We’re pleased to be in your inbox with our monthly Communication Matters newsletter, in which we highlight district successes, provide updates on relevant news, and pass along pertinent information to bolster your CASE membership.

With that said, we love hearing about innovation in your districts! Is your school or district doing something worthy of a shout-out? Be it a district-wide project, a school-specific milestone or even a staff member who goes above and beyond, we want to know!

Be sure to contact CASE Director of Communications Melissa Gibson with your story or shout-out for a chance to be featured in a future Communication Matters. Email her at mgibson@co-case.org.

**Spotlight On: Harrison District High School Grads Earn More Than a Diploma**

High school students in Harrison School District Two now have a greater chance than ever before to continue their education after they graduate.

Thanks to a partnership between Pikes Peak Community College (PPCC), the Dakota Foundation, and the Legacy Institute, a new scholarship program – set to begin in fall 2020 – will provide free college tuition and academic support coaches to every qualifying high school graduate in the school district.

“Those conversations at the dinner table when a parent tells their child, ‘You’re not going to college. We can’t afford it’… Those conversations are over,” said Dr. Lance Bolton, PPCC’s president.
This pilot scholarship, named the Dakota Promise Scholarship, was developed with the financial support of the Dakota Foundation, which will be funding it for three years. Additional funding has been provided by the Legacy Foundation, and Harrison School District is working to ensure the program is sustainable in the fourth year.

“The idea behind this scholarship is to create new on-ramps, new ways for young people in some of our most underserved areas to reach their dreams,” Bolton said. “We’re tremendously grateful to the Dakota Foundation for sharing this vision with us, and if we can find more corporate support, we’d love to expand this to the entire Pike’s Peak region.”

The goal of The Dakota Promise Scholarship is to double the number of students attending college within one year of high school graduation and get 80 percent of those students to complete a certificate or degree or transfer to a four-year college or university.

PPCC will play a pivotal role in the success of this program by providing participating students with intensive support from professional student success coaches which includes financial, personal, food, transportation and academic support.
Harrison School District Two was chosen for this program because of its highly under-served population and long-standing partnership with PPCC. Harrison School District and PPCC are valuable education systems in Southeast Colorado Springs and have worked together on concurrent enrollment, having successfully graduated a number of students for the past three years with an associate degree one week before high school graduation.

To be eligible for the program, students must complete high school with a 2.5 GPA or better for their combined junior and senior years, enroll at PPCC within 12 months of graduation, enroll and complete a minimum of 24 credit hours per academic year and apply for financial aid.

The scholarships would pay the difference between grants a student receives from financial aid, and tuition and fees, up to $5,000 per student, per year. Students must maintain a 2.0 GPA or better while enrolled at PPCC to continue to receive the scholarship.

“I feel that we’ve told our students they could go to college, but we forget that the financial barriers they face can be enormous,” said District Two Superintendent Wendy Birhanzel. “But this changes everything. We will truly be a pre-k to college district. This will be huge for our kids.”

**Aspire to Something Higher**

Do you hold an administrative license, or are you working toward one and would like to know more about applying and interviewing for leadership positions? The Colorado Association of School Personnel Administrators is sponsoring the Aspiring to the Principalship course on January 24, 2020. Receive personalized feedback on your resume, become informed on current state-wide education initiatives, discover how your own personal strengths compare to the Rubric for
Evaluating Colorado’s Principals, and more. You can register online for this event [here].

**CHSAA Round Table Coming Next Month**

The Colorado High School Activities Association Round Table is right around the corner. The event will be help at the Marriott Tech Center on Monday, January 27, 2020. This year’s guest speaker, JC Pohl, will discuss student mental health, which will be followed by a review of proposed bylaws. To sign up for the event, be sure to register [here] by Friday, January 17, 2020. If you would like to book a room at the Marriott, you can take advantage of our group rate by clicking [here].

**Calling All Artists!**

CASE would love to add some student artwork to our office! If your school or district has any student art that you would be willing to loan us, we would love to display it proudly! Please reach out to Carrie Yantzer at cyantzer@co-case.org if you are able to help. Thank you!

**CASE job posting for Executive Director Position**

With CASE Executive Director Lisa Escárcega retiring in June, our association is seeking a highly qualified leader to serve in this critical role. The Coordinating Council, representing all seven CASE departments, would like a successful candidate to assume responsibilities of the position July 1, 2020. For more information and/or to apply, please visit [https://macnjake.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx](https://macnjake.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx).

**CASE Legislative Priorities Executive Summary**

As part of CASE’s ongoing implementation of our Strategic Plan, the CASE Platform Committee has developed a high-level executive summary of the association’s legislative priorities. This document outlines legislative priorities based on information gathered at the CASE regional meetings, CASE department meetings, and superintendent meetings throughout the state. This [CASE Legislation Platform: Executive Summary](https://macnjake.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx) will help inform our advocacy efforts in the 2020 legislative session.

**In The News**

- ‘Flipped’ Denver school board elects former teacher as president, after new members sworn in ([Chalkbeat Colorado](https://www.chalkbeat.org/article/flipped-denver-school-board-elects-former-teacher-as-president), 12/04/2019)
- Denver to change curriculum that educators said ‘eliminates the Native American perspective’ ([Chalkbeat Colorado](https://www.chalkbeat.org/article/denver-to-change-curriculum), 12/03/2019)