



GREELEY-EVANS SCHOOL DISTRICT 6 News Release

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Colorado Commissioner of Education Visits District 6; Says Reforms Are a Model for the State

Colorado commissioner of education Dwight D. Jones on Tuesday made District 6 the first stop on his planned tour of all 178 districts in the state. And when he goes to other districts, he plans to take some of District 6 with him.

The commissioner praised District 6's reform effort of the past two years, saying that the strategic plan created here may serve as a good model for other districts across the state.

"What you've developed in this school district is just fantastic," Jones said. "It is so good that we're talking with your superintendent and your deputy superintendent about how we might develop that as a model across the state. We know that there are other districts that are facing similar challenges that are also going to have to face the brutal facts, and in doing that, I think we're better positioned to say 'Here's what Greeley has done and here's lessons learned.'"

The District's plan to raise standards is bearing fruit in the form of higher scores on assessment tests in 2006 and 2007. Jones is expected to decide in the next few weeks whether District 6 will have its academic watch status lifted by the Colorado Department of Education. A trend of declining test scores led the department to place the district on the watch list two years ago.

Even if the rising scores have not yet risen to the level some expect, Jones said he is confident they'll get there. "The things that you're doing are proven, they're well researched, and so I'm quite confident that you're going to get the achievement gains that you're after," he said.

The first school on Jones' visitation list was Harold S. Winograd K-8 School, 320 N. 71st Ave. During the afternoon visit, principal Holly Bressler led a walkthrough for a guest list that included Jones, North Central Region senior manager Michael Clough, superintendent Dr. Renae Dreier and deputy superintendent Dr. Ranelle Lang.

They visited several classrooms from kindergarten to third grade, watching students make graphs on a floor chart, plant seeds, and practice reading. In each room, students remained engaged in their teachers' instruction despite all the guests walking through.

Jones cheerfully took time to talk with children in each class, asking them to explain what they were learning and encouraging them to keep working hard.

"It was an honor to be selected to be the school where the commissioner chose to visit," Bressler said. "We're appreciative of his time and his interest in what we we're doing instructionally with the students. We're appreciative of his commitment to the education of *all* students."

What Jones saw at Winograd confirmed for him the successes of the district's multi-faceted strategic plan to improve academic achievement. "The school was just fantastic," he said. "It was nice to go visit a school and to see that the plan has actually made it out to the facilities and to the buildings. It was really nice to see the kids engaged, the teachers using best practices, and that piece was just so exciting."

Since being put on watch, the district has undergone a major overhaul of its curriculum and organization. The results have been increased CSAP scores for the last two years and a streamlined, cohesive method of teaching District 6 students across grade levels and at all sites.

"The kids were just doing a fantastic job, and the teachers – it was obvious that they were well trained and they had a system that they supported and believed in and they were actually implementing that very well," Jones said.

After touring Winograd, Jones was the special guest at a District-headquarters reception. He met and mingled with District principals and invited guests from the community, including Greeley mayor Tom Selders, University of Northern Colorado president Kay Norton and others.

Dr. Bruce Broderius, District 6 Board of Education president, introduced Jones to the gathering, noting that when the Colorado Board of Education appointed Jones to his post on June 1, the vote was unanimous. Broderius said that vote signaled not only the state board's support for Jones, but the quality of leader he is.

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