

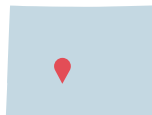
LEADING THE WAY: P-3 EDUCATION IN COLORADO

WHO:

JACKIE CRABTREE, *Principal Cotopaxi Consolidated Schools*

WHERE: Fremont School District RE-3

Located at the western end of Fremont County, School District RE-3 includes five small communities, all within 12 miles of the school, located in Cotopaxi. Four of the five communities are located along the Arkansas River at the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range. The school ties these five separate communities together.



JACKIE CRABTREE

Fremont School District RE-3 is committed to helping students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to become healthy, happy, safe, and productive adults; to help students become enthusiastic, life-long learners who are able to manage change; and to help students perpetuate and improve the democratic process and have a positive impact on their communities, their country and the world in a safe school environment.

GOALS:

To learn how to serve our children in ways that make a difference.

The P-3 Cadre experience helps to bring focus to specific aspects of alignment important to comprehensive efforts needed to effectively support programming along the early learning continuum. Using a framework helps to bring a sense of focus and structure to the work of serving young children and their families. And, staying at the forefront of educational research and best practices is critical. Part of serving children in ways that make a difference also includes aligning the curricula between the early childhood and elementary school programs. This is in progress at Cotopaxi Consolidated Schools, particularly around the new science and social studies programs. Next, we'll incorporate a new literacy program.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Being a part of the P-3 Leadership Cadre has helped to bring attention to the things that Cotopaxi is doing right and what could be improved. As an administrator, it's essential to focus on the most important things.

The internal group involved with the P-3 alignment efforts can be expanded to include others, such as Title 1 and Special Education specialists. Plus, making connections with the community and working with them as partners in this effort will make a positive difference.

Prioritizing time to collaborate on P-3 alignment is essential for teacher-buy in and being successful, overall. Shifting the focus has changed our perspective on young children and the questions we ask when serving young children and their families.

As a result of the P-3 Cadre experience, "our work is more focused. A lot of this has come from what we are learning about what is really important."

“ The school has changed...we have more materials. We have listened to teachers to see what they want, what their needs are. That is based on what they are learning is most important. Teachers have spent time researching and then coming up with new ideas. Teachers lead, instead of administrators leading. ”

NEXT STEPS:

At Cotopaxi Consolidated Schools, the plan is to continue developing more structured and focused processes around collaboration across our small P-3 team. The aim is to further develop our weekly meetings and create more meaningful lessons. Observing teachers in action is an ongoing priority because it provides opportunities for school leaders to see what teachers are doing and how students are improving in their writing skills, for instance.

