

Literacy Program Sets High Expectations

Sally Mentor Hay walks directly into a classroom and gently quizzes a teacher. Where are you in your lesson plan today? How does this lesson fit with the content standard you're teaching today? What is this group of students doing now? Her questions dig methodically to a microscopic level of detail. No gloss allowed. She picks up folders and papers directly from desks, leans down closely to listen to a group of students doing some shared reading, and plucks books from the rack of a classroom library to see if they are truly challenging.

Sally Mentor Hay, brought to the district in January by Superintendent Jerry Wartgow as Acting Chief Academic Officer, is bringing a challenge to DPS – to bear down on literacy, raise expectations, and boost students at each and every turn.

She talks confidently about teachers being able to help students learn together in small groups. She lifts up the idea of kindergarten and first-grade students reading 1 million words each year. Her vision includes teachers being provided with the latest in professional development right in their classrooms and schools by well-trained coaches.

"You'll see it work," she says with a confident smile. "You'll be amazed."

In a mid-March gathering at Place Middle School, Mentor Hay presented the elementary school literacy plan (a separate plan for middle and high schools is in development) to principals and members of all Collaborative Decision-Making teams.

At the outset, Mentor Hay cautioned that the program would require schools to think differently about staffing decisions and how all adults operate in a school. She also acknowledged that the literacy program seeks to provide an "appropriate balance between strong, effective (district) leadership" and allowing schools to have the "freedom to personalize the program for their unique needs."

The "first issue," said Mentor Hay, "is to get very clear about what makes a literacy program work for many kinds of students."

The program she is promoting prescribes the use of three-hours of instruction time every day – 90 minutes in a reading block, 60 minutes in a writer's workshop, and 30 minutes in a skills block.

The reading block begins with 10-25 minutes of whole group instruction, followed by 60-75 minutes of a work period. During the work period, students are reading independently, engaging in partner reading, engaging in book talks and book clubs, writing in response journals, and doing author studies. Teachers, meanwhile, are instructing in guided reading and holding reading assessment conferences with no more than 3 students at a time.

During the writer's workshop, group instruction of 10 minutes is followed by a work period when students work on their writing – planning, drafting, meeting in response groups, revising, editing, and publishing. Teachers, meanwhile, are conferencing with individual or small groups of students.

The skills block provides whole group instruction on phonics, word work, or other conventions. The first step in making the program a reality, she said, will be to show students the constant routines of book discussions, independent work, writing folders, and other steps that will allow the teacher more time to work with students in small groups and help students develop independence.

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Acting Chief Academic Officer Sally Mentor Hay (right) looks over the lesson plan of Harrington Elementary School kindergarten teacher Sandra Berumen-Villa.

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Congratulations!

Basketball player Torrey Phillips of Abraham Lincoln High School was selected to play in "The Show 2" at the Denver Nuggets basketball game scheduled for April 13 at 9:30 p.m. "The Show 2" immediately follows the 7 p.m. game between the Phoenix Suns vs. Denver Nuggets. Friends, family and coaches can purchase five or \$15 dollar tickets for all games that day through Camille Mandigo at 303-405-1148. In addition, Phillips and fellow player Quinton Hosley were just two of 2,700 high school senior basketball players nationwide to be nominated to the 2002 McDonald's All American High School Basketball Team. The McDonald's All American Game has a rich history and an elite alumni list including NCAA and NBA greats such as Magic Johnson and Michael Jordan.

Maureen Porter of Southmoor and Joy Warner of Park Hill are two of 29 National Board Certified Teachers who have been chosen to participate in The Digital Edge: Accomplished Teaching with Technology project. Armed with new digital cameras, laptop computers and five days of training, the board certified teachers are building a national digital library for educators and parents. The end result will be the creation of an online digital library of videos, lesson plans and student work samples to be used as part of a mentoring program with participating colleges of teachers and their teaching practice. Nearly 200 board certified teachers applied for the special project, which is a joint effort between the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the International Society for Technology in Education, Apple and AT&T Foundation.



Gust Elementary School Students spell out three patriotic letters on the school's blacktop.

Manual High School Alum Recognized In World Of Film

Glen Fogel, 24, a graduate of Manual High School and Hill Middle School, has been selected to show four films at the 2002 Whitney Museum Biennial Exhibition. The Biennial Exhibition opened in New York City on March 6, 2002, and the exhibit will be open to the public for over two months.

Glen, an experimental avant-garde filmmaker, moved to New York City to undertake a career in filmmaking. The Whitney Museum is considered the premier American art museum in the United States and every two years holds a Biennial exhibit featuring America's greatest artists in all mediums. The Biennial includes both established and emerging artists. The Biennial exhibit is unique in that it seeks artists from throughout the country and selection is by a jury panel made up of well-known members of the art community. Selection as an artist at the Whitney Biennial is the goal of many American artists. Glen at age 24 is the youngest among the 113 American artists selected for the Biennial.

Glen was a co-editor of the Manual High School yearbook and took many of the photos for the 1995 edition. Glen was an honors student at Manual High School and at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, where he later attended.

Among Glen's four short films to be shown at the Whitney is his most recent film entitled "Ascension." The film was made from recordings of the television show, "The Price is Right". Glen describes the film, as follows:

"The Price is Right is an icon of preposterous Americana. Yet, my intention in making the film was not to poke fun, or to make another simple social critique of American consumer driven culture, but to explore the intense emotional transformation of ordinary people - the utter and inconceivable joy that overwhelms the contestants - so extreme in nature that it crosses the line between pleasure and pain, joy and sadness."

Over the last two and a half years, Glen's films have been shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, the Lincoln Center in New York City, the San Francisco Cinematheque, New York City's Robert Beck Memorial Cinema, as well as numerous other venues in the US and in Europe.

Glen's parents are attorney David Fogel and wife Linda. Glen's parents and siblings, Brian and Jill, are all DPS graduates.

Children At Mitchell Elementary School Learn How To "Be Smart Not Scared" At "Escape School"

Following the recent abduction of two Mitchell students, Principal Reggie Robinson took it upon himself to empower his kids. With the support of the "Escape School" program, Robinson rounded up the children at his school to receive training that might one day save a life.

"Today we're going to listen to a couple of people on how to keep you safe," Robinson told his audience.

The presentation began with a friendly message from police officer Jim Mair who told the children to "never, ever get in a car with a stranger." Then, a DPS Security officer followed. "See this? This is the kind of car that I drive," said Dave Light, pointing to a photo of DPS security vehicles he would pass out to every child. "If you ever see me and need help, you can wave me down."

Light then introduced the special guest for the day, Stacie Schubert who runs "Escape School," a program sponsored by Olinger Mortuaries. "Escape School" is a nationally acclaimed child abduction program. Schubert visits schools at no cost as a community service. The program's motto is "be smart not scared." In addition, children learn how the rules change during an abduction attempt, skills to escape abduction, and how to differentiate between "good" and "bad" strangers.

"What does a stranger look like?" asked Schubert to the kids. "How do they look? How do they smell?" The children responded, "He looks icky! He's dressed in black! Stinky and smells like alcohol!"

Schubert went on to explain that strangers come in all shapes and sizes and taught the students one lesson that often contrasts with what parents teach their children. "Not all strangers are bad," said Schubert.

Schubert showed students how to respond to a stranger that tries to lure them out of a store into their car. "One of the things you can do is scream something that people will pay attention to such as 'Help! Stranger! Or that's not my dad!'" The next two moves, Schubert told the kids, may go against their instincts but they should latch on to the next stranger they find and not let go. "And if you're in a grocery store and a stranger tries to grab you...knocking over the pickle jars to draw attention to yourself is okay," said Schubert.

Nearly 5,000 children are abducted yearly by strangers in the United States. Almost 400 of those children are never seen alive again. "Escape School" is designed to teach families critical abduction prevention and survival tactics. And with the recent indecent exposures and abductions around Denver's schools, parents and schools are on their guard and ready to listen to any information that might keep their kids safe. For more information on Escape School, call Stacie Schubert at 303-781-7597.



Fourth-grader Jimmy Rodriguez practices escaping an abduction with presenter Stacie Schubert of Escape School.

Low Cost Health Insurance Now Includes Dental Benefits

Do you know a child in need? If, so please pass on this information. Low and no-cost health insurance is available to those who qualify through Colorado Child Health Plan Plus. Colorado Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+) is a comprehensive health plan for children who live in families with limited incomes. CHP+ is a state program providing primary, specialty and emergency health care services for uninsured Colorado children age 18 and under. As of February 1, 2002, dental benefits through Delta Dental are available.

These benefits include exams, cleaning and x-rays, fillings and routine extractions and limited root canal therapy.

Most families will pay an annual fee of \$25 to enroll one child and \$35 to enroll two or more children. Depending on family size and income, families may have to make small co-payments for health services at the time they are received. Some families will not have to pay an annual enrollment fee or make co-payments.

To obtain an application or for additional information, call the DPS School Medicaid Office at 303-764-3549.



Appointments

Brenda Kazan: Principal, Fallis
 T. Jason Martinez: Principal, Moore
 Charles Raisch: Principal, Steck
 James R. Ajemian: Teacher, Valverde
 Desiree Amato: Teacher, Colfax
 Robert W. Fisher: Military Instruction, Education
 Christina M. Flowers: Teacher, Mitchell
 Kent M. Hups: Teacher, Emerson Street School
 Krista Ketterling: Teacher, McGlone
 Madeline M. Cordova: Secretary I, North
 Valerie Esquibel: Office Support II, Education
 Elia K. Fisher: Secretary I, Fred N. Thomas
 Career Ed Center
 Roberta J. Herald: Secretary II, Knapp
 Julie A. Rendon: Secretary I, North
 Constance C. Straub: Secretary I, Bromwell
 Nancy Vargas: Secretary I, Lake
 Joshua M. Bertrand: Senior General Laborer,
 Operations
 Mitchell W. Hovet: Senior General Laborer,
 Operations
 Roger Reyes: Pest Control Technician, Operations
 Nick J. Bailey: Custodial Helper, George
 Washington
 Marcus R. Baxter: Custodial Helper, Montbello
 Roy D. Cruz: Custodial Helper, John F. Kennedy
 James Delauro: Custodial Helper, Henry
 Martha Delgado: Custodial Helper, East
 Theodore Lovato: Custodial Helper,
 John F. Kennedy
 Guadalupe Mora: Custodial Helper, Mitchell
 Tekle G. Solomon: Custodial Helper,
 Emily Griffith Opportunity School
 Violeta A. Suarez: Custodial Helper, Lake
 Mira Vidakovic: Custodial Helper,
 George Washington
 Scott W. Barnes: Human Resource Specialist,
 Administration
 Marlon Dugarte-Romero: Liaison Specialist,
 Horace Mann
 David R. Leyba: Truant Officer, Safety & Security
 Gail M. Lujan: Truant Officer, Operations
 Richard C. Maes: Fix Asset Inventory Specialist,
 Operations
 Heather E. Schwartz: Recruitment Coordinator,
 Administration
 Lety M. Silvas: Moet Career Specialist, Manual
 Rhonda A. Tucker: Recruitment Coordinator,
 Administration
 Michael F. Covillo: Parts/Tool Room/Counter
 Clerk, Transportation

Change in Assignment

Gwen Henderson-Gethers: Principal, Carson
 Karen L. Fender: Bookkeeper I, Lake
 Tabatha D. Garcia: Secretary II, Steck
 Daniel L. Bodison: Facility Manager I, Montclair
 Judy M. Bondurant: Executive Secretary II,
 Administration
 Patrick J. Hellern: Facility Manager II, Ellis
 Thomas S. Stokes: Facility Manager II, Ford
 Manuel Z. Chavez: Custodian Assistant II,
 Operations
 Melissa M. Davis: Custodian Assistant I, Holm
 Ivey L. Farrow: Custodian Assistant I, Fallis
 Rose M. Muhammad: Custodian Assistant I,
 Palmer
 Helen D. Porras: Custodian Assistant I, Sandoval
 Gloria Rodriguez: Custodian Assistant III, Lake
 Carmen M. Valdiviezo: Custodian Assistant II,
 Operations
 Lee A. Bollacker: Database Administrator II,
 Education

Ronald D. Bush: Security Comm. Officer, Safety &
 Security
 Douglas A. Wilson: Plan & Scheduling
 Coordinator II, Operations

Reappointments

Nadine Smith: Psychologist, Student Services
 Jessica Jensen: Teacher, Palmer
 Cody M. Martinez: Child Care Coordinator, Gove
 Dianthony Pollard: Fixed Assets Inventory
 Specialist, Transportation

Retirement

Delia K. Armstrong: Principal, Moore
 Elwyn L. Ashford Jr.: Assistant Principal,
 Thomas Jefferson
 Karen K. Close: Principal, Beach Court
 James M. Hilton: Principal, Smiley
 Ida M. Jones: Principal, Administration
 Toni Knight: Principal, Steck
 Johnny Lydia: Chief Personnel Officer,
 Administration
 Moises C. Martinez: Principal, Kunsmiller
 Michael G. Nicholson: Principal, John F. Kennedy
 Joseph J. Perea: Exec. Director, Eng Language
 Acquisition
 James W. Richardson: Principal, McKinley/
 Thatcher
 Harry J. Risoli: Assistant Principal,
 John F. Kennedy
 S.L. Adams: Nurse, Sabin
 Janis A. Diciacco: Psychologist, Education
 Paula L. Erickson: Speech Language Specialist,
 Education
 Alberta L. Liebert: Social Worker, Education
 Joyce A. Marshall: Social Worker, Education
 Griselda Padilla: Social Worker, Education
 Vicki E. Tomlin: Psychologist, Education
 Fradene Andersen: Teacher, South
 Karlene Anderson: Teacher, Horace Mann
 Michael Baldwin: Teacher, Gust
 Lorraine M. Birkey: Teacher, Administration
 Susan J. Boatright: Teacher, Abraham Lincoln
 Sharon E. Calahan: Teacher, Martin Luther King Jr.
 Grace Caldwell: Teacher, Stedman
 Justin D. Carpenter: Teacher, Cole
 Linda D. Carrera: Teacher, Ellis
 Catherine A. Climp: Teacher, West
 Beatrice Cohen: Library Media Spec, Mitchell
 Estela Cruz: Teacher, Oakland
 Kathryn Dates: Teacher, Ellis
 Doris E. Dempsey: Teacher, Contemporary
 Learning Academy
 Toney M. Dvorak: Teacher, Goldrick
 Jonne F. Enyart-Johnson: Teacher, West
 Genevieve R. Estes: Teacher, Oakland
 Beth K. Finnell: Teacher, Merrill
 Frances P. Frain: Teacher, Baker
 Daniel Gallegos: Teacher, Kepner
 Roberto D. Garcia: Teacher, Merrill
 Sharon A. Gerdy: Teacher, Beach Court
 F.C. Godsmann: Teacher, Baker
 Shirley A. Grauerholz: Teacher, Traylor
 Mary G. Gudgeon-Eyer: Teacher, Dots
 Laraine Hamilton: Teacher, Green Valley
 M.H. Hart: Teacher, John F. Kennedy
 Ruth A. Hensen: Teacher, University Park
 Barbara Hessel: Teacher, George Washington
 Elizabeth E. Hopwood: Teacher, Montbello
 Frederick P. Huelsmann: Teacher, East
 Terry L. Humbargar: Teacher, Abraham Lincoln
 Ann I. Hunsaker: Teacher, Abraham Lincoln
 David W. Hutchinson: Teacher, Godsmann
 Phyllis A. Jensen: Teacher, Doull
 Martha A. Johnson: Teacher, North
 Kent H. Kirksey: Teacher, John F. Kennedy
 Mary E. Kobey: Teacher, Schmitt
 Irene H. Korpan: Teacher, Ashley
 Dennis S. Kos: Teacher, East
 Kathleen J. Kubitz: Teacher, Amesse
 Mary A. Kuehn: Teacher, Newlon
 Susan M. Kunst: Teacher, Maxwell
 Carla S. Lanza: Teacher, Abraham Lincoln
 Mary (Mimi) Larson: Teacher, Sabin
 Russell D. Law: Teacher, Abraham Lincoln
 Valerie S. Layman: Teacher, Abraham Lincoln
 Marsha Leadingham: Teacher, South
 Prescilla M. Lemak: Teacher, South
 Sharon K. Little: Teacher, Abraham Lincoln
 Carol M. Mackell: Teacher, Kunsmiller
 Sherry Marsland: Teacher, Merrill
 G.D. Mast: Teacher, Gust
 Christine Matthews: Teacher, Traylor
 Les Mattocks: Teacher, Abraham Lincoln
 Beryl E. Maus: Teacher, Traylor
 Myles D. McNicholas: Teacher, Lincoln
 Nancy C. Mentzer: Teacher, Stedman
 Phyllis I. Meyer: Teacher, Baker
 Mary L. Miller: Teacher, Fallis
 Rita B. Montroy: Teacher, Hamilton
 Carol A. Moore: Teacher, Henry
 Edward A. Morin: Teacher, Henry
 Reta E. Murray: Teacher, Fallis
 Ladean B. Nuanes: Teacher, East
 Jane C. Nyman: Teacher, East
 Judith E. Osmundsen: Teacher, Kepner
 Sharon S. Patterson: Teacher, Sabin
 Susan Peacock: Teacher, Del Pueblo
 Philip J. Perry: Teacher, Abraham Lincoln
 Maryann M. Potocnik: Teacher, Rosedale
 Sarah D. Purdy: Teacher, East
 Patricia Redifer: Teacher, Wyman
 Philip A. Ricciardi: Teacher, John F. Kennedy
 Linda Riede: Teacher, East
 Linda J. Rolf: Teacher, Colfax
 Dave A. Romero: Teacher, North
 Norma S. Romero: Teacher, Cowell
 Michele H. Roth: Teacher, Education
 Michael F. Ryan: Teacher, Teller
 Arthur Sanchez: Teacher, Thomas Jefferson
 Donna E. Schultz: Teacher, Phillips
 Barbara J. Settle: Teacher, Thomas Jefferson
 Virginia L. Sheridan: Teacher, Thomas Jefferson
 Gloria J. Sherman: Teacher, Kepner
 Lucille J. Siegal: Teacher, Administration
 Narlene J. Singer: Teacher, Schmitt
 Joyce Thorn: Teacher, Hallett
 Holly M. Thorstad: Teacher, Sabin
 Linda L. Toy: Teacher, Maxwell
 Barbara A. Turnbough: Teacher, Kepner
 Ruby E. Underhill: Teacher, Brown
 Sharon Veto: Teacher, Abraham Lincoln
 Barbara Veto: Teacher, Valverde
 Beverly E. Wagoner: Teacher, Fred N. Thomas CEC
 Charmaine Washington: Teacher, Martin Luther
 King Jr.
 Mary L. Weathers: Teacher, Marrama
 Karen B. Weaver: Teacher, Whittier
 O.K. Weigner: Teacher, Thomas Jefferson
 Janice E. Welker: Teacher, North
 Arthur R. Williams: Teacher, Manual
 Barbara J. Williams: Teacher, Maxwell
 Cynthia L. Wilmot: Teacher, Kunsmiller
 Sharron L. Carosella: Teacher,
 Emily Griffith Opportunity School
 Robert A. Berlin: Supervisor, Operations

Death

Andrea Bryant: Secretary, Holm

Swansea Students Trained In The Art Of Ballet Through Special Partnership

While children and parents scatter from Swansea Elementary after-school, dozens of girls sashay their way to the gymnasium where a unique opportunity has arisen for wannabe ballerinas. Seven- and eight-year-olds use all their strength to roll out an old heavy piano from the nearby storage room. They are eagerly awaiting the arrival of their new dance instructor.

"I just started in January," fourth-grader Carolina Hernandez explained as she munched on popcorn in her pink tights and slippers. "I was at a school where they didn't teach ballet, so I'm pretty lucky."

Her fellow students are lucky, too. At Swansea, ballet was unheard of for many children until the school offered the classes. Even if they were offered nearby, parents say, they would be unable to afford private lessons. More than 96 percent of the students are on free or reduced lunch.

"It's the only enrichment activity my daughter has because we don't have the monetary resources to put her anywhere else," said parent Martha Olga Silva in Spanish. "Now all she talks about is homework and ballet."

In walks Esther Smith, the instructor. It's time to dance. "Denise, over here in front of Elizabeth. Ready and... demi, grande, porte-bras... and over, other side..."

"I started teaching ballet at the Swansea Recreation Center in September of 2000," said Smith. "I taught ballet with Summer Scholars in the summer of 2001 and, we received the support of the Colorado Ballet in the fall of 2001."

With the support and funding of the Colorado Ballet, the program has grown to an unprecedented level of success. "We have so many people to thank for that—Colorado Ballet has allowed me to make opportunities for these children that didn't exist a year ago," adds Smith.

There are 41 students enrolled in the ballet and pre-ballet classes. Smith's expectations for the students are high. "This is not a recreation program. It is a serious dance class," said Smith. "The children are learning more than ballet here. They are learning the value of self-discipline, dedication and motivation. I want to provide the opportunities for them—real dance training. Whether they want to take it is up to them."

At today's class, a group of boys watches curiously. "We want to try but they won't let us because we don't have shoes," one explains.

"I think I am the only dance teacher in town turning away students," said Smith. Smith hopes to fund a boys program.

Currently, the Colorado Ballet pays for Smith, pianist Ella Kaplansky and needed supplies—leotards, ballet slippers, and ballet barres.

"I love it," said fourth-grader Carolina Hernandez of her new ballet class. "I want to be a ballet teacher when I grow up."

"We do the splits. It's fun," said third-grader Iris Ortiz.

Swansea is a showcase for Colorado Ballet's Dance Renaissance Program and is a first in collaborations between Denver Public Schools and the Colorado Ballet. The Colorado Ballet's Dance Renaissance program has started programs at Smith-Renaissance Elementary and Valdez Elementary.

"It demonstrates what making bridges between ballet and education can do for the city's children," said Smith. For some children, their new ballet class has opened the door to a world of possibilities.

"Mariah tells me she dreams of being a star," said parent Linda Perez. "She wants to sing and dance some day. She's seven years old. You have to give them every opportunity to achieve those dreams."

** Special thanks to Alyson Vivar, Manager of Education and Outreach at Colorado Ballet, Board member Elaine Gantz Berman, and Carrie Morgridge for providing tickets to Swansea students for the Colorado and Aspen ballet.**



Ballet Instructor Esther Smith demonstrates a dance sequence to Swansea students during an after-school ballet program.

Prestigious Award Bestowed on EGOS

By Kari Gomez-Smith

At a black tie dinner attended by over 800 people, Emily Griffith Opportunity School received the prestigious Downtown Denver Partnership Annual Award. This was the Award's 41st year. The Colorado Convention Center hosted the event on the evening of February 27, 2002.

Each year the award is given to projects, businesses, organizations, or events that have made significant contributions toward creating a unique, vibrant, and diverse Downtown Denver. Nominees for the award must have demonstrated an entrepreneurial spirit and/or a longstanding commitment that significantly contributes to or further enhances the economic, cultural, social, and/or physical environment of Downtown Denver. They must be located in the Downtown core or an adjacent neighborhood, and their contribution must have been made or finalized during 2001.



Sharon Robinson, Executive Director Emily Griffith Opportunity School receives Downtown Denver Partnership Annual Award from James Basey, Chair Downtown Denver Partnership, Inc.

Over 40 entities were nominated. A 22-member jury appointed by the Downtown Denver Partnership, Inc. reviewed each nomination. Jurists represented a variety of businesses and organizations. After careful consideration and deliberation lasting over three months, six award winners were selected. Emily Griffith is pleased to be one of the six. Other winners are REI, Pacific Mercantile Co., 16 Market Square, Commons Park, and INVESCO Field at Mile High.

Opportunity School was selected for its 85-year-long history of welcoming any student who wants to better their life through education. Over the decades, the school has helped over 1.3 million students. It has adapted to serve a changing student body, and it prides itself on reflecting the needs of local businesses in its over 350 course offerings. Strong partnerships have developed between many Downtown companies and the school with many Downtown employers filling their job openings with the school's graduates.

9NEWS and Coors Brewing Company sponsored the event, which is a fundraiser for Denver Civic Ventures, Inc., the charitable corporation component of the Downtown Denver Partnership. The Partnership is a non-profit business organization that creatively plans, manages, and develops Downtown Denver as the urban core of the Rocky Mountain region.

The school is proud to be a part of the Downtown Denver community and provide Denver residents and employers with an inexpensive means to improve their lives through education. It is a great honor to be recognized by the Downtown Denver Partnership Inc. for doing this job well.

Sara M. Howell

8th Grade Math Teacher
Hamilton Middle School



Years with DPS: 15

Latest Accomplishment:
Named Colorado's Native American Educator of the Year. I was nominated by the American Indian Education Advisory Council for DPS and received my award on March 19th at a Buffalo Feast associated with March Pow-wow.

The Most Challenging Part About My Job: Homework

The Most Rewarding Part About My Job: Watching my students play sports.

I've also worked: A Bar Manager, Garden Projects Coordinator, Construction Worker, and Baseball Umpire.

When I'm not working I am usually: Making sculptures, remodeling my house, running with my dogs, and playing golf.

Hometown: Lakewood, CO

Favorite movie: Erin Brokovich

Favorite restaurant: Moose Hill Cantina

Favorite book: Harry Potter Series

Family: Father, Farrell, retired DPS; Mom, Bev, potter; Brother, JR, US Air Force Pilot

Philosophy for life: Live! Live! Live!

What I'm most proud of: My Native-American Heritage. I'm a member of the Pumpkin Vine Clan, of the Skidi Band of Pawnee Indians.

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"Significant research," she said, shows that the combination of expert teaching and a strong program yields powerful results. "As we move into this program, many of you will be joining me in that sincere belief," she said. "These results will be visible to you in the first quarter next year." New York City, Los Angeles, Fort Worth, and El Paso have all enjoyed strong results, she said, following this model. In fact, many schools in DPS have latched onto this approach and are seeing its impact.

"There is a strong body of research that undergirds the program we are advocating," she said.

The program entails the use of coaches to work with teachers. The coaches, who are in the process of being hired and selected by schools during the month of April, will work with teachers to make sure that all aspects of the literacy plan are appropriately implemented. They will work side by side with teachers, demonstrating how the program components work, and providing feedback to each teacher's classroom work. Additionally, the coaches will play a key role in delivering staff development to teachers on a weekly basis by bringing the latest research, articles, and topics for training and discussion.

During the Place discussion, Mentor Hay was asked why the federal funds that will be diverted to install the literacy program – particularly to hire the coaches – wouldn't be better used to reduce class sizes.

Superintendent Jerry Wartgow responded for her. The available money might be able to reduce class sizes by one or two students per teacher, he said, but unless the district can reach 15 students per teacher – something that is unlikely given current budgets – research shows minimal improvements.

"Yes, this is risky and yes, people will be doing something different than what they've been doing," said Wartgow, "and yes, this is a change environment." But with 74 schools ranked "low" and 21 ranked "unsatisfactory" on state accountability reports, he said, "we have to do something different" to make progress.

"We can't do it if it's business as usual," he said. "We need your help, we need your investment ... and a lot of it's going to depend on your can-do attitude."

Final note: Superintendent Wartgow announced in January the University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Learning (IFL) had been contracted to provide instructional leadership for the balance of the 2001-2002 school year. Sally Mentor Hay is that group's liaison to DPS, serving as Acting Chief Academic Officer.

The institute will provide a series of intensive professional development and instructional sessions for DPS principals, seminars for the district's current instructional leadership and superintendent, access to NetLearn tools and IFL websites, and technical service support.

The Donnell-Kay Foundation is providing the funding for IFL's work in Denver, which will run through June 30.

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