



Colorado Department of Education – Communications Office
201 East Colfax Ave.
Room 207
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: 303-866-3898
Fax: 303-866-6938

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News Release

Heritage and Gypsum Elementary Schools Named Title I “Distinguished Schools of the Year”

The Colorado Department of Education announced today the selection of Heritage Elementary School and Gypsum Elementary School as Title I Distinguished Schools of the year.

Heritage Elementary School is located in Pueblo City Schools and Gypsum Elementary is part of Eagle County School District.

The award recognizes these two Title I schools—one for achieving academic success, and one for making progress in closing achievement gaps associated with race and poverty.

“Heritage and Gypsum are beating the odds,” said Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. “These two schools are shining examples of what hard work and teamwork can accomplish.”

Heritage Elementary was selected for the exceptional student performance award. In 2010, the percentage of students who were at or above the NCLB proficient level in reading and math (as determined by the CSAP) was 98.21 percent. Heritage principal Gina Gallegos says the school works to ensure that each and every student is learning and growing to the best of their ability in meeting standards and expectations.

Gypsum Elementary School was selected as a distinguished school for its work in closing the achievement gap. Gypsum, a high-poverty school, increased the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-priced lunch who were at or above the proficient level on the

reading and math CSAP from 85.89 percent in 2009 to 94.44 percent in 2010. The achievement gap between students eligible for free and reduced-priced lunch and those ineligible for free and reduced-priced lunch decreased by 4.4 percent. Gypsum principal Mitch Forsberg attributed the school's success to "multiple short interventions for students, data-driven instruction and a school wide culture of achievement."

"We are impressed by the gains made by the students and are pleased to recognize the teachers and principals in these schools for their hard work and dedication to student success," said Pat Chapman, executive director of the Office of Federal Programs at CDE.

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 each 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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