

From the Principal's Desk...

On behalf of the teachers and staff at Douglass Elementary School, I'd like to wish you all a Happy New Year, with the hopes that 2010 holds happiness and success for our students, parents, and staff!

As we begin the new year, our teachers are excited to implement new technology in their daily instruction, thanks to the support and underwriting of our PTO and from the voters support of technology bonds. We have purchased new digital projectors for classrooms to allow teachers to prepare classroom presentations.

To complement the projectors, we also purchased document cameras – the next generation of overhead projectors! Now, teachers don't have to run down to the copy machine to make transparencies....all you need is the book you're using with kids, the math textbook, or even the materials for a science experiment. The document camera then projects to the screen in full color!

Thanks to the support of PTO, we were able to purchase carts to safely house these items, plus the laptop computer and other teaching materials. We are grateful to be able to get to work, for the benefit of our students! One of the strategies that improves student achievement for boys and girls is making teaching and learning visual – this technology neatly complements our school-wide work this year.

I am also pleased to announce to you all some wonderful news about our school. The Colorado Department of Education has nominated Douglass Elementary School for the 2010 Blue Ribbon Award from the U.S. Department of Education! A team of teachers is working with me to complete the application and submit it in February. We will learn the results in the fall of 2010! It is an enormous honor to be nominated – only five schools in Colorado (both public and private) will be considered. This is a tribute to Douglass' long tradition of academic excellence – the quality of teaching – the involvement of parents – the achievement of our students. We haven't won the award yet, but I extend my congratulations to you all for this nomination!

I believe that with quality teaching, effective parent involvement, a positive school culture, and leadership at the school and district level, a superior school results. We have the elements in place to continue excellence at Douglass. I often hear questions from parents about what that involvement can look like, and how best parents can impact the education of their students. The teachers and I have spent time discussing the most effective ways for parents to be involved, and also discussed some norms for communication.

For example, teachers expect each other to communicate sooner rather than later with parents, and listen to concerns with a frame of positive intent. We also want to be as proactive possible, anticipating concerns and questions and providing information to families with as much advance notice as possible.

In return, we created a list of involvement and communication requests for families to take note of. I've put this document in the newsletter this month. We believe that working

together, we can make this year and every year a successful experience at Douglass Elementary.

I look forward to working together in 2010 and beyond, for the ultimate benefit of our kids.

Your principal,
Jon Wolfer