



Skinner Middle School Newsletter

January 2013

*The legacy, the passion, the opportunity
Educating and motivating life-long learners who explore,
create and achieve.*

A Note from the Principal...

Over the past five years Skinner has made tremendous improvement. The programming now offered to students and the quality teaching staff has re-attracted families to the neighborhood school. We can now confidently say Skinner Middle School offers a quality education to students in the Northwest area of Denver.

While we internally strengthened the Skinner academic program, externally, families recognized the work taking place and started to return to the neighborhood middle school. Our enrollment has been steadily increasing and the current enrollment is 375 students sixth to eighth grade. Through the choice process, positive marketing efforts, and the programming offered by Skinner staff, we anticipate growing to reach at least 400 for the 2013-14 school-year.

A recent discussion in the Centennial Community has raised the question of phasing out their middle school program over a two-year period. The Denver Public Schools Board of Education voted on this recommendation at its December 20th meeting, and passed the resolution that Centennial will no longer offer 6th grade for the 2013-14 school year. This change has the potential to impact Skinner by increasing the number of 6th-grade students attending our school next year. Many families with 5th-grade students who attend Centennial currently live within Skinner's school boundary or within the nearby community, and we expect many of these students to be interested in the opportunities our school offers. We want to be sure our school community is prepared for these potential changes in enrollment, and that we welcome families from Centennial into our middle school community.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 720-424-1420.

Sincerely,

Michelle Koyama

Upcoming Important Dates for January

January 1st - January 6th ~ WINTER BREAK- NO SCHOOL

January 7th & January 8th ~ NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS

January 9th ~ TCAP Awards Assemblies

January 14th ~ Neighborhood Center Winter/ Spring Programs Begin

January 21st ~ Martin Luther King Day NO SCHOOL

January 22nd ~ NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS

January 24th & January 29th ~ Mandatory Parent Conferences (See schedule)

January 25th ~ Friday Enrichment Begins

January 26th ~ Saturday School

January 30th ~ CSC Meeting @ 4:15pm

School of Choice Process

First Round applications must be submitted to any Denver Public School between December 3rd and January 31st. Stop by the main office for paperwork and procedures or visit the School of Choice link on the DPS website.

All 8th grade students must complete this Choice process to transition to High School.

3rd Annual Pasta Potluck and Family Dance!

Thursday, February 7th from 6:00 - 8:30 pm

Skinner Middle School cordially invites you and your family to attend the 3rd Annual Pasta Potluck and Family Dance! Please bring a dish to share. It's a pasta-themed meal, but sides and desserts are also appreciated. Skinner will provide the beverage, plates and utensils. We'll have a DJ playing hits from yesterday and today so wear your dancing shoes. This fun and popular event is a big favorite among Skinner families.

Student/ Family/ Teacher Conferences

1/24 or 1/29 4-8pm

The second round of Conferences will take place this January. It is an expectation that all students attend conferences with a family member to discuss their own academic progress and set goals for the remainder of the school year. At conferences, families will experience a student lead conference or have a designated meeting with the grade level teachers. This second round of conferences will serve as a progress check before report cards go out again in February.

Skinner Safety Update

At the end of December, the DPS Communications Department sent a letter home to families following the Connecticut horror. An excerpt from that letter states:

“Our DPS Department of Safety and Security works closely with the Denver Police Department and many metro-area safety agencies to help ensure that our schools are safe havens for our kids, our staff, and our community. The Department of Safety and Security also works with the leadership at each of our schools on plans and procedures to keep our campuses secure. Schools restrict building access to one door, which must be monitored at all times during the school day. We also have security teams who patrol schools and neighborhoods, including School Resource Officers at many of our middle and high schools. We will be working with all schools in the coming days to emphasize the importance of vigilance on all safety issues and doing regular reviews with staff of all safety plans.”

We wanted Skinner families to know that we recently received communication that Skinner is on the list to have a front door buzzer added so visitors will have to “ring in” to school. Skinner currently has two ADA access doors that are monitored by a security camera. We look forward to having our front door added to the same security system by the beginning of February.

Thank you to Community Partners

Skinner would like to thank **PIZZA PUB** for donating to lunch to our volunteer Science Fair Judges.

Pizza Pub is located at 35th and Tennyson

Skinner T-Shirt Recall

It has been brought to our attention that the logos on some of our new 2012-2013 black and green Skinner logo t-shirts have been peeling off. We have contacted the t-shirt company, and they have agreed to replace these shirts with an identical shirt in the same size.

Please bring your 2012-2013 black and green logo t-shirt to Ms. Chavira in the Main Office, and she will exchange it for a new, identical shirt in the same size.

We apologize for the inconvenience!

After School Pick-Up

ALL Skinner students should be in an activity (PIE, Neighborhood Center, and Athletics) by 2:50pm. All remaining students should be picked up, or off campus by 3:00pm. Any student remaining on campus after 3:00pm will be placed into ASI. ***It will then be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to sign that student out of ASI.*** Skinner staff is not available to supervise students not participating in after-school activities after this 3:00pm time. For the safety of your student, please know your child's after-school plan(s).

As weather is getting colder, we have an increased number of students wearing shorts under their pants. This is causing their pants to sag. Students who choose to wear shorts to school under their pants will be asked to remove their shorts, and will be assigned ASI. Thank you for helping us with this issue and making sure your student is coming to school in proper dress code and representing as a true Skinner Scholar!

Neighborhood Center

The Skinner Middle School Neighborhood Center is offering a wide variety of programs after school:

BUG (Bringing up Grades)

College4YOU

Teen Ambassadors

Cooking

Contact Sandy Baca-Sandoval (720.424.1475) or Dirk Boden (720.424.1469) in the Neighborhood Center for more information!

A reminder to all 8th grade families: ALL Neighborhood Center programs count towards mandatory tutoring hours. Make sure to check your student's agenda to see that s/he is attending. ****Tutoring hours were updated accordingly, and are reflected on the Mid-Year conference letter you received in December.**

Calling ALL COOKS! Dinner for Teachers!

If you are able and willing to contribute to our **Teacher Conference Dinners**, the themes will be as follows:

Thursday, January 24th- Mexican

Tuesday, January 29th-Italian

We are in need of main dishes, desserts, sides, beverages or cash to purchase additional items.

Please RSVP to Lindsay.Meier@dpsk12.org or 720.424.1528.

Any and all donations are greatly appreciated! Thank you for supporting our hard-working teachers!

Attendance and Cold Weather Days

During these wintery days it is especially important that families plan ahead and wake up early to get to school on time. Excused absences are granted for serious medical reasons or legal obligations (see policy signed during registration).

Please see the below chart for Skinner's attendance for first semester. As the year has progressed, attendance has declined significantly. **The overall goal is at least 95%.**

	2012-13	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
All Grades	93.10%	96.70%	95.09%	94.21%	92.52%	89.81%
6	93.96%	95.92%	96.31%	95.89%	93.67%	89.50%
7	93.56%	97.82%	95.31%	94.35%	92.93%	90.02%
8	91.56%	96.29%	93.39%	92.07%	90.70%	89.91%

If your student must be absent due to significant factors, your child must check in with each of his/her teachers to develop a plan for making up missed work including attending the teacher's PIE session on Thursday afternoon so that s/he may receive the missed instructional support.