

**Dates to Remember**

**Friday, April 17 —  
 No School,  
 Teacher Planning Day**

**Saturday, April 25 —  
 Ebert Yard Sale**

**Monday, April 27 -  
 Classroom Photos**

**Monday, April 27 — PTO  
 meeting at 6:30**

**Thursday, April 30—  
 5th Grade Operas  
 1:30 & 6:30 performances**

**Friday, Amy 8th—  
 Shakespeare Festival**

**Thursday, May 14 — Gala,  
 5:30—8pm**

**Friday, May 15 -  
 Late Start Day (11:45)**

**Friday, May 22 —  
 Field Day**

**Monday, May 25 —  
 Holiday, No School**

**Thursday, May 28th  
 5th Grade Continuation  
 8:45 Breakfast  
 9:45 Continuation**

**Friday, May 29th  
 Last Day of School**

**From the Principal's Desk**

*"Virtually all the authoritative voices and documents in every teaching field are calling for schools that are more student-centered, active, experiential, authentic, democratic, collaborative, rigorous, and challenging."*

-Best Practice: Today's Standards for Teaching & Learning in America's Schools

Dear Polaris Families,

As our year winds down, the activity at Polaris is ramping up and we are seeing the results of learning and wonderful culminations of curriculum in our school. From the wonderful fairy tale castle in Kindergarten to the hand-crafted didgeridoos and aboriginal dream time stories that are filling the first grade wing, the learning is apparent and the creativity evident. I am excited to trek through the Rainforest that second graders will soon construct, as part of their educational journey this year. Third graders will migrate to the library where they will create the Chinese Emperors Silent Army next week. Our fourth grade hallway is silent this week, because students have traveled to Crow Canyon as an adventurous extension of their history and archaeology unit. Evidence of fifth grade endeavors in theatre and creative voice line the hallway outside of my office (e.g., stagecraft built with hammers, wood, and tarps). Fifth graders are experiencing larger-than-life emotions and drama, not only as they begin adolescence, but also as they prepare to share with our entire school their musical, multi-act opera entitled *The Hideous Side of Beauty*. I can't wait to hear them sing and instruct us in this bent on beauty.



**Thank you for supporting our school and for ensuring that its compelling story remains robust.** I was so encouraged to hear about SOS's success during the March fundraising push. The only one of its kind, in Denver Public Schools, Polaris at Ebert is a fully dedicated magnet school for highly gifted and high achieving students. Because of your generosity, we can—with unwavering fidelity—uphold the mission of the Polaris program: provide and deliver a designed curriculum that integrates the arts in concert with rigorous and experiential learning to meet the needs of highly-capable students.

Another potent dose of inspiration at Polaris is our faculty's diverse pedagogical talents in classrooms and their intelligent discourse about teacher's craft during professional development. Like talented artists, each teacher demonstrates qualities of life-long learners who seek opportunities to become better informed about gifted education practices. Today many of them will venture with me to the Cherry Creek Challenge School, also a free standing magnet for gifted learners in the Cherry Creek School District, for classroom observations and to forge an additional professional relationship with like schools in the metro area.



## Ebert Yard Sale — April 25th

It's that time again! We are getting ready for Ebert's 5th annual Spring Yard Sale! Laurie Hipley and Zane Robertson have generously agreed to host the sale this year on Saturday, April 25th from 8:00am to 1:00pm at 990 Krameria Street. That's only 2 weeks away! Now all we need is stuff to sell.

We've got a great location and in this economy, we're expecting a lot of customers. So please look through your basement, garage or attic and get your stuff over to 990 Krameria. In the last few years we've made over \$3000 each time -- so this is any easy, fast and fun way to make money for our school.

We're looking for furniture, art, housewares, toys, books and sports equipment of any kind! We also take clothes, but they don't sell as well as other items unless they are high end brand names in primo condition. If you bring a baked good we'll sell that too!

And since we need people to help on that day (April 25th 8am-1pm), we've included this Sly Reply: <http://www.slyreply.com/Event/EventDetails.aspx?eid=cpXDyGJrGf4%3d>

Any questions? give Laurie or Zane a call at 303-320-1171 or email Laurie at: [lhipley@comcast.net](mailto:lhipley@comcast.net).

*From The Principal's Desk Continued*

Last fall, many Polaris teachers and I did such observations in Thorton at Stargate Academy, yet another self-contained magnet for gifted learners. As with all good reciprocity, we in turn will host Stargate in collegial exchange of classroom visitations at Polaris next week. I am thrilled to report that we have begun discourse about best practices in gifted education with both of these exceptional schools. As a teacher, I sought and ventured out of my classroom for such opportunities, which I firmly believe provide pause for reflection and improvement in teaching technique. As principal, I think it crucial to forge professional partnerships with other schools for the gifted because ours is a very specialized population and delivery of curriculum and sustaining the best learning environment is crucial to meet the needs of our students. Analyzing our own best practices and those of like schools is key to maintaining and improving upon our own systems and pedagogy at the Polaris. Many of you know me as a collaborative educator and as our school's leader; I firmly believe professional collaboration is critical to the strength and vitality of this school. One must get out every once in a while to improve practice and gain greater insights by engaging with other educators. Not only that, it is so much fun to observe other teachers' magical breakthroughs with students!

Additionally, it is refreshing for faculty to visit schools that like us are anomalies in their districts. It exemplifies the great responsibility that we share to ensure the nurturing of students who are often misunderstood or their potential unrealized in regular classroom settings. The work we do today to help our children love learning does matter. The work we do today with our children to help him or her realize his or her potential is paramount. I ask you to remain protective of our shared purpose of advocating for our communities' exceptional learners and this school, because your helpful participation is key to our success. Help us continue to tell the story of gifted education. Contribute your time and talents when and where you can. **The children and teachers are the soul of Polaris; your participation and volunteerism is its connective tissue.**

I ask not only for your financial contribution, **but your attendance at monthly P.T.O.** (Parent Teacher Organization) **meetings.** Participation is dwindling and although, I love each and every attendee, I see the same faces at each meeting. Please roll up your sleeves and share your voice and views with the PTO vision.

Soon many of our heartiest volunteers will 'graduate' with their children, and systems and committees unique to Polaris will diminish as quickly as the PTO crowd. I urge you to contact your child's room parent, Kim Brummond (our parent volunteer coordinator), or me so we can grow our collaborative voice and vision in support of our school's vitality. The sights, sounds and excitement that permeate our hallways are indicative of our extraordinary children who enjoy the optimal academic, social, and emotional context that we provide them. Please participate with us and continue Polaris's legacy as a premier school for Denver Public Schools and a national model for meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of our atypical learners in a most extraordinary context. Compelling indeed.

Karin Johnson  
Principal



## Meet Our New Student Intern

You may see a new face in the hallway here at Polaris in the coming weeks, please help us welcome Michiko Suzuki. Miss Michiko joins us as a student intern from Japan. Miss Michiko will be visiting the various classrooms and grade levels over the next few weeks and will begin her classroom instruction next fall. Miss Michiko is staying with the Earnest family (Olivia, kdg) & Eliot, 2nd gr) and will spend the summer practicing her language skills and getting to know our culture better. We are so happy to have her here to share her talents and culture— Welcome to our school, Miss Michiko!

## YEARBOOKS ARE STILL AVAILABLE!

It is not too late to order a yearbook for your child if you have not already done so. Yearbooks are available for \$14 and will continue to be available until the Autograph Party on Wednesday, May 26th

At the close of the school year children are invited to celebrate the year at the Autograph Party (a yearbook purchase is *not* required to attend). To continue this annual tradition we must sell the yearbook out. Many of you know that we **do not** sell the yearbook as a fundraiser, choosing to retail it for what we pay to have it printed. This practice allows us to keep the cost low. Most schools retail their yearbook for \$20 or more, while our yearbook sells for just \$14.

Please help support this wonderful tradition and buy a yearbook today!

## Volunteer Opportunities Abound!!!

Please join us at our next PTO meeting to learn more about our school, the support PTO offers to keep our school the dynamic environment that it is, as well as the many volunteer opportunities that are available both in school and outside of the building.

**PTO MEETING**  
**Monday, April 27th 6:30 pm**

## DI Tournament Results

There is fantastic news to share on the DI front! We have 3 Polaris teams going to the State DI tournament this year, which is pretty amazing overall (as Denver only sends 15 total).

The 3rd Grade boys did outstanding! They worked perfectly together, which is quite an accomplishment for a first-time team. This was a major triumph of teamwork and a textbook example of what can happen 'when eagles choose to flock.' This team, comprised of Owen Benson, Max Bresler, Sam Floyd, Augustus Hartgrove, Nathan Howard, and Cormac McCrimmon tied for 3rd place in their Challenge (mechanical engineering + theater + foreign country knowledge). As a result of their strong instant challenge performance, the boys earned the right to move forward to State this year.

Our 4th grade team (which is comprised of Molly Brogden, Tali B., Asha Garcia, Luke Freehling, and Isabel Sabbah) was awarded 3rd place in their Challenge (improv skit + mystery + film knowledge). This team was wonderfully consistent in their creativity and teamwork! This team will also move forward to the State level.

Our 5th grade girl team, Jade Benson, Jackie Danahey, Mara Krutsinger, Cailan Rowland, and Claire Shugart, literally got showered with awards at the district tournament. They received 2nd place in their Challenge (architectural engineering + art + theater). They also received one of the special DI awards, the Spirit award, for their Instant Challenge performance. Then, the team was nominated by many to receive the CollegeInvest scholarship award (\$50 for each team member). Wow. These girls will move forward to the State competition as well.

We had 4 other Polaris teams competing as well. The TMs from those teams all report that the kids did fantastic overall, and had great fun. And, that is - BY FAR - the most important thing in DI. For, even though the program 'externalizes awards' to some extent, the entire objective of this extracurricular activity is to nurture kids' internal passion for creative problem-solving.

Kind regards,  
Leigh Alvarado Benson (your school DI coordinator)

*You Are Cordially Invited to Attend*

*Three Original Opera Performances  
Written, Directed and Produced by  
The Lively Tones Opera Company  
(Mr. Donato's Class)  
The Apollo Players  
(Ms. Abeyta's Class)  
And  
The Hideous Side of Beauty  
(Ms. Lei's Class)*

*Thursday, April 30th  
1st Performance 1:30 in the afternoon  
2nd Performance 6:30 in the evening*

*Please plan to attend for all three operas  
Each performance is about 20 minutes in length*

**P.S. From the  
Principal!**

Ooh I almost forgot to mention my new best friend...

I have just finished and highly recommend to each of you a must read book. Living with Intensity by Susan Daniels and Michael Piechowski. This book is an invaluable addition to the libraries for all whom work with, live with and love high ability children and adults. This book is grounded in Kazimierz Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration, which deconstructs the multilevelness of overexciteability, giftedness and developmental potential; these analyzed within the frame of practical strategies for understanding and nurturing gifted individuals. I urge those of you with children who tend toward, extreme sensitivity, perfectionism and intensity to befriend this compassionate and comprehensive reference.

