



WHITTIER GREENLEAF

MARCH 2009

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From the Principal's Desk

Dear Families,

Thank you, thank you for supporting the Boulder Valley School District bond back in 2006! We are really excited to begin our work this month as a Design Advisory Team to plan for the new addition to Whittier. I truly appreciate those of you from our community who have volunteered your time to be part of this important group. You will hear from me with updates after each D.A.T. meeting and as the construction project nears. As a reminder, we expect to break ground on the addition before the winter break of 2009. I promise to keep you posted!

On February 17th, our students and staff thoroughly enjoyed the Imagination Makers Theater Company's production of *Poetrees and Other Verses from Nature*. This outstanding performance was made possible through our school and a grant from the Community Foundation Serving Boulder County and Boulder County Scientific and Cultural Facilities District. Thank you to these organizations for their support of arts at Whittier.

As you know, CSAP time is upon us for our 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders! Thank you for checking our calendar with yours to help your child be at school for these important assessments. We rely on CSAP data as an integral part of the body of evidence for decision-making at our school.

Once again, it's time to report our progress on our School Improvement Plan Goals. Here are some of the strategies that we are working on in each of our goal areas:

Equity: We are working to improve the reading scores of our Latino students in the following ways:

- We have implemented flexible, short-term reading groups with a specific instructional focus for all students.
- We continue to integrate specific reading strategies in content area instruction.
- We continue to serve many students in after-school reading and math intervention groups.
- We have completed our project of cataloguing our guided reading library so that it may be used with greater frequency and with specific level and content readily available.
- We continue to provide leveled books for home reading.

Achievement: All Whittier International students will improve their math proficiency.

- Thank you to our wonderful PTA for providing us with Math Journals to support math instruction.
- All teachers are implementing *Everyday Math*, our new math program at least 75% of math instruction time.
- Families have begun to receive communication about each math unit.

Cont'd

Climate: Students will treat each other with respect, play cooperatively and avoid bullying and teasing behavior.

- Counselors have visited most classrooms to provide bully-proofing lessons and have provided lessons to other classes.
- Our classes are enjoying the playground toys provided by our P.E. teacher.
- The counselors have completed their improvements to the Peace Place program and will bring these changes to the staff in the near future.
- The Peer Mediators have received training and are excited about beginning their work.

School Operations: We are working to decrease the interruptions to students who are learning in our hallways.

- We completed a survey of all students and adults who work in the hallways and realized that increased vigilance for silence in the hallways has already made a big difference!

There's another "Coffee with the Principal" event on Tuesday, February 24th at 10:00 this time. Please join us if you can!

Best regards, Becky Escamilla

Coffee with the Principal



Please join Becky and the Community for Coffee or Tea
On Tuesday, February 24th
At 10:00
Near the Office.
Stop By if You Can!

PTA NEWS ~

**PTA Meeting: Wednesday, March 4th
6-7:30 pm**

Dinner and child care provided at no charge.

Join us!

Parents are encouraged to complete school survey

At the beginning of March, the Office of Planning and Assessment will send all parents the Parent *Snapshot Survey* via U.S. mail. Your participation is very important as the survey questions are aligned to our school's strategic plans and goals. Summarized results help us determine how well our school is performing.

It is important for our school to have a high participation rate so that our survey data will accurately reflect parents' perceptions and opinions. The survey results are reviewed by our school staff to determine what programs and processes are working and which ones need improvement. Consequently, the survey results can have a significant impact on our school operations.

Because the same survey has been given for several years, our school staff and School Improvement Team are able to study trends and patterns in responses. All of this information helps us to serve you in the best way possible. Because your feedback is important, we hope that you will take a few minutes to complete the survey and return it to the Office of Planning and Assessment in the postage-paid envelope.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call 303 442-____ (name of Principal or school representative) at (school

BOULDER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT Learning Materials Adoption Preview

The Board of Education of the Boulder Valley Schools invites the public to examine materials being considered for adoption as basic learning materials for the following subject areas:

Science K-12
Music K-5

The materials proposed for adoption will be on display for patron review at the

Boulder Valley Schools
Education Center
Curriculum Office
6500 E. Arapahoe
Boulder, CO 80303

Materials will be on display for one month.

March 3, 2009 – April 3, 2009

Preview hours are Monday - Friday, 7:30a.m - 4:30p.m.

For further information, call Carol Thompson at 303-447-5177.

We're Saving Trees!

Thank you to all Whittier families who have signed up for the Whittier e-mail list-serve.

The Greenleaf and other communications are now being sent by e-mail, and we have reduced our printing by almost two thirds!

(You may still join the e-list by signing up in the Whittier office.)

The Whittier Greenleaf is also posted on the website each month.

MARCH 2009

BVSD's school calendars for the next two years were approved by the Board of Education on Jan. 27. Electronic copies of both calendars are available on the website at <http://bvsd.org/calendar/Pages/default.aspx> (links are in the left index).

Schools will be provided with copies of next year's calendar printed on cardstock for all of their student households and staff members in mid-March.

March CSAP Tests Are Coming

The CSAP tests began 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 school's principal about the Reading, Writing, Math, and Science tests.

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.

Our BOOK FAIR was a Hit!

Thank you for helping to make our BOOK FAIR a huge success!

This year we sold a record \$7428.22 at the Fair. This is \$2288.26 more than last year! So far, we have added 107 new books to the collection and will be able to add at least another 100 books this spring. We receive 60% of the profit if it is taken in books so I try to get as many quality books as possible. Special thanks to all the people who donated a total of 50 books for our teacher's classroom collections, and \$50.00 in book gift certificates. Another special thanks goes to all the wonderful volunteers who helped set up, run, and take down the Fair. Please stop by the library and see all the "fab" pictures of staff and students who dressed up for the fair Hollywood-style!

Claudia Riggs

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Grade-Level Updates on Whittier's IB Program

Kindergarten

Kindergarteners have become experts in natural resources and why they are important. Put on your scarves and gloves! Next week, we will venture to Antarctica (in our imaginations) as we begin our "Mapping Our World" Unit of Inquiry. We will focus on maps, globes and the cold, mysterious continent of Antarctica. We have also been discussing I.B. Attitudes and Outcomes - ask a kindergartener about independence, integrity and commitment!

First Grade

First grade just finished our Personal History unit. The students had a great time sharing their dolls and information about their ancestors with all the visitors during the Inquiry Fair. Our next unit is Life in Earth's Gardens. We have started seeds growing in our classrooms and are excited to watch their entire life cycle during the next several weeks. We will soon build homes for worms and discuss how the worms can help our gardens grow. We are looking forward to getting outside into our wonderful Whittier garden and planting and enjoying the outdoors. We would love to have garden helpers!

Third Grade

Third grade is just ending our unit on the human body. We would like to extend our thanks many parents for helping to enhance this unit. Kyra's dad turned Holly's class into orthopedic surgeons for an afternoon, Gracie's mom was a wealth of information on every visit to our class and Kendra's mom (from 4th grade) shared a very cool model with movable organs! The Inquiry Fair was full of different investigations that extended from this unit. Next we fly into "Superheroes: Fact and Fiction", always a favorite with the required reading of comic books. The project for this unit will be participation in our musical on March 5th, "Let's Hear It for the Heroes". We'd like to also express our appreciation for the support we receive from all the specialist. In art the kids make coil Native American pots which relate to our last unit of inquiry beginning in April, Amy Hancock was very involved in the human body unit including our very popular jump-roping but so much more. Claudia in the library is a wealth of resources to support all our units and Ms. Jordan is skillfully guiding the music on the program mentioned above. It indeed does take a village in 3rd grade!

Fourth Grade:

IB in fourth grade has been a shocking experience! Ha-ha... We did have a lot of fun in February with our Energy unit. We learned about magnets, electricity, and how they are related! The students did an amazing job on their inquiry fair projects, really taking a closer look into a particular puzzling question. The discoveries were fantastic! And their presentations were very creative and engaging.

Fourth Grade, con't.:

We also looked at where the energy for our electricity comes from, and what is our responsibility towards its use. In March we will be looking at structures of life. We will investigate plants and animals to see how they adapt to their environment, the life cycle of different animals, and how they are connected through food chains/webs.

Fifth Grade

IB attitudes are popping out all over in the Fifth Grade. Our last inquiry unit began with a big bang as we introduced our *Variables Inquiry* by trying to affect the size of bubbles using a variety of bubble gum brands. Students learned how to construct controlled experiments with boats, pendulums, tops, and catapults. The enthusiasm students showed as they measured capacity of "lifeboats", distance foil balls could be launched, length of time tops spun on various surfaces, and numbers of swings different length pendulums completed in a fifteen second interval was contagious. The entire fifth grade seemed to swing and spin with excitement as thinkers satisfied their curiosity about how things work. Our next inquiry is civil war. We will learn about our own war between the states, and look at historic and current civil wars around the world. In all our book groups, students identify IB attitudes in the main characters and defend their opinions with examples from the text. Currently students are focusing on respect in the lunch room and tolerance on the playground.

Whittier International Art

For up to date information on what we are doing in ART, including I.B. information, Art club information, and student galleries, please go to the art website at:

<http://schools.bvsd.org/whittier/artsite/index.html>

The art site is updated every week with up to date pictures of students working on their art, finished projects, and added links to learn more about art including artists, art movements, and cultural art from around the world!

Art ROCKS!!

Jenn Shepherd

Music Notes

3rd grade students will present a musical, "Let's Hear it for the Heroes," on Thursday, March 5, at 6:30 p.m. Be sure you change this musical date on your calendars. It was previously scheduled for February.

The **2nd grade musical** about "Bugs" will be on Tuesday, April 7, at 6:30 p.m.

The Whittier Choir will perform on Thursday, April 16 for Art and Music Night. Miss Shepherd will display art work from every Whittier student. The event begins at 6:00 p.m., and choir sings at 6:30 pm.

Marcia Jordan

Music Teacher