

April 14, 2010

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## CASE Congratulates School Leader Award Winners!



### **Mark Strakbein named High School Principal of the Year**

Mark Strakbein, principal of Eagle Valley High School in Eagle County, is the 2010 Colorado High School Principal of the Year. Mark is an outstanding school leader and his impact on student learning and achievement has been profound. Since he became Eagle Valley principal in 2004, the graduation rate has steadily increased and is now over 22 percent higher than it was just five years ago. With 92.5 percent of students graduating in 2009, this is nearly 20 percent higher than Colorado's overall state graduation rate.

Mark is highly praised for his dynamic leadership style that brings out the best in both staff and students. At a time when school reform is garnering quite a bit of buzz, he has successfully implemented school-level reforms that have directly improved student performance and educator effectiveness. Equally significant is that he's spearheaded initiatives such as a comprehensive teacher evaluation system and student intervention program with great support and buy-in from staff and the larger community.

[Click here](#) to read more.



### **Colorado Springs' Lori Smith named Middle School Principal of the Year**

Cheyenne Mountain Junior High School Principal's Dr. Lori Smith is the 2010 Colorado Middle School Principal of the Year. She is held in high regard by staff as well as the students and parents that she works with. Among her many accomplishments, Lori has put into place a systemic and comprehensive framework around student instruction,

assessment, and behavior that has made a tremendously positive difference at Cheyenne Mountain Junior High. Student learning and school culture have both improved as a result.

As an expert and sought-after speaker on Response to Intervention (RtI), Lori has implemented a successful RtI model that is research based, data-driven, and rooted in a strong sense of collaboration among staff. This, coupled with her leadership in putting Positive Behavior Support models and Professional Learning Communities in place, has resulted in greater student success. Her unwavering focus on doing what's best for kids is inspiring to her staff and fellow school principals.

[Click here](#) to read more.



## Mary Kay Sommers named Colorado's National Distinguished Principal of the Year

Mary Kay Sommers, principal of Shepardson Elementary School in the Poudre School District, is Colorado's 2010 National Distinguished Principal of the Year. Mary Kay is familiar to many CASE members for her outstanding leadership at the state and federal level. She's a strong voice in Colorado for public education, and has also served as the President of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and testified before Congress on the impacts of NCLB.

As principal of Shepardson Elementary School, Mary Kay has set high standards for excellence. In the fall of 2009 Shepardson was recognized as one of 161 Colorado schools to have the highest academic student growth scores. Additionally, Poudre School District designated Shepardson as "Accredited with Distinction" based on outstanding student performance and progress over time.

Mary Kay is tireless in seeking ways to provide kids with an outstanding education, and the enthusiasm and support she has from staff and the larger community is testimony to the lasting impact she has made.

[Click here](#) to read more.

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## 2010-11 CASE Membership Now Open!

Renewal for the 2010-11 CASE membership year is now available. Just visit [www.co-case.org](http://www.co-case.org) or call us at (303) 762-8762 to renew your membership. New this year is the opportunity to purchase up to 2 years of CASE membership. Members who take advantage of this option will receive a \$50 coupon to use for future CASE events.

We're pleased to share that there will be **no dues increase** for the 2010-11 year. Renew your membership today!

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# Announcing the 41st Annual CASE Convention

Every year, CASE members and education stakeholders from across the state look forward to our annual Convention. Last year CASE had record attendance at this event and we're looking forward to another outstanding Convention this July!

Join us July 28-30, 2010 in beautiful Breckenridge for what will be a value-packed and engaging professional development event. Pre-Convention sessions will be held July 26 and 27.

Here's a rundown of Convention highlights:

- **5 Pre-Conventions** on topics including new model content standard implementation, P-20 alignment, and Pre-Convention sessions especially for rural educators and new superintendents.
- **3 powerful keynote presentations** by Steven Berlin Johnson, Jennifer James, and Andy Hargreaves
- Back by popular demand, **4 distinguished speaker sessions**
- Over **80 breakout sessions** on the topics that matter most to you

Go to [www.co-case.org](http://www.co-case.org) or call (303) 762-8762 to register. You'll receive the Convention brochure soon in the mail, but [click here](#) to check it out online. Take advantage of early bird pricing that ends June 1 and get signed up today!

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## Follow CASE on Twitter!

CASE is using Twitter to share quick announcements and news. Just [click here](#) to get signed up and stay in the know about important developments on the legislative, professional development, and CASE membership front.

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# Professional Development Opportunities

## Professional Development Symposium

With support from CASE, Pearson is offering a free Colorado Professional Development Symposium on Thursday, April 29 at the Hyatt Regency Denver Tech Center from 9 am to 1 pm.

This event will allow you to interact with colleagues and Professional Development specialists to examine how and why Professional Development is critical to reshaping the way K-12 education is delivered. Discussion topics will center around teacher evaluation and effectiveness, building professional development capacity, the elements of successful professional development and how to plan and prioritize professional development training to maximize its effect.

Don't miss out on this event! The keynote speaker will be **Diana Sirko**, incoming Deputy Commissioner at CDE. Additional speakers include CASE members **Michelle Ansley** (Director of Academic Achievement, Englewood School District), **John Maloy** (Superintendent, Aspen School District) and **Beverly Tarpley** (Assistant Superintendent, Cheyenne Mountain School District). CASE Director of Professional Development **Mary McNeil** and CEA's Director of Teaching and Learning **Linda Barker** will also present.

Space for this event is limited. To reserve your seat and receive additional information please send your RSVP to Leslie Gundy at [Leslie.Gundy@Pearson.com](mailto:Leslie.Gundy@Pearson.com) by Sunday, April 25, 2010.

## CHPS Training: New Solutions for Green Schools in Colorado

Join CHPS (Collaborative for High Performance Schools) for an in-depth training session in Colorado this April, called New Solutions for Green Schools in Colorado. School and district facility planners, design professionals, energy consultants and other interested industry professionals in Colorado will benefit from these in-person seminars to promote green, healthy Colorado schools. Facilitated by CHPS staff and local partners, the training will provide an in-depth review of the CO-CHPS program and resources. Participants will learn about CHPS' program offerings, the CO-CHPS prerequisites and credits, and hear from practitioners on how to implement high performance schools in Colorado. The training will include a credit-by-credit review of CO-CHPS, as well as case studies from local school district energy managers and presentations from the Governor's Energy Office and from the Department of Education BEST program. The training will also include a review of CHPS Verified, a robust and established program that provides an independent review of CHPS projects. The course will offer 6 AIA Learning Units (HSW/SD credit).

Space is limited, so **sign up** early! Click on the date and location that's most convenient for you.

- Monday, April 26, 2010: **Grand Junction**
- Wednesday, April 28, 2010: **Colorado Springs**
- Thursday, April 29, 2010: **Denver**

Special discounts are available:

- Attendance is free for school and district employees
- Discounts for bringing a school or district representative
- Discounts for CHPS members

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# News and Notes

Educator effectiveness is a hot topic not only in Colorado, but across the U.S. A new piece of legislation introduced in New York by two Democratic state legislators would allow New York City principals the authority to choose who to let go if budget problems require teacher layoffs. The current law requires that teachers with the least amount of experience be the first to be laid off. The bill is sure to spark controversy and opposition from the state teachers union; to read the full article [click here](#).

Source: *NY Times*, 4/13/10

A new report by EducationSector takes a fresh look at college and workforce readiness indicators. College- and Career-Ready: Using Outcomes Data to Hold High Schools Accountable for Student Success asserts that we need to look at more than just graduation rates and test scores to assess how prepared students are to go onto higher education or enter the workforce once they graduate high school. Outcomes data—that is, what happens once a student graduates—is the best way to determine how well-prepared students are, says the report. Some states have moved in this direction and are tracking the number of kids who go on to attend college, how well those students do (GPA, credits earned, etc.), and are also collecting workforce data. To read the full article, [click here](#).

(Source: *ERS e-Bulletin*)

In response to budget cuts, the Omaha Public School District is considering whether to combine some grade levels into one classroom. Some multigrade classes already exist in the school district, which officials say has “saved the district money because it could get by with one fewer teacher at the school.” Still, this approach is new enough that the district doesn’t have enough data to gauge the impacts on student learning. Anecdotal evidence is somewhat mixed—while some parents have expressed concern, others say their child is challenged and experiences a benefit in staying with one teacher for two years. [Click here](#) to read the full article.

(Source: *Omaha World-Herald*)

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**Please do not reply to this message. Questions? Contact Melissa Gibson at [mgibson@co-case.org](mailto:mgibson@co-case.org).**