

Welcome to the 2005-2006 school year and to the first *Tiger Pause* of the year!

This school year began with three days of staff meetings prior to welcoming students back for classes. The first of those days was an intensive orientation for new teachers, and SPHS has thirteen! The next two days were planned with three goals in mind. One goal was all about team-building. With such a new face to the staff, we will be making considered efforts to carry forward the traditions that have worked so well for us while also embracing different ways of doing things to lead us to even greater improvements. Our other goals for the first days together were to plan ahead to ease the way for students upon their return and to delve into data while reviewing and recommitting to our action plan for the year. Of course, we did stop to celebrate our (30 point!) API improvement and to take apart the data regarding that growth.

Over the first and second full weeks of school, our administrative team and counselors met with each freshman Global Studies class and with the sophomore, junior, and senior classes in three special assemblies. Our objective was to welcome all students, give a brief orientation, and to make personal connections. In each of those meetings, we were amazed at the smooth transition everyone has made to the 2005-06 school year! We emphasized aspirations and audacity with the freshmen, challenging them to embrace the uncertainty of the future with boldness and clear vision, as the best way to prepare for the future is to invent it.

We have a new School Resource Officer on campus this year. Representing the South Pasadena Police Department, signing on for SRO duty for four years, is Detective Shannon Robledo. Students are responding well to his proactive, yet soft-spoken ways. One of the challenges we give each student at the beginning of the year is to develop connections with adults on campus who can be significant in their lives as mentors and “safe havens”. Detective Robledo is here as another adult connection for students on campus.

We were very pleased, over the summer, to send families several mailings with updated versions of student programs. The feedback was positive, and many families took advantage of the early mailings to write to counselors with questions or requests. We will be continuing our effort to get information out early to our students and their families.

As of this writing, we are still making schedule adjustments. In keeping with staffing ratios determined last year, it was necessary that we staff conservatively. With increased enrollment and a commitment on our part to provide a range of classes to students, we are adjusting some students' classes to allow for three more sections of English. Thankfully, with the great work our English Department has done to align courses, students will be able to make a seamless transition to their new classes, and all adjustments will be completed before you read this. Nonetheless, we apologize for the change.

I would like to thank the wonderful volunteers from the PTSA who helped out in August during Registration packet pick-up. Ted Goeders, Karen Haglund, Rose Barron, Kristen Dube, and Lee Ann O'Neill were really great to take time out of their busy schedules to help us make the process a painless one for our SPHS families. Additionally, many parents worked at the Registration tables for two days in late August. Without the assistance of Donna Mohamadi and her volunteer crew, students would not have been served so quickly, and it wouldn't have been nearly as fun!

We have a saying regarding our students at SPHS: “We are growing them locally to make an impact globally.” Already, much of our student body is involved in outreach to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. There are both long- and short-range plans in the works by the ASB Leadership, the Red Cross Club, and the Leo Club, to name a few. On a school level, we are

adopting a Mississippi family, sponsoring a backpack drive to equip displaced students with the materials needed for school, and holding a benefit concert that will feature artists from our band, orchestra, Arroyo Seco Singers, and more. Please remain alert for involvement opportunities. The online daily bulletin will be a good source of information.

Along with the return of our students came a renewed energy for me, personally. Working with the students and assisting them with their development, growth, and achievement is our essential charge. I commit to keeping the focus on students as we proceed through their high school experiences. As always, I can be reached at janderson@fc.spusd.net.