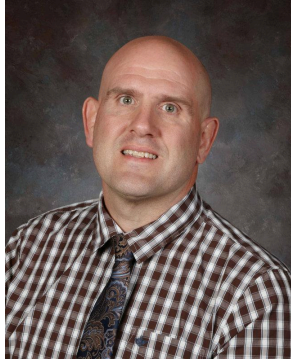




Coal Ridge High School Principal Candidates

Submitted bios in alphabetical order by last name



Michael Mikalakis

I have been part of Garfield RE2 and Coal Ridge High School for the past nineteen years: nine as an English teacher, nine as Assistant Principal, and one learning how to effectively teach at Kathryn Senor Elementary. Throughout my tenure, I have applied the principle of servant leadership, a concept that I learned the term for while earning my Master of Education in Educational Leadership at Colorado Christian University, but I was applying, unknowingly, as a teacher. This philosophy has shaped my career because I have always believed in the power of building strong relationships, because you can foster the most out of people (students, colleagues, teachers) when you put them first, and empower them to grow into the best versions of themselves.

My commitment to Coal Ridge goes beyond the office. I attend our school events, have stepped into teaching roles when needed, coaching, and chaperoning dances, and I strive to promote a safe and positive environment where students and staff can thrive. As Assistant Principal, I have designed professional development that equips teachers with proven instructional strategies, meaningful feedback, and opportunities for growth. This work in curriculum alignment, PLC facilitation, and AP program administration has contributed to our school's recognized growth and achievement.

I approach this opportunity to become the principal of Coal Ridge High School as a stewardship opportunity, not a personal achievement. My vision is to build upon the foundation Coal Ridge has established, deepening our culture of instructional excellence, teacher empowerment, and student success, so our school continues to flourish and impact more students and educators for years to come.



Coal Ridge High School Principal Candidates



Jessica Newman

My name is Jessica Newman, and I am an experienced educational leader with over 20 years in education, including 12 years in school leadership as a Dean and Assistant Principal. My passion lies in building strong systems while fostering a positive, relationship-driven school culture where both students and staff can thrive.

Originally from Arizona, I later moved to Colorado, where I have continued to grow as an educator and leader. My experience spans elementary through high school, including teaching both Spanish and English, which has allowed me to connect with diverse student populations and support a wide range of learning needs.

I believe effective leadership requires both structure and heart—creating clear systems that support success while also building meaningful relationships with students, staff, and families. I am deeply committed to ensuring every student feels safe, supported, and capable of achieving at high levels.



Coal Ridge High School Principal Candidates



Troy Snyder

Greetings! I'm Troy Snyder, a third-culture kid, dad and husband, educator, lifelong learner, and avid lover of the great outdoors.

My family has deep roots in western Colorado, and Durango is my hometown; however, my formative years were shaped by the unique experiences of being a third-culture kid, growing up in Colombia, with additional enriching chapters in Mexico, Indonesia, Egypt, and China. These diverse environments have not only shaped my worldview but also fostered a profound appreciation for a wide range of perspectives and cultural nuances.

On the academic front, I laid the foundation for my educational journey at Colorado State, earning my undergraduate degree. Building on this, I pursued a master's degree at the University of Phoenix, which deepened my understanding of educational dynamics. Furthering my commitment to excellence, I earned my doctorate and MBA from Texas Christian University.

My educational career has taken on a multifaceted nature, encompassing roles in inner-city, suburban, rural, public, private, boarding, and international schools as an AP teacher, administrator at elementary, middle, and high school levels, district testing coordinator, district safety coordinator, college graduate, school adjunct professor of education, and school board member. Most recently, I proudly served as the Director of QSI Zhuhai, a pre-k through 12th-grade international school in China.

Family is the heartbeat of my life, and my wife, Kimberley, an educator and the K-12 literacy coordinator for a school district, and I have shared 24 wonderful years of marriage. Together, we are raising two incredible children - Avery, an artistic and entrepreneurial junior at Fort Lewis College, and Henry, an adventurous sophomore who'd spends his time roping and riding.

My passion for the outdoors knows no bounds. Whether exploring the ocean depths as a certified rescue scuba diver, navigating scenic trails as an avid backpacker, shredding mountain trails on my bike, carving through snow-covered slopes as a skier, or finding tranquility by the water while fishing, nature is my sanctuary.

Beyond my passion for the outdoors, I am a lifelong learner and devoted reader, constantly on the lookout for new knowledge and insights. In addition, I am a dedicated traveler, finding joy in



Coal Ridge High School Principal Candidates

exploring diverse cultures and embracing the unfamiliar with enthusiasm, always ready for the next thrilling adventure. My most recent trip was taking 24 students to Bali a few weeks ago. I am also dedicated to fitness, enjoy coaching, and love the Broncos, Avs, and Nuggets.

As I continue to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of education, I am excited to bring my diverse background, passion for learning, and love for the outdoors to new horizons.