

Finding a Voice of Influence

It was a banner year for all HOPE students who participated in the Annual Persuasive Argument Competition. Chris Vann, Aurora Public Schools Coordinator for Prevention and Intervention, was a judge at the competition, and he said he was “blown away” by the poise and professionalism from HOPE’s students. More than forty 6-12th graders represented over twenty HOPE Learning Centers at the event. Their compelling essays ranged in topics from later school start times to capital punishment.



Gabriella and Ana helped each other become excellent communicators

The Persuasive Argument Competition is a natural extension of academic language arts lessons. HOPE Director of Student Achievement Dr. Janet Filbin said, “This competition equips our students to serve others with strong and credible voices. It teaches them to think critically and to present their messages to different audiences so that they can advocate for themselves and their communities.”

Many HOPE students used their voices to influence popular perceptions and opinions. “I was impressed with the variety of topics the students chose,” said contest judge Rosalind “Bee” Harris, publisher of *Denver Urban Spectrum*. “It was wonderful to see that students had the resolve to share their points of view, especially since extreme differences in opinion were presented.” Ms. Harris appreciated “the diversity not only in the topics but also among the student body; I saw the ‘face of America’ represented here. I encourage each HOPE student to find what they are passionate about and make it happen.”



Christian presents at the HOPE Persuasive Argument Competition

Just as in the larger community, where leaders take a stand on important issues, HOPE students demonstrated commitment to the topics they selected. Christian, from I AM Academy, spoke out against Arizona Senate Bill 1070 (Immigration), explaining his belief that our Founding Fathers would not have endorsed the resulting law and practices.

“They said, ‘All men are created equal,’” emphasized the seventh grader, adding, “I know they would not have allowed people to be treated badly just because they do not have the opportunity for a good life, a job and a safe home where they lived before coming here.” Christian also argued that the immigration law is costly, despite being promoted as a way to save money.

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Greetings from the Chief Executive Officer

At HOPE, we demonstrate how much we value our students, community and partners in education by responding to your continuously changing communication needs.



This *Voices of HOPE* embodies that value with a new design. Along with the same high quality of news about our student competitions, activities and events, you will also find new columns that illustrate components of our academic strategy and help you learn more about Team HOPE.

“Good communication” means many things across departments, from how we positively convey the importance of academic excellence in the classroom, to improved teacher communication with smart phones. It also encompasses our cooperation between departments and within the Douglas County School District, which is illustrated well in our “Collaborative Excellence in Admissions and Records” article.

Through our communication efforts, we ensure our teachers and mentors access to professional development opportunities and up-to-date information to maintain a culture of excellence. Our print communications, from this newsletter to articles about students in the community publications *Denver Urban Spectrum* and *El Semanario*, consistently inform the broader community about our students’ academic achievements and activities at Learning Centers.

This year, HOPE has significantly expanded our social media communications. We are using Facebook to reach out on a daily basis with fun facts about education, trivia, photos, and event announcements. Join the conversation at: www.facebook.com/HopeOnlineLearningAcademyCoOp

You can follow updates via Twitter. Find us at [@hopeonlinelearn](https://twitter.com/hopeonlinelearn)

HOPE’s YouTube page is regularly refreshed too, with videos from school events: www.youtube.com/HOPEOnlineLearning

Our online bulletin board is a place to stay up-to-date with HOPE’s current events: www.hopeonline.org/news/bulletin-board

Of course, we are always available for in-person meetings, phone calls and letters. With many exciting options at our blended learning school, keeping the lines of communication open strengthens us as a school and a community. Thank you for staying in touch with questions and ideas that become HOPE successes!

Sincerely,
Heather O'Mara
Chief Executive Officer



Alejandro and Kacy's playoff match



Isaiah



HOPE's 2nd Annual Ping Pong Tournament Winners



HOPE Hurricanes game



HOPE players and coaches



HOPE Spartans Tourney



HOPE Mustangs



A HOPE rap group performs in HOPE's Got Talent!



Student dancers are ready for their act



Performers await stage instructions



Dancers grace the HOPE stage

HOPE ATHLETICS ANNOUNCEMENT COURT OF DREAMS

Friday, March 1, 2013

Tickets – \$15 per person

Price covers admission to Nuggets game following tournament

Call to purchase a ticket or admission for a HOPE player

Come watch HOPE athletes play on the Nuggets' Pepsi Center court!

SAVE THE DATE!

HOPE Formal

Saturday, April 13, 2013

Crystal Rose
9755 E. Hampden Ave., Denver, CO

QUESTIONS: Contact Melanie Stone
melanie.stone@hopeonline.org
(720) 402-3016



250 HOPE students took part in national Digital Learning Day



HOPE students make a rally poster



HOPE students lead the march to the Capitol

Collaborative Excellence in Admissions and Records

The HOPE Admissions and Records team, led by Director Mark Swalley, works hard together to achieve the accuracy that ensures our school's success while emphasizing student support.

"We are very strict with data because, for HOPE, for Douglas County and for the state, it has to be exact. Every department depends on us," says veteran team member Maryanne Young.

Yet, the team's collaboration extends beyond the doors of HOPE. Their cooperation with Douglas County is exemplary. As one of the district's largest schools, HOPE has the least audit exceptions. The pupil count workbook that the Admissions and Records team prepares is used by the Colorado Department of Education as an example for other online schools in the state. In addition, they provide essential information cooperatively to all HOPE departments and to other Colorado school districts as well.



HOPE Admissions and Records Team

While October's Count Day finds the team in high gear with official enrollment reporting, these "unsung heroes" actively monitor the path of HOPE students during the entire school year. Their efforts have helped HOPE establish year-round enrollment. "We maintain a consistent focus on keeping our Learning Centers at capacity to serve as many students as possible throughout the year," explains Mr. Swalley.

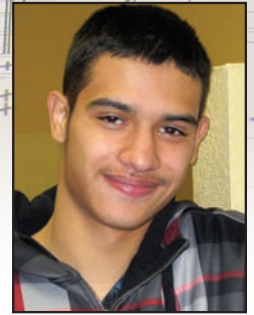
The department, composed of Mr. Swalley, Maryanne Young, Karen Biderman, Ann Parker and Shauna Hightower, are vital to students' success throughout their careers at HOPE. They take pride in helping students find a "good fit" at a Learning Center and encouraging positive communication. The department engages with parents and students through enrollment events and ongoing outreach.

The Admissions and Records department takes great pride in its work – and its people. "We have a fabulous team," emphasizes Ms. Biderman. "We operate like a family with a great coach. We all feel lucky to work together."

Thank you, Admissions and Records Team! You truly exemplify the spirit of HOPE!

STUDENT SUCCESS

Angel's Blueprint for a Knockout Future



HOPE Student Angel is a proud team player

HOPE Online (HOPE) student Angel loves having a team behind him, whether he is competing in boxing, setting goals with HOPE Learning Specialist Philancy Monck or completing daily class assignments at Center of Hope Academy in Lakewood. The confident sophomore remembers when he was "not an easy kid to work with," which adds to his appreciation for the HOPE teachers and Learning Center staff who "figured out how to support me and stay behind me 100%."

He adds, "Without them, I would probably still be figuring out what to do. Instead, I am taking steps toward my dream of applying my skills in drawing, artwork, computers and creativity to study architecture."

"Angel and I talk about his future now instead of his past," observes Ms. Monck. "I am designing a learning program to prepare him for architectural studies. I showed him all that would be required and his response was, 'I can do that.' Angel has earned a reputation for reliability. He does what he says he will do, and we are here to help him achieve his goals."

Angel continues an impressive turnaround in his third year at HOPE with the help of the inspiring people in his life. He is especially proud that praise has replaced discipline as a motivator, and his academic record has improved substantially. Before HOPE, Angel figured reading just wasn't for him because he did not have good test scores. "I finally realized, with so many people pushing me forward, that I just had to show up to do the work, and I did," he testifies.

Regardless of whether he is doing online or hands-on work at his blended learning school, Angel has the same attitude. "I know that there are going to be obstacles, but I go through them or around them so that the same obstacles do not come up again."

Finding a Voice of Influence (Continued from page 1)

Ana and Gabriella, from Action Academy, spoke on the topics of animal testing and television abuse, respectively. Finding their voices of influence through annual participation in the Persuasive Argument Contest has helped them grow.

"I encourage my friends to think about not wearing makeup because of my research on animal testing," Ana shared. "I also learned the value of preparation to communicate well at school, at church and at home. Before, I struggled to get across my thoughts and feelings clearly."

Gabriella, as she prepared her presentation, learned a lot about editing. "Right up until minutes before the competition," she recalled, "I had to keep paring down to the most important elements of my material to meet the time constraints."

Contest judge and Metro State University of Denver Field Experience

Coordinator Suzanne Klein discovered that, after reviewing many of the persuasive argument essays, "I could not stop reading them. They were so interesting. Then, to hear the students present them really gave me a multi-dimensional view of how well they understood their topics and how committed they were to them."



HOPE Teacher Ms. Ferguson, mentor Mr. Lewin, and students

Mentor Mr. Rambow and his students

HOPE LEARNING CENTER HIGHLIGHT:
The Impact of Vision

“Vision animates, inspires, transforms purpose into action.”
 –Warren Bennis, American scholar, leadership pioneer, author

HOPE at Vision Academy is a testament to the impact of vision. Now in its fourth year, Vision Academy has been fortified by its response to growth and the changing needs of their students.

The loyalty of Vision’s students and families is evidence of its consistent growth and stability. “All the students who finished the year with us returned this fall,” points out Vision Academy’s Learning Center Director Dawn Scott. “We are more and more like a strong extended family. The students feel supported here. Having a solid core group plays a role in their security, which affects their achievement.”

Perhaps the most vital aspect of Vision’s resilience has been, in Ms. Scott’s words, “an absolutely amazing staff.” She says, “Our HOPE teachers are a perfect fit. Students respond so well to HOPE Teacher Brandy Ferguson’s positive manner, the lessons she oversees and how she reaches individual students. The same is true for our HOPE Title 1 Reading Specialist Natasha Fortis. She will do anything and everything possible to help a student, whether it is in reading or in another discipline.”

“We have an exceptional Learning Center Manager in Ms. Natalie Glidden,” Ms. Scott says, and the classroom mentors connect extraordinarily well with students, using their unique gifts and learning passions. “Mentor Mr. David Lewin is all about technology and brings the excitement of ‘really cool’ gadgets and his love of science to the classroom. Mr. Chase Rambo is incredibly engaging and inspiring. He is so skilled at drawing out each student while encouraging everyone to work together.”

Working together is a strong theme not only in the classroom but among the teachers and mentors who support one another to meet their students’ needs. Ms. Scott holds firmly to her belief that Vision staff, teachers and mentors will continue on a path toward excellence. “We want to make HOPE especially proud of our students’ progress as it continues to advance,” Ms. Scott says. “We have everything in place to achieve that goal.”

EDITOR NOTES

Become a voice of HOPE! Does your student have a special success story? Is your Learning Center reaching a notable goal? Is there a field trip or activity that may inspire others? Send us your ideas for posts and articles about student and Learning Center successes, achievements and events! Email ruth.west@HOPEonline.org

We welcome your feedback about the new *Voices of HOPE* format. Email us at info@HOPEonline.org

HOPE Pioneers Blended Learning for English Language Learners

HOPE students have outperformed the state in reading among English Language Learning (ELL) students, on average, at almost every grade level for the last 2 years. Growth data indicates that HOPE students are moving up in language acquisition. This shows that HOPE, with its focus on blended learning, is a successful method for ELL students.

“As learners progress in understanding, using, and applying the English language, we would expect to see gains in academic scores,” explains HOPE Director of Student Achievement Dr. Janet Filbin. “Three full-time ELL teachers on special assignment instruct our entire staff in assessing scores on English language development so that they better understand the different ways a student shows his or her academic ability. Ultimately, our goal is to teach staff how to use the data to formulate targeted learning objectives for ELL students.”

Individual student needs are at the center of HOPE’s learning model, and ELL instruction is no exception. “We have designed tiered professional development objectives and services for teachers and mentors that reflect the ratio of students in their classrooms needing ELL instruction,” Dr. Filbin adds.

HOPE Learning Centers with highly concentrated ELL populations in the elementary grades have an ELL Specialist onsite. “We know that this age group needs critical ELL support,” Dr. Filbin says, emphasizing that every HOPE Learning Center, regardless of the number of ELL students, has the tools to understand the impact of language on learning, identifies second language learners and responds to their needs with specific strategies.



Hope Learning Centers

Below is a list of all 2012-2013 HOPE Learning Centers. Visits are a hands-on way to learn about HOPE’s unique model, allowing community members to see firsthand how blended learning is helping Colorado students. To arrange a Learning Center tour, please call 720-402-3000.

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|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Action Learning Center | Front Range Academy – Elmira | Renewal Academy – Aurora |
| Ambassador’s Academy | Front Range Academy – Westminster | Renewal Academy – Mountain View |
| Awaken Academy | Hillcrest Academy | Renewal Academy – Thornton |
| Belmar Academy | I AM Academy | Roca Fuerte Learning Academy – Elementary |
| Bridges of Silence Educational Center | JMJA Learning Center | Roca Fuerte Learning Academy – Secondary |
| Center of Hope Academy | Little Sailors Academy | Solid Rock Academy |
| Chapel Hill Academy | Maranatha Learning Center | Tetra Academy |
| Cherry Creek Learning Center | New Beginnings Learning Center | Trinity Learning Center |
| Cornerstone Learning Center | New Hope Academy | Tubman Hilliard Global Academy |
| Crescent View Academy | Redeemer Learning Center – k | Universal Learning Center |
| Dinosaur Community Learning Center | Redeemer Learning Center – 1-8 | Victory Academy |
| Front Range Academy – Arvada | Pathway Learning Center – Elementary | Vision Academy |
| Front Range Academy – Broomfield | Pathway Learning Center – Secondary | Westside Academy |

HOPE

ONLINE LEARNING ACADEMY

373 Inverness Parkway, Suite 205
Englewood, CO 80112

CIRCLES OF THE WORLD

Arts Across Cultures
Artistic Director: Janelle Ayon

Sunday, April 28, 2013

HOPE Performance • 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Denver Art Museum

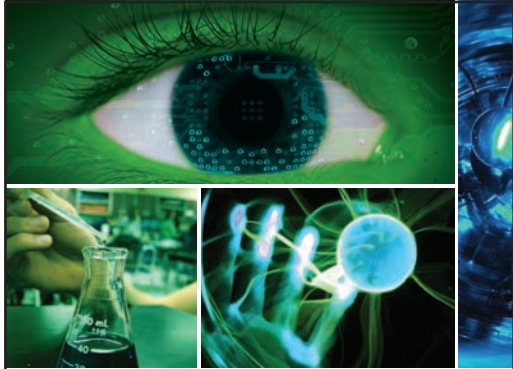
100 W. 14th Ave. Pkwy., Denver, CO 80204

Free Admission to Celebrate "Día del Niño"

12:00 – 4:00 pm



FEATURING I AM ACADEMY,
HILLCREST ACADEMY AND VICTORY ACADEMY



HOPE SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM

INQUIRY-BASED INVESTIGATION

April 18, 2013 • 12:00 – 3:00 pm

HOPE Online Learning Academy Co-Op
373 Inverness Parkway, Suite 205
Englewood, CO 80112

All Learning Centers will be represented