



Colorado Department of Education – Communications Office  
201 East Colfax Ave.  
Room 505  
Denver, CO 80203  
Phone: 303-866-3898  
Fax: 303-866-6938

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## **News Release**

### ***Six School Districts Removed from “Academic Watch” Status***

Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight Jones today announced that six school districts are being removed from the state’s list of districts on “academic watch” due to significant growth in student achievement.

The list of upgraded districts includes Greeley-Evans School District 6, the largest district ever placed on academic watch in the state. Greeley-Evans School District 6 serves 18,000 students; the other five districts with changes to their accreditation status serve less than 7,000 students combined.

The six districts are:

- Branson School District (Las Animas County)
- Dolores County School District RE-2J (Dove Creek)
- Florence School District Re-2 (Fremont County)
- Greeley-Evans School District 6 (Weld County)
- Lake County R-1 School District (Leadville)
- Weld County School District 8 (Fort Lupton)

“What we have seen from all these districts is a tremendous amount of hard work and focus from leadership, teachers, principals, students and the community at large,” said Commissioner Jones. “We have full confidence that these six districts are embarking on a new era of sustained improvement.”

Commissioner Jones pointed out that only districts with a “clear pattern of improvement” are being removed from watch status. In fact, nine other districts remain on watch and the accreditation status in one district (Aguilar School District Re-6) is being downgraded from watch to probation. In all, three districts are on probation.

Miami-Yoder School District, which had been on probation, was upgraded today to academic watch, also based on the positive trend in student achievement.

During a mid-September visit to Greeley-Evans School District 6, Commissioner Jones praised the district’s reform effort and lauded the district’s strategic plan as a good model for other districts around the state.

State law (C.R.S. 22-11-104) provides for a corrective action cycle under the accreditation process for districts that fail to meet a variety of indicators including student achievement, dropout rates, graduation rates, attendance rates and other measures of district performance.

In September, Commissioner Jones launched *Forward Thinking*, the department’s new plan to increase the graduation rate and close the achievement gap in all Colorado schools.

One of the goals in that plan is to revise the process under which schools and districts are labeled via the accreditation process.

“It’s one thing to say ‘universal proficiency’ and it’s another to make it happen,” said Deputy Commissioner Ken Turner. “At the heart of *Forward Thinking* is the idea that no single entity can reach that goal alone. The state department of education will form a strong alliance with local school districts to improve the pace of progress toward that goal and it’s that notion of teamwork that will guide the accreditation process as we move forward.”

**For more information, contact** Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Tanya Price, 303-866-6397, in the CDE Office of Communications. To sign up for the CDE e-mail news service, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html>.

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