

Summit News



Volume 31, Issue 6

March 18, 2011

Summit Calendar

March

March 18	3 rd Quarter Ends
March 21-25	Spring Break
March 28 and 29	Summit in session!
March 30	Board Meeting, 6:00 pm, Library

April

April 1	3 rd Annual Celebrate Summit Event, 7:00 pm, BMoCA
April 13	Community Connections Meeting, 8:15 am, Library Board Meeting, 6 pm, Library
April 15	Half day of school, Parent/teacher conferences 1:30-6pm
Week of April 18	Summit Staff Appreciation Week
April 20	Board Meeting, 6:00 pm, Library
Weekend of April 23	Homework Free/Family Weekend
April 27	Board Meeting, 6:00 pm, Library
April 29	Summit Day – No School

May

May 5	Volunteer Tea
May 9	Drama rehearsal, 5:30 pm, Louisville Middle School
May 10	Drama performance, 7:00 pm, LMS
May 11	Instrumental Music Spring Concert and Art Show, 5 & 7 pm
May 13	1/2 day, Professional Development Meeting
May 18	Spring Choir Concert, 7:00 pm, Boulder High School

Half day of school is 8am-12:10pm

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Principal's Column

“Learning is not attained by chance; it must be sought with ardor and attended to with diligence.”

Abigail Adams

The issues of school work, homework, and school stress have been swirling around for some time, as have the conflicting messages of many students not being adequately challenged in school or adequately prepared for college and future careers. The recent movies ‘Waiting for Superman’ and ‘Race to Nowhere’ have brought some of these issues to the forefront again. I recently read through some wonderful essays written by Summit English II students on this topic and I wanted to take a few moments to give you my perspective on the issues of school work, homework and school stress as they exist at Summit.

Summit believes in the importance of homework as a meaningful extension of classroom learning, of being necessary to master the skills and content of a challenging curriculum. This is in keeping with our mission as an academically rigorous school that seeks to develop the lifelong habits of scholarship, academic achievement and creativity. When you choose Summit as your school, this is one of the things you sign on for. Why are schoolwork and homework such a priority at Summit?

Of the 365 days in the calendar year, students at Summit are in school for about 180 of these days, usually from 8:00 a.m. to 3:05 p.m. Some schools have even less contact days and even shorter schedules. Over half of the year is comprised of weekends, holidays, and vacations. In other words, the majority of time each day, - and the majority of days each year, - is spent by our students *not* being in school.

If we did not give our students the opportunity to use at least *some* of this time outside of school to devote to their learning, we would not be effective at enabling our students to learn at such high levels. They would then pay the price when they were not ready to be successful in high school, were not able to do well in college and, ultimately, were not able to build the life they have envisioned for themselves. At a certain point this can become a ‘race to nowhere’ but, of course, there is also value in working hard and having meaningful career options when one is older. This doesn’t happen without a certain amount of effort and, yes, at times, stress.

When one wants to master the piano or the violin it is not enough just to take lessons. One must also practice between lessons.

To master the material there is a certain amount of time one needs to put in. Otherwise, it just does not happen.

We must also realize that not all homework is created equal. There is work that is meaningful and worthwhile and then there is work that is deadening. Summit teachers strive to assign fun, engaging work which helps our students develop into young scholars and into knowledgeable, thoughtful citizens.

We must realize as well that some students (and parents) put an enormous additional measure of pressure on *themselves*, and can be overly obsessive and competitive to no good end. Summit strongly discourages such attitudes and has many programs and supports in place to try to support such students putting less stress on themselves and managing their workload and life outside of school in a more balanced way. Nevertheless, we need to be honest: sometimes the school is blamed for creating stress where the source of the stress actually lies elsewhere.

We are fortunate to live in a community where there are many educational options at every level. Some schools are more academically rigorous than others. Some schools have more of an arts or music focus. Some schools are more ‘expeditionary learning’ in their approach. No child needs to attend a school where he or she is miserable and feels there is an excessive amount of pressure, homework or competition.

I began with a quote from Abigail Adams. Allow me to end with a quote from Theodore Roosevelt: **“Far and away the best prize life has to offer is the opportunity to work hard at work worth doing.”**

While the work at Summit can indeed be difficult and stressful at times, it is also work which is enriching, fun and intellectually challenging. It is indeed work worth doing. And this becomes clearer to many of our students with the gift of time and perspective. When our students get down the road a little ways and look back on their time here and at what Summit gave them, this consistently becomes evident in a way that is often not as readily apparent during the time they are here.

And what is the overwhelming sentiment we hear then from our graduates about the education they received at Summit, - even with the amount of school work, homework and occasional stress some of them experienced? What we hear is a sense of deep and abiding gratitude for the excellent education they received at Summit and how well it prepared them for their future.

Impact of Proposed State Funding Cuts on Summit

At the Annual Community Meeting on March 10, Shelly Hendrick, Business Manager, and Liz Snowden, Board Treasurer, presented an overview of the financial outlook for Summit in light of Gov. Hickenlooper's recent proposal to cut \$375 million from K-12 education next year. These cuts mean that Per Pupil Revenue (PPR) would be cut by over \$480 for a total of \$161,000 less revenue to Summit next year. The same or even larger cuts are being forecast for the 2012-2013 school year.

Fortunately, Boulder County passed a Mill Levy Override (3A) in November from which Summit will receive approximately \$800 per student per year. Therefore, for now, the school is in good financial shape. However, because of continued decreases in state funding and increases in expenses outside of our control (teacher retirement payments, health care cost increases, etc.), the benefits of 3A could be eliminated within two years.

While the Summit Board and administration are taking steps to prepare and protect the school, you, as parents, can help as well.

- Contribute to Tools for Learning. (Thank you if you already have!) As a charter school, we are responsible for managing our own budget and your donations go directly to our operating budget.
- Send ideas for cost savings/revenue generation to David Finell, Shelly Hendrick or Liz Snowden.

Volunteer to serve on the Budget Task Force. This task force, started last year by parents, teachers, board members and administration, will again tackle the difficult task of recommending where and how Summit should make cuts. Please let Shelly Hendrick (shendrick@bvsd.org) or Liz Snowden (lsnowden.at.summit@gmail.com) know if you are interested in serving.

Please feel free to contact Shelly or Liz if you have any additional questions.

Can You Support Summit?

As you know, the financial outlook for our state continues to be very challenging and will result in further deep cuts to public funding for K-12 education. Summit will be forced to consider various options, such as increasing class sizes and further reducing our operating costs, in order to balance our operating budget. However, an important advantage of our charter school model is that we can use your donations to directly fund teacher salaries and other operating expenses, so we hope that our community will step up and play a key role in helping us through this difficult period.

We wish to thank everyone who has already pledged their support to Summit this year, including our most recent donors:

Amgen (matching gift)
Lisa and Benjamin Brussell
Kevin Cassidy
Wendy and Leif Redal
Sony Corporation (matching gift)

So far, 54% of our current families have contributed to the annual fund, Tools for Learning, this school year. Our primary goal is to achieve 100% participation from our community, regardless of donation amount.

If you haven't already done so, can you support Summit this year? All donations are greatly appreciated! You can either donate online (go to <http://www.bvsd.org/schools/summit> and click on the **Donate Now!** link) or write a check to Supporters of Summit, Inc. and mail it to the Summit Office at 4655 Hanover Avenue, Boulder, CO 80305. And don't forget to take advantage of your employers' matching gift programs - in most cases, your donation can be doubled and make a big difference to our school.

Thank you for your generous support!

Your Board of Directors

8th Grade Graduation Party Planning

8th grade parents, please join us to help plan the 8th grade graduation party! We will be meeting on Wednesday, April 6 at 2:00 pm in the Library conference room. The party will take place on Thursday evening, May 26. Questions? Contact Amy Beringer at amyberinger@comcast.net.

Spring Parent/Teacher Conferences

The Summit faculty and administration has decided to reinstate one afternoon of Parent/Teacher Conferences on April 15 from 1:30 – 6:00 p.m.

There will be a half day of school on April 15, with school beginning at 8:00 a.m. and ending at 12:10 p.m.

The two days of October conferences were very well attended and we all appreciated having that time to meet with parents and discuss how your children are progressing at Summit.

Due to the loss of two instructional days in February, we made the difficult decision to not hold a second round of Parent/Teacher Conferences in February. However, we all recognize the importance of providing time for teachers and parents to meet again before the end of the school year.

Now that we are pretty much through March (statistically the largest snow month in Colorado) we are feeling more confident that the odds of losing more instructional days due to bad weather is more minimal than it seemed after the district cancelled two days of school in January.

One afternoon of conferences is a compromise, - being less than the traditional two afternoons we usually offer. But hopefully it will enable some level of communication with at least a few of your children's teachers.

Some 'Helpful Hints' for Successful Parent/Teacher Conferences

- Prioritize the 2 or 3 teachers with whom you really want to speak. You will not be able to get to all of your children's teachers. If both parents/guardians will be attending conferences, you may want to divide up to see teachers separately.
- If you feel that your child is doing well at Summit and there is no pressing need for you to have a face to face meeting with his/her teachers, consider not attending conferences. Lines will be long and perhaps there is no real need for you to wait for several hours to speak with two or three teachers. Teachers do welcome e-mail communication from parents as an alternative way of touching base. Writing to teachers for an update on how your child is doing is *not* an imposition, so please consider this as an option.
- There will be *long* lines so expect to wait. Please bring something to read or do while you are waiting.
- Books, magazines or other such items should not be used as placeholders in a line. Please be courteous to the other parents who are waiting.
- We are not going to use the cafeteria for conferences. All conferences will be held in classrooms or in the library. More specific information on when and where teachers will be available will be sent home by the school office prior to conferences.
- Conferences will last about five minutes. Please be respectful of this time limit. Teachers have been told to stay within this time limit if other parents are waiting and teachers will be using timers to help with this.
- Please be respectful of teachers' times for breaks, and of their need to get home at the end of the day. We will be closing up promptly at 6:00 p.m.

Thank you.

Mr. David B. Finell, Principal



Thirteen Summit Seventh Graders Are Headed to State History Day Competition

On Saturday, March 5, 41 Summit students participated in the Regional History Day competition at Front Range Community College. Thirteen Summit students won slots in the top three in their project category, and will be representing Summit on May 7 at Colorado History Day at CU-Denver. Those students are listed below with their project category:

Individual Performance

Tatjana Kunz
Q Urdang

Group Performance

Clara Lietz and Bryn Redal

Paper

Lillie Bahrami
Avery Tallman

Individual Exhibit

Lina Takahashi

Individual Documentary

Alik Christianian

Individual Website

Emilia Van Buskirk

Group Website

Arash Yousefzadeh and Stevan Maksimovic

Calvin Lincoln and Brad Winchester

Congratulations to all of these young historians!

Ms. Thompson

Money Jam Club Coming to Summit this March

Students, learn the best investment you can make in any economic climate! Discover how much your friendships impact your future fortunes. Learn about the stock market and how you can participate. The **Money Jam Club** will meet for four sessions after school on Thursdays beginning March 31, 2011. We'll discuss financial decisions and their consequences, funding them by saving and investing, and how the goal of becoming a millionaire is within your reach. This free introductory club on finance is open to all Summit students, and will be held on four Thursdays this year: March 31, April 7, 14 and 21 from 3:15-4:15 pm in the library. Interested students can contact Ms. Byerlein in the library, or parents may email her at elizabeth.byerlein@bvsd.org to register.



Box Tops For Education



I want to inform you and your student about the Box Tops for Education program as it can provide additional funding for the school.

The NetZero Club has been collecting Box Tops for the past several years in order to raise money for their club. For the current school year, the club has raised \$158 just from cutting out Box Tops and submitting them twice a year. (If you're looking for the Box Tops collection box, it's in the main office.) In order for the school to raise additional funds from Box Tops, families can register online at boxtops4education.com. Please take a look at this website, and consider registering. You can do your online shopping through the box tops website and a certain percentage will be donated to Summit Middle School each time you purchase something.

This has the potential to boost Summit earnings in addition to collecting Box Tops at the school. Please give it a try and if you have any questions, please contact me at ninadonohue@comcast.net.

Thank you for your efforts to help our fabulous school!

Sincerely,
Nina Donohue, Summit Parent

Summit's National Junior Honor Society Selection Process

Summit's National Junior Honor Society selection process for the class of 2012 is underway.

In keeping with the national norms and rules of NJHS, here is our process:

1. Teachers and administrators nominate students from a list of academically qualified Summit students currently in 7th grade. Academic qualifications include: cumulative 3.5 or above gpa for 6th grade and the first semester of 7th grade, or if the student entered Summit in 7th grade, for the first semester of 7th grade. In addition, students may not have failed any electives. Each teacher/administrator may nominate up to 8 boys and 8 girls based on their perceptions of the NJHS pillars: *leadership, character, service, citizenship and scholarship* in the classroom, our school community and/or interactions with students.
2. Teachers' nominee lists are returned to Tom Seibel or Cheryle Kapsak before spring break.
3. After spring break we will provide all faculty/administrators with a ballot that has the "nominated" list.
4. From those nominated, each teacher/administrator will vote for up to 8 girls and 8 boys, who best exemplify the 5 NJHS pillars.

Projected timeline:

- Discussion of process, list of qualified students at March 15th faculty meeting
- Ballots will be handed out at April 5th faculty meeting
- Ballots due back to Tom Seibel or Cheryle Kapsak by the April 19th faculty meeting
- Invitations to the NJHS class of 2012 will be extended by the end of April/early May
- Induction in May

SHOW YOUR SCHOOL SPIRIT ORDER YOUR HOODIE SWEATSHIRT NOW!

Gray hoodie with a purple and white Summit logo
Purple hoodie with a black and white Summit logo

Please indicate quantity below:

	Youth XL	Adult Small	Adult Medium	Adult Large	Adult XL
Gray					
Purple					

Total sweatshirts ordered _____ @ \$25.00 each

Total due \$ _____

Student name _____

Parent name _____

E-mail _____

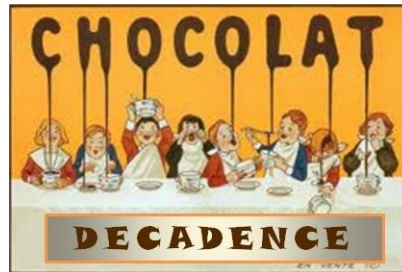
Phone number _____

Please make checks payable to Summit Middle School. Please print this order form and drop off in the box in the Summit Office by April 8, 2011. Sweatshirts will be distributed on Registration Day in August.

GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY!

for the

Celebrate Summit
Annual Community Party
to benefit Summit Middle School



Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art

Friday, April 1st

7:00-10:00 in the evening

Join past, present and incoming Summit parents,
staff and faculty for a great evening that supports Summit!

Enjoy delicious desserts & snacks beverages, cordials & coffees

Live Auction, Paddle Raiser and Themed Baskets

Tickets \$25

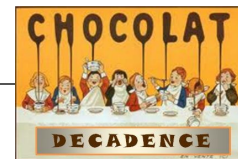
[Click to Purchase Tickets](#)

Questions, Donations, Volunteers? Contact Robin at luffrobin@me.com

All proceeds directly benefit Summit
Supporters of Summit Inc[®] (SOS) is a registered 501(c)3

Your tickets will be held at the door on the night of the event.

Celebrate Summit Auction Items



The Nature People™

“Polar Bear Expedition Trip”

Round trip flight from Winnipeg to Churchill. Accommodations, all meals services of NHA's professional Expedition Leaders and assistants, all activities/entrance fees, evening wildlife and cultural presentations, all taxes and service charges. (excludes last lunch or dinner in Churchill)

Donated by Natural Habitat Adventures. Value: \$10,600

“Vail Condominium”

Spend 7 nights at Vail Racquet Club in a beautiful two bedroom condo (sleeps 8). Fireplace, wireless internet, pool, Jacuzzi, clubhouse, tennis courts. Available during the month of June 2011 or September 2011 - April 2012 (excludes Thanksgiving week and Winter Break).

Donated by the Platt Family. Value: \$2,100



“Martha’s Vineyard Vacation”

One week in a gorgeous 3 bedroom cottage on Martha’s Vineyard. (Sleeps 7). Biking distance to downtown Edgartown. Donated by the Shusterman family. **Value: \$1,500**

“Amazing Telluride Trip for Four”

Labor Day weekend trip including (4) round trip flight from DIA. Four nights stay in Hotel Telluride. World class food at Honga’s Restaurant. Plus, (4) passes to the Telluride Film Festival.

Donated by the Luff family. Value: \$4,000



“Astonishing Aspen House”

A beautiful new 9000 square foot vacation home at the edge of the Maroon Bells scenic area. Offered for 7 days and 7 nights this summer anywhere from June 24th to July 5th, 2011. *Donated by Steeplechase Properties. Value: \$21,000*

“Taste of Ghana: Dinner for 6-8 in Your Home”

Enjoy a special Ghanaian dinner prepared in your home by Hay-dee Ayi-Bonte (one of Summit’s teachers) and her husband. Menu can be based on your needs/wants and includes Ghanaian salad, soup, main dish and dessert.

Donated by the Ayi-Bonte family. Value: priceless!



Parent Engagement Network presents

Thriving During the Teenage Years

Can Teens be Trusted?

By Dr. Jan Hittelman

As concerns rise regarding teen substance abuse, Internet activity, text messaging, etc., many parents out of fear are “clamping down” and policing their own children. Many “experts” are recommending parents periodically search rooms, monitor cell phone use, text messaging, computer use, and Internet sites visited. Under certain circumstances, if your teen has repeatedly violated your trust, has a known substance abuse problem, or has a psychiatric disorder that requires a high level of monitoring, I would agree with this approach. I most certainly would not recommend that every parent start policing and checking up on his or her teenage child. The real challenge for parents of teens is trying to balance developing a trusting relationship with looking out for your child’s well being.

I would encourage parents to remember that most teens are not abusing substances, engaging in dangerous Internet, text messaging, cell phone, or computer activity. Most of our children deserve to be trusted. If we have difficulty calming our fears, there are far more effective and respectful ways to help ensure that our children avoid a wide range of risk behaviors:

- Engage in frequent, mutually respectful, discussions regarding these behaviors. Try and listen more than lecture. Encourage your child to share his/her point of view. There is a wealth of evidence that when parents effectively communicate their concerns regarding risk behaviors, children engage in them far less often. Based on local YRBS data, high school students are 18 times more likely to think it's wrong for someone their age to drink if they believe their parents think it's wrong.
- Encourage your child to participate in the discipline plan regarding risk behaviors and consequences. This will increase the likelihood that they will take responsibility for their behavior and truly learn from their mistakes.
- Give fair warning. When/if you are considering monitoring your child’s behavior, let them know the reasons that you are doing so and be honest with them about what you are going to do. Losing the element of surprise is far outweighed by losing their respect.
- If your trust is violated, provide your child with opportunities, guidance and encouragement to regain your trust. Remember, it is important to give your teen a chance to try again after a mistake. Mistakes are how we learn.

Trying to find the right balance between trust and oversight will help ensure that we develop healthy, respectful, and lasting relationships with our children.

UPCOMING PEN EVENT: Get real, Girls

Presenter: Rachel Simmons

National presenter and author, “Odd Girl Out” and “Curse of the Good Girl”
(In memory of Rachael Kessler, author of the ground-breaking book, Soul of Education)
www.GirlsLeadership.org

Thursday, April 28, 6:30-8:30pm, Fairview High School (1515 Greenbriar, Boulder)

Learn more about PEN by visiting their website: www.parentengagementnetwork.org or by contacting Paula Nelson, PEN chair (pnj6225@yahoo.com, 303-880-6030) or Betsy Fox, PEN Lead Coach, (foxbetsy123@msn.com, 720-563-7007).

Dr. Jan Hittelman, a licensed psychologist, is Director of Boulder Psychological Services and the Founder of the Boulder Counseling Cooperative. Questions or comments for this monthly column can be sent via email to: jan.hittelman@gmail.com, or by phone: 720-217-3270

Summit News

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

Summit News is available at
<http://bvsd.org/schools/summit/newsletters/Pages/default.aspx>

Scharmin Dorostkar, Editor
Please email submissions to
summit.office@bvsd.org.

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://bvsd.org/openenrollment/Pages/default.aspx>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2010-2011 ACADEMIC YEAR

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