

CHALK TALK

news from Jeffco Public Schools



Allendale Elementary first grader Davon Randolph gives Instructional Coach Jacque Burroughs a high five.

An instructional coach in every school

Allendale Elementary Instructional Coach Jacque Burroughs cannot walk down the hall without a teacher asking her for ideas about reaching an individual student, or talking about a reading lesson, or asking about interpreting test score data.

"I love being at the school," she said. "I get to see not only the

teacher feel successful, but also the student."

Burroughs is just one of 150 instructional coaches in Jeffco, one for each school. Jeffco's Department of Learning and Educational Achievement (DLEA) Executive Director Priscilla Straughn compares instructional coaches to sports coaches. "Part of the role of a sports coach is to make the athletes better, to help their performance, and to maximize their skills," Straughn said. "It's the same role for an instructional coach."

The positions are funded for two years with federal stimulus money earmarked specifically for professional development.

Straughn said, "It's really a two year window of opportunity and our belief is that the most important factor in student achievement is a highly qualified, skillful classroom teacher."

Allendale 1st grade teacher Colleen Destree said having Burroughs as an instructional coach makes her a better teacher. "It helps kids to have a coach because it helps their teachers to have better eyes and to really go deeper with their instruction and meet the individual child's needs."

New CSAP growth reports for students

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has introduced a new measure for students taking the CSAP in grades 3 through 10 called the Colorado Growth Model. For an individual student, growth compares a student's CSAP performance to all other students with a similar CSAP history using Student Growth Percentiles.

According to CDE, a Student Growth Percentile defines how much relative growth a student made from one year to the next relative to a student's "academic peers." More specifically, the Colorado Growth Model compares each student's performance to students in the same grade throughout the state who had similar CSAP scores in past years. The model then produces a student growth percentile, much like children's height and weight percentiles that pediatricians share with parents.

[Read more](#)



The latest on H1N1

As Jeffco students headed back to school last month, an unwelcome visitor came back with them – the flu. H1N1 (formerly called swine flu) is in the community and more than likely in schools as well. But according to public health

officials, that's no reason to panic. Unlike last spring when schools were closing with a single case of H1N1, the Centers for Disease Control is no longer recommending closing schools when a case of H1N1 appears.

Jeffco Public Schools is working closely with county and state health agencies to track student absences. That's why parents may hear a recorded message on their school's attendance line asking if the absence is because of a flu-like illness.

[Read more](#)



Sacred work

"Everyday I get to come and do the best work in America," Jeffco Superintendent Dr. Cindy Stevenson told a group of parents and community leaders over breakfast this month. "And when I use the word sacred, I don't use the word lightly. I do believe

school work is sacred."

About 12 times a year, for five years now, Stevenson has had breakfast with parents and community leaders. She talks about issues facing the district and answers questions from the community. Breakfasts are by invitation. [View an excerpt of this month's breakfast hosted by Warren Tech, here.](#) If you would like to attend a future breakfast call Communications Services at 303-982-6808

List of upcoming Superintendent's Breakfasts
Oct. 7 - Mount Carbon Elementary School
Nov. 11 - Golden High School
Nov. 19 - Alameda High School
Dec. 9 - Manning School

New research shows drivers in school zones are distracted

New research from Safe Kids USA shows that one out of every six drivers in school zones is distracted. Use of electronics (such as cell phones, PDAs and Smartphones) was the leading category of distraction while driving according to a recent National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study.

The study consisted of more than 40,000 observational road-side surveys conducted by local Safe Kids researchers including over 3,000 observations from the Ken Caryl Middle School area in Littleton. The local study showed a higher rate of distracted drivers (19.8 per 100 vehicles) as compared to 17.0 for the whole study group. Drivers in Littleton had lower cell phone use rate but higher eating/drinking/smoking and reaching/looking behind behaviors than the national results.

[Read more](#)

Encouraging parents conference

The fall 2009 Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conference are family-centered conferences designed to offer support, information, and education to parents and professionals who work with children with disabilities. These conferences are available to persons residing in Colorado who have a child with a disability - ages birth to twenty-one.

[Check out the Website for more information](#)

Take time off for school involvement

Do you want to be able to attend a conference with your student's teacher and not worry about missing work? This summer, Governor Bill Ritter signed a bill that allows parents/guardians to take unpaid time off of work to attend school-related activities.

The [Parental Involvement in K-12 Education Act](#) gives parents, who work at public agencies or companies with more than 50 workers, the chance to take six hours per month or 18 hours each school year of unpaid leave to go to things like parent-teacher conferences, special education interventions or behavioral meetings with educators. The bill says employers have the discretion to limit the time taken to be no more than three hours at one time.

Part-time workers have access to a portion of those leave hours depending on their work schedule. According to the law, all employees have to give their supervisors a week's notice and provide them with written verification from the school or school district of the academic activity.

The leave under this bill is specified as unpaid leave, but it states employers can make agreements with employees, allowing them to take paid leave and then make up the work time in the same week or use available accrued paid leave such as vacation, sick, personal or paid time off.

The bill also states that an employer may limit or deny an employee leave under this bill in emergencies or other situations that may endanger a person's health or safety, or when the absence could result in a stop of service or production.

Helping Kids Thrive Conference

Where do you go for answers to parenting a child? The Helping Kids Thrive Conference provides hands-on practical tools, skills, and information to help children grow in positive ways. The conference is free for parents and families and will be Thursday, October 22, 5:30 - 9 p.m. at Jefferson High School, 2305 Pierce Street, Edgewater.

Classes include:

The Preschool Years: Creating a Blueprint for Success; The Elementary Years: Foundation for Healthy Growth; The Teen Years: Framing Boundaries and Expectations; Empowering Successful Kids; AND MUCH MORE!

- Light refreshments will be available
- Supervised children's activities on-site during the conference. (Children must be potty-trained.)
- Community resource tables
- Some classes are presented in English & Spanish

Space is Limited. [Register now](#) or call 303-432-5144.

Good News About Jeffco Schools

My Teacher My Hero
They don't have superhuman strength, but they have the power to make a difference in a student's life. Three Jeffco teachers were honored at the My Teacher, My Hero celebration this month at Southwest Plaza.

Nominated by their principals, Superintendent Dr. Cindy Stevenson presented awards to Stacey Evans, third-grade teacher at Westgate Elementary; Chet Andes, technology education at Evergreen Middle and Lori Young, math teacher at Columbine High School.

[Read more Good News](#)



New CSAP growth reports for students - Continued

If a student grew as well or better than 60 percent of her academic peers, she would have a growth percentile of 60.

Individual Student Growth percentiles are categorized by “low”, “typical,” or “high” growth. It is important to place your child’s growth score in the perspective of all of the learning that your child has demonstrated from a variety of assessments including classroom tests, grades, and state assessments to get the entire picture of your student’s progress.

If your student completed the CSAP last year, you will be receiving a CDE Growth and Achievement report for your child at parent-teacher conferences. For more information about this report, click on <http://www.screencast.com/t/gfNKpOnP> to view a short video explaining the report.

You also can discuss this report with your child’s teachers or school principal.

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New research shows drivers in school zones are distracted- Continued

“The public expects drivers to be on their best behavior when they are near schools, however the new study shows the opposite is true when it comes to distracted driving,” said Leslie Feuerborn, Safe Kids Denver Metro coordinator. “With recent research demonstrating that the driving skills of a distracted driver are as bad as or worse than an intoxicated driver, the overall relevance of this study is clear. Almost one in six drivers in a school zone behaves like a drunk driver.”

Recent Colorado legislation hopes to change cell phone statistics by restricting drivers from text messaging while driving, effective December 1, 2009. In addition, drivers under 18 are restricted from all use of wireless telephones while driving except in certain emergency situations.

For more information about the new report on distracted drivers and tips for drivers and pedestrians, visit www.usa.safekids.org/wtw/.

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The latest on H1N1 - Continued

“Monitoring flu-like illness in the schools gives us a real-time, daily indication of the magnitude of illness in our school population,” said Dr. Mark Johnson, executive director of Jefferson County Public Health. “By tracking flu-like illness, we are in a better position to implement public health measures such as social distancing, vaccination clinics or other actions designed to decrease the spread of disease in our population if they become necessary. We extend our gratitude to the schools, the parents and children for their help in this important endeavor,” he said.

Here is the latest on H1N1:

- Federal, State and local health agencies ask parents to be aware of the evolving situation around H1N1.
- Health agencies are NOT recommending schools close based on confirmed H1N1 cases.
- Keep students home when they have a fever. They should be fever-free without medicine for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Prevent flu by washing hands. Rub hands together for least 20 seconds.
- Remind students to cover their nose and mouths when they sneeze.
- Watch for information on the H1N1 vaccine.
- To view an interview with Jeffco Public Health Epidemiologist Dr. Gayle Miller, click on this link: [Jeffco Public Health Interview](#)
- [Click here for letter to parents](#) from Jeffco Schools and Jefferson County Public Health. This letter also has important information regarding Outdoor Lab Schools and H1N1.
- Best sources of the latest information:

[Centers for Disease Control](#)

[Colorado State Health Department](#)

[Jeffco Public Health](#)

[Jeffco Public Schools](#)

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Good News - Continued

A slugger for special needs

The Colorado Rockies have awarded Anna Mead, physical education teacher at **Conifer High School**, the Colorado Rockies Hal O'leary award for her work with special needs students. Mead received the award during a recognition dinner on Sept. 16 at Coors Field.

Jeffco tech talents

North Arvada Middle school students are technologically savvy. Led by teacher Les Stern, former students Mattie Bockholt and Keaton Prsbrey won first place in the "Problem Solving" category at the 2009 Technology Student Association (TSA) national conference this summer. The TSA is the only student organization devoted exclusively to the needs of students interested in technology. Over 4,000 middle and high school students from across the U.S. competed at the event in Denver.

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