

Our Students Deserve High Expectations & Resources

by Greg Rabenhorst

The first quarter of the 2015-2016 school year has been quite successful as our students are demonstrating great things each and every day. One of the most impactful elements of a child's life is the educators that come in contact with them every weekday. ***We take very seriously this role we play in preparing the Re3-J children for the future.***

Unfortunately, much of what is communicated in the media about education is related to the issue of school funding. In recent legislative sessions, our state government has not made education a funding priority as evidenced by the creation of the Negative Factor which has led to a decrease in funding to Re-3J by an average of \$2 million annually for the past five years. On Tuesday, citizens learned that the ***Colorado Supreme Court rejected a challenge to the use of the Negative Factor*** as a way to reduce funding to public schools. This leaves little hope of restored funding by the State to our children's education.

The Board and administration have been communicating in myriad ways the financial condition of our district and the implications of not increasing funding for our students. Our annual audits are conducted and available on the district website. The financial record reflects years of deficit budgeting so that students were less negatively impacted; however, this method continually lowered the fund balance which was not sustainable over time. The Board and I determined that a more balanced budget approach was required in late 2013. As a result of this and a failed mill levy override in 2014, ***budget reductions were necessary***. The necessity of reductions was two-fold: 1) funding reductions by State government, and 2) our obligation to direct funds toward those things that lead to increased student achievement (e.g., our strategic plan goals).

In spite of financial setbacks, your district staff will continue to work on the priorities identified by multiple stakeholders two years ago which contributed to the development of our strategic plan: ***increasing academic proficiency in language arts, increasing academic proficiency in math, decreasing post-secondary remediation rates, increasing graduation rates, and decreasing teacher turnover***. We are proud of our graduation rates, particularly in comparison to the state average. Teacher turnover is of great concern in the district as we lost approximately 25% of teachers coming into the new school year. Teacher quality is the most critical factor in a child's education, and we continue to lose quality teachers to districts with much higher compensation packages.

I recently sent a message to our parent community stating that the current status quo in education is not good enough for me as superintendent or for your school board members. Technology advances, standards increase, history increases, humans evolve, competition strengthens. Our students can't possibly achieve higher standards and compete with students around the county, state, country, or world if they are held to a status quo of mediocrity. ***Our students deserve higher expectations from us***. Unfortunately, reaching beyond the status quo requires resources, more resources than we provide the teachers of our children in this district.

I have challenged our staff to find authentic ways to engage parents and community members this year. We need to be bold and forthright in our messaging. We need the support of our community. ***Collectively, we are the best advocates for our children and our communities***. Please partner with us by becoming informed and engaging in the educational and political process so that those who make decisions, particularly at the State level, know that we believe in high expectations for our students who deserve sufficient resources to achieve their educational dreams. Help us reach beyond the current status quo.

Weld Re-3J Nondiscrimination Statement

The Weld County School District Re-3J does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services in the educational programs or activities in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated your groups. A lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to participation and admission in any Weld County School District Re-3J program. Individuals in the following positions have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

Executive Director of Resource Support Services

Weld County School District Re-3J
99 West Broadway, Keenesburg, CO 80643
Phone: 303-536-2000

DAC Schedule Posted

The District Accountability Committee (DAC) is comprised of members with diverse perspectives who work together to advise the administration and Board of Education on key issues facing the district. DAC members include parents, business owners, and district employees. The DAC performs statutory requirements such as providing input on the budget and reviewing improvement plans for accreditation purposes. DAC meetings will be held at 5:30 p.m. at the District Office on the following dates during the 2015-2016 school year.

September 3	January 28
October 8	March 3
November 5	April 7

November Election

District voters will have the opportunity to vote for Board of Education members on November 3. Two of the five seats are up for election. Petitions have been filed, and three candidates will be placed on the ballot. Incumbent Bryan Haffner is running for Director District D, incumbent Deb Gustafson will be running against Brian Olivas for the seat in Director District E. Voters will select one candidate from each of the Director Districts.

District Communication Tools

As a district, one of our highest priorities this year is engaging our community and improving communication. One method to assist with this is adding an on-line communication tool called *Let's Talk!* This can be found on any page of our website. It offers the ability to have a comment, question, or concern documented and routed to the best person to provide a response in a timely manner. This doesn't replace in-person, phone call, or email communications but offers another avenue for effective communication.

Weld Re-3J has transitioned to SchoolMessenger for event notifications and as an emergency messaging system this year. SchoolMessenger is a school notification system that helps educational leaders send notices, weather advisories, emergency alerts, and other important parent communications via voice, text, or e-mail. Weld Re-3J intends to communicate essential information in the most informative and efficient ways. Emails with valuable information will be sent to parents, and emergency notifications will be sent via phone. Parents are advised to provide the accurate primary and secondary phone number information to the appropriate school office personnel.

District Transportation Services

The Weld County Re-3J Transportation Department would like to thank the many community members who have stepped up to help make this year a success. The department has made many changes this year, but the transporting of students has been successful from the start of the school year!

In an effort to control costs and manage a significant personnel shortage, routes were reduced with magnet stops created in our rural areas. The department leaders will continue to monitor the magnet stops to ensure the safety of our students. Our highest priority is to student safety.

We appreciate the community spirit shown by those who are willing to allow magnet bus stops on their property. Your support in creating a great school/community environment is evident!

HELP WANTED!

School Bus Drivers still needed for the current school year. Please contact the Weld Re-3J Transportation Department at 303-536-2900 to inquire.

Re-3J Introduces Improved Food Service Program

Weld Re-3J students began the school year with an array of options to choose from with the district's Food Service Program. Breakfast options are available at each of our schools, and lunches are served with multiple options at each grade level. Elementary schools students are offered three entrée choices which include a daily salad bar and fresh fruit. Middle school and high school students can select from at least five entrée choices each day including a fresh salad bar as well as a la carte options. In the Spring of 2015, the Board of Education approved a contract with Chartwells, a national food service provider, to administer the food service program. Because of this decision, students are offered healthy and enticing food options that are prepared daily in each of the school's kitchens. Parents can view the multiple menu options at re3j.nutrislice.com. Parents can also download the mobile app for Nutrislice for a quick reference to the daily menus. All menus are online for the month along with dietary information, carb counts and meal prices. Please check it out.

Parents can also refill their child's lunch account or pay student fees from the convenience of home. These payments can be made with a credit card, debit card or checking account. Please visit PayFort.net to set up an account. The student's ID will be needed to add a child to the account. Please contact the Food Service Department at 303-536-2970 for questions or other inquiries. The district proudly welcomes Chartwells to the Re-3J family.

Updated Curriculum

By Judy Orbanosky

Weld Re-3J School district has been working to enhance its instructional programming through purchasing new instructional programs. With the limited financial resources, most content areas had not received updated materials in more than ten years. As Re-3J works to improve student learning and to ensure that all of our students graduate college and career ready, we are committed to updating the instructional materials used in all classrooms. Last year the elementary adopted a new math program and this year the middle and high school are implementing the newly purchased math program. We are in the midst of piloting two new English Language Arts (literacy) programs and a final decision will be made in the spring of 2016. The middle and high school will begin reviewing new science materials and anticipate a pilot starting in January. When science materials being recommended for purchase are available, they will be put on public display for review by any parent or community member.

Hoff Elementary

By Principal Ronda D. Soliz

Hoff has had a wonderful start to the 2015-16 school year. Teachers, parents and students are excited for new beginnings as they work together towards another successful year. We have many new things happening at Hoff while also maintaining many of our school's most popular traditions.

Hoff students are proud to be participating in adopting more physical movement in the classroom with the use of "Go Noodle". Go Noodle is an interactive website that focuses on getting physical movement and brain breaks incorporated into the classroom. These activities help promote physical movement along with stimulating and engaging students through motivational songs, dance, and exercise. Research has shown that when we engage students' minds and allow them to move they perform better academically and behavior can dramatically improve. Many of our classrooms, including our music department, have already made this common practice.



Hoff has also created a community bulletin board in the school called Coyote Connection that contains all the important information about upcoming events, P.T.O news, as well as school functions. It is a great place for our families who may not have access to our online newsletters or our website to still be kept up to date on all the happenings at Hoff.



On September 11th we had our 3rd annual Hoff Fun-a-Thon fundraiser put on by our P.T.O. The participation from our community and outside businesses with sponsorships and donations was incredible. The students did a great job fundraising, and we want to thank all parents and families for their contributions and support.

Technology at Hoff has reached new heights, and we are happy to report that students are integrating technology on a daily basis with Chrome Books provided by our P.T.O. They are learning how to create Google documents, set up Gmail accounts, and access new reading curriculum and math programs such as Ten Marks online. While pencil and paper still continues to be the overall tool, we are excited to see our children excelling at the use of technology and understanding how it can enhance their education.

As you can see there are many great things happening at Hoff! We encourage our community to join us by getting involved. If you're interested in visiting or volunteering at Hoff please feel free to sign in at our office; we welcome you. Hoff is a family that is committed to the educational well-being of all our students, and with the continued support from our community, our school board, and the district, all of the students in Re-3j are prospering.

Hudson Academy of Arts & Sciences

By Principal Greg Dent

Welcome back to the 2015-2016 school year! Hudson is excited to announce the addition of three new staff members. Please welcome these staff members.

David Gallegos –Significant Support Needs



I am extremely excited to have been given the opportunity to become part of the Hudson Academy of Arts and Sciences family. I started on September 14th. I have been teaching for ten years. I have two masters' degrees, one in Administration and Supervision and the other in Special Education. I also have an endorsement in Educational Technology. I am married to my beautiful wife Vanessa. I have four children, three girls and one boy. In my free time I enjoy working out at the gym, movies, and I am a diehard Denver Broncos fan.

Zach Rae-Special Education-Special Education



My name is Zach Rae and I am the new Special Education Resource Teacher at Hudson Academy. I received my bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Colorado in Mexican American Studies and Spanish. I then attended Grand Canyon University and received a Master's degree in Special Education. I decided to become a special education teacher because of members of my family with disabilities and because of my own experiences in elementary school. Most importantly, I love working with elementary school students, as they are at that age where learning is a new wonder.

Luv Russell- Art



Hello my name is Luv Lee Russell. I have been teaching Fine Art for over 15 years in three different states. I love painting, welding, and drawing in charcoal. I am so excited to be a part of the Hudson community. I look forward to educating the students in all types of media, and my goal this year will be to take the 5th grade to the Denver Art museum in the spring of 2016. Thank you all so much the donations, and welcome emails and letters. If you have any question, comments or concerns, or would just like to say hello, please feel free to email. Let's make this a great colorful year!

Hudson Academy is also excited to announce the first ever run/walk club. The Rebel Runners encourages students to improve their fitness and be involved in community events outside of school. Students in 1st through 5th grade are encouraged to participate on Monday and Friday mornings from 7:45 until 8:10. These runners have already participated in a few events and are looking forward to the Scream Scram on October 16th, the Erie Erie on October 31st and the Brighton Turkey Trot on November 21st. Special thanks for Mr. Sampson for sponsoring this healthy opportunity for our students.

Lochbuie Elementary School

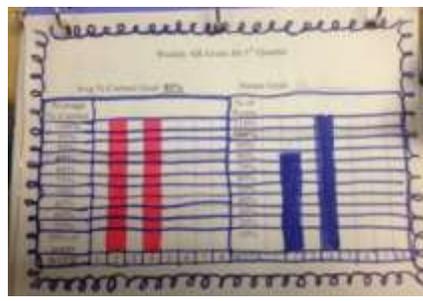
by Principal Jennifer Forbes

As a Leader in Me School, our staff and students set goals so that we can "Begin with the end in Mind". Our big rocks for the year are Leader in Me, quality instruction, and relationships. We have selected these big rocks to ensure that we provide the best instruction for each student and provide a great work environment for our staff. Each Monday, when we release at 1:50, the teachers meet and work on one of our big rocks. For example, teachers have planned their reading instruction, planned our Leadership Notebooks, and examined student data to plan for instruction. As a staff, we stay focused on our big rocks for greater success in our school.

Each student at Lochbuie Elementary has a reading goal. Our school goal is to have 80% of our students meet their quarterly reading goals. Reading goals are set based on the grade level's standards. Some grade levels set goals based on letter sounds, sight words, or independent reading progress. As a school we are trying to fill our school tree with leaves; one for each student in the school who has met their goal. Each classroom is also trying to fill their tree; one for each student in the class who met their goal. At the end of each quarter, we will celebrate our accomplishments with a school assembly. Stop in to watch our trees grow.



School Wide Reading Goal



Individual Student AR Goal

Lochbuie Elementary believes that every second of instruction is important. We strive for every single student to be at school every day for the entire day. We track our daily attendance rate and the number of students who check in late or leave early. We want to see every student every day!



Attendance Goals

WCMS Unites to End Bullying and Teach Tolerance

By Jamie Jeffery with contributions by Jessica Odegaard

There is a lot happening at Weld Central Middle School! We are through the first quarter of school and it has been exciting and engaging. This fall, we welcomed eight new teachers, one new paraprofessional, and a new transition counselor to our staff. The new teachers are Kathleen Chittenden (English as a Second Language), Matthew Clark (Science), Deborah Foreman (Reading Intervention), Crystal Garcia (Language Arts), Mindy Jones (Special Education), Savita Kirsh (Science), Lisa Kleynenberg (Language Arts and Social Studies), and Ashley Ross (Language Arts). Debra Lindstrom is our special education paraprofessional and Kate Swinden was hired as our eighth grade transition counselor. These new staff members are working well with the returning staff members to support our school's core values of *Unity*, *Integrity*, and *Respect*. Recent and upcoming events are opportunities to become more united as a school.

During the month of October, the Counselors at Weld Central Middle School are going to be focusing on uniting our school to help end the cycle of bullying. We are going to be joining thousands of other schools across the country and world by participating in two very important days.

October 21st is Unity Day; on this day we are going to ask all of our students and staff to wear orange to unite against bullying. PACER.org is the leading campaign for this initiative and one of their slogans we are adopting for the month of October is "Make it orange. Make it end." Not only are we going to be asking students and staff to wear orange to unite as one against bullying, but we are also going to be participating in PACER's Project Connect. With this project we are going to create a paper link chain where each student is going to write what he or she can do as an individual to help make our school a safer place for peers. All of the chain links are going to be connected together to symbolize everyone uniting as one against bullying at our school.

October 27th will be Mix-It-Up-Day at lunch! This day is dedicated to shaking things up! We are going to be asking students to sit with people they do not know or usually hang out with at lunch this day. This national campaign, launched by Teaching Tolerance, encourages students to identify, question, and cross social boundaries. Studies done on this initiative have shown that crossing group lines and interacting with new groups of students can help reduce prejudice. When students interact with people who are different from them, biases and misperceptions can disappear! The hope is that meeting new people and making new friends can help eliminate bullying.

At Weld Central Middle School, the staff members are united to support our students. For example, with the recent serious injury to one of our sixth graders and her mom, and the tragic passing of her two younger siblings, WCMS staff members united by wearing blue to honor and remember these young children (see photos).



Left to right: Kim Spayd, Debbie Foreman, Jamie Jeffery, Monique Covert, Beka Dornbos, Corissa Cieloha'



left to right, back row: Cory Urban, Thomas Keller, Kate Swinden, Jerad Sutton, Dave Turner, Lucia Lee, Robin, Johnson, Rebecca Bradford, Jacob Weems, Blake Chamness. Front row: Savita Kirsh, Lisa Kleynenberg, Heather Montejano, Crystal Garcia, Dee Teter-Ries, Ashley Ross, and Jessica Odegaard



Left to right, back row: Mindy Jones, Terran Duncan, Barbara Haggerty, Courtney Pryor. Front row: Irene Burke Greg Wellesley, Kenny Wildenstein, Matt Clark, Kathleen Chittenden

WCHS

by Dan Kennedy, Principal

After spending considerable time the past couple of months learning the Weld Central High School environment, I have been very impressed with the staff and students as our school year kicked off on August 12th. As we work our way through this year, I encourage parents to come in and be a part of our school and programs. We are always looking for better ways to communicate with parents so I would recommend everyone use our school number (303) 536-2100 or my email danielkennedy@re3j.com to ask questions, voice concerns, and get questions answered. We also post information and pictures on our high school Facebook page, "Rebel Maniacs", so be sure to 'like' the page. We continuously update information on our high school website, wchs.re3j.com, including the Counseling Department, Activities/Athletics, and our WCHS Parent Handbook.

Homecoming Week, September 28th through October 3rd

Weld Central High School's 2015 Homecoming week was fantastic. The week started with student dress up day and students were able to participate in many traditional Homecoming activities throughout the week. Activities included the Powder Puff and Peach Fuzz games, Talent Show, Carnival, Homecoming Parade in downtown Keenesburg and of course the Friday night football game against the Fort Morgan Mustangs. Students concluded the week with a dance on Saturday night. Thanks to all those who came out and supported the different athletic events and activities during Homecoming week.

New Graduation Requirements

Weld Central High School will be implementing new graduation requirements which will start with the Class of 2017. The revised policy is posted on the district website. Additional communication will be forthcoming, and we will begin the process of talking to students as we do registration in the spring semester. As part of these graduation requirements, the State has mandated each high school have assessments in place which will demonstrate student proficiency in English and Math starting with the Class of 2021 (this year's 7th grade).

Starting a Chain of Kindness at CCA

April Dowdy, Director



The challenge of Rachel Scott, the first student shot at Columbine, was to begin a chain reaction of kindness. She was known for exhibiting kindness to those that many others would choose to ignore and simply seeing the best in others. In her words she wrote, "...people will never know how far a little kindness can go." Her family has made sure her message has touched millions through Rachel's Challenge, an organization dedicated to empowering adults and students to create safe, caring and supportive environments in schools.

On September 1st we had a great day with Neil McIntyre, and not only did he entertain the students with his beatboxing and other musical abilities, but he also spoke to the students about the importance of showing kindness, issuing five challenges to the students.

- Look for the best in others around you
- Believe in yourself. Dream big.
- Choose positive influences
- Speak with kindness
- Start your own chain reaction

Middle school students at CCA are taking this challenge seriously and are leading the school through their Friends of Rachel (FOR) club. The FOR club students have met regularly to find ways to exhibit kindness, as well as recognize other students throughout the school. Currently, 7th graders are interviewing every student in the school and taking the time to let everyone else know all about them. Students have also made sure that the hallways are covered with positive messages, and the entire school is constructing a giant paper strip chain with examples of kindness written on them. What a great way to begin the school year, and we are very grateful to our PTO for providing this great opportunity for us!



