


# The Five Star FOCUS

VOLUME 2

2022-2023



*A PLACE  
FOR you*

Adams12   
Five Star Schools

# A letter from the superintendent

**CHRIS GDOWSKI**



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**COMMUNITY AND OPPORTUNITY DRAW FAMILIES TO CHOOSE** Adams 12 Five Star Schools as a place for their children to learn, grow and excel. As a child, I called the Five Star District home, and as a parent and the superintendent, I continue to value how our district and schools welcome our students and ensure that no matter their strengths or needs, there's a supportive community here for them.

One of our guiding goals in Adams 12 Five Star Schools is to know every student by name, strength and need and to ensure access, opportunity and a sense of belonging for each student. This is the foundation to elevating student success.

Whether your child is just beginning their learning journey with us, or is embarking on their final years before graduation, there's "a place for you" in Adams 12 Five Star Schools. In this year's edition of *The Five Star Focus*, you'll find inspiring stories of how our students and staff experience a sense of belonging, including:

- **Home Team:** Barrier-breaking coach eyes new challenge (Page 18)
- **Seen and Known:** District Deaf/Hard of Hearing program gives students a place to thrive (Page 10)
- **Difference Maker:** Five Star graduates thank former teacher who made all the difference (Page 8)
- **A Place to Shine:** Gifted and Advanced Pathway puts students on path to success (Page 14)
- **Home Sweet Home:** Construction students build tiny houses for at-risk youth (Page 6)

These stories provide a personal touch into how we live out our strengths in the Five Star District - Care, Collaborate, Empower, Engage and Focus on Students.

Welcome! We're excited to provide "a place for you" in our family of schools.

*Chris Gdowski*

# The Five Star FOCUS

2022-2023



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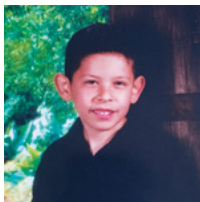
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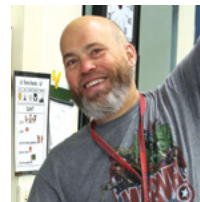
## Table of contents



**PAGE 4**  
*Homegrown Staff*



**PAGE 6**  
*Home Sweet Home*



**PAGE 8**  
*Difference Maker*



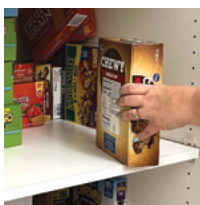
**PAGE 10**  
*Seen and Known*



**PAGE 12**  
*Embracing our  
Community*



**PAGE 14**  
*A Place to Shine*



**PAGE 16**  
*Helping Hands*



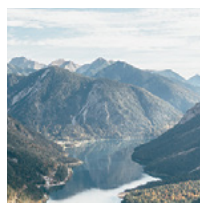
**PAGE 18**  
*Home Team*



**PAGE 20**  
*2016 Bond Delivered*



**PAGE 22**  
*Future Focused*



**PAGE 23**  
*ELEVATE in Action*



**PAGE 24**  
*Five Star Snapshots*



**PAGE 26**  
*School Directory*

# ***A PLACE FOR*** *you*

ENROLL TODAY! [www.adams12.org/enroll](http://www.adams12.org/enroll)

No matter what your child's passions are or what unique learning opportunity they're looking for, there's a *home* for them in Adams 12 Five Star Schools.

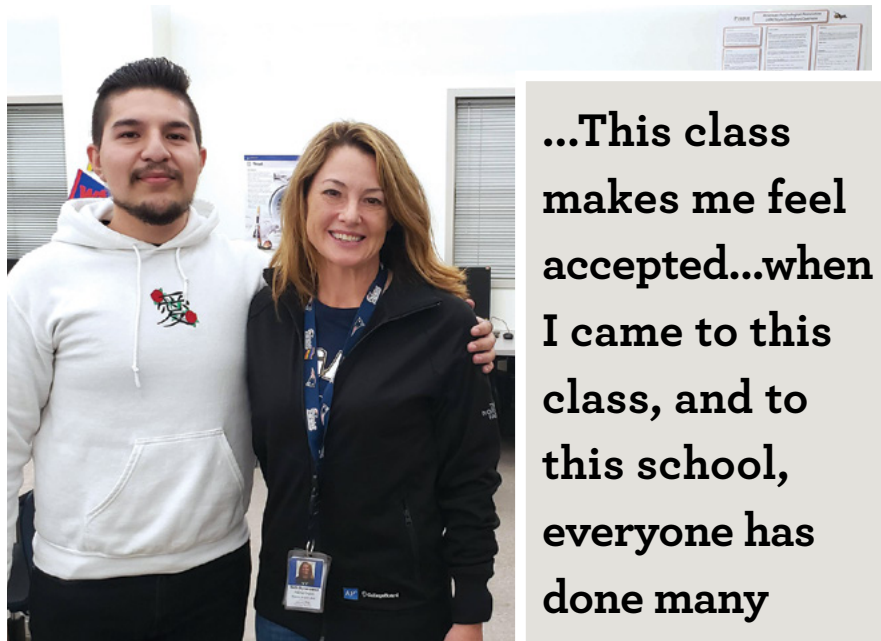


"I've worked for the district for 23 years. There are students who still reach out to me just to say 'you made a difference in my life.'"

Lorraine Nichols, office manager

I've been so happy and so fortunate in the opportunities and the experiences that I've had. It just feels like home. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

Jennifer Kover, teacher



Christian and Ms. Bynarowicz, English teacher

...This class makes me feel accepted...when I came to this class, and to this school, everyone has done many things for me.

Christian, student



**Mr. Seifarth would walk with me in the mornings, and it felt really good to have someone to talk to.**

Samantha, student

*Samantha and Mr. Seifarth, P.E. teacher*

**“What makes it home for us, is watching him thrive and be happy when he goes to school.”**

Jami Fries, parent



*Preston and Miss Joni, health aide*

**Miss Joni helped me... always making sure I’m on top of it. Always there as emotional support. Just there as a friend. Every day I saw her and she’s the one who helped me through it.**

Preston, student

**“I want them to know that they’ve found their home, ... and we’ll do whatever it takes to make them successful.”**

Peter Ziltz, teacher

# Homegrown STAFF

*Staff serve students  
in the district that  
helped them thrive*

**FOR MANY OF OUR EDUCATORS,** fellow certified and classified staff, and administrators, serving students in the Five Star District is like coming home. Many have spent their entire careers here – and some have even been here since they were students themselves. Take a look at a few of those people who have decided to give back to the community where they grew up.



**SHARLA KACZAR**  
Principal at The Studio School

**SHARLA KACZAR CAN REMEMBER** every teacher she's had since she was a kindergartener at Thornton Elementary.

She can recall the teachers who welcomed her with warm smiles on the first day of school, mentored her, or, in one case, named her emcee of her middle school's talent show, something that bolstered her confidence as a leader – and perhaps planted the seeds that would move her to one day lead The Studio School, the district's arts-integration magnet school.

"My teachers inspired me to do different things," she said. "They inspired me in ways that still help me to this day."

After serving students at many schools across the district, Ms. Kaczar now helps them thrive through visual and performing arts at a school where creative expression is woven into every lesson.

"I am so grateful for all the opportunities the district has given me to be where I am today," she said. "And I want to be in a place where others get those same opportunities and access. The staff here bend over backwards to make that happen. I see it daily."

**ATTENDED:**  
Thornton Elementary  
Meritt Hutton Jr. Sr. High (closed in 1992)  
Thornton High School

**JENNIFER HOPKINS STILL REMEMBERS** a business class at Northglenn High School that changed her life. In that class, she learned how to do her taxes, write a resume and letters of interest, and even how to interview for a job. As part of the course, students also found work – sometimes with local businesses and sometimes at the district. And that’s how her career with the Five Star District began nearly three decades ago.

She worked in the transportation department for 11 months her senior year, earning both class credit and a paycheck. When she was getting ready to graduate, a full-time position was opening up and her teachers encouraged her to apply.

“I really credit that class with me getting the job because it taught you work skills, life skills and the things you need to be set up for success,” she said.

Her role has evolved over the years. She first began as a data entry clerk, then worked as a business support technician and is now the transportation support specialist.

“It’s been kind of neat seeing the way the district has grown and changed,” she said.

Jennifer is specifically amazed by the new classes available for students through FutureForward – the district’s career and technical education pathway.

**ATTENDED:**  
 North Star Elementary  
 Stukey Elementary  
 Pecos Jr. High (now STEM Launch)  
 Northglenn High School



**JENNIFER HOPKINS**  
 Transportation Specialist



**FERNANDO ZAMORA**  
 Music Teacher at McElwain Elementary

**BY THE TIME HE WAS FOUR YEARS OLD**, Fernando Zamora knew he wanted to be a violinist. As a high school student at Mountain Range High School, he had decided how he would turn this dream into a career.

“I said ‘I want to teach music,’” he said. “It was my teacher. She was very passionate about her teaching, and she really cared about teaching us and giving us opportunities to play. I knew that was the kind of teacher I wanted to be.”

Now a music teacher at McElwain Elementary, Mr. Zamora works to inspire his students the same way, with carefully planned lessons, and music selections he thinks they’ll enjoy.

“It’s really a privilege to serve at Adams 12,” he said. “It’s where most of my education comes from, and it’s neat to be able to serve the district that served me. I get to give back.”

**ATTENDED:**  
 Woodglen Elementary  
 Century Middle School  
 Mountain Range High School



# Home SWEET Home



View exclusive  
videos and articles.  
**SCAN NOW**

## *Construction students build tiny houses for at-risk youth*

**THIS YEAR, CONSTRUCTION STUDENTS** at Washington Square built the first of five tiny homes. These homes will go to young people who are aging out of foster care.

“I think the idea is cool because we’re not only able to learn about construction elements, but we’re also able to give back to our community,” says Luca Mastroeni, one of the students building the tiny homes in the Advanced Principles of Construction class.

The tiny home has a loft sleeping space, living room, kitchen and bathroom, all compacted to make the most of the small space. The home is only 190 square feet but offers a world of independence to its new owners.

The class instructor, Aaron Cooper, is proud to prepare his students not just to build a home, but to build a career. The Construction Pathway takes students through courses over several years where they’ll learn and hone skills in areas like



Construction students working on the inside of the tiny house.



Finished and staged version of the tiny house open for tours during the ribbon cutting.



Aaron Cooper and Marv Lewis cutting the ribbon.



“These houses are going to create a place that they can call home and they can thrive.”

*Shannon Hancock,  
Five Star Education Foundation Executive Director*

HVAC, plumbing and electricity, and ends with a professional internship with a local business.

“We’re doing everything in the tiny homes that we do in the real world,” Cooper says. “Our students are learning a trade where they’ll be able to go to work right after high school.”

The project has helped the students build not only their skills, but also their confidence and sense of connection to their community.

On May 10, 2022, students cut the ribbon on the first home. They proudly stood in front of the house, each one of them cutting a piece of the ribbon to take home to remember the time they spent on the project and the contribution they made to their community.

“It’s been amazing to see this year of hard work come together. Today we turn this house into a home,” said student Joselyn Lechuga at the ribbon cutting.

The project was originally planned to be built and sold to cover future costs, but a local donor (Bob Lembke of 70 Ranch) passionate about helping kids in foster care made expanding the project possible with his large donation to the Five Star Education Foundation.

Foundation Executive Director Shannon Hancock is working with Access Housing and a coalition of local nonprofits to create the tiny home village for young adults to finish their education and launch into the next phase of their lives in their very own home in Adams County.

“There’s a large population of our students that are experiencing homelessness, and those aging out of the system have nowhere to go,” says Hancock. “These houses are going to create a place that they can call home and they can thrive. It’s about the community wrapping big arms around these kids to have a place they call home.” ★

## BY THE NUMBERS

**25** different career pathways offered through CTE programming

**8,916** students enrolled in CTE courses

**2** dedicated CTE campuses

**5** comprehensive high schools offer integrated programming

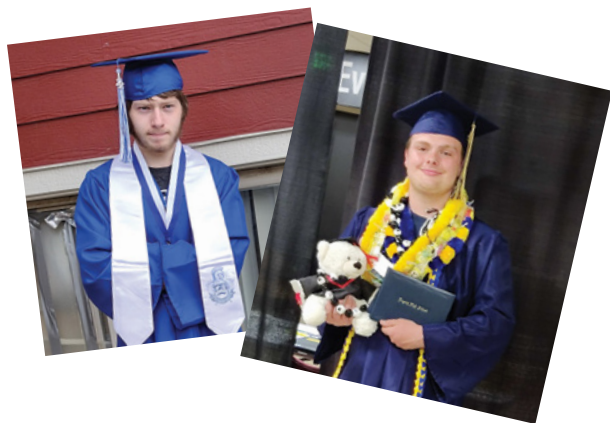


# Difference MAKER

*Five Star graduates thank former teacher who made all the difference*

**“I want them to know that they’ve found their home, and we’re going to build those relationships and connections with them and do whatever it takes to make them successful.”**

*Peter Ziltz, Rocky Mountain Elementary Teacher*



**WHEN CHACE UNDERWOOD WALKED ACROSS THE STAGE** at Thornton High School’s graduation, he was thinking about a teacher who changed his life more than a decade ago.

Chace doesn’t hesitate to say that without Rocky Mountain Elementary’s affective needs teacher Peter Ziltz, he doesn’t think he would have graduated. Chace first met Ziltz, or Mr. Z, as students call him, when he was a withdrawn and struggling first grader. By the time Chace moved on to middle school, he had progressed by leaps and bounds and was ready for his next challenge.

“He taught me how to read and write,” Chace said. “He’s the reason why I was able to pass.”

That’s why before he graduated, he and his mom wanted to stop by Rocky Mountain Elementary one last time to say “thank you,” a full 12 years since he was last in Mr. Z’s class. These types of visits aren’t uncommon for Mr. Z, who has been a Five Star educator for 24 years. Nathan Wagner, another former student, and his mother, Kourtney, also paid his old teacher a visit prior to his graduation from Legacy High School.

Mr. Z is the kind of teacher who leaves a lasting impression – the kind of teacher you remember. And no matter how many years have passed since he last saw them, Mr. Z always remembers them, too.

“You can feel the love when you get to his classroom,” Nathan’s mother, Kourtney, said. “I was nervous because I hadn’t seen him in so long. I didn’t know if he’d remember us, but he knew exactly who we were, and we picked up where we left off. It was like we never left.”

Mr. Z keeps a wall of fame in his classroom with photos of all of the students he’s worked with over the years.



Nathan with Mr. Z



Chace with Mr. Z

“They move their picture over to the wall when they’re ready to leave, and it’s pretty powerful,” he said. “Whenever they come back to visit, it’s a testament to what we were able to do together here.”

When Chace first started in Mr. Z’s class his mom, Lindsey, remembers his incredible shyness, and that he wasn’t speaking much. Mr. Z brought him out of his shell.

“He would figure out ways to best help Chace, specifically for him, the things that would help him the best,” she said. “Chace would come home and tell me ‘Mr. Z did tai chi with me to help with my breathing, or counting exercises.’ Those kinds of things really helped. Without him, I don’t think Chace or I would be where we are today.”

Nathan also remembers Mr. Z working with him to find out exactly what he needed to learn and grow.

“I had a hard time dealing with things and would get stressed out super easily,” he said. “Mr. Z gave me a lot of coping mechanisms and ways to calm down, things to help me be aware of my surroundings, and allowing myself to just think before I act.”

Mr. Z treats his students with respect and high expectations, Rocky Mountain Principal Kate Vogel said. His patience, sense of humor and generosity make students feel safe.

“He respects them, and they respect him,” she said. “He is really good about sharing himself with these kids. He shares stories about his own family and brings his own experiences into the work so students get to know him not just as an affective needs teacher, but as a human being.”

Mr. Z sees all of his students this way, too. He knows there’s no one-size-fits-all solution for them. He spends time figuring out what will work best for each child, based on their specific needs.

“I want them to know that they’ve found their home, and we’re going to build those relationships and connections with them and do whatever it takes to make them successful,” he said. “For each kid, it’s different.” ★



# Seen and KNOWN

***District Deaf/  
Hard of Hearing  
program gives  
students a place  
to thrive***

**IT'S ALMOST SHOWTIME FOR KINDERGARTENER NATHAN FRIES**, and he's beaming from ear to ear. He and his Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing classmates at Mountain View Elementary are about to present their final project, How to Be "Deaf Friendly," to a classroom of adults including family, teachers and the school principal.

Nathan is one of about 60 students at Mountain View Elementary who are a part of the Adams 12 Five Star Schools center-based Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) program. The program serves students from preschool through 12th grade and tracks from Mountain View to Westlake Middle School and Legacy High School which are all located in Broomfield.

"Representation matters," DHH teacher Jenna Harris said. "It's important for kids to see others who are like them. At Mountain View, our kiddos have role models and can also be role models for younger students. It's powerful."

**“...what makes it home for us,  
is watching him thrive and be  
happy when he goes to school.”**

*Jami Fries, parent*

This center-based program is one-of-a-kind in Colorado. In addition to serving families who live in the Five Star District, the program draws students from surrounding districts without adequate support for DHH students, such as DHH programs, qualified interpreters, or DHH teachers.

“I know there are a lot of families in Colorado that really want the supports for their DHH child like what Mountain View has,” Nathan’s mom Jami Fries said. The Fries family lives in Mead, which is located in another school district.

“When we had Nathan, he actually was born hearing and he lost his hearing, all of it, at six months old,” she said. “He is profoundly deaf in both ears.”

Nathan has cochlear implants, electronic devices that help provide a sense of sound.

“He does really like wearing them,” his mom said. “He likes access to sound. He chooses to speak, but he really needs that extra sign language piece to understand new concepts, which of course is what school is.”

The teaching philosophy of the DHH program in Adams 12 Five Star Schools is Total Communication. That means educating children with hearing loss that incorporates all means of communication; formal signs, natural gestures, fingerspelling, body language, listening, lipreading, speech and pictures. This philosophy is what drew Harris, a 20-year veteran DHH teacher, to join the program after graduate school.

“We follow the child’s preferred method of communication and expand on it using a variety of communication techniques,” she said. “I believe this philosophy empowers students by providing them with multiple means of communicating their thoughts, ideas and feelings.”

And that’s just the kind of environment Nathan needs and thrives in.

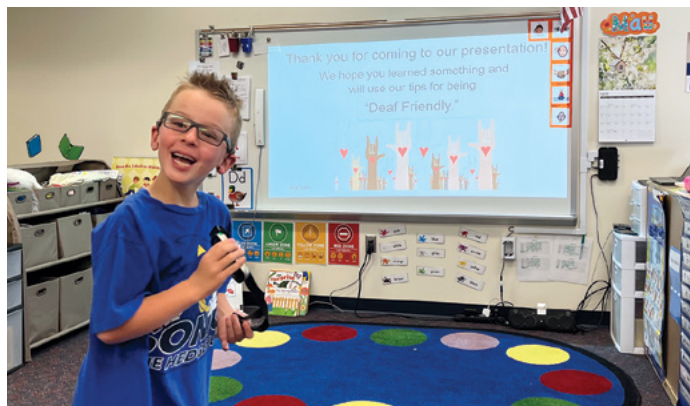
“We have just been so happy with Adams 12,” his mom said. “Just having access to everything within the school, visually, all of the sign language access around the school, the TVs, teachers of the Deaf, the speech therapists, and the aides; it’s just been such an inclusive environment. He has just been thriving.”

Nathan’s favorite part of school is when they get to go to “centers.” Centers allow students to explore areas of interest to them and engage in hands-on learning activities. So what’s Nathan’s favorite center?

“Hmmm,” he said. “Trains!!! I went on The Polar Express before.” He went on to share that he’s good at building train tracks and writing about trains.

Outside their learning in the general education classroom, Harris teaches the kindergarteners self-advocacy skills so they can learn how to advocate for themselves and their needs.

In the presentation about How to Be “Deaf Friendly,” the students showcase all they’ve learned about self-advocacy,



Nathan celebrates his class presentation about How to be “Deaf Friendly.”

empathy, self-love and inclusive practices. They also demonstrate the academic growth they’ve made, like Nathan learning to read entire paragraphs.

“Thank you for coming to our presentation,” Nathan said to a classroom full of adults. “We hope you learned something and will use our tips for being ‘Deaf Friendly.’”

“For me, I just love seeing the growth and he’s doing amazing,” his mom said. “That really has to do with the patience and thinking outside the box, and his teachers do such an amazing job with that.”

“Quite honestly the most happy part is watching Nathan come home being so happy, and he’s got so many friends in the classroom and the stories he comes home with. That for me is what makes it home for us, is watching him thrive and be happy when he goes to school.” ★

## BY THE NUMBERS

**7** school districts have students attending the Five Star District’s DHH Program

**~100** students in grades Preschool-12 participate in the center-based DHH Program

**65** staff members directly support DHH students



# Embracing our COMMUNITY

*Families connect with district,  
others through parent groups*

**“AIPAC provides a respectful, supportive and safe place for my family and me to be connected.”**

*Melissa Clyde, a parent and leader*

**ADAMS 12 FIVE STAR SCHOOLS IS PROUD** of its diverse population. Students and families of all different cultures and backgrounds call the Five Star community home. Families and students feel connected by celebrating their cultural diversity alongside district staff and community partners through a number of district and school groups.

The Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC) and American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC) are only two of the many parent groups that foster collaboration between parents and Five Star staff. For many, these groups are an extension of their family where they can show up as their authentic selves and hold meaningful conversations about how to further elevate student success. Both HAC and AIPAC are more than just a parent group, they open their meetings to children and community members and often have delicious food for their members to enjoy.



HAC members at the first group meeting.

**Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)**

The HAC values the richness and diversity that the Hispanic culture brings to the educational system and the greater Five Star District. When you attend a HAC meeting, you can expect to feel the comfort and support of this group that makes it easy to share your experiences and thoughts with others.

When Blanca Castillo, a single mother and immigrant, first started attending HAC meetings, she expected a group that would help her navigate a new education system. What she received was that and so much more.

She has formed relationships with staff and other parents who have now become her family and have empowered her to overcome great obstacles. Castillo recalls a time she received a call “from a HAC member letting me know that they had raised money to help pay for my expenses that month. I wasn’t expecting that.” Now, years later, she’s helping other parents find resources and connections.

Thornton Elementary and Thornton Middle School students know Blanca as ‘Ms. Castillo’ and think she’s a school employee because she has been a volunteer for over 10 years. While her youngest son is now a high school upperclassman, you can always

find her at a PTO meeting or district event. Castillo’s community trusts her to advocate for them by amplifying their voices and concerns as she has always provided answers and resolutions.



AIPAC dancers at Sukey Elementary’s culture night.

**American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC)**

The AIPAC strives to foster a supportive network through cultural awareness and community building. At AIPAC meetings and events you can see multigenerational engagement from grandparents to preschoolers; they all come together at cultural community events like the annual powwow.

“AIPAC cares about me,” says an elementary student member. “AIPAC cares about who I am.”

You can expect to see students performing traditional dances and songs at events, or leading and facilitating conversations alongside community leaders.

Colorado’s small and well-connected Native community cultivates strong ties across the Five Star District.

“AIPAC provides a respectful, supportive and safe place for my family and me to be connected,” says Melissa Clyde, a parent and leader. “We meet new families and children who have the interest to share, teach and connect over our Native cultural ways. If you care about your children learning about new cultures and want to influence the public education system, then this is a great place to start.”

The HAC and AIPAC are only two of the many groups that are available to students, staff and families across the Five Star District. ★

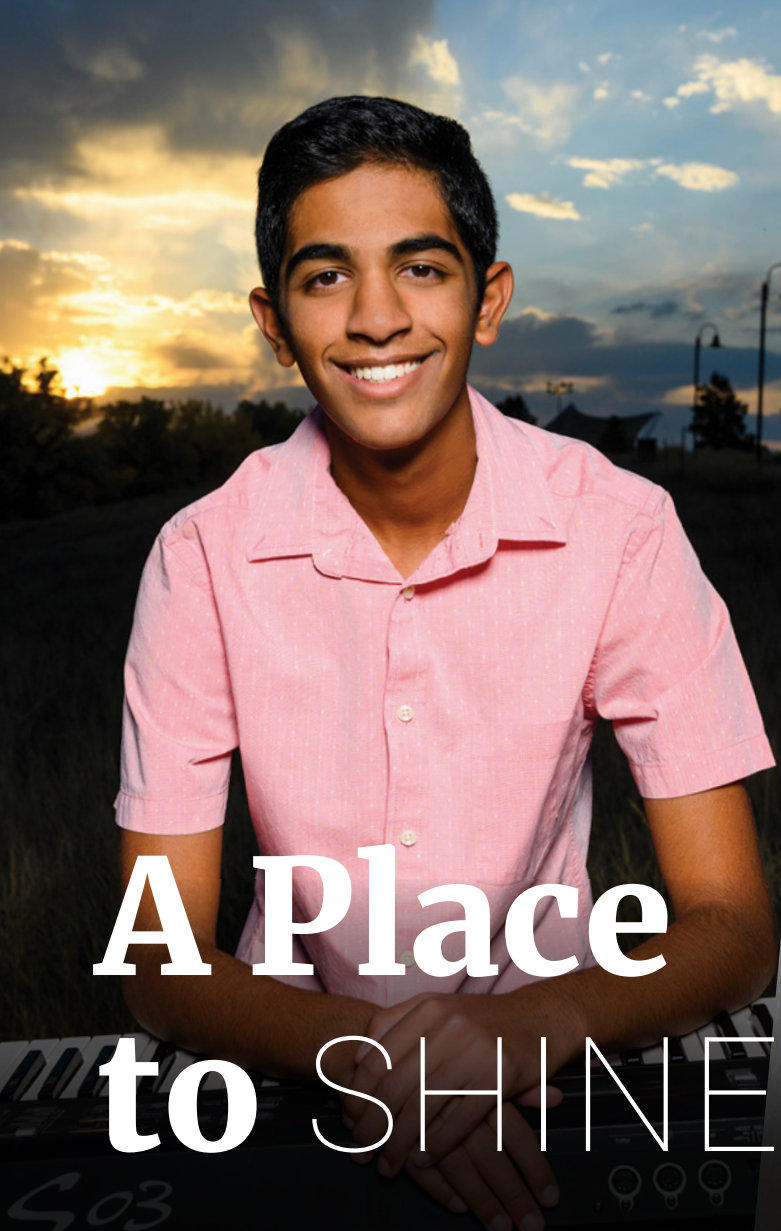


**Find out more information about HAC, AIPAC and other ways to get involved. SCAN NOW**

**BY THE NUMBERS**

**17** scholarships HAC awarded in the 2021-22 school year

**7** tribes were the original stewards of the land now called Colorado



# A Place to SHINE

## *Gifted and Advanced Pathway puts students on road to success*

**ADAMS 12 FIVE STAR SCHOOLS PROVIDES A ROBUST PATHWAY** for gifted and advanced students to thrive and succeed starting at kindergarten and continuing through high school graduation.

For parents of identified gifted and advanced students, the district offers numerous options for them to get the academic challenge they need but also have their unique social-emotional needs nurtured.

The district's Gifted and Advanced Pathway is designed to meet students wherever they are enrolled. Some students find a home at Hulstrom K-8, the district's gifted magnet school, while others thrive in their neighborhood school.

"Regardless of where the student attends, each school has programming designed to develop their potential," Dr. Lynn Saltzgaver, Director of Advanced Academic & Gifted Services said. "We want to give our gifted learners the opportunity to grow and thrive in any school environment."

Saltzgaver adds all schools frame their gifted and advanced curriculum to meet the unique culture and diversity of the students the school serves.



“The richness and diversity of the experiences of students, family and staff within each school community makes gifted programming come alive for students,” she said.

Hulstrom, the district magnet school, offers a curriculum from kindergarten through eighth grade that is specifically designed to meet the needs of both identified gifted and advanced students or students who may not be formally identified as gifted but in need of specialized programming offered at a magnet school.

Legacy High School graduate Nathan George and Horizon High School junior Kaitlin Bailey are examples of students who accessed district gifted and advanced programming through Hulstrom and used it to accelerate their academic careers.

George, now a sophomore music education student at the University of Colorado Boulder, said his time at Hulstrom gave him an intertwined, well-rounded education.

“Hulstrom did a phenomenal job of developing students’ knowledge and skills in all subjects,” he said. “In addition to this, they gave us exposure to numerous other fields in our electives and extracurriculars, enabling us to choose the activities we were most interested in.”

From Hulstrom, he moved on to Legacy High School where he was accepted into the Legacy 2000 (L2K) STEM-focused program.



Legacy High School graduate Nathan George

“Overall, Hulstrom taught me to strive for a standard of excellence, a good work ethic, and to try and have fun with everything I did,”

George said. “That is something that has carried not only through high school but now to my collegiate life as well.”

Bailey not only found challenge at Hulstrom, she also found support from teachers as well as new friends.

“I never had peers who had similar interests to me, and so I struggled mightily with finding other kids to befriend or talk to at all,” she said. “However, at Hulstrom, I found many other kids who were very similar to me, and had similar interests, so for the first time I was able to make profound and lasting friendships.”

She is now enrolled in the Students of Academic Rigor (SOAR) Program at Horizon High School. Bailey said that the gifted and advanced curriculum at Hulstrom prepared her for the challenges of an advanced high school academic program. She is considering a possible career in radiology.

“Because we were already helped along to a high level of academic achievement, moving on to basically any honors program felt like a natural next step,” Bailey said.



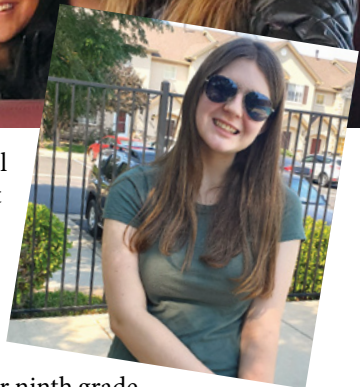
Horizon High School junior Kaitlin Bailey

Dr. Colleen Urlik, Principal of Hulstrom, indicates that about 92 percent of Hulstrom students select a program or high school of choice and it’s an emphasis of each students eighth grade year.

“Our students enter into their ninth grade year with an incredible sense of agency and confidence as they have selected their next steps based on their strengths, interests, passions and goals,” Urlik said.

From Hulstrom to Legacy, George looks back on, not only the tools he was given to succeed, but the friendships and connections he made along the way.

“There are not many districts where teachers remember their students and are excited to see them even if they had them in class more than 10 years ago,” he said. “There are not many districts where graduated students are not only willing, but excited to come back and serve/volunteer to give back to their community. However, I can say Adams 12 Five Star Schools is one of these districts because I have experienced all of these things. The teachers and friends I had through my years of education helped shape me to be the person I am today.” ★



**“We want to give our gifted learners the opportunity to grow and thrive in any school environment.”**

*Dr. Lynn Saltzgaver,  
Director of Advanced Academic & Gifted Services*

## BY THE NUMBERS

**92%** Hulstrom students move on to a district program or high school of choice

**4,326** students in the gifted and advanced pathway



# Helping HANDS

*Five Star Resource Closets provide basic needs for students and families*



Watch 9News  
feature.  
SCAN NOW

## SCHOOLS IN THE FIVE STAR DISTRICT HAVE ALWAYS

been a home away from home for students. This became even more apparent the past few years as students and their families started reaching out to their schools for additional support with basic needs.

“We saw the urgent demand for support rising more than 500 percent in the first few months of the pandemic” said Lisle Reed, Coordinator of the Office of Whole Child Initiatives.

Reed reached out to the Five Star Education Foundation to see if there was a way to provide essential resources to students and families more quickly at the students’ schools, rather than a central location. From these needs, the Five Star Resource Closets were established.

“Schools are the hub of the community,” said Shannon Hancock, executive director of the Five Star Education Foundation. “They have the relationships with the families and are in the best position to respond immediately when students and families are in need.”

Thoughtfully located in our schools with the biggest need, these resource closets serve as the entry point for students to get connected to long-term community programs. Schools with resources have reported better attendance, decreases in behavioral issues, higher classroom achievement and more.



Currently there are resource closets in 33 district schools. They are made possible thanks to support from Five Star Education Foundation and in collaboration with A Precious Child, Food for Hope and the district’s Office of Whole Child Initiatives. The resource closets have been available since 2020, and, thanks to funding secured by the Foundation, will remain in place for years to come. The ability to continue offering the resource closets is thanks to investments from the Adams County Foundation, the Safeway and Albertsons Foundation, the Kaiser Foundation and ongoing community support from generous donors.

Whether it’s a bag of groceries to feed a family of five for a few days until they can get connected with long-term resources, school supplies for a refugee student, a pair of shoes so a fourth grader can participate in gym class, or a coat for a high schooler’s cold walk home, students are getting what they need to focus on learning.

“Resource closets are a tool that fosters trust and security, and allows students to be part of a community of learners,” Hancock said. ★

## BY THE NUMBERS

**62%** of district schools have a Five Star Resource Closet... and growing!

**OVER 25k** times Resource Closets were accessed in the 2021-22 school year

**30** students given access to a summer volunteer program that provides workforce development skills to those who have mental and/or physical needs

**\$10k** invested to empower FutureForward counselors to do what they do best  
A YEAR

## ABOUT THE FOUNDATION



Five Star Education Foundation has supported students in Adams 12 Five Star Schools for over 30 years. Through our partnership with the district and community, we support programs that provide students with the skills and experiences needed to succeed in today’s world.

Learn more: [www.5starfoundation.org](http://www.5starfoundation.org)



**SHANNON HANCOCK**  
Executive Director



# Home TEAM

*Barrier-breaking  
coach eyes new  
challenge*

**WHEN THE THORNTON HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY FOOTBALL TEAM** opens their 2022 season, it will be a historic moment as Shira Spielman becomes the first female football coach in the history of the Five Star District.

Spielman, however, is less inclined to dote on the magnitude of her barrier-shattering accomplishment and more on what her mom might have thought. Five Star Stadium, the home of the Trojans, is, after all, a stone's throw from the neighborhood where Spielman's mother grew up.

But to get to that moment, it first took a great deal of persistence from Thornton High School football coach Nick Trombetta.

Trombetta's request for Spielman to join his coaching staff would roll in on an annual basis, usually each spring, just as her work as a long-time assistant basketball coach at Horizon High School began to wind down. The two knew each other long before he took the reins of the Trojan football program as counselors at the Tennyson Center, a treatment center for neglected, abused and traumatized children, in Denver.

When Trombetta would reach out, it would normally be met with a polite decline. Spielman couldn't justify the time commitment

Spielman with student at Leroy Elementary.



Spielman at basketball camp with Horizon coaches and players.



Spielman huddles up with Thornton football players during practice.



of adding another sport. But, when he texted her this past spring, the response was different.

Spielman had run out of excuses.

“My mom passed suddenly in January and it was kind of like, ‘Well, why do I keep waiting? Why do I keep putting it off?’” she said.

Trombetta understands the symbolism many will see in Spielman’s hire but he wasn’t looking to help Spielman shatter a glass ceiling. His mission is the same as when he took over a struggling football program in December 2017.

Winning.

“This is no publicity stunt,” he said. “Shira is a winner. She is a former collegiate athlete so she understands the grind of getting to that next level. She has been coaching basketball at Horizon and they are always competing at a very high level. She knows what that should look like.”

Trombetta added that her hire shouldn’t surprise anyone who has followed the progress of the program over the past several years and seen its track record of inclusivity.

“This is not something groundbreaking for the Thornton High School program,” he explained. “If you want to play or coach football and commit yourself to something bigger than you, you have a home with us.”

While Spielman embraces the history-making aspect of the role, it brings mixed emotions.

“Quite honestly, I wish that wasn’t it,” she said of being the first female football coach. “But I also think if it takes somebody to get people to see that it’s OK and that I’m a good coach, regardless of male or female, then I’m all for it,” she added. “Hopefully it can pave a way for other people.”

She says the benefits of working with student athletes goes beyond the typical joys of watching them grow and reach their potential.

“I think the biggest thing that I enjoy is how they continuously shape me as a human,” Spielman said. “Any big things that have happened in my life have translated into my coaching and they are always there to kind of shake and shift the way I do things.”

“That continued to happen even this year with my mom dying,” she added. “I told them at our [basketball] banquet that they got me out of bed. They were the ones who I was like, ‘OK, I want to get up for them.’”

When she thinks of Five Star Schools and why she has found a sense of belonging here, she credits Leroy Elementary where she works as a Social-Emotional Learning Specialist as well as the Horizon basketball community for supporting her, challenging her and lifting her up.

“That’s what kept me here – the two places I’ve really grounded myself in,” Spielman said. “It’s definitely a sense of community in these two places and I hope to get that at Thornton as well.”

That sense of community, of family, brings her back to what she’ll, perhaps, be thinking during that first Friday night of September as the Trojans take the field.

“I know that would have meant something,” she said as she thought about her mom. “I think part of me just felt like [the new coaching role] would honor her a little bit as well. I thought it was a cool way to continue being part of that community now that she’s gone.” ★



# 2016 Bond DELIVERED

*Thank You Five Star Community!*

**WE DID IT!** With the support of the Five Star Community, we have completed a five-year bond program to construct new schools and make important improvements at each and every district school and facility.

Every project and improvement identified as part of the bond program has been delivered as promised. Thanks to diligent project management as well as strong financial oversight and accountability, the district was able to invest additional bond money into a number of projects over the past five years. Bond savings also were used to fund several additional improvement projects planned for a handful of schools and facilities in Summer 2023.

## Completed:

- ✓ Construction of a new P-8 school (Thunder Vista)
- ✓ Construction of a second district Career and Technical Education Campus (FutureForward at Washington Square)
- ✓ Building expansions of elementary schools to alleviate overcrowding and remove mobile classrooms (Arapahoe Ridge and Cotton Creek elementary schools)
- ✓ Renovations, upgrades and critical system and infrastructure improvements at each district school and facility
- ✓ Critical safety and security improvements including secured entrance vestibules at each district school
- ✓ Construction of a self-provisioned fiber network to meet current and future district connectivity needs



Thunder Vista P-8



FutureForward at Washington Square



North Stadium



Cotton Creek Elementary



Westlake Middle School



# Future FOCUSED

## *Planning helps district look ahead*

**BUILD A LONG-TERM VISION** for academic programming and shape schools and facilities to embrace that vision.

That's the idea of Blueprint 2032, a long-term academic programming and facility planning process launched by Five Star Schools during the 2021-2022 school year.

However, the idea of melding facilities to meet the needs of changing academic programming needs, instead of the opposite, is a new opportunity for the district.

That's because, for much of the past 30 years, the district found itself in a position of responding to steady enrollment growth, which necessitated the frequent construction of new schools to keep up with the growth.

Now, as district enrollment growth has leveled off, there's an opportunity to first re-examine the district's academic priorities and how district facilities can best support those priorities.



“Blueprint 2032 provides our community the unique opportunity to reimagine how we use all of our school buildings to offer our students and families the learning opportunities they seek and those which will best position them for a successful future,” said Five Star Schools Deputy Superintendent Priscilla Straughn.

Much of the first year of the Blueprint 2032 planning process involved collecting a large amount of data and input from Five Star students, parents, staff and community members through a survey as well as community dialogue sessions. The district also brought together a diverse mix of district stakeholders to serve on a Blueprint 2032 Task Force to play a key role in the creation of this plan.

By spring 2022, the path to plan development had taken shape in two forms: the start of a detailed facility assessment to better understand current strengths and weaknesses of buildings when it comes to supporting students and the first draft of a long range academic plan that will be further defined in the 2022-2023 school year.





# ELEVATE IN ACTION

## *Investments bring to life strategic plan*

**THANKS TO THE INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT** of the Five Star Community, Adams 12 Five Star Schools is elevating student success in every classroom, every day. With insight from thousands of community members, our strategic plan - ELEVATE - serves as the roadmap for success in the Five Star District.

Voters made a significant investment in ELEVATE with the passage of Ballot Issue 5C on Nov. 6, 2018. Check out how this funding is creating extraordinary experiences for our students.



OUTSIDE-  
THE-CLASSROOM  
LEARNING

- ✓ Expanded career and technical education programming increases student access and opportunity



DIVERSE  
LEARNING

- ✓ Academic interventionists help accelerate student learning at all elementary and K-8 schools



SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL  
LEARNING

- ✓ Social-emotional learning specialists, school counselors and mental health providers support student wellness



SAFE SCHOOLS

- ✓ Additional campus security officers provide enhanced supervision at the district's comprehensive high schools



WORLD-CLASS  
STAFF

- ✓ Instructional coaches, as part of a new teacher leadership program (launched for 2022-2023 school year), provide school-based professional learning, facilitate the analysis of student work and engage in coaching cycles with teachers



21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY  
LEARNERS


- ✓ Updated learning materials, resources and textbooks align with new and more rigorous academic standards

# Five Star SNAPSHOTS

*A collection of photos  
from events happening  
around the district.*

*Photography from school Facebook pages. Check them out!*

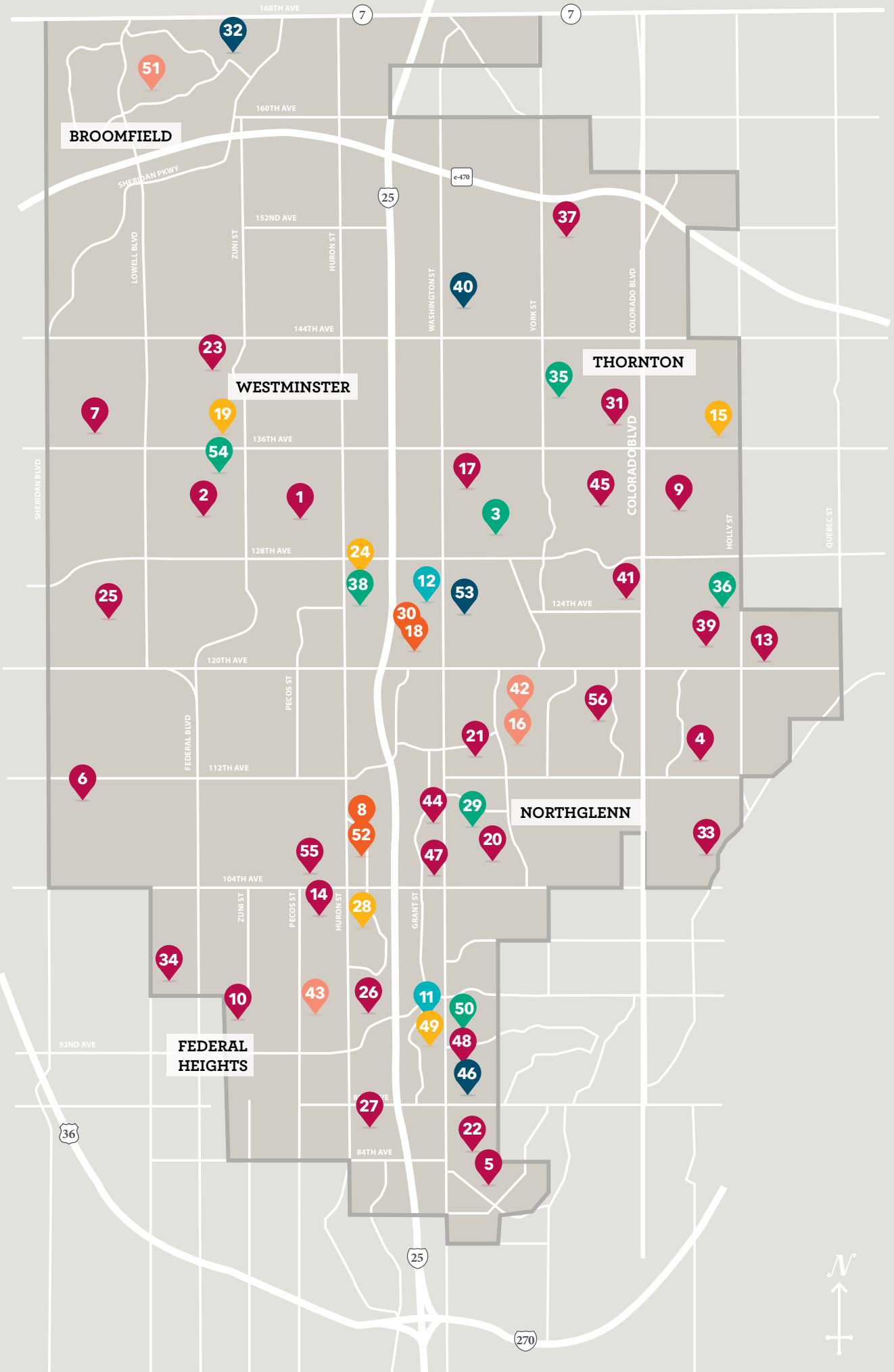


Show us what makes you #FiveStarProud.   



**LEFT PAGE:** (1) Cherry Drive Elementary field day tug of war. (2) Five Star Education Foundation 2022 Golf Classic event. (3) Five Star 5k participants. (4) Eagleview Elementary students having fun at their annual Soaring Sprint. (5) Mountain Range High School celebrates during their fun run. (6) Legacy High School athlete places 3rd at State in pole vaulting.

**RIGHT PAGE:** (7) Thornton High School graduates. (8) Students at The Studio School's fun run which raised over \$57,000. (9) FutureForward at Washington Square students learning new skills. (10) Century Middle School students take in the sights in New York City. (11) Coronado Hills Elementary students enjoying time together at the end of the year. (12) Horizon High School Unified Basketball student goes in for the shot.



**BROOMFIELD**

**WESTMINSTER**

**THORNTON**

**NORTHGLENN**

**FEDERAL HEIGHTS**



# School Directory

- 1** Arapahoe Ridge Elementary  
arapahoe.adams12.org
- 2** Centennial Elementary  
centennial.adams12.org
- 3** Century Middle  
century.adams12.org  
*IB Middle Years Programme*
- 4** Cherry Drive Elementary  
cherry.adams12.org
- 5** Coronado Hills Elementary  
coronado.adams12.org
- 6** Cotton Creek Elementary  
cotton.adams12.org
- 7** Coyote Ridge Elementary  
coyote.adams12.org
- 8** Crossroads Middle  
crossroads.adams12.org  
*Alternative Education Campus*
- 9** Eagleview Elementary  
eagleview.adams12.org
- 10** Federal Heights Elementary  
federal.adams12.org
- 11** FutureForward at Bollman  
futureforward.adams12.org  
*Career and Technical Education Campus*
- 12** FutureForward at Washington Square  
futureforward.adams12.org  
*Career and Technical Education Campus*
- 13** Glacier Peak Elementary  
glacier.adams12.org
- 14** Hillcrest Elementary  
hillcrest.adams12.org
- 15** Horizon High School  
horizon.adams12.org  
*SOAR Program*
- 16** Hulstrom K-8  
hulstrom.adams12.org  
*Gifted and Talented School*
- 17** Hunters Glen Elementary  
hunters.adams12.org
- 18** Independence Academy  
*Alternative Education Campus*
- 19** Legacy High School  
legacy.adams12.org  
*Legacy 2000 Program*
- 20** Leroy Elementary  
leroy.adams12.org
- 21** Malley Drive Elementary  
malley.adams12.org
- 22** McElwain Elementary  
mcelwain.adams12.org
- 23** Meridian Elementary  
meridian.adams12.org
- 24** Mountain Range High School  
mountainrange.adams12.org  
*High School of Business*
- 25** Mountain View Elementary  
mountain.adams12.org  
*Unique Regional Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program*
- 26** North Mor Elementary  
northmor.adams12.org
- 27** North Star Elementary  
northstar.adams12.org
- 28** Northglenn High School  
northglennh.adams12.org  
*STEM programming*
- 29** Northglenn Middle  
northglennm.adams12.org
- 30** Pathways Future Center School  
pathways.adams12.org  
*Alternative Education Campus*
- 31** Prairie Hills Elementary  
prairie.adams12.org
- 32** Prospect Ridge Academy  
www.prospectridgeacademy.org  
*Charter School*
- 33** Riverdale Elementary  
riverdale.adams12.org
- 34** Rocky Mountain Elementary  
rocky.adams12.org
- 35** Rocky Top Middle  
rockytop.adams12.org
- 36** Shadow Ridge Middle  
shadowridge.adams12.org
- 37** Silver Creek Elementary  
silvercreek.adams12.org
- 38** Silver Hills Middle  
silverhills.adams12.org
- 39** Skyview Elementary  
skyview.adams12.org
- 40** Stargate School  
stargateschool.org  
*Charter School*
- 41** Stellar Elementary  
stellar.adams12.org
- 42** STEM Lab  
stem.adams12.org  
*STEM programming*
- 43** STEM Launch  
stemlaunch.adams12.org  
*STEM programming*
- 44** Stukey Elementary  
stukey.adams12.org
- 45** Tarver Elementary  
tarver.adams12.org
- 46** The New America School  
www.newamericaschool.org  
*Charter School*
- 47** The Studio School  
studioschool.adams12.org  
*Arts-integrated School*
- 48** Thornton Elementary  
thorntone.adams12.org
- 49** Thornton High School  
thorntonh.adams12.org  
*IB Programme*
- 50** Thornton Middle  
thorntonm.adams12.org
- 51** Thunder Vista P-8  
thundervista.adams12.org
- 52** Vantage Point High School  
vantage.adams12.org  
*Alternative Education Campus*
- 53** Westgate Community school  
westgateschool.org  
*Charter School*
- 54** Westlake Middle  
westlake.adams12.org
- 55** Westview Elementary  
westview.adams12.org
- 56** Woodglen Elementary  
woodglen.adams12.org

## *Vision*

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*Adams 12 Five Star Schools is a caring, inclusive, and engaging district which exists so the students it serves can attain the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue the future of their choosing and are equipped to navigate and thrive in our rapidly changing world.*

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## *Mission*

WE COMMIT TO **ENGAGE** AND **INSPIRE** ALL STUDENTS

TO **INNOVATE**, **ACHIEVE** AND **SUCCEED** IN A

SAFE ENVIRONMENT BY ENSURING HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTION

IN EVERY CLASSROOM, EVERY DAY.



## You're doing great things!

Tell us about a time when someone made an impact on your life and helped ELEVATE student success.

**TELL US YOUR STORY.**

[www.adams12.org/FiveStarStories](http://www.adams12.org/FiveStarStories)

Photo Credit: Mountain Range High School | Caption: Student celebrates the end of school at the senior parade.

Show us what makes you  
#FiveStarProud   

Photo credit: Thornton High School  
Caption: Hispanic Latino Student Union hosts Dia De Los Muertos at Thornton High School

HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOLS LOCATED IN  
*Broomfield, Federal Heights, Northglenn, Thornton and Westminster*  
**THERE'S A PLACE FOR YOU. Enroll today > [www.adams12.org/enroll](http://www.adams12.org/enroll)**