

*"I think I should have no other mortal wants, if I could always have plenty of music. It seems to infuse strength into my limbs and ideas into my brain. Life seems to go on without effort, when I am filled with music."*

George Eliot

# Grey Matters

Volume 1

May 24 – 28, 2004

Number 36

Hopefully you were able come to school last Tuesday night for the RJG Spring Concert. It was an outstanding performance by the Strings Ensemble led by Irina Kulinich, the After-School Choir, and the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade choruses, each led by Julie Clinch. It was amazing to see so much talent on one stage.

This week you have another chance to see more of the marvelous talent of RJG students. Tuesday night, at 7:30pm, the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Band students will perform the RJG Spring Band Concert, which is the culmination of another year of Band. But that's not all! The opening reception for the RJG Virtual Art Show is scheduled for this Wednesday night at 7pm in the RJG library. Please join us for both events.

A few parents have raised issues regarding our plans to move Study Skills from grade 8 to grade 7 next year. Specifically, the concern is that the current grade 7 students will miss this very valuable curriculum. Let me take a moment to try and reduce this anxiety.

As many parents and staff agree, it is more logical to teach Study Skills in grade 7 rather than grade 8. Students are transitioning from the elementary model. Adding the support and skill development of Study Skills in grade 7 will greatly improve student success their first year at RJG. These skills will carry over to grade 8 as well as into the future.

Unfortunately, there will never be an easy or "clean" time to make the move. Whether we do it next year or the following year, a group of 7<sup>th</sup> graders might miss Study Skills. To solve this problem, we are eliminating what is currently known as Info Skills and replacing it with a new course taught in the grade 8. The focus of this new course, for the 2004-05 school year, will be the same core curriculum as Study Skills, specifically to assure that all of our current grade 7 students receive the Study Skills curriculum. The most significant difference between the current Study Skills program and the Study Skills component of the new course is that it will be taught in the computer lab. This daily access to technology should be a great benefit as there are numerous ways in which technology can be used to enhance the curriculum.

Let me reiterate that no child will have to miss the Study Skills curriculum. Time has been set aside this summer to develop the curriculum for the new course. Ms. Roadman is working closely with the teacher of the new program to assure that the key components of the curriculum are covered.