

**Dr. Steve Rasmussen, Superintendent**

January 2012

TO: Families of Issaquah School District 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders

FROM: Jodi Bongard, Executive Director of Elementary Education

RE: Choice Science/Technology Programs for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Graders

Each year we inform the families of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders about the Issaquah School District Science Technology choice program options for grades 4 and 5. These programs are located at Briarwood, Clark and Cascade Ridge Elementary Schools and provide the standard district curriculum for those grades through a much stronger emphasis on science and technology. This information sheet tells you about the programs, how you can attend information sessions and when final applications are due.

These programs are multi-age for approximately 25 students per grade; multi-age in that the 4<sup>th</sup> graders continue in the program the following year as 5<sup>th</sup> graders. We are frequently asked about gender-appropriateness for the programs and want to emphasize that both boys and girls are welcome and thrive in the classes. Typically, successful students are good independent learners, enjoy inquiry learning and work well in a team situation.

Due to very high demand for these programs families are asked to select one school's program they would like to be considered for. **Transportation to each program is the responsibility of the families.**

We are currently offering enrollment to district 3<sup>rd</sup> graders for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade openings next year in all programs. Students will be selected from all district elementary schools with an attempt to balance the enrollment between schools. Spaces will be assigned by the neighborhood school in the attendance area your child resides for each program location separately. A wait list will be formed, and students will be admitted as spaces occur until school starts. Spaces for 5<sup>th</sup> grade at all locations are limited and families currently on the established wait lists will be contacted to fill any available spots.

Enrollment forms **must** be picked up at the informational meeting. (For those families who have had a student previously enrolled in the program, attendance at the informational meeting is not required. Forms may be obtained at your school's office.) Enrollment forms must be returned no later than **Friday, April 6, 2012**, to the District office. All enrollment requests received by April 6<sup>th</sup> will be treated equally in the lottery. Forms received after the deadline will be dated in the order received and placed on the wait list following students placed initially from the original lottery.

**Placement letters will be sent home in April. Please do not contact the schools, teachers or the District office for lottery results. This information will be sent by mail only.**

If you have additional questions, please call 425-837-7025.

**PLEASE TURN OVER FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE OPEN HOUSES**

### **Program Offerings**

The Issaquah School District offers three Science and Technology Magnet Programs, serving 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in unique multi-age classrooms. Each magnet serves 50+ students in a two-year program. Each program covers all standard 4/5 district adopted curriculum, with an added emphasis on science and technology. Grade specific math instruction is provided.

Magnet programs are located at Briarwood, Clark, and Cascade Ridge Elementary schools, with each program fully integrated into the home school. Each school offers expanded science – technology learning opportunities that can contribute to a distinct curricular focus at each magnet.

### **Teaching Approaches and Student Learning**

Magnet programs are housed in two joined classrooms and instructed using a team teaching approach. This setting builds collaboration skills and promotes a strong sense of community. At the same time, the larger classroom setting necessitates organizational strategies that help develop student independence. Additionally, the larger class size allows for large whole group discussions offering unique opportunities to develop listening, critical thinking and oral presentation skills.

Weekly learning stations are used to target specific curricular goals. Students often work in small groups to provide focused, individualized instruction; this practice is supported by numerous parent volunteers. Each magnet has a portfolio system that compiles student work for reflection on progress and attainment of learning goals.

Coverage of curriculum is rigorous. Project-based learning, with a variety of product options, is a key component of the magnet philosophy. Projects are designed to incorporate many subject areas (including Language Arts, Social Studies, Math and the Arts) and involve the use of technology to increase student involvement and engagement. A variety of formats are used to promote literacy and writing skills across the curriculum, (such as Writer's Workshop, Reader's Workshop, Current Events Reporting, Monthly Literacy projects and Word Study). The district science curriculum is expanded through the use of simulations, field trips, guest speakers and experiences focused on scientific process and investigation. All of these approaches are designed to encourage creativity and draw personal connections to real-world application of the concepts under study.

#### **4/5 SHOOTING S.T.A.R.S. Program at Briarwood Elementary**

**(Scientific Technological and Resourceful Students)**

<http://connect.issaquah.wednet.edu/elementary/briarwood/staff/lindnerp/default.aspx>

Parents interested in having their child attend the Briarwood program should attend the Information Night on Tuesday, March 6. The **parent only** presentation will be held from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. in adjoining rooms 102 & 107. Current Shooting STARS students will be present to answer questions as well.

#### **4/5 S.H.A.R.K.s at Clark Elementary**

**(Scientific Helpful and Resourceful Kids)**

[http://connect.issaquah.wednet.edu/elementary/clark/staff/ms\\_quillens\\_site/default.aspx](http://connect.issaquah.wednet.edu/elementary/clark/staff/ms_quillens_site/default.aspx)

Parents interested in having their child attend the Clark program should attend the Information Night in the Multipurpose Room at Clark on Thursday, March 15, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. You may bring your 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student (no siblings please) to this presentation.

#### **4/5 T.E.A.M. Program at Cascade Ridge Elementary**

**(Technology Enhanced Alternative Model)**

[http://connect.issaquah.wednet.edu/elementary/cascade/staff/mrs\\_pereas\\_site/default.aspx](http://connect.issaquah.wednet.edu/elementary/cascade/staff/mrs_pereas_site/default.aspx)

Parents interested in enrolling their child in the Cascade Ridge program should attend the Information Night on Wednesday, March 21. The presentation will be from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. You may bring your 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student (no siblings please) to this presentation. Current T.E.A.M. students will be present to answer questions as well.