables are designated as Guest Tables for family members who come to have lunch with their child. For safety reasons, only the child of the guest may join him/her at the Guest Table or the courtyard.

**BIRTHDAY TREATS:** If parents wish to recognize their child's birthday with treats (cupcakes or cookies) for the class, these items must not replace a nutritious lunch. They may be shared at the end of the school day. Other types of birthday celebrations (balloons and decorations) are not allowed at school because they are distracting to the learning environment.



**SCHOOL PICTURES:** Be sure to save this date and mark your calendar!

Individual Fall Pictures: **Wednesday, October 14, 2009**



**COUGAR SPIRIT DAY:** Each Friday is Cougar Spirit Day. All students are encouraged to wear our school t-shirt or the school colors of red and blue to show their Cougar Spirit! The Cougar Spirit Award will be awarded to the class in each grade level who has the greatest number of students wearing school shirts and school colors and will be proudly displayed beside the classroom door. T-shirts can be purchased in the front office for \$8.00.

**PARENT DROP OFF:** Please do not use the parking lots to drop off children. You are welcome to park and walk your child in if you wish. If you are dropping off, please pull through the front drop off lane, and the safety patrols will open the car door for you and assist your child into the building. **Please do not use the bus loop parking lot.** Thanks for all your support and cooperation. One of our top priorities is the safety of your child or children.

## Counselor's Corner

Welcome Colonies North Cougars! My name is Mrs. Stephanie Rigby, and I am the new counselor here at Colonies North. It is a very exciting time for me, as I am looking forward to getting to know all of your children this year. It is important for your children to be ready for the challenges it takes to be a successful learner and individual. As the counselor, it is my duty to be part of the support team that makes sure that it happens! We are off on a Journey to Success! I am looking forward to meeting all of you.

You are invited to **Parent Preview Night** with the counselor after the first PTA meeting.

**Tuesday, September 8, 2009**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Counselor's Office Room A101**

You will be able to view guidance materials for all grades and learn what NISD counselors do!

## Yearbook and PALs

Parents,  
If you are interested in helping with the yearbook or becoming a Parent Assisting in Learning (PAL), please stop by the office. Even if you can only help thirty minutes to one hour a week, you can make a difference at our school. We need you!



## Student Accident Insurance

Parents who are interested in purchasing the Student Accident Insurance Coverage should complete the form and return it with their payment (check or money order only) to either the school or directly mail it to the address shown on the back of the Student Accident Insurance Coverage form.

The cancelled check or copy of the

money order serves as your receipt.

Coverage does not take effect until the completed form with payment is received by Texas School Insurance.

Parents who choose not to purchase the Student Accident Insurance Coverage do not need to return the form.

Parents may call Ray Schramm, Texas School Insurance at (210) 492-

7732 if they have any questions regarding the insurance coverage of claims.



## Regular School Attendance

Research shows that children who are in school most of the time do better on state tests. Studies also show that kids who are absent more often score lower on state tests.

Being late for school hurts a child's learning, too. A student who is 10 minutes late every day will miss 30 hours of instruction during the year.

Children can copy notes or make up

an assignment, but they can never get back what's most important: the discussions, the questions, the explanations by the teacher and the thinking that makes learning come alive.

Your child's success in school depends on having a solid educational background—one that can only be gained through **regular school attendance**.





# Cougar Calendar



## SEPTEMBER 2009

| Sun              | Mon                    | Tue                                   | Wed   | Thu  | Fri   | Sat |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|-----|
|                  |                        | 1<br>6:30 p.m. Parent Orientation K-2 | 2<br>6:00-7:30 p.m. School Night for Scouting | 3  | 4   | 5   |
| 6                | 7<br>Labor Day Holiday | 8<br>6:30 p.m. PTA General Meeting    | 9   | 10   | 11<br>Patriot Day                               | 12  |
| 13               | 14                     | 15                                    | 16  | 17   | 18<br>Rosh Hashanah<br>11:45 a.m. Early Release | 19  |
| 20               | 21                     | 22                                    | 23  | 24<br>3:30 p.m. School Advisory Team (SAT) Meeting | 25  | 26  |
| 27<br>Yom Kippur | 28                     | 29                                    | 30  |  |   |     |

**PARENT AND TEACHER CONFERENCES:** Conferences are encouraged throughout the school year as questions or concerns arise. All teachers will arrange a conference during the first semester. Most parents want face to face conferences, while others prefer phone conferences due to working schedules. Please feel free to inform your child's teacher which method works best for you. It is to everyone's advantage that you discuss concerns with the teacher or parties involved before calling an administrator. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, you are free to call an administrator. A parent or teacher may request a conference any time during the school year; however, these conferences must be pre-scheduled. The teacher cannot be expected to stop instruction to the class when a parent unexpectedly arrives. Conferences must be face to face when discipline problems persist or the behavior is of a serious nature. Our Early Release Day on **October 10** will be used for parent conferences.

### CONFERENCE TIMES

|             |                                  |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 8:30-9:15   | Kindergarten                     |
| 9:20-10:05  | First Grade                      |
| 10:10-10:55 | Second Grade                     |
| 10:55-11:40 | Specialists                      |
| 10:50-12:15 | Pre-K/PPCD<br>(Lunch & Planning) |
| 11:40-12:25 | Fifth Grade                      |
| 1:00-1:45   | Fourth Grade                     |
| 1:50-2:35   | Third Grade                      |



**MEDICATIONS:** All medication should be taken directly to the school office by the parent. No medications may be kept in the classroom nor may students administer their own medication. If it is necessary to send medication via the child, the parent is encouraged to call the school nurse the same day. Parents are reminded that they are responsible for the medication until it is delivered to the clinic. Leftover medication must be picked up by the parents. Students may take home only empty containers.

**STUDENT DRESS CODE:** For all students, shorts, skirts, culottes, and dresses must be mid-thigh or longer in length. Any clothes that are suggestive, indecent or which cause distraction will not be permitted. No cut-offs, tight fitting pants, or exercise/bicycle shorts are allowed. Over-sized or baggy pants are also not allowed. Students may not wear tops or shirts with "spaghetti" straps or large cut-out armholes. Tennis shoes are the preferred shoe at school for safety reasons. Flip flops are popular and stylish but expose the foot to many dangers. While wearing flip flops, children often trip while running, so this type of shoe is not allowed during P.E. class time. Tennis shoes with retractable wheels are not allowed at school because they also pose a safety concern.

**TOYS:** Toys may not be brought to school unless the teacher is having "show and tell" or a special event. This includes items such as hand-held video games, iPods, and collectable cards. Teachers will notify parents if/when students will be allowed to bring these types of items to school. If a student does bring a toy to school, the teacher will take the toy and keep it until a parent can pick it up.



### Journey to Success

A **BIG** thank you goes to all of the Colonies North **Faculty and Staff** for their hard work getting ready for the new school year. Many have worked late hours into the evening and even on weekends in order to provide your children with the best education in Northside! Many also personally donated school supplies and backpacks for our students.

Another **SPECIAL** thank you goes to **Mrs. Keri Kinsey**, parent of Stuart and Elaine, who provided a delicious breakfast from Order Up for the faculty and staff on our first day back, AXA Advisors, LLC for providing breakfast on our second day back, and Incredible Pizza Company for providing breakfast on our teacher workday!

Thank you to our community partners that sponsored our red take-home folders. The folders look terrific, and it certainly helps with the communication between school and home. When you are out and about, please let the following businesses know you appreciate their support for Colonies North Elementary: **Oaks North Animal Hospital, Oak Hills Lanes, State Farm Insurance Agent Javier Leal, Randolph-Brooks Federal Credit Union, Oak Ridge Baptist Church, Alamo Gymnastics Center, Martial Arts Academy of San Antonio, big'z burger joint, and Gianni's Italian Cuisine.**