

Friday, April 10, 2009

To Jeffco Schools Board of Education and District Cabinet:

In December 2008, the Jefferson County Administrators Association (JCAA) Board of Directors and membership communicated a prioritized list of recommendations we hoped to save from potential budget cuts. Instructional Coaches were our very highest priority. Instructional Coaches remain our highest priority. It has always been, and will always be, JCAA's focus to implement best practices proven to work in Jeffco schools. Instructional Coaches are research based best practices worthy of investment.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) released a report in February 2009 exploring the relationship between teacher support systems and student achievement in a time of declining resources. We believe Instructional Coaches are an integral part of a functional support system, especially as resources continue to dwindle in the near (and possibly long) term.

As administrators we understand the myriad of funding choices facing the District. We also believe and understand that Instructional Coaches improve student learning. As we face budget cuts, increasing class sizes and increased data gathering requirements, we cannot simply require each educator to do more.

Coaches support teachers as they;

- Discover the best ways to reach their students.
- Uncover the fine points in curriculum.
- Identify how to purposefully plan so that students can demonstrate mastery of knowledge and understanding of state standards.
- Use research based best practices tailored to the needs of their students.
- Reflect on the purpose and use of assessments to drive instructional decisions.

All of these areas lead to higher student achievement.

Given the connection between coaches and student achievement, JCAA strongly advocates that Instructional Coaches be considered a highest priority as funding allows. It is JCAA's opinion, as an association and as individual administrators, that Jeffco elementary and middle schools will benefit immensely from expansion of coaching programs.

Sincerely,

Jim Jelinek  
President

Warren Blair  
President-Elect

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Past-President

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District Cabinet Liaison

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District Cabinet Liaison

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Central Level Liaison

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Arvada Area

Gale Downing  
Arvada West Area

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Bill Chapman  
Central Area #2

Marc Horner  
Central Area #3

John Canuel  
Central Area #4

Anne Sterrett  
Chatfield Area

Jill Colby  
Choice Schools

Connie Brasher  
Columbine Area

Frank LaViolette  
Conifer Area

Tracy Haschker  
Dakota Ridge Area

Peggy Miller  
Evergreen Area

Peggy Griebenow  
Golden Area

Kevin Carroll  
Green Mountain Area

Joan Chavez  
Jefferson Area

Kathy Krieger  
Lakewood Area

John White  
Pomona Area

Dana Ellis  
Ralston Valley Area

Brendan Feely  
Standley Lake Area

Sue Borzych  
Wheat Ridge Area

Michael Long  
Executive Director