

*From the principal's desk...*

**Douglass Elementary is a National Blue Ribbon School!** We are so proud of this honor from the U.S. Department of Education. What a tribute this is to the dedication of our teachers, the hard work of our students, and the commitment of families to making this one of the best schools in the country. As I told the students in our school assembly yesterday, there are very few kids in the country that can say they go to a Blue Ribbon School. Mr. Rich Cendali and I will accept the award in Washington, D.C., in November.

In order to qualify for this honor, we needed to have results in the top 10% of the state in reading and math for the past five years. Last December, the Colorado Department of Education nominated Douglass for this honor – only the third Boulder Valley School to have been so honored, and one of just six honored in the state this year.

Those results are no accident. They are the culmination of ***outstanding teaching*** here at Douglass Elementary by a veteran, caring staff. The more we learn about what makes a school great, the more we understand that great teachers make great schools. And the teachers at Douglass make awards like the Blue Ribbon Award a reality. Our teachers aren't working towards this award intentionally – but their care for our kids transcends test scores. They care about instilling a love for learning, which sets kids on the path towards great success.

Top results also come from ***kids who work hard every day*** at school and do their personal best. It's not just high results, but it's a caring community of learners that our kids create every day. They come from families that are committed to a great school and show that support in many ways.

We are a ***fortunate community*** here at Douglass. We faced the threat of significant budget cuts this past spring, and our parent community stepped forward to absorb nearly \$30,000 in cuts. Had our parents not been so generous through PTO and our major fundraisers last year – the Dedication to Education, King Soopers gift cards, and the Jog-a-Thon – we would have been forced to reduce our support of literacy tutors and not been able to provide the small-group literacy instruction that our teachers consider the backbone of our reading and writing success.

We face more economic challenges in the coming months as well. The state's budget forecast is not promising, and we could face another round of cuts over and above what we experienced this past spring. Please remember – that \$30,000 cut is permanent to our budget – that will be our starting point as plan for 2011-2012. There are several items on this November's ballot whose outcome is uncertain, but the impact of which will be significant if they pass or if they fail.

That uncertainty and the overwhelmingly evident success of our school – recognized by 5280 Magazine as one of the top schools in the metro area just a couple of weeks ago as well – is why your continued support of our PTO is so important. We don't know what the district and state budgets will look like. But your continued support of our school is important – this year, next year, and for your students in the future.

Proud to be your child's principal,

Jon Wolfer

