

From the principal's desk....

As we enter our Thanksgiving Vacation, I wish you and your family a Happy Thanksgiving, and I hope that you gain rest and comfort from family and friends this week. As a reminder, there is no school from November 21 through 29; we return to school on Monday, November 30!

I am thankful to so many people at Douglass Elementary – the exceptional teachers who care for our students every day; the office staff who make our teachers and my job easier; the support staff who work hand-in-hand with students and teachers for our kids; our parents who volunteer hundreds of hours in classrooms, PTO, and SIT committees; and for our wonderful kids who make it a pleasure to come to work every day. For these and many other things, I am grateful this Thanksgiving 2009!

Earlier this month, we e-mailed a separate newsletter article called “Helping Boys and Girls Learn.” If you missed it, look on Douglass’s web site - <http://bvsd.org/schools/douglass> - and click on the Principal’s Page link. I keep articles of interest there for your perusal.

I’ve also added an article specific to girls this month. As we developed our school-wide goals this year around effective instructional strategies for boys and girls, we heard over and over that we do not want to short-change the education of girls in any way at Douglass Elementary School. To that end, our goals are written to increase the achievement of boys in reading and writing while maintaining the high achievement of girls.

National studies have indicated a concern about the achievement of girls in mathematics and science. While girls at Douglass achieve at similar levels as boys, gaps tend to appear as girls enter high school. There are also much fewer girls enrolled in mathematics, computer science, and engineering courses in college.

An article titled “Teaching Girls to Tinker,” published last week in *Education Week*, suggests that we parents and teachers tend to not encourage girls to struggle with math – and even do things like repair broken things at home. Perhaps we rescue girls as they struggle with concepts more often than boys, telling boys to work things through while giving a bit more aid unconsciously.

Check that article out on my Principal’s Page – I’d love to hear your feedback.

Today, your students should receive their 1st Trimester Report Card. At Wednesday’s Coffee & Conversation, we discussed the important information that these reports share with families, indicating the progress your child is making towards the end-of-year standards in their grade level. The district’s web site has a link - <http://bvsd.org/reportcards/Documents/rcTopFivePoints.pdf> - to additional information. As always, be sure to speak to your child’s teacher with any questions about this document.

On behalf of the faculty and staff at Douglass Elementary School, I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving!

Your principal,
Jon Wolfer