Change in school district leadership
Contributed by: Douglas County School District on 8/28/2009

This week, the Douglas County School District Board of Education accepted the resignation of Jim Christensen, who has been Superintendent of DCSD for six years.

In his resignation letter to staff, Dr. Christensen thanked them and their supporting community teams for their continued work in providing educational excellence. "The recently released academic indicators display the performance of our kids on CSAP, ACT, AP exams, early literacy and thinking. I beam with pride on what you continue to accomplish and your work has left me nothing short of emotional. You are leaders in academic performance in our state and leaders in purpose for our community."

Christensen will be joining an education organization that will focus on ensuring every child has a chance to learn and graduate from high school, even when facing or living in situations that point to the contrary. "I treasure the time I have spent in Douglas County School District and have had nothing but positive experiences here," said Superintendent Christensen. "But this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work very specifically in an area of education I am passionate about, and which I see as education's greatest challenge."

"Jim has led the District with vision during a time of tremendous growth and change. We wish him well on his next endeavor and are confident he will continue to be a force in public education," said Board President Kristine Turner. "While there is never a good time for a school district to lose a quality Superintendent, we feel confident the procedures we have in place will make this transition a smooth one."

The Board chose Steve Herzog, the District's Chief Operating Officer, to serve as interim Superintendent. Herzog offers 30 years in education with 15 of those in Douglas County schools. Turner added, "We are thrilled to have Steve work with us through this transition process and his strong experience in all facets of education within Douglas County schools will enable us to move forward quickly."
Christensen follows his heart

By Michele Sample
Published: 08.28.09

Jim Christensen's decision to resign as Douglas County School District's Superintendent came down to his 8-year-old daughter, Linda.

"The opportunity kind of fell in my lap, honestly," Christensen said.

After adopting Linda two years ago from Haiti, Christensen has spent a lot of his personal time engaged with mission work.

He was approached by a group in Texas who was investigating a start-up company to deal with the drop-off rate in education with a strong drive to close the achievement gap in underprivileged areas.

"I want to be part of this think-tank," Christensen said. "I don't know where we will land, but this is a chance I don't want to walk away from." Christensen's last official day will be Oct. 1.

At an emergency succession meeting of the school board Aug. 24, a motion was approved to designate Steve Herzog, chief operating officer, "as the sole finalist to be the interim superintendent until the board selects its superintendent."

Douglas County Board of Education President Kristen Turner said she believes there were several reasons Christensen decided to move on.

"I can't climb into his head, but I believe there were a combination of factors," Turner said. She mentioned political reasons may have effected a decision to leave, but that, she said, "played a lesser role I am sure." Four seats on the Douglas County School Board are up for election Nov. 3.

Christensen said election results, the budget cuts and changes in the school procedures did not impact his decision.

"I have been through tougher times," Christensen said. "I probably have three or five opportunities come my way every year, and if I was running from what I was facing here, I would have done it a couple years ago."

In Christensen's resignation letter to the staff, he thanked the staff and supporting community teams associated with the district.

"Simply stated, you are the best I have ever been around," Christensen said.

Herzog said he learned of the superintendent's news "fifteen minutes before the rest of the world."

Herzog offers 30 years in education with 15 of those in Douglas County schools.
In the meantime, Turner said the board of education will work with a consultant, as the search for a new superintendent begins.

"Whether or not we will hire Steve full-time, we have to go through candidates and will conduct a full-blown search," Turner said. "It basically will be the job of a new school board."

Christensen said that Herzog has participated in activities at the superintendent level for a long time, and with a strong succession plan and good policies already in place, the transition should be successful.

"There are some community collaborative issues we need Steve to get in the middle of," Christensen said. "But we are getting it all organized."
A group of Colorado children will be among the first in the world to test a swine-flu vaccine as part of a global effort to mass produce an immunization by mid-October.

A Denver physician is beginning a clinical trial this week for Novartis, one of several drug manufacturers racing to make a vaccine for the H1N1 virus.

The world's leading producers of the seasonal flu vaccine — changed yearly to target the most threatening strains — are using the same technology to create an H1N1 immunization. The seasonal flu vaccine, in the making since late winter, will not protect against swine flu.

About 100 Colorado children ages 3 to 8 are expected to participate in a clinical trial led by Denver immunologist Dr. Isaac Melamed of IMMUNOe 1st International Research Centers in Thornton.

Melamed said he thinks he will find enough children for the study within a few days, given that many parents are eager to have their children protected from the virus. Because the vaccine was developed in the same way as the seasonal flu shot, medical experts foresee no problems.

The research center canceled other projects for the next month to focus on H1N1.

The Denver study is part of a larger clinical trial at about 30 sites in the United States and Mexico. A handful of other drug companies under contract with the federal government also have set up trials, using the "seed virus" from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

The federal government has ordered 195 million doses, about 45 million of which are expected to be ready in October. It could take until late November before a significant number of people are protected against the virus, though.

That is because people will need two shots about three weeks apart. It will take up to two weeks after the second shot for immunity to take effect, health officials said.

"Everybody's expectation is the vaccine will be safe," said Dr. Matthew F. Daley, a professor at the University of Colorado Denver and pediatrician at Children's Hospital.

Vaccine technology is much safer today than it was in 1976, when a government immunization program against swine flu was linked to neurological side effects, he said.

"The technology is much more refined — only what needs to be in the vaccine is in the vaccine," Daley said. "It's a little like comparing the safety of cars in 2009, with air bags and everything, to the safety of cars in the '70s."

Swine-flu cases in Colorado have resulted in 62 hospitalizations and one death, according to the state health department. The virus was first confirmed in the state in April.

Public-health departments across the state are making plans to distribute the vaccine at schools and health fairs to those who the CDC determines are most susceptible to the virus, mainly pregnant women and people...
DENVER AND THE WEST

Colorado students tune in to president

As the dust settles, those who listened say Obama made a good case for working hard in school.

By Jeremy P. Meyer
The Denver Post

POSTED: 09/09/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT
UPDATED: 09/09/2009 02:45:47 AM MDT

In a sweltering classroom on the third floor of Park Hill's Smiley Middle School, about 40 students in an American history class on Tuesday watched the TV intently as President Barack Obama told them to take their education seriously.

The controversial speech that was not controversial played on cable television and on the Internet throughout the nation's classrooms after days of partisan bickering about the event.

Obama spoke from a Virginia high school, telling the nation's students to take responsibility for their education and stick with it, even through tough circumstances.

The lead-up to the speech ignited a partisan debate, with some families threatening to pull their children from school rather than let them listen to the speech, which they feared would be politically manipulative. That suspicion was partly fueled by the administration's lesson plans that encouraged students to "help the president." The White House later revised the lesson plans.

Colorado school districts mostly left the decision to show the speech up to principals or teachers — and many schools chose not to air it over the broadcast because it would interrupt their class schedules.

Some said they would record the event for possible viewing later.

Schools that showed the speech gave students another educational option if they didn't want to see it.

"A teachable moment," said Smiley history teacher George Bandy after Obama's talk. "It's awesome that kids get a chance to hear from the country's leader about education."

Obama's focus on education rang true to Bandy's class of mostly African-American students — many of whom said afterward they were going to heed the president's advice.

"It made me want to focus more," said Pauteurree Smith, 13. "We need to stop playing around, and we need to learn. Education is important."

Smith said his parents have offered the same type of message but felt it was more meaningful coming from the leader of the free world.

"I thought it was cool he was speaking to the students," said Rochè Marion, 13.

"He made a very good point: that it is our education and we need to stand up and fight for it. I need to work hard because sometimes I get distracted."

Students at Park Hill's Smiley Middle School listen to President Barack Obama's back-to-school address Tuesday morning. While many classrooms tuned in, some teachers opted not to view the much-debated speech, saying it interfered with lesson plans.

(St. Sangosti, The Denver Post)

EXTRAS

Watch video of students at Smiley Middle School in Denver as they read to President Obama's speech
View a slide show of Obama giving his speech
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Share your opinion at MileHighMamas.com

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Company wellness programs improve health, cut costs

updated 9:14 a.m. EDT, Tue September 1, 2009

By Alison Harding
CNN

CHANTILLY, Virginia (CNN) -- Employee wellness programs just may be the cure for companies struggling to keep up with rapidly rising health care costs.

And proponents say that in addition to saving companies money, the programs are an effective way to help employees live healthier lives.

Jeff and Linda Pond of Virginia even suggest that Linda's company wellness program may have saved Jeff's life.

Two years ago, Pond received a letter informing him that his annual blood test results indicated he might have prostate cancer. The letter advised him to consult his physician.

Pond is now six weeks out of surgery to treat early stage prostate cancer and says things are "back to normal," thanks to Linda's employee wellness program at Quest Diagnostics, which provided the free blood tests that initially detected signs of cancer.

"My cancer would have gone undetected for years, and likely wouldn't have been nearly as treatable as it is," Pond said, adding that early detection saved him from having to go through more intensive -- and expensive -- treatments down the road.

It is this concept of preventative care that spurred the CEO of Quest Diagnostics -- where Linda works as a registered nurse -- to implement the company's wellness program four years ago, said Steve Burton, vice president of health and wellness services at Quest Diagnostics.

The company's voluntary program, Healthy Quest, provides employees, their spouses and domestic partners with a personalized health report -- called Blueprint for Wellness -- based on laboratory testing. The program also provides educational materials, weight-loss support groups, fitness classes, a smoking cessation program and personal counseling sessions. Employees who participate in the free program are given $10 bi-weekly as an incentive, Burton said.

So what's in it for the company?

Healthy Quest is designed to focus on health issues that "drive a lot of costs, and drive a lot of lost productivity," like obesity, smoking and stress, Burton said. Since Healthy Quest was established, the company has benefited from lower health care costs, fewer sick days and more satisfied employees, he said.

"Through an independent researcher, we determined that for every dollar that we invest behind Healthy Quest, there's a savings of about $4.80," Burton said.

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Obama’s speech a health care ‘game changer’?
**DCSD officials rewrite rules for Pres. Obama**

Contributed by: Michael Robinson on 9/3/2009

In a virtually unprecedented action, Douglas County School District (DCSD) Officials altered and rewrote a key document to greatly expand the number of impressionable children exposed to the direct influence of President Obama on September 8, 2009.

On the morning of September 2nd, in reaction to a huge volume of phone calls to the School District, Officials posted a notice concerning the September 8, 2009 Obama speech to students. As an attachment to the notice, the Officials included a .pdf form entitled "Presidential Address Permission Form." You can view the .pdf of the release form here. The form posted was taken from Douglas County School Board approved form IJA-E, the Guest Speaker Permission Form. You can see it here.

It provides for an alternative activity if a parent doesn't want their child to hear a guest speaker or if a signed permission form is not returned to the school, i.e. an "Opt In" form. Because of this, a parent doesn't have to do anything to stop their child from seeing the Obama Address.

Later on the very same day, DCSD Officials made the unusual decision to alter the posted, approved form and change the form language so that a parent must now print out the form, sign it and return it to the child's school, or their child will be required to be influenced by the Obama Address. This altered form is called the "Presidential Address Permission Form - Opt Out." You can see the altered form here.

A thorough search of the DCSD school records as shown on the District's web site shows that there is no "Opt Out" form adopted or approved by the Douglas County School District. Ms. Susan Meek, the Acting Director of Communication for the District declined to comment on this abrupt change of the parental consent form or to return phone calls and emails. A review of the metadata on the Opt Out form's .pdf shows that the form was written by Ms. Stacey Neith, a Communications Specialist in Ms. Meek's office.

If any parent is offended or would like to comment on this unusual extra-legal action by school officials, Ms. Meek may be contacted at 303-387-0030 or 720-971-9830.
DougCo Students Can 'Opt Out' Of Obama Address

DENVER (CBS4) — President Obama's upcoming speech to school students about education will encourage children to work hard and stay in school. It's the first direct speech by a president to students in school, but some parents aren't happy. Now the Douglas County School District is offering families the chance to "opt out" of the speech next Tuesday.

The speech would be shown directly to students in the schools over the Internet. The speech has become a hot topic across the country. Many don't think the president should be allowed to speak directly to the children, bypassing their parents.

"Being live, what is going to be addressed? These are young impressionable minds all the way from kindergarten to 12 years old," parent Mike Ballou said. "Do we really need a political figure giving a speech directly to our children in a school setting?"

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan wrote school principals across the nation that the president will challenge students to work hard, set education goals and take responsibility for learning.

"I think it's kind of the president's job since he's trying to help us all out," student Matt Major said. "I wouldn't mind watching it."

School districts are getting many complaint calls from parents.

"Each school and teacher will take a look to see if and how that presidential address might fit within their instructional day," Susan Meek with Douglas County Schools said.

The Douglas County Schools Web site calls the speech an historical event that offers parents the opportunity for their student to "opt out."

"If it's going to be a speech for prime time in our homes to all of us, with parents -- do I need to go to my child's school and embarrass her in front of her (friends) and watch it with her? I'd rather watch it in the comfort of my own home to be quite honest with you," Ballou said.

Many other parents have expressed support.

Other parents in different parts of the country have gone so far as to call for a sick out the day of the address.

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Lack Of Obama Speech Irks Parents

School District: ‘More Time Was Needed’

Lane Lyon, 7NEWS Reporter

POSTED: 2:30 am MDT September 9, 2009
UPDATED: 6:35 am MDT September 9, 2009

CASTLE ROCK, Colo. -- Thirty minutes before President Barack Obama addressed school kids across the country, Rusty Winkler was surprised to learn his 4th-grade son would not be seeing the speech.

“We didn’t have time to make any other arrangements,” Winkler said.

Winkler shared an e-mail with 7NEWS that said, “Dear Parents, I wanted to let you know the fourth-grade will not be watching Obama’s speech today. We will be having a normal school day with our regular learning schedule.” The letter was signed, “Joanna Polzin, Castle Rock Elementary.”

“I sent back a response of one word, ‘Why?’ I still haven’t gotten answer back,” he said.

A spokeswoman for the Douglas County School District said it was unclear why e-mail was sent so late, but explained schools were dealing with a short “turn around time” about how students would be able to see the speech.

Susan Meek said fifth- and sixth-graders at the school were able to view the speech. “And other grades decided more time was needed to work it into their instructional day,” Meek said, and explained individual schools were charged with making decisions about the speech.

Winkler and his wife Kristen said the decision at Castle Rock Elementary was confusing considering a post on the school’s Web site that indicated the speech would be available to students. The post had been taken down Tuesday evening. Winkler e-mailed the statement she said was posted earlier.

The letter was signed, “Joanna Polzin, Castle Rock Elementary.”

“I sent back a response of one word, ‘Why?’ I still haven’t gotten answer back,” he said.

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Susan Meek said fifth- and sixth-graders at the school were able to view the speech.

“The speech was recorded for viewing on a future date,” Meek said.

She explained a bandwidth limitation in the district allowed the speech to be seen by only 50 computers. There are more than 70 schools in the district.

“(The speech) has been recorded for viewing on a future date,” Meek said.

“CRE is viewing this as an historical event and will make it available to classrooms and students as such. Other options will be available to students at that time should you decide to have your child opt-out,” the statement read.

Meek said since principals first learned of the speech last week, logistics about showing the president’s remarks live became challenging.

She explained a bandwidth limitation in the district allowed the speech to be seen by only 50 computers. There are more than 70 schools in the district.

“(The speech) has been recorded for viewing on a future date,” Meek said.

“It’s unfortunate more information was not provided in the e-mail,” she added.

Winkler said he supported his fourth-grade son participating in the presidential event.
“I wanted him to watch it but I wanted to be the one who decided if he watched it or didn’t.”

He added his fifth grade son also did not see the speech, despite what 7NEWS was told by the district.

“We will opt out,” said David Barr, another Castle Rock Elementary parent, who said he was glad his son was off track today.

Barr has signed another notice precluding his middle school-aged daughter from seeing the president’s message.

“That’s my job and everyone’s job as a parent, to ride their children to do the best they can,” Barr said.

But 7NEWS heard from several outraged parents with children at other Douglas County schools about not having the option to see the speech along with other students across the country.

“I am begging you to please put the word out there of the parents who find it ridiculous that this speech was not automatically shown in the schools without question,” said a parent who asked not to be identified.

Tony, another parent, wrote, “I think this really was a simple matter, although unfortunately it was quickly blown out of proportion by the parents and I believe, forced the schools to take quick decisive action that may not have been in the best interest for our kids.”

Winkler said he wants a better explanation, and worries the issue became political.

“If this wasn’t shown because of a teacher’s political view, that’s not appropriate,” he said.

Meeks denied the allegation any personal views played a role in the individual school’s decisions.

“Our teachers do a wonderful job of creating a culture of thinking. I’m not concerned about it being political on the side of teachers,” she said.

Betty Faille I think it’s encouraging to our children to have the President of the United States speak directly to them and I am proud that he chose to do this. I hope all of the children are inspired to work harder to reach their goals.

Today, 07:27:24

Todd Calm down, Rusty. I’m sure your kid can watch the video as many times as he’d like. Now, now.

Today, 08:44:08

Guest you are an idiot!

Today, 09:18:34

Rufuss Todd, I think you missed the point. Sure we can view it anytime, but this was a message, real time, just for them, and because of someone’s ignorance, they missed out. It could have been a defining moment for them and it is NOT the same to see it after the fact.

I am just shocked that any school would NOT want their kids to see and hear the president (no matter who it is) delivering a message to THEM. This should never have been a political thing, and shame on the ignorant parents and school officials that created such a fuss. It’s not like this was a separation of church and state thing – it IS “state”. And then to have an elementary school decide that it was not important enough to have the kids see it, well I guess I would be making arrangements to have my kids go to a school that I could trust to have the best interest of my child’s education in mind over their own political views!

I can only hope that the children will be able to see what a huge bit of ridiculousness this has turned into.

Today, 09:26:26
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Local Students Listen To Obama's Speech

Some Students Decide To Opt Out

Jaclyn Allen, 7NEWS Reporter

POSTED: 4:49 pm MDT September 8, 2009
UPDATED: 5:50 pm MDT September 8, 2009

OBAMA SPEECH TO STUDENTS

Video: Local Students Listen To Obama’s Speech
Video: Students Talk About Obama’s Address
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DENVER -- In a pep talk that kept clear of politics, President Barack Obama on Tuesday challenged the nation's students to take pride in their education -- and stick with it even if they don't like every class or must overcome tough circumstances at home.

"Every single one of you has something that you're good at. Every single one of you has something to offer," Obama told students at Wakefield High School in suburban Arlington, Va., and children watching his speech on television in schools across the country. "And you have a responsibility to yourself to discover what that is."

Presidents often visit schools, and Obama was not the first one to offer a back-to-school address aimed at millions of students in every grade.

Yet this one was doused with controversy from the beginning, as several conservative organizations and many concerned parents warned Obama was trying to sell his political agenda. That concern was caused in part by an accompanying administration lesson plan encouraging students to "help the president," which the White House later revised and Education Secretary Arne Duncan acknowledged Tuesday was wrongheaded.

School districts in some areas decided not to provide their students access to his midday speech.

Other districts gave students a chance to opt out.

In the Cherry Creek school district, approximately 600 student opted out of the speech, and absences were "somewhat higher," said a district spokeswoman, who didn't know if it was because parents kept their kids at home for the speech or for a long holiday weekend.

At Lakewood High School, the principal has received numerous phone calls and e-mails since stating every classroom would watch the speech, some with racist overtones.

"Words that I never thought that I would be hearing over allowing the President of the United States to speak to our children," said Ron Castagna, principal at Lakewood High School. "I was flabbergasted at some of the phone calls."

In Virginia, upon arrival at the school, Obama's motorcade was greeted by a small band of protesters. One carried a sign exclaiming: "Mr. President, stay away from our kids."

Obama didn't mention the uproar.

He preceded his broad-scale talk by meeting with about 40 Wakefield students in a school library, where at one point he advised them to "be careful what you post on Facebook. Whatever you do, it will be pulled up again later somewhere in your life."

"When I was your age," Obama said, "I was a little bit of a goof-off. My main goal was to get on the varsity basketball team and have fun."

One young person asked why the country doesn't have universal health insurance. "I think we need it. I think we can do it," Obama replied. The president said the country can afford to insure all Americans and that doing so will save money in the long run.

He also told the group that not having a father at home "forced me to grow up faster."

Asked to name one person -- dead or alive -- he would choose to dine with, Obama said inspirational leader Mohandas K. Gandhi.

"He's somebody I find a lot of inspiration in. He inspired Dr. (Martin Luther) King with his message of nonviolence," Obama said. "He ended up doing so much and changed the world just by the power of his ethics."

The White House released the text of his speech a day early so school officials and parents could evaluate it before it was delivered. Obama gave it virtually unchanged, and it was carried live on C-SPAN and the White House Web site.

"There is no excuse for not trying" he said. "The truth is, being successful is hard. You won't love every subject that you study. You won't click with every teacher that you have."

The school he chose as the setting for his talk -- Wakefield -- is the most economically and racially diverse school in Arlington County, according to the Department of Education. Nearly 40 percent of graduating seniors pass an Advanced Placement test. That's more than twice the national average.
At Lakewood High School, students were allowed to opt out of the speech, and several hundred decided not to listen.

But the majority of students heard what the President had to say and many thought it was inspiring.

"Definitely when he talked about people who've had success have failed the most," said Danielle Worthman, a Lakewood Senior. "That you can take a failure and learn from it is the most important thing. I have experienced that a lot."
Man stabbed during home invasion

By Chris Michlewicz
Published: 09.03.09

Police have arrested all four suspects in a brazen home invasion that sent a Castle Rock man to the hospital.

The suspects — Joshua Hogle, 21, and three male juveniles ages 14, 15 and 16 — escaped capture for about a day before Castle Rock police caught up with them. Now they face a long list of felony charges, including first-degree assault and first-degree burglary, as suspects in the injuring of a homeowner who confronted them during the break-in.

The homeowner, identified as David Parrish, 55, was taking a nap in his home on Ash Avenue, east of the intersection at Gilbert Street and Oman Road, around 7:35 p.m. Aug. 31 when he heard people inside his house. Looking for the perfect target, the men had passed on a few homes they knew were occupied before settling on Parrish’s house, which they believed was unoccupied, said Tony Lane, Castle Rock police chief.

“He got up to see what was going on when he found the suspects, then one of them plunged a knife into his abdomen,” Lane said.

The suspects fled without taking any valuables and Parrish was rushed to Sky Ridge Medical Center, where he remains in stable condition. His injuries are very serious, but not life-threatening.

Hogle and the three boys — one of whom attends a local middle school — were allegedly looking for items to steal and sell so they could post bail for a friend who had been arrested just days earlier, Lane said.

Police are still investigating, but believe one of the young teens is responsible for the stabbing. The first-degree burglary charge, which is the result of entering an occupied home with a deadly weapon, is so serious in nature that it’s “like attempted murder,” the police chief said.

Hogle, a registered sex offender who has been living in a tent in the Castle Rock area, faces an extended prison stay for violating his probation. He remains in custody on $200,000 bond.

The suspects were identified in a photo lineup by witnesses and have had prior contact with the Castle Rock Police Department.
New development builds ripped muscles legally

Computer slowing down? What to do about it

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President Barack Obama's plan to address the nation's students during the school day Tuesday has polarized parents over whether it's OK for their kids to listen to the speech.

On one side are parents who say the webcast speech to K-12 students is "political recruiting" and "spreading the liberal agenda."

On the other are those who say listening to presidential speeches is an important part of American culture and the education process.

The White House officially announced the speech Wednesday morning, and the U.S. Department of Education followed up with a letter to school principals and a lesson plan for discussing the talk. The White House said the speech will address the importance of studying and staying in school.

Most metro-area districts passed information about the speech on to their schools Wednesday afternoon, asking principals to send the information home with students that same day.

But word of the address leaked out early and spread rapidly online and on talk radio, and some parents reacted strongly to the perceived motive for the speech.

School districts in the metro area immediately began fielding phone calls and e-mails from parents.

Many wanted more information about Obama's agenda, but others reacted angrily and threatened to pull their children out of school that day.

"We've received about 50 phone calls today, the vast majority of them opposed to the speech," said Susan Meek, spokeswoman for Douglas County Schools. "Some parents are worried they won't be able to be there, or won't have been able to view the speech ahead of time."

"Liberical agenda"

Highlands Ranch parent Shanneen Barron, in an e-mail to The Denver Post, wondered why Obama's speech is OK for the classroom when the Bible is not.

"I believe in the Bible and I believe it has educational value," she wrote, "but teachers aren't allowed to teach on that. So why this? We won't be sending our kids to school on Tuesday."

One Jefferson County parent complained of Obama's "political recruiting," while a Douglas County parent said that "spreading (Obama's) liberal agenda in publicly funded schools is reprehensible."
DENVER -- Some Colorado parents are outraged about President Barack Obama's planned nationwide address to school children, saying he's trying to indoctrinate students with his agenda.

Obama plans to address students across the nation on Tuesday with a message about staying in school, working hard and achieving educational goals.

Shanneen Barron, a Highlands Ranch mother, said she normally isn't involved in political activism, even though a sign in her front yard reads "Vote Republican."

But she said she is worried that Obama will put forth a socialist agenda and try to indoctrinate her children.

"Thinking about my kids in school having to listen to that just really upsets me," she said.

"I'm an American. They are Americans, and I don't feel that's OK. I feel very scared to be in this country with our leadership right now."

She and her husband will keep their kids at home Tuesday when Obama makes his nationwide address to students.

They're not alone.

Districts across the metro area are getting calls from concerned parents.

Douglas County Schools even posted an online policy: it will treat the address as a guest speaker and allow parents to opt out their children.

A White House spokesman released this statement: "The President will speak directly to students around the country about the value of education and the importance of staying in school as part of his effort to dramatically cut the dropout rate. It's not a policy speech."

Supporters are concerned about what they call the increased politicization of issues by extremists.

"It's just kind of ridiculous to think that people are worried that a visit from the president is going to turn their children into socialists overnight or be the kick start to a socialist program," said Ryan Kelling, a Denver resident. "There's not much debate about real issues, and this just continues the trend of politicizing everything."

As conservatives rally around the issue, it's important to note this isn't the first time a president has spoken directly to school children.

President George H.W. Bush gave a live address from a Washington classroom in 1991 to stress the importance of achievement in education.
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By posting your comments you agree to accept our Terms of Use. To report an offensive or otherwise inappropriate comment, click the "Flag" link that appears beneath that comment. Flagging a comment will send it to our editorial staff for review.

Ray Mueller "Shanneen Barron, a Highlands Ranch mother, isn’t involved in politics", excuse me? What is her basis for not wanting her kids to hear the President? If she wasn't old to act in this way and say these things be an organization trying to discredit the President, then she must have some other reason. Shame on you "Channel" for not fleshing out the real story here.

09/02/2009, 21:24:18 Flag Reply via Comments

Craig Smith HUH? that didn't make any sense?

09/03/2009, 06:49:06 Flag Reply via Comments

Mary Dechant-Fox I'd like to know what she is telling her kids when they ask her why they are not going to school? What is wrong with a little encouragement from the PRESIDENT of the US? I really think this is a one-party issue.

09/03/2009, 04:19:11 Flag Reply via Comments

KTC We certainly don't want our kids to hear the message to "work hard & stay in school", what an awful liberal message! This country will go nowhere as long as so many people spread fear and insist on sitting on the far right or the far left. Give me a break, you really think your child will be brainwashed by listening to an hour speech? Are your kids that weak?

09/03/2009, 04:42:52 Flag Reply via Comments

Misti Hunt It seems that after the past 8 years....people would learn their lesson. We finally have a President who is for the people!! Anyone who does not agree has no common sense. Just because he is a Democratic President. Shanneen Barron and all of those like her should really get past their conservative views and try to see what is best for their country. You do not see the Shanneen Barrons of this country doing anything but spouting hate. They are not rolling up their sleeves and working to make this country better. I feel shame for all of you that sit and complain instead of helping this country. WE ARE ALL AMERICANS.....

09/03/2009, 10:32:48 Flag Reply via Comments

Sarah White We finally have a President who is for the people!! Anyone who does not agree has no common sense.

Or is a tax payer.

09/03/2009, 11:31:53 Flag Reply via Comments

Steve Pavey Sorry, my far right little moron, but yes, you do lack common sense. The focus of the speech is to stress the importance of "staying in school, studying hard, getting a good education so that you can achieve your goals". WHAT, pray tell, is BAD about that? YOU haven't even heard what he is going to say and you've already made up your mind that it's pushing some sort of evil agenda, because he's OBAMA. That is stupid, just to tell it like it is.

And our little housewife from Highland Ranch? Stupid AND a liar! A liar because if she REALLY wasn't involved in politics, she would have no opinion about Obama. The only people who have opinions about Obama strong enough to keep their kids home from school are by definition POLITICAL. You can't say you aren't political and then say you are scared for the country with our current leadership! THAT, my little morons, is a POLITICAL statement! And we've already established that freaking out over a speech that is basically going to mirror Bush Sr.'s call to, you guessed it, study hard and stay in school so you can get a good education and accomplish your goals is........well, STUPID!

09/03/2009, 17:50:01 Flag Reply via Comments

Elf Or she is another dumb suburban house wife who has no real knowledge of politics.

09/03/2009, 13:47:03 Flag Reply via Comments

skii2xs Elf... you've proven that sufficiently

09/03/2009, 13:47:03 Flag Reply via Comments
Okay, Melanie Gladden and those against this speech. So if a teacher, mother, father, grandparent encourages a child to stay in school and work hard to reach their goals, this is called brainwashing, is that right? Or is it considered brainwashing when ANY president addresses our children with this message. Hmmm. The fact is that you're Anti-Obama and it does not matter that he has a good message or is trying to do a good deed: you are against him no matter what he does!!! Maybe it's because of whom he is, a black man telling our kids what to do and that makes some of you disgusted and sick!! You need to look past the color of his skin and seriously work to try to make our country better than engaging in petty issues.

Ray Mueller Good for you Heather, be careful or you will expose your children to opinions and believes other than your own. Please educate us as to your reasons. Channel7 appears to think people's reason for keeping their kids home are so obvious, they forgot to include them in the story.

Elizabeth Carnegie ... Wow, Heather. Would you please tell us what you know the President of the United States is going to say that deserves your extreme fear and loathing of him? According to the White House website, the president is going to “... talk directly to students across the country on the importance of taking responsibility for their education, challenging them to set goals and do everything they can to succeed.” THAT offends you?

You are teaching your children VERY ugly lessons - not the least of which is to condemn someone's speech before they even speak!! Yikes, Heather. You scare me.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/mediarources/

Bill Witten I thought Heather's comment reflected concern as a parent, not "fear and loathing". Just for kicks and grins, how do YOU know what the President is going to say? The hate and vitriol in your comments leave no doubt that you are a left-thread wing nut. Ugly is the deception that the two major parties are trying to pull off in this country. Vote for freedom. Vote Libertarian.

http://www.lp.org

Liger Lady Can you say WACK JOB? This woman is an ignoramous and her husband looks like he isn't playing with a full deck either. She probably knows nothing about politics except maybe that her parents raised her as a Republican. I don't have anything against any party - just against STUPIDITY!

Why do the news reporters ALWAYS find the wackiest people to talk to and put on camera? If this is how the Republican Party wants to be represented.....then there is something seriously wrong here. Go Obama! LOL

steve pavey Hey, Craig. The purpose of a government is....to govern. What exactly does that mean to you? To me, that means to provide for the common good. Oh and before you say that sounds like Communism, that comes directly from our nation's founding fathers. The White House website already revealed what the speech is about - the value of staying in school, studying hard and setting goals and,gasp!, taking RESPONSIBILITY for yourself and your education. Craig! WHAT problem do you have with THAT?? I find it amusing that when Obama says something, it's radical. When Reagan said some of the same damn things, it was brilliant. I don't agree with Obama on everything. I didn't agree with Reagan on many things. But I agree with both of them about some things!

http://www.whitehouse.gov/mediarources/
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President stream-lines message to students

By Michele Sample
Published: 09.03.09

U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, announced recently throughout the country that there will be a presidential address to students at 10 a.m., Sept. 8, Mountain Standard Time.

The invitation encouraged schools, teachers and students to watch the presidential address through this live streaming event.

The purpose of this address, as outlined by Secretary Duncan, is to challenge students to work hard, set educational goals, and take responsibility for their learning. What sets this presidential speech apart from previous events, according to the Douglas County School District Web site, is that the president is speaking directly to school-age students.

The Douglas County School District considers this address as similar to having a guest speaker in a student’s school.

The district encourages schools to handle this speech as they would any other historical event.

The Web site states if a student’s school decides to have an all-school activity related to the presidential address, the parents and students will receive advance notice. Schools will provide an alternative option for families who object to participating in the viewing.

For more information go to www.dcsdk12.org
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SAT Scores Fall as Gap Widens; Asians Gain
By JOHN HECHINGER

High-school students’ performance last year on the SAT college-entrance exam fell slightly, and the score gap generally widened between lower-performing minority groups and white and Asian-American students, raising questions about the effectiveness of national education reform efforts.

Average scores for the class of 2009 in critical reading dropped to 501 from 502, in writing to 493 from 494 and held steady in math, at 515. The combined scores are the lowest this decade and reflect stalled performance over the past three years. The reading scores are the worst since 1994.

Many observers Tuesday viewed the flat results of recent years as discouraging in light of a more than 25-year effort to improve U.S. education. "This is a nearly unrelenting tale of woe and disappointment," said Chester E. Finn Jr., president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, a Washington, D.C., think tank. "If there's any good news here, I can't find it."

Mr. Finn, a former education official in the Reagan administration, said he expected the results of the SAT and ACT -- another college entrance exam -- to add fuel to a movement among the nation's governors and school superintendents to come up with consistent national standards for high-school curricula.

The SAT scores -- which range from 200 to 800 -- are closely watched because the standardized test measures the achievement of America's top high-school students. It is the most widely administered college-entrance exam.

The fresh data are sure to figure into the debate over President Barack Obama’s education agenda and potential changes to the federal No Child Left Behind law, which is up for renewal in Congress.

In the class of 2009, African-American students received an average critical reading score of 429, or 72 points below the general population. Math scores had a similar gap. Hispanic students’ scores also lagged but not by as much.

Asian-American students showed the most dramatic gains. In math they scored an average of 587 -- 72 points better than the general population. Since 2008, their average math score has climbed six points.

The results come a week after the disclosure that only a quarter of 2009 high-school graduates who took the ACT, the other main college entrance exam, had the skills to succeed in college.

Gaston Caperton, president of the College Board, the New York-based nonprofit that oversees the SAT, stressed what he considered the good news in Tuesday’s data: the growing and diverse number of students taking the exam.

In a record 1.53 million students took the exam in 2009. About 40% were minority students, up from 29% in 1999. Education analysts said scores would be expected to drop as more students take the test, so College Board officials interpreted the stability in scores as encouraging.

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Noting the gap in achievement between lower-performing minority students and the general
population, College Board officials said those who lagged tended to go to school in poorer
districts with fewer resources. “As a country, we must do better providing students of every
background access to the best education,” Mr. Caperton said.

College Board officials said that Asian-American students appeared to do better at all income
levels. Officials said that was because they tend to take more Advanced Placement and other
rigorous courses, and their families place a strong value on success in education.

Though no timetable has been set, Congress is expected to revisit President George W. Bush’s
No Child Left Behind law, which took effect in 2002 and mandates that all students be proficient
on state tests in reading and math by 2014. It requires that all schools show steady progress
toward meeting that goal or face sanctions. The law is aimed especially at boosting the
achievement of minorities.

Mr. Obama has made college-readiness a major focus of his own education agenda, and the
recent college-entrance results show the challenge of that task.

Critics of No Child Left Behind, including parents and teachers’ unions, have noted that
much-touted gains on state tests often aren’t mirrored on national exams, such as the SAT. U.S.
schoolchildren also lag top-performing Asian countries on an international assessment of math
achievement.

“You can’t look at these results and say that NCLB has been an enormous success,” says Jack
Jennings, president of the Center on Education Policy, a nonpartisan research organization in
Washington. “The bottom line is the country is changing dramatically. Unless minority kids are
educated better, we are going to be in trouble because pretty soon they are going to be the
majority.”

Russ Whitehurst, a former top education official in Mr. Bush’s administration, noted that NCLB
focuses more on early grades and wasn’t designed to have a huge impact on high school. The
SAT scores echo other national tests that have found improvement in early grades that don’t
translate into high school, he said.

Mr. Whitehurst, a senior fellow and director of the Brown Center on Education Policy at the
Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank, says the U.S. has done “a decent job” educating
the fast-growing population of Hispanic families. But he says the SAT results show a need to
improve writing and reading instruction.

Write to John Hechinger at john.hechinger@wsj.com

Printed in The Wall Street Journal, page A1

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School board candidates speak out

By Michele Sample  
Published: 09.03.09

With the recent resignation of superintendent Jim Christensen, the next school board has a great deal to decide about the future of Douglas County Schools.

In November's election, four of the district's seven school board seats are up for grabs and candidates are starting to introduce themselves to the community. Ryan Stuart, District A, Clifton Stahl, District C and Justin Williams, District F are not up for re-election until November 2011.

On Aug. 31, seven candidates running for those seats sat in front of a large audience in the Chaparral High School auditorium.

The candidates were asked questions regarding their background and association with the school district, why they want to run for the school board, and a little bit about the 2008-2009 budget cuts. The questions were asked by two seniors from Ponderosa High School, and then questioning was opened up to the public.

Douglas Benevento-District E

"I am an attorney in private practice, children in school next year, and after speaking with many parents, students taxpayers and administration, I believe there is a lot of frustration with the school board."

John Carson-District B

"I am a current member of the school board for the last four years. An attorney in Denver working with affordable housing issues, and I believe we have a lot to be proud of. I want a better pay system for teachers."

Sue Catterall-District B

"I have worked with a fortune 500 company in marketing, research and when my kids were born, I wanted to focus on their upbringing and education. I have volunteered in their classrooms, held leadership positions, been a member of the school advisory council and led volunteers in the campaign for 3A and 3B. I have two passions, architecture and design and education."

Emily Hansen-District G

"I am a local girl, member of Leadership Douglas County and have served on the board for the last four years. I have also served in local student advisory councils."

Kevin Leung-District D

"My name is pronounced "lung," it is a vital organ. Important for you and important for the school district. Remember, I am the only candidate who came out tonight from District D. I taught at Regis University, and have a MBA in computer science. I will try to make sure information technology is a priority."

Meghann Silverthorn-District G

"I work for Lockheed in the defense contract agency and have attended many schools, overseas as well. I have a masters in public administration, and as a taxpayer, with no children, I believe we deserve to know..."
Kristine Turner-District G

"I have been on the school board for six years, as vice president and now president. This is my passion. I have four children, work on legislation at the capitol, and I believe education is the ticket to their future."

Douglas Benevento-District E

"Our kids aren't going to be competing with kids from just Jefferson County, but from China, Brazil and Europe. We need to prepare them to be the best they can be, with arts, science, history and mathematics. We need a school board that is operating efficiently and transparently."

John Carson-District B

"What motivates me to run are my three children, and the future country they are going to grow up in. Also, the teachers are the most important, study after study shows the quality in the classroom, you remember."

Sue Catterall-District B

"My interest in running is one of passion. I have spent the last eight to 10 months reading everything there is to read on public education, problem solving, oral and written education and world awareness. I have the desire to serve, and hope that you look at the candidates carefully, and find the one that best suits your needs and your families."

Emily Hansen-District G

"Four years ago, my reasons were more naive, and they are different now. I have learned so much and have so much to bring to the table. I want to continue to hear you and try to make good decisions. I want to serve you, whether you are a taxpayer with children or without."

Kevin Leung-District D

"My wife asks me the exact same questions very day. I have three daughters and I look in their eyes and ask how I can better my children. I run a successful business, and my experience can help the school district."

Meghann Silverthorn-District G

"I am running because of each and everyone of you. Talk about transparency and accountability, everybody here deserves that. The Web site is a little uncomprehensive, and overwhelming, and I would like to help improve that."

Kristine Turner-District E

"We need to have experience on this board. I don't want to leave a lot of work undone. The superintendent will be elected by this school board, and we have got to do a better job communicating with the public, as a team, on how to spend dollars."

Douglas Benevento-District E

"The 37 million includes transportation, and parents are wildly unhappy about it. We have got to get parents and more people involved."

John Carson-District B

"The budget is very tight, we have to be innovative, do more with less. We surveyed 7,000 people and they overwhelmingly put teachers at the top of the list to keep."

Sue Catterall-District B

"I have sat on many district accountability committee meetings and the consistent message came through from teachers, administration, 'don't touch the classrooms'. It all came down to 292 people that lost their jobs. The district overall may be more efficient, but we are going forward, and need innovation."

Emily Hansen-District G

"Out of the 30 million cut felt this year, 2.4 million was the buses, and not the biggest portion of the cuts. There has been change of staffing, class size, special education procedures and open campus. We have the experience, and understand. I have spent a lot of time learning, and will make the best decisions I can for all of Douglas County."

Kevin Leung-District D

"The one burden, the most, are our teachers. Parents, driving kids to school. This is just the beginning, the Obama money will expire. We need someone who will understand a 450 million dollar enterprise."

Meghann Silverthorn-District G

"This isn't just about dollars. This is about real people. My background from college was the vice president of our student union, 24 million budget at that time. Taxpayers and benefits, we can't say yes to everything.
We have to look at our real lives for examples of this, and what does that do to our personal house budgets.”

Kristine Turner-District E

"Like everyone at the table has mentioned, we have made a lot of cuts over the year, to the tune of 60 million. I think that what we need to think of are solutions. The sky is not falling. We are not going to stop educating children. There are a lot of innovative ways to bring dollars in. On-line education costs us less, put ads on buses. I don't think parents knew what the budget cuts were going to look like. They didn't realize when they voted last year on 3A and 3B that there were going to be cuts to transportation and administration. I have had many parents come up to me and say, we need another chance as more educated voters now to speak on what we truly want for education in this country."

The next candidate forum is set for 7 p.m., Sept. 17 at the Platt River Academy gymnasium, 4085 Lark Sparrow, Highlands Ranch.

What is a school board?

According to The Colorado Association of School Boards:

"The local school board grew out of the town meeting, dating back more than 200 years ago."

"Basic function is to provide local citizens control over public education."

"The regular term of office for most school board members is four years, without pay."

What does a school board member do?

According to The Colorado Association of School Boards:

"School boards are local policy makers, and the guidance and control that the board provides through its policies are critical to the smooth operations of the school system, and to setting a direction for staff."

"School board members are in a unique position to serve as a link between the school system and the public."

"Board members should be leaders in adopting operating policies, overseeing the school district budget, and establishing school district goals."

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School supply drive 2.0
Contributed by: Erin Feese, YourHub.com on 8/26/2009

DonorsChoose.org helps teachers fund projects, supplies

Teachers at ThunderRidge High School have new supplies to use this year, thanks to a Web site that matches donors in the community with classrooms in need.

DonorsChoose.org allows teachers to post their requests online and people can make donations - in any amount - toward the project. Once the dollar amount of the project is reached, the supplies are shipped directly to the school.

Art teacher Ruth Wilson received a digital drawing tablet for her students using Donors Choose. The tablet, which connects to a computer, allows students to draw on the computer like they would using a pencil and paper, Wilson said.

"It's the coolest thing," Wilson said of the Web site. "These are things we couldn't bring to kids before. It's opened huge doors."

She said using the drawing tablet gives students experience using a tool that they will use if they attend an art institute or study art in college.

In the wake of budget cuts in Douglas County School District, even basic materials are running low.

Using Donors Choose, ThunderRidge English teacher Lindsay Brennan received 100 copies of the book "Of Mice and Men," ensuring there will be more copies to go around for the about 550 freshman.

"Every ninth-grade teacher teaches 'Of Mice and Men,' but we only have 120 copies at TRHS," she said. "'Of Mice and Men' tends to be kids' favorite book that they read in all of high school."

With funds collected on Donors Choose, science teacher Jonathan Hebel purchased four fuel cell model cars for his AP Environmental Science classes. Students will use the cars to learn about hydrogen power.

"There are countless experiments that I can run using these cars, including having students calculate energy efficiency, which is routinely on the AP exam," he said.

Donors Choose started with social studies teacher Charles Best in the Bronx in New York City.

According to the Web site, Best knew there were people out there who wanted to help schools in need, but were frustrated when they didn't have control over how the money was spent. He created Donors Choose so "citizen philanthropists" could directly contribute to a classroom.

Donors Choose has projects from teachers all the over the country. According to Kari Hayden, director of corporate partnerships for DonorsChoose.org, 760 teachers from 378 schools in Colorado have posted projects, with 567 successfully funded.

Currently, the site has five requests from Douglas County schools.

Erin Feese: 303-954-2953 or feese@yourhub.com
DENVER - Concerned parents have threatened to hold their children out of school next Tuesday when President Barack Obama gives a nationally-televised speech to students.

Obama plans to address students on the value of education, hard work and setting goals.

Critics argue Obama will use the speech to push his policies.

The Florida Republican Party issued a press release Tuesday saying "taxpayer dollars are being used to spread President Obama's socialist ideology" and "liberal propaganda."

The White House Spokesman Tommy Vietor told the Associated Press Obama has no plans to give a policy speech to school children.

Denver, Jefferson County and Douglas County School District leaders will allow building principals to determine if the speech will be shown.

Aurora School District representatives said it was letting each school decide whether to show the speech. Parents can have their child opt out of seeing it if they wish. They would have to do other class activities, which must tie to the curriculum.

The Cherry Creek School District says students can opt out of hearing the speech without consequence. Parents are asked to contact their school's office no later than before school on Tuesday. Parents should also notify their child's teacher.

The Boulder Valley School District says it is leaving the decision up to individual principals at each school. Then, teachers may also choose not to show it. A parent can also ask that their child not watch the speech if it is being allowed in the classroom and they will participate in a different learning activity.

Englewood Schools Superintendent Sean McDaniel directed his principals to talk to individual teachers to determine if they see value in watching the speech in their classrooms.

"This is our president. Regardless of who you are in this nation, he is our president," McDaniel said. "For him to say I would like to talk to the kids about education, value, hard work, that's a good message."

"If it does turn political, we are in no way interested in several captive audiences around the district listening to a political rally," McDaniel said. "We unplug it at that time."

One concerned parent, who asked to remain anonymous fearing teachers would punish his children over his opinions, said, "If Obama wants to speak to kids that's fine, do it at 7 p.m. when parents can be there to discuss it."

Another parent told 9NEWS he was concerned with a U.S. Department of Education memo to schools with suggested activities that included having students write about "what they can do to help the president."
That particular suggestion was eliminated from an updated version of the memo distributed Wednesday.

McDaniel says he didn't mind the suggested curriculum, but he stressed that Englewood teachers would determine how to handle discussions about the president's address.

(The Associated Press contributed to this report. Copyright KUSA*TV, All Rights Reserved)
DENVER -- A presidential speech encouraging children to do their best in school is instead creating controversy among school districts and parents.

At issue: will there be a hidden political agenda in the speech? Douglas County's Pine Lane primary and intermediate schools won't be carrying the president's address.

While the school's assistant principal wouldn't comment about the reasons behind the decision, an e-mail to parents stated, "We believe there will be other opportunities for viewing of this speech should you feel you'd like your children to hear this message."

Many large districts came out with their policies about carrying the address on Thursday.

Aurora, Cherry Creek and Boulder Valley schools will leave it up to individual principals and teachers and give parents a chance to opt out their kids.

However, Boulder Valley's spokesman said if parents decide to keep their kids home, it will be an excused absence, even though the school will provide alternate activities for students who are opted out.

Meanwhile, other educators said it is a shame the moment has become so politicized. At Lakewood High School, the address will be broadcast in every classroom.

"I guess I don't have that much fear that we can't have an honest dialogue, and if it does go down the road that's too political, our kids will know that," said Ron Castagna, principal at Lakewood High School. "If he indoctrinates our children to work harder, set educational goals, take responsibility for their learning, more power to him."

Previous Stories:
- September 3, 2009: Obama's Address To School Children Outrages Conservatives
- September 2, 2009: Fla. GOP: Obama To Spread Socialism In Schools

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Echo 101 Items

up2here

Darth - You're an idiot!

09/03/2009, 18:01:19 - Flag - Reply

Darth Barney

Thanks for proving my point up2here. Great comeback!

09/03/2009, 18:07:04 - Flag - Reply

Richard Henry

Aparently 52% of college graduates dont understand the caps lock key function

5 days ago, 11:58:38 - Flag - Reply

nick calvert

DO YOU HAVE MAY IDEA OF HOW IGNORANT YOU SOUND? 52% OF DOUGLAS COUNTY RESIDENTS, 25 AND OLDER, HAVE A BACHELOR DEGREE OR HIGHER. THAT STUDY DOES NOT INCLUDE THE ASSOCIATES DEGREES. GET THE FACTS BEFORE YOU SAY ITS "IGNORANT". THE PRINCIPAL DID US A FAVOR, BY NOT FORCING OUR KIDS TO LISTEN TO THE PRESIDENT. I WOULD FEEL DIFFERENTLY IF IT WAS A HIGH SCHOOL, WHERE THE KIDS AT LEAST HAVE AN OPINION THEY CAN SHARE.

5 days ago, 08:44:41 - Flag - Reply

Darth Barney

Try the CAPS LOCK key. Its right next to the little "A" thingy. Learn to type in Doug Co?

5 days ago, 09:07:34 - Flag - Reply

Darth Barney

Maybe if we just bury Douglas County in six feet of sand they won't have to collectively appear so ignorant all the time...

09/03/2009, 18:01:19 - Flag - Reply

Bill Witten

Douglas County ignorant? Ridiculous. That’s why our schools are so much better, budgets are better, less crime, etc., right? What a left-thread wing nut.

I wish you had said something intellectual so that I could rip your logic apart and show who is truly “ignorant” here but that is asking too much of someone that makes comments like these. As hole.

09/03/2009, 18:31:42 - Flag - Reply

guest

I live in DougCo and yes, most of the folks are pretty ignorant, not to mention arrogant, petty, mindless, rude, abnoxious, etc. And no, the DougCo schools are not that much better and our budgets are strained (as you keep getting an increase in “fees” from the HOAs).

5 days ago, 08:24:48 - Flag - Reply

Darth Barney

Here’s something intelligent for you to chew on then, the official state rankings for public schools. Sorry, but I don’t see a Doug county school in the top 10. Just Boulder, Cherry Creek, Arapahoe, Poudre Valley. Nice try though.

http://www.psk12.com/rating/i2StreeRs.php/STATE_CD_level_High_CountyID_0.html
http://www.psk12.com/rating/i2StreeRs.php/STATE_CD_level_Elementary_CountyID_0.html

Hope this helps you...

5 days ago, 18:23:58 - Flag - Reply

Meanoolddem

Hey Billy, you claim to be a libertarian, but from the slant of your posts, and your obvious ignorance, you have shown yourself to be just another repub poser whining because your boys sunk their own ship.

5 days ago, 09:00:37 - Flag - Reply

TODAY’S HOT DEALS

- $39 & up – Fly Into the New Year: Sale Fares to 60+ Cities*
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- $216 & up – Europe on Sale from Across the U.S.*
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  Continental Airlines

Listed by Travelzoo
*Some taxes, fees additional

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- Protect Your Identity
- Make What You’re Worth

- Foreclosures Climb To Record Highs
- Bigger Is Not Always Better
- Top 10 Home Buying Mistakes
- 4 Summer Home Updates
- How To Choose A Neighborhood

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Again, Darth – You're an idiot! Don't cry to me when you're enslaved by your own party. I for one, will go down only one way: fighting. If you realize your bad choice of support, I will also fight for you. Until then, you're on your own.

Darth Barney: my party? How do you know its my party? It's not, but neither am I so ignorant, so intolerant, so hateful, so bigoted, etc. How exactly is 'my choice' a 'bad choice of support'?

"I for one, will go down only one way: fighting."

Darth Barney: "If you realize your bad choice of support, I will also fight for you"

I did fight for yours, so that you can openly be so ignorant, intolerant, close-minded, hateful, bigoted, etc. How exactly is 'my choice' a 'bad choice of support'?

"I for one, will go down only one way: fighting."

Fighting for what? A unified country? Start by getting you head out of the sand...

Darth Barney: "If you realize your bad choice of support, I will also fight for you"

Sorry Darth. You're too far gone and you're on your own. I can almost hear you screaming for help from your prison cell now. Good luck with your bondage, I'll turn my attention to those with common sense and a will of their own and can think for themselves. I wish you good luck.
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Transportation cuts punish voters

I was surprised by your article on the bus cuts affecting Douglas County this school year.

Many, many of us have and continue to complain about this to the district. Their quote that we just "need to get used to it" is so typical of the top managers of the Douglas County School District.

I had the misfortune of attending a meeting with Board of Education President Kristine A. Turner this summer over the busing issue.

What floored me most was not her lack of preparation. It was the fact that when you look at the big picture, the district, with a budget in excess of $500 million, is taking a $21 million dollar cut. Less than 5 percent. I have worked at the executive level of many, many large corporations during my career, and this type of budget cut can be obtained easily, with qualified personnel at the helm.

It is almost laughable that the district considers this to be a major budget reduction. Have none of them ever worked for a company with shareholders, where accountability is important?

Sadly, after listening to the board president, it became clear to me that if the leaders of our school district have no clue how to painlessly reduce by less than 5 percent their budget, they don’t deserve more money to squander away.

It is my firm belief that they chose reduction in busing as a way to "punish" the voters ... so sad.

I am fortunate to have my children enrolled in two very good schools in Douglas County, with leaders that I believe could cut-budget the district honchos any day. Hopefully this school board’s terms will all expire very soon, and some real leaders, who know how to effect cuts without affecting quality of teaching, busing, etc., will take the reins. Maybe not purchasing golf cars this summer to get around the bus yard would be a good place to start cutting.

Beth Westberg
Castle Rock

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Wednesday
September 9, 2009

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Published: 08.27.09

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President Obama to speak to school children nationwide
(02:18) 09/03/2009 at 05:30am