



# Echoing Pines

## September 2009

Pine Shadows  
Elementary

9900 Neuens  
Houston TX 77080  
(713)365-4260

Volume 8

### A Note From the Principal, Alexia Greiner

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome all of our students, parents, and staff back to school. Our first week of school started off wonderfully. Each of our students seem to be getting into the routine of their new classroom, and are excited about learning.

We have several new staff members this year. Yolanda Castillo (Kindergarten) comes to us from Panda Path. Caroline Enroth and Amelia Pardo (3rd Grade) join us from Shadow Oaks and Hollibrook respectively. Lourdes Ocasio (Special Ed-Resource) is new to our district, but has teaching experience. Sharon Wagner and Dana Parkey (5th Grade) are both returning to teaching and previously taught in our district. Finally, we'll be sharing Samantha Pisarski (Music) with Spring Shadows Elementary. Please stop by and say hello to our new staff members the next time you are visiting the school. We are very excited to have all of them with us.

Our Meet the Teacher in August was a great success. It was wonderful to see the children coming to meet their new teacher and looking so excited to begin the new school year. Meeting your teacher before school is always a good way to alleviate the stress of the unknown on the first day of school.

The staff and I are committed to helping our students achieve excellence. As a function of this, I will be spending two full days every week in the classrooms in order to help improve the teaching and learning that happens on a daily basis. Therefore, I may not always be available to speak with you when you drop in or telephone me. However, I really do value communicating with you. So, when you want to speak with me, please contact my Administrative Assistant, Kandace Meachum who will schedule a time for us to talk. Thank you in advance for your ongoing support of our school and your patience and understanding as I implement these practices.

I am also committed to strengthening the communication between the school and home. I would like to visit with groups of you in your homes, informally, as a way of us getting to know each other. If you are interested in hosting an informal gathering (day or evening), please contact our Parent Liaison, Luisa Rodriguez, and then we'll set up a time for our informal gathering.

Again, I'd like to welcome you all back to school. I look forward to seeing you at Back to School Night on September 24th. If you have any questions, concerns, or would just like to visit with me, please contact me at 713-365-4260 or via email at alexia.greiner@springbranchisd.com .

Sincerely,

Alexia Greiner

### September

- 7th: Labor Day (School Closed)
- 8th: Science Benchmark (Grades 2-5)
- 9th: College T-Shirt Day / Math Benchmark (Grades 2-5)
- 10th: Reading Benchmark( Grades 3-5)
- 11th: Patriot Day
- 17th: Constitution Day
- 24th: Non-Uniform Day (\$1.00 Ticket) & Back to School Night-Open House

### October

- 1st: Science CBQ (Grades 4-5)
- 12th: Columbus Day(School Closed)
- 14th: College T-Shirt Day
- 15th: Science Family Night (Grades K-2)
- 19th-23rd: PSE Book Fair
- 22nd-23rd: Early Dismissal (11:30)
- 26th: Reports Cards Go Home
- 29th: Non-Uniform Day (\$1.00 Ticket)



## Art News

In art this year we will be doing many exciting projects. We will use a variety of media, including paint, chalk, oil pastels, markers and clay. Many will be quite messy so please send an art shirt labeled with your child's name as soon as possible.

While coming to art class is fun and enjoyable for most students, there are many benefits to early art and music education. It stimulates both side of the brain and helps students develop higher order thinking skills. Children learn to work cooperatively which will be an important skill throughout their life. They learn responsibility through handling and cleaning up of materials and children develop their character by learning to persevere even when the assignment is difficult.

Lastly it also teaches the skills of creating art and the appreciation of many kinds of art. Studies have shown that children who have early art and music education perform better in academic subjects and can visualize and solve problems more creatively.

I look forward to working with your children this as we learn and grow together. Please encourage them to draw and be creative problem solvers at home as well.

Dana Wade  
 Art Teacher

## Library News

Come visit the library and see all the new books that we have prepared over the summer. We have many new science and history books as well as new story books to enjoy.

This year we also have a new "crop" of Bluebonnet contenders. The 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will be reading these books to find their favorite. In January, those student who have read 5 or more books, will be allowed to vote for their favorite. Our votes plus those of students all across Texas will be tallied. A winner will be announced, and the author of that book invited to speak at the Texas Library Association meeting in San Antonio. I have heard from a little bird that there are some really funny stories in this new group of books.

But guess what, that is not all that is coming to our library. This fall we will be getting new computers, I-touches, library furniture, and even some new games to play in the library. You may be very surprised at what is going to be going on in your library.

So, come check out what is new in the library.

**Making a Difference  
 In the Lives of Children  
 by Striving for Excellence  
 Through Teamwork**



## Health Fitness news

The state mandated Fitness Testing is in it's third year. Students in grades Third, Fourth and Fifth are Pre-testing using the Fitness Gram Program. Fitness Gram is a comprehensive fitness assessment which includes a variety of health-related physical fitness test designed to assess Cardiovascular Fitness with the PACER Test, Muscle Strength and Endurance with Push Ups and Curl Ups, Flexibility with Shoulder Stretch, Sit and Reach and Trunk Lift. The last part of the test is Body Composition. Body Composition is calculated by Height and Weight proportion. These tests are to help Health Fitness teachers, students and parents assess the fitness needs students. Look for Fitness Gram report cards later in the year. Students will work though out the year to improve in each area. Students will be tested again in the spring to see their improvement. Students in Kindergarten, First and Second have also been working to improve their fitness as well as practicing locomotion skills like skipping, galloping, sliding.

We are looking for a fun filled and Health year.

## Music News

Greeting from the music department!

We welcome our new music teacher, Ms. Samantha Pisarski, to our team! Samantha is a 2009 graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University and beginning her teaching career with us! She is fond of Italian opera and all kinds of rock music. Ms. Pisarski will be working half time here and half time at Spring Shadows Elementary.

Mr. Pablo Ocañas is beginning his eighth year at PSE and fourteenth in SBISD. He is a 1996 graduate of the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston, where he will soon complete his master's degree in Music Education. He performs regularly as a pianist and flutist and enjoys new age music.

Parents wishing to participate in our parent/teacher Education Through Music program through the Richards Institute of Education and Research may find out more information at [educationthroughmusic.com](http://educationthroughmusic.com) or by emailing [Pablo.Ocanas@springbranchisd.com](mailto:Pablo.Ocanas@springbranchisd.com).

We encourage, support, and challenge parents and family to sing regularly and support the arts in our community. We are excited to sing, dance, and play with your children and look forward to a year of exciting musical experiences!