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News Release

La Jara and Stein Elementary Schools Named Title I “Distinguished Schools of the Year”

The Colorado Department of Education announced today the selection of La Jara Elementary School and Stein Elementary School as Title I Distinguished Schools of the year.

La Jara Elementary School is located in La Jara in the North Conejos RE-1J School District and Stein Elementary is in Lakewood in Jefferson County School District.

The award recognizes two Title I schools—one that has achieved academic success, and one that made progress in closing achievement gaps associated with race and poverty.

“It is fantastic to see La Jara and Stein recognized in this capacity,” said Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. “These two schools are shining examples of what hard work and teamwork can accomplish.”

La Jara Elementary was selected for exceptional student performance. In 2009, the percentage of students who were at or above the NCLB proficient level on reading and math CSAP was 99.48 percent. La Jara principal Brian Crowther states that the school’s success is the result of “the staff’s collaborative teamwork that has created an atmosphere in which every child can succeed.”

Stein Elementary School was selected as a distinguished school for their work in closing the achievement gap. Stein, a high-poverty school, increased the percentage of students eligible for free and

reduced lunch who were at or above the proficient level on reading and math CSAP from 80.1 percent in 2008 to 88.9 percent in 2009. The achievement gap between students eligible for free and reduced lunch and those ineligible for free and reduced lunch was decreased by 4.7 percent. Stein principal Socorro Alarcon says the award "is an affirmation that at-risk students can achieve if they are provided with high-quality, data-driven instruction, challenging curriculum, and are given the support and interventions that they need."

"We are grateful for the opportunity to recognize the exceptional progress being made by La Jara and Stein Elementary School students," said Pat Chapman, executive director of the Office of Federal Programs at CDE. "The efforts being made by the leadership and teachers at these schools is impressive."

The Title I Distinguished School Program is a joint project of the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association of State Title I Directors. The distinguished schools will receive an award of \$10,000 and will be recognized at the National Title I Conference in Washington, D.C. in January.

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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