



Spring 2012

*Dedicated to Excellence*

Cherry Creek Schools

### **Eight Cherry Creek schools students score perfect 36 on ACT**

Congratulations to the eight Cherry Creek schools students who scored a perfect 36 on the ACT in 2011! Those students are:

- Emily Baade, Grandview High School, Colorado ACT
- Rachel Hoffman, Cherry Creek High School, National ACT
- Tae Kim, Cherry Creek High School, Colorado ACT
- Graham Rowe, Grandview High School, National ACT
- Brennan Ryan, Cherry Creek High School, National ACT
- Joseph Sandoval, Smoky Hill High School, Colorado ACT
- Diane Schulze, Cherry Creek High School, National ACT
- Tong Yin, Cherry Creek High School, National ACT

Colorado is one of ten states to offer the ACT to all high school juniors. The National ACT is an optional test for high school students.

### **Congratulations!**

- To Polton Elementary, named a 2011 Best of Aurora Award winner in the Elementary Schools category by the US Commerce Association!
- To Aleshia Cantrell, a dean at Overland High School, recipient of a Circles of Change Award, which honors individuals who inspire peace, hope and positive change.
- To Grandview High School, named "Project Unify School of the Year" by Special Olympics Colorado, in recognition of Grandview's extraordinary efforts to build strong relationships between students with special needs and the rest of the student body.

### **Cherry Creek schools honored for academic excellence and growth**

Fifteen Cherry Creek schools earned the Colorado Department of Education's John Irwin Award, which is given to schools that demonstrate excellent academic achievement. Those schools are:

- Belleview Elementary
- Campus Middle School
- Challenge School

- Cherry Creek Academy
- Cherry Creek High School
- Cherry Hills Village Elementary
- Cottonwood Creek Elementary
- Coyote Hills Elementary
- Dry Creek Elementary
- Greenwood Elementary
- Homestead Elementary
- Indian Ridge Elementary
- Rolling Hills Elementary
- West Middle School
- Willow Creek Elementary

In addition, 14 Cherry Creek schools received the Governor's Distinguished Improvement Award from CDE for exceptional student growth. Those schools are:

- Antelope Ridge Elementary
- Belleview Elementary
- Canyon Creek Elementary
- Challenge School
- Cherry Hills Village Elementary
- Cottonwood Creek Elementary
- Creekside Elementary
- Dry Creek Elementary
- Fox Hollow Elementary
- Heritage Elementary
- High Plains Elementary
- Peakview Elementary
- Pine Ridge Elementary
- Rolling Hills Elementary

### **Cherry Creek schools score high on Colorado School Performance Framework**

All of the schools in the Cherry Creek School District are in the top two categories of the new accreditation system recently developed by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE).

The accreditation categories are:

- Accredited with Performance Plan – meeting or exceeding state performance targets
- Accredited with Improvement Plan – approaching or meeting state performance targets
- Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan – not meeting state targets, requires state supervision and rapid improvement
- Accredited with Turnaround Plan – school performance is well below state targets and state intervention is required

95 percent of Cherry Creek schools are in the highest category, Accredited with Performance Plan, compared to 70% of schools statewide. Five percent of Cherry Creek schools (3 schools) are in the second highest category, Accredited with Improvement Plan, compared to about 18% of schools statewide. No Cherry Creek schools are in the bottom two categories.

### **Class of 2011 earns more than \$35 million in scholarships**

The 3,600 members of the Class of 2011, who graduated from the Cherry Creek School District's six high schools in May, earned more than \$35 million in scholarships. The class also includes a Presidential Scholar, 39 National Merit finalists, 5 National Merit Hispanic Scholars, 5 Boettcher Scholars, 9 military academy appointments (Air Force, Naval Academy, West Point and Merchant Marines), and many other scholarship recipients.

More than 2,000 students, or 55% of the Class of 2011, took one or more Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes as seniors. Members of the Class of 2011 won state titles (individual or team) in 20 different sports, and performed a variety of classic and contemporary plays and musicals. They also devoted tens of thousands of hours to community service, helping people in our district and around the globe.

### **Overland High School teacher wins \$10,000 Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence**

Jennifer Nass-Fukai, science coordinator at Overland High School, is a 2011 winner of the Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence. She will receive an unrestricted cash award of \$5,000 and a restricted grant of \$5,000 for her school, to be used for the professional development of science teachers, the expansion or enhancement of science programs, or science resources.

Nass-Fukai is one of 34 award recipients across the country. They were selected by an independent panel of judges on the basis of creativity of teaching methods; effectiveness in the classroom; and plans for the use of grant money to improve science education resources in their schools. All have demonstrated an outstanding ability to inspire their students and produce results in science education.

### **All six Cherry Creek School District high schools made the 2011 *Washington Post* list of top high schools in the nation.**

The list takes the total number of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Advanced International Certificate of Education tests given at a school each year and divides it by the number of seniors who graduated in May or June. Of Colorado's 375 high schools, 35 made the list.

### **Cherry Creek School District teachers honored for effective leadership**

The Cherry Creek School District is the recipient of two **2011 Commissioner's Choice Awards** honoring effectiveness in education.

The Cherry Creek STAR Mentor Program, a partnership between the Cherry Creek Education Association and the Cherry Creek School District is the recipient of the Excellence in Induction Award. S.T.A.R. Mentors are master teachers with a wealth of experience to help those new to the profession.

Cherry Hills Village Elementary School received the Teacher Leadership Award, which recognizes innovative leadership models that empower teachers to achieve consistent, sustained student growth.

### **Cherry Creek Teachers Achieve National Board Certification**

Five teachers in the Cherry Creek School District earned National Board Certification in 2010, according to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which sets the standards for teaching excellence and administers the rigorous National Board Certification program.

The Cherry Creek School District now has 76 National Board Certified teachers, putting it third in the state in the number of these outstanding educators.

The Cherry Creek Schools teachers who achieved National Board Certification in 2010 are: Danielle Brown, third grade teacher, Peakview Elementary; Katie Davidson, math teacher, Falcon Creek Middle School; Dana Howell, Language Arts teacher, Thunder Ridge Middle School; Jennifer Kirkpatrick, English teacher, Overland High School; Jacquelynn Pleis, fifth grade teacher, Dakota Valley Elementary.

National Board Certified teachers have successfully demonstrated advanced teaching knowledge, skills and practices. Certification is achieved through a rigorous, performance-based assessment that typically takes one to three years to complete. Nationally, less than two percent of teachers have earned National Board Certification.

### **Cherry Creek Schools' students honored as Aurora Scholars**

To the cheers and applause of family and friends, 169 students from the Cherry Creek School District's Aurora schools were honored as "Aurora Scholars" during presentations on April 14 at Grandview High School and on April 20 at Hinkley High School.

The Cherry Creek Schools students, along with students from Aurora Public Schools, were recognized by officials from the City of Aurora and their schools and districts, for their academic achievements and for contributing to their school and community.

### **Cherry Creek School District gets highest mark for effective spending**

An independent study has ranked the Cherry Creek School District among the highest in Colorado for effective use of funds for academic achievement. The Center for American Progress compared spending by school districts nationwide to state math and reading test results for the 2007-2008 school year. The study included school districts with 250 students or more.

The Cherry Creek School District received a "Green" rating indicating the highest return on investment (ROI) of use of funding for student success. The return on investment measure rates the academic achievement of school districts for each dollar spent compared to other districts in the state.

Overall, the study found that school districts that target more dollars to the classroom and less on administration fared much better. Cherry Creek Schools spends more than 80% of its General Fund budget on direct and indirect instruction and less than 5% on central administration costs.

### **Exceptional Volunteers honored for exceptional service**

Dedicated. Generous. Selfless. Those are just a few of the words used to describe the 59 people honored as the Cherry Creek School District's 2011 Exceptional Volunteers.

They include parents and grandparents, businesspeople and retirees; people who have spent countless hours volunteering in classrooms, serving on committees, organizing events, and working behind the scenes in myriad ways to support Cherry Creek students and schools.

“These remarkable people exemplify the educational excellence of our district,” said Superintendent Mary Chesley. “We are surrounded by good and smart people who come together every day to raise 50,000 students to heights beyond our own.”

### **Cherry Creek High School Library Honored as Best in State**

In April 2011, the Kathleen D. Smith Library at Cherry Creek High School was honored as Colorado’s Outstanding School Library by the Colorado Association of School Libraries and the American Association of School Libraries (AASL). AASL President Nancy Everhart visited the library as part of her nationwide Vision Tour to showcase exemplary school libraries.

“Great school libraries help students be effective users of ideas and information,” said Everhart, who also emphasized that great libraries are the result of the joint efforts of staff members, school and district administrators, parents and the community.

The Smith Library has been recognized as a “High Performing Power Library” every year since 1998 by the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado State Library. It is also a two-time recipient of the National School Library Media Program of the Year Award.

### **SEAC receives “Power of Partnership” Award**

The Cherry Creek School District Special Education Advisory Committee, known as SEAC, has been honored for a decade of work on behalf of special needs students and families. SEAC received the “Power of Partnership” award from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee (CSEAC) during the Colorado SEAC Forum, held Nov. 9.

“It’s an honor to be recognized as a leader in supporting special needs students and Special Education programs,” said Laura Ayres, SEAC Parent Co-Chair. “This award shows that state leaders recognize that what we do benefits students, families, schools and educators.”

The district’s SEAC is made up of parents, educators and community members. They work to create and strengthen partnerships among parents, the district and community agencies by providing a forum that promotes education, advocacy, networking and collective problem solving. The group also provides input to the Board of Education and district administration on Special Education issues.

### **Cherry Creek School District earns energy awards**

The Cherry Creek School District is among 14 organizations and business to receive the 2011 Excel Expo Energy Efficiency Award. The district was recognized for *The Most Energy Savings Between Multiple Programs*, for conservation in lighting, water and indoor environmental systems.

In addition, ten of the district’s elementary schools, including several older schools, recently received Energy Star designation from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for their energy efficiency and conservation efforts. They join 19 other elementary schools that received Energy Star designation in 2009.