

Littleton Independent ⁽¹⁾

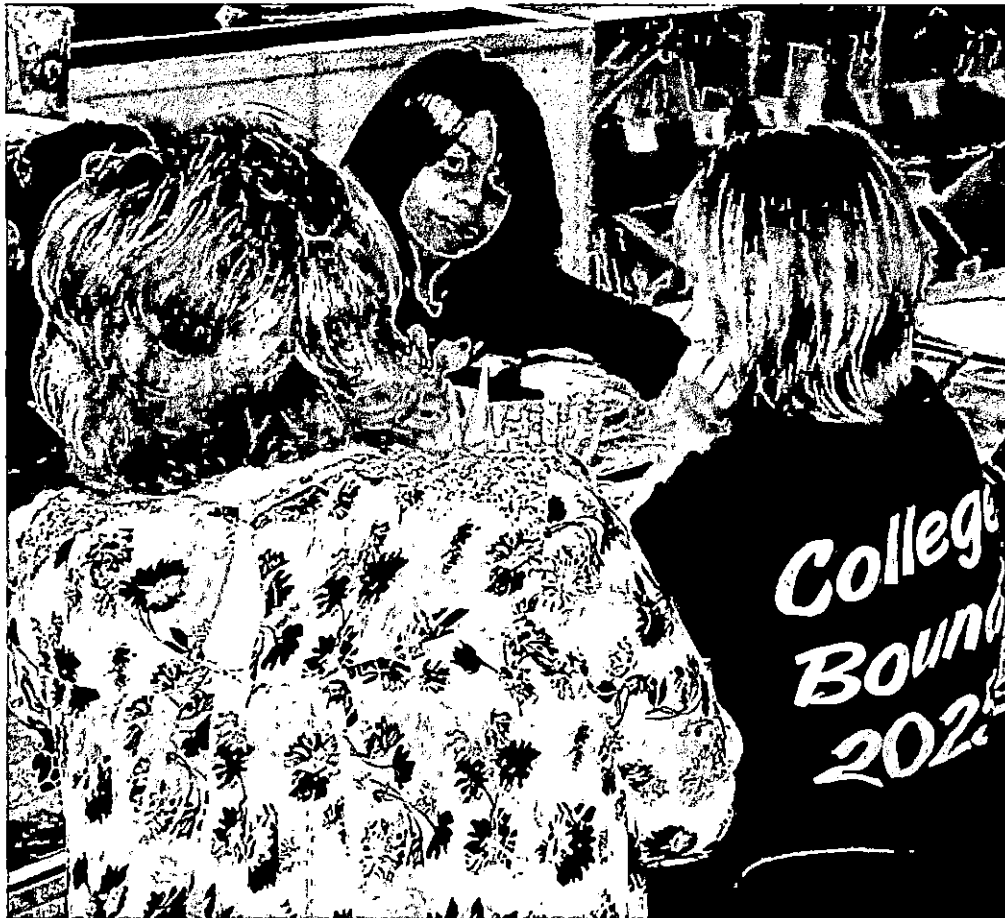
() NEWS (/NEWS/)

ENTERTAINMENT (/ENTERTAINMENT/)

VOICES (/VOICES/)

Three-pronged effort turns Littleton school around

Additional teachers, longer day help bring improvement



(/uploads/original/1457399106_9eb6.jpg).

Field Elementary third grade teacher Cheryl Wells helps Justice Sisneros, left, and Arielle Murphy with their schoolwork.

KYLE HARDING



Posted Sunday, March 6, 2016 7:30 pm

Kyle Harding (mailto:kharding@coloradocommunitymedia.com)

A combination of teaching improvements and a longer school day is being credited by Littleton Public Schools with helping to turn around a struggling elementary.

During testing in 2010, Field Elementary students did not display adequate growth scores, and in 2012 and 2013 it was the only school in the LPS district to be placed in the improvement category by the Colorado Department of Education, requiring it to implement a plan.

The district researched the best methods to help schools that need improvement, and also examined models for teaching impoverished students and students who speak English as a second language, both overrepresented at Field relative to the rest of the district.

Elementary education director Kathleen Ambron said the district came up with a plan and the board of education made a three-year commitment to fund it.

In standardized testing in spring 2014, the school was 1 percentage point away from meeting the state's expectations. Testing has been suspended since then as Colorado implements new standards, but the students will test again next month, and Ambron and Field Elementary principal Lyn Bajaj are confident the school will show more improvement.

There are three main pieces to the turnaround initiative: putting an additional teacher in classrooms, coaching for teachers and an extended school day.

Each grade level gets an English-language acquisition teacher, who helps develop methods to explain concepts to English learners during a portion of every day. Bajaj said the co-teachers are beneficial for the native English speakers as well, because there's an extra teacher in the classroom.

The school's teachers also are being taught. Instructional coaches, who are experts in teaching literacy or math, were hired to help them improve.

Bajaj said that there was some reluctance on the part of teachers to accept coaching, but they have seen results.

"It's incredible to hear teachers say 'I'm teaching better than I ever have,'" she said.

Fifth-grader Vanessa Chavez, who spends time helping in a fourth-grade classroom during math class, said she has noticed the difference in the level of instruction.

"I just think that the teaching is going deeper," she said.

Finally, students have had an extra 53 minutes of instruction time each day for the past three years. Next year, the school plans to scale back to an extra 30 minutes.

“We know that kids in poverty typically lack background knowledge,” Bajaj said. “They’re not going to the zoo and to the symphony.”

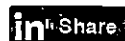
She said that the extra instruction time helps address that.

Although the end of the initiative’s third year is coming up, the school plans to continue its efforts in co-teaching and coaching.

“I don’t know that we’ll ever be done,” Ambron said. “Because kids that are English language learners and in poverty will always need additional resources.”

Keywords

Field Elementary School (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_filter=Field Elementary School), Littleton Colorado (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_filter= Littleton Colorado), Kyle Harding (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_filter= Kyle Harding)



Comments

NO COMMENTS ON THIS STORY | PLEASE LOG IN TO COMMENT BY CLICKING HERE (/LOGIN.HTML)

News (/news/)



(/stories/Democrats-want-permanent-funding-for-transportation,242775)

Democrats want permanent funding for transportation (/stories/Democrats-want-permanent-funding-for-transportation,242775)

3 DAYS AGO

Texting and driving bill advances in Legislature (/stories/Texting-and-driving-bill-advances-in-Legislature,242776)

3 DAYS AGO

Bill that would OK gun training for school employees passes Senate (/stories/Bill-that-would-OK-gun-training-for-school-employees-passes-Senate,242673)

5 DAYS AGO

City manager interviews prompt tepid reactions (/stories/City-manager-interviews-prompt-tepid-reactions,242654)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Sports (/sports/)



(/stories/Athlete-signs-up-for-something-big,242505)

Athlete signs up for something big (/stories/Athlete-signs-up-for-something-big,242505)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Standout performers south metro (/stories/Standout-performers-south-metro,242695)

5 DAYS AGO

Local athletes sign to play at next level (/stories/Local-athletes-sign-to-play-at-next-level,242693)

5 DAYS AGO

Heritage's quick goals spark key win (/stories/Heritages-quick-goals-spark-key-win,242443)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6

Life (/life/)



(/stories/Stephan-Hume,242478)

My name is...Stephan Hume (/stories/Stephan-Hume,242478)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Books, Bibles and Beyond (/stories/Books-Bibles-and-Beyond,242464)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6

Big cookie goals (/stories/Big-cookie-goals,242189)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31

'The world just goes away' (/stories/The-world-just-goes-away,242144)

MONDAY, JANUARY 30

Search site

Go

ADVANCED SEARCH (/SEARCH.HTML)