



Integrated News

November 21, 2008

Principal's report

Dear BCSIS Parents:

The BVSD Open Enrollment period begins in December. This is a time when we reach out as a school and communicate to the larger community who we are and why we do what we do. As we near this process, I would like to share again with you a letter I wrote last year. It describes Arts Integration in detail and outlines why the arts help children learn and grow.

I hope you find this information helpful. I also hope you and your family have a wonderful, relaxing Thanksgiving vacation.

Phil

Arts Integration

As you all know, our school draws from several different educational models (Waldorf Education, Multiple Intelligences, etc.) for inspiration, instructional practice, and curriculum content. The educational model that is most prevalent in our program is Arts Integration.

Arts Integration is a relatively recent, cutting-edge model of education that is based on both research and experiential observation. This model can be defined as the use of arts in a manner that supports and enhances learning of subject matter in any discipline. One of our current teachers, Sabine Smead, along with a former BCSIS teacher, Roberta Mantione, wrote a highly regarded book on Arts Integration called, *Weaving through Words: Using the Arts to Teach Reading Comprehension Strategies*. We actually have a leading expert on the topic right here at the school!

The following overview is a summary of an article written by Sabine and Roberta, which was distributed to parents at the Community Meeting. I felt it was critical to communicate the components of Arts Integration to all of you, as it is the foundation of our school's unique focus program.

Encouraging use of multiple sign systems: Each art form uses its own unique set of symbols and signs to express meaning. The ability to make meaning is based on the ability to weave together and jump between sign systems in order to deepen understanding. For example, often when a mathematician is stuck on a problem they might stop to draw pictures to help interpret the problem.

Brain Development: All forms of the arts help students develop an ability to focus and attend to a task. The visual arts give students the ability to start developing mental imagery. The arts are often the emotional anchor through topics and content, and lead to student's ability to remember what they have studied.

"Emotion drives attention, attention drives memory; and memory drives learning." - Robert Sylwester

Develop higher order thinking skills, critical and creative: The arts encourage people to think outside the box and often stimulate creativity and promote divergence. Through working with the arts, children are required to develop flexibility, originality, fluency, elaboration, brainstorming, modification, imagery, associative thinking, attribute listing, and metaphorical thinking.

Constructing and interpreting meaning: The arts force the artist to experience authentic problem solving and interpret meaning.

Aesthetics: The arts can be used to create aesthetics in classrooms. People respond to their surroundings and can be more productive in certain surroundings. An aesthetically creative and beautiful environment can increase the productivity and wellbeing of the people in that environment.

"The arts enhance the process of learning. The systems they nourish, which include our sensory, attentional, cognitive, emotional, and motor capabilities are, in fact, the driving forces behind all other learning." - Eric Jensen



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Nov 24-28 (Mon-Fri) **No School** - Conference exchange days and holidays

Dec 2 (Tues) 2:30-6pm: **Book Fair**

Dec 3 & 4 (Wed & Thurs) 2:30-4:30pm: **Book Fair**

Dec 6 (Sat) 12-5pm: **"Celebrating BCSIS" Silent Auction and Talent Show**

Dec 11 (Thurs) 8am-3pm. **Vision & Hearing Screenings**

Dec 12 (Fri) 1:30-3pm. **Africa Club Coffee Hour in the Open Space**

Dec 13 (Sat) 5:00 & 6:30pm. **Spiral Garden in the Open Space**

Dec 22 (Mon) to Jan 6 (Tues) No School - Winter Holidays



News & Notes

Busy times ahead

When we return from Thanksgiving break, we have the book sale, the vision and hearing tests, the “Celebrating BCSIS” Talent Show and Auction, Open Houses for Open Enrollment and the Spiral Garden. Thanks to the many parents who have already signed up to volunteer for these events. We need everyone’s help in order for the events to run smoothly. If you are not already signed up for one of these events, please consider signing up for the book sale which is taking place December 2-4 with set up on December 1. This is a major source of funding to keep the library up to date. Volunteers are needed to set up displays of books, cashier and help students find interesting choices. If you can help, please contact Kael at 303-494-1454 or kael.davis@bvsd.org.

Thank you corner

Thank you to Whole Foods and those participating in the bag program at the WF Basemar location. Whole Foods has generously helped raise and donate a total of \$1200 to BCSIS. This money will go toward purchasing classroom supplies, materials and professional development for our staff. Please keep bringing your own bags—it is good for the environment and Whole Foods will continue to contribute \$0.05 to BCSIS when a customer donates their bag refund.

BCSIS Spiral Garden

Please join us on Saturday, December 13, in the Open Space. The first session begins at 5pm, and the second session begins at 6:30pm.

Come celebrate as we bring our warm light into the darkness of winter. With story, song, and meditative reflection, our children will journey into the spiral where they will find a bowl of shiny crystals reflecting the light. From the center, they will journey outward and place the crystals along the spiral. The whole ceremony is done reverently, accompanied by the music of a single harp. This is a quiet time to reflect and honor each child in his or her journey. Our intent for this celebration of winter is to illuminate our inner light and radiate it outward into the world.

Please look for the flyer in your children’s Monday mail. Fill out the sign up slip for the session you want to attend with the number in your family attending. Return the slip to your classroom or to the office to the manila envelope labeled “Spiral Garden RSVP’s”. Call Kim Roberts, 303-552-4590 or Robin Allegra, 720-291-3046 with any questions.

The Adventures of the Robo Joes, Season 1

Rookie engineers have sprouted up at BCSIS over the last two months! A group of 4th and 5th graders, guided by geekmeister Bob Manthy, prepared for 10 weeks to represent our

school at the science and technology competition run by First Lego League. BCSIS’s team, the Robo Joes, figured out how to build robot parts and program them to simulate climate study with various plastic Lego pieces. The competition, attended by schools statewide, was surprisingly fierce, but the emphasis was on friendly sportsmanship, gracious professionalism, and discovery. No sticky-sweet platitudes, but no chest-thumping either. Light-bulb hats, sprinting Samurai, and an amazing rock’n’roll sound system pumped up the tournament.

Thus inspired, the Robo Joes—where all the “o’s” look like lug nuts and all the members look like junior scientists—had their robots extract ice cores, ride bikes, bury carbon dioxide, construct levees and perform various other tasks. Well, usually. Well, hopefully. Rumor has it the bike riding robot totally missed the bike. (It needed a helmet? A GPS?). And a Type A robot mistakenly performed more than one mission. Our Robo Joes, however, remained undeterred. Even entertained. They modified robotic appendages, tweaked programs, and sent out for pizza.

So thank you to Blue Manthy, Luca Gacy, Caleb Pugmire, Sam Primozich, Joshua Phillip, Lucas Leitz, Isaac Nagel-Brice, Dason Jacob and Micah Dombrower for comprising our first ever Lego League robotics team under the outstanding auspices of Engineer Bob. Additional thanks to Phil for lending Terry’s laptops (uh, I assume with Terry’s ok), and to Sonja Toutenhoofd for organizing additional care and feeding of our Joes, and to the many parent volunteers. May next year’s Lego challenge serve half as well to engage our kids in research, problem-solving and engineering with such teamwork. Any aspiring 9 and 10 year old Joes and Josephines are welcome. – Laura Dombrower

Africa Club Coffee Hour

Friday, December 12th, 1:30-3pm in the Open Space. Africa Club will provide the coffee, tea, card-making and doll-making activities for the children. Please bring a baked item to share, relax, socialize with the community prior to the holiday break. Bay Roberts and Patti Gilbert will be showing a short film about the Rock Foundation, our sister school in Uganda. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

The Lost and Found

Last week a High Peaks mother spent 30 minutes circling the school grounds, classrooms, and Lost and Found for her son’s black coat. She was exasperated and her kindergartner was in tears. It is possible that some parents have been “shopping” from the Lost and Found prior to the holiday break and the last day of the academic year. In years past, a great deal of quality unclaimed items have been available to claim prior to being donated to local charitable organizations. Please resist the temptation to shop prior to the year’s end and allow the community to claim their lost items. Thanks! - The Lost and Found Fairies