

Summit News

Summit Calendar

Volume 30, Issue 7

November 19, 2010

November

November 22-26	Thanksgiving Vacation – no school
November 29	Board Planning Committee, 8:05 am 8 th Grade Boys Basketball Game, 4:00 pm Open Enrollment period begins

December

December 1	Summit Tour for prospective families, 8:15 am 8 th Grade Boys Basketball Game, 4:00 pm Board Meeting, 6:00 pm
December 2	High School Transition Night, 6:30 pm
December 3	1/2 Day: Professional Development Meetings
December 6	8 th Grade Boys Basketball Game, 4:00 pm
December 7	Summit Tour, 8:15 am
December 8	8 th Grade Boys Basketball Game, 4:00 pm
December 9	Summit Tour, 8:15 am Summit Prospective Parent/Student Info Night, 6:30 pm
December 10	8 th Grade Boys Basketball Game, 4:00 pm
December 13	History Day (viewing from 11:45-2:20) Board Planning Committee Meeting, 8:05 am 8 th Grade Boys Basketball Game, 4:00 pm Musical Tech Rehearsal, 5:30 pm
December 14	Summit Musical, 7:00 pm, Boulder High School
December 15	Community Connections Meeting, 8:15 am Summit Tour, 8:15 am Board Meeting, 6:00 pm Art Show, 5:30 pm, and Instrumental Music Winter Concert, 7:00 pm
December 16	Summit Tour, 8:15 am
December 20 – Jan 3	Winter break - Summit back in session Tuesday, January 4.

Inside this issue:

<i>Fundraising Update</i>	2
<i>Zone of Proximal Development</i>	3
<i>Open Enrollment At Summit</i>	3
<i>Promoting Safe Use of Internet</i>	4
<i>Summit Giving Tree</i>	4
<i>School Improvement Plan</i>	5
<i>Music Calendar</i>	6
<i>History Day Lunch Menu</i>	6
<i>Number of Charter Schools Growing</i>	6
<i>Parent Engagement Network</i>	7
<i>Thank You</i>	7

Fundraising Update

Thank you to all of our families that have contributed to Summit's fundraising campaigns to-date. Together we have raised \$50,785 for the school's annual fund (Tools for Learning) and \$32,200 in new pledges for the Gym Campaign!

For those parents that have not yet had the opportunity to donate, it's not too late! As 2010 draws to a close and you consider your year-end charitable donations, we hope that you will make a tax-deductible donation to Summit's fundraising campaigns. Remember that you can now make an online donation directly on our website (go to <http://www.bvdsd.org/schools/summit/Pages/default.aspx> and click on the **Donate Now!** button) or mail/drop off a check at the school office - please choose whichever method is most convenient for you.

As we continue to solicit donations for the Gym Campaign, we wish to remind our school community of the following facts:

- Because of our status as a charter school, Summit is responsible for funding its own capital improvements.
- Summit was fortunate to receive \$5.5 million in bond funding to build our library, science/art/technology wing, however this investment in Summit's building was made by BVSD *under the condition* that our community raise the funds necessary to build a gym. We realize that parents did not choose to send their children to Summit for its facilities, but rather for the outstanding educational opportunities available to our students. Nonetheless, we cannot lose sight of the fact that our new library, science classrooms and other campus improvements have greatly enhanced the learning environment for Summit's students.
- To date, the Gym Campaign has raised over \$1.9 million, largely from alumni families whose children had already graduated from Summit and will not therefore benefit directly from these capital improvements.
- The nine-member Summit Board of Directors (all parent volunteers) is responsible for fundraising ac-

tivities at Summit. We have always endeavored to promote the school's fundraising needs in a thoughtful and transparent manner, recognizing that we have families from a wide range of socio-economic situations. We must strike a fine balance between our responsibilities as financial fiduciaries of the school and as fellow parents. We hope you can understand that we must continue to ask for donations to the Gym Campaign until the school's construction loan (the only debt Summit has ever had) is repaid.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Summit's Gym Campaign, please direct them to board member Robin Luff at rluff.at.summit@gmail.com.

Thank you!

Dita Hutchinson and Robin Luff
Development Committee Co-Chairs
Summit Board of Directors

Thank You! To the following families for their recent generous support of Summit Middle School:

Rita Boreiko and Albert Betz
Karl and Dianne Buchholz
Art and Christy DeBruyn
Lisa Dierauf
Janice and Stephen Garbarini
Luis and Julia Garza
Jonathan and Kim Haines
Dave and Deli Haynes
Cheryle and Daniel Kapsak
Dana and Norwood Keel
The Valdemar Larson Memorial Fund
Ying Yi and Jing He

Marlys and Chris Lietz
Chang Li
Michelle Meyer
Andrew and Becky Morley
Tim Perley and Penny Axelrad
Bill Perry and Diane Clymer
Emilio Suarez and Yolanda Berea
Robert and Paula Sukiennicki
Masahiko and Yoko Takahashi
Shih-Hua Tseng
Cindy Ding and Yizi Xu

The Zone of Proximal Development By David B. Finell, Principal

Lev Vygotsky was a Soviet psychologist and social constructivist who lived from 1896 – 1934. He developed an idea called ‘the zone of proximal development’, which is basically the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can do with help. What Vygotsky identified is basically the ‘sweet spot’ in education, where a student is being challenged/stretched in ways which maximize his or her learning but do not overwhelm the student. His definition of this is:

“...the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers.”

Vygotsky believed the role of education is to provide students with experiences which are in their zone of proximal development, which will then encourage and advance their individual learning. Rather than relying on knowledge-based tests as a means to gauge students’ intelligence, Vygotsky argued that it is better to examine a student’s ability to solve problems independently and their ability to solve problems with the assistance of adults and peers.

The practice of scaffolding in education is closely related to Vygotsky’s work, as it is a process through which a teacher or more competent peer gives aid to the student in his or her learning, and then tapers off this aid as it becomes unnecessary. Scaffolding refers to the way an adult or peer helps guide the student’s learning via focused questions, meaningful activities and positive interactions/relationships.

So, why you might ask, am I giving you a quick overview of Vygotsky? Summit is very much about placing students in our program where they are learning in their zone of proximal development, where they are challenged but not overwhelmed. No limits are placed on how far a student can go here. There is no ceiling. At the same time we all understand that it can be detrimental to place students in a course which is not appropriate at that point in a child’s development. At Summit we believe that placement decisions need to be based on data and not just on parent or student preference. If the data does not support the placement, then putting a student in the class would just set him or her up for stress and failure.

Sometimes I see that parents and students at Summit, and in our culture at large, can be very competitive with each other. There are students who wish they could be on a different baseball team; or could be playing violin at a more advanced level in the orchestra; or could have more money or more friends or cooler clothes. Unfortunately, sometimes this attitude translates to a student wishing to be in a more advanced class at Summit, even though their current class is a better match for them.

I sometimes hear comments which reflect the perception that higher level classes at Summit (especially in math and English) carry more status. Thus some people (and, let’s be honest, this is usually driven by parents) may feel that it is desirable for their child to be in a more advanced class, even though **all** classes at Summit are advanced for middle school. Such perceptions can be driven by these issues of status and competitiveness, and not by what is educationally in a child’s best interest.

Talk about a ‘race to nowhere’! Students come into middle school with a wide range of educational backgrounds and interests, and these conditions establish some parameters regarding which classes make sense for students to take or not take at a given point in time. We should refrain from assigning value judgments to one class over another. **All** of the classes at Summit are rich and wonderful classes taught by outstanding teachers. And **all** of our students, who put forth the effort and work hard, will be on a strong trajectory to success in high school and beyond.

I therefore encourage parents and students to remember that school is not about being in a more accelerated class than someone else or getting a better grade than someone else. School is not a status competition. Rather, school is about learning in one’s zone of proximal development in order to maximize one’s intellectual progress and love of learning.

If a parent feels that your child is not placed correctly in a given subject, then your child’s teachers and I would welcome having a conversation with you and having the opportunity to review the data on which the placement is based. But remember this: the important thing in school is not about being in the most advanced classes, but rather being in the classes that are right for the student. It’s about learning in that sweet spot, in one’s zone of proximal development.

Open Enrollment at Summit

If you have a 5th grade sibling of a current Summit student who would like to enroll in Summit for 6th grade, you must participate in BVSD’s open enrollment process. The open enrollment period begins November 29th and closes January 14th at 4:00 p.m. The process is entirely online this year. Please use the following link starting November 29th: <http://bvsd.org/openenrollment/Pages/default.aspx>

Please also let the Summit Office know (summit.office@bvsd.org) about any siblings who would like to attend Summit for the 11-12 school year so that we may offer them a chance to shadow after the OE period has closed. Current Summit students do not need to participate in the OE process again unless your family has moved out of the district. Thank you!

Promoting Safe and Appropriate Use of the Internet

As first generation internet parents, we are learning how to balance our children's interest in exploring the internet with the need to monitor and make agreements on what is appropriate and safe. On Thursday, November 4th seven seventh grade students led a Dialogue Night on Internet Safety, in collaboration with Summit's School Resource Officer (SRO). Thank you to Sam Chaim-Weisman, Evan Derby, Samantha Du, Gali Ekon-Lev, Audrey McClurg, Ailish MacDonald, and Avery Tallman for their leadership and willingness to lead this program.

While the program was not well attended, all who participated spoke to the benefits of parents and youth talking together about student use of the internet. In small groups, parents and students explored the many facets of internet use and perspectives on how to create agreements for internet safety at home. When parents and students make proactive decisions, students are more able to resist and avoid at-risk situations. Students involved in the internet safety program collectively agreed that parent supervision and involvement in their internet use is important and needed. There is much literature available on parent supervision of internet use. A summary of recommendations:

- Be involved in your child's cyberspace. Ask your child to show you the sites they typically use.
- Ask your child to share his/her user account names and passwords. If this presents a challenge with trust, ask your child to write these for you and place them in a sealed envelope to be opened in case of an emergency.

- Consider keeping computers in public places. Youth make better choices when they know there is adult supervision.
- Open accounts in social domains such as Facebook, to monitor social networking activities. Ensure friend lists are people your child knows.
- Ask your child to show you his/her profiles/pages. Help your child to consider how he/she presents him/herself.
- Inquire about the potential of cyber-bullying.
- Ensure internet safety practices are being followed (no password or personal identification information shared).
- Remind your child that internet behavior is public behavior. There are short and long-term consequences for one's actions on the internet, including such activities as applying to colleges or for employment.

Establish family policies for acceptable computer use. Talk together (and list) what may or may not be allowed, including agreements about time limits.

Adolescence can be a difficult time to parent, as teenagers want and need more independence yet they also must have clear boundaries and guidelines from adults. Adult supervision and involvement in use of the internet and social networking will make a positive difference and promote good judgment and decision-making for our youth.

Summit Giving Tree

In the spirit of Thanksgiving and community building at Summit, we are excited to bring a Salvation Army Giving Tree to our school. This Giving Tree will be at Summit from Thursday, November 18th – Thursday, December 9th. If you are interested and able to give back to others in your immediate Summit community and the larger Boulder Valley community in this way, please consider donating a gift or two for a family in need.

A small tree is in the front office with gift tags. A green tag signifies a person from the larger community and a purple tag means that the recipient will be from the Summit community. We encourage you or your child to stop by the office and select a tag or two. There will be a few pieces of information on each tag to aid you in your shopping. When you select your tag, please fill out the donation form with your name and phone number. If this item is not returned, we will give you a follow up call as a reminder. Please remember that by taking a tag you are committing to returning the gift(s) by December 9th.

Again, the tree is up! After the Thanksgiving break, there will be a box in the front office where you can drop off the gifts you selected. Please place the unwrapped gift(s) in a bag along with the gift tag and tie the bag up so it stays all together. **The gifts will need to be returned to the office by Thursday December 9th.**

All of your donations are tax-deductible. The Salvation Army is a 501(c)(3) organization. *Please hold onto your receipts and make a photocopy of your tag, that is sufficient to itemize this expense on your taxes.*

If you have any questions, please email Sarah Lems at slems@comcast.net

Thank you so much for helping other families have a wonderful holiday season!

Summit Community Connections

Progress on School Improvement Plan

Chitra Seshan, SAC Chair

You may recall the Oct 15th newsletter article describing Summit's three school improvement goals for 2010-2011. In this article, I wanted to update you on our progress towards these goals.

Equity (E): Students will receive identification within the first month of the development of a pattern of need and supports/interventions as needed, whether or not they have been previously identified as needing supports for 504, IEP or other disabilities. More quantifiable measures of RtI success will be used on RtI individual tracking.

Regarding our Equity goal, we added a timed portion to our math assessment for incoming students that was administered in March and have provided math resources to the families of students who need intervention in math skills. Students scoring partially proficient or below on any CSAP test were identified for intervention. Grade level transitional meetings were held among the teachers on Sept. 7 and Oct. 19 to provide continuity between grades. These have helped in getting an early start to identification of students needing help and in supporting those students with resources. To improve the ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of the support, the RtI (Response to Intervention) form has been revised to make it more data driven. It now includes MAP and CSAP scores, grades for core subjects for each quarter, attendance, behavior, hearing/vision screening results, cross-curricular skills, and student level of motivation/engagement. To provide greater support for our identified students, the School Psychologist, Dani Rudkin, is meeting each Wednesday with these students who have been identified as needing extra support. Also, Special Education teacher, Terri Lamond, has joined the RtI team for the weekly meetings.

Climate (C): In collaboration between home and school, students' capacity for success with Summit's program will be expanded by helping them strengthen their repertoire of skills and work habits towards managing their work load and responsibilities. Improvement will be measured by changes in the Summit survey data as evaluated by the Summit SAC.

In our work towards the Climate goal, the well attended "Helping Your Child Succeed at Summit" program, which was held on Sept. 15, was reworked to include segments from our Pixie math teacher Mr. Tom Seibel and our Pixie social studies teacher Ms. Cheryle Kapsak. 6th grade Pre-Algebra and reading notes in the 6th grade year have traditionally been areas of stress for new families and Mr. Seibel's and Ms. Kapsak's workshops were hopefully helpful in informing and transitioning our new families. You may have also noticed that Ms. Elizabeth Troup, our school counselor, has been helping parents support their student by including articles in the Summit News, sending

emails, and holding discussion groups with parents to provide information on the Stand Up! Program and other topics. If you haven't had a chance to read the previous articles, they are available on the Summit website. And I can tell you personally that the discussion group held on Nov. 3rd, attended by about a dozen parents, was an enjoyable and insightful exchange of experiences. She has also led the re-work of the Stand-Up! Program based on student input to place a greater emphasis on understanding the social-emotional triggers that lead to unkind behavior. The Summit Board and administration continue to work on Summit's message to prospective families to ensure that the students enrolled at Summit are a good match for Summit's educational program. Also, the Summit Board increased the Para Professional support hours from 10 hours per week last year to 19 hours per week this year to help teachers with grading. This should help provide more timely feedback to students on their work. Along these lines, the NJHS students have been helping teachers and students by providing tutoring for History Day, Earth Science, Literacy Lab, English I and Mathematics.

Achievement (A): This is a two year goal to understand our current scope and sequence, to identify strengths and weaknesses in our 'Information and Technology Literacy Skills' curriculum, and to subsequently (in the 2nd year) implement methods of more accurately assessing student mastery of these standards.

All school research projects are now coordinated through Pat McDermott, our Librarian, even if the project does not use the library. This is to allow her to gather information on all the research projects in the school to allow us to coordinate the timing and content of the projects based on the data collected. This process was rolled out to the teachers by Pat McDermott and Cynthia Kolanowski (English III teacher) at the Nov 2 faculty meeting. The entire faculty is also in the process of delineating which of the skills in the first six Technology Literacy Skills Standards are taught in each subject and grade level and in what sequence. They will complete this task by the end of the first semester. Our Technology Literacy Skills Standards (there is a link on the Summit Website) actually include 8 standards, but at this time we only have the first 6 sequenced by grade level. The last two will be sequenced during the spring semester. For the first semester, our focus will be on completing our school-wide work on standards 1-6, which we have found to be relevant and do not need revising. The same process will be applied to the last two standards during the fall semester of next year. During the second semester, we will also review the results of our data collection, determine any changes needed in the scope and sequence of teaching these cross-curricular standards, and identify ways to assess and track student mastery. The goal is to implement tracking of student mastery of these standards during the 2011-2012 school year.

Music/Drama Calendar

Friday, Dec 3	Fairview Choir Festival, 6:30 pm Fairview High School Big Gym Call for singers at 5:45
Monday, Dec 13	Drama tech rehearsal, 5:30 pm Boulder High School
Tues, Dec 14	Dear Edwina Performance, 7:00 pm Boulder High School Call for actors at 5:30 pm
Weds, Dec 15	Band Performance, 7:00 pm Summit Multipurpose Room

History Day Lunch Menu

There is a change to the lunch menu on December 13 and 14, due to History Day. Chef Lynn is offering easy to serve items to help the line move quickly through the cafeteria: on Monday, December 13 she will offer Cheese Pizza OR Chix wraps or bowls, and on Tuesday, December 14 she will offer Nachos and Burgers, beef or veggie.

Center for Education Reform



November 9, 2010

Contact: Andrew Campanella, (800) 521-2118, andrew@edreform.com

Number of US Charter Schools Grows by 9 Percent in 2010

5,453 charter schools around the US educate more than 1.7 million students

WASHINGTON, DC - With Americans focused on the political future of the country in the wake of recent mid-term elections, new research by The Center for Education Reform today revealed that the number of US charter schools grew by 9 percent in 2010. As of today, 5,453 schools now serve the families of more than 1.7 million American students.

From the very first charter school's doors opening in 1993 to just over 1,600 only ten years ago to well over 5,000 schools today, charters have taken root in 39 states and the District of Columbia, providing parents and students with strong options to their traditionally assigned public schools.

"Despite laws in many states that are specifically designed to hinder the creation of charter schools, new and more personalized options for children continue to increase year after year," said Jeanne Allen, President of The Center for Education Reform. "For almost two million kids, charter schools offer a learning environment they crave and the singular focus on student achievement – and success – they need. Given high parental demand and the academic success of charter schools, states should look to create a more favorable atmosphere for the creation of these schools."

Continuously throughout each year, the Center for Education Reform tracks the creation of new charter schools and marks the closing of others, working directly with schools, organizations and states to determine accurate numbers not only for schools themselves, but for their student populations as well, providing the public with the most up-to-date information possible.

"The bright spotlight of Hollywood and the mainstream media has shown the country that too often, our kids are left waiting for some way out of a broken, one-size-fits-all approach to their education and future," Allen said. "Charter schools offer teachers, administrators and parents an innovative way to break that cycle and rescue our kids from falling further behind."

For more information on charter school growth, please visit <http://edreform.com>.

The Center for Education Reform drives the creation of better educational opportunities for all children. CER changes laws, minds and cultures to allow good schools to flourish.



Parent Engagement Network: Thriving Through the Adolescent Years

Adolescent Social Development
By Dr. Jan Hittelman

Social skills are tools that we use to interact with and understand others in our social environment. These skills are not innate, but are learned through our interpersonal experiences. Unlike “abilities”, which we are born with, “skills” can only be learned through practice. For example, some people are born with the ability to sing beautifully, while the skill to write one’s name must be learned. In addition, social skills can be lost if not practiced. It was found that prisoners of war, who were in isolation for long periods of time, actually lost their social skills and had to re-learn them. Children who are shy or socially withdrawn have less opportunity to practice and improve their social skills. Similarly, children with undesirable social behavior may be avoided by others and excluded from social events. Consequently, they are at-risk for falling further and further behind same-age peers in terms of their social skills development. Good social skills are necessary for positive emotional adjustment and successful functioning at home, school, work, and other social settings. Not surprisingly, research shows that people with poor social skills have more problems in school, at home, at work, and with the legal system.

If your adolescent is experiencing social challenges, it is not too late for them to strengthen their social skills and become more socially confident and successful. Often, the socially awkward adolescent has increased motivation to address their social challenges. This is because of the added importance of peer affiliation and acceptance during adolescent development.

One way to help increase social competence is participation in a social skills training program. Social skills train-

ing has been shown to be an effective way for children to learn needed strategies and “catch-up” to their peers in terms of their social competence. These skills can be taught individually or better yet in a group setting. The specific social skills taught typically involve: non-verbal communication (e.g. eye contact, nodding, smiling), social perspective taking (getting a better sense of how others’ are thinking and feeling), empathy, asking questions, dealing with peer pressure, etc.

As we try to focus on the whole child, nurturing our children’s social development, along with their academic and emotional development, will help them be successful in life.

To learn more about addressing social challenges in adolescence, attend a free workshop on Monday December 13th entitled “Supporting the Shy Teen”, an educational, interactive workshop for parents of shy teenagers, beginning at 7:00pm at the Meadows Library in Boulder. For more information, visit: www.BoulderBPS.com.

Celebrate Parenting in a World of Diversity

Comprehensive view of parents, youth and resources in Boulder Valley
Presentation in English and Spanish
Thursday, December 9, 6:30-9:30 pm
Lafayette Public Library

Eugenia Brady
Parent Involvement Specialist BVSD
Eugenia.Brady@bvsd.org

With Thanks, from Summit staff

Summit teachers and staff enjoyed a wonderful staff appreciation fall lunch on November 17, thanks to Community Connections and these terrific parents:

Shelli Angel, Gail Arant, Dianne Buchholz, Patricia Carlson, Nancy Davis, Shannon Derby, Kathy Dessau, Julie John, Irina Petropavlovskikh, Andrea Popescu, Wendy Redal, Shawna Reininger, Mary Rios, Diane Schwemm, Dori Shiovitz, Anne Shusterman, Jennifer Stachniak, Jenny Stein and Donna Walters.

We thank you all for your kindness and delicious food, and wish all Summit families a wonderful Thanksgiving.



Summit News

Summit News is the official newsletter of Summit Middle School
4655 Hanover Ave.
Boulder, CO 80305.

Telephone: 720-561-3900
Attendance: 720-561-3902
Fax: 720-561-3901

Summit News is e-mailed to the parents of enrolled students. Others are added to this list upon request.

Summit News is available at
www.bvbsd.org/schools/summit

Scharmin Dorostkar, Editor,
scharmin-dorostkar@comcast.net

SUMMIT MISSION STATEMENT

- *To provide a rigorous, academic curriculum that promotes high levels of student effort and academic achievement.*
- *To foster high self-esteem through stimulating intellectual challenge and meaningful academic accomplishment.*
- *To inspire in students a lifelong love of learning, a desire for self-development and good citizenship.*
- *To create a community of peers who value scholarship, academic achievement, and creativity.*
- *To serve as an excellent preparation for students intending to study in rigorous college preparatory high school programs, including International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement.*

ENROLLMENT IN SUMMIT

Summit Middle School is a tuition-free, public charter school in the Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) serving grades 6, 7 and 8 through mixed-age classes grouped by ability, interest, motivation, developmental level and mastery of previous material, and taught by teachers who are specialists in their subject areas. Prospective students register through the District's open enrollment process. Please go to BVSD's Open Enrollment link for more information:

<http://bvbsd.org/openenrollment/Pages/default.aspx>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2010-2011 ACADEMIC YEAR

Ali Gidfar, Chair, agidfar.at.summit@gmail.com
Liz Snowden, Treasurer, lsnowden.at.summit@gmail.com
Polly Dawkins, Secretary, pdawkins.at.summit@gmail.com
Dita Hutchinson, dhutchinson.at.summit@gmail.com
Sue Kunz, skunz.at.summit@gmail.com
Robin Luff, rluff.at.summit@gmail.com
Debra Ritzwoller, dritzwoller.at.summit@gmail.com
Chitra Seshan, cseshan.at.summit@gmail.com
Douglas Steen, dsteen.at.summit@gmail.com
David Finell, Principal, david.finell@bvbsd.org (ex officio)