

From the Principal's Desk...

Dear families,

Budget challenges statewide have been in the news again in recent weeks, and I want you to know how that news impacts us at Douglass and in Boulder Valley School District.

The good news is that because you and other Boulder Valley voters overwhelmingly passed the 3A mill levy last November, any cuts from the state this year are mitigated by \$12.5 million of cushion. (the remaining \$12.5 million goes to establishing new preschool programs, including one at Douglass beginning in the fall of 2012, and staff salaries). If the governor's current recommendation of over \$300 million in statewide cuts to K-12 education is passed by the legislature, then Boulder Valley's share of the cuts is also approximately \$12.5 million. So thanks to our voters, we will not see additional budget impacts due to the statewide budget cuts.

We will still have the same shortfall this fall as we did last fall – approximately \$37,000. However, we have already received an allocation from the district's spring collection of 3A mill levy monies which will cover that reduction. Last year, your generosity in supporting the PTO's spring Laps for Literacy covered that reduction. We do not need to ask for additional support from PTO this year, again, thanks to the voters in Boulder Valley.

If you'd like to learn more about the challenges that we face in public education, there are two budget forums hosted by Superintendent Chris King and Chief Financial Officer Bill Sutter. At these events, our Superintendent will get your feedback on the development of the district's budget this spring, as well as share details about the decisions being made at the state level. Those forums will be held at Fairview High School (1515 Greenbriar Blvd., Boulder) on Monday, March 7 from 6:00-8:00 p.m., and at the Lafayette Public Library (775 W. Baseline Rd., Lafayette) on Tuesday, March 8 from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Dr. King attended one of our faculty meetings in February to share similar information, which was clear and informative – I hope you can attend one of those meetings.

You may also have heard district-wide discussion about “Collaboration Time”, an initiative that is really not new to education, but reflects good instructional practice. When teachers see students struggling, the first thing they do is collaborate with their teammates to brainstorm ideas and solutions. Our teachers do this during their team planning time, and we have also met in after school faculty meetings.

Many schools are adopting a new schedule this fall that sets aside more time for teachers to meet in this fashion. Some schools will start school an hour later every Wednesday, while some will dismiss students one hour earlier, also on Wednesdays. At Douglass this fall, we are not changing our schedule – our teachers will continue to meet in their regular team meetings, and we will also meet after school as a whole staff to explore the state's new curriculum. For example, our grade level teams look forward to more time allotted to talking to the grade level above and below to ensure that our curriculum is cleanly aligned as kids move to the next grade. We will accomplish this without impacting family schedules.

See you all at Family Fun Night!

Your principal,
Jon Wolfer