COSPRA AWARDS

GOLDEN ACHIEVEMENT AWARD SUBMISSION

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SUBMITTED BY:

Chief Communications Officer Emma Garret-Nelson
Social Media Manager Mikaley Osley

Campaign Summary

Research

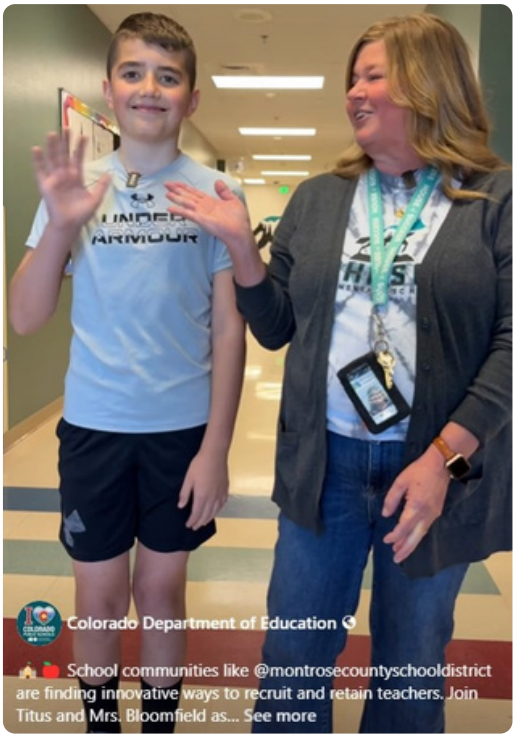
Before January 2024, CDE's communications were internally focused and reactive, primarily highlighting state-level programs. Despite its role in serving districts, CDE's channels lacked representation of Colorado schools and educators, and there was little engagement with school communicators. Additionally, national perceptions of public schools indicated a need for stronger storytelling at the state level.[1]

Planning

To address this, Chief Communications Officer Emma Garrett-Nelson committed to three key priorities: proactive communication on data releases, minimizing surprises for school communicators, and elevating educators and districts statewide. Recognizing CDE's unique platform, she worked to build trust with district communicators, ensuring they had the support needed for successful engagement.

Implementation

CDE's Social Media Takeovers, launched in January 2025 with Greeley-Evans School District 6, provide districts full control of CDE's social platforms for a day. The process includes three key touchpoints: initial outreach, a planning meeting, and a pre-takeover check-in. Promotional efforts include co-branded graphics shared in advance. On takeover day, CDE pauses regular content, allowing districts to post freely without an approval process—fostering trust and authentic engagement.



Evaluation

The program successfully increased district visibility and audience growth. Metrics, including impressions, engagement, video views, and follower gains, demonstrated strong impact (see attached data). Positive feedback from districts and audiences reinforced the initiative's success. Moving forward, refining social media education for districts will enhance future takeovers, ensuring even greater impact.

1 https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/04/04/about-half-of-americans-say-public-k-12-education-is-going-in-the-wrong-direction/

Past Social Media Graphics (Pre-2024)

Graphic and stock-photo focused that highlight state-level programs and messages



Sample Takeover Posts January & February 2025

Genuine photos that highlight Colorado schools, students, and educators directly



Testimonies

Positive feedback from the relationships we have invested in with the field.

Communications Director, 5k student school district in Rifle, CO

I just want to say THANK YOU! Having access to all of this information in advance is so AWESOME! [DISTRICT NAME] hasn't had that many opportunities to toot their own horn as a state leader. We do great work, and we aren't typically on the forefront. Having all of this info in advance allows me to put together compendium information for our local news outlets so that we can be proactive rather than reactive. SO THANK YOU! This hasn't happened before. I appreciate all of the hard work you and your team are doing!

Chief Communications Officer, 23k student school district in Greeley, CO

Thank you for the opportunity! I think I speak for all of us when I say we had a blast doing [the takeover]! My team is exceptional, and I am so grateful for them. Thanks for sharing the stats. I hope other schools jump on the bandwagon!

Communications Director, 6k student school district in Montrose, CO

I am extra grateful for how available and connected you have been to us and our rural district.

Sample Promotional Graphics



Greeley-Evans CDE Social Media Takeover

Monday, January 27

Facebook

Total Reach :
16.8k

Interactions:
1.7k

Views:
53.5k

Instagram

Total Reach :
5.7k

Interactions:
1.3k

Views:
35.7k

Total Posts
36

Top Facebook Posts



Greeley-Evans School District 6 is Rolling...
Mon Jan 27, 8:00am
15.8K 176
14 6



To win a state championship,...
Mon Jan 27, 4:00pm
8.7K 156
7 9

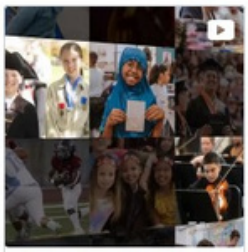


Greeley-Evans School District 6 is proud to...
Mon Jan 27, 10:00am
6.6K 150
21 9

Top Instagram Posts



Greeley-Evans School District 6 is proud to...
Mon Jan 27, 10:00am
4.3K 184
1 26



🎉 Today, We're Taking Over! 🎉 Get ready f...
Mon Jan 27, 7:01am
3.7K 58
0 7



This morning, Greeley-Evans School Distric...
Mon Jan 27, 12:01pm
3.5K 109
0 6

Links to Top 5 Social Media Posts

Takeover #1 - Greeley-Evans Takeover

- Introduction to Steven the Heiman Elementary School Bus Driver
- Superintendent Dr. Deirdre Pilch visiting Jackson Elementary School while students have lunch
- Introducing the new Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center
- The State Championship Unified Bowling Team from Northridge High School
- An overview video of Greeley-Evans District, introducing everyone to the district and the takeover

Montrose County Social Media Takeover

Thursday, February 27

Facebook

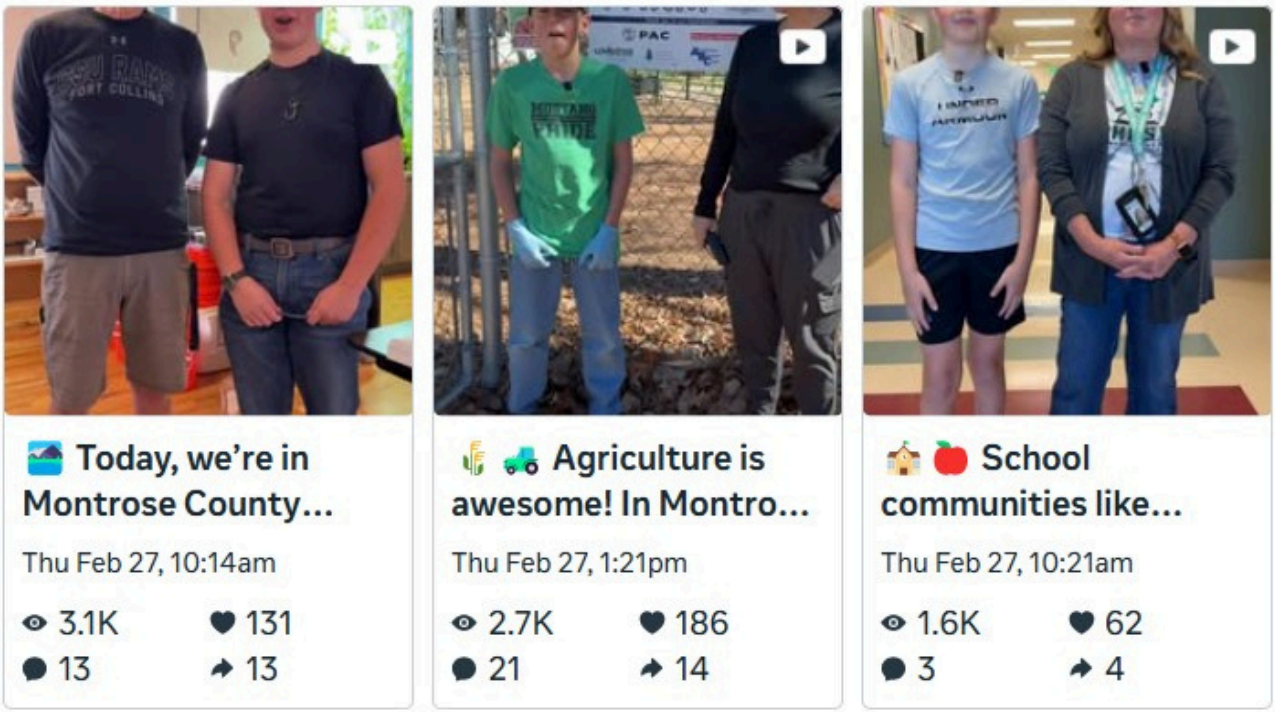
Total Reach :
4.3k

Total Posts:
7

Interactions:
321

Views:
9.6k

Top Facebook Posts



Links to Top 5 Social Media Posts

Takeover #2 - Montrose County Takeover

- Peak Virtual Academy learning science by studying Colorado's wildlife firsthand
- A tour of the Oak Grove Elementary School's farm from a student
- A tour of the Johnson Elementary School MCSD Teaching and Learning Academy
- Playing pickle ball for P.E. at Northside Elementary
- Photos of the Outer Range Outdoor Education, the first fully-outdoor learning campus in Colorado