

News Release

March 13, 2009

For further information contact:

Jana Caldwell
Director of Communications
303.762.8762 X103; 303.762.8697 (fax)
jcaldwell@co-case.org



Brighton leader tapped as Colorado's National Distinguished Principal of the Year

Kay Collins, principal of South Elementary School in the Brighton 27J School District, is the 2009 Colorado National Distinguished Principal of the Year. The announcement was made by the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE), which coordinated the selection process.

South Elementary was named a “high growth” and “high performing” school in the 2008 School Accountability Reports. This accomplishment occurred despite the school’s large numbers of disadvantaged students, including those with limited English skills. In 2004, South Elementary was named a *No Child Left Behind* Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education, an award which recognizes student academic growth schoolwide.

The school’s motto: “South Elementary is the place I want to be!” reflects Collins’ focus on creating a positive climate for learning and social development of students. As a result, students and adults care about one another and operate by the “golden rule.”

Collins works continuously to create an instructional environment where all students learn. Performance data is used to improve instruction and to understand the needs of each student. Staff meet regularly to ensure students are progressing in their learning.

Collins has initiated a number of community partnerships to meet student needs, including a back-to-school supply campaign with a coffee shop chain, a winter coat drive through a local church, and a senior volunteer program to support student learning.

More...

CASE Departments

CASE

News Release

Page 2

Brighton Superintendent Rod Blunck, himself a former Colorado Superintendent of the Year, describes Collins as “one of the best leaders I have worked with in my 20 years in the profession.” Blunck cites the progress Collins spearheaded at South Elementary to close the learning gap between poor and minority children and their more affluent peers. In addition to her exemplary leadership abilities, “Kay is a woman of great character and integrity,” added Blunck.

Collins has been principal at South Elementary School since 2000. Prior to that time she was a teacher in the Fort Lupton Schools. Collins earned degrees in elementary education and educational leadership from the University of Northern Colorado. She also participated in the executive leadership program at the University of Colorado.

Collins was selected by her peers in the Colorado Association of Elementary School Principals (CAESP), a department of CASE and affiliate of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). The National Distinguished Principal program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, NAESP, and VALIC.

The award recognizes successful elementary or middle level principals who have provided outstanding leadership. Selection criteria include evidence of respect from the school community; active community involvement; strong educational leadership; and evidence of maintaining an orderly, purposeful learning environment.

Libby Bailey, president of CAESP, echoed support for Collins’ selection. “It’s clear that Kay has been a dynamic leader in Brighton. Her school has made substantial progress in closing the achievement gap with its focus on disadvantaged students. She definitely represents the best among elementary principals in our state,” said Bailey.

CASE and CAESP will present Collins with her award at a school event this spring. She and other CASE award winners also will be recognized at the annual CASE convention this summer in Breckenridge.

As Colorado’s National Distinguished Principal, Collins will be honored, along with other state winners, in Washington, D.C. next fall.

Established in 1969, the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE) is an organization of more than 2,000 school administrators committed to improving student achievement through promoting and building quality education leadership in all Colorado schools.

###

[Click here](#) for a link to a photo of Kay Collins.