Important Calendar Dates:

September

September 3rd - Labor Day (NO SCHOOL)
September 4th - 7th  6th Grade Outdoor Education
September 11th - PTO Meeting
September 12th - SAC Meeting
September 21st - NO SCHOOL (Professional Development Day)
September 26th - CHIPOTLE NIGHT (4pm - 8pm)

DCSD Conventional Calendar

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A Note from the Principal

Dear Trailblazer Families,

I hope this finds you well and looking forward to Fall Break with your children. We are marking the end of our first quarter of the 2018-19 school year with parent-teacher conferences. Conferences are a wonderful time to connect with your child’s teacher, to ask questions about your child, and to receive suggestions for helping your child continue to grow.

As conferences approach, here is some information that you will find helpful for enjoying a positive experience (excerpts from: Parent-Teacher Conference Tip Sheets for Principals, Teachers, and Parents: Harvard Family Research Project. October 2010):

What should you expect during conferences?

- **A two-way conversation.** Like all good conversations, parent-teacher conferences are best when both people talk and listen. The conference is a time for you to learn about your child’s progress in school: Ask to see data about your child’s attendance, grades, and test scores. Find out whether your child is meeting school expectations and academic standards. This is also a time for the teacher to learn about what your child is like at home. When you tell the teacher about your child’s skills, interests, needs, and dreams, the teacher can help your child more.

- **Emphasis on learning.** Good parent-teacher conferences focus on how well the child is doing in school. They also talk about how the child can do even better. To get ready for the conversation, look at your child’s homework, tests, and notices before the conference. Be sure to bring a list of questions that you would like to ask the teacher.

- **Opportunities and challenges.** Just like you, teachers want your child to succeed. You will probably hear positive feedback about your child’s progress and areas for improvement. Be prepared by thinking about your child’s strengths and challenges beforehand. Be ready to ask questions about ways you and the teacher can help your child with some of his or her challenges.

What should you be discussing during your child’s conference?

- **Progress.** Find out how your child is doing by asking questions like: Is my child performing at grade level? How is he or she doing compared to the rest of the class? What do you see as his or her strengths? How could he or she improve?

- **Assignments and assessments.** Ask to see examples of your child’s work. Ask how the teacher gives grades.

- **Your thoughts about your child.** Be sure to share your thoughts and feelings about your child. Tell the teacher what you think your child is good at. Explain what he or she needs more help with.

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A Note from the Principal

- **Support learning at home.** Ask what you can do at home to help your child learn. Ask if the teacher knows of other programs or services in the community that could also help your child.

- **Support learning at school.** Find out what services are available at the school to help your child. Ask how the teacher will both challenge your child and support your child when he or she needs it.

**How should you follow up?**

- **Make a plan.** Write down the things that you and the teacher will each do to support your child. You can do this during the conference or after. Write down what you will do, when, and how often. Make plans to check in with the teacher in the coming months.

- **Schedule another time to talk.** Communication should go both ways. Ask how you can contact the teacher. And don’t forget to ask how the teacher will contact you too. There are many ways to communicate—in person, by phone, notes, email. Make a plan that works for both of you. Be sure to schedule at least one more time to talk in the next few months.

- **Talk to your child.** The parent–teacher conference is all about your child, so don’t forget to include him or her. Share with your child what you learned. Show him or her how you will help with learning at home. Ask for his or her suggestions.

If you have questions, concerns, or need more information about the purpose of parent-teacher conferences, please contact Deanne Kirby or Katie Sodaro-Jensen. We often drop in to conferences to check in, to help problem solve, or to share great news about a child’s progress. As always, we are looking forward to seeing you and to your partnership with our teachers and our school.

With care for our community,

**Deanne Kirby**

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I can’t tell you how thrilled I am to be part of the Trailblazer community! I had the pleasure of spending some time at Trailblazer at the end of last year, and know that it is a very special place. I have truly enjoyed getting to know the teachers, parents and students. What a wonderful community we have!

I have been in the field of education for 18 years, spending the majority of my time in Alexandria, Virginia. I had the opportunity to teach multiple grade levels, along with special education and our gifted program. My family moved to Colorado five years ago and I researched Douglas County School District. I was amazed at how innovative and evolved it was, and was delighted to be offered a position in the Curriculum and Instruction Department. In this role, I had the opportunity to support fantastic teachers and leaders as they worked toward improving their craft and setting their schools up for success. I quickly became even more passionate about quality instruction, engaging students, and personalizing learning to fit each child’s needs. As a coordinator, I was always happiest when I was working in schools, and knew that is where my heart belonged. Missing working with kids, I decided to get my administrator’s license with hopes of becoming a building leader. I started my role as assistant principal at Northeast Elementary. I was there for two years, but commuting from Littleton to Parker every day was too difficult. When a position opened up at Trailblazer, I jumped on the opportunity! I feel incredibly lucky to be here, and am honored to be a part of this amazing staff!

Katie Sodaro-Jensen
Assistant principal
We have hit the ground running in the music classroom! All classes have been going over the rules and procedures and students are already excited to be jumping on instruments!

This year Kindergartners-2nd graders will be working on a variety of pitched percussion instruments as they get used to reading music notes and rhythms.

3rd graders will have the chance to start their journey on the ukuleles as we learn about reading ukulele tablature. We will be using Recorder Karate in 4th grade, where students earn "belts" for each performance test that they pass.

5th graders will be working on their own version of "ukulele karate" as they learn how to read tablature and will also learn how to play chords and accompany melodies.

6th graders will be transitioning from the ukulele to the guitar this year. After their basic instruction on guitar, they will have the choice to return to the ukulele or continue their adventure on the guitar.

Stay tuned for more fun updates from the music classroom!

~Miss Dawson

PTO Update

- Our annual Back to School BBQ was a fantastic success! We had a huge crowd that enjoyed smoked pulled pork sandwiches and hot dogs, played a variety of games, ate popcorn and cotton candy and some even got to dunk their teacher!

- We were also able to formally open our brand new playground and had a ribbon cutting ceremony that was attended by several District leaders including our new superintendent, Dr. Tucker. All of them commented how wonderful the event was and how impressed they were with our community. This event is only possible with the help of many amazing volunteers, including students from Thunder Ridge High School. Many thanks go out to them all!
New Playground

If you build it, they will come!!! Let’s give a huge round of applause to our TBE PTO and community for our new playground. Many, many hours of fundraising, planning and hard work were put into this new structure. The kids absolutely love it.
Trailblazer Elementary Volunteer of the Month

August

Name: Brooke Wisler

What grade(s) is/are your child(ren) in here at TBE?
I have two sons currently at TBE in fourth and first grade. I also have a TBE graduate who is a seventh grader at RVMS and a daughter who will be coming to TBE in a few years.

How long have you been volunteering here at TBE?
Since our eldest was in Kindy, which means this is my eighth year!

What do you like most about volunteering at our school?
The flexibility and variety! There are so many opportunities to meet needs at our school and there is something to fit everyone's schedule and skill set. Over the years I've done everything from cutting paper, making posters and cookies to recently serving as a Chairperson of the playground project.

What types of volunteering do you do here at TBE? (i.e.: Thursday folders, field trips, events, etc)
Our life has undergone many changes during these years we've been at TBE and thus my volunteering has looked different every year. Sometimes I've been able to assist regularly in the classroom and one year I was the SAC Chairperson. I've been actively participating in our PTO during the past several years, which is a great way to be involved throughout the year as well as make great friends. Mostly I enjoy working at events, taking on projects and baking lots of treats :)

Do you have a memorable volunteer moment you would like share?
It takes a lot for me to get teary but I definitely shed some happy tears at the end of the year assembly when we announced that the Fun Run was a success and that we'd be building the new playground for this school year. Celebrating with everyone at the ribbon-cutting at the back to school barbecue last weekend was the icing on the cake!

What can we do to better support our volunteers at TBE?
I think the scariest part of volunteering is getting stared! Let's just keep encouraging one another to take the leap and participate. Many charter and private schools have mandatory volunteer hours required of their families. At TBE we all have the opportunity to do as little (or much!) as possible but I think our kids and community benefit greatly when everyone is involved. If every family can volunteer even just a few hours at TBE this year it will make an amazing difference!

Why would you encourage others to volunteer?
I think it's important to model volunteerism for our children and it's also great to get to know the peers, teachers and staff who are shaping their lives. It's also a really fun way to make friends with the TBE community and very personally rewarding.
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Bet you didn't know.....

- The average person produces enough saliva in their lifetime to fill up two swimming pools.
- Except for identical twins, every person on earth has a unique smell.
- In order to taste something your saliva must be able to dissolve it. Hard to believe? Try drying off your tongue before eating your favorite candy.
- Your bones are strong. Very strong. In fact, one matchbox sized chunk of bone can support over 9 tons of weight, or four times that of concrete.
- For the next sixty seconds if you could follow one of your blood cells it would take you on a complete circuit of your body.

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