



## **Dolores School District RE-4A**

**Scott Cooper, Superintendent**

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May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Dear Students, Staff, Parents and Community,

We are quickly approaching the end of the school year! There have been and are still many fun student-centered productions and celebrations occurring nearly nightly at the schools. As we wrap up the school year, I wanted to provide you this information.

I am very proud of our elementary team of educators and our third grade students. Their Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) scores are always the first to be reported by the state. The percentage of unsatisfactory scores has steadily declined while the advanced scores have been steadily climbing over the past few years. All of the high quality instruction produced by our professional teachers, supported by outstanding para-professionals and combined with targeted interventions has provided our students with a solid foundation of learning. Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year we will provide a solid K-6<sup>th</sup> elementary school that will produce students at, or above grade level, fully prepared for the advanced rigor of middle school and onto our high school with its college and career ready focus.

Thank you students, staff and parents for your flexibility, patience and understanding during our major construction project. Our Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) grant funded and community supported building project is well underway, roughly 50% completed. We are very pleased with the speed of our construction schedule. FCI Constructors are ahead of schedule and under budget. FCI has remained very cognizant of our students and staff in regards to safety and sharing of the construction process through class field trips, career day interviews and spontaneously stopping to answer student and staff questions. This project has created a great learning experience for our students. I will be presenting our additional BEST grant application to the BEST board in Denver in two weeks. We are asking for just over one million in grant funding with a waiver on the matching funds. These dollars will provide safe and secure front entrances to our secondary and elementary schools, 16 new exterior doors with electronic locks and a new gym roof. This is a big ask of the BEST grant program and it will be the third time that I present to them to secure funding for our building project in the past two years. We feel justified requesting this additional funding, because we allocated up to \$750,000 of our school district reserves last fall to support our current project. We hope to leverage these dollars to achieve the additional grant. Now is the time to go for it, because FCI is mobilized and ready to tackle this work at a much lower cost than if we were to wait a year or two.

Thank you for communicating with our legislators. Your effort combined with thousands of parents and educators across the state paid off with better funding than originally expected. Financially schools across Colorado will be a little better off due to reduction of the Negative Factor. Today, May 7<sup>th</sup>, the legislators have approved funding for school districts for the next school year. They have increased K-12 base funding by 2.8% and decreased the Negative Factor by \$110 million (roughly 11% of the total Negative Factor, 1.1 billion). Each winter and spring until the Negative Factor is completely wiped out, we will continue to remind our legislators of the immense needs of high quality education for our students. School finance in Colorado is very complicated and difficult to understand. If you have any questions, please contact me for more information.

Have a great rest of the school year and a wonderful summer!

Respectfully,

Superintendent, Dolores School District