

Thrive update



Enhance Inspire
Inform healthy kids make smarter students

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>> Wellness Policy adopted for BVSD

In its Jan. 11 meeting, the Boulder Valley Board of Education adopted the following Wellness Policy for Boulder Valley School District:

WELLNESS POLICY: NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (Policy ADF)

Part of the educational mission of the Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) includes enhancing the health and wellness of the entire community by teaching students to establish and maintain life-long healthy eating and physical activity habits. The mission shall be accomplished through nutrition education, hands-on experiential learning in cooking and gardening classes through community collaboration, the food served in schools, academic content in the classroom, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment.

Goal Statement for Nutrition

The primary goal of Boulder Valley School District's nutrition component is to ensure the wellness of each student attending BVSD and to provide guidance to school personnel in the areas of nutrition and health. To accomplish this, Nutrition Services and the Board subscribes to the following as guided by the district's Wellness Advisory Council:

1. No student who attends BVSD will go hungry while in school.
2. The nutritional value of the food served by BVSD and after school programs will significantly improve upon USDA and State Dietary Guidelines and follow the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) guidelines whenever possible, by providing nutritious, fresh, tasty, and when possible, locally produced food that reflects BVSD's cultural diversity.
3. A fresh, healthy, nutritious breakfast and lunch is available to every student at every school so that students are prepared to learn to their fullest potential.
4. The district will also ensure that every student in afterschool programs will have access to a healthy after-school snack.

Goal Statement for Physical Activity

The primary goal of Boulder Valley School District's physical activity component is to provide opportunities for every student in grades K-12 to develop the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills to be able to regularly participate in physical activity, to enjoy the short and long-term benefits of a physically active and health enhancing lifestyle, and to reduce the risk of developing obesity and chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

...just in time for this issue of Thrive Update the theme of which, coincidentally, is "physical health and well being."

>> Homeless Teens

Nicole was a beautiful vivacious junior in high school. She was a member of the drill team, was popular, and was dating a football player. Sounds like a typical teenager... yes? The big secret that Nicole was hiding was that she was homeless. Not the picture that comes into your head when you think of homelessness? Homelessness among youth under 18 years of age is dramatically on the rise. In fact, recent studies have found that one in five youth will run away from home before reaching 18 years of age.

Youth homelessness is defined as a teen with unstable housing, i.e., they stay at least one night in a place that is not their home because they could not stay at home, ran away from home, did not have a home, and/or stayed at a shelter, outdoors, in a squat, a car or public transportation, under a bridge, or with a stranger. This definition includes those 'couch surfing' meaning those who "surf" from one friend's house to another.

Nearly 45 percent of homeless youth attend school. Many of the reasons youth leave homes include: being told to leave, abuse/neglect, family conflict, economic reasons, substance abuse and sexual orientation.

How can you help? If your son or daughter has a friend who needs a place to stay due to problems at home, one who is living on the streets, or if a youth confides in you about being homeless, here are some helpful tips:

- Don't ignore it – access help from your church, schools or a local shelter.
- If you are a parent and your teen is asking that a friend stay at your house, help the youth but don't enable the problems in the family or with this youth to continue. Require them to contact their parents, to inform them where they are, and then provide the family information to access professionals to help.
- Refer the youth to speak to a school counselor or the designated McKinney Vento person
- If your child has run away, file a missing persons report. Don't hide the issues -- get help.
- Refer them to Attention Homes Runaway and Homeless youth programs. Attention Homes provide emergency shelter and day drop-in center services as well as street outreach to youth living on the street. Youth who come to the emergency shelter have the opportunity to have safe housing while having access to resources to assist the family in addressing problems and looking for long-term housing options.

Helping end homelessness begins with each of us. Do your part – It truly takes a village.

by Amy Jenkins LCSW
Attention Homes
Executive Program Director

>> What is McKinney-Vento and who is the designated McKinney-Vento person?

McKinney-Vento is federal education law, the intention of which is to remove all barriers to enrollment, attendance, and academic success that children and youth who do not have stable or adequate housing might face.

The law requires school districts to identify families and students in these situations and to designate someone to serve as McKinney-Vento Liaison. BVSD has two designated liaisons at the district level, Catalina Mendez and Wendy Gaylord, and a principal appointed staff person in each school. This year BVSD has supported close to 800 students and families under this law providing immediate enrollment (even if lacking address and documents), school meals, school stability, transportation, referrals for needed services, school supplies and fee waivers all while insuring confidentiality.

Each McKinney-Vento situation is different: grandparents suddenly find themselves caring for a grandchild, a family loses their home in a fire, a mom loses her job and moves in with family friends, or a vivacious high school junior like Nicole who may be sleeping on someone's couch.

by Wendy Gaylord and Catalina Mendez
BVSD McKinney-Vento Liaisons

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>> Parenting Today with Dr. J Exercise and Emotional Wellness

A prime motivator for exercising has always been to maintain physical health. There are a number of studies, however, that indicate that exercise can also improve our mental health. While we still do not fully understand this mind-body connection, there are indications that exercise can help to reduce a wide range of emotional and behavioral difficulties. These include: depression, anxiety, poor self-esteem, social withdrawal, negative mood, and stress. While the physical benefits like weight loss require an ongoing, sustained exercise regimen, many people report emotional benefits after exercising only once for just 20 minutes! In addition, the exercise itself need not be strenuous. It can be as easy as going for a walk. Don't think of exercise as a chore, but something to do that's fun. The trick is to make it a priority in your day. If you currently don't exercise very much, shoot for at least once a week to start.

Our community offers a wealth of opportunities for healthy exercise: city recreation centers, YMCAs, hiking and bicycle trails, climbing gyms, skate parks, even the sidewalk outside your home!

Exercise can also be a great family activity. By walking, bicycling, swimming, or hiking with your children, you will be creating an opportunity for positive family interaction as well as modeling a healthy lifestyle that they will hopefully incorporate into their regular routine. Consider telling your child that you want to do more fun things together and offer some physical activity options. Let them choose an initial activity and make sure to follow up as soon as possible. Work towards incorporating exercise into the family routine several times a week.

So after you finish reading this month's Thrive newsletter, get out there and do something fun! Your mind and body will be glad you did.

Dr. Jan Hittelman, a licensed psychologist, is Director of Boulder Psychological Services and Founder of the Boulder Counseling Cooperative. Questions or comments for this monthly column can be sent via email to: jan.hittelman@gmail.com, or by phone: 720-217-3270

Does your student have a favorite teacher?

Nominations are now being accepted by Barnes & Noble Bookstore for their My Favorite Teacher Contest. Students can nominate their teacher by writing essays, poems or thank you letters that share how their teacher has influenced their life and why they appreciate and admire their teacher. Participating schools collect the essays and submit them to the Boulder Barnes & Noble store for consideration. Students may also submit their essay or poem directly to Jeff Oliver at Barnes & Noble, 2999 Pearl St., Boulder, CO 80301. Entries will be judged on the compelling nature of the teacher's qualities, the sincerity of the student's appreciation, and the quality of expression and writing. All entries must be accompanied by an entry form signed by the student's parent.

Teachers from kindergarten through grade 12 are eligible for nomination. Awards include cash prizes for the teachers and schools, NOOK™ eBook Readers and more. The contest will be broken down into local and regional winners, from which the Barnes & Noble Teacher of the Year will be chosen. See www.bn.com/myfavoriteteacher for contest details and entry forms. The deadline for nominations is March 18, 2011.

>> BVSD School Age Care Program

The BVSD School Age Care (SAC) Program provides high quality before- and after-school care for kindergarten through fifth-grade students. We are committed to providing families with the peace of mind that comes from knowing their children are well cared for. Our goal is to provide a safe, culturally sensitive and respectful environment where children can experience a blend of recreational and educational opportunities. We are here to enhance each student's growth as a lifelong learner.

Here is a quick look at what we offer:

- * Recreational activities
- * Arts and crafts
- * Homework assistance
- * Healthy snacks
- * Sports activities
- * and a lot more
- * Well trained/professional staff
- * Group games

The program is fully licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services and provides a low staff to child ratio. All staff members are skilled professionals dedicated to providing high quality programs for children. They are required to have a combination of professional training and job experience which enables them to meet the developmental needs of children. Our staff members provide a fun, safe program with respect and concern for children and their families.

Registration may be done online at <http://bvsd.org/sac/Pages/Registration.aspx>. Downloadable forms are also available on that webpage or you may email linda.miron@bvsd.org to have forms mailed or faxed to you. Our registration deadline is two weeks prior to your child's expected start date. Sites do fill up, so register early! Partial scholarships are available for families that need financial assistance.

Locations Available

Aspen Creek K8, Birch, Coal Creek, Community Montessori, Douglass, Eldorado K8, Emerald, Fireside, Heatherwood, Lafayette, Monarch K8, Pioneer, Ryan and Sanchez.

For more information on BVSD's School Age Care Program, please visit www.bvsd.org/sac or call 720-561-3770.

>> The Y offers Before- and After-School Programs

The YMCA of Boulder Valley has been providing quality after-school programs for Boulder Valley families in kindergarten through fifth grade since 1975. With an emphasis on caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility, our childcare programs are value driven and committed to providing a safe, supportive, and fun environment for children. Children don't stop learning when the last school bell rings; they simply change "teachers."

Children are well-cared for and have the opportunity to:

- Get creative with daily ART activities
- Play traditional BOARD GAMES
- Go on a FIELD TRIP adventure
- Enjoy team sports and ACTIVE GAMES
- Sign up for SWIMMING LESSONS
- Have some STUDY time
- Make discoveries at our SCIENCE center

All staff members meet and often exceed qualifications established by the State of Colorado and the National YMCA. We plan for a 1 to 12 staff/child ratio rather than the 1 to 15 ratio established by the State of Colorado – another way we work to assure a positive and nurturing place for your child. In addition, this allows staff to focus on developing positive assets in youth.

When school is in session, registration materials are available through the director at each school location. When school is not in session or for other questions, please call the School Age Administrative Assistant at 303-443-4474 x2001 for general information. When a family facing economic hardship feels they are unable to afford our fees in full, the YMCA will make efforts to provide assistance.

Locations Available

BCSIS, Bear Creek, Columbine, Creekside, Crest View, Eisenhower, Flatirons, Foothill, High Peaks, Louisville, Mesa, Superior, University Hill, and Whittier International.

For more information on the Y's School Age Before- and After-School Programs, please email afterschool@ymcabv.org or call 303-443-4474 x2001.

>>Calendar of Classes & Events

FEBRUARY 2011

Monday, February 7

Asian American Youth Leadership Conference

BVSD's Department of Language, Culture and Equity sponsors five youth leadership conferences each year which provide students with opportunities to learn leadership skills, gain pride and network with other students who share heritage, culture, history, and experiences. Following is the schedule for this year's Youth Leadership Conferences:

Jan. 14 – American Indian (Coordinator: Patrila "Ime" Salazar)

Jan. 24 – Latino (Coordinator: Bill de la Cruz)

Feb. 1 – Safe Schools (Coordinator: Cynthia Hildner) *(will be rescheduled)*

Feb. 7 – Asian American (Coordinator: Karen Shimamoto)

Feb. 17 – African American (Coordinator: Debra Frazier)

For more information, please contact BVSD's Department of Language, Culture and Equity at 720-561-5073.

Monday, February 7, 6:30 p.m.

The Admission Game

An Interactive Presentation of the College Admission Process (for students AND parents)

Featuring Peter Van Buskirk, author, motivational speaker, and former dean of admission

Broomfield High School. #1 Eagle Way, Broomfield

Learn what will happen to your application behind closed doors!

- Become a member of an admission committee
- Review four candidates' credentials
- Debate their strengths and weaknesses
- Vote to determine who gets in

This presentation is sponsored by the BVSD School Counselors. www.bvsd.org/counseling

Monday, February 7, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Pathways to Parenting Success Series – Live from the BVSD Board Room! HOPE Event: Successfully Navigating Depression and Suicide

BVSD Ed Center Board Room - 6500 E Arapahoe, Boulder

HOPE Coalition presents "Lifting the Veil: A Journey of Hope and Empowerment"

Join local experts as they discuss important parenting topics and answer your questions live, during the broadcast. Join the live audience in the BVSD Board Room, watch it on Comcast Cable Channel 22, or stream from your computer at <http://bvsd.org/BV22/Pages/PathwaystoParentingSeries.aspx>.

THRIVEupdate for BVSD Parents

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experts and parents

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Look for us on the web!
www.bvsd.com

FEBRUARY 2011

Thursday, February 10, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

BVSD and ACL Present - On the Road: Transition to Adulthood (for students with disabilities)

This month's topic is "Independent Living."

BVSD Education Center, 6500 East Arapahoe, Boulder

Do you know where you are in preparing to hit the road of adulthood? Do you know what you need to bring? Do you know where you want to go? These monthly workshops throughout the year will help answer those questions for your child or teen and give you the tools, information and strategies to think through and plan for a meaningful future that includes work, relationships and independent living. For more information, contact Anna Stewart at 720-561-5918.

Wednesday, February 16, 7:00 p.m.

Stuart Omdal, PhD-- Common Gifted Education Myths

Louisville Middle School, 1341 Main Street, Louisville

Maybe you've heard these myths: "All children are gifted." "Gifted students don't need help; they'll do fine on their own." "That student can't be gifted he's receiving poor grades." "Gifted education programs are elitist" Whether you're the parent of a gifted child, or you're teaching gifted students, you'll benefit from hearing Dr. Omdal discuss these and other myths about giftedness. Parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, if you want to know more about what giftedness is, and is not, then this is for you! See www.bvgt.org for more information.

Thursday, February 17

African American Youth Leadership Conference

For more information, please contact BVSD's Department of Language, Culture and Equity at 720-561-5073.

Thursday, February 25, 6:00-7:15 p.m.

BVSD'S Elementary College Nights

Pioneer Elementary, 101 Baseline Road, Lafayette

Sponsored by BVSD Student Success, PEN, BVSD Counselors and BVSD Language, Culture and Equity. These presentations are for parents of elementary school children, aimed at low income families that have seen few, if any, relatives go on to college. Hosted in collaboration with state college savings program CollegeInvest, these presentations will give parents practical and strategic information, letting them know that there is real hope that their elementary student can eventually attend college, especially if they start planning now. *Children, younger siblings and all family members are welcome, childcare is provided. Snacks provide. \$250 worth of prize drawings for savings accounts from CollegeInvest. Presentation will be in both Spanish and English.*

MARCH 2011

Monday, March 7, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Pathways to Parenting Success Series – Live from the BVSD Board Room!

Secrets of Effective Parenting

BVSD Ed Center Board Room - 6500 E Arapahoe, Boulder

Live from the BVSD Board Room!

Join local experts as they discuss important parenting topics and answer your questions live, during the broadcast. Join the live audience in the BVSD Board Room, watch it on Comcast Cable Channel 22, or stream from your computer at <http://bvsd.org/BV22/Pages/PathwaystoParentingSeries.aspx>

Seeking volunteer opportunities for your child or teen?

The Volunteer Connection of Boulder County provides a Youth Connection Guide online at http://www.volunteerconnection.net/db/2011_youthguide.pdf that is filled with volunteer jobs for kids of all ages. Issues that volunteers can work for include animals and pets, education, the environment, community, social action, and many more. For more information contact the Volunteer Connection at 303-444-4904 or visit their website at www.volunteerconnection.net.