

Dec. 5, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information:

Melissa Reeves, mdreeves@jeffco.k12.co.us, Jeffco Public Schools, 303-982-6567

Marlene Desmond, mdesmond@jeffco.k12.co.us, Jeffco Public Schools, 303-982-6819



JEFFERSON-AREA INNOVATION INTRODUCED TO COMMUNITY

Students and families have been invited to join Jefferson-area principals and schools to bring an enhanced educational experience to the community's schools.

“We have a deep commitment to provide our students with the best educational opportunities,” said Jefferson High School Principal Michael James. “We joined together to map out a framework for our students and that has propelled the *Jefferson Area Innovation Plan*.”

School principals from **Jefferson High**, **Wheat Ridge 5-8 School**, **Edgewater**, **Lumberg**, **Molholm** and **Stevens elementary schools** worked as a team to review best practices, research programs and systems and brainstormed innovative educational strategies to map out a plan to help boost our schools' student achievement.

“My Jefferson-area colleagues know that our school community is unique and dynamic and deserving of educational options that reflect the needs of our students and values,” said Edgewater Principal Celeste Sultze. “This innovation plan is a true representation of how intentional we are when working with our students to meet their academic and social needs; I'm honored and it's such a privilege to come to work every day.”

In the coming weeks, schools staff will advertise parent and community informational forums that invite ideas and gather input for the final innovation plan.

Highlights of the *Jefferson Area Innovation Plan* framework include: People, Structures and Program. “We will continue to retain and recruit effective educators committed to collaboration, professional growth, and give educators additional time to improve their skills and knowledge to support student achievement,” said Jeffco's Chief School Effectiveness Officer Terry Elliott. “At the same time, we will commit to identifying and obtaining classroom support to meet the unique needs of these schools.”

In the 2015-16 school year, **Jefferson High School's** campus will create a pre-college and career academy-focused neighborhood school for grades 7-12, while establishing a **Stevens PK-6** school on the current **Wheat Ridge 5-8 School** campus. There are no enrollment changes planned at **Edgewater**, **Lumberg** and **Molholm** elementary schools. “What we are really excited about is that our school communities will come together to create strategic and intentional Professional Learning Communities to improve classroom instruction in order to better support student achievement,” said Lumberg Principal Rhonda Hatch-Rivera.

Students, families and staff will see programming changes including an enhanced academic language development program for students, continued enhancements to dual language programs for kindergarten through 12th-grade students, Problem Based Learning for grades 7 – 12 and initial pathways identified for secondary students.

“We know that many of our Jefferson-area schools have students who are still learning the foundations of the English language, they are our dual-language learners,” said Molholm Principal John D’Orazio. “Literacy programs and language development play a huge and crucial piece of our students’ academic foundations. If they don’t have a strong language and literacy comprehension, their success in other subjects will fall short.”

Jefferson-area principals will announce school-based meetings and open information forums to collect student, parent, staff and community feedback.

“We know this community cares about their schools and their kids, we care about them too, and we are going to actively engage their enthusiasm in student learning,” said Superintendent Dan McMinimee. “Our schools value our students and families’ input as we work to make a difference in student growth. We also want to invite parents to participate on their School Accountability Committees to improve the future of our schools.”