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The Mesa Messenger

March 2009

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- Thriving During the Elementary Years: Language Development and School Success

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Message from the Principal

Dear Mesa Families,

A correction to my previous newsletter: At that time, I anticipated that parents would receive the BVSD Parent Snapshot Survey via Mesa Friday Folder. Instead, you now should have received this survey in your home mailbox. Regardless, I hope you were able to provide your feedback.

It is only March, but we are already planning for the 2009-2010 school year. One aspect of planning includes decisions about teaching assignments (specifically, what grade level is assigned to each current teacher and who will fill any new positions). I am already weighing these decisions carefully, but please know that final decisions will not be announced until May. Another critical aspect of planning is our class placement process. I've provided notes about this process, following this letter. I invite you to review the information.

Go Mustangs!
Josh

MESA CLASS PLACEMENT PROCESS

Class placement is important to everyone. An effective class placement process results in balanced classes of similar size. A great deal of time and planning by the staff is devoted to the development of the class lists.

• Parent May Complete Optional Student Information Sheet

Available in the office beginning March 30th

• Parents Cannot Request a Particular Teacher

• Specialists Make Recommendations

Our team of specialists (Art, Music, Library, Physical Education, Literacy, and Special Education) makes initial suggestions for student placements and review class lists for the following year. These teachers generally know the majority of students and bring additional perspectives of each student to this process.

• Current Teacher Teams Build Class List Recommendations

Teaching teams meet and determine class lists for

the following year. In developing these lists, the present grade level teachers use their knowledge of the students in their classes, the parent information from the placement information sheet, and specialist recommendations.

• Principal Reviews Class Lists

The principal reviews the class lists. In the event of any possible changes, the principal confers with grade level teachers regarding the ramifications of such change. It is the principal's goal to see that each student, teacher, and class has the greatest potential for a successful school year.

• Class Lists

We post the class lists just before our summer dismissal. During the last week of school, children meet briefly with next year's teacher and their new classmates.

• New Students Added

During August registration, the principal adds new students to class lists, keeping in mind the class placement philosophy in order to maintain balanced classes.

Library News

We have gained access this year to some online resources that can be accessed from home as well as from school. The **EBSCO database collections** are useful for student research. Some are most accessible by students in the intermediate and upper grades as they may be text based. At school, these are accessible from school computers with no username or password, but from home, a username and password are required. To access these databases from home you can go to <http://search.ebscohost.com> and enter the username "mesa" and the password "mustang". The two main student research database collections are Searchasaurus (more accessible to younger students) and Kidsearch. While several classes have used these databases at school for research, they have been used very little from homes. Please let me know if you have difficulties, and I will try to work those out. Thanks to PTO for the grant that made this one possible.

Another nice collection to which we have recently acquired access is **TumbleBooks**. This is a very good selection of audio books online. They range from older classics to many newer books. You can see the pages from many books while listening to the audio. To access



these from home you will need up-to-date Flash plug-in software, and a high speed connection is recommended. Just go to the Mesa website and on the Library page in the "Programs" tab you will see the TumbleBooks icon. This is brand new, and if the connection doesn't work, please let me know so that we can get any difficulties fixed right away.

Reading to End Racism is coming up, and a number of volunteers have stepped forward to help with the reading. We still need a few more readers and will be setting up a second training time. If you are interested, please contact me (stan.converse@bvsd.org) and your help will be greatly appreciated. Thanks to Laura Spicer for working so hard to organize all of this.

Planning is underway for an **end-**

of-the-year book swap. We want to let you know before spring break so that during all of that spring cleaning you can pick books to bring in. The actual date of the swap will be announced soon. After spring break more information will come home about bringing in books, and there will be collection boxes in classrooms in which students will be able to deposit books.

It is almost time for the **fourth annual "One Book, One Boulder County"** event. Throughout April there will be a variety of events



and discussions at many libraries and at the University of Colorado. This year's book is Katherine Paterson's "Bridge to Terabithia," which won the Newbery Medal in 1978. A culminating event will be the appearance of Katherine Paterson at Macky Auditorium on the CU campus on May 1st. This is a great chance to read a good book at the same time that many others read it and share the experience.

~ Stan Converse
Mesa Librarian/Teacher

Mesa Hosts Kindergarten Orientation

Mesa will host Kindergarten Orientation for parents of incoming children at **10:00am on Saturday, April 18th**.

Parents will have the opportunity to receive information about Mesa's Kindergarten and K-CARE programs,

tour the school, and meet families of current Mesa students. Incoming Kindergarten students are also encouraged to attend.

To **RSVP**, please call the school at (303) 494-4704 or email Kendra Wilczewski at kendra.wilczewski@bvsd.org



Music Notes

Congratulations to all of the 4th and 5th graders on their wonderful *Seussical* performances!

Coming Events:

- 2nd Grade Circus ~ April 2nd
- 1st Grade Dinosaur Show ~ April 16th
- 3rd Grade "Interplanetary Jammin'" ~ April 23rd

2nd Grade Circus:

We are looking for parents to help with the 2nd Grade Circus. If you are interested in helping with costumes or decorations, please contact Ms. Knoebel or Mrs. Bruno.

~ Sarah Knoebel



View additional *Seussical* photos at <http://bvsvd.org/schools/mesa/music/Pages/home.aspx>

PE Class News

Jump Rope for Heart was a huge success this year! Thank you for all of your continued support. Mesa was able to raise **\$6,175.28** for the American Heart Association. Way to go Mesa Community!

Fitness Club is right around the corner. Be looking for information to come home with your child right after Spring Break. This year we are asking that families fill out an



individual registration form, Code of Conduct, permission slip, and t-shirt form for each child with a separate check attached for each child. We would like you to fill out ONE volunteer form and ONE Pasta Pig Out form per FAMILY. Thanks for doing this as it really helps with the organizing of around 200 submitted packets. If you have any questions, you can e-mail me at jacy.bruno@bvsvd.org

~ Jacy Bruno

Science Fair Update

We have now reviewed and returned all of the Project Proposals to your students' teachers. Hopefully all kids have received their reviewed proposals and can continue with their projects in the upcoming weeks. If your student did not receive their proposal, please

contact their teacher, or me at GelderloosMW@msn.com

Remember, all projects are due in the Library on **Wednesday, April 15th**, and the Science Fair will take place on April 16th and 17th.

The Open House for the Science Fair will take place on Friday, April 17th, 3:00-6:00pm.

~ Julie Gelderloos and Clare Stocker
Mesa Science Fair Coordinators

Art Views

New Date for the Mesa All-School Art Show!
 Mark your calendar for Tuesday, April 21st, 7:00-8:30pm. This free event showcases every student and their art. Each student will have more than one piece of art work in the show. Wander the halls of Mesa which are filled with over 1,500 pieces of art! Invite friends and relatives to come anytime between 7:00 and 8:30pm. If you cannot make it that night, the art will stay up for about one week (any more than that and it starts falling down!).

4th Grade Art Field Trip to NCAR Architecture on Wednesday, May 13th, 8:30am-12:00pm
 Students will need to be dropped off in the NCAR parking lot instead of at Mesa. Parents, this is a good car pool opportunity! We spend the morning sketching and studying the famous building designed by architect I.M. Pei. I.M. Pei is in the Boulder Valley Art curriculum for 4th grade. Classroom teachers and Mrs. Christenson will work with students in different locations surrounding the building. This trip is all outdoors, so students need to come prepared for

that. We hike back to Mesa in time for lunch. More details will come later!

Volunteer Opportunities:

- **Mesa Art Show**
 We need volunteers to hang art work on Tuesday, April 21st, the same day as the show. I will be asking room parents to assist in finding helpers. We start hanging at 8:30am, and with enough people, we should be done around noon. Volunteer for all or part of that time ~ any amount of time you can donate will be appreciated!
- **Art Room Help Needed**
 I need help hanging art work, matting and labeling the work on black paper, and getting supplies ready. Any amount of time would be helpful!

~ April Christenson, Art Specialist

Mesa Health Room Scripts

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. It is best to wash hands with soap and clean running water for 20 seconds. However, if soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based product to clean your hands. Alcohol-based hand rubs significantly reduce the number of germs on skin and are fast acting.

When washing hands with soap and water:

- Wet hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if it is available.
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue rubbing hands for 20 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing "Happy

Birthday" twice through to a friend!

- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use the paper towel to turn off the faucet.

When should you wash your hands?

- Before preparing or eating food
- After going to the bathroom
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has gone to the bathroom

- Before and after tending to someone who is sick
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After handling an animal, its toys, leashes, or animal waste
- After handling garbage, cleaning cloths, drains, or soil
- Before and after treating a cut or wound

Remember: If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based gel to clean hands. When using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Apply product to the palm of one hand.
- Rub hands together.
- Rub the product over all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry.



SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Happenings

April 2nd

2nd Grade Circus, 1:00pm and 7:00pm

April 3rd

5th Grade Civil War Fair, 12:45pm, Riser Room

April 6th

All School Assembly, 8:45am

April 6th - 8th

4th Grade Outdoor Education at Cal-Wood



April 6th

Families notified of K-CARE enrollment status for the 2009-2010 school year

April 7th

PTO, 6:15pm

April 13th

3rd Grade Field Trip to Fiske Planetarium, 10:00am

April 15th

3rd Grade Field Trip to State Capitol, 9:00am

April 16th

1st Grade Dinosaur Show

April 16th and 17th

All School Science Fair, 8:30am - 3:00pm

April 17th

3rd Grade Space Sleepover, 6:00pm

April 18th

Kindergarten Orientation, 10:00am

April 20th

All School Assembly, 8:45am

April 21st

Reading to End Racism

April 21st

Mesa Art Show, 7:00pm - 8:30pm

April 22nd

Africa Explorers, Kindergarten, 10:30am - 1:00pm

April 23rd

3rd Grade Musical, 1:00pm and 7:00pm

April 24th and 27th

No School ~ Parent Conference Exchange Day

April 28th

No School for Students ~ Professional Development Day

April 29th and 30th

Field Days



Acting Workshop Offered Through BVSD Lifelong Learning

To register, connect to our course area at www.bvsd.org/LLL or call (303) 499-1125 x222.

Acting Workshop Ages 7-12

Take advantage of the no-school days to make new friends and learn about theatre! Students will learn basic drama skills through games, exercises, improvisation, and skits as we work together on a final skit to perform. Family and friends are invited to a Workshop Variety Show created and performed by students at 3:30pm. Bring a sack lunch and snack.

When: Friday, 8:00am-4:00pm

(1 session on April 24, 2009)

Cost: \$89

Instructor: Megan Buckley

Location: Community Montessori, Boulder

When: Monday, 8:00am-4:00pm

(1 session on April 27, 2009)

Cost: \$89

Instructor: Megan Buckley

Location: Community Montessori, Boulder

~ Julie Kurzawa
BVSD Lifelong Learning
Registrar



PTO Corner

Happy Spring Break! The PTO is keeping busy with our final activities of the school year, and we are well underway in our planning for the 2009-2010 school year!

Direct Donations: Thank you so much to the Mesa community for your support during the fall direct donation campaign. Because of your support, we have been able to fund all of our budgeted programs, as well as some additional items. If you did not contribute in the Fall, we hope you will still consider donating as there are always funding needs. The suggested donation is \$100 per child. If you have any questions about a donation, please contact Renae Foxhoven (renae@foxbach.com).

Mesa T-Shirts and Sweatshirts: A Mesa t-shirt (\$12) or sweatshirt (\$23) is a great addition to the

Spring wardrobe! They come in pink, slate blue, and moss green and are available at the Mesa Morning Table.

Class Pictures: Class pictures are coming up on Friday, April 10th. Many of you already ordered your child's class picture during the direct donation at the beginning of the year. Reminders for those who did not order a picture will be sent home via the Friday Folders right after Spring Break. If you receive a reminder and would like to order a picture, order forms will be available at the Mesa Morning Table after Spring Break.

Spring Sports and Activities: Is your son or daughter interested in participating in a spring sport or activity? Information is available at the Mesa Morning Table for the following activities: Boulder Valley Girls Softball Association,

YMCA/Boulder Valley Lacrosse (boys and girls), i9 Sports (Football and Cheerleading), and Parlondo School of Music. If you have a spring activity that you would like to supply information for, 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. In addition, we have extra copies of the summer camp newspaper that was sent home via the Friday Folders.

Next Meeting: Come join us on Tuesday, April 7th, at 6:15pm in the Library! We will be discussing the final events of the school year, as well as initiating our budget discussions for the 2009-2010 school year. Pizza and child care provided (\$4 per child). We are all members of the Mesa PTO, and we need your help in executing our remaining events and planning for the new school year!

From the Garden...

Save the Date! Earth Day Pick-Up Family Picnic: Sunday, April 19th, 3:00-7:00pm

Please join the Garden to Table program for an all family, community celebration of Earth Day. We will be digging a new row in the garden, working on a number of playground improvement projects, coming together for a potluck picnic, and enjoying an evening of pick-up games. Bring your whole family, work gloves, shovels, plates, cups, utensils (preferably re-usable or compostable ☺), something to drink and a dish to share, blankets, balls, bats, and smiles. *This event is in lieu of the previously announced May 2nd event.*

Mesa Garden Challenges You to Save the Environment

With the help of CarbonRally.com,

we are challenging Mesa families and staff to lead a more sustainable life. Parents and teachers, your family can go online and sign-on as an individual or join our team: at

<http://www.carbonrally.com/teams/663>

By creating an account, you can track challenges and the amount of CO² reduced by taking on the different challenges. In the future, we may compete against other area schools to see who can lead the way to a more sustainable future.

Mesa Master Gardener Volunteers

We have two new Master Gardener volunteers you may see in a classroom or the garden. Val Havlick taught Life Science at Southern Hills for many years, and her daughter is a 3rd grade teacher at Bear Creek.

Carolyn Brigham is a recent transplant from New York State, having taught middle school for 25 years. Both bring a wealth of garden knowledge to us, and we are very happy to have them supporting our efforts!

Spring Cleaning? Don't Throw it Out, Throw it Our Way!

The garden is looking for new and gently-used tools to have on hand. Here is the Garden Wish List: 6 weeding forks, 6 shovels, 2 rakes, 6 hand trowels, 2 picks, 3 border spades, and 3 8-inch-wide digging forks. Anything anyone can donate would be greatly appreciated.

Get Involved

If you're interested in getting involved with our effort, please contact Cassy at cassymatthews@comcast.net.



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Thriving During the Elementary Years: Language Development and School Success

One of the most amazing experiences as a parent is witnessing language development in our young children: from no language, to first words (“no” usually being one of the first!), to sentences, all in a relatively short time, typically within the first three years of life. The onset and development of language is a complex combination of neurological development and environmental factors.

Parents can make a significant contribution to their children’s language development by enriching their language opportunities. Examples of this would include: reading together, playing word games, stimulating discussions through a variety of new experiences, being a good listener, asking questions, providing writing opportunities, and modeling good language usage.

Language development is a critical precursor to school success. A child with significant language delays will inevitably struggle with academic activities. This is because the vast majority of school tasks are language-based. In addition to reading, tasks that involve spelling, oral and written expression are all language-based. Language skills are typically divided into two categories: expressive language and receptive language. Expressive

language is how we express our thoughts and feelings, while receptive language is our understanding of information that is shared by others. In addition there is speech development, which involves the physical act of speech and includes skills like enunciation and articulation.

Because of the profound impacts of language development on school success, most school districts provide early speech/language screenings to identify those who require corrective services. The good news is that Speech and Language Pathologists can often reduce these deficits quite effectively. The earlier these problems are identified, the easier and faster they typically are to remediate.

If you have concerns about your child’s speech/language development, consider having an assessment by a Speech and Language Pathologist. Through using standardized speech/language testing materials, strengths and weaknesses can be pinpointed to help determine if remediation is needed.

~ Dr. Jan Hittelman
Dr. Jan Hittelman is a licensed psychologist and Director of Boulder

Psychological Services, LLC.

Questions or comments for this column can be sent via email to: jan.hittelman@gmail.com or by phone: (720) 217-3270.



Upcoming PEN Event

The Adolescent Brain ~ New Brain Research & What Parents Need to Know

Presenter: Dr. Cynthia Divino, Psychologist and Clinical Supervisor

April 8th
9:00am - 11:00am
BVSD Conference Center
6500 Arapahoe, Boulder

April 21st
7:00pm - 9:00pm
Peak to Peak School
800 Merlin, Lafayette

Learn more about PEN by visiting parentengagementnetwork.org or by contacting Betsy Fox with the Boulder County Healthy Youth Alliance at (303) 441-3981.



We’re on the Web!

See us at:

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