



August 28, 2011

## Mrs. Taht's Fourth Grade Newsflash



It was a pleasure to see you at our **Back to School Night** on Tuesday. Thank you for attending. If you were unable to make it, please visit our classroom website for information (class schedules, year-long curriculum, B2S Night PowerPoint and information, etc.). Also, if anyone has difficulty obtaining copies from our website, please let me know. Our class website is:

<http://bvsd.org/schools/douglass/teachers/taht/default.aspx> I hope you'll find it useful.



### Next three weeks at a glance...

- 8/29 Friday Folder Due
- 8/30 Back to School Pizza Party 5:30
- 8/31 DEAR Contract Due  
Field Trip Permission Slip Due
- 9/1 No School for 4<sup>th</sup> graders
- 9/2 No School
- 9/5 Labor Day - No School
- 9/6 DAM Field Trip 9-1:30
- 9/7 Individual School Picture
- 9/9 DEAR Contract Due
- 9/12 Book Orders Due
- 9/12 Friday Folder Due
- 9/16 DEAR Contract Due



In fourth grade, we value field trips as an integral part of our curriculum. We look for multiple ways to supplement and enhance our students' learning, and to go above and beyond the curriculum. Because we put great value in the enrichment of our students' learning through "the arts", many of our field trips will enhance our students' cultural and artistic learning. With that said, our **first field trip will be to the Denver Art Museum on September 6<sup>th</sup>**. We will participate in their Marvelous Mud Tour (clay sculpture). A permission slip will come home on Monday with your child. Please sign and return it ASAP. Buses will be used for this trip. If you'd like to be one of two chaperones for our class, please indicate this on the permission slip. Thank you!



Our classroom phone tree will not be needed this year. The new "School Messenger" system will be able to send out any emergency messages school-wide.

## Check out our new learning goals....

Reading	DEAR – continue to practice filling out our weekly logs, contracts, and the Accelerated Reader (AR) program Coming in September: small group fantasy books to focus on summarizing, questioning, predictions, vocabulary, and literary elements of similes and metaphors
Writing	Decorating Writer’s Notebooks and planting new “seeds”: ideas from our own life experiences and using mentor texts as models
Language	Spelling = high frequency word lists will come home in Friday folders on 8/31 – volunteers will begin testing 9/9 Small group spelling instruction begins in September – concentration of spelling patterns and rules
Math (4 <sup>th</sup> gr)	Review of Addition & Subtraction, rounding and estimation Speed tests = addition facts (ask your child which strategy he/she is working on)
Science	Properties of water Water Cycle

**Classroom Volunteers**...watch for a separate email pertaining to your designated area of assistance in the classroom (the email will have start date and other details). Most positions will begin after Labor Day, September 6<sup>th</sup>. **Below is a list of areas we could still use some help with. Send me a note via email if you're interested.**

**Trimester 2 B-day party organizer** (Nov 19-Mar 31/7 students): March 23

**Writing helper:** Tuesday, Wednesday 10:15-10:45

**Math helper:** Monday, Tuesday 12:45-1:30

**Class Photographer:** can be done at home

Throughout the first two weeks of school, I have been collecting data to help me know and understand your child's unique and personal learning needs/style. I am assessing: writing qualities, and skills in spelling, reading, and math, as well as speaking and listening skills. This Thursday, 9/1, I will not ask your child to come in for an appointment. Instead, the teachers will work as a fourth grade team, along with our support staff, to evaluate these various assessments, and to collaborate on the best practices to utilize in order to meet each child's individualized needs. *Your fourth grader will not attend school on 9/1, 9/2, or 9/5.*

I see the education of your child as a "triangle" - you, your child, and I are all vertices of the triangle, and we all need to be working well together and "on the same page". In October, we will schedule a conference to include parents, teachers, and students. These conferences are oriented to "goal setting" meetings. I enjoy these conferences, as it is a wonderful opportunity for all three important corners of the triangle to come together to share ideas, and to all hear the same things. I use the month of September to try to get to know your child better, and to help him/her prepare for these conferences. I will send home a "questionnaire" for you to complete in a few weeks (via email). Your child will complete something similar in school. And together, we will all design meaningful and attainable goals for our fourth grade year together.

## **DEAR and AR**

Two acronyms that I hope you will become very familiar with. **DEAR (Drop Everything And Read)** is an important component to our reading program. The book(s) used during this time should always be at an independent ("just right") reading level for a child. If he/she is choosing a "just right book", he/she can easily explain the gist of the story, will know the important characters and setting, and can tell you an important or exciting or a favorite part of the story. Your child is not reading a "just right book" if he/she cannot do one of the above and/or if he/she is struggling with more than a handful (five) of words on any given page.

**AR (Accelerated Reader)** is the computer program purchased by our PTO which helps us monitor your child's independent reading. I am still in the process of learning all of the fabulous functions involved with this program, and I am adapting new ways to use it with your child every day. We are currently awaiting the installation of part of the program (STAR) which will offer a quick assessment, and produce a BL (book level = optimum independent reading level) for your child. When I have that available, I will forward the information home to you as well. Thank you for your questions, and your patience, as I figure out the best way to approve and share your child's reading level, record each child's reading in a systematic way, and most importantly, help your child to discover or continue to foster his/her love for reading! 😊