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The Mesa Messenger

January 2009

**Special Interest
Articles:**

- Message from the Principal
- Registration of Mesa Kindergarteners
- Brain Storm: Exploring Healthy Approaches for Enhancing Students' Social and Academic Development
- Thriving During the Elementary Years: The Magic of Structured Activity Rewards

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Message from the Principal

Dear Mesa Families,

Every five years, individual schools host a School Site Review Team for two days. Schools are required to do this to maintain their accreditation with the Colorado Department of Education. On January 22nd and 23rd, Mesa hosted a site review team of seven professionals (administrators, teachers, and consultants). This team visited with teachers, parents, and students, asking questions and observing teaching and learning.

This was a valuable process. As an Excellent School with a High

Growth Rating, accreditation is not an issue. More importantly, the two days provided us with an opportunity to discuss our practices and seek feedback on ways in which we might improve. We all want continuous improvement. At the end of the process, the team will provide a report which will include commendations and recommendations. I will share that report with our community, when it's completed.

We are also preparing for Parent Teacher Conferences (see information in newsletter about dates and times). For parents, this is a

unique time in which you can ask questions, learn about your child's progress, and share important information with the teacher. Many of you communicate with your child's teacher on a regular basis, but I still encourage you to email the teacher in advance, if you have specific questions you'd like to address in the conference. We want to do what we can to plan effective and efficient conferences.

Thanks for your time in reading.

Go Mustangs!

Josh

PE Class News

Jump Rope for Heart is quickly approaching and will take place the week before Valentine's Day on



February 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th. Be looking for more information to follow in your child's Friday Folder. We will also be doing an afterschool Jump Rope Clinic that will take place on Mondays and Wednesdays. The dates for this program will be January 26th and 28th and February 2nd and 4th. The clinics run from 3:00-4:00pm in the gym. Any

K-5 student interested can participate. Students will be able to practice new tricks and work on short rope skills. I will also be selling jump ropes again this year. They range from \$2.00 to \$5.00, and proceeds go to the PE Department. If you have any questions, you can email me at jacy.bruno@bvsd.org

~ Jacy Bruno

Counseling Center

Every month I will be addressing a mental health topic that hopefully answers some questions that both parents and teachers ponder. I hope this information is helpful to you.

Supporting Children's Mental Health: Tips for Parents and Educators

1. Create a sense of belonging: Feeling connected and welcomed at school and at home are essential to building a positive identity and a sense of trust.
2. Promote resilience: Everyone faces adversity in life. Connectedness, competency, and helping others can help foster resilience.
3. Develop competencies: When children feel successful at something, whether it's academic or an individual talent, they begin to see that they can overcome challenges and accomplish goals through their actions.
4. Ensure a positive, safe environment: Every student should feel safe and respected at school and at home. Identifying easy-to-understand rules and fair consequences allows children to feel safe. Teach children to work together to prevent bullying and promote respect, responsibility, and kindness to one another. "Catch" children being successful.
5. Encourage helping others: Helping others reinforces that you are part of a community, and it helps children see that they are an agent of change. This builds a positive self concept.
6. Encourage good physical health: Good physical health supports good mental health. Healthy eating habits, good exercise, and adequate sleep protect kids against the stress of tough situations. Regular exercise also decreases negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, and depression.
7. Know the signs and symptoms and help for mental health problems: Break down the stigma surrounding mental health and know that there are people at school and in the community who can answer questions and help guide you in the right direction to support your children.



SOURCE: Communiqué June 2008, a newspaper published by the National Association of School Psychologists

*~ Debora L. Price
School Psychologist
Mesa, Coal Creek,
Monarch K-8, and
Superior*

Share-A-Gift Thank You

Thanks to the participation of Mesa and other Boulder Valley Schools, Share-a-Gift, a non-profit, non-denominational organization, collected many toys and bikes to share with less fortunate children within the

Boulder Valley School District. This year, Share-a-Gift was able to help 600 families representing 1400 children during the holiday season. This would not be possible without the help of

schools, which are the largest source of used toys for distribution. Thanks again for supporting this worthwhile program!

~ Cathy Conery



Pony Express Fundraiser

The Pony Express is returning to Mesa to deliver all your special Valentines! This fundraiser is sponsored by Mesa K-Care and Kindergarten students. Last year we gave the money to Pennies for Patients in collaboration with the Student Council.

Please plan on mailing lots of cards! Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, students, friends, staff members, and teachers ... anyone can send cards for 5 cents each.



The Pony Express Station is set up outside the K-Care classroom and is run on the honor system.

Just place your money in the clear plastic ballot box and your cards in the appropriate classroom bag. The Kindergarten children will deliver the mail each day, starting on Monday, February 2nd, and delivering through Friday, February 13th. We CANNOT deliver candy, balloons, or stuffed animals, just items that fit in the individual envelopes.

Thank you and we look forward to delivering your mail!

~ Ruth Chou

Mesa Health Room Scripts

Guidelines for Keeping Your Student Home

The beginning of any infectious illness is usually the time it is most likely to spread to others. This is also the time when your student is probably feeling unable to participate in class. In order to keep everyone healthy, we ask that you observe the following guidelines and keep your student home if he/she exhibits any of the following:

- Fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. Your student should remain home for **24 hours** after symptoms end.
- Colds and respiratory viruses. Keep your student home at the beginning of a cold. When he/she feels better and no longer has a persistent cough, it is permissible to return to

school.

- Strep throat. Your student may return to school after taking antibiotics for **24 hours**.
- Chicken pox. Keep your student home until there are no new lesions and all existing lesions have scabbed over.
- Eye infection. Any eye infection must be treated by a physician before the student returns to school. If antibiotic therapy is prescribed, the student must remain home for at least **24 hours** after treatment has begun and must be free of eye drainage.
- Open sores on skin. All skin lesions must be covered by a bandage or clothing during the school day. Lesions include impetigo, ring worm, scabies, and other fungal,

bacterial, or viral skin infections.

- Generalized skin rash. Any student with an undiagnosed skin rash must be seen by a physician for diagnosis and/or treatment before returning to school with a **note** from the **health care provider**.
- Head lice. Your student may return to school only after treatment with lice shampoo. (Please refer to the October 2008 issue of *The Mesa Messenger* for additional information on head lice.)

In addition to these guidelines, a student will be sent home from school if he/she has a temperature of 101°F or more.

SOURCE: BVSD School Health Program

Donations Still Needed

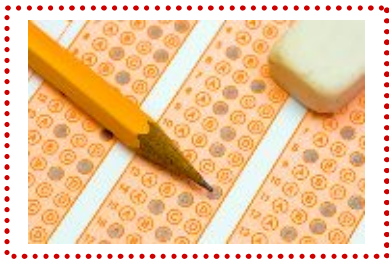
If your family has extra jeans, athletic pants, or socks that your children have outgrown, the Mesa Health Room can use them! **Older children's' sizes** are especially needed. Thank you!



March CSAP Tests are Coming!

The CSAP tests begin on February 17th with 3rd Grade Reading.

CSAP testing will resume on Monday, March 2nd. March CSAP testing will include two sessions each of Math and Writing for 3rd grade students. 5th graders will also begin on Monday, March 2nd, with three sessions of Math followed by three sessions each of Reading, Writing, and Science. 4th graders begin their CSAP tests on Tuesday, March 3rd, with three sessions each of Reading, Writing, and Math. Parents of students in CSAP grades will receive more information from the Principal about the Reading, Writing, Math, and Science tests. *Parents, please*



plan ahead so that we maximize attendance on CSAP days!

The district expects to receive the 3rd grade Reading results in early May. CSAP results from all March testing will arrive in late August. Parents will receive the CSAP reading results in May directly from the school, while the August results will be sent via US mail from the BVSD Education Center. Please make sure that an accurate mailing address is on file at the school to ensure delivery of CSAP results.

CSAP results for the school are first reported in late July or early August. These results are then used in calculating a school accountability report for publication in late fall. While these tests are important, they are only one way in which we measure our students' achievement and the success of our school. Teachers' daily observations tell us more about the progress that each child is making. CSAP tests and other external tests are an additional way of measuring achievement that can offer information about our progress and areas to improve.

Registration of Mesa Kindergarteners for 2009-2010

We are now encouraging and inviting all Mesa neighborhood families to **enroll online** at <http://mab.bvsd.org/>

Before you begin, please be sure you have the following information available:

- Demographic information for your student, parent/guardians, and other household members
- Emergency contacts information, including health care provider contact information
- Educational history for student
- Health information for student
- Special needs information for student
- Immunization records (signed by the health care provider)

Age Requirements:

- Kindergarten students must be

5 years old on or before September 30th of the enrollment year

If you need access to a computer and/or printer, click [here](#) for a list of library locations and hours.

Following successful completion of the online enrollment application, bring your receipt and all supporting documentation to the



Mesa Office.

Open Enrollment applicants: If your student has been offered, and you have accepted, a seat through the open enrollment process, please continue the enrollment process by completing the Student Enrollment Online form at <http://mab.bvsd.org/>.

Important Note: our annual **Kindergarten Orientation** is scheduled for Saturday, April 18th, from 10-11:30am. Keep watching the Mesa web site for orientation updates!

Please contact the Student Enrollment Office at enrollment.helpdesk@bvsd.org or (303) 447-5247 if you have questions regarding the enrollment process.

TAG Talk

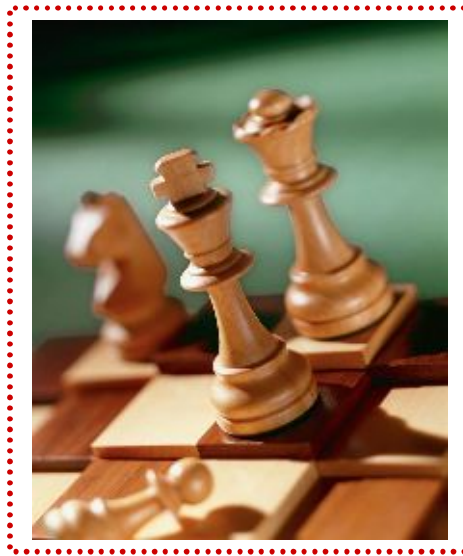
Our latest **Chess League Team** match took place Thursday, January 8th, against Flatirons Elementary. We had a fantastic turnout of students and agreed to count thirteen boards for scores, as opposed to the usual top four boards only. (Hurrah! We are big fans of scoring as many boards as possible, so that as many students as possible can contribute to the overall results.) Out of 26 games, Mesa won 17, Flatirons won 6, and 3 games were draws. Thus, Mesa won the match by a score of 18.5 to 7.5. Our league team is doing very well, and everyone seems to be having fun.

We continue to be very impressed with how the League Team members are doing, top board to bottom board! In addition to our seasoned veterans playing another solid match, the Flatirons match was a chance for some junior players to meet competition that “counted” by playing a scoring board. Ages of the League Team players run, mostly, from third through fifth grades. Undaunted by the pressure, they all came through with solid performances. Once again, fantastic work all around!

At the Monday, January 12th morning assembly, in order to celebrate their success so far, the League Team members presented Mr. Baldner with a special Mesa Chess League Team T-shirt. Now

that he is an official member, anyone care to challenge him to a match?

Regular Chess Club started on Tuesday, January 13th, in the Library after school. We had a turnout of 59 kids and will continue on Tuesdays from now until Spring Break. The cost is \$12.00, and scholarships are available. Please see Judy Bullert in the Mesa Office if you need a scholarship. We will include instruction in the Tuesday sessions, along with the “Royal Court” where the Princesses and Princes of Mesa Chess will eventually be “crowned” after a certain number of club meetings that are attended. Everyone has the possibility to become a member of the Royal Court.



We are beginning the organization of our enrichment program, **Junior Great Books**, at Mesa. It will run through the spring months, interspersed among all the other activities at Mesa. A parent volunteer meets with small grade-level groups of students, Grades 2-5, and engages in a shared common reading each week and shared inquiry about the meaning of the reading. Training is provided for new volunteers (and, if desired, returning volunteers).

The cost is \$18.00, which covers the book, and scholarships are provided per request through Judy Bullert in the Mesa Office. Usually the groups meet during the school day, sometimes during lunch, but the timing depends upon the teachers’, parents’, and students’ needs. Junior Great Books is open to all students, but the expectation is that participants will read at grade level or above. Registration forms will be sent home, electronically, from the grade-level, classroom teachers. Please be sure to read your teacher’s latest newsletter and return the form to the classroom teacher by Monday, January 26th.

Any questions? Please contact Betsy Puls, betsy.puls@bvsd.org, (303) 494-4704, or Adrienne Lee, Parent Volunteer Coordinator, at adrienne.lee@gmail.com, (303) 494-4476.

~ Betsy Puls

Who Let the Dogs Out on the School Grounds?

Parents are reminded that Mesa has a policy regarding dogs visiting the school and in the classroom:

- *Dogs are not allowed in the building unless they are for show-and-tell or other special occasions.*
- *Dogs on the school grounds should be on a leash, supervised*

by an adult and kept away from school doors

Compliance with this policy will ensure the safety and protection of every child.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact the principal, Mr. Baldner, in the Mesa Office.



Happenings

February 2nd
Pony Express Begins

February 2nd
Parent-Teacher Conferences,
3:30-6:50pm

February 3rd
PTO, 6:15pm

February 4th
Parent-Teacher Conferences,
3:30-6:50pm

February 8th
Cub Scout Pack 171 Pinewood
Derby, 1:00-5:00pm

February 9th
All School Assembly, 8:45am

February 9th
Jump Rope for Heart Begins

February 10th
Parent-Teacher Conferences,
3:30-6:50pm

February 12th
Parent-Teacher Conferences,
3:30-6:50pm

February 12th
Love & Logic Begins, 6:30pm

February 13th
Valentine Parties, 2:00pm

February 16th
No School, Presidents' Day



February 17th
3rd Grade CSAP (Reading)

February 19th
End of 2nd Trimester

February 23rd
Professional Development Day, No
School for Students

February 27th
Report cards go home.

March 2nd
All School Assembly, 8:45am

March 2nd
3rd Grade CSAP (Math and
Writing)

March 2nd
5th Grade CSAP (Math, Reading,
Writing, and Science)

March 3rd
4th Grade CSAP (Reading, Writing,
and Math)

Music Notes

The M&M's are working very hard on our musical, *Seussical, Jr!* We will have a very important dress rehearsal on **Sunday, March 1st**. It is the only time we will have to practice with lights, costumes, and sets before our performances the following

week. Performance dates are:

- Wednesday, March 4th, 5K
- Thursday, March 5th, 5G
- Friday, March 6th, 5K

~ Sarah Knoebel



PEN Events

Dr. Michael Bradley ~ acclaimed national speaker and author of several books, including *Yes, Your Teen is Crazy!* ~ will be in Boulder on February 27th & 28th:

- Reception and Presentation: "When Things Get Crazy with Your Teen: The Why, the How, and What to do NOW!" ~ Friday, February 27th ~ 6-10pm ~ Unity Church, 2855 Folsom St., Boulder
Tickets: \$25 before January 31st, \$35 prior to event, \$45 at the door
- "For Crazy Parents of Crazy Teens: Solving Problems While Loving Your Child" Workshop ~ Saturday, February 28th ~ 10am-noon ~ September School, 1902 Walnut St., Boulder
Tickets: \$45 before January 31st, \$60 by February 27th

Please call (303) 443-9933 for details.

Brain Storm: Exploring Healthy Approaches for Enhancing Students' Social and Academic Development

Does your child contend with AD/HD, behavior issues, autism spectrum disorders, emotional concerns, social challenges, or learning disabilities?

Parents and teachers have been asking for more options, so BVSD has assembled a **free** panel comprised of experts in their field:

- **Dr. Debby Hamilton**, Holistic Pediatrician
- **Dianne Koehler**, Nutritionist/Herbalist
- **Vicki Hunnicut**, founder of EatLocalColorado.org
- **Mary Capone**, author of *The Gluten-Free Gourmet Italian Cookbook*

Please join us on Tuesday, **April 14th, 6-8pm**, at the BVSD Education Center, 6500 Arapahoe Road, in Boulder. We will discuss ways that we can improve our children's health so they can learn and grow! Research demonstrates a strong connection between healthy bodies and healthy minds. The panel does not require preregistration, and light refreshments will be served.

For more information about this event, please contact Anna Stewart, Parent Professional Partnership, Parent Liaison, at (303) 245-5918 or anna.stewart@bvsd.org

~ Anna Stewart



PTO Corner

We hope you all had a safe and wonderful Winter Break! The PTO is back in action. We had a nice visit from Terry Gillach, Principal of Southern Hills Middle School, at our January meeting. Thank you to the new parents who joined us at that meeting and for volunteering to help out with upcoming events!

PTO Budget

Grandrabbits Bunny Bucks: The PTO made over \$1,000 from Grandrabbits. Thank you to all Mesa families who have supported this local business. Teachers will be spending this money before the end of this month on supplies for their classrooms.

Upcoming Events

Mesa Yearbook: Development of the Mesa yearbook is underway, and we need pictures of all the students! Please drop off a CD or flash drive of pictures to the Mesa Morning Table by Friday, January

23rd. Thank you to Dian Kiwiet and Julie Okada for all of their efforts on the yearbook!

Parent/Teacher Conference Meal Sign-Up: It's already that time of year again – Parent/Teacher Conferences! If you would like to provide a meal for one of the conference days, please contact Lisa Gillespie at lisamgillespie@msn.com or (303) 494-2513. Meal sign-ups will also be posted starting Friday, January 23rd, on the glass windows of the Office. If you don't want to provide a full meal, you can provide side items like bread, utensils, etc. Conference days are long for the



teachers, and they really appreciate the home-cooked meals!

Spring Sports: Is your son or daughter interested in playing baseball, softball, or lacrosse this spring? Over the coming weeks, the Mesa Morning Table will be providing information on upcoming spring sports, including registration forms. If you have a spring activity for which you would like to supply information, please contact Renae Foxhoven or Jennifer O'Brien (PTO Co-Presidents). We would be happy to put out fliers and registration forms for other activities as well.

Next Meeting: Come join us on Tuesday, February 3rd, at 6:15pm in the Library for our next meeting! Pizza and child care provided (\$4 per child). We are all members of the Mesa PTO and we need your help in executing all of our planned events for the remainder of the school year!

From the Garden...

Planting the Seeds

Even though it's snowy, the garden planning has begun! We're starting peppers and tomatoes from seeds in a few classrooms – and some other veggies with help from the students at Boulder Tec in their greenhouse.

Going Green

Behind the scenes, G2T @ Mesa has been planting some seeds of the educational variety. Work has begun on planning a Mesa-wide Green Event in May, and with the help of a generous anonymous donor, plans are being developed for an outdoor, solar-powered worm composter. The materials are being sourced and designs are starting so that Mesa kids will have a hands-on opportunity to learn about vermiculture right in our own garden.

Hitting the Books

Also being funded by the recent

donation are the necessary materials to begin our foray into offering sustainability tie-ins to our existing curriculum. We're finalizing book lists, available toolkits, and other resources as well as working with the Mesa and BVSD staffs to build a program that is seamless with what's already happening in the classrooms. Mesa has a tremendous opportunity to be a leader in this exciting area of environmental education!

Working on Wellness

Mesa parent and RN, Anita Schumann, is taking the lead on the wellness front by setting up a series of health and wellness presentations geared towards the classroom. Following the BVSD health education standards, these lessons will be piloted with Ellie Goldberg's class and will then be offered to any other interested classrooms. We'll be offering an outline of topics once it's finalized. Stay tuned!



Get Involved

If you're interested in working on the sustainability or curriculum teams or would like to be involved in planning the Mesa Goes Green Event, please contact Cassy at cassymatthews@comcast.net. You can also follow the effort via our Yahoo Group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mesaG2T/>. There you'll find our full calendar and copies of the many materials we've been gathering and working on to support the G2T efforts.

Library News

Congratulations to the artists who participated in the Library's Book Mark Contest. There were many great designs. A special congratulations to the winners at each grade level: Henrik, in Mrs. Anderson's Kindergarten class; Brianna in Mrs. Nankervis' 1st grade; Ben in Mrs. Schoolmaster's 2nd grade; Allison in Mrs. A-H's 3rd grade; Thomas in Mr. Dayhoff's 4th grade; and Katy in Mr. Kellogg's 5th grade. Good job!

Parents, we ask your help in talking with your children about books from the library. We have had quite a few books that are more than a week or two overdue, and that keeps them from being able to check out another book until the overdues are returned. We send out a notice once per

month regarding books that are two weeks or more overdue. If you see one of those notes, please work with your child to locate the book(s) and return them right away. Also, if there is any question about the book, please ask us (or have your child ask) because the book may occasionally have been turned in by someone else who saw it in the hall



or somewhere. Sometimes a child may also think that s/he has not returned a book, but when we check s/he has no books checked out. We just want to be sure we have clear communication with the students about their library books and really appreciate your support.

We have been reading books from the Colorado Children's Book Award nominees and will be ready to participate in voting next month for the state award. Also, next month we get to celebrate "Read Across America" day on Dr. Seuss's birthday followed a short time later with the *Seussical* musical by the marvelous M&Ms.

~ Stan Converse, Teacher Librarian



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Thriving During the Elementary Years: The Magic of Structured Activity Rewards

Over the course of many years working with elementary-age children, it became clear to me that the common denominator for the vast majority of my “behavior problem” clients was parental attention. All of this led me to discover the magic of Structured Activity Rewards.

When I would suggest this approach to parents, many would initially respond, “We’ve tried behavioral contracts, what else have you got?” What they didn’t realize was that these behavioral strategies sound easy (i.e., reward the good, punish the bad), but common pitfalls tend to sabotage the system. These pitfalls typically include: using an overly complicated system (usually including grids and charts), choosing unmotivating “rewards,” not including the child in the creation of the plan, no plan for phasing out the system, lack of clarity regarding the behaviors themselves, expecting perfection, bribing versus reinforcing, and poor

parental follow through.

The purpose of the Activity Rewards Contract is to ensure initial practice of the behavior(s) that we are encouraging the child to learn. Motivation and practice are essential ingredients towards learning new skills and behaviors. For children needing to improve their behavior, however, there is often an initial lack of motivation and subsequent practice of the skills required. Using structured activity rewards solves this problem. In addition, using parental time and attention as the primary incentives serve to enhance the parent-child relationship and improve the parent’s overall discipline technique. The system, then, attempts to retrain both child and parent.

By precisely following the steps outlined below, the results are often immediate and dramatic:

1. Decide on the specific behavior.
2. Brainstorm fun activities with your child.
3. Discuss the specific behavior with your child.
4. Negotiate the terms of the contract together and write it out.
5. Review the contract together and make corrections where needed.



6. Read and sign the contract.
7. Encourage success; be the “good coach.”
8. Monitor progress.
9. Follow-up as soon as possible with earned activity rewards.
10. Revise the contract as needed.
11. When appropriate, phase out the contract.

~ Dr. Jan Hittelman

Dr. Jan Hittelman is a licensed psychologist and Director of Boulder Psychological Services, LLC.

What's your opinion? Questions or comments for this column can be sent to: 1527 Pine Street, Suite B, Boulder, CO 80302, via email to: jan.hittelman@gmail.com or by phone: (720) 217-3270.

Get additional information by visiting: www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com



We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://bvsd.org/schools/mesa>