



Colorado Department of Education – Communications Office
201 East Colfax Ave.
Room 501
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: 303-866-3898
Fax: 303-866-6938

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News Release

Anita Foxworth Named Director of Achievement Gap; Content Specialists Appointed for Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies

Commissioner Dwight D. Jones today named four individuals who will strengthen the department's team of curricular experts and one who will lead the effort to close the achievement gap.

All five positions were made possible by funding approved by the Colorado State Legislature, following a request from the Colorado Department of Education. The funding requests were based on one of the primary goals of "Forward Thinking," which calls for the department to support districts by acquiring and developing expertise in mathematics, reading, science, arts, and social studies. "Forward Thinking" is the department's blueprint to improve service and support to school districts.

"Building this team is critical to our ability to assist all school districts in their effort to raise expectations and to ensuring that students have access to rich, engaging instructional content delivered by teachers who have access to top-notch professional development," said Commissioner Jones.

Content specialists will work on the revision and review of standards and assessments, work with school districts to improve instruction for students served by federal, gifted and talented, special education and English language acquisition programs, and identify curricula that have been proven to narrow achievement gaps and increase student achievement.

Closing the Achievement Gap – Anita Foxworth

Commissioner Jones appointed Dr. Anita Foxworth to serve as the department's achievement gap specialist and director of achievement gap and academic support. In this capacity, Foxworth will work with all units within the department to unify efforts to narrow achievement gaps associated with race and income level. She will also provide oversight and support for the department's content specialists.

Foxworth served as principal consultant in the Office of Federal Programs for the past seven years where she led CDE's initiative to implement school and district reviews designed to improve the performance of all students. Prior to her work with the department, Foxworth worked as a senior research associate at RMC Research Corporation delivering educational services in the areas of parent involvement, resource reallocation and school improvement. Foxworth has also worked in Seattle Public Schools administering grant programs and professional development programs that focused on the needs of students with disabilities, students in poverty and students who were second language learners.

Foxworth holds a master's degree in special education and a doctorate in special education and psychology from St. Louis University.

Arts – Karol Gates

Karol Gates has been principal of Meridian Ranch Elementary School in Falcon School District 49 following 12 years as an assistant principal, curriculum coordinator and teacher in Academy School District 20. She has also been a teacher in Elicott School District 22. Karol served as assistant principal at the award winning da Vinci Academy, a model integrated arts program. She was instrumental in the development of curricular materials for Opera Goes To School and was nominated for a national award by the state's nomination committee.

Gates holds a master's degree in education – curriculum development from Lesley University and a bachelor's degree in music from the University of Northern Colorado.

Mathematics – Melissa Colman

Melissa Colsman, a recognized Colorado math leader, has been the district mathematics coordinator in Cherry Creek Schools for the past five years. She has taught mathematics at Campus Middle School in Cherry Creek and has worked as an elementary teacher in Cherry Creek's Village East Elementary School. Colsman has conducted numerous professional development activities statewide, has been a contributing member to Colorado's math leaders and has instituted collaborative efforts that led to a Math Certificate program designed to increase the math content knowledge of elementary teachers.

Colsman is working on her doctoral degree in educational leadership and innovation at the University of Colorado at Denver. She holds a master's degree in interdisciplinary studies – education and a bachelor's degree in middle school education, both from the University of Northern Colorado.

Science – Barry Cartwright

Barry Cartwright has been an eighth-grade teacher and science team leader with the St. Vrain Valley School District for the past five years and an active teacher leader at Alton Middle School and Silver Creek Middle / High School prior to that. Additionally, Cartwright worked as the head of the science department at Lincoln School in Kathmandu, Nepal and as a science teacher at Battle Mountain High School in Minturn, Colorado. Cartwright has also worked as a U.S. Forest Service biologist.

Cartwright holds a master's degree in science curriculum and instruction from the University of Colorado at Denver and a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington.

Social Studies – Brenda Barr

Dr. Brenda Barr has been principal of Strawberry Park Elementary School in Steamboat Springs School District since 2007. Previously, she worked as a principal, assistant principal and district social studies supervisor in Colorado Springs School District 11. She has also worked as a social studies specialist for the Mississippi Department of Education. During that time Brenda partnered with the National Council for Economic Education to train teachers on virtual economics; she worked with Harcourt Brace to create an American History Assessment; she co-wrote and facilitated a Mississippi Geographic

Television series on national geography standards and she was chair of the Geography Endowment for the state.

Barr holds a doctorate in educational leadership and policy studies from the University of Denver, as well as a master's degree in secondary education and a bachelor's degree in history, both from the University of Alabama.

For more information, contact Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Megan McDermott, 303-866-2334, 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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