Five Star District hosts community-wide “Back to School Bash”

More than 2,500 backpacks given away to those in need

On July 30, 2016, Adams 12 Five Star Schools’ Student Engagement Initiatives hosted the first ever “Back to School Bash” to provide needed resources to students for the 2016-2017 school year. Based on generous donations from several community partners, the Back to School Bash provided free backpacks filled with school supplies as well as free immunizations through Tri-County Health. Families also benefited from information on school transportation, free reduced lunch, and high school online registration.

The first-year event drew 2,000 people who received over 2,500 backpacks and 136 vaccines. Karina Delaney, whole child initiatives coordinator, felt the first-year event was a success that took collaboration from community partners and resources across the district.

The Five Star District has provided resources to students and families through the Student and Family Outreach program for years. The idea to create a Back to School Bash came from the desire to bring families and resources together on one day as a celebration of the new school year.

First literacy summer school provides continuous, learning experiences for students and teachers

Program targets kindergarten and first-grade students with reading deficiencies

Summer is usually a time for teachers and students to take a break from school. For the 12 teachers, seven interventionists, three instructional coaches, and 56 students enrolled in the Five Star District’s first literacy summer school, it was actually a time to provide additional instruction and support to increase students’ reading skills and strategies.

The inaugural literacy summer school targeted kindergarten and first-grade students across the district who were identified as having a significant reading deficiency. Twelve teachers from eight elementary schools volunteered their time, four days a week for the month of June, to learn new strategies for developing strong readers, teach small-group intervention lessons and prevent the “summer slide” for their students.

District Reading Interventionists joined the teachers to share the Interactive Strategies Approach (ISA) that is currently being used in Five Star elementary schools. Through this collaborative learning process, teachers were armed with the same instructional strategies that the interventionists use with students during the school year. Establishing these cohesive plans reinforces that students achieve the same reading goals in and out of the classroom.

Each day consisted of free breakfast for students, small-group reading intervention lessons, reading, writing, computer literacy games and time spent with Reading Corps volunteers. Throughout the month of June, students arrived excited to spend the day engaged in reading and writing from start to finish. This excitement was not unique to students; teachers felt a sense of pride watching their students gain confidence and new knowledge with each day.

The teachers were excited about the progress students made in such a short amount of time. This new approach to teaching and learning created confident readers, who will be wonderful contributors to our society for years to come.

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The Five Star District has provided resources to students and families through the Student and Family Outreach program for years. The idea to create a Back to School Bash came from the desire to bring families and resources together on one day as a celebration of the new school year.

On Sept. 8, 2016 the district took another step in supporting its focus on literacy. Superintendent Chris Gdowski along with Stukey Elementary Principal Lori Bailey and members of the Learning Services team unveiled the Free Little Library, designed and built by Bollman Technical Educational Center carpentry students. Now home to the first registered Free Little Library at a school in the Five Star District, Stukey Elementary joins nearly 36,000 others located in all 50 U.S. states and in over 70 countries around the world.

Free Little Libraries are established to promote literacy and the love of reading by building free book exchanges worldwide and to build a sense of community as we share skills, creativity and wisdom across generations.
By Kathy Plomer, President
Adams 12 Five Star Schools Board of Education


We honor former Board Member William “Bill” Jones who passed away August 23, 2016. Mr. Jones had a passion for public education and knew the opportunity is the opportunity for greater community education and engagement.

Adams 12 Five Star Schools has already made big strides in its efforts to involve parents and community members in the direction of the district. Our Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LRPAC) provided critical input into the priorities included in the bond.

This fall, we will again offer our Five Star Leadership Academy and will have 75 parents who will learn about all aspects of school funding, the organization and academic direction. Additionally, we have a New District Accountability Committee (DAC) that will begin its work and a finance and audit committees in the planning stages. All of these outreach efforts reflect a belief that our schools are an integral part of our community and our needs to be an integral part of our community.

Public participation helped shape bond proposal

As we draw closer to Election Day, Nov. 8, it’s important to keep in mind the legal parameters involved in election matters. District Policy 500.20, “Political and Campaign Matters,” outlines the expectations for employees and community members.

There is specific protocol for the distribution of political and campaign information on district grounds. While this is punishing during the school day, such information can be distributed before, after or during the school day, location and medium that’s established by the school principal in order to address traffic, safety and educational interests.

Information which promotes, favors or opposes ballot issues, ballot questions or candidates for public office cannot be sent home with students or included in school newsletters. Additionally, no political or campaign signs can be placed on or in district facilities. They also cannot be placed on district grounds.

To register to vote or to manage your registration information online for the 2016 general election, go to www.govtcolorado.com. You can check your registration status and submit your mail ballot.

We offer a passion for public education and was an advocate for the Adams 12 Five Star Community from the time he and his wife Carolyn moved to Thornton in 1962. Their three sons, Bill, Jim and Dick, along with four of their six grandchildren graduated from Five Star Schools.

Mr. Jones was appointed to fill the vacancy in Director District No. 4 on the Adams 12 Five Star Schools Board of Education in October 1999 and was later elected to serve in the position from November 2001-March 2009. As a board member he advocated for low-income students, visited schools in his Director District weekly and challenged students to stay in school so he could hand them their diploma at graduation.

Mr. Jones was a champion for staff, particularly classified employees, regularly recognizing their efforts and contributions.

This fall, the Five Star District identified about 1300 students experiencing homelessness. To support this program, the City of Thornton and State of Colorado together have already allocated $300,000 to provide rental assistance with rising housing costs and decreasing access to shelters, school, city and county officials agreed that something needed to be done.

Under this rental assistance program, families are identified and pre-screened by the Five Star District, which connects them with Thornton and Adams County. To qualify, families must be experiencing homelessness, have a student in the district, have a head of the household who is at least 18 years old and be willing to live in Thornton.

Working in collaboration with the city and county provides wrap-around services for families and is unique in addressing this challenge, Garcia-Gomez said.

Pinkard said that the process to get housing was long and finding a place that met all of the requirements for her housing voucher was challenging. She was able to secure a place just two days before her voucher would have expired, and the family moved into their new home in August.

In the midst of all of this, Pinkard was diagnosed with breast cancer. “I couldn’t even imagine trying to do this without my own space,” she said.

Her daughter has been her rock through this experience, she said, helping to keep her busy keeping up with her children’s activities and sports as they’ve dealt with every challenge. Pinkard is grateful that she and her family have a secure home to call their own. “I’m just so thankful.”

We highly respected and valued his service on the Board and deeply miss his contributions to the district and the students he served.

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November election includes numerous state seats up for grabs

Interim ed commissioner to serve longer, plan to implement new federal law begins to take shape

State-level Election Races

The November election weighs heavily on elected officials in Colorado. Three State Board of Education members – Joyce Rankin, Steve Durham and Deb Scheffel – have democratic opponents. In the House of Representatives, all 65 seats are up for re-election and in the Senate, 18 seats are in play. The close divide in both the House and Senate means that this will be a very tough election season as control of the House and Senate is at stake. The Democrats control the House by a 34-31 margin and the Republicans control the Senate with an 18-17 margin.

Interim Education Commissioner

The State Board of Education announced that Interim Commissioner of Education, Katy Anthes, has agreed to serve until May 2017. Chairman of the Board, Steve Durham and Vice Chair, Angelica Schroeder also stated that the Board is not likely to begin the search process for a permanent commissioner until January 2017. According to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Anthes is the first female commissioner in 65 years.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

CDE has been working diligently over the past several months on the development of Colorado’s state plan in comply with the newly passed federal law dubbed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The state department has officially submitted its finalized state plan to the USDOE by March 2017 and is in the process of working with several work groups to begin drafting.

CDE has formed the HUB/Spoke Committees to assist in the formulation of the state plan. The ESSA Hub Committee held its first of at least five meetings on August 8. The HUB Committee is advisory to the Department and the Board, and will provide oversight of the State’s ESSA plan development.

The ESSA Spoke Committees will be organized around the proposed USDOE rules for state plan requirements (below) and will begin to develop a framework for each section of the plan. Additionally, a legislative interim committee was created to study the Every Student Succeeds Act. The interim committee has met twice and is working with various components of the new law and will provide guidance and feedback to the Department as the state plan is developed.

ESSA Spoke Committees:

- Standards:
  - Assessment
  - Accountability
  - School Improvement
  - Title Program Plans/Assurance
  - Stakeholder Consultation/Program Coordination

Three months after the Reading Rally, when EW1 returned with more than 1,500 school supplies, students were there to thank them for their generous gift. The supplies, collected and donated by EW1 members, included items such as pens, pencils, paper, folders, ear buds and backpacks.

"It’s been wonderful to come together and fill the needs that some of our families can’t provide for themselves," Principal Leslie Burke-Dominick said. "We could build something for many years to come, making these resources available for not only our current but future students.

"The supply donation was a first for EW1 and solidified their desire to continue providing support at Westview Elementary this year.

Community organization partners with Westview Elementary School to support student success

Executive Women International donates books and school supplies

The Five Star District’s focus on literacy received community support last spring when Executive Women International (EW1) selected Westview Elementary as the home of their 2016 Reading Rally—an event to promote summer reading. EW1 is a global women’s organization that brings women together from diverse businesses with focuses on personal and professional development, building connections and enhancing the community. They strive to enhance the community through their Reading Rally and ASIST Scholarship—which provides continuing education for non-traditional students so they can better provide for themselves and their families.

Each year their annual Reading Rally comes to a different elementary school, where they can give back to the community by reading to and providing age-appropriate books for students.

"We select schools for the Reading Rally where we can make the biggest impact," said Mdylo Ambrose, director of the executive women international board Denver chapter. "We hadn’t been in a school in the Five Star District in well over 10 years and after seeing the number of students on free and reduced benefits at Westview, we knew we could help."

On May 24, EW1 arrived at Westview Elementary with 403 donated backpacks filled with an age-appropriate book, bookmark and other goodies for each student in grades K-5. In addition to delivering the backpacks, members of EW1 interacted with students and read the books aloud to select classrooms.

"This event shows the generosity of others," mentioned Nadine Abrahams, digital teacher librarian. "EW1 gave the need of our school and chose to support our school’s literacy focus through summer reading."

Normally a one-time event for the organization quickly turned into a blooming partnership when EW1 chose to extend their relationship beyond, not only encouraging students to read but making sure they could be successful in school.

Students from Suzanne Yamashita’s 2015-2016 second-grade class are excited about their bags full of goodies and a book to read over the summer!
A number of schools have deteriorated roof decks and mechanical units. Rusted building structure steel in the crawlspace of a school. Mobile classrooms at Meridian Elementary to relieve overcrowding. Deteriorating sewer lines plague a number of our schools. Smoke tests are done to find failing sewer lines in need of repair. Renovation at Stueky Elementary as part of their security upgrade work.

**The Road to the 2016 Bond Proposal**

The growing needs of the Five Star District are no secret. Limited funding has challenged the ability to address overcrowding and repair aging buildings to ensure students learn in comfortable, safe and dry learning environments. As a result, the district set out on a year-long community engagement process to best prioritize and address these needs.

**Established Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LRPAC)**
- Comprised of parents, community members and school staff, they spent the year reviewing and prioritizing the district’s immediate and longer-term needs.
- Conducted school walkthroughs
  - Facilitates team walked schools alongside principals to address needed investments.
- Visited schools with the Five Star Leadership Academy
  - Parents and community members went on tours of schools to learn more about school-specific facility needs.
- Held funding challenge conversations at school staff and PTO/A meetings.
- LRPAC presented recommendation to Superintendent Chris Gdowski and the Board of Education.
- Facility scorecards were made available providing a snapshot of their neighborhood or child’s school building - what is in good shape and what needs improving.
- Online survey to parents on priorities for their schools.
- Telephone town hall.
  - “The maintenance of the schools is very important to make sure our children have a safe and comfortable learning environment. That should be a main priority for the district.” – Survey participant
- Superintendent Chris Gdowski makes his recommendation to the Board of Education for a $350 million bond proposal.

**Board of Education Meeting**
- Board of Education approved placement of bond on the November ballot.

**MARCH 2016**
- Community-wide and school investment flyers available at Back to School nights
- “Did You Know...” publication
  - Bond webpages
  - Community-wide and school

**APRIL 2016**
- Launched Funding 101 campaign.
  - Social media
  - "Did You Know..." publication
  - "The Road to the 2016 Bond" publication
- Facility scorecards were made available

**MAY 2016**
- "The Road to the 2016 Bond" publication
- Bond webpages
- Community-wide and school
- Investment flyers available at Back to School nights

**JUNE 2016**
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**SEPTEMBER 2015**
- FEBRUARY 2016
- MARCH 2016
- APRIL 2016
- MAY 2016
- JUNE 2016
- JULY 2016
- AUGUST 2016

**Launched bond informational pieces for community**
- "The Road to the 2016 Bond" publication
- Bond webpages
- Community-wide and school

**On Aug. 24, 2016, the Adams 12 Five Star Schools Board of Education approved a resolution to place a $350 million bond on the November 2016 ballot with NO TAX RATE INCREASE to residents because the district has paid down and refinanced existing debt.**

“This is a tremendous opportunity for our students and community. What we’ve done as far as transparency in preparing for this bond and explaining school funding and our needs puts us in a great position as a trusted school district and employer in our community. I believe we have the support for this initiative and I’m proud to vote yes to place this issue on the ballot.”

– Kathy Plomer, president of the Adams 12 Five Star Schools Board of Education

“This bond isn’t only important for our kids now, but also for those that are coming up. How can we expect our students to be the best they can if we don’t do our best to support them?”

– Rocky Top Middle School parent

“When Rocky Top was built 13 years ago, we were told it was a mega-middle school with a capacity of 1,250 – today we welcomed 1,369 6th, 7th and 8th graders and we will easily top 1,400 in the coming weeks as they finish buildings in our neighborhood.”

– Marie Perez
  - math learning specialist at Rocky Top Middle School

“Every success I have is because of Bollman Tech. There’s no doubt in my mind that these careers that we’re setting up for these young people are directly going to impact everyone in this community. We can’t get our cars fixed, or our HVACs repaired or our houses built if there is no one to do that and if there are no schools for those trades, how are they supposed to learn?”

– Bollman Technical Education Center Alum

“CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION Career and technical education opportunities prepare students for in-demand careers in fields such as skilled trades, technology services, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, etc. Over the last 5 years 1,213 students were turned away due to lack of space. 25% of all students who applied missed opportunities due to lack of space.”

1,213
350 million
= 25%

"This bond isn’t only important for our kids now, but also for those that are coming up. How can we expect our students to be the best they can if we don’t do our best to support them?”

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Three named to prestigious scholarship for first time in 10+ years

Horizon High School world history teacher Dave Galen has inspired Leilani to become a high school teacher. "He was continuously kind, passionate, hilarious and challenged me in the classroom—attributes that I hope to convey to my own students," Lina said.

She is pursuing music education, focusing on violin, and English majors as well as a leadership minor at the University of Colorado Boulder. She hopes to join the Peace Corps following college.

"My teachers truly made me want to learn something new every day," Lina said. "I am eternally grateful to all the educators I've had the pleasure of studying under during my years at Horizon High School and other schools."

Sister Leilani was very involved in DECA, an international association of marketing students. She credited teachers Justin Schrader and Jill Valenitie for their guidance.

"Through DECA, I learned how to lead, work on a team and be professional," Leilani said. "Without DECA, I never would have received the Boettcher Scholarship."

She is studying business with a focus on finance at CU Boulder. She plans to work in government relations.

Challenging coursework through Legacy 2000—a program designed to work on their process was easier and to prepare them earlier.

To view the personal stories and learn more about the 2016-2017 Boettcher Scholarship recipients, visit www.5starfoundation.org/beinspired/ and join the conversation on Facebook or Twitter.

For the second year, Century Middle School celebrates 10 years during their homecoming week. Mark a decade with them at their homecoming football game vs. Douglas County.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21 12:00-1:00 P.M.
Join the conversation, ask questions and hear back from us live to participate, mention #Adams12 and use #Adams12 educated on Twitter.

Questions can be on any topic such as health, wellness, curriculum and instruction, finances, decision making, etc.

Mountain Range High School celebrates 10 years during their homecoming week. Mark a decade with them at their homecoming football game vs. Douglas County.

Friday, Sept. 30 7 pm
North Stadium 12500 Delaware Dr. Westminster, CO

Online registration successfully replaces high school check-in process

More than 9,000 high school students registered for school online this year. Parents enjoyed a faster and more efficient way to register their high school student for the 2016-2017 school year. The online registration pilot saved benefits of the new process. Nearly 85 percent of high school parents or guardians reported online registration met or exceeded their expectations and 9 percent stated the process was easier and to prepare them earlier.

In its inaugural year, 9,274 high school students, nearly 87 percent of those enrolled, were registered online before the first day of school. In addition to registering students for high school, parents saved time and energy with the ability to verify contact information and sign-off on mandatory forms in one convenient location. Parents, students and staff could easily access the process online, allowing students to skip the lines at high school check-ins and register students for school from anywhere with an internet connection.

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Start the year off right, don't let absences add up

Learn about how to promote regular attendance through the year

School success goes hand-in-hand with consistent attendance, and it’s important to build the habit of focusing on good attendance early. Promoting regular attendance is a joint effort between the school, parents, families and the community. To kick off the school year, and in honor of September being “Attendance Awareness Month,” we’ve compiled useful facts and tips to ensure your student starts the year right.

Did you know?
• Students suffer academically. Missing 18 days or more of the school year is considered chronic absence and puts children behind...
• Absences are unavoidable. Children get sick and need to stay home occasionally – make that the exception, not the rule.
• Too many absences is bad, whether excused or unexcused. Any absence represents a drop out.
• Some absences are unavoidable. Children get sick and need to stay home occasionally – make that the exception, not the rule.
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Tips:
• Avoid extended vacations that require children to miss school. Try to schedule vacations with the school calendar. The same goes for doctor’s appointments.
• Set a regular bedtime and morning routine for younger children. Ensure they get 9 to 11 hours of sleep, and lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
• Help older children develop homework and bedtime routines. Allow for 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep, and ensure when the lights go out, so do the cell phones, video games and computers.
• Get to know teachers and administrators. Regular attendance is a joint effort; introduce yourself to your child’s teacher and follow their academic progress.
• Set an example for your child. Show them attendance matters; only allow absences for true sickness.
• Talk to your child. Tell them why being in school is important, and why attendance matters.
• Talk to your child about what they missed in school, and how they became leaders in their community,” said Chris Gdowski, district...
With this free service*, you will receive text messages notifying you of safety alerts or other important information impacting the Adams 12 Five Star Schools system.

You can opt-out from alerts at any time. Reply with HELP if you need assistance.

Your privacy is important. Your information will not be sold or provided to third parties. *Your cell phone number must be up-to-date in your Infinite Campus profile. **Message and/or data rates may apply.

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Earning cash rewards is easy ...
Just do the following transactions and activities in your free Kasasa Cash Back checking account each monthly qualification cycle:
- Have at least 15 debit card purchases post and settle
- 1 direct deposit/ACH debit or credit into your account during the qualification cycle
- Enrollment in Online Banking
- Be enrolled in and receive e-statements

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- 1% cash back on everyday debit card purchases
- No minimum balance to earn rewards
- Refunds on ATM fees, nationwide*

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