



January 23, 2012

Dear Esteemed Central Alumni, Current and Former Faculty, Parents/Guardians and Friends of Central:

The old adage, “Your perception becomes your reality”, is so true. Some of our marketing students from DECA are preparing to compete at the Broadmoor, and they have chosen to market our school. As part of their project, they have visited all of our feeder middle schools to administer a survey to the eighth graders. The first question on the survey was, “If you were to decide on your high school today, which high school would you choose?” The second question was, “If you did not select Central High School, please tell us why.” Unfortunately, the results were not good because of the many untrue perceptions these students have of our school such as there are too many thugs, too much violence, too many pregnancies, too much bullying, kids are snooty, there are no college prep classes, no high academic standards, poor education and teachers, my mom won’t let me go there, it’s going to be a K-12 school, and on and on! Somewhere along the line, they have heard negative comments about Central, and they now believe these false perceptions.

As a newcomer to Central this year, I honestly had some of the same misperceptions. When people heard that I was going to Central as the principal some were afraid for me and some even offered their condolences. I really didn’t know what to expect, but I was never afraid, and I soon came to find out first-hand that Central is a great school full of great students and a caring staff. I now get very defensive when someone says anything negative about our school. What I have found is that the students here are very courteous and friendly. What I hear over and over from the kids is that they like it here because there aren’t any cliques. Everyone is a family at Central. In my experience, I have found these things to be very true and feel proud to be a part of the Wildcat family.

It’s up to all of us to change the perception people have of our school. We need to stop letting others define us! We need to get the message out about all the great things that Central has going for it. We have the lowest number of discipline problems and the best attendance that we have had in years. I only looked at data to 2007, but that says a lot about the climate of our school. Due to the excellent job that our on-site Wellness Center is doing, the number of pregnancies that we have this school year are minimal. Bullying is not tolerated and it is dealt with as soon as it comes to our attention. The administrative team takes appropriate behavior very seriously. We have gone to every classroom twice already this school year to emphasize and reemphasize our high expectations both behaviorally and academically. Central High School has more Boettcher Scholars than any other high school in Pueblo. Central has many senior-to-sophomore classes, college prep classes, advanced placement offerings and concurrent enrollment opportunities at Pueblo Community College. Seventy five percent of our student body is involved in extra-curricular activities such as sports, clubs, and organizations. All of our students take part in positively contributing their services in some way to our community.

Central High School’s 10th grade English classes had 60% of all grade-level students receive grades of proficient or advanced on the December Galileo Assessment administered by the district office. This was a higher percentage than all other 10th grade classes across the district. Central 9th and 10th grade math and English classes also tested more than 80% of all students in those grades. This was also the highest percentage in the district. We are making gains in our academic achievement. This year, we reinstated the Career and Scholarship Center to assist students with the application process and to help our students get organized. The volunteers who man this center are doing a fantastic job. Our teachers continue their professional development to grow as teachers on an on-going basis. We have many teachers who have been at Central for several years. If it were a bad school, they would have moved on. We have a young man who will be leaving at the end of January to become a Congressional Page in Washington, D.C. for the remainder of the semester. He is one of only sixty-six students

in the entire nation who have been chosen for this distinction. Recently, we had a senior boy who won 1st place in a national essay contest at the high school level. Central High School is the only high school in all of Pueblo that is a part of the CSU-Fort Collins Alliance which offers scholarships to any of our students meeting their criteria. We just had one of our Central grads graduate from CSU-Fort Collins. This opportunity was hers only because she was a Central graduate.

We are taking the TCAP, the State mandated test very seriously. Our staff and students are working hard to prepare for this test in March. None of our students will be allowed to opt out. We are hoping for gains in all areas over our past scores.

I could go on about the many positives that are happening at Central. I sent my staff a 2011 Reflection of the positive things that have happened so far this year at Central, and there were fifty-seven different items on that list. If any of you would like a copy of this list, I would be glad to send you a copy. This list continues to grow.

The purpose of this letter is to solicit donations for two things - one, either run a full page campaign ad in the Pueblo Chieftain sometime in February and/or rent a billboard, or do TV spots to promote Central before students make their final decision as to what high school to attend. Whatever we do, we will highlight the positive things that are happening at Central. The second, is to help fund the incentives needed to promote our students best efforts on the TCAP test, which must show improvement this year. Donations can be dropped off at the Activities Office at Central or can be mailed to Central High School, 216 E. Orman Ave., Pueblo, CO 81004 c/o the Activities Office. All donations would be tax deductible. If you are able to contribute, please make your checks payable to Central High School. We certainly appreciate all the help that you can give us to help turn these misperceptions around. Please talk up Central every chance that you get and pass this request on. We need to combat the bad rap that Central has gotten!

It is our plan to visit all the feeder middle schools to share with them the realities about Central and clear up these misconceptions and hopefully change some decisions about not attending Central High School. A group of students from our digital media class is putting together a couple of different videos that we can use in multiple ways to promote the positives that are going on at Central.

If you have any Central promotional ideas that will help our campaign, please don't hesitate to call or e-mail me or any other administrator or staff member to share your ideas. (719) 549-7304. Thank you for your time. If you are not on our Wildcat Family Database, please contact the data entry clerk, Karen Medina at (719) 549-7305 or karen.medina@pueblacityschools.us to be added to the list.

I'm not sure whose quote this is, but "Once a Wildcat, always a Wildcat!" is true. I already feel that way.

Respectfully,

Mrs. Ruth Taravella, Principal

Central High School