

## Welcome Back!

August 15, 2011

Dear Parents,



Welcome to a new school year. I'm thrilled to be starting my ninth year working with the wonderful students and families here at Douglass. I spent the summer months catching up with friends and spending quality time with family: my two daughters, Cadence and Madison; and my husband, Brian. As is typical of my summer months, I had the opportunity to catch up on some personal reading. I highly recommend Run, a fictional tale by Ann Patchet - full of lots of symbolism and thought-provoking ideas about family, race, politics, and more. I enjoyed two young adult fiction books that I would also recommend to adults. The first is The Book Thief, a fictional tale about the Holocaust, using "Death" as the narrator of the story (I know, sounds gruesome, but it was brilliantly written and you won't be able to put it down!). I also just finished The Hunger Games, the first book in a trilogy by Suzanne Collins. I can't wait to get to the bookstore to pick up the second and third books in this series. These are books that are not yet appropriate for your fourth grade reader...but may be good reading in the not-so-far-off future of middle school. 😊

I want to thank you for helping to get your child off to a good start at school. We had a busy and fun day together. The first days are always fun, but with the construction taking place all around us, it was doubly exciting!! I am really looking forward to getting to know you and your special child this year - we're going to have a wonderful year together.

If you have not done so yet, please be sure to visit our school website. The website is <http://www.bvsd.org/schools/douglass/Pages/home.aspx>. It is updated regularly, and is a great resource for information. There are several forms that need to be printed, completed and returned to school as soon as possible. The **transportation form** is particularly important as we do several field trips with parent transport rather than by bus. With the additional fees and requirements for drivers, we will assess whether this practice is still an option for this school year. I'll have a sign up at Back to School night where you can let me know if you're interested.

I have a personal website for our classroom, which can also be accessed via the school website. Follow the "teacher" link, and find my name. Or you can access it directly at [www.bvsd.org/schools/douglass/teachers/taht/default.aspx](http://www.bvsd.org/schools/douglass/teachers/taht/default.aspx). It will also be updated regularly, and is a great location to find updated information about homework, projects, calendars and due dates, field trips, forms, school photos, etc. I hope you will check it out and use it throughout the school year.

**Back to School Night, Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 p.m.** I look forward to answering your questions, and providing you an overview of the year. Since it is still a week away, below is some important info to help get your child off to a good start.

**Homework:** Helping your child to establish a consistent time and a quiet place for homework is very helpful. Also helpful is designating a location for where items are "housed" (i.e. when an assignment is complete, where does it go? Where does the backpack go?) These practices will help to create and encourage organizational habits for your child. The fourth grade expectation is that each child may spend up to 40 minutes with homework each night. About twenty minutes of this time should be devoted to reading (with a parent is fine and encouraged.) **This is the most important homework assignment for your child.** Typically math may require 10-15 minutes a night. The remaining 10 minutes could be used for ongoing projects, practicing spelling words (high frequency words), and learning math facts (addition, subtraction, multiplication).

**Time for Kids:** Time for Kids (TFK) is a weekly magazine that covers global current events, science topics, and many other interesting articles for students. I will typically use this as a reading resource in class, and it will then come home with your child to be used as he/she wishes.

**Snacks and Birthdays:** I encourage the students to bring a snack each day and ask that it be nutritious. Good suggestions are fruit, nuts, crackers, cheese, bagels, etc. Please do not send candy, cookies, or chips for snacks. I appreciate your help.

**Birthday celebrations** will be conducted in a communal style, once per trimester. A schedule and sign up for help will be available at Back to School Night.

**Friday Folders:** Friday folders will come home each Friday with your child. Please review the work in the folders with your child and initial the Friday Folder Reflection (FFR) sheet each week, returning it with your child on Mondays. The FFR sheet will detail your child's perception of celebrations and challenges regarding his/her work. Permission slips, order forms, etc. may be returned in the folders.

**Assignment Notebook:** Most of the students used an ANB (assignment notebook) in third grade. During the first several weeks of school I will be initialing the assignment notebook most nights and ask that you initial it as well. This helps us to keep track of your child's homework progress. Students are to record all assignments daily, and to put a check mark next to each assignment after it is completed. The ANB is a good way to keep communication lines open between parent and teacher, as is the Friday folder. You are also welcome to call or e-mail me. My phone number and e-mail address are:

I would love to have your e-mail address as this is a great way to communicate, and save paper for Friday Letters. It's easiest if you email me at [linda.taht@bvsd.org](mailto:linda.taht@bvsd.org), with the subject "add to newsletters". You can also complete the form at the end of this letter and return it with your child.

**Eldorado Spring Water:** I encourage your child to bring a water bottle for use in class. I will have a water supply delivered monthly which the kids can use to refill their bottles in the room. Keeping hydrated will help your child to stay concentrated and to further enhance his/her learning.

**Book Clubs:** Periodically I'll send home Scholastic book orders in Friday folders. These book clubs often have great titles at wonderfully low prices. This program can be a great motivator for developing a love for reading. Of course, the library is a great motivator too. I'll be looking for a parent-volunteer to handle the finances and ordering of the books. (This is a great way to help out if you are unable to come in to our classroom.) For your convenience, an on-line ordering system is set up.

**SIGN UP** at [www.Scholastic.com/bookclubs](http://www.Scholastic.com/bookclubs) . On the parent page, click the "Don't have a User Name and Password?" link, then register for your own username and password. When prompted, enter the one-time Class Activation Code GK7D3. This code ensures that your order is sent to me. This information is also posted on our classroom website.

Please detach & return the following information to school as soon as possible.

-----  
**Phone Tree:** Please indicate which parent(s) and phone numbers you'd prefer to have listed on our class phone tree. I will create a tree based on the information you provide me (below) and will send a final copy home in Friday folders.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
best # to reach you

**E-mail (complete only if you have not e-mailed me directly):** We'd like to receive Friday Newsletters via e-mail. The best address(es) to use:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail address

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_