



NEWS RELEASE

December 9, 2008

District 6 School Ratings Improve; McAuliffe Earns 'Excellent' Status

State ratings have improved at four neighborhood schools in District 6 and one charter school program, according to reports released today by the Colorado Department of Education, while no neighborhood schools declined.

The ratings are part of the state's annual School Accountability Reports produced for each public school in the state. They list academic achievement data, student demographics, financial data, and more. Using student data from the spring 2008 CSAP testing, the state assigns each school an overall achievement rating and academic growth rating. Achievement ratings are: Unsatisfactory, Low, Average, High and Excellent. Growth ratings are: Low, Typical and High.

District 6 schools have made gains in their ratings, based on a trend of improved academic achievement over the last several years. This year, 26 percent of District 6 schools, including charters, are rated as High or Excellent, compared to 19 percent in 2005. The percentage rated as Low has declined from 53 percent in 2005 to 37 percent in 2008.

"As an entire school system, we're getting better," said Superintendent Ranelle Lang. "Our students are making solid academic progress, and we need to congratulate them for their commitment to learning and achieving. It has also taken a great deal of unwavering focus by our teachers, principals, support staff, and central leadership staff. The employees of District 6 are among the most talented and dedicated professionals to be found in any district, anywhere."

Local schools improve their ratings

McAuliffe Elementary School, which was rated as a High achieving school in each of the last three years, has entered the Excellent category, the highest possible rating. The school also earned a High growth rating, meaning its students showed significantly more academic progress during the year than similar schools across Colorado.

"Our entire school community can celebrate this accomplishment," said Sandy Cosner, principal of McAuliffe. "The staff has always worked extremely hard to make sure that our students increase their learning every year. Part of our staff's success is commitment to our students and commitment to each other as professionals. And we have tremendous support from our community, including volunteers from parents, organizations such as our business partner, Lighthouse Lending, and from the Rotary club."

Monfort Elementary School has now jumped back into the High achievement category, matching its rating from 2006. Monfort had slipped to Average last year.

“This is my fourth year as principal at Monfort and I am amazed at the work that the students are doing this year. Our expectations are higher, the student support is stronger, and the student results keep improving,” said principal Amie Cieminski. “Monfort families, staff, and students are exceptionally loyal and proud of their school. I see it every day in the faces of our young learners, in the commitment that families make to get their children to school every day, and in the dedication of endless hours that the staff put into their jobs. They love their school.”

Martinez Elementary School is now rated as Average, up from three straight years at the Low category. Martinez students have made solid progress for the last several years, and the school’s growth rating in 2008 is High.

Greeley Central High School bounced back into the Average category this year, after slipping down to the Low rating in 2007.

Frontier Charter School’s elementary program is rated as Excellent this year, up from two consecutive years in the High category. Its growth rating is also High.

The only local school to slip a rating category this year is University Charter School’s middle school program, which is now rated as Average. The program had a High rating from 2005 to 2007.

New formula for Growth ratings in 2008

The Colorado Department of Education earlier this year unveiled a new model for tracking the academic progress of students and their schools. The Colorado Growth Model provides a common understanding of how individual students and groups of students progress from year to year toward state standards, based on where each individual student begins. The model focuses attention on maximizing student progress over time and reveals where, and among which students, the strongest growth is happening and where it is not. The growth ratings on the SARs have been changed this year to align with the new growth model.

Five neighborhood school programs and one charter school program earned High growth ratings this year. They are Martinez and McAuliffe elementary schools, Chappelow K-8 School’s elementary and middle school programs, Greeley Central High School, and Frontier Charter School’s elementary program.

Reports available online and at individual schools

School Accountability Reports for individual District 6 schools are available for public view today on the websites of District 6 and the Colorado Department of Education. On the District 6 website, www.greeleyschools.org, each school’s report can be found in the Schools section. On the CDE website, the reports can be found at <http://reportcard.cde.state.co.us/reportcard/CommandHandler.jsp>.

Hard copies of the reports are being sent to schools by CDE, beginning today, and should be available for parents and other interested persons at schools by Friday, Dec. 19.