

## Praise, Encouragement, and Feedback

### What do the experts say?

Spring is always a tough time of year in school. CSAPs are looming, we all have cabin fever, and students and teachers can be caught looking longingly out the window. This has been a particularly tough spring with talks of budget cuts and dwindling resources. This is a great time to refresh what you know about praise, encouragement and feedback in your classroom.

Jere Brophy writes: **“Effective praise can be informative as well as reinforcing, can provide encouragement and support, and can help teachers establish friendly relationships with students.”** He goes on to say that praise should be specific, and should attribute success to **effort and ability**. An important finding of his extensive research on effective praise is that it should not be controlling, as in, “I really like what you did”, but rather designed to build internal or intrinsic motivation as in, “You must be really proud of yourself to have been so resourceful to find the right research materials for your persuasive essay.” An interesting part of his research is that praise is best if given privately.

Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish suggest that we describe what a child did well and sum it up in a word. **“You picked up all the papers on the floor; now that is what I call considerate.”** Descriptive praise helps students learn the meaning of such terms as *candid, consistent, flexible, organized, responsible, perseverance, honesty, purposeful, etc.*

Grant Wiggins writes, **“Feedback is not about praise or blame, approval or disappointment. Feedback is value-neutral. It describes what you did and did not do.... Praise is necessary but praise only keeps you in the game. It doesn’t get you any better.”** Many rubrics use judgmental language like “excellent or good”, which is evaluation rather than feedback. We want to give as much objective and nonjudgmental feedback as we can by using carefully constructed rubrics or other means so students can begin to self-assess. Use terms such as “had 3 examples of figurative language” or “solved problem using more than one variable” instead of using value-laden words.

All three—**praise, encouragement, and feedback**—are needed to help students feel good about their learning and to improve and grow. At this time, more than ever, remember to use all three in large doses this spring, and don’t forget to share some with your colleagues as well.

## Race to the Top

According to a press release from the Colorado Department of Education, Colorado has been selected as one of 16 finalists in the federal Race to the Top educational stimulus program.

Over the next six weeks, the State will be preparing the entire proposal for review in Washington. Generally, it is believed the State has a solid chance with the proposal. Although one point that the United States Department of Education may be critical of is the major Colorado rescission in funds this year. Initially, this amount was \$691K for our district, but was an additional rescission of \$120K was added recently. Fortunately, we had the reserves to withstand this additional amount. Vody Hermann, the chief CDE financial planner, cannot stress enough the need for continuing reserves over the next five years. Our plans is to use these reserves annually to continue on the most critical “life, health, and safety” building issues and provide relief for the Budget Task Force proposals.

As you will remember, our School Board passed a resolution supporting *Race to the Top*. If the state is successful in their application it is very likely we will be part of the state initiatives. Approximately 75% of the State’s 178 districts have joined the process. Potentially, hurdles that all districts face is a revision of teacher and administrator evaluation systems to include student achievement information, and the acceptance of federal core area standards. We will keep you posted on *Race to the Top* development.

## School District Awarded Grant for Educational Appraisal

Our School District has been awarded a \$105K grant from the Colorado Department of Education for a comprehensive appraisal of the district’s achievement efforts.

Connie Vincent, the Director of Curriculum, Assessment and Title I, announced the award at the last School Board meeting. A group of education leaders from around the state will visit each of Delta County’s 19 schools, including the Vision schools, this fall. The group, which in the past has been made of up school superintendents, curriculum experts and other school staff, will be here for one week to do the appraisals.

A Comprehensive Appraisal for District Improvement will be prepared for each school, and a report presented to the district of the group’s findings. The group will be interviewing parents, teachers, administrators and community leaders in the appraisal process, to see what areas the district needs to work on to improve education, and which areas are working well.

The grant was awarded in part, she said, because the district has been unable to make Adequate Yearly Progress goals in some sub-groups. The report will hopefully direct district staff to make changes that will improve those yearly results.

A sizeable part of the grant, about 2/3 will fund the audit, where approximately one-third will help to fund efforts like CAT, and formative assessments. (Portions of article courtesy of the DCI.)

## Public Employees Retirements Association (PERA) PERA Employer Contribution Rate

PERA Rate Chart									
	1/1/2010	1/1/2011	1/1/2012	1/1/2013	1/1/2014	1/1/2015	1/1/2016	1/1/2017	1/1/2018
<b>Standard contribution rate</b>	10.15%	10.15%	10.15%	10.15%	10.15%	10.15%	10.15%	10.15%	10.15%
<b>Amortization Equalization Adjustment</b>	2.20%	2.60%	3.00%	3.40%	3.80%	4.20%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%
<b>Supplemental AED</b>	1.50%	2.00%	2.50%	3.00%	3.50%	4.00%	4.50%	5.00%	5.50%
<b>Total Employer Contribution</b>	13.85%	14.75%	15.65%	16.55%	17.45%	18.35%	19.15%	19.65%	20.15%
<b>Increment Contribution Change</b>	3.20%	4.10%	5.00%	5.90%	6.80%	7.70%	8.50%	9.00%	9.50%
<b>Employee Contribution Percentage</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>

The above chart is an important and informative review of the changing financial picture for the employer's rate of PERA contribution. Although you can see from the last line, the employee's portion is expected to remain the same over the next eight years, the contribution rate is far different for the employer's portion.

Annually, the employer's portion takes nearly a 1% jump. PERA explains that it is important for districts to get the message to staff that this one percent should be considered as part of any salary increase. This is a difficult suggestion for our district employees when it appears that salary freezes are going to be recommended for the fall budget. It is true in a general sense that retirement fund stabilization is an employee benefit. The retirement program is protected and current employees will benefit from a solid retirement program in the future. However, the 1% increase per year from the employer to PERA does not "put bread on the table" next year.

### The Budget Task Force Consensus Approach To Decision Making

**Consensus** = All points of view have been heard, and the will of the group is evident even to those who most oppose it.

- ◆ We use this model with all sub-groups, budget task force, and School Board. Representatives of all groups must represent their constituency.
- ◆ We pledge to actively listen to all minority opinions/concerns and evaluate all dissenting opinions.
- ◆ Once the will of the group is known, we will support the process and not actively oppose the final decision.

Each of the proposals used this screen to develop consensus. Most of the initiatives (next column) were unanimous or 17 to 3 or 4 with the dissenting opinions agreeing with the statement, "I can live with it."

### 'Draft' of Budget Task Force Focus

<u>Short Term Alternatives</u>	<u>Projected Savings</u>
Reduce District Staff by 2 Work Days	\$300,000
Eliminate Funding for College Classes	150,000
Increase Employee Health Premium Contribution	360,000
Reduce Bus Transportation Costs by 10%	114,000
Intra School Consolidation (reduction in staff)	850,000
Change Qualifying Hours for Health Insurance	20,000
Reduce Food for Meetings	35,000
Eliminate General Fund Support for Food Service	150,000
Reduce Training/In-Service (out of class)	9,000
Reduce Copier/Paper Costs by 10%	25,000
Reduce Extra-Curricular Cost (by 10%)	100,000

**"Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall."**

...Stephen R. Covey

## PRESS RELEASE

**This Press Release from the Board of Education should start appearing in the newspapers tomorrow.**

For Immediate Release MARCH 8, 2010

Contact: Bob Tweedell, Board President 874-6122

### DELTA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION ANNOUNCES INTENT TO EMPLOY NEW SUPERINTENDENT

Delta, CO. As announced February 25 at the regular School Board meeting, the Delta County School Board has negotiated an employment contract with Edward D. Longfield to be the next Superintendent of Schools, starting June 15, 2010. The School Board expects this contract to be ratified at the next regular School Board meeting. The Superintendent's position was made vacant by the retirement of the current Superintendent, Mike McMillan.

"The Board is very pleased that it has been able to hire Mr. Longfield," said Board President Bob Tweedell. We unanimously believe that he is highly qualified to be the next Superintendent and is the best candidate for the position.

Mr. Longfield is well-acquainted with the Delta School District, having worked for the district in various capacities from 1991 to 2009. He was a teacher at Delta High School, Principal of Paonia Elementary School, Personnel Director, and most recently Assistant Superintendent for 3 years. He has been the Superintendent at Manitou Springs School District 14 during the 2009-2010 school year.

"Mr. Longfield has been involved with various practices and programs put into place by the current Superintendent, Mike McMillan. It is expected that Mr. Longfield will continue with these same practices and programs, thereby insuring a high level of continuity and leadership stability in the District," Tweedell said. "This continuity includes such things as professional learning communities, curriculum alignment, teacher evaluation practices, setting high expectations for students and staff, BEST financing to help build Cedaredge Elementary School, other building improvements, use of data, and student assessment techniques."

The Board has carefully considered the pros and cons of the various methods of choosing a new Superintendent. After much thought and deliberation, the Board decided not to do a "search," if Mr. Longfield could be hired, because the board considered him to be the logical replacement for Mr. McMillan. The Board consulted with its legal counsel and was advised that a search is not required. Other area school districts have recently hired superintendents and did not do a search.

"The district saved a significant amount of money and staff time by not engaging in a lengthy, time consuming, and expensive search process. This is important when we are being required to cut an estimated \$2.6 million from the budget for the 2010-2011 fiscal year" Tweedell said.

Mr. Tweedell also states, "The Board also notes that it has been very pleased with the performance of our current Superintendent, Mr. McMillan. He, along with all of the District's teachers and other staff, have accomplished a great deal in the areas of student achievement, graduation rates, increasing the fund balance, operation of the Delta Montrose Technical College, obtaining a significant grant for the remodeling of the old Cedaredge Middle School into a new Cedaredge Elementary School, encouragement of the VISION School concept, and growth of early childhood education, just to name a few items. The District is well positioned to receive significant funding from the U.S. Department of Education's "Race to the Top" initiative because of the efforts of Mr. McMillan, Mr. Longfield, and many other dedicated employees. If the District is able to receive such funds, this will save Delta County taxpayers money in the long run. The Board thanks Mr. McMillan for his 39 years of service to the District and wishes him well in his retirement."



## Thoughts and Concerns

- ◆ Congratulations to **Laurie Miles**, preschool aide, and her husband, on the arrival of their son, Gavin.
- ◆ Our thoughts go out to **Maureen Ayers**, teacher at Hotchkiss K-8. Her daughter, Meghan, has been undergoing treatments in Denver. We wish Meghan a speedy recovery.
- ◆ Our thoughts go out to **Ben Magtutu**, teacher at Paonia Jr./Sr. High School. He recently had surgery. We wish Ben a speedy recovery.
- ◆ Our thoughts go out to **Carla Cabrere**, aide at Lincoln Elementary School. Her husband recently had surgery. We wish him a speedy recovery.
- ◆ Our thoughts go out to **Elisa Galvan**, aide at Lincoln Elementary School. She recently had surgery. We wish her a speedy recovery.
- ◆ Our thoughts go out to **Marty Chartier**, hearing specialist at Special Service, and her husband, Steve, in the loss of Steve's mother.



## Why we strive for 100%

### If 99.9% were good enough then...

- Two million documents will be lost by the IRS this year.
- 811,000 faulty rolls of 35mm film will be loaded this year.
- 22,000 checks will be deducted from the wrong accounts within the next 60 minutes.
- 12 babies will be given to the wrong parents each day.
- 1314 phone calls will be misplaced by telecommunication services every minute.
- 268,500 defective tires will be shipped this year.
- 14,208 defective computers will be shipped this year.
- 103,260 income tax forms will be processed incorrectly this year.
- 2,488,200 books will be shipped in the next 12 months with the wrong cover.
- 2 airplanes landing today at O'Hare in Chicago will be unsafe.
- 18,322 pieces of mail will be mishandled in the next hour.
- 291 pacemaker operations will be performed incorrectly this year.
- 880,000 credit cards in circulation will turn out to have incorrect information on their magnetic strips.
- 114,500 mismatched pairs of shoes will be shipped this year.
- \$761,900 will be spent in the next 12 months on tapes and CDs that won't play.
- 107 incorrect medical procedures will be performed by the end of the day today.
- 315 entries in Webster's 3rd International Dictionary of the English Language will turn out to be misspelled.

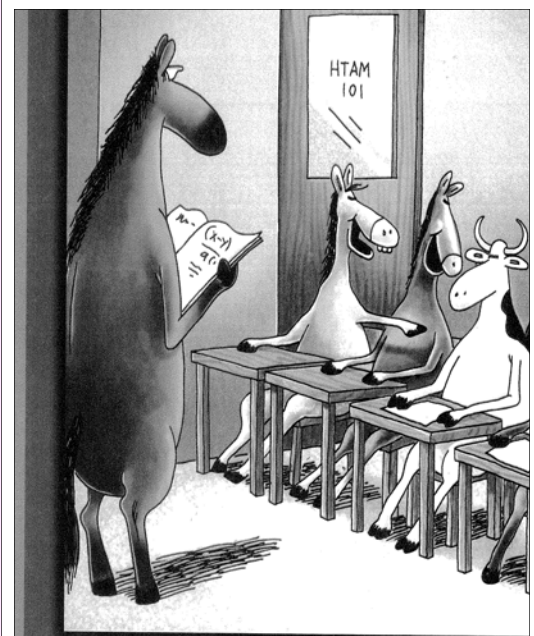
Over 300 students in Delta County Schools will be unsuccessful, or fail in their work.

So the question is... if your child was one of the 300 who did not succeed, would you be okay with it?

Source: InSight, Syncrude, Canada Ltd., Communications Division

## Calendar

- March 9 Principals' Meeting @ D.O. at 8:00 a.m.**  
**Coordinating Council @ D.O. at 4:00 p.m.**
- March 17 Delayed Start Day**
- March 18 School Board Meeting @ Crawford K-8 School**  
Policy Review at 6:00 p.m.  
Regular Meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- March 23 Classified Council @ D.O. at 12:15 p.m.**  
**Budget Task Force @ Delta Center at 5:30 p.m.**
- April 6 District Accountability Meeting @ D.O. at 6:15 p.m.**
- April 12-16 Spring Break**



Her answer off by miles, Sheila's "cow sense" was always a target of ridicule.