



Douglas County
School District

Learn today. Lead tomorrow.

NEWSLINE

A weekly news source from Douglas County School District

www.dcsdk12.org

August 6, 2009

Photo of the week ...



An Acres Green student adds his backpack to the shelf on the first day of classes for modified calendar schools.

Welcome back for a new school year!

Wednesday was the first day of school for several elementaries on the modified calendar. It's a sight we'll be seeing District-wide next week as our modified and conventional calendar schools ramp up for the new year!

Information on H1N1/Swine flu

Seasonal flu season will be upon us soon, and with it a likely resurgence of H1N1/Swine flu. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) anticipates that H1N1 cases will co-circulate with regular flu over the influenza season. So far, the severity of H1N1 has been similar to seasonal influenza.

Recommendations provided by the state health department regarding personal precautions to decrease their chances of getting the flu include:

- Wash hands frequently
- Cover your sneezes and coughs
- Avoid others with respiratory illnesses
- Stay home if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms

An H1N1 vaccine is being developed and will begin rolling out later this year. We will provide more information on the new vaccine as it becomes available.

Information related to DCSD will be posted on its website at www.dcsdk12.org. For official information, please refer to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment at www.cdph.state.co.us. A Colorado health information hotline called Colorado HELP (COHELP), 1.877.462.2911, is open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days a week.

Grand Opening for new special ed facility at Plum Creek

After ten long years of conception, planning and design, and one full year of construction, the newly built special education facility at Plum Creek Academy (PCA) will be celebrating its Grand Opening on Saturday, August 8. The new state-of-the-art academy was funded by 2006 bond money and is the only facility of its kind in Douglas County.

PCA's special education program has been part of the District since 1993. Many of the students are gifted but limited by disabilities such as severe anxiety, ADD/ADHD, bipolar disorder and other restrictive learning disabilities. PCA may also serve as an interim placement for special education students transitioning from residential treatment centers or hospital settings back to the School District. The academy offers an environment that allows for a low student/staff ratio and attempts to limit the maximum number of students at any one time to 40. In addition to being outstanding teachers in their areas of expertise, all of the devoted certified staff of 29 have at least a masters degree, and backgrounds in special education and/or behavior.

The student population also includes up to 10 autistic children with a whole spectrum of sensory issues. Special rooms that meet the unique needs of the students, such as a Sensory Room, and a Swing Room, help to bring over- and under-stimulated kids back into an optimal window for learning. The staff-to-student ratio for these children is nearly one-to-one.

PCA's goal is to serve students temporarily. The objective, per the mission statement, is to empower students to the point where a successful transition to their neighborhood school or an appropriate alternative can be accomplished. Transition generally begins with one or two classes at their local high school and takes about a full year.

"Because of the unique needs of each PCA student, daily small group counseling focuses on developing appropriate social skills," says principal Dale Jenkins. "Our social workers and transition coach teach students necessary strategies ahead of time so that they will have them in their toolbox when they encounter those situations while transitioning into their local schools."

The Grand Opening of this much-anticipated new school in Highlands Ranch will include speakers from DCSD and PCA students and staff, as well as other activities including building tours, and is open to the public beginning at 10 a.m. The school is located at 9340 Commerce Center Street in Highlands Ranch.



PCA principal Dale Jenkins shows off their new, state-of-the-art special education facility.

Open Campus policy Q&A

What is Open Campus?

Open Campus is a new policy this year at District high schools which allows some students to leave the school campus during free periods. Sophomores, juniors and seniors will be allowed to leave school grounds when not enrolled in a regularly scheduled class. Freshmen will *not* be allowed to leave school grounds without advance permission from the Principal.

What will Open Campus accomplish?

In conjunction with the reduction of graduation requirements beginning with the class of 2012, and the expansion of the school day to nine periods, Open Campus will provide students with more flexibility in their schedules. This will allow them to pursue off-campus opportunities, such as College Ready courses, technical education, internships and work, and to pursue any necessary remedial studies during the school year, reducing the need to pay for summer school classes. It will also increase the capacity of schools, given the limited bond dollars available for expansion.

Do other districts have Open Campus?

Yes, this new policy puts DCSD in line with several other metro school districts, such as Cherry Creek, Denver and Jefferson County, that employ open campus policies at all or some of their high schools.

BOE policy JH can be found on our website at www.dcsdk12.org> Board of Education> Board of Education/Superintendent Policies> J-Students. For more detailed information, please refer to your individual school's website.



Spotlight

School supply drive a community effort

The Giving Tree Committee in Lone Tree recently partnered with DCSD, a Castle Rock community group and numerous businesses and community groups to provide school supplies to students in need.

Working within their communities, the Giving Tree group and the Castle Rock group held supply drives at many different venues.

Park Meadows accepted donations and sponsorships of school supply packets. Fish City Grill at the Vistas in Park Meadows donated 10% of its sales for Monday, July 27. Sky Ridge Medical Center donated supplies, local Safeway and Costco stores donated gift cards and acted as collection points, as did local business Go Putt!. The City of Lone Tree hosted the Giving Tree at the Colorado Symphony concert in Sweetwater Park on July 25.

In Castle Rock, Music in the Meadows in Butterfield Crossing Park hosted a supply drive at their July 22 concert and also partnered with local businesses to serve as drop-off points for supplies. Three local Office Depot stores participated, as did Walmart.

Douglas County Library put donation boxes at all their locations, and department donations also came in from Douglas County Sheriff's Office.

As a result of this drive, the Lone Tree and Castle Rock efforts resulted in more than 150 backpacks filled with new supplies valued at over \$10,000. Donations continue to come in. The District has identified 10 schools with the greatest need to receive the generous donations.

Numerous other local businesses and organizations donated money, supplies and services. A more complete list can be found in the web version of this story.

ADMINISTRATION

Jim Christensen, *Superintendent*
Bill Hodges, *Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources*
Annette Fante, *Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services*
Steve Herzog, *Chief Operating Officer*
David Hart, *Chief Finance Officer*
Randy Weldon, *Chief Information Officer*

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kristine Turner, *President*
Emily Hansen, *Vice President*
John Carson, Clifton Stahl, Ryan Stuart,
Timothy L. White and Justin G. Williams, *Directors*

BOARD BRIEFS

This section summarizes highlights of the August 4 Board of Education worksession not featured elsewhere in this publication.

The August 4th meeting of the Board of Education was a Work Session for discussion of educational and business matters. No action items were scheduled for this meeting.

News, Information and Resources *Call for nominations for school directors*

The Board of Education of Douglas County School District in the Counties of Douglas and Elbert calls for nomination of candidates for school directors to be placed on the ballot for the regular biennial school election to be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2009.

The offices to be voted on are School Directors from the Douglas County School District Director Districts B, D, E, and G, each for a four (4) year term. To be qualified, a candidate must have been a registered elector of the School District for at least twelve consecutive months before the election and a resident of the Director District which will be represented.

Nomination petitions may be obtained at the Douglas County School District Administration Office, 620 Wilcox Street, in Castle Rock. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Completed petitions should be submitted no later than 4 p.m. on August 28, 2009 to:

Nona Eichelberger, Secretary
Board of Education
Douglas County School District Re. 1
620 Wilcox Street
Castle Rock, CO 80104
303-387-0258

Reminder: Changes in Nutrition Services

Families, please be aware of changes in Nutrition Services regarding the school lunch program that are now in effect. Items of note include the fee changes, the department moving to paperless lunch menus, a new online payment plan, and a fee for returned checks.

For more information, go to the School District website (www.dcsdk12.org) and look for a link to more detailed information, or click on Business Services > Nutrition Services > Summer 2009 Newsletter.

Reminder: Transportation Redesign

DCSD recently redesigned bus transportation routes for the 2009-10 school year due to budget reductions. As you prepare your students for the coming school year, please familiarize yourself with the changes. Bus route maps for 4-track, conventional and modified calendars are available from the front page of the District website (www.dcsdk12.org) under Timely Topics.

Birth Certificates Necessary for Enrolling

Certified birth certificates are needed to enroll children in school, sports and numerous after-school programs. They are also required when applying for a driver's license, social security card or passport. A souvenir baby footprint birth certificate from a hospital is not acceptable as a legal document.

Certified birth certificates are available from Tri-County Health Department in person, by mail and over the internet. The cost is \$17 for the first certificate and \$10 for each additional copy. The administrative office, located at 7000 East Belleview Avenue, is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Birth certificates can be ordered online at the Tri-County Health Department web site at www.tchd.org. For more information, call 303.220.9200.

Save the Date: Youth Congress 2009

The Partnership of Douglas County Governments will be holding *Youth Congress 2009* on Saturday, October 3 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Villa Parker, 10936 North Pine Drive, in Parker. Help change the world! Highlights of the day include meeting your elected officials, meeting the founder of PeaceJam, learning the process of making policy, helping influence laws and meeting other involved youths. Participants will also receive volunteer credit hours and awesome take-aways. If you are between the ages of 13 and 19, you can be a youth delegate. RSVP to Carla Turner at 303.688.4825 x5327 or cturner@douglas.co.us.

If you have comments, questions, suggestions, or a submission to *Newsline*, contact:

Douglas County School District, Communications Office, 620 Wilcox Street, Castle Rock, Colorado 80104.
phone 303.387.0033 • fax 303.387.0107 • email communications@dcsdk12.org • www.dcsdk12.org