

### *From the principal's desk...*

Welcome back to school! This is our first newsletter of the 2010-2011 school year. We publish every other week, and I encourage you to take note of all the upcoming events and important information that follows. We publish the newsletter mainly on-line – emailing to all families and posted on our web site – so as to limit our printing and paper expenses, but we do post the current copy of the newsletter in the hallway outside the main office and have some copies available in the office for families who don't have email access.

I'm grateful for the tremendous turnout this week at Back To School Night, a chance to meet our new teachers and for you to get acquainted with your child's teachers. I didn't take the time in my remarks on Tuesday to share with you some information about planning for our school bond improvement project or about a special grant our district and our school received this month.

First, our school is earmarked for \$3.4 million for playground and building improvement projects as a result of the passage of the 2006 bond election. Our playground and field construction was completed last summer. Now, a committee of parents, teachers, community members, and architects has met twice to advise district planners on our needs for the remaining \$2.5 million of building improvements.

You can check the status of our Design Advisory Team (DAT) and get additional information on the specific projects being planned at <http://bvsd.org/bondproject/schools/Pages/douglass.aspx>. I'll also update you as we complete planning. The DAT's work ends in early October; the architect will complete plans by early January, which will then be sent out for bid. Construction should begin in late May 2011.

Second, Douglass Elementary will see the benefit from recent federal legislation. Boulder Valley School District has received \$5.4 million to be spent over the next two years. These dollars will be allocated to schools to reduce class size and reverse some of the state-wide budget cuts that all schools experienced this past spring. Specifically, teachers were allocated to schools on a higher class size ratio.

Our school will receive enough money to return to four rounds of Kindergarten – we had lost one round in early August because of the class size ratio increase that, compared to our actual enrollment, led the district to decrease the number of Kindergarten classes. We will also be able to provide additional special education support and fund some additional literacy and math tutors.

One important note about these funds – they are “one-time only” funds and will expire in September 2012. So we will benefit in the short term, but they are not ongoing beyond that date.

That's the encouraging news as we start school this year. However, state-wide, we are concerned about the future funding for public schools. As we move into the month of September, look for information coming from our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) regarding the ways you can support our students and teachers at Douglass Elementary. There are two main ways to support our school financially – through the use of King Soopers gift cards – 5% of the money you load on to these cards goes directly to our PTO – and the Dedication to Education campaign. Look for more information in this month's newsletter. In this time of budget shortfalls statewide and in the Boulder Valley School District, the support of our community will be critical this year.

Finally, one of our duties at Douglass is to provide a safe learning environment for students and staff. To that end, we are required to practice various safety drills on a regular basis. In order to minimize the impact on classrooms, we will do a series of safety drills this Monday morning – a lockdown and lockout drill in the event of danger in the neighborhood, a tornado drill, and our monthly fire drill. These drills will take 30 to 45 minutes to complete, but are important learning experiences for our students and staff so that we know what to do if the unlikely does come to pass.

Thank you all for a great start to the school year!

Your principal,  
Jon Wolfer