



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - 3/17/2017**

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## **Rocky Ford School District Ensures Full-Day Preschool Program for the Future**

ROCKY FORD – The Rocky Ford School District is pleased to announce an ongoing relationship with Jane’s World and a new partnership with Child Development Services (CDS) to provide high quality preschool services to four-year-old students in the Rocky Ford community for at least the 2017/2018 school year and hopefully far into the future.

Here are some quick facts about these partnerships and the preschool program:

- Jane’s World will receive funding for 21 slots from the Colorado Preschool Program.
  - This is the same number of slots that Jane’s World has received for the past few years.
  - These students will attend preschool at Jane’s World facility and the services will be the same high level program that has existed there for many years.
- CDS will receive funding for 32 slots from the Colorado Preschool Program.
  - The management of the preschool program at Washington Primary School will switch from Rocky Ford School District to CDS.
  - These students will still attend preschool in the modular building that is next to Washington Primary School.
  - Through the combination of state CPP funding and the federal Head Start funding that CDS receives, students will receive a full-day program.
  - If the current preschool staff so desires, they will stay on through the transition in management and will continue to be the teachers at the Washington preschool site for next year.
  - We are excited that students will follow the curricular program that CDS has developed which was very impressive during the site visits.

The school district annually receives funding for 53 student slots from the state of Colorado through the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP). The modular at Washington Primary School has served up to 32 four-year-old preschool students per year (due to a restriction on maximum class sizes) and Jane’s World has received the funding for the remaining student slots for the past several years. At the end of the 2015/2016 school year, the CPP state office informed us that the district was out of compliance with the financial model. The funding was meant for a half-day program and we were providing a full-day program.

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**MISSION:** The mission of Rocky Ford School District No. R2 is to ensure individual success and learning of all students, within a safe environment.

We were required to find extra funding by either contributing money from the district's general fund which would reduce the money that is intended for students in Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade or allow preschool students to attend in the morning for free and charge tuition for the afternoon. Neither option was appealing.

A third option for resolving the financial situation was revealed when CDS expressed an interest in the CPP slots for preschool students. CDS receives federal funding for preschool students which could be combined with the state CPP funding. By combining both streams of funding in this way, there would be no need to pull funding from the K-12 students and, more importantly, there would be no need to charge tuition and four-year-old students would still receive a full-day preschool program. When the district considered the financial realities with the instructionally rich environment that CDS has developed at their schools, it was clear that this was the route we needed to go to protect the preschool program for our future four-year-old students. To top this off, CDS would manage the program right out of the same modular building at Washington Primary School. With the funding resolved and the facilities remaining open, the stage has been set for a smooth transition.

What this transition means for our current preschool program at Washington Primary School is that the management of the program will switch from the school district to CDS. As already mentioned, the same facilities will be used and there is an opportunity for the same staff members to remain. As with any transition of this kind, it is difficult on the adults who are directly affected by the prospect of having new management. However, in the end, the decision was made with the students in mind. This was the one route that would ensure a full-day preschool program for four-year-old students for the future. We are confident in both Jane's World and CDS and know that our future four-year-old students will be served well in preschool as they prepare to enter Kindergarten. We thank the parents and community members who provided their feedback and insights throughout the decision making process. We are confident that we will continue to meet the needs of four-year-old students for a long time to come!