

September 2024 Newsletter



School Hours

Monday through Thursday 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Friday 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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IMPORTANT DATES

9/1/24 Happy Work Anniversary to Ms. Michelle!

9/2/24 Labor Day (No School)

9/7/24 International Bacon Day

9/11/24 Picture Day 12pm

9/11/24 Back to School Night 5-7pm

9/12/24 Activity- Paddleboarding Soda Lake

9/17/24 Ms. Kayla's Birthday

9/22//24 Fall equinox

9/25/24 Activity- Mini Golf

9/28/24 Mr. Marius' Birthday

Monthly Message From Our Executive Director, [Michelle Tuengel](#)



Welcome to the Accelerated Schools 2024-2025 school year.

We are excited to be back with our students. We sure did miss everyone over the summer. This new school year

started on Monday, August 12th. The start of a new school year is always filled with excitement and enthusiasm. All students gathered in the Grand Room as the staff was introduced, and everyone went over the student handbook. If you did not see your student's handbook or need another copy, please let us know, and we will be happy to get one for you.

Please note for the 2024- 2025 school year, Accelerated Schools will only offer online classes or send work for students when they are not in school in specific circumstances. Online will not be offered as a convenience. Please talk to Michelle Tuengel or Evan Simpson if you feel your student needs this accommodation. Our experience shows that students learn better in the classroom, where teachers can assist as needed.

I would like to welcome Thomas R. and Denzel D. to our high school community. We are so glad to have you here.

Click Here to View Our September Calendar!



Birthdays this month

Ms. Kayla- 9/17

Mr. Marius- 9/28

Donor Spotlight September 2024

We would like to thank the following individuals and companies for their generous donations and pledges of support during the month of August:

- **Madonna Nuce**
- **April De Roin**

For information on becoming a donor, please visit [**acceleratedschools.org**](https://acceleratedschools.org) or contact us via [**email here.**](#)

[Donate Here](#)

Fitzroy Place Restoration Project!

The new pillars are looking great!! As of the end of July, the chimney on the carriage house has been repaired. The masonry team has now moved to the main building to work on the four (4) chimneys, as well as the stone bases and pillars on the North portico.

Historic Denver Project Number
23-02-006.

As mentioned, the first day of classes for the fall session started on August 12, 2024, and will continue until October 10, 2024.

The school will be closed on Monday, September 2, 2024, for Labor Day. There will be a non-contact day for students on Friday, October 11, so teachers can work on report cards and do some training.

Our Back to School night will be on Wednesday, September 11, 2024. You will have a chance to meet all of your student's teachers and staff members, visit with other parents, and hear about the classes and the work your student does each day and more information about the new cell phone policy. So mark your calendars. More information will be coming soon.

I would like to leave you with one of my favorite quotes. Now more than ever, I believe this is true.

"The difference between an obstacle and an opportunity is your attitude."
Author unknown

Best,

Michelle

Upcoming Events (September-December)

Picture Day- 9/11/24 12pm

School dress code still applies! Once the photos are processed we will share a link with parents/guardians so they can pick what they like!

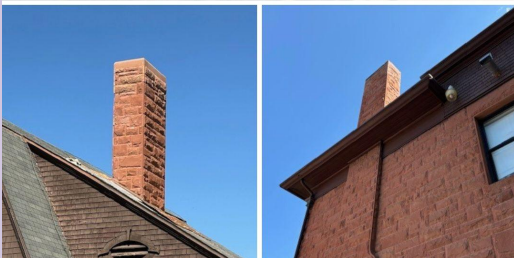
Back to School Night- 9/11/24 5-7pm

Parents and guardians will get a chance to meet with teachers, learn what classes their student is taking, and get a peek at what a typical day looks like at Accelerated Schools.

Report Card/Non Contact Day: 10/11/24 (No Students!)

Quarter 1 of the 2024 school year ends on 10/11/24. School will be closed to students on this day to allow teachers to finish report cards.

2nd Annual 'A Christmas Carol' at the Fitzroy Mansion!- December 12th, 2024



from 5pm-7pm

All students, families and community members are invited to attend! Entry is free, with certain items available for purchase via "punch card" purchased in the front office. There will be family friendly crafts, activities, food and beverages throughout the event.

RSVP via Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2nd-annual-a-christmas-carol-at-fitzroy-mansion-tickets-1005393538137>



Cleaning out the Garage?

Accelerated Schools is always looking for gently used items we can use, such as sports equipment, art supplies, books, bikes, ski/snowboard gear, or even fresh ingredients for our cooking class! Please keep us in mind if you are downsizing or clearing out your space. We also rely on donations for our silent auctions during annual fundraising events. Email us at info@acceleratedschools.org for more information. We provide receipts for tax purposes for donations.

August Activities

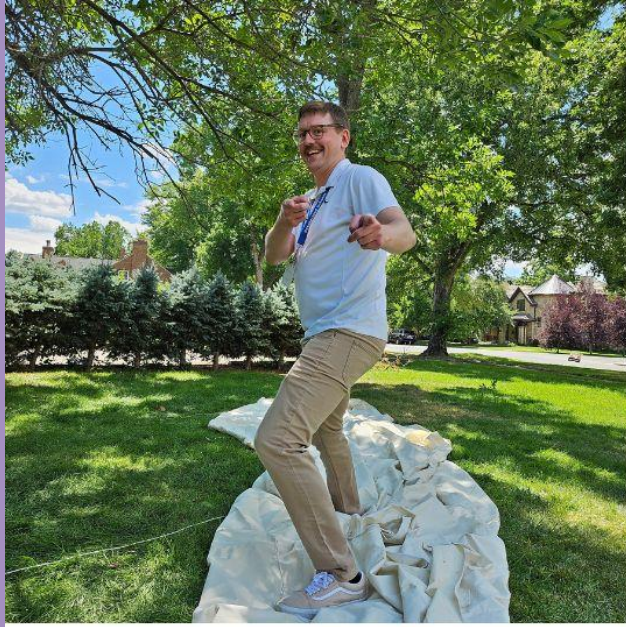
8/12/24 FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL!
(ice breakers for students and staff!)

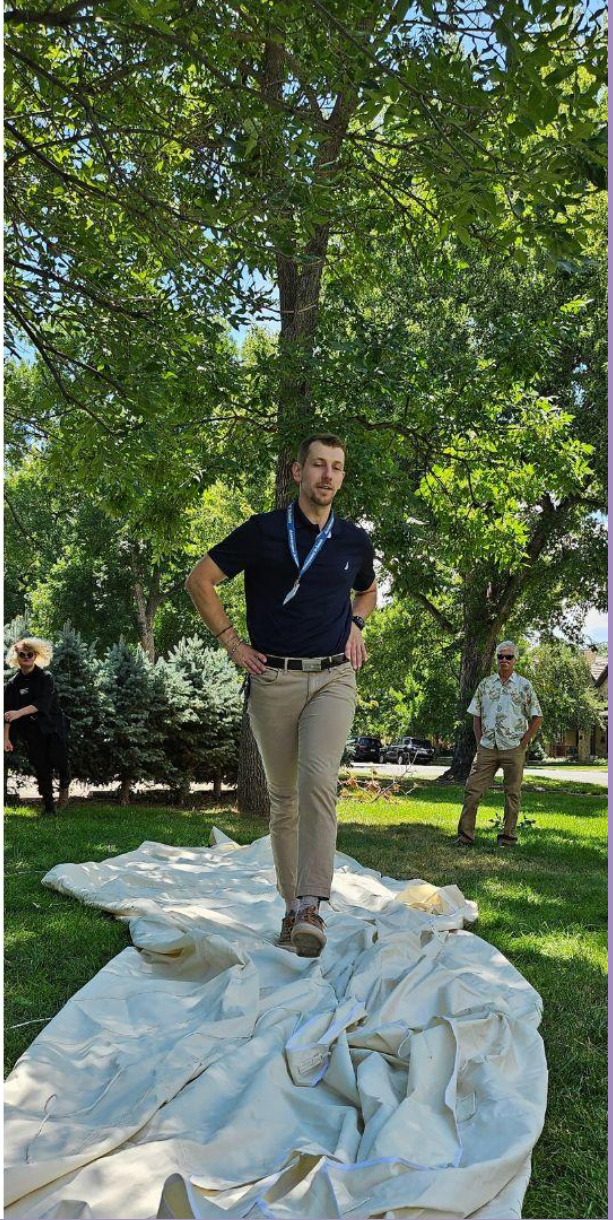














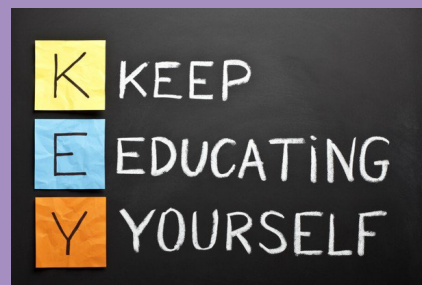
8/15/24 Hiking- Mt Blue Sky



Continuing Education Keeps Us on Our Toes

Jessica Machetta, English/Language Arts, Civics, Life/Study skills, and Activities Coordinator

New information on spectrum disorders is a constantly developing trend and we have so many opportunities at Accelerated Schools to integrate that information and grow with the field. It truly is fascinating to learn about how growing brains process this big ole world, regardless of neurodivergent or neurotypical diagnoses. Kids are kids.



Regular networking events bring industry professionals together to collaborate on what works and what doesn't in education. It's there where we get to grow as a community, all of us in it for the better good of our students. We are always welcoming to newcomers and growing our circle of like minded educators.

Dr. Craig Knippenburg, LCSW, M.Div meets with us annually to talk about neurology. Dr. Knippenburg has written 2 books on how children's brains work. He is able to convey how complex chemical reactions in childrens' brains play out in the real world. He presents the information in a common-sense manner that is easily relatable both to

teachers as well as parents. His data is often mind blowing and only lends to just how important the work we do here really is.

We also meet as a staff every Friday to address any concerns with kiddos head-on, whether it is helping them tackle and overcome challenges in their education, social life, mental and/or physical health, we teach our kids with a holistic approach that I wish were more prevalent in our country's education system as a whole.

Well, that said, the start of the regular school year can be tough for some of our students. The change in routine, the stress of acquiring or improving their social skills, it can be a lot. (OK, OK, it can be rough on some of our teachers too.) However, I feel that it's about this time of the school year where we really start to hit our stride: the new-kid jitters wear off, walls start to come down, students are starting to get into subject matter they really enjoy, new and old friendships are forged and reinforced. Perhaps most importantly, kids have started to earn our trust and really believe that they will be a success at our school. And they will! Our hard work shows at the end of every year, when we celebrate nearly 100 percent graduation rate. Our pride is immeasurable.

We truly have a great group of kids this year from various backgrounds, countries and cultures. It's such a joy to work with all of them. It really is magical to see our little melting pot generate excitement to learn and grow. Their enthusiasm is infectious. From Denmark to Japan, Vietnam to Africa, and of course, Denver and our neighboring towns and cities, there is never a dull moment nor lack of lively conversation. They certainly do keep us young and growing. Forever growing.

Remember, we always love to have visitors to come and witness the amazing work that we do here. If you know someone who knows someone who has a child that might be a great fit for our school community, I urge you to send them our way for a visit. We love to show off our hard work.

First Day of Class: Icebreakers in High School Social Studies Classes

Kyle Pepper, History Instructor and Enrollment Counselor

Icebreakers are fun activities to help people get to know one another. Instructors, teachers, and coaches can use Icebreakers to help acquaint students with course content and expectations. Icebreakers can also be designed to help warm up in-person and online learning spaces and orient students to the classroom environment.

For the reasons listed above, I believe it is important and necessary to start a new school year or class with a positive team-building activity or Icebreaker that allows students to meet and learn about one another while working together to achieve a common goal. We all know from experience that it can be very tough and sometimes socially awkward transitioning back to the typical school week routine after so much freedom in routine and schedule during the summer months. Team-building activities like Icebreakers are especially important for new students at a new school or those students who may have taken summer or time off from school during the summer months.

I am very excited to be teaching three high school Social Studies courses this Fall: Period 1 Colorado History, Period 2 U.S. History, and Period 3 World Geography. On the first day of classes on Tuesday, August 13th, all three of my Social Studies classes participated in a Cup Stack Challenge that focused on collaboration and challenged students to work together as a cohesive unit and team. I have provided photos of

students performing the Icebreaker below.

If you would like to recreate the Icebreaker my classes did during our first day of Social Studies classes, I have provided the instructions below for the Cup Stack Challenge Collaborative Activity.

Divide students into teams of four. Provide each team with six cups, one rubber band and four pieces of string that are each two feet long. Students must work as a team to stack all of the cups in a pyramid. Here's the catch: they cannot touch the cups directly. Students must create a tool using the string and rubber bands to move the cups. Students have 10 minutes to complete this task. Extend the game by conducting another round, but with new challenges, such as stacking the cups without talking or with one player in the group blindfolded.



How to be like Water

Raechel Kimsey, History, Psychology and Fine Arts Instructor

When I was young and starting at a new school, I remember being given a river rock, and then guided over to a fountain we had at the school. Many stones of a similar size sat in a pool at the bottom of the fountain. I looked at the rock I had been given. It was chalky, gray and uninteresting. Unsure of what was to come, I dropped the stone in the water. A docile click followed a jarring splash, and the rock transformed in color. I noticed rich, deep, black striations running through it with glittering highlights of quartz.

The principal of the school stood next to me and said, "We hope our school can be like this for you, and you can discover your true colors."

Lao Tzu- author of The Tao Te Ching- believed that water to be the strongest thing in the world. Water accepts whatever condition it finds itself in. It can be light and ephemeral like a mist, or as formidable and destructive as a tsunami. Its versatility lies in the fact that it does not force, it simply flows, and yet, with the patience of millions of years, it can carve a deep canyon into stone. The moral here is that true strength lies in acceptance rather than force.

I reflect on these things often in my career here at Accelerated Schools. My aim as an Expressive Arts, History, and Psychology Educator is to be a model of true strength for my students, and to teach them the things that will reflect their own true nature back to them. My hope is that our school can be like that fountain for every student who roams the hallways of The Fitzroy.

Exciting Updates and Reflections from the Enrollment Counselor

Kate Oh, English, Korean, and Cooking Instructor and Enrollment Counselor

As the new school year begins, I am filled with excitement and motivation. This year, I am thrilled to be teaching three wonderful subjects that I am passionate about:

Courses I'll be Teaching:

- English: We will explore the depths of the English language, enhance our writing skills, and reading comprehension.
- Korean: Join me as we dive into the intricacies of the Korean language, opening doors to a rich and vibrant culture.
- Cooking: In this hands-on class, we will come together to create and enjoy delicious dishes, discovering the art, joy of cooking and most importantly sharing what we created.

In addition to my teaching roles, working as an Enrollment Counselor at Accelerated Schools continues to inspire me. This role has allowed me to connect with our students on a deeper level, understanding their unique challenges and even identifying challenges of my own that I had not previously considered. It motivates me to provide the best support possible and to be a guiding force in their educational journey.

I am also excited to share that Accelerated Schools has grown more diverse than ever, welcoming new international students from Canada, Guinea, the Netherlands, Senegal, and Vietnam. This diversity enriches our community, offering all of us the opportunity to learn from each other and broaden our perspectives.

I look forward to an incredible year of learning, growth, and shared experiences. Let's make this school year one to remember!

Back to School!!

Debby Sharp, Middle School Instructor

Summer has whizzed by and it's time to get energized for a new school year! I do enjoy my lazy summer days but I'm also always excited for the first week of school. It's a thrilling time because old friends get to catch up and new friends get to know each other. The first week at Accelerated in Middle School will be spent engaging in fun get to know each other activities and

setting classroom norms in order to build a strong classroom community. We will learn to celebrate each other's differences and learn what strengths each of us brings to our community.

There are so many benefits to reading both recreationally and educationally. Some benefits are improving concentration, boosting creativity, inspiring success, reducing stress, and improving literacy skills. The first week of school all middle schoolers will choose a book they want to read for pleasure and each day they will spend at least 15 minutes reading independently. Throughout the year we will be reading different genres of novels to invite students to use texts to better understand others' experiences in the world and to build vocabulary in order to communicate their own perspective on the human experience. Just as students will be reading different genres of text, so will they be engaging in the writing process to write different genres of text such as informative, narratives, poetry and creative writing pieces.



Middle School will start the year in Social Studies with Civics. We will learn all about how our government works. It is an election year so what better time to learn about our government and the election process. So, by mid September all classes will be humming along at a productive school year, reading, writing and learning about the world around us. Each student will accept challenges at a pace and level where they can understand and make sense out of it.

Last Month in Science

Dan McMahon, Science Instructor

Middle School Science

Middle school science is picking up where they left off last spring where they had developed a profile view of North America, identifying the two main types of underlying rock. They then analyzed earthquake data from the mountain chain they researched using the Seismic Explorer simulator. This month students will use the Seismic Explorer again to identify the location, size and movement of the Earth's plates based on earthquake distribution. They will be looking for patterns in GPS data to examine land movement. and use a physical model to demonstrate that the entire North American plate moves at a constant speed and in a specific direction. This will lead to a third revision of models to connect how the North American plate is related to the movement of all the plates on the Earth's Surface.



Environmental Science

In environmental science this month we are wrapping up the unit of "systems" which looks at environmental issues using the approach of open and closed systems. We used the Harvard Gulch field site in our final evaluation of how to apply the systems method. The unit also investigates the relationship of cycles such as the hydrologic and carbon cycles in a system like Harvard Gulch. Our current unit is on sustainability. After defining the term and its application in environmental science we have been using the UN Sustainability Circle framework to look at the sustainability of Denver.

Environmental science is well into our third unit on Sustainability. After evaluating the sustainability and resilience programs in the City of Denver we zoomed out examining the Platte River Watershed. The maps produced by the Platte River Natural Capital Assessment Report provided insight into natural capital and environmental services, as seen in the watershed. We have also returned to Harvard Gulch to look at the natural capital and services the project offers. The unit ends looking at the Millennium Environmental Assessment and with students taking a Carbon Footprint Assessment.

Earth Science

In Earth Science this year the focus will start with a review of concepts in science that will expand upon the principles that will help in our interpretation of the Earth. These concepts will be revisited throughout the year. Our first topic is recognizing the difference between an observation and an inference. We used the dinosaur track site on Dinosaur Ridge as an example. From there we will be using qualitative observations to determine the density of earth materials, helping to define characteristic properties. With these concepts we will turn our attention to mineral identification.



For more than 40 years, concerned parents have turned to Accelerated Schools for individualized learning programs helping students overcome challenges, and excel academically. The fact is, a traditional school system is not designed to meet the needs of every child. When a student is not being successful, or is not thriving in a traditional environment, parents must often look elsewhere for a solution. This is where Accelerated Schools comes in.

Accelerated Schools begins by creating a learning program designed specifically for a student. Our work points are toward changing the ratio of failure to success and by cultivating an environment of accountability. Our students are given attainable goals and are rewarded by celebrating their accomplishments. Once a student starts experiencing success, their attitude, motivation and effort improve dramatically. This ends the negative cycle and leads to positive academic progress and positive self-esteem.

If you have comments and/or suggestions about our newsletter, email [Kayla Presnal](mailto:Kayla.Presnal)

Accelerated Schools

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