

# Cougar Tracks

Parent Newsletter

Distributed the 1st Thursday of Every Month



Carson Elementary School  
5420 East First Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80220  
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## Upcoming Events

### January

- 8 CSC Parent Meeting
- 14 Late Start Day
- 15 PTA Meeting
- 19 MLK Holiday
- 21 4/5 Music/Drama Program

### 2008 - 2009 CSC

#### PARENTS

Norma Barron  
Michael Culhane  
Robert MacLaren  
Anne McCord

#### Business/Community

Catherine Hance

#### Teachers

Darby DeGroat  
Dawn Goodner  
Angela Hanning  
Cheryl Osgood

#### Classified

#### Principal

Gwen Henderson-Gethers

## Principal's Message

Happy New Year! I hope that all is well and you had a wonderful holiday season. We have much to look forward to this year. To start the year we will have a new President and a new Superintendent...Wow! I feel personally that Michael Bennet has done a great job as the Superintendent, displaying outstanding leadership. In my book, he is awesome. He has participated in every Principal staff development to learn alongside the rest of us. He has been in every area meeting with principals and has met with teachers ongoing to discuss his vision and hear their concerns. I personally will miss him as the Superintendent. He has a great vision for the district and has worked to ensure the best for the students and staff of the Denver Public Schools. Although we do not know

what lies ahead, I am certain that we will continue the work we do at Carson to ensure the best for all students.

To start the new year, as a staff we started our first day back to work looking at Benchmark data together. This information will help us as we plan ongoing instruction. It is important to remember that assessment drives instruction.

All second through fifth grade students take the Benchmark assessment in reading, writing and math three times a year. The most recent Benchmark assessment was given to the students in early December. This assessment is used to assess how well students are progressing toward proficiency on state standards addressed by the curriculum throughout the

year. The last Benchmark assessment will be given to the students in April.

The students are spending time their first week back in school reviewing the "Character Counts" posters displayed throughout the classes and halls. Please talk to your child to see what they can tell you about the expectations for them at Carson regarding character.

Many students have already received the "Principals' Preferral Award" for October, November and December. Teachers select students who go above and beyond to demonstrate the character that we want to see at Carson. The next time you're in the building, stop and check out the bulletin board to see if your child's picture is displayed.

Wishing you all a wonderful and prosperous New Year.

*Late Start Day  
Wednesday, January 14  
School begins at 11:55. Supervision will begin at 11:45*

*A sack lunch will be served.*

***The PTA IS ONE WAY YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR NOT ONLY YOUR CHILD, BUT FOR ALL CARSON STUDENTS.***

**CHARACTER EDUCATION**  
**Denver Public Schools**  
**Carson Elementary**

*Respect*  
*Responsibility*  
*Kindness*  
*Tolerance*  
*Perseverance*  
*Integrity*  
*Courage*

**“We are proud students, involved parents, committed educators and a caring staff. We are a warm welcoming community offering a safe, nurturing and challenging environment. Our children are comfortable growing, learning and celebrating differences with consistency, honesty, responsibility, kindness and respect.”**

***Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday***  
***Monday***  
***January 19***

***Music/Drama Performance***  
***Grades 4/5***  
***January 21***  
***6:30***

## **NAEP Assessment to be given to 4th Graders**

The fourth grade students have been selected to participate in the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often referred to as the *Nation’s Report Card*. It is an ongoing assessment that measures what our elementary students know and can do in various academic subjects. This assessment is given in all fifty states and to the Department of Defense students (domestic and overseas). From participating in NAEP, we will be able to see how students in our state perform compared to students in other states and the nation as a whole. This ninety minute assessment will take place for Carson’s fourth graders on March 3.

All parents of fourth grade students, please see the letter in this week’s Thursday folder for more information regarding the assessment.

## **CSAP Testing**

The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) will be given again this year to all students in grades 3, 4 & 5. The third grade students will take the reading assessment only on February 10 & 11. All students in grades 3, 4 & 5 will take the CSAP tests beginning March 2 through March 20. In March the third grade students will take the writing and math tests, 4th grade students will take the reading, writing and math tests and the 5th grade students will take the reading, writing, math and science tests.

Although we have worked not only this school year, but in years past to ensure academic success for all students, we will be teaching testing as a genre to help our students be prepared. We will also begin supporting students by working with them on CSAP released items that are made available by the state.

You can help us by ensuring that your child is at school everyday on time during testing. Please do not schedule doctor or dental appointments during testing

time if at all possible. It is important that all students are at school to participate in CSAP testing. Also, you can assist by talking to your third, fourth or fifth grader about these very important tests. If at any time you should have any questions or concerns regarding CSAP testing, please feel free to call your child’s teacher or the principal.

**School Tour Dates**

**Friday, January 16 - 9:30**  
**&**  
**Thursday, January 22 - 1:30**

**Please invite a family member or friend.**

## School of Choice Applications Now Available

Denver Public Schools offers families the opportunity to have their children apply to a traditional DPS school that is not the school which serves their residence (neighborhood school). School of Choice applications are now available in the office. **Applications are being accepted now through January 30, 2009 for this First Round. The First Round is where applications are processed at the District level and priority groupings are offered.** Applications must be turned in to a traditional DPS school.

**All First Round applicants fall within a priority group. Random numbers (lottery) are issued upon data entry designating the applicant's position on the list within the priority group. Space available per grade is the criteria used for determining how many Choice students can be accommodated.**

The First Round Application will have two school offerings in preference order. If the student is accepted at the 1st preference school, the 2nd preference school is inactivated. If the student is in waiting status at the 1st preference school, all efforts will be made to accommodate the 2nd preference school.

The Second Round is where applications are processed by the requested school on a first come-first served basis after the First Round applicants have been placed. The Second Round window is March 2 through August 28, 2009. Please note that space may or may not be available at a particular school during the Second Round.

Parents may apply to as many Second Round schools as they like with applications taken at each requested school.

**If you have a child in the ECE class at Carson with Mrs. Pezoa and would like to attend Carson's all day kindergarten program next school year, there is an application for kindergartners who are applying to attend a Choice school OR their neighborhood school. To be considered for the all day program, an application must be submitted. Students planning to attend Carson for a half day kindergarten program only who do not live in the Carson neighborhood must complete a School of Choice application as well.**

If a student has been approved to attend their Choice school, notification will be sent beginning March 2, 2009.

Once the student has been approved to attend a school of choice at the kindergarten level or higher, the student will be projected to return until the last grade offered at the school (in most cases).

**Applications are available for children wanting to attend ECE. The application must be completed and submitted for the child to be considered for the program.**

*Please note that the majority of the information contained above comes from the district School of Choice process and is not specific to Carson. Please feel free to call the Carson office 303-355-7316 or the School of Choice Office 720-423-3493 if you have questions.*

## The 3<sup>rd</sup> Carson Elementary School Summit

Carson PTA, CSC and Character Education Committees invite you to an energizing workshop aimed at strengthening our commitment to our intentional school community.

**Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup> 8:30am – 2:30pm at the Daniels Fund Bldg in Cherry Creek**

Please watch for more details in the Thursday folders.

## PTA Notebook

### UPDATES

#### **PTA Winter Membership Drive:**

Really, it is not too late to become a member of the fabulous Carson PTA. Your membership is important to Carson, the teachers and the students. By becoming a member, you can stay informed about everything happening at Carson and you can receive great discounts at numerous stores too. Most importantly, your membership dues help support the Carson PTA and allow us to support such great events at school like the Sock Hop, Field Day, Teacher Appreciation and so much more. Membership is just \$10 individual or \$15 for a family membership. Contact Chris Wells at 303-320-4767 if you have any questions.

#### **PTA Officers and Coordinators for 2009-2010 School Year**

It is hard to believe that we are already starting to think about next year and the PTA! Yes, it is true that the PTA is looking to fill many event coordinator and the officer positions of Vice President and Secretary. The Vice President serves one year in this position and then serves a second year as PTA President. If you are interested in any position and want to get involved in any way with the PTA and any event we sponsor, please contact Tracey Pliskin at 720-468-1585 or Laura Kent at 303-321-5633 .

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

#### **Before/After School Enrichment Co-coordinator Needed:**

We are urgently in need of a coordinator for the before/after school "club level" enrichment for the Winter/Spring season. Without a lead coordinator, we are at risk of losing this program. If you are interested in filling this position, please contact Laura Kent at 303-321-5633.

**Book Exchange:** We need volunteers to help out with the annual Book Exchange on January 29<sup>th</sup> and January 30<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Amy Paris at 303-355-2834 if you can help.

**In-School Enrichment:** We would still love to get more parents involved in this fantastic program. Even if you cannot lead a class, you can really help out in the classrooms by just attending the enrichment session to provide more helping hands and extra supervision. The enrichment sessions will take place every Friday in February from 1 p.m. to 1:45p.m. Please contact Heidi Achenbach at 303-863-8212 or Jen Nicholson at 303-377-0498 if you would like to volunteer.

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#### **January PTA Meeting - Thursday Night. January 15th. 6:30 p.m. Carson Library.**

Our meetings continue to be productive, informative and fun. Please join us to find out how you can get involved in the second semester. There are many terrific school-wide events next semester that are really great to be involved in and to attend.

#### **Carson Family Night at Steve's Snappin' Dogs: Friday, January 30<sup>th</sup>. 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

Join us for a really fun dinner at Steve's Snappin' Dogs on Colfax. It will feel like summer as we enjoy fun and fabulous gourmet hot dogs, hamburgers, salads, and such. Steve's will donate 10% of your dinner total bill to Carson. These Carson Family Nights are great fundraisers and terrific community events for everyone to enjoy. Carson will take over the entire restaurant so the kids can have a great time together. More details will follow soon.