



Expeditionary Learning Schools Outward Bound

EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING SCHOOLS PULL AHEAD ON CSAP

DENVER, CO – The 2009 Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) scores, just released, demonstrate strong gains for the state’s 15 K-12 Expeditionary Learning schools (ELS). ELS students in urban, suburban, and rural communities across the state made important gains in reading, writing, math, and science. Data highlights include:

- The cohort of students that entered Explore Elementary School in Thornton as 4th graders in 2006 – the school’s first year – were tied for the lowest scores in the district. In 2009, these sixth graders were the highest performers in the district, achieving a 44% increase in proficiency in reading over three years, from 28% proficiency in 4th grade to 72% proficiency in 6th grade.
- Middle school students at the Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning (RMSEL) in Denver increased their math CSAP scores between 2008 and 2009 by 31 percentage points in the 6th grade, 17 percentage points in the 7th grade, and 22 percentage points in the 8th grade.
- Students at Mapleton Expeditionary School of the Arts (MESA) in Thornton demonstrated an increase in proficiency in 100% of the 14 CSAP tests taken by students at the school. Also, for the second year in a row, 100% of graduating seniors were accepted to four-year colleges.
- At Minturn Middle School in Minturn, student cohort groups made gains at every grade level and in every category. Science proficiency rates at Minturn exceeded the district average by 17 percentage points and the state average by 21 percentage points.
- William Smith High School posted a 14% growth rate overall, the highest growth rate among all Aurora public schools.

Expeditionary Learning Schools has been partnering with and starting schools in Colorado since it first opened its doors in 1993. Beginning with one demonstration school, the Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning, in 1993, Colorado now boasts more ELS schools than any other state except New York. Unique in its ability to drive improvement in both new and existing schools, charter schools and district schools, and schools at every grade level and in every kind of community, ELS has impacted thousands of students across the state.

Founding MESA principal and current state senator Michael Johnston, commented on ELS’s success in Colorado: “These results prove two important tenets of the Expeditionary Learning philosophy. First, that rigorous inquiry-based educational approaches can and do produce dramatic student achievement gains. And, second, that the ELS model is both flexible and rigorous enough to produce outstanding results in all types of schools – district schools and charter schools, fresh starts and turnarounds, and

existing public schools whose teachers and principals have made a commitment to school-wide improvement. The breadth and depth of these successes give us real reason to believe that transformative change is possible.”

Scott Hartl, President and CEO of ELS, expressed pride in the accomplishments of the Colorado schools: “My sincere congratulations to the teachers, principals, and district leaders of our Colorado Expeditionary Learning schools. These results demonstrate the path-setting success that is possible with strong and stable implementation of the ELS design. ELS schools are demonstrating consistent results at a national scale and truly transformative results in many pockets. I am pleased to see Colorado leading the way.”

Expeditionary Learning Schools, the largest school reform organization of its kind, works in 144 schools in 28 states and the District of Columbia. Primarily located in urban and rural areas where school improvement is most needed, ELS schools promote high academic achievement through real world projects and products within an active, engaging, and rigorous college preparatory curriculum. There will be 18 ELS schools in Colorado during the 2009-2010 school year and at least two more in planning stages.

www.elschools.org
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