

Thrive update

 **Boulder Valley** School District
Excellence and Equity

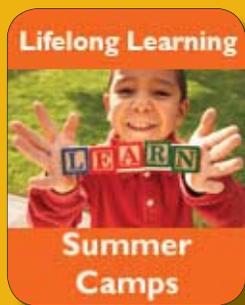
Enhance Inspire
Inform healthy kids make smarter students

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APRIL 2011

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>> Transitions

Transitions are periods in our lives where we undergo change, passing from one life experience to another. Throughout our lives, we are continuously experiencing change; physiological changes, changes in our environment, developmental changes in our children, changes in our relationships, emotional changes, etc. We may not always be aware of this constant state of change. When major life transitions occur however, it can sometimes feel a bit overwhelming. Some children and adults even struggle with transitioning from one activity to another. Transitions are often difficult because we worry about what comes next and struggle with managing our expectations and fears. Typical academic transitions that are challenging for our children include: "moving up" from preschool to kindergarten, elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, high school to college, and graduating college. These transitions can be challenging for parents as well, particularly their child's transition into adolescence and then adulthood.

The best strategy for successfully navigating life's transitions is to be proactive, not reactive. Consider the following suggestions:

1. **Name it:** Our most powerful tool to manage and understand our expectations, fears, and concerns is language. By discussing these issues we can clarify the issues of concern.
2. **Problem solve it:** Once we clarify our concerns, we can then begin to develop a game plan to address them. If, for example, our elementary student is worried about lockers in middle school, visiting the school and practicing opening the lock can ease anxiety.
3. **Celebrate it:** We have far fewer rituals in our culture than we once had. Rituals provide us with an opportunity to celebrate life transitions and honor those who are going through them.
4. **Monitor it:** As the transition unfolds, we want to continue to process, problem solve, and celebrate the changes in our lives.

While many of us are fearful of change, it is not only a part of life, but also a bridge that allows us to realize our dreams and aspirations. By being proactive and embracing change, we can increase the likelihood that it will lead to positive outcomes.

by **Dr. Jan Hittelman**
Licensed Psychologist

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

>> The Zone of Proximal Development

Lev Vygotsky was a Soviet psychologist and social constructivist who lived from 1896-1934. He developed an idea called "the zone of proximal development," which is the area between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can do with help. Vygotsky believed the role of education is providing students with experiences which are in their zone of proximal development – experiences that inspire students to maximize their learning but don't overwhelm them.

So, why you might ask, am I giving you a quick overview of Vygotsky?

All schools strive to place students where they are learning in their zone of proximal development. We do not wish to impose pre-determined limits on how far a student can go. At the same time we understand that it can be detrimental to place students in a course which is not appropriate at that point in a child's development of knowledge and skills. Teachers and principals believe that student placement decisions need to be based on data. If the data does not support the placement then putting a student in the class would just set him or her up for stress and failure.

We see that parents and students can be very competitive with each other. There are students who wish they could be on a more competitive baseball team, could be playing violin at a more advanced level in the orchestra, or had more money or more friends or cooler clothes just like "so and so." Sometimes this translates to a student wishing to be in a more advanced class, even though their current class is a better match.

I sometimes hear comments which reflect a perception that higher level classes (especially in math and English) carry more status, even though we are talking about choosing from a range of classes at many schools, all of which are advanced for middle school. Such perceptions can be driven by issues of status and competitiveness, and not by what is educationally in a child's best interest.

Talk about a "race to nowhere"!

Students enter middle school with a wide range of educational backgrounds and interests, forming parameters around which classes make sense for students to take or not take at a given point in time. We seek to make all classes rich and wonderful experiences for our children taught by outstanding teachers. All of our students, who put forth the effort and work hard, will be on a strong trajectory of success in high school and beyond.

I encourage parents and students to remember that school is not about being in a more accelerated class than someone else or getting a better grade than someone else. School is not a status competition. Rather, school is about learning in one's zone of proximal development in order to maximize one's intellectual progress and love of learning.

by David Finell
Principal
Summit Middle School

BVSD Bike to School Day is Earth Day, April 22, 2011.



The third annual human powered event celebrates walking and biking to school as a way to take part in daily physical activity that is fun and refreshing, and good for the Earth.

This year's event will be simple and fun, a day all students and staff will enjoy. All registered participants will receive:

- * A free school lunch and coupons at local stores.
- * A chance to win prizes, such as bikes and tune-ups, helmets, bike lights, jerseys, bells, and more.

* The school with the most registered participants, based on percentage, will be awarded a RUSH Smoothie Party!

BVSD Bike to School Day registration opens on Friday, April 1 at BVSD.org/TOSchool. Be part of the FUN!

Thank you to our partners: BVSD Safe Routes to School Program, BVSD School Food Project, Cateye, Community Cycles, Full Cycle, and RUSH.

>> Later Start School Times for Teens

Over the past few months (and over the past seven years that I have been principal of Fairview High School, to be quite honest), I have been questioned repeatedly as to why we start school at 7:35 in the morning, when we know that the research states that adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 do much better academically, emotionally and physically with a later school start time.

My answer has always been, "It would be great to have a later start, but factors outside of our control have created and maintained our starting time." A good political answer, but it was not a good educational answer. I had to take a step back and really think about my beliefs as an educator, a parent and a community member. We start at 7:35 because I have never taken the time nor energy to get us to think what really is best for our kids. I think I am ready to lead that charge and, furthermore, I believe that perhaps the time is now for other reasons as well:

- The movie "Race to Nowhere" has been shown numerous times in our community and its message is beginning to get some traction regarding undue stress on students and the impact that the lack of sleep and early school days has on that stress.
- The district is seriously looking at late starts for numerous schools in the district for teacher collaboration time, so district transportation may be making some changes to its regular routes. Since transportation has always been a stumbling block to changing to a late start for high schools, this change in the district might be the opening we need to move our schedule.
- But most importantly, it is the right thing to do for our kids.

Let me explain ...

For many years now, study after study has come out and shown the negative impact of the school day starting too early and the benefits of late start in regard to academic achievement, stress reduction and decreased student health concerns. The data is very compelling and most convincing, however we (school districts, schools, etc.) have chosen to either ignore these studies or turn a deaf ear for a variety of reasons—transportation issues, athletic issues, tradition of start time, or we just don't like change. These are not reasons for us not to take a serious look at moving our school day start time. I believe that it would be in our best interest to shift our school day start time back anywhere from 40 to 60 minutes. The benefits, I believe, would greatly outweigh any struggles we may have with any logistical issues.

by Don Stensrud

Principal
Fairview High School

Further information

Dr. Breus on Teens and Sleep Deprivation (2:44 mins. Video)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olSxyTlJOJ8&safety_mode=true&persist_safety_mode=1

Later school start times and Zzzs to A's (L.A. Times article)

<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/aug/23/health/la-he-school-time-20100823>

Backgrounder: Later School Start Times (National Sleep Foundation)

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/hot-topics/backgrounder-later-school-start-times>

Sleep and Teens : Biology and Behavior (National Sleep Foundation)

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/ask-the-expert/sleep-and-teens-biology-and-behavior>

It's About Time (and Sleep): Making the Case for Starting School Later (Education World)

http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin314.shtml

Later School Start Times May Foster Better Students (Bloomberg Businessweek)

<http://www.businessweek.com/lifestyle/content/healthday/640822.html>

Science of Sleepy High School Students (CNN Video)

<http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/health/2010/10/14/hm.teens.sleep.cnn?iref=allsearch>

Links to all of these resources and more are available at <http://www.fhslatestart.org/resources.html>.

>> Individualized Career and Academic Plans (ICAPs) now required by the State of Colorado

Linking Today's Educational Experience to the Future

Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAPs) are coming to Boulder Valley School District! Much of the information contained in ICAPs is already a part of each student's high school experience, however the ICAP process will also provide annual review and revision of a student's academic, extracurricular, and postsecondary plans. In 2011-12, there will be a renewed and central focus for all 6th through 12th graders to create a personal vision for the world of work through career exploration and post-secondary education lessons that will provide information and opportunities to practice post-secondary skills. Individual Career and Academic planning will be an organized effort by all BVSD secondary schools to help link students' visions of their futures with their current educational experience.

Middle Level ICAP Preparation

All sixth through eighth grade students will continue to acquire an online College in Colorado account. College in Colorado is "a free website to explore career and education opportunities, plan a strategy to achieve them, advance one's possibilities." (www.collegeincolorado.org) College in Colorado is a web-based program, accessible from school and home that school counselors, selected teachers, parents and students can collaboratively use to discuss the world of work opportunities and how those opportunities can be achieved. Sixth through eighth grade students will use their online Colorado in College accounts to identify current interests and skills. Along with these self-discovery exercises, students will set academic and extra-curricular goals and review the goals annually to learn from their decisions and actions. Students will also begin exploring potential career pathways to learn what it will take to match their personal vision of the world of work with the skills necessary to realize their vision of the future.

High School ICAP Development

Beginning in the 2011-12 school year, ninth and tenth grade students will begin to create their Individual Career and Academic Plans while all high school students will continue to plan for their post-secondary futures through lessons and use of their online accounts in one of two online career exploration tools (College in Colorado, www.collegeincolorado.org or Naviance, see link for Naviance on your student's high school website). Individual Career and Academic Plans will continue to be introduced to all ninth graders in the following years. ICAPs require high school counselors along with selected teachers to help students match interests and skills with potential post-secondary opportunities and learn the process of matching their personal vision of the world of work with the skills necessary to realize their vision of the future. All students will be taught and will practice goal setting skills in the areas of post-secondary planning, academic planning, and extracurricular planning and will revisit those goals on an annual basis to reflect on what they have learned, what is working, and what needs to be changed. ICAPs will provide a tool to merge many aspects of a student's life into a centralized plan for the future. ICAPs will also include lessons and practice in the areas of post-secondary education, financial education, and job readiness. Continue to watch the BVSD website and your school newsletters and websites for more about this exciting means to link current studies and activities with future planning.

ICAP.....linking today with tomorrow's vision.

by Judy Davis
Educational Consultant

>>Calendar of Classes & Events

APRIL 2011

April 2 and 3

All Our Kids: Path to Family Acceptance

How can we promote the well-being of LGBT youth? Join Caitlin Ryan from the Family Acceptance Project, San Francisco University, for this free and informative discussion. For more information contact Anne Guilfoile at 303-494-9181 or email chrui@indra.com.

Presentation will be offered twice in Boulder County:

Saturday, April 2, 10:15 a.m.-noon

Lafayette Public Library, 775 W. Baseline Road, Lafayette
and

Sunday, April 3, 2:00-3:15 p.m.

First United Methodist Church, 1421 Spruce Street, Boulder

Monday, April 4, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Pathways to Parenting Success Series – Live from the BVSD Board Room! Protecting Your Child from Risky Behaviors

BVSD Ed Center Board Room - 6500 E Arapahoe, Boulder

Experimentation, impulsivity, and underdeveloped decision-making skills; learn how to help your child stay safe.

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>.

Thursday, April 7, 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 "Financial Planning."

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.

Thursday, April 14, 7:00 p.m.

Linda Silverman, PhD –Perfectionism

Fairview High School, 1515 Greenbriar Blvd, Boulder

Perfectionism comes with the territory of giftedness and is its least appreciated aspect. Perfectionism has the potential for propelling one toward unparalleled greatness or plummeting one into despair. Sponsored by Boulder Valley Gifted and Talented. Open to the public. More information about the presenters and BVGT is available at www.bvgt.org

THRIVEupdate for BVSD Parents

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experts and parents

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

>>Calendar of Classes and Events

Thursday, April 14, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

BVSD Parent Education Series presents... The ABCs of IEPS

BVSD Education Center Board Room, 6500 Arapahoe Road in Boulder

Your child's IEP is the document that describes their needs and services. Join an advocate (Aza Fakhri from the ACL), a special education assistant director (Michelle Brenner from BVSD) and a parent liaison (Anna Stewart from BVSD Parent Support Center) as they walk you through the IEP one page at a time. You'll learn the difference between a modification and an accommodation, service delivery, goals and objectives, determinations of disability and more. Registration is free. RSVP to anna.stewart@bvsd.org or call Anna at 720-561-5918.

Monday, April 25

Safe Schools Youth Leadership Conference

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

Wednesday, April 27, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Brainstorm Panels: Supporting Our Non-Traditional Learners

BVSD Education Center Board Room, 6500 Arapahoe Road in Boulder

Panelists:

Shelley Karpel, MSW, LCSW and **Bonnie Leaf**, MA; Family consultants, Access to Achieve

Joey Lerner, M.D., Adolescent and Pediatric Psychiatrist

Rachel Hendricks, Psychotherapist and Neurotherapist, Rocky Mountain Neurofeedback

Dr. Tamara Eslich, Brain Balance Achievement Center

Emily Wingeier, MA; Neuro Kinesiologist, Learning Enhancement

Contact Anna at 720-561-5918 or email to anna.stewart@bvsd.org for more information and registration.

Thursday, April 28, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

PEN Presents: Get Real, Girls

Fairview High School, 1515 Greenbriar Blvd., Boulder

Renowned presenter and author Rachel Simmons will provide insights framed from her bestselling books, *Odd Girl Out* and *Curse of the Good Girl*. Visit www.girlsleadership.org for more information.

Thursday, April 28, 6:00-7:15 p.m.

BVSD'S Elementary College Nights

Uni Hill Elementary, 956 16th St., Boulder

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 Collegenest, 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 Collegenest. Presentation will be in both Spanish and English.*

April 18-24 — National TV Turn-Off Week

Promote a healthy lifestyle by taking a week-long recess from TV, electronic games and recreational use of the computer. Engage in more active play, family interaction, community involvement, thinking, creating and doing. The U.S. Surgeon General supports and promotes National TV Turn-Off Week.

Lafayette's Bob Burger Recreation Center offers a special program with prizes to encourage parents and children to participate in TV Turn Off Week: <http://www.cityoflafayette.com/Page.asp?NavID=1724>



Seeking summer activities for your child or teen?

BVSD's Lifelong Learning Program offers summer camps in science, literacy, math, cooking, visual arts, outdoor activities and more! New this summer, College4Kids, academically challenging camps for advanced, and talented and gifted students. Visit www.bvsd.org/LLL or call 720-561-3768 for more information.