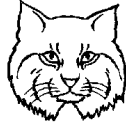


The Briones Banner

April 11 2003
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Juana Briones Elementary School
4100 Orme St. Palo Alto CA 94306
415 856 0899



Calendar

Mon. April 14, 8:15am	PTA General Meeting
Thurs. April 17	Local holiday, no school
Fri. April 18	Local holiday, no school

The Briones Banner is now also available on the Briones web site at www.briones.palo-alto.ca.us/

Principal's Message

As a school, we are basking in the glow of post-construction calm, able to focus exclusively on our primary missions of teaching and learning. Some obvious signs of construction do remain – the ongoing landscaping projects. The playground was seeded prior to spring break, and the new grass is already growing vigorously in most areas. We'll turn our kids loose on the new turf and the nautical play structure by the middle of May. The campus should look fairly normal in time for fifth grade graduation on June 12.

STAR testing begins week of April 28

The mention of graduation suggests we are nearing the end of the school year. We have only 41 days of school remaining and they promise to be incredibly hectic -- and extremely important. Heading the list of events and activities is STAR testing for grades 2-5. The test "window" for the state is April 21 through May 19. We have the option of testing within

that period and have decided to start the week of April 28. I'm mentioning this now to encourage parents to avoid unnecessary student absences. It's much easier on everyone if students are tested with their classmates instead of during makeup sessions, which tend to be more stressful for both students and teachers. Please avoid making appointments for your children during the school day or vacationing during this time.

Looking ahead to next year

Even as one year winds down, most principals are gearing up for the next. Planning, which includes enrollment and staffing projections and budget analysis, increasingly occupies our attention. This spring, pulling together a vision of next year is more challenging because of the state's budget crisis. Cuts in the state budget will certainly affect our school district, but the extent of those reductions is still uncertain. PAUSD is bracing for revenue reductions of \$3.7 million dollars. Some politicians are arguing for more draconian cuts that could cost PAUSD as much as \$23.1 million. If you would like to know more about budget issues, their impact on our school district, and how you might help, please click on the Budget Information button at the

PAUSD web site.

Although aspects of school funding are up in the air, enrollment projections are more certain. We appear on pace to again have two kindergarten classes next year. We will, however, graduate three fifth grades. Unless we suddenly have a substantial influx of students, particularly at third grade where we need them, we stand to lose one classroom teacher. Our student body will probably number between 220 and 240. In a future Banner, I will outline grade level assignments for our teachers for next year based on enrollment projections, along with how you can provide us with input on your learner's needs and assets.

I am pleased to report that most of our students appear settled and calm despite the pervasive media coverage of hostilities in Iraq. I can't say that the conflict hasn't had an effect on the well being of our children; I really don't know what's going on inside of their perceptive minds. I can only report on what we experience here at school. The students do seem to be in a good place, emotionally-speaking. I suspect that many parents have limited their children's exposure to the war coverage or filtered it for them by answering questions and offering explanations. If you're doing that, I am glad, and I thank you. Childhood is short enough as it is.

Juana Briones celebrated and getting long overdue recognition

Finally, hats off to Halimah Van Tuyl, Mary Goodkind, Jill Dinneen, and the Girls Scouts of Troop 569 for their work on the celebration of Juana Briones's 201st birthday. The MP Room was packed on March 12 with celebrants, including members of the Briones family, the historical society, local dignitaries, parents, and students. Thanks to such events, the greater community is beginning to fully appreciate Juana Briones as the courageous and resourceful woman in history that she was.

—Gary Dalton, Principal

PTA President's Message

In this Banner, Principal, Gary Dalton refers to school funding problems, especially with regard to state funding cuts. The amount of money at stake has the potential to seriously impact public education in Palo Alto. There are other changes in school funding that will also significantly impact Juana Briones. In PAUSD we have been accustomed to raising funds at each school to supplement the program for our students. In our case we use this money to support additional aide time, Spectra Art and science. The new district staffing policy restricts the ability of individual schools to raise money on a school-by-school basis for hiring additional staff. The All Schools Fund (ASF) is a new district-wide fundraising organization that will raise funds centrally in accordance with the district staffing policy. Over the next several months you will be asked to support efforts to assure funding for continuing the high quality of education we enjoy at Briones.

The formation of ASF represents a shift in the fundraising focus away from individual PTAs. The 2003-04 school year, however, will be a very challenging year of transition. PTAs across the district will be raising funds to maintain current levels of programming before the staff policy goes into effect for school year 2004-05 and ASF needs to raise the funds for 2004-05 by March of the coming school year. **We will be raising funds for two years over the course of the next 10 months!** How we are going to accomplish this will be the focus of our discussion at the Juana Briones PTA meeting on Monday April 14th at 8:15 am. Please make every effort to join us for this very important discussion!

Along with the shift to district-wide

fundraising comes an opportunity to build stronger district-wide connections. ASF is sponsoring a kick-off event following the May Fete Parade. Show your Briones spirit at the May Fete Town Fair and School Showcase on May 3! You can also learn more about the state school funding budget cuts on that day.

Look for more information on these and other upcoming events in this issue of the Banner.

—Heidi Stein, PTA Co-President,
494-8432

PTA News and To Do's

Briones Mural Project

Do you have any extra PENNIES or other coins? Room 8 second graders are collecting coins to finance a mural! Thanks to a generous grant from PAFE, Juana Briones students will soon begin painting a large mural on the outside wall of the MP room, between the two doors and facing the playground. A well known artist, Yermo Aranda, who has worked with the Spectra Art program for about 30 years, is currently working with the students' concepts and image ideas to design a mural focusing on our community. Our grant covers most of the expenses, but we need a bit more. Plus, those smart learners love to practice counting money! We hope you can help! Send your change to Room 8... Thanks!
Pamela Dappen

Juana Briones PTA Election Meeting April 14th

The Juana Briones PTA will meet on April 14th at 8:15 am to vote on the proposed slate of officers for the 2003-04 school year. We will also have a very important discussion about our ability to continue funding additional aide time, Spectra art and science for the upcoming school year as we transition to district-wide fundraising for the following year. Over the next 10 months all Palo Alto PTAs, in cooperation with the All Schools Fund, will be raising funds to support

programming for the 2003-04 and the 2004-05 school years. This is an enormous undertaking! Please join us for this important meeting.

Unlearning Racism

Teachers, parents, administrators, students – you are all invited to the Second Annual Community Conversation on Unlearning Racism: Providing an Optimum Education for All our Children. The program features "Silent Beats," a thought-provoking short film by local filmmaker Jon Chu, followed by a facilitated discussion with André Burnett, Director of Outreach and Community Services for Social Advocates for Youth. When: Thurs., April 24, 5 -7:30 p.m. Where: Nixon Elementary School, 1711 Stanford Ave. A light dinner will be served. Child care available by reservation only -- call Darsha Davidoff (328-3797) by April 21. Also call Darsha for more information about the program. Note to teachers: To receive salary advancement credit for this event, contact the PAUSD Professional Development Department at 329-3773

May Fete Parade, Town Fair and School Show Case

Come show your Briones spirit and march in the May Fete Parade! Continue the fun at the 1st ASF sponsored Town Fair and School Showcase on Saturday May 3rd, downtown Palo Alto. The parade begins at 10:00 am. Sign-ups to march with the Briones gang are in the classrooms. Everyone is encouraged to wear Bobcat attire. See Sharon in the office to purchase your Briones Bobcat t-shirt or sweatshirt.

The fair will take place at the end of the May Fete Parade at Addison School on Saturday, May 3rd, 10:30 am – 1:00 pm. There will be food, games, music from the middle and high school bands, and a School Showcase highlighting the work of students in the Palo Alto Schools. Briones is sponsoring the Duck Pond game! If you would like to volunteer contact Carolyn Cooper at 650-947-8581

Three Ways to Help Briones Get Cash and Equipment

1. Your used inkjet cartridges can be recycled for cash. Bring them to the marked box in the office.

2. Clip your Box Tops for Education and bring them to the office. The Box Tops for Education coupons are found on lots of cereal boxes, frosting and cake mixes.

3. Look for Labels for Education found on Campbell's soups, Goldfish crackers, etc. There is also a box for these in the office.

Raising Healthy Boys and Girls: Beyond Bullying, Peer Pressure and Clique

Rosalind Wiseman, Co-founder of the Empower Program and best-selling author of *Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends and Other Realities of Adolescence*, will speak on helping parents learn how to empower girls and boys to stop violence that can happen every day in American schools. She will speak on Tues., April 29th, 7 - 9:00 pm at Spangenberg Theatre, Gunn High School. Cost: \$10.00 BEFORE April 18; \$15.00 after April 18 or at the door. Checks made payable to: PAMF. Mail to: San Mateo County Office of Education, Attn: Claire Goss - 101 Twin Dolphin Drive, Redwood City, CA 94065 - 1064. For more information call Claire Goss at 650-802-5347 or Becky Beacom at 650-853-4733.

Items included in the Briones Banner are presented as a community service. The Briones PTA and PAUSD do not necessarily endorse any of the programs mentioned here. For more information about any item, please check to see if complete flyers are available in the school office or are posted on the bulletin board just outside the school office