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News Release

Blue Ribbon Schools Lauded By Colorado State Board Of Education

The Colorado State Board of Education began its meeting this month by honoring five schools identified as 2009 Blue Ribbon Award winners. The federal program recognizes schools that are academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.

“You put Colorado on the map,” said Board Chairman Bob Schaffer, who noted there are only 321 schools given the award nationally out of 133,000 that are eligible. “This is a huge designation [and it] speaks highly of your schools, administrators, community and families. This is a positive statement on behalf of all Colorado.”

The winners, announced in September 2009, were Chipeta Elementary School in Colorado Springs (Colorado Springs School District 11); Haaff Elementary School and Morton Elementary School, both in Pueblo (Pueblo City Schools District 60); High Peaks Elementary School in Boulder (Boulder Valley School District RE-2) and Soaring Eagles School in Colorado Springs (Harrison School District 2). Principals and teachers at the three schools in Boulder and Colorado Springs joined the recognition in person; representatives from both Pueblo schools joined the meeting via Web-based video camera.

“Folks don’t realize what a prestigious award the Blue Ribbon Award is and how hard it is to achieve,” said Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones.

Commissioner Jones said he heard a common theme in the comments from school principals and teachers. “Relationships really matter,” he

said. "Achievement can be improved when we relate to the kids we are serving."

Math Standards Honor Lew Romagnano

The state board voted to dedicate the newly minted state model content standard in mathematics to Lew Romagnano, who served as a co-chair of the standards subcommittee on mathematics and who passed away Jan. 13, 2010.

Romagnano, who demonstrated tremendous dedication to the standards revision process, was a professor of mathematical sciences at Metro State College. He left behind a legacy of mathematics leadership through his work with teachers, his contributions to mathematics education research and his uncompromising high standards.

3-3 Vote Upholds Jefferson County Schools Decision On Lotus School For Excellence II

The state board heard an appeal by the organizers of Lotus School for Excellence II, a proposed charter school previously turned down by the Jefferson County Schools Board of Education.

With board member Randy DeHoff absent, the board's vote was split three-three on the fate of the charter proposal. Chairman Schaffer and board members Marcia Neal and Peggy Littleton supported a motion to remand the proposal to the school district for further consideration; board members Elaine Gantz Berman, Angelika Schroeder and Jane Goff supported a motion to uphold Jefferson County Schools' rejection of the charter.

Without enough votes to overturn the local board's decision, the original denial of Lotus' application, in effect, was upheld.

Other action

Key items the board also considered and approved include:

- A contingency reserve request on behalf of Greeley-Evans Weld Country School District 6 to relieve the district from lost state share funds due to an assessed valuation change made by the Weld County assessor after CDE requested final total program appropriation.
- State share payments to school districts under the Public School Finance Act of 1994.

- A new teacher preparation program for a master's degree in special education from Metro State College.
- A new secondary post-baccalaureate non-degree teacher preparation program from the University of Northern Colorado.
- Notice of rulemaking for permanent rules concerning Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement. The Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement Act, Article 14 of Title 22 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, requires the state board to promulgate rules to establish criteria for identifying high priority and priority local education providers, rules for implementing the Student Re-engagement Grant Program and defining and calculating the following rates: student dropout rate, graduation rate, completion rate, the student re-engagement rate; truancy rate, student mobility rate, student suspension rate and student expulsion rate.
- A notice of rulemaking for a proposed rule that would set statewide expectations for informing parents about arrests of district employees.

Additionally, the board:

- Received the annual report from the Office of Online Learning (full report may be found at the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/ygqp3g2>)
- Received information from the Public School Capital Construction Assistance Board that two previously approved projects under the Building Excellent Schools Today grant program (projects for Mapleton Public Schools and North Routt Community Charter School) will not be funded due to the lack of local matching grant resources.

For additional information about other approved items on consent, please visit the state board's Web page:

<http://www.boarddocs.com/co/cde/Board.nsf/Public>

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

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