

inside dps



Budding artists Deshon Gray and Rochelle White of Park Hill School try their hands at painting during an art class. Currently, only two-thirds of DPS elementary schools offer art and music classes. That will change in the fall thanks to \$6.5 million in new mill levy funding for elementary arts. Every elementary school will receive an allocation based on student enrollment.

elementary arts flourish



With smocks on and paint brushes in hand, eager students at Park Hill School wait for the signal from art teacher Cristina Sandoval to continue their latest project. Today it's a Mondrian inspired painting – next week another equally enticing project. In the fall, scenes like this will be the norm across the city.

All elementary students will take art and music classes next year thanks to the recently-approved mill levy initiative that included \$6.5 million for elementary arts. Currently, one-third of the district's elementary schools do not offer any art or music programs – there simply isn't enough money.

Designed by a committee overseeing implementation of the new funds, the goal of the mill levy is to provide elementary students with a standards-driven level of arts awareness and experiences in visual arts, vocal music, instrumental music, drama and dance. Productive arts exposure at the elementary level prepares students to choose the specialties they want to pursue

By Anne Ross, Public Information Office Intern

as middle and high school students.

"We know that when children have music and art in their lives, they perform better academically," said Stephen Gonzales, manager of the district's music program. "Arts education teaches kids to express themselves creatively and be more tolerant and open. It promotes individuality and bolsters self-confidence in addition to improving overall academic performance."

Gully Stanford, a long-time member of the district's Arts Advisory Council, recently told a Denver Post reporter, "It's tectonic, pivotal – this is a school district committing itself to redefining a quality education." Stanford, formerly of the Denver Center for Performing Arts, is the director of the Gear-Up, which prepares underserved students for college.

See **ARTS** on page 6

super conscientious friendly dps employees

By Anne Ross, Public Information Office Intern

Imagine "super conscientious friendly DPS employees" to the tune of "supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" sung by Walt Disney's Mary Poppins. That's the motto Superintendent Jerry Wartgow wants all employees to remember and make a priority when interacting with customers.

This year, over 250 DPS office professionals have attended "On the Frontline" workshops that focused on ways to improve the image parents have of Denver Public Schools.

The workshops suggested finding ways to delight customers, keeping in mind that secretaries are among the most trusted people in the school district. Presenter Marilyn Saltzman told the group that customer service is about the little things one can do for parents and students.

"Going the extra mile shows how much you care, and showing how much you care about children is really important to parents," Saltzman said. "If something bad happens [to a child] on the way to school, it's hard to concentrate. Same thing when they come into the office – how you treat them can affect their academic performance."

Saltzman also said that a parent has an expectation of service, and how one person treats them can affect that person's impression of the whole district. The wider the gap between someone's expectations and the service rendered, the unhappier the person is likely to be.

Some attendees gave some ideas on how to avoid that gap. Suggestions to ease confusion included cross training office staff and a compiling an up-to-date handbook of frequently used forms that parents need so they're at your fingertips when you need them. The hope is to delight parents and students by making it easy for them to get what they need.

If you find yourself in a situation with a difficult parent, Saltzman said being a good listener can help. "It's hard to fight when someone's being agreeable," she said, suggesting that if you still find yourself dealing with a difficult person despite your best efforts, try to not take it personally. Why not keep a file of good things said or written about you and look at it when the situation is over? "People always remember the conflict, but a lot of good things are going on in schools," Saltzman said.

Bernadette Rodriguez of the Northwest Area Office said that one of the main benefits of attending the workshop was knowing that the district is supporting office professionals.

"Being on the frontline for numerous years, I can honestly say that the workshop refreshed my work ethic and integrity," she said. "Marilyn provided great information for all secretaries, no matter what capacity they're in." ■

READ

one million words
EVERY YEAR



Morey Middle School student Scott Gemperline gets his turn in the limelight for reaching his Million Words Campaign benchmark.

Millionaire Minutes

"Bet you can't read just one!" The students of **John Amesse Elementary School** love to read and the hallways show it. Given the Valentine's Day challenge to show their love for reading, students and teachers at John Amesse decked out the hallways with such sayings as "our hearts are yearning to read," "open your heart to a good book ... we did," "share a smile, share a book" and "what a character!" Students used acrostic poems and created amazing short stories and fabulous books to demonstrate their passion for reading. As one fourth-grader said, "I love books because they open your imagination and teach you new words." • As an alternative to the traditional Valentine's Day celebration, **Cory Elementary School** fourth- and fifth-graders exchanged gently-used, favorite books from home to share with a friend. • **Kepner Middle School** kicked off its Million Words Campaign with "Got More Words," a display featuring students and administrators reading, reading, reading! Students keep track of words read in their reading logs, and those who read 250,000 words each quarter receive a certificate of recognition and are invited to the honors activity for that quarter. • **Morey Middle School** celebrates million-word readers by showering them in tiny floating soap bubbles and bright balloons and posting their picture on library walls. Some students at Morey already have read one million words several times over! ■



Carolynn Suazo, left, and Bernadette Rodriguez of the Northwest Area Office were among 250 DPS office professionals who participated in the half-day "On the Frontline" customer service trainings offered this year. One of the DPS priorities is to improve the performance and image of the district through a responsive, customer-oriented, user-friendly organizational culture and enhanced, district-wide communication practices and systems.

East High School teacher Derek Gottlieb was featured in Morey Middle School's winning entry in the "Home of the Free" photojournalism competition.

hats off!

Hugo Peralta, a junior at **Abraham Lincoln High School**, received the "Best of Show" in the 2004 Scholastic Art Show's ceramics and glass category and the Gold Key Award, which is the highest level of achievement on the regional level. Gold Key winning entries proceed to New York for national judging, with final winners sent to Washington, D.C. for exhibition in the Corcoran Gallery following an awards ceremony at the Kennedy Center. Peralta's piece is "Vase, Calla Lilies and Bird."

Three **Denver School of the Arts** student groups – Jazz Workshop Orchestra, Chorale and Vanguard Ensemble – performed at the 2004 Colorado Music Educators Association Clinic/Conference in January. DSA was the only Denver school to participate and the only school in the conference to feature three performing groups.

William Eucker, a senior at **George Washington High School**, was one of only two Colorado semifinalists among 300 nationwide who received \$1,000 in the 63rd annual Intel Science Talent Search. The school received a matching \$1,000 award. A record 1,652 students applied nationwide. The competition is often considered the "junior Nobel Prize," providing an incentive for students to develop their scientific interests at an early age. William's project was "determining the growth mechanism of single-wall carbon nanotubes synthesized by catalyzed chemical vapor deposition."

Four students in the Model United Nations team from **George Washington High**

School won honorable mention delegation during the North American Invitational in Washington, DC last month. Honorable mention winners were: Jordan Cohen and Max Keleman representing India in the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs; and John Stanford and Doug DeMuro representing India in the World Health Organization.

Mayor John Hickenlooper honored more than 600 DPS students at the **Mile High Scholars** celebration last month at Boettcher Concert Hall. Every semester, each DPS school selects one student in each grade to be recognized based on a combination of achievement, character, leadership and special accomplishments. This celebration for hundreds of students and thousands of well-wishers is an education festival, with presentations of a schools' scholars by the principal, an ice cream and cookie reception, and certificates and treats such as zoo passes and sports events tickets.

Morey Middle School eighth-grade social studies teacher Sherry Brown and five students will travel to Washington, D.C. this summer to pick up their prize as the Denver winners in the "Home of the Free" photojournalism competition. The Morey team includes eighth-graders Lyric Stott, Steven Silverman, Lisa Lovell, Brandi Sampson and Joseph Montoya. The team finished second nationally. A team from Chicago placed first; New York City, third. In all, 135 student teams have been competing since the beginning of the school year to capture the best photographic image of local civil servants at work. Under the tutelage of Pulitzer Prize-

winning professional photojournalists Carol Guzy and David Hume Kennerly, student teams submitted thousands of photographs. Morey's winning photograph was of **East High School** teacher Derek Gottlieb. All the winning pictures are online at <http://www.wamuhomeofthefree.com>.

Six DPS teachers recently earned their National Board Certification: Frances Anderson of **Greenlee Elementary**, Karen Fernandez of **Manual Arts and Cultural High School**, Christine Kones-Blach of **Centennial Elementary**, Roxanne Rhodes of **Abraham Lincoln High School**, Richard Rosivach of **Thomas Jefferson High School** and Christine Ross of **Place Middle School**. They join the ranks of Colorado's 173 teachers with the same designation. In all, DPS has 36 teachers who have earned the national certification of professional teaching excellence – more than any other district in the state. Nationwide 32,135 teachers are certified.

Over 80 **Career and Technology Education** teachers and secondary counselors attended the district's third annual Best Practices Conference in January. Business and marketing, industrial technology, consumer and family studies and computer teachers began the day with an exciting keynote presentation of "A Thousand Things Went Right Today!" by Ilan Shamir. Participants attended a variety of workshops presented by their colleagues related to innovative CTE technology activities, academic integration and programs. ■

5K Run/Walk Lends A Hand To Homeless Students

The second annual "There's No Place Like Home" 5K run/walk is at 10 a.m. Sunday, April 18 in City Park. The race benefits homeless children and families in Denver Public Schools (last year's race raised \$6,000).

The first 24 schools to register a team will receive 50 free pedometers for their physical education department. The grand prize is \$1,000 in PE equipment for the school that raises the most money in pledges. Two additional prizes of \$500 in PE equipment will go to

those schools that raise the second and third highest amounts.

Schools that register at least 50 runners or walkers will get free bus transportation to the event. Registration forms are available in school PE departments.

Join the DPS Educational Outreach Program for refreshments, music, prizes and a chance to support Denver's children and families experiencing homelessness. For more information, contact Liz Murphy, DPS Homeless Liaison, at 303-405-8227. ■

comings & goings

APPOINTMENTS

Aurelio L. Avila: Facility Mgmt Info Specialist, Montbello
Evelyn L. Baker: Teacher, Noel
Christopher Beatty: Teacher, Bradley
Susan Borgeteien: Executive Secretary I, Operations
Catalina Cenicerros: Custodian Helper, Thomas Jefferson
Brandy Chance: Teacher, George Washington
Brian J. Crowley: Teacher, Fairview
Eric M. Derosie: Teacher, George Washington
Linette L. Dorrance: Teacher, Cheltenham
Angela D. Driber: Teacher, Lake
Sarah Feero: Teacher, Rishel
Sheree Gonzales: Secretary II, Alternative Placement Services
April Griffith: Teacher, George Washington
Ryan R. Hanson: Vehicle Service Tech II, Operations
Kelly A. Hilgers: Teacher, Hill
Christine Houseworth: Teacher, Green Valley
Ottis M. Hurd: Custodian Helper, George Washington
Bonnie L. Hutchens: Teacher, CEC Middle College of Denver
Robert L. Ingle: Teacher, Garden Place
Juanita Jacobo-Garcia: Teacher, Cheltenham
Khampiane Keodonexay: Teacher, Lake
Jose Lopez: Teacher, Gilpin
Veronica A. Martinez: Secretary I, Del Pueblo
Anita M. Murano: Teacher, University Park
Gilberto J. Palomino: Teacher, Abraham Lincoln
Becky A. Powell: Human Resources Generalist, Administration
Gilbert Quintana: Teacher, Martin Luther King Jr.
Debra L. Rivera: Secretary II, Colfax
Nancy C. Saiz: Secretary I, Denison
Edwin J. Salem: Teacher, Kunsmiller
Margaret D. Schurr: Teacher, Carson
David T. Shirk: Teacher, Abraham Lincoln
Jonathan Soule: L2 Locksmith, Operations
Michael J. Stewart: Teacher, Noel
Phillip Umling: Vehicle Maintenance Tech, Operations
Jennifer D. Watters: Library Technician I, Education
Lorraine Zamora: Bookkeeper II, Administration

CHANGE IN ASSIGNMENT

Jean M. Belden: Special Ed Program Manager, Education
David P. Cohen: Custodian Assistant I, Fairview
Scott Enzminger: Facility Manager II, Grant
Amy L. Estep: Office Support III, Education
Andrea Feinberg: Interim Principal, Knapp
Francesca Isabelle: Teacher, Cheltenham
Edward Kent: Custodian Assistant I, Rosedale
Nancy A. Leapley: Custodian Assistant I, Slavens
Grant Lutz: Facility Manager II, McMeen
Michael L. McClain: Custodian Assistant I, Montclair
Patricia M. Montoya: Facility Manager I, Southmoor
Daniel O. Ortega: Facility Manager I, Crofton
Jerry Salazar: Facility Manager II, Sabin
Andrew Schrant: Assistant Principal, North
Michael Torres: Custodian Assistant III, Baker

REAPPOINTMENTS

Polly J. Beck: Teacher, Alternative Placement Services
Santiago O. Lopez: Literacy Coach, Education
Jason Sherman: Teacher, Alternative Placement Services
Jorge E. Toquica: Teacher, McGlone

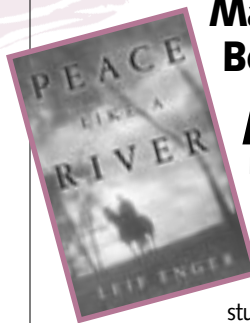
RETIREMENTS

Anna Canales: Teacher, Castro
Elizabeth Cannon: Teacher, Morey
Stanley P. Deuprey: Bus Driver, Operations
Keith M. Holcomb: Technician, Operations
Frederick A. Horn: Systems Analyst, Operations
Lilli Jones: Accountant, Operations
Robert T. Lucas: Custodian, Greenwood
Beatrice F. Sanchez: Bookkeeper, Administration
Linda P. Yakich: Bus Driver, Operations
Gary J. Younger: Crew Chief, Operations

DEATH

Gay N. McHugh: Teacher, John F. Kennedy
Patricia K. Scheibach: Teacher, Merrill

Mayor launches "One Book, One Denver"



More than 3,000 copies of the book "Peace Like a River" by Leif Enger are on their way to DPS high schools as part of Mayor John Hickenlooper's first annual city-wide book club "One Book, One Denver." The Mayor is inviting DPS students and the entire city to read and discuss the book during March and April.

"Denverites know that reading great literature provokes us to think about ourselves and our relationships and can expand our perspectives on life and the world around us," said Mayor Hickenlooper. "We're hoping to enlarge that circle of readers and to stimulate conversation. Talking about books with friends, family and neighbors often adds richness and depth to the experience of reading."

The book club's mile high sponsor – HealthONE – purchased a mile of books (5,280 copies) for the Denver Public Library and DPS. Visit the website www.denvergov.org/onebook for a complete listing of One Book, One Denver events. ■

news from human resources

Employee Self-Service Just A Click Away!

Log on today to the new SEA Employee Self-Service web tool to see how easy it is to look up your personal information! Access <http://employeeinfo.dpsk12.org> and enter your Outlook username and password. To correct your information, print the SEA Employee Correction Form, complete it and include any support documentation, and send it to the HR Service Center.

Need help? Training documentation is online at <http://hr.dpsk12.org/sea/training>. For login or password issues, call the DoTS Hotline at 303-764-3888. For all other issues, contact the HR Call Center at 303-764-3973. ■

USHERS WANTED

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Colorado Ushers is looking for friendly and dependable volunteers for various theaters around town. To learn more about this opportunity, visit www.coloradoushers.org or call 303-282-8885.

teachers decide on new compensation plan

This month, members of the Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA) will vote on a groundbreaking reform to change how teachers in Denver Public Schools are paid.

The Professional Compensation System for Teachers, or ProComp, is the result of years of collaboration on research and development between the district and the DCTA.

"Teachers can earn significantly more money earlier in their careers through ProComp," said Gary Justus, co-chair of the Joint Task Force on Teacher Compensation and longtime teacher at Abraham Lincoln. "The new system provides nine avenues where teachers can build their compensation." Under the terms of the tentative collective bargaining agreement, teachers can significantly increase their career earnings in ways that advance the district's instructional goals. Teachers would be rewarded for improving student achievement, receiving successful professional evaluations, working in the most academically needy schools and improving their skills and knowledge.

"I encourage teachers to vote for this system, which gives them more choices," said Justus. Current teachers can decide whether to join ProComp or remain in the existing compensation system. Teachers have seven years to opt in to the new system, so each can join ProComp when it is to their best advantage. Teachers can compare future earnings in the current system and ProComp by visiting the **salary calculator** at www.denverteachercompensation.org.

One way teachers can build compensation sooner is through Professional Development Units, which they can earn every year. The units would be paid for graduate courses, professional development classes and research projects. Eligible research projects would be those in which a teacher learned new content, tried it in the classroom and reflected on what they learned. Such units can help veteran teachers build earnings prior to retirement. They also help younger teachers improve their compensation as courses are completed (without having to wait to accumulate 30 hours to advance a lane across the existing salary schedule).

Another provision unique to ProComp would pay annual bonuses to experienced teachers who serve in schools with the most academically needy students, as determined by factors such as percent of students receiving free and reduced-price lunches.

"This provision is designed to attract the most effective teachers to teach students with the greatest needs," said Justus.

Before ProComp could take effect, teachers must ratify the agreement and Denver voters must approve \$25 million in additional revenues. A November 2005 vote is being eyed as a likely timeframe to ask for community support if teachers approve ProComp this month.

The teacher compensation plan was developed by a task force of 12 teachers, administrators and citizens commissioned jointly by DPS and DCTA.

More information about the ProComp recommendation can be found at www.denverteachercompensation.org.

HR Ready for New System

If DCTA members approve ProComp this month and Denver voters approve a later mill levy in fall 2005, the new system will go into effect two and half years from now – in

the fall of 2006.

Human Resources and the Payroll Department already are gearing up to handle the new compensation system.

"We plan to be entirely ready to meet the internal logistical demands of the new system," said Robin Kane, Executive Director of HR. "We know this will be a great initiative to attract and retain teachers."

In January, a project team was established comprised of Teacher Compensation Design Team members, DoTS, Curriculum, Assessment & Testing, HR, Finance and Payroll professionals.

"The team has developed a detailed project plan and conversion work is underway," said Kane. In January 2006, the project team will implement a limited portion of the system, including market incentives and bonuses for teachers in distinguished schools. Full implementation of all elements of ProComp will be completed by July 1, 2006.

"If this initiative is approved by DCTA members and the mill levy is approved by Denver voters, I believe that the district's solid technology base can effectively support this implementation," said Ed Freeman, Chief Information Officer. "ProComp is an exciting initiative that should have a positive impact on increasing district-wide student achievement." ■



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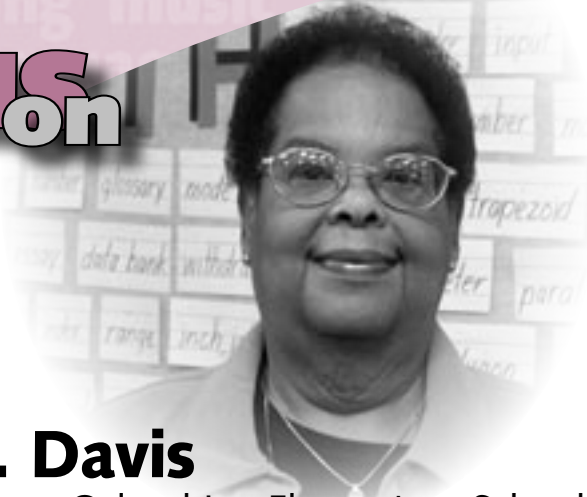
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focus on



Cleasie M. Davis Third-Grade Teacher, Columbian Elementary School

Years With DPS: 3

Greatest Or Latest Accomplishment: Joyfully returning to the educational field and pursuing professional development after retiring from the corporate world.

The Most Challenging Part About My Job: Trying to work smarter and not harder in order to accomplish personal and professional expectations.

The Most Rewarding Part About My Job: I am pleased when my students are happy and doing their best. Teaching is my passion.

When I'm Not Working I Am Usually: Volunteering with several organizations, concentrating on my personal fitness program that includes water aerobics and celebrating family and friends.

I've Also Worked: As a first-grade teacher, home economist and data coordinator.

Hometown: Kirkwood, Missouri

Favorite Movie: One of my favorite movies is "Coming to America."

Favorite Book: One of my favorite books is "Waiting to Exhale" by Terry McMillan.

Favorite Restaurant: Cheesecake Factory and P. F. Chang's China Bistro

Family: I was happily married for 39 years to the late Larry G. Davis; I am thankful for my wonderful son Desmond (30).

Philosophy For Life: Do your best, be positive and grateful, keep smiling, help someone today and do not worry too much about tomorrow.

Final Words: It is my distinct pleasure to work with the dedicated students and committed staff at Columbian. The Northwest quadrant and Columbian Elementary School are my "home away from home." Together, they have helped to broaden my personal and professional horizons.



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ARTS from page 1

Initiative means more art and music teachers

All elementary schools will receive a new mill-levy funded teacher allocation to add to their current level of staffing. That means the district will hire 97 new art and music teachers – an average of one per elementary school, more than doubling the number of current art and music teachers.

"This elementary arts and music initiative is like taking 97 steps in the right direction," said Rosanne Fulton, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

In addition to teachers, the funding also will provide supplies and in some cases, additional money for startup costs.

Park Hill has made sacrifices and held many fundraisers to keep arts education in classrooms. It's been worth it, according to Principal Peter Sherman, who echoes sentiments from Gonzales that art is incredibly important to a child's well-rounded academic career.

"Art should be used as a way to get at content, not as icing on the cake, but part of the cake," said Sherman. Students should be able to "express themselves and see things from different perspectives."

Park Hill has relied heavily on community resources to supplement the school's arts education program, and Doull Elementary School got creative last year in order to hang onto arts education.

A coveted "Arts are Basic" grant funds a full-time visual arts position this year at Doull Elementary School, but before she got the green light on funding, Principal Jayne Sbarboro had allocated funds resourcefully through the Collaborative Decision Making process from administrative and custodial supplies to purchase the arts position.

Principal Rachel Starks of Stedman Elementary School, which currently offers no art or music classes, said that while no final decisions about next year's funding have been made, she hopes to offer vocal and instrumental music and visual arts.

Schools will have flexibility in how they deliver the elementary arts program, but by the end of fifth-grade, every student should meet the DPS standards in all five art specialties, regardless of which school they attend. Students won't necessarily engage in all art specialties each year, but over the course of their education, they will experience all five specialty areas.

In addition to the rich experiences art teachers provide for students, DPS will strengthen partnerships with community organizations and artists to offer opportunities that will complement the overall program.

"At the end of the school year, I hope my students see themselves as artists," said Sandoval. "It will be wonderful when all elementary students can see themselves that way." ■