



## Welcome to the District Connection

This is the first edition of the District's monthly newsletter which will highlight the incredible work in the district and share out district news. District-wide, the first nine weeks began with a smooth start academically. The level of implementation and commitment of staff to school improvement is evident as I visit every school. The laser like focus on student's well-being and student learning is evident. The thoughtful development and deep level of implementation of each school's 90 Day Plan which focuses on high leverage improvement strategies (Big Rocks) school-wide is becoming part of the school culture. The plans are rigorous, purposeful, and focus on student learning. Success of the 90 Day Plans is evident in two of our Turnaround Schools improving their accreditation rating. Congratulations go to Kemper and Maugh Elementary Schools!

As we move forward, our district and schools are committed to staying focused on the deep level of instruction, while at the same time, assessing individual student learning by using multiple data points especially using the interim assessments. The focus is on having effective SEED teams to support teachers working collectively to assess, plan, strategize, and implement differentiated instructional strategies to meet the needs of students.

In addition to focusing on students, there will be a district effort to help support the well-being of our entire staff. It is through your *incredible* work that the success and well-being of the students will be attained. The district will be scheduling opportunities for staff to participate in during the school year. In December, we will start the first of a series of opportunities with the introduction to a District Wellness Program which will be free to all staff. Opportunities on the horizon include retirement planning through Edwards Jones and low interest home mortgage loans for new staff.

Staff feedback is very important to the success of the district. There will be survey requests in future newsletters for staff feedback as we are only as strong as the collective group of incredible staff that work for Montezuma-Cortez School District RE-1.

With the passing of the 3A Ballot question, the district is prepared to move forward with demolishing the retired high school. Our goal is to demolish the retired high school, repurpose the land for community use and upgrade the existing Panther Stadium. The demolition design has been completed and the district will be soliciting bids to start the demolition process this winter. Thank you to the Retired High School Community Committee and the City of Cortez for their work and support in being able to move forward to honor the district's commitment to the community. It is a privilege to live in such a great community.

## 2016 district and school accreditation ratings

We recently received preliminary accreditation ratings for the District and each school. These preliminary ratings are based on our PARCC achievement and growth data and our indicators of post-secondary readiness for the high school (e.g. graduation, ACT). These preliminary ratings include some schools that have demonstrated improvement and some that have experienced a decline. The District's preliminary rating is "Accredited on Priority Improvement - Year 6".

The District has requested accreditation redesignation ratings from the Colorado Department of Education for the Cortez Middle School, Montezuma-Cortez High School and the District due to the high number of student who opted out of taking the state assessment PARRC test. We do not consider any of our preliminary accreditation ratings to be final until we complete that process in December or possibly as late as January. We will continue to keep leaders and staff apprised of this process as it unfolds.

The District remains committed to our Big Rocks and the strong school improvement work that we have underway in our schools across the District. We really appreciate the dedication of our staff and everyone's hard work with our students to support their growth and achievement. We remain committed to our District vision of "putting kids first" and doing "whatever it takes" to support all our students.

If you have questions about your school's preliminary accreditation, please contact your school principal. If you have questions about the District accreditation rating or the Accreditation Reconsideration process, please contact Carol Mehesy or Lori Haukeness.

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## The District to roll out a Wellness Program

Our district's strength and success depends on our staff and on their health. In an effort to help all of us increase our knowledge about health matters, we are instituting a worksite wellness program through Pinnacol (our work comp carrier) and Virgin Pulse. This program is completely voluntary, but the District hopes you will find activities that inspire you to participate. Staff members will soon see posters and fliers throughout the district promoting this new initiative. You can take a look at the program overview here (please hold the CTL key down when you click on the link):

[Click here for Wellness Program](#)

## Sue Ciccia receives prestigious school nurse award

Congratulations to Sue Ciccia, our District Director of Nursing and Health Services, for being recognized as **the School Nurse Administrator of the Year for 2016 by the Colorado Association of School Nurses**. The purpose of this award is to publicly recognize the importance and visibility of school nurse administrators by annually honoring one School Nurse Administrator of the Year in Colorado who has demonstrated excellence in leadership and support of school nurses.



Sue was honored with this award for her leadership in helping establish the school-based health clinic at the Montezuma-Cortez High School and in "working tirelessly for our district and attending to the nursing needs of students throughout our district". The award also praises Sue for being the "type of person who will do anything she can to help students". Sue started her career with Montezuma-Cortez School District in 2000. Thank you Sue for modelling our district vision of "Kids First!" and "Whatever it Takes". Congratulations on your award.

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## District response to student tragedy

In response to the our district's and surrounding district's recent tragic student deaths, we are taking proactive steps to support our schools and the community. The district will be providing support through staff training, information through school newsletters and community partnerships.

Through the Colorado Safe-To-Tell Program, one can anonymously report anything that concerns or threatens you, your friends, your family or your community. **The Safe-To-Tell number is 1-877-542-7233**. Please add this phone number in your cell phone directory.

As we all know, the upcoming holidays are wonderful but they can add extra stress to our lives. Did you know that you can access mental health services with our \$40 insurance co-pay? Contact the HR Department for more information .

### District Administration

Lori Haukeness, Superintendent  
Dan Porter, Assistant Superintendent  
Carla Hoehn, Director of Finance  
Jeanette Allen, Director of Curriculum & Instruction  
Carol Mehesy, Director of School Improvement & Grants  
Mark Knox, Director of Technology

## BRIEFLY...

### University of Virginia Sustainability Program

Last week, Kemper, Manaugh, Mesa instructional teams and district administrators received in-depth training from the University of Virginia. The emphasis of this professional development centered on how to embed and sustain school improvement through the turnaround work that the district and schools have been engaged in the last two years. The knowledge gained and work completed will be shared with the respective schools and district wide.

### School Board Member Training

School Board Members were invited to participate in board training sessions which specifically focus on how a board can effectively support student learning in the District. The Board was invited to participate in the training by the Colorado Department of Education. This invitation was based on the district's high quality and successful turnaround work. The turnaround board training goal is to provide board members with information and tools to deepen board knowledge of an engagement in our efforts to better support the turnaround work in our district.

### Indian Policy and Procedure Meeting

The annual IPP meeting was held on October 25. Our District Administration and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe collectively agreed to focus on two goals for the 2016-2017 school year.

The two goals are:

- 1.) Improve student attendance
- 2.) Examine student transitions from pre-kindergarten to post secondary to address transitional issues that may impede student success



Happy Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving Holiday Break is November 21 –25.

November paychecks will be issued on November 18!

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