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*Dean Peters*

Inside this issue:

<a href="#"><u>Governing Board News</u></a>	2
<a href="#"><u>Volunteer News</u></a>	4

Dear ACS Parents,

Welcome Back ACS students and families! I hope you all had a wonderful summer break and you are all eager to get going with the 2008-2009 school year. Last week our teachers and students were busy getting acquainted with one another, establishing classroom procedures and expectations. We also welcomed several new students to our ACS community.

Starting a new school year is always exciting and fun, but it is also quite busy as we get new routines underway such as a new start time for our middle school students, working out the logistics of morning carpool, and getting after school activities underway. We appreciate your patience as we get these routines established and we work out the kinks along the way!

I'd like to provide you with a few reminders that will help in making our daily interactions go even smoother:

1. Please have your student here on time. It is critical that each student be in his/her seat, ready to learn at the appropriate time. For our middle school students that time is 8:10 a.m. and for our elementary students it is 8:25 a.m. Tardy students disrupt the entire class and they miss important information.
2. Please remember to adhere to the morning drop off times for students. Middle school students may start being dropped off at 8:00 a.m. If they have younger siblings and/or elementary aged carpoolers, they will accompany them into the gym. Middle school students who are dropped off prior to 8:00 a.m. will be placed into Academy Kids. If you do not see an assistant out front in a carpool vest, then students should not be dropped off. Families who have only elementary students may begin to drop off their students at 8:15 a.m. Students dropped off prior to this time that do not carpool with or have middle school student siblings will be sent to Academy Kids.
3. Please remember that all visitors to ACS must enter through the front door only. All visitors must sign in at the front office and obtain and wear a VISITOR or volunteer name badge. These badges must be worn at all times while in the building.
4. Please help monitor your student's compliance with our dress code. Your help to monitor and reinforce the dress code sends a positive message of support for our policy. We greatly appreciate this!
5. As a reminder, the pink hoodies from last year may ONLY be worn as a "coat" and not as an ACS hoodie. They must be removed after students have entered their classrooms and hung up and treated as a coat. The pink t-shirts are not considered "spirit" wear and can only be worn on dress down days.
6. Daily attendance is a requirement of all students and it is essential to their academic success. However, if your student is sick, please keep them home until they are better as students learn best when they are healthy.
7. Middle School electives have changed this year. The first change has to do with the fact that the 6<sup>th</sup> graders are on a completely different bell schedule than the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Their electives are being offered by their 6<sup>th</sup> grade core teachers only. Due to this

**Important Dates**

Aug. 22—K-5 Testing Day  
Middle School Regular  
day, dress down day.

Aug. 29—Dress Down Day

Sept. 1—No School

change, the manner in which electives were offered for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders had to be changed since there were not as many students in the pool for choosing electives. Thus, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders were balanced throughout the 6 electives offered for these students. We understand this is a change from previous years, but it was a necessary change that had to be done in order to balance out the number of students among the six electives. Although the elective names may be the same, the teachers have “tweaked” their electives to provide new activities and projects for students to do. They’ve “spiced” things up a bit, in order to make it a new learning experience for these students.

8. If you have a questions or concerns about something regarding school, please call or schedule a meeting with the appropriate staff member. We appreciate the opportunity to address issues as soon as they become a concern for you so they do not lead to a bigger issue.

In closing, I appreciate all the support you have given our ACS staff as we transition into the 2008-2009 school year. Although there have been changes in several areas, we believe these changes are necessary in order to provide the academic rigor which will make ACS more successful. Our goal is to continue to make ACS one of the top performing schools in Douglas County. With your continued support and strong partnership we can attain this goal by keeping our focus on student success throughout the school year.

Thank you,

Kendra Peters

ACS Assistant Dean

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## *Governing Board News*

The Governing Board held its first meeting of the school year this past Monday evening. A small number of parents and staff members were in attendance at the meeting, and at the earlier working session. Carpool procedures and improvements were the main topic at the working session. A meeting of the board’s Policy Committee will delve further into the carpool issue this coming Monday, August 25, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the school library. All interested parties are encouraged to attend and give their input.

Highlights from the general meeting follow, but for a complete accounting, plan to attend a board meeting in person or read Board Secretary, Todd Warnke’s minutes when they become available. Business Manager, Barbara Ireland, started things off with a quick recap of projects accomplished over the summer, including completion of the remainder of the exterior painting, installation of new carpet throughout as well as additional security cameras and the arrival of a shipment of new chairs and desks (which were assembled by parent volunteers and staff members the Friday night before school started on Monday!)

The parent comment portion of the meeting focused on concerns about our new Saxon math curriculum. Deans Brown and Peters explained how the placement tests factored in and how the new curriculum will work. The deans said that the tests were basically a review for the students, but that they did point out where the gaps in their learning were. Geometry and measurement were areas where our students were weak. Second through eighth grade students will take another placement test in September to determine their current math level.

The Deans pointed out that our new language arts program, Treasures, had a slow start, but that our students have caught on quickly. They are confident that the same will hold true in the math area.

A new library catalog/checkout system which would bring our current system up to date has been proposed. Using the new “Alexandria”

system, our library could switch over easily and teachers would be able to access the system from their classrooms. The cost is \$5000, with a \$799 yearly maintenance fee. The board will look into this for future discussion and a possible vote.

Laurie Hughes, middle school Spanish teacher, and the Governing Board's middle school teacher representative reported that the change in location for the middle school appears to be working well. Sixth grade is now on one side of the building and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders on the other, a system that is creating a calmer, more relaxed atmosphere for all. There have been less instances of bullying since the separation and lunches are kept separate as well.

Our homeschool support program is off to a fine start with enrollment up from last year's numbers. These classes meet Tuesdays and Thursdays at three off-site locations – in Castle Rock, Parker, and Highlands Ranch. Homeschool students also have the opportunity to participate in sports and extracurricular activities at ACS.

The Governing Board committees are comprised of ACS parents and staff members, and volunteer time is earned for serving on a committee. Contact any board member for more information if interested. Meetings are held on an as-needed basis, except for the School Advisory Council (SAC), which meets monthly. The SAC's next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 2, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the school cafeteria followed by a PTO meeting. Board member Ellen Neal-Eakin serves as the liaison to the SAC. Babysitting and snacks are provided at these meetings.

The Operations Committee reports that the new wireless speaker systems for the teachers are "awesome," according to committee chair Chad Mitchell, who had the opportunity to sit in a class and observe. Also, the new choir microphones have been installed and help ensure that those on stage can be heard.

The Policy Committee, chaired by Cindy Hazlehurst, will meet regarding carpool (as previously mentioned) on Monday night, August 25, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the library. All are welcome.

Getting the word out about the good things happening at ACS is one focus of the Communications committee, headed up by Cynthia Heikes. Aspiring writers or those interested in helping spread the word about ACS are encouraged to join this committee.

The task at hand for the Strategic Planning Committee is to educate our parents and others about an upcoming ballot measure, which will benefit charter schools through a mil levy if passed. Committee Chair Paul Hardison said the monies from the mil levy would start small but will build down the road. Although charters are not included in the district's bond issue this time, our students would benefit from the bond in the future when they move on to Douglas County high schools. Watch for upcoming meetings regarding this important issue.

Board President Clayton Watson said he is waiting to hear when an agreement regarding ACS and the Town of Castle Rock will go before town council. The agreement refers to a portion of the land on ACS' site that would revert back to the town in November 2010 if the agreement is not rewritten. Watson is hopeful that all council members will have the opportunity to learn about the issue and its history before it goes to a vote.

The board's next working session will be held Wednesday, August 27, from 5 to 7 p.m. in the school conference room. Our monthly general meeting is slated for Monday, September 8, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the school cafeteria. We encourage you all to attend, find out what's going on at ACS, and earn some volunteer time along the way!

## Volunteer News

### ACS Volunteers are Shining Stars

The start of another wonderful year at ACS! I hope you are excited as your children are starting back to school and your schedule again becomes driven by the academic calendar. It is so refreshing to see our students enter the building every morning to continue their education. Even more exciting is seeing our wonderful volunteers coming in to the school to assist in many different areas. Your participation and involvement adds a lot to your child's educational experience and strengthens our ACS community.

Skow Photography was here on Tuesday, but their camera malfunctioned toward the end of the day and we were not able to take 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and volunteer pictures. They will be back on September 9<sup>th</sup> to do 7<sup>th</sup> grade, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, afternoon Kindergarten and all volunteers. You can come in between 10:30 and 1:00 to have your volunteer picture taken if you haven't already had it done. We hope to have your badges and everything up and running as soon as possible. Until we have your individual badges, just use a Visitor badge when you sign in at the office. Please remember to log your hours in over at the Volunteer table which is across from the school office. Each family has a card for you to log your volunteer hours on.

I want to thank the volunteers who helped with registration—Lisa Douglas, Jaynee Hodgkins, Ron and Lettie Lee. Due to a family medical emergency, I was unable to be here and I appreciate the volunteers who stepped in to assist us. We also had many volunteers that helped assemble our new desks right before school started at the last minute! We appreciate your willingness to help and I hope you will remember to log in the hours that you volunteered. We also appreciate everyone who has volunteered to be a classroom coordinator this year.

Let's all work together to make this a wonderful school year!

Anne Belfrage

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