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Dispatch

School District 49 - 10850 E Woodmen Rd — Peyton CO 80831-8127.

Postmaster: Direct address changes/corrections to the printers addres

Vol 5, No. 3

July 13, 2020

D49 Grads Bend, but Don't Brake, for COVID-19



The Springs Studio for Academic Excellence Class of 2020 kicked off graduation season with a drive-in style ceremony May 22 at Vista Ridge High School. (District 49/David Nancarrow) **See center spread for more Graduation 2020 photos**

By The D49 Communications Department Staff

A Season of Uncertainty

At the start of the 2019 - 2020 school year the class of 2020 anticipated the week leading into Memorial Day would be their time

to conclude their D49 academic journey and celebrate with a traditional graduation

As spring break approached, events and opportunities began to vanish in the shadow of the COVID-19 health emergency. Graduation, it seemed, could have easily

fallen to the spread of the novel coronavirus. Instead, D49 turned to its community to determine what to do next.

Two plans emerged: Springs Studio for Academic Excellence and Pikes Peak Early College, along with Patriot High School landed on a drive-in style ceremony. The results from multiple online feedback forums outlined the preference for D49's three larger campuses, opting for a more traditional ceremony, in an outdoor venue, with family members attending.

All plans met a list of guidelines and requirements from local and state health experts.

Three Schools Led the Way

Forty-five out of a total of 61 SSAE grads, and a few family members sat in their vehicles arranged in a wide semi-circle in the Vista Ridge High School parking lot for the first ceremony the morning of May 22. At the top of the semi-circle's arc, a long carpet, with marks every six feet, led to a podium where a small group of special guests and dignitaries shared their remarks, including SSAE Executive Principal Dave Knoche. Families tuned in to 104.7 FM to hear the speeches broadcast through their car stereos.

"It's not what I expected whatsoever in any way, form or fashion," said Jonathan Martens, a member of the SSAE class of 2020. "But I absolutely love what they've been able to do given the fact that we have to stay separated and all that stuff."

One by one, the grads wearing purple robes and facemasks paused at the podium where their name was read, and their photo taken.

"[The SSAE staff have] gone above and beyond to make these kids feel special, so it's almost more special than the traditional graduation," Jonathan's mother Lisa said with a chuckle. "He will never mix up this graduation with anybody else!"

To cap off the PPEC ceremony that followed SSAE's, PPEC Principal Rochelle Kolhouse prompted the class members back in their vehicles to turn their tassels together

See **Graduation 2020** page 2

Now, More Than Ever, the only Constant is Change

By Brett Ridgway

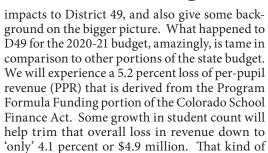
D49 Chief Business Officer

The depth of the economic impact of coronavirus has now hit home with us in public education. In just a matter of weeks, the national unemployment rate increased 2.5 times – going from 3.8 percent in February 2020 to 13 percent just three months later. That means more than 14 million people had to apply for unemployment benefits

from the 'Coronavirus Recession'. This recession, nationally and globally, will be twice as bad as the 'Great Recession' we experienced just ten years ago – making this the worst economic downturn since the World War II era.

The state of Colorado's budget lost \$1 billion in 2019-20 and another \$2 billion for 2020-21 – a 16 percent drop. State lawmakers had to make many hard decisions to balance the budget. While K-12 education took a big hit of 5.24 percent, Higher Education took a much bigger hit – a 50 percent drop in state revenue. Many other programs and departments had to take large reductions as well, because K-12 'only' had a 5.24 percent decrease.

In three communications to staff and stakeholders over the last 60 days, I have tried to inform readers of the direct



loss in revenue creates a Fiscal Emergency for District 49. Accordingly, the Board of Education adopted a resolution declaring such at their special meeting on June 24.

What followed the declaration of a Fiscal Emergency were the actions necessary to the balance the General Fund budget with related reductions in spending:

- All pay schedules were frozen, as was each employee's step placement on their schedule.
- Approximately 2.5 percent of each teacher's base pay will now be funded from Mill Levy Override.
- Many positions voluntarily vacated, across the district, will not be refilled in 2020-21.
- Non-personnel costs were strategically reduced across the district.

District 49 is the beneficiary of \$6.3 million in Coronavirus Relief Fund money from the federal government - via the state government. This is one-time money, however, with many strings attached that require uses related to coronavirus. Therefore, it is not completely helpful in allaying the \$4.9 million general fund deficit. It will help, especially with new costs necessary to reopen schools this fall, but it will soon be gone and we will have to carry on with regular (state and local) funding sources to support the educational program delivery.

Everything is changing; not toward a new destination, for a 'new normal', but onto an ever-changing, ever-evolving path. The changing path is the new normal. D49 strives to be agile to react promptly and effectively to new circumstances as they come. For example, a modification or repeal of the Gallagher Amendment would stop the erosion of our property tax base that puts District 49 at a disadvantage for funding against our neighbor and competitor districts. Tracking a repeal/redesign ballot initiative to the Gallagher Amendment this fall is a very important endeavor for District 49. So we encourage our entire community to learn more and stay informed on this and the many issues facing D49, our state and our country as we head into election season. Informed opinions support informed decisions.

Graduation 2020 From page 1

from the right side to the left, symbolizing their transition from student to graduate. Family members honked horns, and cheers rang loud in support of the monumental moment.

D49 leaders applauded the PPEC graduates for showing grit and resilience during a unique time and for finishing the year with admirable accomplishments. Nearly half of the 53 graduates in the class earned an associate degree, industry certification or 60 credits toward a bachelor's degree, along with completing high school.

A day later, May 23, cars lined up just beyond the fenceline of the softball field at the Falcon Legacy Campus to honor the graduating seniors of Patriot High School.

PHS Principal Steve Gard announced the names of the class of 2020, sharing a few words written for each grad by a PHS staff member. The graduates' families waited in their vehicles and listened to the remarks broadcast on an FM radio station, honking and cheering when their student walked from center field to the principal's podium to receive their diploma. Twenty-six of 28 graduating PHS seniors completed the commencement circuit, jumping back into their vehicle with a diploma in hand, positioned to begin the next chapter of their lives.

In addition to pride, some grads described the feeling of reaching the finish line as a mixture of excitement, nerves and novelty.

"I've gone through 18 years to graduate with my parents in a car," Weston Pezdirtz said with a smile. "In 10 years we'll be saying, like, 'We graduated during corona.' It's gonna be crazy."

Sometimes You Have to Throw a Hail Mary...

The larger campuses delayed their ceremonies until the final week of June, scheduling first a student-only ceremony at UCHealth Park, home of Rocky Mountain Vibes Baseball.

Planners hoped holding the commencement events later would coincide with the slowing spread of COVID-19 enough to allow families to attend.

"A lot of things had to come together, but we are catching a Hail Mary," Peter Hilts, D49 chief education officer reported during the June 11 board of education meeting. In early June experts at El Paso County Public Health and Environment eased restrictions on public gatherings including graduation ceremonies. By the June 11 board meeting, ceremony planners determined each graduate could invite up to six guests to attend

On Thursday, June 25, the Vista Ridge High School class of 2020 sat six feet apart from each other in the green outfield ready to graduate and turn their tassels to signify their transition from students to graduates.

During his address to the senior class, POWER Zone Leader Dr. Mike Pickering said, "What this abnormal graduation does not create, an abnormal graduate. All of your passions, dreams and accomplishments are still as important and relevant as they ever were. Perhaps even more in some contexts. The same characteristics that brought you to this very time and place today, are the same characteristics that will continue to help you persevere and help you get through the next chapters in your life."

Jude Almacen, member of the VRHS class of 2020 said, "It's relieving to be here. Graduation was always up in the air, whether or not we'd be able to walk. I'm just glad it's happening, that we can commence the ceremony like we're supposed to do."

Originally, the Sand Creek High School class of 2020 would have graduated in a May 23 ceremony. Despite the delay created by Coronavirus health concerns and restrictions, families agreed waiting for the June 26 event was worth it. "This moment is amazing, and I am beyond excited," said Johnnie Brunson, father of Graduate Isaiah Brunson.

"Staff have been working so hard to make this happen, and I know they love these kids," said Shaunna Walewski, mother of Graduate Rebecca Walewski. "I give props to D49 for trying to make it special for the kids."

District 49 closed out the 2019-2020 academic year with a graduation ceremony to honor the Falcon High School Class of 2020, Saturday, June 27.

"Throughout 2020 we have endured serious turmoil," Salutatorian Kalyn Ohlrich told her class. "But out of this we have learned that kindness, empathy and equality should always prevail...Life doesn't go as planned. We have to roll with the punches no matter how unfair it seems."

"It's a blessing to be here. Seeing our prom, senior breakfast and other events go away, I'm very thankful the district was able to put something together for us to celebrate with each other and our families," said FHS grad Shonciré Graham.

"It's a good send off for her, and great closure for us as she is our oldest child," said her father, Eric Graham. "It's a day that we've been looking forward to for 18 years. It's 13 years of academic work with all her success culminating into one event before she goes off to college."

D49 Grows New Teachers with Scholarship Program

By Amy Matisek

Internal Communications Manager

For three teaching assistants in District 49, fitting college into their demanding schedule is a dream come true and a chance to cultivate their life's mission. D49 recently partnered with Western Governors University to help staff members in support roles achieve their goal of becoming a teacher by presenting them with full-ride scholarships.

"I wish I had known all along that teaching was my calling. Instead, I spent years in the corporate world selling weddings," shared Nicole Croney, paraprofessional at Woodmen Hills Elementary. "This scholarship is the opportunity for me to reach education and career goals, while making a difference in students' lives - my ultimate goal."

Each of the recipients will complete their bachelor's degree and earn a teaching license with the Summit Scholarship. Staff receiving the scholarships are:

- Nicole Croney from Woodmen Hills Elementary School
- · Michelle Graves from Horizon Middle School
- Natasha Trapp from Vista Ridge High School

D49 offered the scholarships through an open application process to all staff in support roles across the district. A completed application included an essay about the staff member's desire to become a teacher, along with a letter of recommendation from a building leader and current resume.

"We are incredibly excited about the opportunity to support several of our wonderful educational support staff in the pursuit of their teaching degree through this partnership with WGU," shared Dr. Kathy Pickering, coordinator of professional learning. "This is an incredible opportunity for our district to 'grow our own' and support exceptional educators."

A family member encouraged scholarship recipient Michelle Graves to reveal her love for helping students learn. "My little sister is the one who enticed me to enter the educational field," she explained. "My students firmly believe they'll never succeed in school. After building a rapport with them, it is so satisfying to help students figure out a problem or complete a project."

The Summit Scholarship program is made possible through a partnership with WGU. The university's mission is to create pathways to opportunity for more people, making it easier for individuals to further their education. Headquartered in Salt Lake City, Western Governors University is an online university that offers more than 60 degree programs.

Thanks to rewarding past experiences, all of the scholarship recipients have chosen to focus on teaching students with special needs. "Being a special education paraprofessional led me to find my true passion," shared recipient Natasha Trapp. "I can't wait to one day have my own classroom and make an impact on the everyday lives of students. Thank you D49 and WGU for making my dreams come true."

Congratulations to these 949 staff members!

- Nicole Croney from Woodmen Hills Elementary School
- Michelle Graves from Horizon Middle School
- Natasha Trapp from Vista Ridge High School



Michelle Graves, paraprofessional from Horizon Middle School, received a Summit Scholarship, allowing her to complete a bachelor's degree and earn a teaching license. (District 49/Courtesy: Michelle Graves)



Natasha Trapp, paraprofessional from Vista Ridge High School, received a Summit Scholarship to cultivate her mission of working as a special education teacher. (District 49/Courtesy: Natasha Trapp)



Nicole Croney, paraprofessional from Woodmen Hills Elementary School, was selected for a Summit Scholarship to pursue her dream of teaching. (District 49/Courtesy: Nicole Croney)



PPEC student Jordyn Maisano (left) and John Suthers, Mayor of Colorado Springs (right), presented \$5,700 raised in corporate sponsorships to the Colorado Springs Therapeutic Riding Center May 7. (District 49/

PPEC Freshman Gets Boost from City Hall for Community Assignment

By Amy Matisek

Internal Communications Manager

It started with an assignment in Julie Butterworth's biology class at Pikes Peak Early College earlier this year. Butterworth asked her students to select a nonprofit and assist them with an awareness and fundraising campaign. "It's about connecting biology to the real world," she shared.

Jordyn Maisano, freshman in the class, considered different charities, but ultimately chose the Colorado Springs

Therapeutic Riding Center, an organization that provides high-quality, specialized equine therapy for people of all ages with physical, cognitive and behavioral disabilities.

Jordyn's plans initially included organizing a fundraising dinner hosted in cooperation with John Suthers, the mayor of Colorado Springs. Jordyn herself pitched the idea to the mayor, and he quickly came on board to support her event that was originally scheduled to take place in April.

While COVID-19 restrictions didn't allow the event to happen, Jordyn still made an impact for a nonprofit she grew to love. Together, on May 7, Jordyn and Mayor Suthers presented \$5,700 raised in corporate sponsorships to the Riding Center.

"I am proud that I pulled this together," shared Jordyn. "The riding center needs money because there are many disabled individuals in Colorado Springs who need their help."

Mrs. Butterworth was in attendance for the special check presentation. "It takes ambition and motivation for a student to do this," she commented. "Jordyn took this assignment to the community in every sense of the word."



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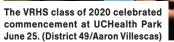
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Evans International Elementary School kindergarten and fifth grade students were recognized for moving on to their new grade-level drive-through style at EIES May 19. (District 49/Amy Bremser)



emony June 27. (District 49/Aaron Villescas)



Walking with heads held high and diplomas in hand, SCHS grads stroll to their next chapter after their graduation ceremony June 26. (District 49/Aaron Villescas)



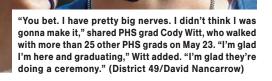
UCHealth Park for their commencement ceremony June 27. (District 49/Aaron Villescas)





grads during their graduation ceremony June 26. (District 49/Aaron Villescas)

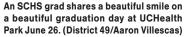














Congrats, VRHS class of 2020! We



VRHS grads shared smiles and excitement at

UCHealth Park June 25. (District 49/Aaron Villescas)

Pikes Peak Early College graduates celebrate their milestone at a drive-in style, socially-distanced ceremony in the parking lot of Vista Ridge High School May 22. (District 49/Amy Matisek)



FHS grads close one chapter and begin another at UCHealth Park for their commencement ceremony June 27. (District 49/Aaron Villescas)

6 July 13, 2020 District 49 Dispatch

D49 Elementary School Earns National Distinction Third Year in a Row



Kindergartners at Ridgeview Elementary School share "good things" to kick off each day as part of the school's Capturing Kids' Hearts program. The program promotes socio-emotional techniques to foster student engagement. (District 49/Amy Matisek)

Bv Amv Matisek

Internal Communications Manager

For a third, consecutive year, D49's Ridgeview Elementary School earned top recognition among schools across our state and country as a Capturing Kids' Hearts National Showcase School. Ridgeview is one of 17 schools in the state of Colorado selected for the honor for the 2019-20 school year.

The Capturing Kids' Hearts program promotes socio-emotional techniques to foster student engagement. Ultimately, the belief is once you have a child's heart, you have a child's mind.

"Capturing Kids' Hearts focuses on building strong relationships, which aligns with the district's cultural compass, directing how staff and students treat each other," shared Kim Moore, principal. "These relationships are key to everything we do at Ridgeview and help ensure

we always stay focused on what is best for students."

Warm welcomes remain the standard at Ridgeview, and begin at the front entrance and continue at every classroom where students find their teachers waiting at the door to offer a personal greeting each day.

Classes start with sharing "good things." During this time, teachers invite students to share something good in their life. Classrooms also have social contracts in place to hold both students and staff accountable.

The school began its journey to meeting, or surpassing, the Capturing Kids' Hearts benchmarks in 2015, and is among 285 schools nationwide to earn the Showcase School distinction for the most recent school year.

The program was created by the Flippen Group, a management consultant company in Texas. The nomination included a rigorous application process, and a site visit from the Flippen Group to gather data and talk with members of the school community.

PAFB Recognizes Military Affiliated Students

By Amy Bremser

Video and Broadcast Specialist

Peterson Air Force Base hosted a "Drive By" graduation celebration to honor military affiliated students, May 21. Eleven District 49 students were recognized at the event.

The base released the following information about the celebration, "This event celebrates all of the hard work, dedication and accomplishments your scholars have achieved in school. This event also serves to honor the family spirit and unity within our military and school community as we come together to send our youth into the world."

District 49 students recognized included: Hannah Elizabeth Goodwin, FHS, Calvin Kirkham, FHS, Aubrey Thomas, FHS, Katie Tompkins, FHS, Zachary Wilson, FHS, Krystina Haygood, SCHS, Emma K. Scheitzach, SCHS, Shirley Victory, SCHS, Macey Van Vleck, SSAE, Miranda Apodaca, VRHS, and Hope Lancaster, VRHS.

District 49 Board of Education president John Graham, Chief Education Officer Peter Hilts, Director of Culture and Services Dr. Lou Fletcher and Military Student Transition Consultant Melissa Dashner all drove in the parade as they cheered on graduates.



Vista Ridge High School graduate Hope Lancaster waves to friends and family. (District 49/Amy Bremser)



D49 Board of Education president John Graham drives in PAFB parade. (District 49/Amy Bremser)



Monday, August 3
D49 Staff Prep Week Begins

Friday, August 7

POWER Zone Elementary Schools Orientation (By appointment only, info will come from your PZ school)

Friday, August 7
First Day for All Other D49 K, 6th & 9th

Monday, August 10
All D49 Students Return to Learn

D49 Charter schedules may vary - Stay plugged in @ d49.org/iconnect



AND CAN BE COMPLETED FROM THE COMFORT OF HOME

TO REGISTER A NEW STUDENT

Visit www.D49.org/enrollment

TO NOTIFY D49 OF A RETURNING STUDENT

Please use Parent Portal within Powerschool to access the form!

HAVE QUESTIONS? NEED HELP?

Send an email to registration@d49.org
Talk to us through the LiveChat chat button on d49.org
Call us at 719-213-0335 (Spanish or English)



Helpful Links on D49.org

Services & Information

49 Pathways

D49.org/49Pathways

Before and After School Care D49.org/Base49

Board of Education

D49.org/BOE

Bus Service Fees

D49.org/BusFees

Enrollment

D49.org/Enrollment

Financial Information

D49.org/FinancialTransparency

Gifted Education D49.org/Gifted

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Human Resources D49.org/HR

Map

D49.org/Map

Meal Fees D49.org/MealFees

Mill Levy Oversight Committee D49.org/MLO-Oversight

Nutrition Services

D49.org/Nutrition
School Calendar

D49.org/Calendar

School Nurses

D49.org/Nursing

Special Education

D49.org/SPED

Transportation D49.org/Transportation

Direct to the Schools

Falcon Zone:

Falcon High School D49.org/FHS

Falcon Middle School D49.org/FMS

Bennett Ranch Elementary School

D49.org/BRES
Falcon Elementary School of

Technology
D49.org/FESoT

Meridian Ranch Elementary School D49.org/MRES

Woodmen Hills Elementary School D49.org/WHES

POWER Zone:

Vista Ridge High School D49.org/VRHS

Skyview Middle School D49.org/SMS

Academy for Literacy, Learning & Innovation Excellence D49.org/ALLIES

Inspiration View Elementary School D49.org/IVES

Odyssey Elementary School D49.org/OES

Ridgeview Elementary School D49.org/RVES

Stetson Elementary School D49.org/SES

Sand Creek Zone:

Sand Creek High School D49.org/SCHS

Horizon Middle School D49.org/HMS

Evans Elementary School D49.org/EES

Remington Elementary School D49.org/RES

Springs Ranch Elementary School D49.org/SRES

iConnect Zone:

Banning Lewis Academy D49.org/BLA

Falcon Homeschool Program

D49.org/FHP

GOAL Academy D49.org/GOAL

Grand Peak Academy D49.org/GPA

Liberty Tree Academy D49.org/LTA Mountain View Academy D49.org/MVA

Patriot High School D49.org/PHS

Pikes Peak Early College D49.org/PPEC

Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning D49.org/PPSEL **Power Technical**

D49.org/PTEC

Rocky Mountain Classical Academy D49.org/RMCA

Springs Studio for Academic Excellence D49.org/SSAE

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CALENDAR
RSS, iCAL Feeds at D49.org

	July 2020							
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July 3 District Closed for July 4th Holiday
July 24New Teacher Orientation
July 29 Teachers Return From Summer Break
Aug. 3D49 Staff Prep Week Begins
Aug. 7 POWER Zone Elementary School Orientation
Aug. 7 First Day For All Other D49 K, 6th, & 9th
Aug. 10 All D49 Students Return to Learn
Sept. 4 Professional Development, No Students
Sept. 7 District Closed for Labor Day
Sept. 25 Elementary Work Day, No Elementary Students
Sept. 30 End of Qtr. 1
Oct. 9Parent Teacher Conferences, No Students
Oct. 12-23Schools Closed for Fall Break
Nov. 11Schools Open for Veterans Day
Nov. 23-27Schools Closed for Thanksgiving Break
Nov. 25-27District Closed for Thanksgiving
Dec. 11 Elementary Assessment Day*
Dec. 17 & 18 High School Finals Schedule
Dec. 18 End of Qtr. 2
Dec. 18Elementary & Middle School Early Release

Jan. 1 District Closed for New Year's Day
Jan. 1-5Schools Closed for Holiday Break
Jan. 6 Professional Development, No Students
Jan. 7Students Return from Holiday Break
Jan. 18 District Closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Feb. 12Parent Teacher Conferences, No Students
Feb. 15 District Closed for Presidents Day
Feb. 16 Elementary PD Day, No Elementary Students
March 5 End of Qtr. 3
March 12 Professional Development, No Students
March 15-26Schools Closed for Spring Break

Dec. 21-31.....Schools Closed for Holiday Break

Dec. 24-31.....District Closed for Holiday Break

May	7Elementary Assessment Day*
May	14 Professional Development, No Students
May	26Last Day for Preschool
May	27 & 28 High School Finals Schedule
May	28End of Qtr. 4
May	28Elementary & Middle School Early Release
May	29 High School Graduation Ceremonies
May	31 District Closed for Memorial Day
June	2Teachers' Last Day

7	<u> </u>	. Important Da
5	Elementary school assessment days are used tudent progress at different points in the school rebsites for information on schedule impacts at	year. See school

	Important Date
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1	District Closed

January 2021								
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Check school websites for campus-specific events at D49.org

SCHOOL DISTRICT 49

10850 East Woodmen Road • Peyton, CO 80831 | P: 719.495.1100

July 13, 2020 District 49 Dispatch

Falcon Zone Mascot Lunch Party



Falcon Elementary School of Technology staff pose with Falcon Zone mascots who helped with meal distribution May 14. (District 49/Aaron Villescas)



Falcon Elementary School of Technology Assistant Principal Paula Kavalec (left) and D49 Chief Operations Officer Pedro Almeida (right) grab a photo with the Falcon Zone mascots at FESoT May 14. (District 49/Aaron Villescas)

By D49 Communications Department

Recognize these faces? The Falcon Zone mascots teamed up to lend a hand with meal distribution at Falcon Elementary School of Technology Thursday, May 14. The district nutrition services team supported students and families by providing grab-and-go meals at three campuses throughout the season of E49. It was a big job, and a real treat to have a few extra hands to show some care for the D49 Family while spreading some school spirit!



Falcon Zone mascots wave to families during the meal distribution May 14. (District 49/ Aaron Villescas)



Springs Studio Addition Coming online August 2020!

IN COLORADO SPRINGS

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