



Integrated News

Boulder Community School of Integrated Studies

March 8, 2007



Principal's report

Dear Parents,

This week I am sharing with you our School Improvement Midyear Report that went out to the Ed Council and the District Accountability Committee recently. There are sections of the report that you may have seen before in the Integrated News, however, I believe it is so important parents are aware of school goals and progress that it is worth sharing those sections with you a second time.

We are proud of the many areas of growth we are seeing this year. Of course, what is most important to the teachers and staff is the growth and progress YOUR INDIVIDUAL CHILD is making this year. All education is, in essence, a collection of individual learning plans for each and every child. With all the "group data" included in this report, please know that we see your child as a unique learner with unique needs.

Also, I want to express how well the 3rd through 5th graders are doing on CSAP. This year we have emphasized a LOW-STRESS approach to CSAP. The children are working their hardest and have fantastic attitudes. Thanks so much for your support at home!

Overview of School Goals and Strategies

"What are BCSIS' specific 2006/2007 school improvement goals?"

I would like to update you on the progress we are making toward our school improvement goals. Each year, every school in the district sets goals in the areas of Achievement (academic success on CSAP and other assessments), Equity (closing achievement gaps between sub-groups of students), and Organization (overall climate and culture of the school). As a reminder, this year our school improvement goals are:

Achievement:

- Develop a consistent, cohesive K-5 writing curriculum that is based on BVSD Standard and Benchmarks.
- Develop a model for working with students in small groups so that they can receive direct writing instruction at their individual skill/ability level.
- Build a strong home/school program for supporting students in the area of writing, both in the classroom and when doing homework with parents.

Equity:

- Teachers will implement a consistent, cohesive, articulated writing curriculum across all grade levels. This writing curriculum will include differentiated strategies for struggling writers and students with special needs.
- Special Education teachers and Literacy teachers will meet with small groups of struggling writers and provide direct instruction using differentiated curriculum. Some

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

March 15 (Thurs) 6:30-8:30pm.

Lisa Cech Presentation in Open Space

March 16 (Fri) 10-11am. **CU**

Dance Team in the Gym

March 20 (Tues) 2:15-3:15pm.

Accordion and Folk Dance Show in Jan's room

March 26-30 (Mon-Fri) **Spring**

Break - NO SCHOOL

April 2 & 3 (Mon & Tues)

Conference Exchange Days - NO SCHOOL

April 11 (Wed) 3:30pm. **First**

meeting of the Lesbian/Gay Parent Support Group in Suzanne's classroom

April 20 (Fri) **Professional De-**

velopment Day - NO SCHOOL

May 17 (Thurs) **BCSIS Spring**

Carnival

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of these small groups will be gender-based.

- Teachers will communicate effectively with parents about writing homework expectations.

BCSIS will conduct Parent Evenings to help parents support student writing at home.

Organization:

- Create, teach, and consistently hold students to a clear set of classroom work and learning behavior expectations.
- Create, teach, and consistently hold students to a clear set of school-wide behavior rules.
- Teachers and the principal will communicate school rules clearly to parents. We will consistently hold parents to a model of working alongside the school in the effort to hold all students accountable for following school rules.

“What steps has BCSIS taken to assure progress on our 2006/2007 school improvement goals?”

The entire staff and community of BCSIS have taken multiple steps toward achieving our goals. However, remember that we have a good portion of the school year still ahead of us. I would greatly appreciate any comments, ideas, congratulations, or concerns you might have while reviewing the progress toward our school improvement goals.

Achievement and Equity:

- Staff used a Professional Development Day to craft a cohesive, articulated K-5 Writing Curriculum, including: a timeline for standards and benchmarks by year and month, a list of curriculum resources that are used by grade level, and a set of assessments and rubrics for each grade level.
- School-wide implementation of Fire-side Writing Prompts and Rubrics. Teachers met in grade level teams to establish benchmark papers. They discussed common strengths and challenges in writing across grade levels.
- Intervention model is being fully implemented. All Special Education, Media, and Literacy teachers are working with

small groups on writing skills, including: vowel sounds and syllables, sentence structure, mechanics, letter writing, editing, publishing, paragraph writing, punctuation, planning and organization, and manipulating sand trays.

- Implementation of gender-based writing strategies such as sand trays, drama, immediate feedback, tableaux and other kinesthetic activities, and non-fiction writing.
- Implementation of writing support strategies both in small-group instruction and in the classroom, including: scribing, keyboarding, Alpha Smarts, “Double-Dosing” pull-out model, graphic organizers, and Arts-Integration.

Organization:

- Teachers used Professional Development time to discuss strategies for communicating and holding higher behavior expectations for the students. Teachers developed a school-wide set of rules and brainstormed ways to present those rules to the students.
- A set of school-wide rules were developed and presented to all students. Parents received a copy of the rules and were asked to discuss them with their children. A separate set of behavior rules were developed for the playground and lunchroom. These rules were presented to parents and paraprofessionals.
- Paraprofessionals are receiving training and regular meetings to discuss the implementation of school rules and behavior expectations.
- A clear set of consequences were developed and communicated with students. The principal is actively involved in visiting classes to reinforce school rules and working collaboratively with classroom teachers to implement appropriate consequences.

Data-Based Progress Report: Organizational Goal

2006/2007 BCSIS Organizational Goal: BCSIS will create, teach, and consistently implement a clear set of school rules and learning behavior expectations for all students. We will actively include parents in the implementation of this goal.

As a celebration of the excellent work that the teachers and students have

done this fall, below are a few results from our In-House Student Survey. We give the survey to 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders in the fall and spring.

As a reminder, one of our School Improvement Goals this year is to help children know and follow school rules more consistently. Our survey results suggest that we are making good progress on this goal.

Relating to our goal to communicate school rules clearly, and to our continual work on making our school safe and comfortable for all children, we saw the following results on our Fall 2006/2007 Survey:

Question

Spring '06 District Survey Positive Responses: a

Fall '06 School Survey Positive Responses: b

I know what to do about bullies.

- a. 73%
- b. 90%

I have not been called hurtful names.

- a. 41%
- b. 96%

I believe our school rules are easy to understand.

- a. 47%
- b. 79%

I have not been bullied by someone at school this year.

- a. 54%
- b. 97%

At school I have not heard students threaten or hurt someone.

- a. 44%
- b. 93%

Teachers expect all students to follow the rules.

- a. 77%
- b. 97%

Data-Based Progress Report: Achievement and Equity Goal

2006/2007 BCSIS Academic Goal: The BCSIS Writing CSAP Weighted Index Average for 3rd, 4th, and 5th

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grades will increase by 9 points, from 92 WI Average to 101 WI Average.

2006/2007 BCSIS Equity Goal: The achievement gap between Special Education students and Non-Special Education students in the area of writing will be reduced based on the Writing CSAP scores. In addition, the achievement gap between Special Education female student and Special Education male students will decrease.

BCSIS Intervention Model

BCSIS has created an Intervention Model that offers a large number of our students the chance to work in small groups with their peers. Led by a trained teacher or paraprofessional, the groups meet on a daily basis from Monday through Thursday. The groups are ever-changing and flexible, and cover a wide variety of content and ability areas, including: support with basic number sense, library skills, writing practice, TAG activities, and reading intervention.

Our goal is to offer students the small group support they need while assuring that they are not missing important activities in the classroom while they are out of the room. Please ask your classroom teacher if you have more questions about this model. It is an educational structure that is based on the most recent academic research and best-practice approaches to learning.

In order to assess our mid-year progress toward this goal, and to assess the success of our Intervention Model in helping us to meet this goal, all of the students who participated in writing intervention groups this year were given a pre and post writing assessment. The Literacy Team used rubrics to evaluate and compare the assessments. The following table describes the impact that direct-instruction had on the writing skills of our students receiving intervention in the area of writing.

[Note: On this assessment "Growth" infers more progress than would have been gained in the general classroom during the same period of time.]

Assessment of Progress/Writing Intervention Groups 2006/2007

All students served in Intervention Groups

% students showing no growth 32%
% students showing growth 56%
% students showing significant growth 12%
% students showing growth or sig. growth 68%

Special Ed students served in Intervention Groups

% students showing no growth 38%
% students showing growth 46%
% students showing significant growth 15%
% students showing growth or sig. growth 61%

Non-Special Ed students served in Intervention Groups

% students showing no growth 25%
% students showing growth 67%
% students showing significant growth 8%
% students showing growth or sig. growth 75%

Special Ed Girls served in Intervention Groups

% students showing no growth 17%
% students showing growth 67%
% students showing significant growth 17%
% students showing growth or sig. growth 84%

Special Ed Boys served in Intervention Groups

% students showing no growth 57%
% students showing growth 29%
% students showing significant growth 14%
% students showing growth or sig. growth 43%

Data Analysis

Overall, 68% of our students demonstrated "growth" or "significant growth" in their writing abilities after receiving direct instruction through our Intervention Model. This shows that the model is successfully supporting our struggling writers.

The Non-Special Education students showed slightly more growth in comparison with our Special Education students after receiving direct instruction. Although the percentage is close, this

demonstrates that we still have more work to do in closing the achievement gap between the writing abilities of our Special Education and Non-Special Education students.

We are very proud of the fact that 61% of our Special Education students showed "growth" or "significant growth" in their writing abilities after receiving direct instruction through our Intervention Model.

The fact that 75% of our Non-Special Education students showed "growth" or "significant growth" in their writing abilities after receiving direct instruction demonstrates that our Intervention Model acts as a significant additional support to the classroom instruction our students receive.

An amazing 84% of our girls with special needs showed "growth" or "significant growth" in their writing abilities after receiving direct instruction through our Intervention Model. This is in comparison with 43% of our boys with special needs. This data trend should help to close the achievement gap between Special Education girls and Special Education boys.

Ongoing Questions:

1. How can we most effectively get parents more involved with the School Improvement Process? How can we motivate parents to support their children at home in the area of writing?
2. How will the loss of our Read 2 Achieve Funds affect our Intervention Model and our overall Literacy Department?
3. In looking at our students that attended writing intervention groups, yet still made no growth during that period, how can we best support these students to assure that they show some improvement in writing this year?



Bacaro Fundraiser A Success

On March 4, BCSIS parents and teachers gathered for a fun-filled evening of dining, socializing and silent auctioning to help benefit BCSIS. Every year, the Friends of BCSIS need to raise a significant amount of money to fund our unique programs and to sponsor art-directed programs that stimulate student success. For the last three years, Dante and Christina Medri have kindly opened the doors of their fabulous restaurant to help with fundraising.

While dining on salmon, risotto, and roasted chicken, parents and teachers had a chance to share adult conversation and get to know each other better. We were treated to wine that perfectly complimented the meal and a vanilla bean gelato with fruit compote that flawlessly finished the meal.

Once again, the teachers and parents of BCSIS showed their artistic talent, generosity and creativity with their silent auction donations. One lucky family is headed to Santa Fe, thanks to the Ward family. Several of us are better styled thanks to the beaded jewelry and silk donations. Other parents won the heated battle over the artwork by Jan May and Robin Allegra.

A total of \$3,633 was raised through ticket sales and the silent auction. The night was only a success because of the dedication and hard work of the committee. Robyn Rathweig created the invitations; Jasmine Poole and Robin Allegra coordinated the silent auction; Sonja Toutenhoofd coordinated the teacher invites; Darcy Vanderbe Pace helped with invitations; Michelle Wimple and Jill Jenkins took care of the finances; Susan Newkumet coordinated with the restaurant; and Kim Greene solicited donations for the silent auction and kept us sane, focused, and on track as always.

- Beth Parrish

Need a great child craft gift?

A new Boulder company, Dragonfly Innovation, kindly donated craft gift bags to all of the attendees at Sunday's Bacaro

Dinner. The parents had fun creating doodles and crafts with the kits. If you are looking for a great gift for your creative child consider Dragonfly Innovation: www.dragonflyin.com.

Call for Parent Input

In the ongoing effort to better welcome new families and to affirm the values of returning families, let's share our impressions of our school traditions by starting with the Spring Festival.

- What was a highlight of last year's Spring Festival for your child and/or you?
- What does Spring Festival mean to BCSIS?

Please send your responses to cynthiacarosella@hotmail.com to be included in an upcoming Integrated News.

BCSIS Email List

If you have BCSIS-related news, please send a message to sonjamarc@earthlink.net. It gets approved by Phil and then sent to our community at large, about 75 percent of parents.\

Need a night out?

Looking for a great night out? Consider Bacaro Restaurant on Pearl Street in Boulder. The food is outstanding; the setting is fun; the martinis are the best in Boulder; and the owners are generous BCSIS parents who give their restaurant, time, and energy to our school.

The BCSIS Spring Plant Sale is coming May 2, 3, and 4!

New and exciting plants for your garden! Order for friends and family! Great Mother's Day gifts, too! Volunteers are needed to assist on sale days, make phone calls, and gather order forms. Please call Vicki Kurzban at 303-440-6149 if you can volunteer.

Support group for gay and lesbian parents and allies

A new support group for gay and lesbian parents and their allies, with the aim of assuring the success and wellbeing of their children at school, is starting at BCSIS. The first meeting is Wednesday, April 11, at 3:30pm in Suzanne's 3rd grade classroom. If you have any questions, please contact the parent liaison, Cynthia Carosella, at 303-748-3037.

Need Printing?

If you have a business or personal need for a wonderful locally-owned printer, please consider Paramount Press, www.paramountpresstags.com/index.html. Owned by BCSIS parents Eileen and Neil Cochran, Paramount Press kindly donated the printing for the Bacaro Dinner invitations for the third year in a row.

CSAP Schedule

Monday, March 12
Fourth Grade Reading/Writing #5
Fifth Grade Reading/Writing #6

Tuesday, March 13
Fourth Grade Reading/Writing #6
Fifth Grade Math #1

Wednesday, March 14
Fourth Grade Math #1
Fifth Grade Math #2

Thursday, March 15
Fourth Grade Math #2
Fifth Grade Math #3

Friday, March 16
Fourth Grade Math #3
Fifth Grade Science #1

Monday, March 19
Third Grade Writing #1
Fifth Grade Science #2

Tuesday, March 20
Third Grade Writing #2
Fifth Grade Science #3