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News Release

Commissioner Dwight D. Jones Commends Five Colorado Schools As “Schools Of Character”

Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones presented five schools with Colorado State Schools of Character Awards at an event yesterday at the state capitol.

Held by the Foundation for Character Development in the Old Supreme Court Chambers, awards were presented to Eagle Rock School (a private school in Estes Park), KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy (Denver Public Schools), Peak to Peak Charter School (Boulder Valley School District), Rocky Heights Middle School (Douglas County Schools) and Russell Middle School (Colorado Springs School District 11).

To be eligible for the award, a school must have been engaged in character education for a minimum of three years. Reviewers screen applications using “Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education,” which ask applicants to list their core ethical values and how they are communicated or encouraged. Schools also need to explain the role of staff planning in character education and how values are tied to service projects.

“The purpose of the State Schools of Character awards program is to provide recognition to schools and districts in Colorado demonstrating an outstanding character education initiative that has yielded improvements in student behavior, school culture and academic achievement,” said Commissioner Jones in his remarks. “The administrators, teachers, students and parents in this room should be proud. You all stand up for each other.”

Added Jim Olmstead, Director of Strategic Partnerships for the Foundation for Character Development: "Character development happens every day in every school. What is different about the schools recognized today is that it is intentional...it impacts the entire school."

Winners of the State Schools of Character Awards are honored at a national forum on character education and receive a small grant to help with outreach.

The State Schools of Character Awards Program and the National Schools of Character are sponsored by the Character Education Partnership, the leading national advocate for the character education movement. The CEP administers the prestigious NSOC awards program to provide educators and school communities with models of effective character education. State sponsors from 30 states give State Schools of Character awards as a prerequisite to the national award. Since 1998, the Character Education Partnership has named approximately 10 public and private schools and districts as National Schools of Character each year.

About the Foundation for Character Development

The Foundation for Character Development is founded on the belief that through comprehensive and effective modeling and practice, youth are more likely to internalize the core virtues needed to be more successful in school, the workplace and throughout life.

The FFCD has conducted research nationally to assess the linkages between effective character within the context of a healthy school culture and outcomes valued by educational stakeholders and employers in local communities. For more information about FFCD, visit <http://www.ffcd.us/>

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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