



News letter

D60 is Present, Powerful, and Empowered by Reading.



District's Graduation Rate Rises Sharply as Fewer Students Drop Out

The district is seeing the results of a district wide commitment to keeping students connected, engaged, and on track to graduate, and the impact is being noticed statewide.

Thanks to a focused, systemic approach to providing students with holistic, proactive support while helping them envision and move toward powerful career options, District 60's four-year graduation rate rose sharply in the 2024–25 school year, while dropout rates declined, as well. The progress was substantial enough that the Colorado Department of Education invited Superintendent Dr. Barbara Kimzey to present as a "voice from the field" at a statewide press conference held on January 13.

According to data from the Colorado Department of Education, District 60's four-year graduation rate increased by 4.7 percentage points, climbing to 88.9 percent well above the state average of 85.6 percent, which rose just 1.4 points during the same period.

Just as importantly, fewer students are leaving school before earning a diploma. The district's dropout rate fell to 1.4 percent, a 1.2 percentage point decrease from the previous year and lower than the statewide dropout rate of 1.6 percent.

Don't Miss the School Showcase!

Coinciding with the opening of the School Choice Window, our February 28 all-district School Showcase will give families and the community a comprehensive look at learning across the district, with every school represented. The event will take place at Pueblo Community College in the Fortino Ballroom from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

We proudly offer diverse programs, including Career and Technical Education, STREAM, AVID, International Baccalaureate, Gifted and Talented, and a wide range of extracurricular activities. Families can complete a School Choice application on site while exploring all D60 schools in one convenient location. Prize giveaways, free swag, and community fellowship will also be part of the event.

Teaching & Learning in **D60**



Mini-Libraries at East and Centennial a Testament to CTE Collaboration

Providing a hands-on example of project-based learning, Marci Imes, Executive Director of Secondary Education and CTE, brought together Centennial and East CTE programs, Secondary Literacy Specialist Erin Roe, and the Pueblo City-County Library District to create mini libraries as part of the district's *Present, Powerful and Empowered by Reading* initiative. The project expanded free access to high-interest reading materials for students and the community and included CTE, DECA, and FCCLA students. A ribbon-cutting ceremony featured Superintendent Dr. Barbara Kimzey, Principals Alex Trujillo and Andy Clementi, School Board Vice President Tommy Farrell, library district representative Jerry Vigil and members of the Superintendent's Cabinet.

Rattlers Make a Splash For Learning

At Belmont Elementary School, fifth-grade Rattlers wrapped up their unit on the ocean with an exciting Jeopardy-style quiz game. The interactive activity challenged students' reading comprehension and knowledge of key concepts from the unit, while also encouraging collaboration, critical thinking, and friendly competition. Working together in teams, students demonstrated their understanding of ocean habitats, vocabulary, and informational texts—all while having fun and cheering each other on. The game was a great way to celebrate their hard work and reinforce learning in an energetic and memorable way.



D60 Online Passion Projects Stress Research-Based Learning

D60 Online emphasizes real-world experiences that support social-emotional learning. This semester, students are completing passion projects, exploring personal interests and potential career paths through project-based learning. Those interested in entrepreneurship visited the soon-to-open Steel City Thrift on South Santa Fe Avenue, where owners Josh Marcowicz and his wife shared how their business combines community service, affordable clothing, and textile reuse. D60 Online counselor JenaRae Sandoval, who leads the passion projects, said students will use insights from field trips and research to develop and present their final projects.



Teaching & Learning in **D60**

South Welding Program Equips Student With vital Job Skills

With major infrastructure projects and growth in manufacturing, construction, and aerospace, demand for skilled welders in the workforce remains strong—a positive sign for students in Randy Arellano’s welding program at South.

Through a concurrent enrollment partnership with Pueblo Community College, students can earn both a high school diploma and an associate’s degree. Mr. Arellano, who previously worked in manufacturing, said students gain in-demand skills by learning arc stick, MIG, and TIG welding, along with blueprint reading and metallurgy.

Pueblo Community College’s welding program ranks among the top 200 in the nation, and local job opportunities are plentiful, with starting wages around \$21 an hour plus benefits.



Centennial's Bulldog TV Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Under the direction of Jacob Lewis, Centennial's Broadcasting & Digital Communications pathway is giving students hands-on experience in news, sports, and entertainment using state-of-the-art broadcast technology. Whether through live morning announcements or coverage of athletics and activities, Bulldog TV is preparing students for real-world careers in media and communications.

East DECA Chapter Earns Prestigious Recognition

Through impactful service and promotion, East’s DECA chapter showed exceptional leadership and school spirit, earning Thrive Level status and qualifying Kadence L. and Jada F. for the Thrive Academy at ICDC in Atlanta.

Audio-Video Production is a Key CTE Program at South

The program includes Audio-Video Production 1 and 2 and Capstone Work-Based Learning. In Audio-Video 1, students learn the full production process from brainstorming to editing, aiming to create a short film independently by year’s end, said instructor Lauren Montoya. Audio-Video 2 focuses on collaboration, with students producing Colt Nation TV, including announcements, live streams, and promotional content. In Capstone Work-Based Learning, students manage school social media and create content for community clients. The program emphasizes collaboration and real-world skills.



South Senior Kennedy Camacho-Orona is MIT-Bound!

With an acceptance rate of just 3%, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is among the world's most selective universities—and Kennedy will be part of the freshman Class of 2026, pursuing a pre-med pathway. Kennedy's success and acceptance to this institution reflects academic excellence, leadership, and the strong support of South teachers and staff.



Two Veteran Educators Lauded For Service

At Heaton, Bonnie Goehringer has been teaching physical education and coaching for three decades. Angie Casados has spent the entirety of her 25-year career at Haaff Elementary, first as a teacher and now as an instructional coach. These veteran educators are credited with being a positive influence on the lives of countless students.



Student Leaders Offer Feedback and Input to Superintendent Kimzey

The Superintendent's Student Advisory Committee, made up of high school leaders from across the district, provides Superintendent Dr. Barbara Kimzey with input and feedback to help make the district a "destination district." Committee meetings now rotate among schools, with the second session for the school year held at South. "We thought it would be better to meet at schools rather than the administration building," said Santino G., a South sophomore. "This allows us to advocate for our schools and show what we hope to change." "The council gives us a chance to communicate directly with the superintendent and drive positive change," Santino added. "I like being able to help our schools—and the district—become better."

Partnership with PCC offers students free concurrent enrollment opportunities

Concurrent enrollment enables eligible high school students to take college courses in their current high school or -- for those wishing to gain the whole of the college experience -- at PCC and Colorado State University - Pueblo.

Amy DeHerrera, Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator at PCC, visited high schools to assist students in the enrollment process.

Many of the PCC concurrent enrollment offerings fall under the banner of Career and Technical Education, including welding, automotive repair, machining technology, cosmetology, and radiologic technology.

Through the partnership with PCC, all district concurrent enrollment students saw the district cover all tuition and book fees, and other costs, for the current school year.

Most concurrent enrollment credits earned at PCC are guaranteed to transfer to any four-year public institution in Colorado. If a student completes enough credits to earn an associate degree while still in high school, they need only two additional years, not four, to complete a Bachelor's degree.

