

HIGHLINE HIGHLIGHTS

What YOU Need to Know

YEAR END EDITION

May 22, 2008



DATES TO REMEMBER

May 15th – May 30th
No More Charges for Lunch

Monday, May 26th
NO SCHOOL Memorial Day

Tuesday, May 27th
Grade Trade Dear
8th Grade Last Day of Classes
Goat Tournament 1:30pm
Commencement Assembly

Wednesday, May 28th
Grade Trade DEAR

Thursday, May 29th
Ms. Walling's Drama Class
Presents Green Eggs & Ham
2:00pm

Friday, May 30th
Talent Show 2:00pm
Last Day of School

Saturday, May 31st
8th Grade Commencement at DU
10:00am

Friday, June 6th
Last day for Non-proficient
Students K-8
Front Office Closes

Monday, July 7th – July 25th
Summer School 8:30-12:00

Wednesday, August 6th
Front Office Opens

Friday, August 8th
Registration Deadline

Note from the Principal

Thank you to each member of our community for making 2007-2008 a year filled with success! We have upgraded many areas of our curriculum, implemented a greatly improved discipline system, hired and retained a skilled and committed TEAM Achieve, and initiated a number of parent/guardian initiatives that will have deep and on-going impact on the school, including among others, a new equity team. We can be proud of a number of achievements:

- Our most successful auction yet (thank you auction team!);
- 3rd grade reading CSAP scores that are not only our school's best, but are also among the best in the district;
- 98% faculty and staff retention rate, a rate amongst our highest ever (see below for full details);
- Strong student and family satisfaction, as measured by our 94.5% re-enrollment rate and our extensive waitlist;
- Roll-out of several new curriculum that are serving students well.

While we are proud of the progress we have made this year, we are also looking forward to making even more progress next year. We have heard from you a number of critical areas that continue to need improvement and we look forward to investing in these areas next year:

- Increasing explicit instruction in technology skills and

better integrating technology into the curriculum;

- Re-designing our web-site (look for a new web presence by mid-August!);
- Increasing & improving home:school communications;
- Restructuring incentive programs to make them more consistent and equitable;
- Utilizing our newly formed Equity Team to help us achieve and communicate our mission of inclusive excellence;
- Continuing to improve our new Positive Behavior System (PBS) through additional faculty training on consistency;
- Increasing our emphasis on teaching students needed skills in test taking, independent thinking, and knowledge application;
- Continuing to improve the implementation of our new or improved language arts curricula (Step Up to Writing, Sitton spelling, Grammar with A Twist, Junior Great Books)
- Researching math curriculum supplementation for implementation in future years.

We have an ambitious goal of becoming DPS's highest achieving school serving one of its most diverse student bodies. We look forward to working together with you next year to take our next step towards achieving this goal. We are well on our way, and with your help we will achieve this vision. Until then, enjoy the summer!

News You Can Use

Farewells and Welcomes:

Highline is proud to announce that our amazing TEAM Achieve will remain largely in tact for the 2008-2009 school year.

At the close of this school year Ms. Hensen, our business manager, will be returning to the corporate world to utilize her finance expertise in that sector. She remains with Highline part time through the close of this year. Because her hours have been reduced, if you have questions over the next few weeks, please feel free to contact Ms. W-B.

Ms. Clay will be moving to Los Angeles at the close of this school year. As many of you know, Ms. Clay's husband has spent this year working in Los Angeles while Ms. Clay and their two daughters remained in Denver. They are looking forward to being together again.

Joining our Highline Academy teaching staff next year will be: Marcos Sample: Part Time Technology Instructor and Support. Mr. Sample just relocated to Denver from the San Diego area where he provided technical support in the telecom industry. He earned his Associate of Applied Sciences Degree in Electronics Engineering Technology here in Denver, and has more than 10 years of technical support experience. Mr. Sample has 5 years of instructional experience as well, teaching gymnastics to children. He will teach technology and support teachers integrating technology into the classroom. Welcome Mr. Sample!

Christina Baumgartner: Part Time Small Group Instructor. You may already know Christina from her days of substitute teaching at Highline Academy. Christina earned her Bachelor of Science in Education from the

University of Maryland. She has 10 years of teaching experience, starting with swim lessons for children while attending college. After college, Christina taught 4th grade in Maryland, then moved to Denver where she coached Junior Varsity Swim at Mullen High School. She will instruct ability groups in core subjects at Highline Academy. Welcome Ms. Baumgartner!

Martin Blandino: Middle School Spanish. Mr. Blandino is a native Spanish speaker from Nicaragua whose heart has always been in teaching. He spent many years in retail management in the US, and then wisely decided to follow his heart. After completing his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at the A&M of Texas, Mr. Blandino entered an alternative licensure to become highly qualified. He substitute taught in elementary before taking a permanent teaching position in a Houston high school. He instructed Spanish for grades 6-12, earning Rookie Teacher of the Year. Welcome Mr. Blandino!

Highline Goes Paperless:

In an effort to reduce paper usage, become more tech-savvy, and increase efficiencies, Highline has decided to make two of its annual processes paperless. Both our year-end school evaluation process and our family re-enrollment process will be conducted on the web, with computer access being provided at Highline if needed. See updates in the "What We Need From You Section" for details on how to complete both processes. Thank you for your support as we try to take our next step forward in technology integration!

Summer Packets: Summer Packet information will be coming home on May 29th. Ask your students for their blue folder. While summer work is optional for most students, it is highly encouraged for all.

Assessments will be given upon our return in the fall for certain summer packet tasks. Please make sure to read the information in your packet carefully so you prepare your student.

3rd Trimester Explorations:

Please make sure to reference the letter sent home last week. All students who are **not** proficient in a core academic class, (a 79% or below), will be assigned to a 3rd trimester intervention from June 2nd - June 6th. Intervention work will be compiled by core teachers, but will be managed by interventions teachers.

Interventions Schedule:

7:50-9:30 Literacy, Language Arts, and Social Studies
9:30-10:00 Snack/Recess
10:00-11:30 Math and Science

Any student not proficient in multiple classes will be recommended for consideration for summer school and retention.

Summer School: Summer school letters are included in today's Thursday folders. Please check to see if your student has been recommended. If you have any questions, contact Ms. W-B.

Summer School Schedule:

Monday, July 7th – Friday, July 25th
8:30-10:00 Math
10:00-10:30 Snack/Recess
10:30-12:00 Literacy, Language Arts, & Writing

Lunch Money: DPS is no longer allowing any student to charge lunch. Please make sure your student has money on their account or brings lunch money to school.

One Week: We still have one week of school left and would like to remind you that our students are still required to attend school, complete their homework, be on time, stay

through the day, and be present and attentive in class. Please help your students finish the year strong by encouraging them to do their best.

Grade Trade: All students will do a "Grade Trade" during DEAR the last week of school. Grade trade means that each class will spend DEAR time in the next grade level to give students a chance to meet the new teachers and visit the new classrooms.

Last Day of School: Our last day of school for Kindergarten through 7th grade is Friday, May 30th. We will have a full day; dismissal is at 3:30. See you in the car line!

Final Report Cards and Summer Packet: Final report cards will not be issued to any student with an outstanding library or lunch balance. Please make sure your account is cleared by June 6th.

Final report cards will be mailed home by the end of June along with uniform information, drop off and pick up procedures, a school calendar, a school supply list, and any final updates, including those related to our principal resident hiring process.

2008-2009 School Calendar: The School Calendar for the 2008-2009 is posted on our web site at highlineacademy.org

Summary of success of East Africa Fundraiser: Highline's first community fundraising night was an enormous success! The school raised over \$800 for various charities, including over \$500 for the school's partnership with the O Ambassador Program (a joint partnership of the Oprah Angel Network and Kids Can Free The Children), \$200 for Rwanda, and nearly \$100 for Uganda's Empower African Children. The event attracted 180 participants, many community donations, and a

variety of local artists and merchants. Thank you to all who attended. A particular shout out to Ms. Norman and Ms. Ganley for their organizing efforts, as well as to the students in the O Ambassador Group—Alexandria Herndon, Elisa Rodriguez, Joe Gift, Shannon Sankey and Kailey Kreh; Mr. Aereilius' first grade class for their Rwanda project, and Mackenzie Whitehead-Bust for her organizing efforts on behalf of Empower African Children.

The O Ambassadors program will be showcased next week on The Oprah Winfrey Show!

Tune in to The Oprah Winfrey Show on Monday, May 26th at 4:00pm, and keep your VCRs and TIVO's rolling to see an entire hour devoted to O Ambassadors. The show will feature many aspects of the program and will give viewers a glimpse of what has been going on in schools all across the United States and Canada this year.

8th Grade Commencement: Due to space constraints at the University of Denver, commencement is not an open event. Any non 8th grade student wishing to attend must RSVP on a reply card with an 8th grade family. Our closing ceremony, scheduled for Tuesday, May 27th at 2:30, is open to all families and will include all Highline students. Please join us to say your farewells and wish our 8th graders well.

8th Grade Commencement Activities: There are several activities for our 8th graders coming up. A detailed list has gone home with your 8th grader (if you have one). Here is a brief outline of some of the activities:

Tuesday, May 27th, Final Day of Class & Celebration Activities: As noted on the calendar and in celebration of their hard work, 8th

graders are being released from school 3 days early! Uniforms are required for the last day of school.

Farewell Breakfast, 7:50 - 8:30am. Our 7th graders (with the help of their families) will send our 8th graders off in style. Students are invited to join us for a festive breakfast in the middle school cafeteria.

Academic Classes, 8:30-11:30
Students will follow their normal morning academic schedule. Final assessments will be administered and will factor into year-end grades.

Faculty/8th Grade Student Awards Ceremony, 12:15-1:15

Yearbook Signing and Final Farewells, 1:15-2:30

Closing Assembly, 2:30pm - 3:30pm. 8th graders will address their younger peers with brief closing remarks. Faculty and students will bid our 8th graders farewell. Parent/Guardians are welcome to join in.

No School for 8th Graders
Wednesday, May 28th - Friday, May 30th: Highline is not sponsoring any activities for our graduates during these final 3 days of school. Please do not send your student to us unless they have explicit and written permission from the principal to be on campus earning your family's remaining volunteer hours. If they come to school without written permission, you will be called to come pick them up.

Monday, June 2nd - Friday, June 6th, 3rd Trimester Interventions: All students, including 8th graders, who are not proficient in a core academic class, are required to be on-site for academic interventions. 8th graders who fail to become proficient and/or fail to show up for interventions will have a recommended retention letter

placed in their permanent academic file.

What We Need From You

Log Your Volunteer Hours:

Thank you so much for all your help throughout the school year. Highline Academy appreciates all that you do. Please make sure all your hours are logged in to the volunteer book as soon as possible, and no later than May 29th. Hours will be totaled for reports cards and input into the system on May 29th & May 30th. It is very important that you log all your hours. We have to report these numbers to our Board and we also use them when applying for grants to show our parent/guardian involvement and commitment.

Year-End Evaluations:

Please check your summer letter for a link to surveymonkey. There you will find access to Highline's year-end internal evaluation (which asks different questions than the DPS survey you recently completed). For those of you with computer access over the summer, feel free to fill out this anonymous survey at your leisure. In addition, computer access will be provided at Highline during re-enrollment days. You can simply come in and do your evaluation and re-enrollment at the same time! See below for dates and details.

Required Registration for 2008

- **2009:** Required registration for the 2008-2009 school year will be done online this year via the parent/guardian portal in Veracross. You will need to verify and update any changes in phone numbers, address or pickup preferences. Directions will be forthcoming in your summer letter with your student's last report card.

If you have never logged on to the parent portal, now is a good time to try it. If you need help,

call the office and we will assist you.

If you don't have access to a computer to complete your registration, the front office will be open from Wednesday, August 6th-Friday August 8th from 7:30am - 4:00pm for registration. You can come in and use a computer at school.

If you have not registered your students online at home or at school by Friday, August 8th, your seat will be offered to a student on the wait list.

Re-Enrollment Rates: Highline Academy is proud to have a 94.5% re-enrollment rate. We do realize that Highline is not for everyone and some of you are looking at other options to make sure this is the best right choice for your student. If you are holding onto a seat that you know you will not be taking in the fall, you are doing us a disservice by holding on to it. Please notify the front office now so we can offer that seat to another student on the waitlist.

Lost and Found: Lost and Found has grown to unprecedented heaps and mounds! There is a particularly lovely collection of coats, blankets, hats, shoes, pants and shirts of larger sizes since the 8th grade trip. Please come to claim your missing things today! Donations to a worthy charity will take place next week.

Shout Outs

Highline Volunteers! Our school would not be what it is without you!! Your investment of time and energy is greatly appreciated and extremely valuable. Parents/guardians who give time to schools are likely to give more time to their kids, according to a study recently released by **Learning Leaders** a city-school volunteer program. The study found that parents boosted the amount of time they

spent reading with their children an average of 27 percent. Homework help time rose an average of 22 percent. The volunteers' children apparently benefited as a result as well, performing better than their peers on standardized tests. While not conclusive, the findings offer "persuasive evidence" that volunteering helps parents teach their kids at home, and kids do better as a result, says Dr. James Meier, who led the study.

We will have our annual volunteer celebration during curriculum night in the beginning of next school year. Thank you again for all you do to make Highline Academy the amazing school that it is.

Book Fair Volunteers Thank you to all of the book fair volunteers who helped ensure a successful Spring Book Fair: Julie Rodriguez, Alison Cavecchi, Jennifer Burnett, Walter & Nicole Almanza, Randy & Anne Boultinghouse, Jon Gonzales, Lisa Esola, Dianne Rogers, Beth Mittelstadt, Lyn Gore, Jim & Donna Scherer and our fabulous librarian, Ms. Dewane.

The Year in Sports

Basketball: The boys and girls basketball team have done extremely well this year among schools in Denver. I believe that we have excellent team work and good sportsmanship with other schools in Denver under the leadership of coach Julian Dameon for the boys and Coach Pateath Herndon for the girls. I wish my 8th grade boys and girls good luck in the various high schools next year.

Soccer: The Highline Girls soccer team was unable to play this year due to the fact that we were unable to raise a team. Hopefully we will have better luck next year.

Tennis: Tuesday was a great day for the Highline Academy MS Tennis Team. They won the DPS Middle School Tennis League Championship. I promised last year we would win the trophy and we did! Congratulations to fine performances from Bridget Alexander, Hunter Alexander, Ganbayar Bayarsaihan, Trevor Davis and Cole Johnson. Special thanks to Matt Aerelius for his time and help as Assistant Coach.

If anyone would like to have a photo of the champions with the trophy, it is in Ms. W-B's office.

A vote of thanks to Matt Aerelius for coaching the B team. I would also like to send out a huge thanks to the parents who helped support the team: Mr. and Mrs. Alexander, Mr. & Mrs. Bayarsaihan, Mr. & Mrs. Butler, Mr. Golden, Mr. & Mrs. Eric Johnson, Mrs. Marquez, Mr. & Mrs. Pan, Mrs. Terrell, Rev. and Mrs. Ron Johnson, Mr. & Mrs. Reaksecker and many others.

It was a great pleasure for me this year as the Colorado Tennis Association nominated myself as Coach of the Year. I truly enjoyed coaching the A team this year. Although most of my A team will be moving on to high school. I would like to send my sincere greetings to the A team, which are Trevor Davis, Ganbayar Bayarsaihan, Hunter Alexander, Bridget Alexander, and Cole Johnson.

GO Hawks & GO Highline Academy

Written by Mr. Olusegun Ayileka,
P.E. Teacher

Love & Logic:

You Can Save Your Child's Life: Parents are the perfect antidote to peer pressure

Your children do not have to fall victim to peer pressure. That's good news considering a recent survey commissioned by the Love and Logic® Institute found nearly 75 percent of American adults believe today's teenagers face decisions with more dangerous consequences than they did. The survey also revealed that 27 percent of adults are most concerned with the negative influence of peers on children, just behind television (29 percent), and surpassing the Internet (19 percent), movies (9 percent), and popular music (7 percent). Almost half believe peers have more influence on children today than in the past. Love and Logic offers parents plenty of practical, easy-to-learn tools that can literally save a child's life when peer pressure drives him or her to experiment with dangerous activities, such as sex, drugs, violence, and other reckless behavior. Here are four tips to help you give your kids the tools they need to resist peer pressure:

Tip 1: Teach your children that poor choices lead to unpleasant consequences. When children know that poor decisions lead to unhappiness, they tend to be a lot more careful about the choices they make. Love and Logic parents allow their children to make plenty of choices, and plenty of mistakes, when the consequences of these mistakes are not serious or life threatening. The wisdom children gain from being held accountable for these smaller mistakes makes them much less likely to make bigger ones when peers turn up the heat.

Tip 2: Avoid power struggles over friendship choices. Don't fall into the trap of fighting a losing battle over who your children choose as friends. Parent-child clashes over this issue actually drive kids away from their parents and the family they need so badly. How many

American teens hit the streets each year because of the resentment these fights create? Love and Logic parents send the following message: "We will love you regardless of whom you choose as your friends."

Tip 3: Send positive messages about your child's ability to make wise choices. Children will either live up to or *down* to their parents' expectations. Some parents unwittingly set their kids up for failure by saying things like, "That Joe is going to get you into a world of trouble." Statements like this imply that our kids are not strong enough to resist being "infected" by others' poor judgment. Love and Logic parents set positive expectations by making loving comments, such as, "Honey, Joe sure is lucky to have a friend like you who makes such smart choices!"

Tip 4: Allow your child to use you as the "bad guy." Love and Logic parents give their children a way of saving face when their friends tempt them to make poor decisions. How? They say, "Sweetie, I know it can be hard to say 'no' when your friends want you to do something that's wrong. You can blame us anytime by saying, 'Oh no. My parents are such dorks. Last time I did something like that they went ballistic. I'd better not.'"

These four tips can save your child's life! There's no need to battle with your children over friends, and there's no need for peer pressure to lead them astray. Parents can be powerful influences in their children's lives — even during the challenging teenage years. Try Love and Logic. Thanks for reading.

Dr. Charles Fay

Dr. Charles Fay is a nationally known speaker, parent, and school psychologist with the Love and Logic Institute in

Golden, Colo. His book, *Love and Logic Magic: When Your Kids Leave You Speechless*, provides a host of helpful tips for teaching values, as well as handling other perplexing

parenting issues. For more information about Love and Logic parenting and teaching techniques, call *1-800-LUV-LOGIC*

Principal's Coffee: Coffee will resume in the fall. If you need to connect with Ms. WB please email her at awhitehead@highlineacademy.org