

STECK ELEMENTARY

P A R E N T H A N D B O O K

450 Albion Street • Denver, CO 80220 • 303.355.7314
Fax - 720.424.3895 • Attendance Line - 720.424.3884
DPS Web Page Address - <http://steck.dpsk12.org>

2009-2010 SCHOOL YEAR



Steck Elementary Staff

La Dawn Baity	Principal
Krystie Warlum	Secretary
Molly Kirschling	ECE
Kelly Hegarty.....	Kindergarten
Stephanie Stauber.....	Kindergarten
Mary Schonebaum	1st Grade
Jennie DiPaolo	1st Grade
Jessica Harwood	1st Grade
Bev Herbert	2nd Grade
Jenna Galli	2nd Grade
Kelly Harrison	3rd Grade
Debbie Heinz	3rd Grade
Andrew Menard	4th Grade
Jan Winget	4th Grade
Mirriah Elliott.....	5th Grade
Sarah Naughton	5th Grade
Stephanie Otto	1st – 2nd Literacy and Math Support
Guy Pasquino.....	3rd – 5th Math Support
Val Collins	3rd – 5th Literacy Support
Bev Laughlin	ESL (English as Second Language)
Linden Silver	LD Specialist/Resource
Kathy Eichenberger	Music, GT (Gifted and Talented)
Dan Dea	Physical Education/Dance
Susan Buck	Technology Coordinator
Chris Wells	Reading Intervention
Jessica Bostrand.....	Art
Betsy Semones	Psychologist
Rachel Johnson	Speech
Jane Jensen	OT/PT
Chuck Mier	Facilities Manager
Wayne Sauve	Assistant FM
Earnestine Fuller.....	Custodian

PARAPROFESSIONALS

Gigi Greenier	Health Aid Para
Debbie Anderson	ECE
Derek Henderson	Kindergarten
Renee Erickson	Kindergarten
Betty Dolmas	1st Grade
Beth Hulac	1st and 3rd Grades
Lisa Krause	2nd Grade

Welcome

Welcome to this year's version of our parent informational handbook. We are hopeful that in presenting the following information in one location, this book will be a useful resource throughout the school year.

SCHOOL HOURS

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Playground Supervision: 8:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.

Grades K-5 school day: 8:15 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Early Childhood Education:

- Morning Class 8:15 a.m. – 10:55 a.m.
- Afternoon Class 12:15 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Regular daily attendance is required of all students. **Please notify the school if your child will be absent or tardy by phoning the school attendance line at 720.424.3884.** The office staff will contact parents of absent students if the absence has not been called in earlier. A written note signed by the parent or guardian explaining an absence or tardiness should be sent with your child when returning to school.

TARDIES: Being on time is a necessary lifetime skill. In order for your child to benefit from instruction, which begins immediately, and not create disruption to teaching and learning, students are to be lined up on the blacktop by 8:10 a.m. or in their classrooms by 8:15 a.m. every day. Children who are tardy should report to the office before reporting to class.

EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES AND TARDIES:

- **ABSENCES:** Always call the office if your child is ill and cannot attend school. If a child has excessive absences during a trimester, a note from the doctor is required in order for additional absences to be considered excused. We recognize that there can be extenuating circumstances, so the school attendance officer may make exceptions on a case by case basis.
- **TARDIES:** Arrival in the classroom after 8:15 a.m. will only be considered excused if accompanied by a note or appointment card from a child's doctor, dentist, orthodontist etc. We encourage parents to make appointments outside of school hours whenever possible. Teachers will contact parents if a pattern of tardiness begins to emerge. After 10 unexcused tardies, parents will be contacted by the attendance officer (our school psychologist) to help generate a plan of support and next steps.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL SUPERVISION: There is supervision on the west and south playgrounds beginning at 8:00 a.m. **Students MAY NOT be dropped off at school before 8:00 a.m.** After school supervision ends promptly at 3:10 p.m. Students not picked up by 3:10 p.m. are brought to the office and parents will be contacted. Please check on the space availability of the before and after school program, Kaleidoscope Corner (see top of p.4), if your work schedule does not allow for drop off or pick up within this time frame.

Steck Elementary offers Kaleidoscope Corner for those parents who need before and after school care. Their phone number is 720.424.8291. Please contact Kaleidoscope Corner directly for fees and availability.

STUDENT DROP-OFF/PICK-UP: Please use the designated street parking around the school for drop-off and pick-up purposes if you are getting out with your child.

- For safety reasons, do not use the staff parking lot.
- The corner of 5th and Albion is very busy with cars parking, driving and students trying to cross the street.
- Please be extremely careful around this area. Visibility is poor and makes seeing small children crossing the street difficult.
- Areas designated for "SCHOOL BUS LOADING ONLY" may not be used for drop-off and pick-up.
- As this is a neighborhood, please be considerate of our neighbors surrounding the school. There are drop off zones for parents to let their child out of the car on each side of the street. Please do not park in the drop off zones.

ANIMALS ON THE PLAYGROUND: The City of Denver has posted signs around the playground perimeter notifying the community that a City Ordinance prohibits dogs and other animals on the playground. This creates a potential hazard on several levels.

- Students may be allergic to animal hair.
- Under certain circumstances, any dog may frighten or pose a threat to a child.
- Animal waste creates unsanitary conditions for our children's play areas. When people see dogs on the playground during student arrival and dismissal times, it implies that they can bring dogs onto the playground during non-school hours – creating unsanitary conditions.

We recognize that some dogs are service animals and are exempted from the above policy. However, please be cognizant of potential student allergies and/or fears children may have of strange dogs.

DISMISSAL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY: If your child must be excused before the end of the school day, please come to the office to sign your child out. Teachers may not release a student without office authorization. Children are only released to the people listed on the emergency card unless written authorization is presented to the office.

INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS: When the weather conditions prevent children from being outside before school, they will be permitted to enter the building at regular supervision time (8:00 a.m.). In case of a severe storm, schools will be in session unless closings are announced on radio or TV. Radio stations KOA 850 or KBNA 1220 are the official announcement stations for school closing information. TV stations begin announcements at 5:00 a.m. If it is announced that the Denver Public Schools are on a "STORM SCHEDULE," it means school starts on time but elementary buses are running 1/2 hour late.

CELL PHONES: Students should not bring cell phones to school. We have phones at school that students may use with the teacher's permission. If a child needs to bring a cell phone to school they should turn it off and give it to their teacher to lock up until after school.

LOST AND FOUND: The center for lost and found items is located near the auditorium on a hanging rack. Small items, such as glasses, are held with the office staff. Please mark your child's name inside all jackets, on their lunch boxes and anything else they might lose! The school is not responsible for lost items! Once a Trimester we will donate unclaimed items to charity organizations. We will post the date on our web site one week in advance.

ILLNESS: If a child becomes ill, has a fever or is injured at school, the nurse or a member of the office staff will contact the person listed on the emergency form and supervise the child until pick-up. In cases of emergency, we will call 911. Please keep your child's emergency card updated.

MEDICATION: If possible, all medication should be given at home. If a child must be given medication during school hours, the Student Medication Request Release Agreement must be filled out by your child's doctor (for prescription and non-prescription medicine) and returned to the office. Medication can only be administered by the nurse or office staff and will be given in the office. Students should not have any medications in their pockets, classroom or backpack (including cough drops) for safety reasons.

FOOD SERVICE: We will be serving hot lunch for those students who choose this option. Lunch will be available for \$1.40 (\$0.40 for students who qualify for reduced lunch). Families are encouraged to purchase lunches by the week or month. You may write a check **with the child's name** on it payable to *Steck Elementary*. The money can be paid directly to the lunchroom after 10:30 a.m. or may be given to the office staff to be placed in the kitchen's mailbox. Each child is responsible for his/her own lunch money. If the money is lost or forgotten, a lunch will be provided but the child must repay the lunchroom manager the following day. A child is only allowed 2 charges before an alternative meal (peanut butter or cheese sandwich, fruit and drink) will be served. Lunches may also be brought from home. Please write the child's name on the sack or lunch box. Soft drinks (soda) should not be brought in sack lunches. Forms for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program are available in the office. Breakfast is not served at Steck Elementary.

ONLINE PAYMENT OPTION: Families can pay on-line and view account balances by subscribing to www.mylunchmoney.com. This service is not connected to or promoted by DPS, but many parents have found it to be a convenient option.

SNACK POLICY: Primary grades (K-2) have a designated snack time each morning. Students are responsible for providing their own snack. Snacks need to be nutritious. Please do not send foods high in fat or sugar content. A recommended snack list is provided. Intermediate grades (3-5) do not have a snack time. If your child has a medical need for a snack, you will need to provide a statement from your doctor and the teacher will help your child work out a routine.

Recommended snacks for Kindergarten - 2nd grade on next page.

RECOMMENDED SNACKS (K-2)

No snacks should require preparation, cutting, peeling or the use of utensils.

- any fresh fruit ready prepared
- any fresh vegetables ready prepared
- granola bars
- yogurt sticks
- cheese sticks
- raisins
- nuts (*well packaged in the case of nut allergies*)
- apple sauce
- rice crackers
- crackers
- cereal

BIRTHDAYS: Birthdays are celebrated on the child's birthday in K - 2nd grade. 3rd - 5th grade students celebrate birthdays on a monthly basis. The students with birthdays in a given month often help plan the class celebration. At all grade levels celebrations are kept short, usually 15-20 minutes at the end of the day. Please review the recommended birthday treat list carefully.

RECOMMENDED BIRTHDAY TREATS

*All birthday treats provided must be **SMALL** and in individual servings.
No treats should require preparation, cutting, peeling or the use of utensils.*

- fruit
- fruit with dips such as yogurt
- fruit kebabs
- veggies/dips
- mini muffins
- mini cupcakes
- small cookies
- banana bread
- rice krispie treats
- donut holes
- savory treats
- cheese/pineapple on sticks
- popsicles
- frozen yogurt

Non-edible treats

- pencils
- erasers

Parent Communication

VISITS: Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit and volunteer at *Steck Elementary*. Most teachers begin scheduling parent volunteers the third or fourth week of school to allow for classroom rituals and routines to be established. For safety and security purposes, all visitors must stop at the Office to sign in and pick up a **VISITOR STICKER**. This is a DPS policy requirement as we are responsible for the safety of everyone in our building.

CONFERENCES: If you wish to meet with a teacher, please contact the teacher in advance to schedule a time convenient to both of you. There will also be scheduled Parent/Teacher conferences twice each year. These dates will be published after the official district calendar is finalized.

FRIDAY FOLDER: Each child at *Steck Elementary* is given a "FRIDAY FOLDER" that they bring home each week. It contains your child's scored or graded school work for that week. All general information and announcements are distributed electronically through our

e-folder system. Time sensitive announcements will be email “blasted” to parents, so please make sure that the office has your current email address.

PHONE DIRECTORY: The *Steck Elementary Directory* is a helpful tool for keeping in touch with other Steck Elementary parents, as DPS will not give out phone numbers without permission. The directory is only given to Steck Elementary families and is not for any other distribution. A permission form will be distributed to all families and if you wish to have your information listed you may fill out the form.

STECK STARLIGHT NEWSLETTER: The *Steck Starlight Newsletter* is the school wide newsletter and will be published and distributed regularly. The newsletter reports on school happenings, PTSA and CSC meetings and news, special events, dates to remember, and children’s work. The newsletter will be sent home in your child’s Friday Folder and is the primary source of information about what is happening at Steck Elementary.

SCHOOL BULLETIN BOARDS: CSC + PTSA information is posted on the bulletin board across from the Office door. We will also use the Steck Web Site to post meeting agendas one week in advance. Minutes or summaries from meetings will be posted after they have been approved – usually at the following monthly meeting.

WEB SITE: The *Steck Elementary Web Site* is <http://steck.dpsk12.org>. It contains current information regarding the school including a calendar of events that is constantly updated. Copies of the newsletter are also posted on the web site.

School Activities and Opportunities

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE): *Half Day ECE Programs* are offered at Steck Elementary for children four years old by October 1st. Contact the Office for information.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: The *English as a Second Language (ESL) Program* provides English language development instruction for individuals and small groups of students for whom English is not their native language.

GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM: The *Gifted and Talented Program* at Steck Elementary has two main components. One is to identify and provide differentiated instruction and opportunities for students who meet specified criteria of the *Gifted and Talented Instructional Program*. The second component is to provide enrichment to the general student body to encourage creative thinking, develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills and enhance general classroom activities. Kathy Eichenberger is the GT Coordinator and our Music Teacher. We have Class Size Relief Teachers in 1st through 5th grade to provide additional enrichment and support to meet the needs of all students.

DESTINATION IMAGINATION: *Destination Imagination* is a wonderful opportunity for students to participate in a team problem-solving, imagination process in competition with other schools. This competition is open to students K-5. Volunteers are needed to coach/manage each team. Work begins in October/November and finishes with competitions in the spring. Our GT teacher generally is involved with the DI team(s) with parents serving as coaches.

STECK CHOIR: Our school choir is open to 4th and 5th grade students who are interested in singing and performing. Parents are encouraged to help with costumes, chaperoning trips, and performance assistance and piano accompaniment.

YOUNG AUTHOR'S PROGRAM: The *Young Author's Program* is a district-wide literary competition, open to all students in the school. Students enter their stories or poetry collections that they have written during the school year. Two winners (1 from K-2 and 1 from 3-5) per school are selected. The winners and their parents are invited to attend the Young Author's Tea and Conference. Entries for this event are collected in early March. Classroom teachers help select appropriate entries.

BROWN BAG LUNCHESES: This highly successful program, introduced last year, is an optional enrichment opportunity. *The Brown Bag Lunch Program* gives children a chance to learn about a variety of topics that are interesting to them. During the lunch time once or twice a month, a guest speaker will present a topic to a group of interested children. Please check our web site frequently for updated information on student activities and opportunities. Mrs. Eichenberger reviews upcoming topics with students so that they can make informed choices. We are always looking for additional speakers and presenters for this program.

Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS: See page 5 for details and a list of recommended birthday treats.

DISTRIBUTION OF INVITATIONS: Please do not hand out birthday invitations at school. The directory has addresses for most of the students. If you need something mailed because you don't have an address, bring a stamped envelope to the main office and we will address it and mail it for you.

HALLOWEEN: ECE-5th Grade students bring their costumes to school for an all school parade in the afternoon. Each classroom then participates in activities organized by room parents and teachers. Alternative activities are provided for students who choose not to participate in Halloween.

WINTER PROGRAM: Our Gifted and Talented/Music teacher creates a December musical program involving all of the children at Steck Elementary. The performance is held in the evening at the Hill Middle School Auditorium. It is not to be missed!

VALENTINE'S DAY: The Steck Elementary Valentine's Day activities usually include classroom parties and the decoration of boxes to receive valentines by student's classmates. Room parents help coordinate events.

SCIENCE FAIR: Students participate in the DPS Science Fair, creating investigations, experiments and displays demonstrating their knowledge of the Scientific Process. Families come to Steck Elementary to see all the wonderful, creative ideas and take part in having the children explain their project. A Steck Science Fair is usually held on alternate years with International Night.

INTERNATIONAL NIGHT: ECE-5th grade students participate in studies about different areas of the world. An all school evening activity for families, serves as a culminating activity.

FIELD DAY: Our Physical Education Teacher coordinates a fabulous field day held in the spring with all students (K-5) competing in a variety of fun filled events.

Parent Involvement Activities

CSC: *WHAT IS IT?* CSC is the acronym for Collaborative School Committee. The Steck Elementary CSC is an elected body of community representatives, parents, teachers, and staff who work together to provide for the short and long term direction of the school. The CSC determines school policies, develops the School Improvement Plan, approves the budget and makes a variety of decisions that affect the school. In addition, sub-committees may include non-CSC members that are under the direction of the CSC. These committees include the Personnel Subcommittee, Technology Committee, Character Education, as well as other committees created to address special areas of need. CSC meetings are held once a month and notifications are sent home via Friday Folders. Meetings are open for anyone to attend. If you wish to bring an issue or concern to the CSC, you must submit your topic to the CSC Chairperson at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting. CSC holds two Parent Only sessions each year for our community. We also solicit input and/or present information to the community at Fall and Spring Community Night Meetings. Elections for CSC vacancies are held in the spring.

PTSA: *WHAT IS IT?* PTSA is the acronym for Parent Teacher Student Association. We are a gathering place to provide support to our students and teachers. We are dedicated to fostering a strong learning environment for our students. We do this through volunteering our time in the students' classrooms, in the office, and at various PTSA functions.

The PTSA is also a way to raise additional funding for Steck Elementary, above what is allocated to us through DPS. Our fundraising efforts:

- Help support our teachers through "mini-grants" for teachers to use for classroom education.
- Continue the upgrading and beautification of our playground and school building.
- Support the *Steck Starlight Newsletter*.

By becoming a member, you automatically help your child as a portion of your dues stays at Steck Elementary and supports its programs.

BOOK FAIR: The *Book Fair* will be held in the fall and 30-35% of each dollar you spend at the *Book Fair* stays at Steck Elementary. Several volunteers are needed to help with sales, set-up and clean up.

FAMILY READING NIGHT: *Family Reading Night*, held in conjunction with the Book Fair, is a family event during which our school community gathers to celebrate the joys of reading.

BOXTOPS COLLECTION: *Box Tops* provide Steck Elementary with additional funds for just a little effort. *Box Tops* for Education are small coupons found on the boxes of General Mills products, including their cereals, Go-Gurt, Yoplait Yogurt, Fruit Gushers, frosting and cake mixes, and many other products. Please clip all Box Tops coupons and send them in with your child. Each classroom will have a special collection area for your Box Tops. This is a fun, NO COST fundraiser for our school.

CLEAN UP, BEAUTIFICATION OF THE PLAYGROUND: We know how important a clean and well-maintained environment is to our school community and our residential neighbors. A couple of times a year there will be designated clean up days when we can all pitch in and help do a little extra to keep the playground clean and green!

DOLLAR A DAY PROGRAM: Steck Elementary has a program called "*Dollar a Day*," which encourages each family to donate one dollar for every day their child is in school. This amounts to a suggested donation of \$180.00 per student. The *Dollar a Day* funds are used exclusively to help Steck Elementary keep teacher and Paraprofessional/student ratios as low as possible.

ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS: Throughout the years, the PTSA has offered a variety of after school activities for our children. Chess Club, Karate, Pottery, Spanish, Kite Making and Visual Arts are some of our most recent offerings. Look for information in your Friday Folder for details regarding this year's programs.

REFLECTIONS: Reflections is an arts competition sponsored by the National PTSA, open to all students in the school. Categories include literature, music, visual arts, photography and dance. Submissions are judged according to the child's age. Winners at the District level advance to statewide and national competition. Prizes are awarded at each level. Entries are due the first week of January and specific information about the program is given to each student in November.

ROOM PARENTS: Each classroom has one or two *Room Parents* who act as Parent liaisons with the other parents and the teacher. *Room Parents* work with the teachers to help plan holiday activities, help with other teacher directed activities, help plan the class project/item donation for the Steck Silent Auction, and the class participation in the Steck Stomp. It is a great way to be involved in your child's classroom and help promote the community atmosphere at Steck Elementary.

SILENT AUCTION: The Annual Silent Auction is PTSA's major fundraiser. We will be working hard collecting donations, marketing the event, and doing all the small details to

ensure a great auction. Each classroom donates an item, and the teachers get involved by donating a fun event that lets your child have a special time with their teacher. It's always a fun, adults-only event during which we enjoy each other's company while raising needed funds for our children's education.

SPRING SOCK HOP: The *Sock Hop* is a fun-filled evening for the whole family. The PTSA gets a DJ and everyone comes to the gym for a fun night of dancing with your friends. Lots of people show up in their favorite 50s attire, providing lots of photo opportunities as well.

STECK STOMP: The *Steck Stomp* is a terrific end of the year community event and fundraiser. This 1-mile pledge/walk or run through the neighborhood combines fitness with a fundraiser, plus a morning of family fun on the playground for carnival games and events.

TALENT SHOW: In the spring, the PTSA coordinates a school talent show providing all children an opportunity to try out for a spot in the talent show. Watch for details in your Friday Folder.

TEACHER APPRECIATION: We have a whole school of wonderfully talented teachers who work very hard with our children. The *Spring Teacher Appreciation Luncheon* and other activities provided by parents, is our way of saying Thank You.

BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS AND INTERVENTIONS: Teachers at Steck Elementary have systems for setting up rituals, routines, and building a sense of community in their classrooms that involves shared expectations. All teachers hold weekly *Morning Meetings* using the Olweyes Bully Prevention and Character Education curriculum materials. In addition, Steck faculty and staff receive on-going training in the DPS Positive Behavior Supports program.

Our playground supervisors are also trained in Systematic Supervision to ensure high levels of supervision on the playground. The PTSA has instituted a Parent Playground Volunteer Program that has been very successful and beneficial in providing addition adult contact for our children during the lunch recess period.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES: When student behaviors or disruptions require discipline interventions, Steck teachers follow the DPS District Discipline Ladder. For a complete description of the Denver Public Schools discipline policies, go to the home page of the DPS web site. A copy of the Discipline Ladder is also included in this booklet.

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISCIPLINE LADDER

