

December 18, 2008



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Dean Brown

Dear ACS Families and Friends,

We would like to wish you a very Happy Holiday Season and break! This last week before break has been fun, busy, and a little bit crazy!



We started off the week with a wonderful Winter Program with our 3rd through 5th graders and then another one on Wednesday with our Kindergartners though 2nd graders. What wonderful programs! The purchase of our speaker system was also greatly evident as we could HEAR the programs this year. Thank you to all of our great classroom teachers who put in tremendous time planning, implementing and working with our kids to make these programs such a success!

By mid week, we had the Castle Rock Fire Department at our school. One of our students, Grace Stafford, won the coloring contest and her picture is on the side of engine 155! She was chosen out of 500 drawings to have her picture on the fire engine and a plaque with Grace's picture that we will hang on the wall by the library. Congratulations, Grace!



Our Virtue and CCIRA Writing winners were honored at an assembly on Thursday. The CCIRA winners' papers are on our website! Please read what these future authors wrote about. Congratulations to all of these winners!

It's that time again...report cards! We will not be sending home report cards this year. Since we have all of our grades on Infinite Campus, parents will need to logon and check their students' report cards and grades on-line. If you have questions, please contact your child's classroom teachers.



Again, we hope you have a very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and wonderful holiday season. Be safe, be happy, and enjoy! See you in 2009!

"Happiness depends on ourselves"

-Aristotle



With Warm Regards,

Yvette Brown
ACS Dean
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Important Dates

- Dec. 19 - Teacher Work Day
- Dec. 19 - Jan. 2 No School
- Jan. 5 - First Day of 3rd Quarter
- Jan 9 - Testing Day K-5, Regular Day 6-8
- Jan 12 - Governing Board Meeting 5:00
- Jan 13 - PTO Meeting 7:30
- Jan 17 - Nuggets Night
- Jan. 19 - Martin Luther King Day No School

Governing Board News

Happy Holidays to parents, teachers, and staff members! We hope you will all have a relaxing winter break with your families, and that both students and staff will return refreshed and renewed for a great 2009!

We are planning to make a slight change to the middle school afternoon carpool pick-up procedure in mid-January of 2009 and want all parents to be aware of this change. Please read the following letter, which was sent out to middle school parents this week.

To the ACS parent community:

As you know, we are striving for a much higher level of Academic Excellence at ACS and have asked our teachers to make every effort to meet and exceed these goals. It is for these reasons that we are announcing a change to the inside pick-up procedure during afternoon carpool **for Middle School students only**, on a trial basis to begin mid-January. No changes will be made for elementary students.

Starting January 20th, 2009, middle school students not picked up from their homeroom classrooms by 3:40 p.m. each day will be directed to one common classroom per grade level. (This amounts to less than 20 students per grade.) They will wait there together until picked up by parents, called down for carpool, or sent to Academy Kids at 4:00 p.m. One middle school teacher will be in each room to oversee students. This will enable the other middle school teachers to have additional time to meet our goals, and allow them to meet with parents, plan lessons, grade students' work, update Infinite Campus, keep homework and websites current, return phone calls and emails, etc.

Middle school teachers will share the duty of overseeing students in the common classrooms, and will rotate the task every week. A notice will be placed on classroom doors to let you know where students are each day, and a weekly guide will be posted in the hallway and on the school website as well.

The Governing Board supports these changes and our teachers' efforts to use the time more effectively. This modification to our middle school pick-up policy will begin on a trial basis, after winter break, on January 20, 2009. Parents and students will be given a few weeks to see how it works, and the Governing Board will ask for parent comment and input regarding the matter at the February 9, 2009 board meeting.

Again, no changes will be made to the elementary pick-up procedure during carpool.

ACS Governing Board

Next board meeting

The board meets next on Monday, January 12th; a 5:00 working session in the conference room will be followed by the general board meeting at 6:00 p.m. in the cafeteria. ACS parents and staff members are invited to attend.



Lost and Found

Please have your students check the Lost and Found as Mrs. Bodiford will be taking all of the items left on December 19th. There are many items in the bin at this time. The Lost and Found is located inside the Cafeteria doors to your right.

Thanks for taking the time to pick up your "lost" items.

Counseling Closet

Happy Holidays from the Counseling Closet!

The holidays present many opportunities to bond with family and friends, but this time of year can also present significant stress to both you and your children.

Compared with what adults face, it might seem like kids don't have that much to stress about. But kids have their own concerns — and sometimes feel stress, just as much as adults do. And kids' stresses can be just as overwhelming, particularly if they don't have effective coping strategies.

So what stresses kids out? In a recent poll of 875 kids, grades, school, and homework topped the list (36%); then family (32%); and followed by friends, peers, gossip, and teasing (21%). When asked how they calm down when they feel pressured, most kids chose more than one activity. They sure don't take stress lying down! Here are the most common ways that kids cope, not all of which are healthy. Here are the results and some tips on how you can help!

These are the coping strategies kids said they use the most (they could give more than one response):

- * 52% play or do something active
- * 44% listen to music
- * 42% watch TV or play a video game
- * 30% talk to a friend
- * 29% try not to think about it
- * 28% try to work things out
- * 26% eat something
- * 23% lose their temper
- * 22% talk to a parent
- * 11% cry

About 25% of the kids we surveyed said that when they are upset, they take it out on themselves. The idea that kids would do things to try to harm themselves may be shocking to parents. But for some kids, feelings of stress, frustration, helplessness, hurt, or anger can be overwhelming. And without a way to express or release the feelings, a kid may feel like a volcano ready to erupt — or at least let off steam.

The poll also revealed important news for parents. Though talking to parents ranked eighth on the list of most popular coping methods, 75% of the kids surveyed said they want and need their parents' help in times of trouble. When they're stressed, they'd like their parents to talk with them, help them solve the problem, try to cheer them up, or just spend time together.

What Parents Can Do

You may not be able to prevent your kids from feeling frustrated, sad, or angry, but you can provide the tools they need to cope with these emotions.

Notice out loud. Tell kids when you notice something they might be feeling ("It seems like you might still feel mad about what happened at the playground"). This shouldn't sound like an accusation (as in: "OK, what happened now? Are you still mad about that?") or make a child feel put on the spot. It's just a casual observation that you're interested in hearing more about your child's concern.

Listen to your kids. Ask them to tell you what's wrong. Listen attentively and calmly — with interest, patience, openness, and caring. Avoid any urge to judge, blame, lecture, or tell your kids what they should have done instead. The idea is to let a child's concerns (and feelings) be heard. Encourage your child to tell the whole story by asking questions. Take your time, and let a child take his or her time, too.

Comment briefly on the feelings you think your child was experiencing as you listen. For example, you might say something like: "That must have been upsetting" or "No wonder you felt mad when they wouldn't let you in the game." Doing so shows that you understand what your child felt, why he or she felt that way, and that you care. Feeling understood and listened to helps kids feel connected to you,

and that is especially important in times of stress.

Put a label on it. Many kids do not yet have words for their feelings. If your child seems angry or frustrated, use those feeling words to help your child learn to identify the emotions by name. That will help put feelings into words so they can be expressed and communicated more easily, which helps kids develop emotional awareness — the ability to recognize their own emotional states. Kids who can recognize and identify emotions are less likely to reach the behavioral boiling point where strong emotions get demonstrated through behaviors rather than communicated with words.

Help kids think of things to do. Suggest activities kids can do to feel better now and to solve the problem at hand. Encourage them to think of a couple of ideas. You can get the brainstorm started if necessary, but don't do all the work. A child's active participation will build confidence. Support good ideas and add to them as needed. Ask, "How do you think this will work?" Sometimes talking and listening and feeling understood is all that's needed to help kids' frustrations melt away. Other times change the subject and move on to something more positive and relaxing. Don't give the problem more attention than it deserves.

Just be there. Sometimes kids don't feel like talking about what's bothering them. Try to respect that, give them space, and still make it clear that you'll be there when they do feel like talking. Even when kids don't feel like talking, they usually don't want parents to leave them alone. You can help them feel better just by being there — to keep your child company and spend time together. So if you notice your child seems to be down in the dumps, stressed, or having a bad day — but doesn't feel like talking — initiate something you can do together. Take a walk, watch a movie, shoot some hoops, or bake some cookies. Isn't it nice to know that your presence really counts?

Be patient. It hurts to see your kids unhappy or worried. But try to resist the urge to fix every problem. Instead, focus on helping them grow into good problem-solvers — kids who know how to roll with life's ups and downs, put feelings into words, calm down when needed, and bounce back to try again. Remember that you can't fix everything, and that you won't be there to solve each problem as your child goes through life. But by learning healthy coping strategies, kids can manage stresses in the future.

Resources: KidsHealth.org, BlueKids.org

Parents,

Please remember to contact me if your students are interested in participating in Peer Mentoring or Group Counseling for second semester!

Angela Krautz

K-8 School Counselor

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DCSD Denver Nuggets Community Night

The 3rd Annual Douglas County School District Denver Nuggets Community Night will be held on Saturday, January 17th, 2009 at the Pepsi Center. The Orlando Magic will play Carmelo Anthony and the rest of the Nuggets at 7:00 PM. Tickets will be \$15 for seating located throughout the arena. Each ticket purchase will have a minimum \$25 value and could be as high as a \$115 value, plus no ticket fees! The schools with the largest attendance will receive the best seat locations, starting in the lower bowl. Additionally, \$2 of each ticket sold will be donated back to the DCEF as a fund raiser directly benefiting Douglas County Schools!

Please drop your order forms off in the school office. Order forms came home last week and more are available in the office.



The Blob Who Thought It Stole Christmas

All the parents and teachers they wanted reform.
They looked for solutions to break from the norm.
They wanted things better, that's why they were fighting,
To make sure their kids would learn reading and writing
And science and math and history too
For everyone's children, not just a few.

But the Blob and its grinchers, they hated reform.
"Imagine," they sniffed " trying to break from the norm."
Standards, and charters, and school choice and such
This ed-reform business is much, much too much.

Who are they, these people this reform-minded crew
Who think they know better than us what to do?
We'll fix them,
We'll teach them,
We'll show them who's boss.

We'll make doubly sure that they suffer a loss.
We'll stop all their harping and carping and cries
We'll tell all the people their numbers are lies.
We'll say that they're wrong And without hesitation,
We'll say that they're out
To destroy education.

Oh, we'll offer solutions - the people will buy it,
All we will need say is, " It won't hurt to try it."
Whole language, new math,
And lots of things pending
(Which, of course, will require more billions in spending.)

And for those who ask questions or say it's a waste,
With great condescension, they'll be put in their place.
We'll stop the reformers, we'll stop them, we will,
Because after all,
We're the kings of the Hill.

So the Blob and it's grinchers
Embarked on their task
To make sure that all things reform finished last.

But the parents and teachers and grandparents too,
Went on with their work, they knew what to do.

The Blob might have money and power and might.
But that didn't mean that they knew what was right.
And no matter the odds, or how long it might take,
The reformers were steadfast... a difference they'd make.

They wouldn't be quiet
And they wouldn't give in
And whenever they lost, they would just start again.
They offered suggestions and wrote legislation
And some ran for office, (to the Blob's consternation).

We'll stop these reformers the Blob-grinchers blustered
And what we can't stop we will just filibuster.
We'll do all we can, oh we've got a few tricks,
After all it's our business to play politics.
Against our opponents we'll spend, spend galore.
And for those who are with us, we'll spend even more.

And when it was over the Blob danced with glee
Their efforts had let to a great victory.
They'd shown the reformers, and now they could say
"Just take your reforms, now take them away."

But the parents and teachers and grandparents too,
Just smiled at the Blob, because everyone knew:
That for all of its millions and for all of its might,
The Blob had not managed to carry the fight.

No matter the money and time overspent
No matter how much their support they had lent
In state after state they had failed to defeat
The education reformers they said they would beat.

And when it was over the fact remained still,
That they couldn't be really the King of the hill.
And for all of their ranting and raving and storm
They've really done nothing to stop ed- reform.



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We're on the web!

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