

September 4, 2008



Dean Peters

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Dear ACS Parents ,

It's hard to believe that September has arrived. You definitely can feel a change in the air as we begin to have cool mornings and chilly evenings. As with changes in the season, we have had a few changes here at ACS as well. The staff and administration would like to thank you for your patience and support as we work toward meeting our mission and vision statements for ACS. These statements are not just words, but are the principles and foundations which make ACS the outstanding school it has been and will continue to be.

We appreciated all the parents and staff who came to the PTO/SAC meeting on Tuesday evening. PTO made some budget decisions and spoke about some of their upcoming fundraiser and community events. More information will follow later in the newsletter regarding these events. We were pleased to have Jed Bowman, Executive Director of Research and Assessment and Curriculum and Instruction with the Douglas County School District, to share his wealth of knowledge and information regarding CSAP. He shared with the group the background of how the CSAP tests were created, how they are scored, as well as how to interpret the data as a school and as parents. Everyone attending walked away with a much clearer understanding of what the test is and what it is not.

Although it is not CSAP testing time, we have begun the NWEA/MAPS testing for our students in grades 2-8. Students are taking three sets of tests; reading, language usage, and math. Students in grades 2-5 and 7-8 are taking these tests during their regular computer class time and students in grades 6 are on a rotating schedule each day. Unlike the CSAP test, we will have immediate access to this data once the testing window is finished as the information is readily available via the web. Your student's classroom teacher will be going over these results as well as last year's CSAP data using our C-SNAP information during parent/teacher conferences in October!

The Douglas County School District Calendar Committee is seeking feedback on the proposed 2009-10 conventional calendars. You can access the survey on the district website at www.dcsdk12.org. The survey will be available until September 5th. There will also be a Board of Education meeting with the DCSD on September 16th. During this meeting, there will be discussions about charter schools and meeting the DCSD End Statements. Please join us at this meeting Tuesday evening.

Please join us at some of the highlighted ACS events coming up in the very near future:

- ACS Governing Board meeting-Monday, September 8th, from 5-7 p.m. in the cafeteria
- PTO magazine and cookie dough drive kick-off assembly on Wednesday, September 10th. Drive begins on Thursday, September 11th.
- PTO Movie Night-Friday, September 12th

PTO/SAC Math Night-Thursday, November 6th –More information to follow in subsequent newsletters.

We'd like to take this time to also mention our sincere apologies regarding the late start to our

Important Dates

Sept. 8 - Governing Board Meeting 6-8 pm

Sept. 9 - Picture Make-Ups

band program. Our band director, Mr. Thrush, has been seriously ill and has been directed by his doctors not to come to school until he is completely well. In the meantime, we are actively searching for a “band substitute” but this is almost like finding a needle in a haystack! If you know of any musicians who can or are willing to be a sub for our program, please have them contact the school. We appreciate your patience as we send out well wishes to Mr. Thrush for a speedy recovery.

Please remember to have your student bring a sweatshirt, hoodie, or coat to school as we are heading into that time of year when the weather can change suddenly. We appreciate everyone’s effort to comply with the recent changes to the carpool policy. There are two areas we are still seeing continuing problems. No cell phones should be used during carpool. There have been several times when an accident nearly occurred due to a cell phone being used while trying to pull away from the curb. Also, please keep in mind that any middle school student who is dropped off in the morning, prior to an assistant in a colored vest being present, will be sent to Academy Kids. We cannot have students left unsupervised due to safety reasons. We appreciate you adhering to these protocols.

Thank you,

Kendra Peters

ACS Assistant Dean

petersk@academycharter.org

September 8
5:00 PM

Governing Board News

Put next **Monday, September 8, at 5:00 p.m.** on your calendar for the next general Governing Board meeting to be held in the school’s cafeteria. An agenda for the meeting can be viewed by clicking [here](#), so you have time to look it over and see what will be discussed at the meeting in advance. This is a public meeting and all ACS parents and staff are encouraged to attend. We hope we’ll see you there!

8th Grade Washington D.C. Trip

All interested 8th grade students and their parents are urged to attend an informational meeting regarding the 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C. next **Tuesday, September 9th, at 6:30 p.m. in the ACS cafeteria.** This is your opportunity to find out more about what the trip entails. We are in the planning stages and welcome your input and participation! It is important to have your student attend this meeting as well. Contact Cynthia Heikes at cdheikes@msn.com for further information.

Fundraising for the trip will begin tomorrow! Any 8th graders that are interested in fundraising for the trip can begin checking out Entertainment Books tomorrow after school! We will be discussing other fundraising at the September 9th meeting. Plan to attend and bring your 8th grader!

Lori Burgos

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SAC News

CSAP Parent Training 101

In the SAC meeting this week, Jed Bowman, Executive Director with Douglas County School District, gave a very informative presentation on CSAP and how to use the results. For those of you that couldn't join us, here's a summary of the information we think every parent should know:

- Colorado legislation requires a standards based education. Standards determined by Colorado educators are defined for each grade level on what each student must learn.
- CSAP testing was designed to measure how well our students know those standards. As Jed stated, CSAP testing is an external audit of internal practices.
- Within Douglas County, CSAP scores are never used as the only piece of information in making a decision. It is a piece of information used in conjunction with other data, especially teacher input on decisions for individual students.
- Currently, a primary goal of state educators is to focus on student thinking and problem solving to ensure success for our students in the 21st century. Because of that, CSAP includes constructive responses, not just multiple choice questions. Students have to show their thought process in answering the majority of questions. Douglas County has reviewed the testing process and feels the tests are graded consistently and fairly.
- Colorado educators worked with McGraw Hill on creating the test and gave their input to ensure the test is measuring how proficient students are in each standard.
- Despite the confidence Douglas County has in the test measuring how well students know the standards, certain problems have arisen in the use of the data. For example, CSAP is often used to compare schools against each other when it alone should not be used as the only piece of information. Demographics, number of students and other factors are very different between schools and will impact overall scores at each school.
- Additionally, CSAP scores shouldn't be evaluated for one year alone. Trends over time should be examined to support any decision making.
- One of the biggest benefits of CSAP data is how usable the information is for administrators and teachers. C-SNAP, a Douglas County software program that analyzes CSAP data, provides each school with a very detailed breakdown of the test results over time, by grade, by subject area, by student, by standard and many other ways. Teachers should (and do at ACS) use C-SNAP to tailor their teaching on each standard and for each student.
- Finally, Jed pointed out parents and students should not stress over CSAP testing. It's a chance to show what you know and to use the information to improve each student's education.

If you are interested in reviewing CSAP released test items or would like more information about the content of the assessment, refer to the Colorado Model Content Standards and/or the Assessment Frameworks at the Colorado Department of Education website, www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/released_items.html.

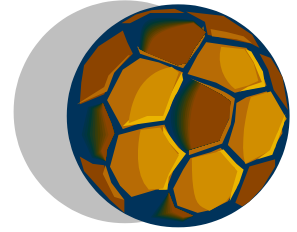
Picture Make-ups



Skow Photography will be here on Tuesday, September 9th, from 10:30 to 1:00. They will be taking Middle School student pictures and volunteer pictures. Volunteers may come to the Gym at any time to have their ID badges made.

Soccer Players Needed

The ACS 6th, 7th and 8th grade Boys' Soccer Team is in need of a few more players immediately! Our first game is next week, and we don't have quite enough players to field a team yet. We are opening up our team to both Middle School boys and girls this year. If we don't have at least 12 players by next Monday, September 8, we will have to cancel the season, and we don't want to do that. If you have any interest, please contact Christy Matlock at matlockc@academycharter.org or Lisa Arnell at arnelll@academycharter.org ASAP.



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We're on the web!

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