

September 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We at Stonybrook School provide a learning environment filled with rich experiences that enhance the social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development of the whole child. Our school culture is one of respect and trust that affords our students the opportunity of risk-taking as part of the learning process.

The Kinnelon Public Schools curriculum is based on the New Jersey Core Content Curriculum Standards and values essential learning for all students. Our teachers exhibit high energy, genuine love for all children, and enthusiasm for professional growth. Faculty members have attended courses at Columbia University's Teachers College as well as attending workshops to refine and extend their knowledge. We at Stonybrook School work collaboratively to analyze student work to inform instruction. Differentiated learning experiences address student need and encourage students to engage in rigorous activities that stretch their minds. Teachers assess student learning using a variety of formative and summative measures.

The Language Arts program at Stonybrook School emphasizes a balanced approach to facilitate the development of students who are independent, life-long readers and writers. Students are engaged in authentic reading and writing experiences during Reading and Writing Workshop. Students read independently in "just right" books, practicing strategies learned during minilessons. Teachers assess student levels, group students, and plan explicit instruction that will assist in raising reading levels during Guided Reading. Students may also participate in literature circles, book clubs, reader's theater, among the many other venues.

Stonybrook School students are all writers who publish original pieces representing a variety of genres including personal narrative, expository or non-fiction, poetry, and persuasive writing. The writers are comfortable and proud to share their published pieces with real audiences. Teachers confer with students on a regular basis, noting the strategies the students are using in their writing. Based upon the data collected, the teacher determines the skills and strategies the writer needs to learn next. The process is a cycle that includes explicit instruction followed by guided practice, and finally, the independent use of the strategy in their writing.

Our Mathematics program provides our students with a hands-on approach, through which our students learn practical strategies to develop and to reinforce concepts and real-world problem solving. An Enrichment Mathematics program is part of our comprehensive curriculum and is recommended for students who achieve the highest levels of advanced proficiency on the NJ-ASK.

The Social Studies and Science curriculum encourages students to work cooperatively to develop hypotheses, experiment, and create projects that allow for connections between their lives and the past and present world around them. The Science Lab at Stonybrook School is always busy, and in 2009, we hosted an elementary Science Night so families could experience real-world science together! Social Studies in grades three through five includes the study of the community, New

Jersey, and the United States. Teachers include rich literature in these content areas, weaving content area comprehension skills throughout the curriculum.

Special area teachers work with students in the areas of Art, Vocal and Instrumental Music, Physical Education, Library/Media Center, and World Language. Students in grades three and four learn Spanish. Fifth grade students spend half of the year learning introductory French in addition to continuing their Spanish instruction during the other half year. Computer technology is a powerful tool that allows our students to learn technological skills in the computer lab, in the Library/Media Center, or in their own classroom. We are always looking at ways to utilize Web 2.0 technology to enhance global learning.

We also offer a myriad of programs to meet the needs of all students: Enrichment for All in cycle classes, Guided Study, Math Enrichment, GOAL (Gifted Opportunities in Achievement and Learning), and Special Education classes based upon eligibility. The Fourth and Fifth Grade Band and Choir students perform concerts during the school year. The gym is filled to capacity on these memorable evenings!

Additionally, we have a building-based Child Study Team. That means we have a school psychologist and learning consultant that are available to work with students who receive special education services as well as students in the general education population. Stonybrook School has a strong guidance program. Our guidance counselor works with all students in the classroom, in small groups, and individually.

Field trips, guest speakers, community service-based projects, and cultural arts assemblies are an important part of how we provide real-life experiences that deepen student learning through engagement. The Kinnelon Elementary Home School Association (KEHSA) sponsors many of these programs. Our KEHSA members volunteer their time in many ways during the school day (Author Day, Book Fair, etc.) and in the evening. Our students benefit from their fundraising in many ways, and most recently through the donation of Smart Board technology. Our goal is to have Smart Boards and projectors installed in each classroom. We are well on our way!

The Stonybrook School community is a proud one. The positive, strong connection between the home and school is what allows our students to achieve greatness!

Jodi L. Mulholland
Principal