

## **Citizen Task Force Gives District Direction**

by Greg Rabenhorst

A Citizen Task Force was formed this past winter, and members participated in three important meetings in February and March. The Citizen Task Force concluded their third meeting on March 24 with unanimous approval of a Bond proposal and a Mill Levy Override (MLO) proposal. Forty committed citizen stakeholders were involved in this important process, and a unanimous decision is clearly a sign of strong support for our students. Many have commented that this is the most invested group of district stakeholders that have come together in recent history. The committee included civic leaders, parents, community members, business owners, and a handful of teacher representatives.

The \$61 million Bond proposal includes a rebuild of the classroom structure at Hudson to accommodate two rounds of each grade, a second elementary school to accommodate over 500 students in Lochbuie, deferred maintenance plans for all of our existing schools (excluding the majority of Hudson), educational enhancements encompassing Art, Science, and STEM at all levels, and safety and security measures. Multiple other options were discussed; however, due to total cost, many 'wants' were not included in the final proposal. The MLO proposal includes over \$3 million in funding to support district priorities involving student instructional initiatives, staff recruit and retain needs, technology, and operations/maintenance. Highlights of the proposal are featured in the "Citizen Task Force Recommendations" summary.

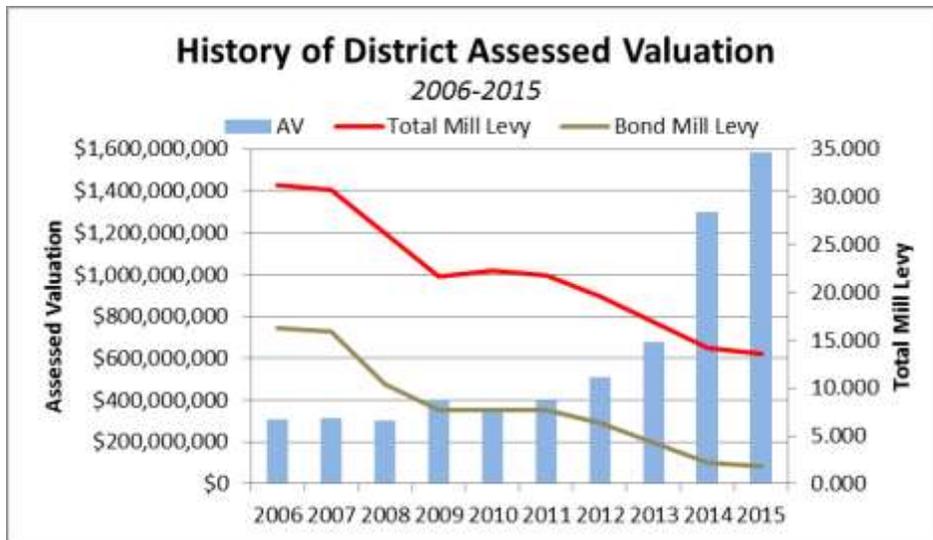
A slide presentation with the full scope of the proposal is available on the district website, and an informational flyer was recently sent to every household in the community. A survey is also being sent to all voter households regarding the potential election questions, and the survey is available on the district website. The survey is designed to gauge community support for the proposal. This will be analyzed by the Board of Education and Citizen Task Force in order to make any potential changes to the proposal before these would become election questions for the November ballot.

## **Assessed Valuation Affects Homeowner Taxes**

In the past two years, the district has witnessed dramatic increases in the total Assessed Valuation (AV). These increases have come primarily from Oil & Gas. Due to these increases, homeowners have reaped the benefit of decreased property taxes. This has not only positively affected the portion of property taxes paid to the school district, but the amount of property taxes paid in total.

The relationship between assessed value and the amount of property taxes a homeowner pays can be compared to a scale. Imagine assessed value on one side and property taxes on the other. When assessed values increase, property tax rates decrease. As depicted in the chart, as AV has increased dramatically over the past few years, the mill levy (tax rate) has just as dramatically declined.

For the first time in several years, the total AV for the district is projected to decline in 2016. The Weld County Assessor is predicting a 40% decrease in Oil & Gas assessed value. As in the scale illustration, this means that the tax rate will increase. As such homeowners will see an increase in their property taxes payable in 2017. Taxes paid to the school district will be similar to those paid a couple of years ago before the dramatic spike in Oil & Gas assessed value.



### District Utilizes Fees to Purchase Updated Supplies & Materials

By Judy Orbanosky

This year has been a year of great learning for both students and teachers in Weld Re-3J Schools. The curriculum and materials fees paid by students' parents have been put to good use and were combined with 'one-time' revenue funds to recommend purchases of new textbooks and materials. New text book programs have been piloted at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The elementary teachers have been busy piloting two different English Language Arts programs in an effort to choose the best program for our students. The middle and high school science teachers piloted new textbooks in the spring semester, as did the middle school social studies teachers. After many hours of training and implementing the new programs in their classrooms, all three groups of teachers are ready to make a final decision, and the Board of Education will be asked to accept the recommendations for the adoption of the new programs at the May regular meeting. The district has also implemented a new reading intervention program at the elementary and middle school levels. Additional programs will be purchased for the 2016-2017 school year with funds that were made available from the department of education. Although textbook adoptions will be more limited next year, the curriculum and materials fees will be used for purchases in other content areas. The district's instructional leadership team will determine which areas will pilot programs early in the new year.

### Graduation Requirement Changes Begin August 2016

In May of 2013, the Colorado State Board of Education adopted new, rigorous graduation guidelines developed by a Council comprised of members from higher education, workforce, parents, community, and school administration. The graduation guidelines that were adopted in Colorado become effective with the graduating class of 2021. Because the guidelines are new and exceptionally more rigorous than most graduation requirements across the state, a committee of local stakeholders began the work in the fall of 2014 in Re-3J to develop local graduation requirements that meet or exceed the State guidelines.

Weld Re-3J Board of Education adopted the new requirements this past September. These requirements begin with the class of 2017; however some aspects of the policy go into effect later and will impact the class of 2021 and beyond. To see the Colorado State Fact Sheets that pertain to the Graduation Guidelines for 2021, visit

[www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/graduationguidelines](http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/graduationguidelines). The graduation requirements that were approved by the Re-3J Board of Education can be found in the 2016-2017 Course Description Book found on Weld Central High School webpage <http://wchs.re3j.com>.

### **Spring Registration Process**

All district schools sent out 2016-2017 registration packets for returning students in April. Parents who intend to enroll children in Re-3J schools next school year are asked to attend to the registration materials as soon as possible.

Similar to last year, general curriculum and materials fees will be assessed to all registering students. As many things increase on an annual basis, this fee has not! The Board of Education approved the 2016-2017 fee schedule which includes the general curriculum and materials fee in the amount of \$60 per student. This required fee is directly allocated toward the funding of curricular textbooks, technology resources, and materials. If the fee for 2016-2017 is paid by May 10, 2016, it will be reduced to \$50 per student. For those families with a financial hardship, other options, such as a payment plan, are available by contacting the school office.

Early registration allows for better planning and a smoother start to the school year for students and staff. Please contact the school office or the district office with questions about the early registration process.

### **Kindergarten Registration**

Brigitte Gustafson

Each year, the district conducts Kindergarten Registration for those children who will be attending the district programs in the fall. This year the district conducted Kindergarten Registration the week of April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Families who were not able to register during this time may call their elementary school to receive registration paperwork.

Parents are asked to register their child at the school they will be attending in the fall; Hoff Elementary, Hudson Academy of Arts and Science or Lochbuie Elementary. Students who are currently attending the district preschool program and are age eligible will automatically be enrolled in Kindergarten, unless parents indicate otherwise. Children must be five years old on or before September 15, 2016 to be eligible for Kindergarten. Please contact an elementary secretary if you are not sure which school your child will be attending.

At registration time, please bring the following items:

- ✓ Registration Fee \$60.00 (\$10.00 reduction if paid at the time of registration)
- ✓ birth certificate
- ✓ photo identification for the parent
- ✓ immunizations records
- ✓ proof of residency in the district (e.g. a copy of utility bill)

The staff will provide you with additional information at the time of registration. No screenings will be done at this time. Beginning in August, the Kindergarten staff will make appointments with parents to conduct assessments with the students. This allows the teachers to have current baseline information on the children and plan accordingly for optimum progress throughout the school year. The process has been very successful in years past and will continue for the coming academic year.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the building your child will attend or visit the Re-3J website at [www.re3j.com](http://www.re3j.com) .

## **Highlighting Hoff**

by Ronda Soliz, Principal

When I look back on our 2015-16 school year, many things come to my mind as highlights. I will start with our annual Fun-a-thon Fundraiser in September, where our school raised over \$12,000 that went directly to supporting our students in various ways; everything from supplies and materials to field trips and guest presenters. We have participated in the Fuel Up to Play 60 grant program sponsored by the NFL to help bring about awareness of the importance of physical activity and movement among children. Through this program our students have participated in the 100 mile running club every Monday and Friday mornings as a way to promote physical activity and wellness.

In October we held an election and 15 students campaigned to be elected as a member of Student Council. Afterwards, our council participated in and organized many fun activities and community outreach events such as; monthly spirit days, fundraising events like Heifer International, socks for the homeless, a canned food drive for the local food bank, a penny drive for United Way and visits to our local senior centers.

This fall we were also very lucky to have a local Colorado author, Karla Oceanak come and visit with our students about being an author and how important writing is in their education. In January, we were fortunate enough to have two of our 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students Myranda Bye and Sydney Patrick attend the Regional Science Fair Finals where both were recognized for their effort and participation. All 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students were then able to show off their Science projects at our first annual Showcase Night. We had over 200 people in attendance that night. This unique event gave parents an insight into reading, math, technology and the science their students are involved in every day. The best part however, was that the children were the teachers. The feedback we received from that night was very positive, as everyone enjoyed how interactive and informative it was.

This spring, we have had several musical performances and a very successful Jump Rope for Heart where we collaborated with several high school students to come and work with our students while receiving community service hours. Overall, this has been a busy school year with so many wonderful highlights. I couldn't be more pleased with the success our students have shown this year and want to thank all of our parents, staff and community members for their continued support of Hoff Elementary. You help us; "be more awesome!"

## **Hudson**

by Greg Dent, Principal

I can hardly believe that another school year is quickly coming to an end. We have had a fantastic year at Hudson Academy. Thank you parents, staff and community for making Hudson Academy the wonderful place it is for our students. I have enjoyed this year so much and I can't

believe that it is almost over. I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight some of the great things that have going on at Hudson Academy.

On April 9<sup>th</sup> the Hudson Academy Student Council sponsored a Night at the Rockies! This was a fun event that was attended by students, family and friends. Student council sold 600 tickets to this event. It was truly a unique experience for our students to see a Major League Baseball game.

Hudson Academy received a grant from the Western Dairy Association through the Fuel Up to Play 60 program for \$2,000. This grant was divided between new playground equipment and a field trip for third thru fifth graders to the Lost Creek Dairy. In addition, Hudson preschool thru second grade students will receive a visit from June, the animatronic cow, in early May. The Fuel Up to Play 60 student ambassadors surveyed the students in the school asking them what playground equipment they wanted. A new equipment cart was purchased, along with frisbees, footballs, flags for flag football, tether balls, soccer balls, basketballs, hula hoops, jump ropes, cones and volleyballs. The students at Hudson Academy made sure to have enough equipment for all our students and their interests. Also, congratulations to Dayrin Estrella, 5<sup>th</sup> grade student at Hudson Academy for getting a full scholarship from the Western Dairy Association to attend the Ambassador Summit in July. This event takes place at Purdue University, Fair Oaks Farms and Farm Bureau Football Center, Home of the Indianapolis Colts. Play 60 is sponsored by the NFL and the Dairy Association. Hudson Academy is excited and proud for Dayrin and the wonderful opportunity she has earned!

Hudson Academy of Arts and Sciences just completed its 8<sup>th</sup> annual Jump Rope for Heart event sponsored by the American Heart Association. It was a two day event that took place on February 9<sup>th</sup> for primary grades Kindergarten, first and second and February 10<sup>th</sup> for intermediate grades third, fourth and fifth. One hundred and seventy five students participated in the event to keep their hearts strong and healthy. The event included jump rope competitions, individual, long and double-dutch jump roping as well as prize giveaways and top fundraiser awards. The Hudson Academy families raised \$2,827.78 for the American Heart Association to help those affected by heart disease. Thank you Hudson Academy students, families, staff and supporters for your help with this event.

Playground equipment and cart purchased with Play 60 grant



## **Community Involvement at Lochbuie Elementary School**

by Jennifer Forbes, Principal

Lochbuie Elementary School is very proud and excited to partner with our community and parents to help educate the whole child. The staff and students at Lochbuie Elementary School work hard to find ways to involve our community. Our Father Daughter Dance, Parent Night, Watch Dogs and performances at the Senior Center have given our students and community a chance to work together.

In March, Lochbuie Elementary School co-sponsored a Father Daughter Dance. This event was an opportunity for Dads and Daughters to get dressed up and celebrate the Father/Daughter bond. Each student was treated to a goody bag, a rose, a chance to meet and have their picture taken with a Princess and enjoy snacks and great music. The gym was packed with over 200 people! It was a fairy tale type evening and so much fun to see everyone enjoy the night!

Also in March, Lochbuie hosted a Parent Night to help educate families about the *7 Habits*. This year, the Parent night focused on Habit 7 "Sharpen the Saw"! Sharpen the saw focuses on creating balance. Focusing on sharpening your saw in the area of mind, body, soul and heart helps families to be the most productive. During Parent Night, families were treated to a \$1 dinner served and cooked by students. Then, families traveled to 4 rooms and enjoyed a variety of activities. Families put together puzzles, played basketball, wrote notes to people they love, and did yoga. All of these activities were planned to help families "Sharpen their Saws!"

Lochbuie Elementary School is very proud of our Watch Dog program and each and every one of our Watch Dog Dads. Watch Dogs is a national program that encourages dads to volunteer in the school for one whole day. On their assigned day, Dads come in and get a schedule for the day and a meal ticket. The schedule takes them all over the school to help in classrooms. The dads also get to spend a chunk of their day with their own child. They are treated to a school lunch and eat with their child. Our students love to see Watch Dogs in our school and the teachers love the extra help! Currently we have 124 dads who have signed up to be a part of the program. Already this year, we had almost 70 days with a Watch Dog on campus, with 12 more days scheduled.

Lochbuie Elementary School is full of students with amazing talents. We are beginning a partnership with the Lochbuie Senior Center to give students an opportunity to share their talents. A group of our band students, along with our music teacher Mr. Serio, walked to the Senior Center and performed for them after their weekly lunch. The mini-concert was well received and we hope to send more students to share their talents with the senior center.

Lochbuie Elementary staff and students want to thank the entire community for helping to make Lochbuie Elementary School an amazing place to work and go to school! We look for more opportunities to work with the community in the future!



Watch Dog Dad



Father Daughter Dance

### **New class at Weld Central Middle School Next Year**

by Jamie Jeffery, Principal

Cue the Indiana Jones music and put on a fedora; archeology is coming to Weld Central Middle School. Mr. Keller, Social Studies teacher at Weld Central Middle School, will be teaching an anthropology class beginning in the fall 2016. This class began as a club which currently meets weekly. In the club, students have been working on excavating two simulated archeological sites located near the baseball field at the middle school. Next school year, the topics and activities which took place in the club will expand to an entire, semester long, class. The class will not only revolve around archeology but will include the three other subfields of anthropology; cultural, physical, and linguistics. The class will review and pick up where the club left off and include excavation, identifying artifacts in a lab setting, hypothesizing the events which took

place regarding the site, an in school museum display, and much more. In preparation of the club and class, Mr. Keller and his archeological team spent time in the fall burying artifacts and creating the simulated site. We are excited to add this class to our elective offerings.



## **Weld Central High School**

by Dan Kennedy, Principal

Weld Central High School has had a busy and exciting spring semester. Our Technology Student Association team competed and placed in the top 5 statewide with their video game creation. Our Match-Wits team earned a spot televised on PBS for its accomplishments. Our Knowledge Bowl team qualified for a national competition this summer. Our FFA had 5 members win state degrees based on their SAE projects. The FFA also had 3 state winners in their proficiency awards. Our FBLA programs sent 9 kids to their state competition and are awaiting their awards. Our Catering program was selected to compete in a "Chopped" style competition this spring. WCHS was selected to participate in the "Every 15 Minutes" program the week prior to prom. And thanks to the Juniors and their class sponsors, Prom was a huge success.

In athletics, Dalton Robertson earned his 3<sup>rd</sup> State Wrestling title and was part of a WCHS team that placed 4<sup>th</sup> at the state wrestling competition. Coach Schellenberg was also named Colorado 7 Wrestling Coach of the Year. Freshmen Katie Becker has set two school records in track (1600 meter run and 300 meter hurdles). Our very own Scott Richardson, Athletic

Director, was named Colorado High School Athletic Association New Athletic Director of the year.

The spring play “The Importance of Being Earnest” was a huge success as was the spring Band/Choir concert. WCHS hosted “Shakespeare in the Parking Lot” which was performed by the Denver Center for Performing Arts.

Graduation is coming up on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Class of 2016 has worked hard to get to this point, and they have a bright future ahead of them. Our Counseling Department has worked on college applications, and they were able to get WCHS honored as a FAFSA Flagship School in Colorado based on increases in FAFSA applications.

### **Get the FACTS about Cardinal Community Academy**

by April Dowdy, Director

The 2016-2017 school year is quickly coming to a close, and we’ve had a great year at Cardinal Community Academy. The year began with four of our elementary teachers moving to new grade levels, which proved to be a very positive move. Teachers, Jody Auer (middle school) and Nathan Rausa (special education) also joined our team, and both have been outstanding additions to CCA. Additionally, a new math program was introduced in grades K - 5. With the great results that were seen this year, I can’t wait to see what’s in store for the next school year.

As always, the end of the school year is a time of reflection. We ask ourselves what worked and what didn’t work. How can we make next year even better? Part of what makes our school great are the dedicated families and students that come to CCA. As we speak with parents about enrolling their children at CCA, we often receive many great questions about curriculum, enrollment, and policies, but we also hear many misconceptions. I’d like to address a few of these misconceptions and give our community some additional information about CCA.

Although not all charter schools are chartered by their local district, we are very fortunate to be chartered through the Weld Re-3J District. Their support is and has been invaluable! Cardinal Community Academy began educating students in 2000, and we currently serve 172 in grades K - 8. The setting is rural, and the class sizes have purposely remained small, with each class capped at 20 students. Due to our classification as charter school, CCA has their own board of directors. Curriculum and programming are decided internally and approved by the CCA Board. The curriculum is developed around the Core Knowledge Sequence (not to be confused with Common Core). This Core Knowledge Sequence details the content to be taught in language arts, history, geography, mathematics, science, music and art. Not only do students find the content interesting, but it ensures that students are receiving an education that is very comprehensive to set them up for success in high school and any post-secondary education.

The following are some of the misconceptions we’ve heard about our school or other charter schools in general:

#### **Misconception #1: Getting into a charter school is about “who you know” and the school gets to pick and choose their students.**

**CCA Fact:** *CCA accepts students on a first come, first served basis. Students do not need to reside in district or pass a test to enter the school. A lottery is held for entering kindergarten*

students (per law), which determines a wait list going forward. Currently, we do not have a policy for sibling priority.

**Misconception #2: Charter schools do not accept students with special needs.**

**CCA Fact:** We have a full-time special education teacher, 3 paraprofessionals, and a part-time reading specialist. Again, we simply fill our classes according to date of enrollment.

**Misconception #3: There are fees and/or tuition to attend a charter school.**

**CCA Fact:** CCA is a charter public school. We receive Per Pupil Revenues (PPR) per student like all other public schools; therefore, there is no tuition. Additionally, CCA does not charge fees to our families.

**Misconception #4: Charter schools are not bound by the same accountability requirements as other schools.**

**CCA Fact:** Charter schools are bound by federal and state public school laws and receive accountability ratings using the same guidelines as all other public schools. Yes! Charter schools are still required to participate in state testing. CCA teachers are also licensed through CDE.

**Misconception #5: I shouldn't bother completing an enrollment form for CCA because the wait lists are long and I won't get in anyway.**

**CCA Fact:** While we do have wait lists for some classes, this is not the case for every class. Currently, we even have a few openings for next year. If you are interested in enrolling your child or simply have questions, give us a call. Our number is 303-732-9312.

Additional information and an enrollment form can be found at [ccaschool.net](http://ccaschool.net).



CCA teachers and aides dress like superheroes to celebrate 100 days of school.

## RE-3J Food Service Program 2015-2016

The beginning of the school year brought a partnership with Chartwells as the food service provider for the district bringing healthy, made from scratch, food options to district students.



In October of 2015 RE-3J kicked off their partnership with Fuel Up to Play 60. The program is sponsored by the NFL and the National Dairy Council with the purpose of enhancing nutrition and physical activity and to encourage children to lead healthier lives. Weld Central Middle School, Hoff Elementary, Hudson Academy, and Lochbuie Elementary were the recipients of \$5000 in grant money for the 2015-2016 school year from Fuel Up to Play 60 to kick start the breakfast in the classroom program. The breakfast in the class room program has given 500 additional free breakfasts each day to students throughout the district, giving students a jump start to their day.

As part of the Fuel Up to Play 60 program, each school also started their own initiatives to promote healthy eating and up to 60 minutes of physical activity a day. This year, 5<sup>th</sup> grade student, Dayrin Estrella from Hudson Academy, was the recipient of a full scholarship from the Western Dairy Association for receiving the most points in the **entire district** in the Fuel Up to Play 60 program. The scholarship will allow Dayrin to attend the Ambassador Summit, July 25-28 at Purdue University, Fair Oak Farm, and the Farm Bureau Football Center. The scholarship will cover everything from travel, lodging, meals, ground transportation and all Summit workshops. Dayrin will learn more about the Fuel Up to Play 60 program, participate in leadership opportunities, meet NFL players, and get media training. Way to go Dayrin!!



Jena Graham (Program Adviser), Dayrin Estrella and Greg Sampson (Program Adviser)

The Fuel Up to Play 60 also brought the Farm to Table initiative to our district this year. In May, students from Hudson Academy will get to visit a local dairy farm to learn about the process of how fresh milk and dairy products are delivered to our homes every day. Hudson Academy will also participate in a smoothie day, allowing students to enjoy smoothies made from local yogurts.



Chartwells is cooking up change this year with their eat, learn, live philosophy. Chartwells engages students and their senses through the creation of new, made from scratch, fresh dining experiences that improve the school day. Chartwells shares knowledge of life enhancing benefits to good nutrition with students, their families, and the community. Chartwells also enriches the lives of our students and are planting the seeds of health and wellness.



You may have noticed Food Focus boards going up at each of the schools in the district this year. Each month Chartwells highlights seasonal and nutrient rich ingredients through the Simply Good Food Focus program. The program aims to move the conversation about food from the lunchroom to the classroom, to home, and throughout the community.



Each school displays a colorful bulletin board showcasing the Food Focus of the Month. The Food Focus of the Month is also brought into homes across the district through our monthly Food Service Newsletter. This allows parents to also learn about the Food Focus of the Month, new menu items, activities with students, and even new recipes every month to try right in your own kitchen. At the elementary level, students are given monthly activity sheets in correlation with the Food Focus of the Month. Students have been learning about the new foods and have been rewarded with their participation via activity classes focused around the ingredients for that month. February brought spice painting classes, March brought a cooking class, and the students will enjoy at gardening class for April.



As the 2015-2016 school year is coming closer to the end for students and hallways will soon be empty, the Re-3J district and Chartwells will be working through the summer to provide a healthy lunch for your children. Please join us for lunch this summer, starting in June, for the Summer Food Program. The Summer Food Program will provide a hot or cold lunch, free of charge, to all student aged children from Pre-K to 18. The lunches will be served at Hudson Academy and Lochbuie Elementary schools on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Please be on the lookout for full details regarding kick off dates, summer activities, and more.

Chartwells has enjoyed serving up tasty fun to students during the 2015-2016 school year and looks forward to providing even more for the upcoming 2016-2017 school year!