

Ace teacher in Columbus recognized

For the Deming Headlight

Article Launched: 09/06/2007 12:00:00 AM MDT



Fifth-grade teacher Kim Perea of Columbus Elementary School works with students... (Courtesy Photo)



Columbus Elementary School has an ace on its faculty.

Denise Woody, a New Mexico Public Education Department coach, said at a recent faculty meeting at Columbus Elementary that fifth-grade teacher Kim Perea, had "the best ACE board in the state."

Perea is in her third year at Columbus, her 20th in Deming Public Schools. She prefers to see herself as one among many as Columbus School raises and meets its goals.

Woody is with Jim Shipley and Associates, an agency consulting for the New Mexico PED at several schools in the state.

ACE is a performance-enhancing strategy developed by Shipley which increases the quality of student's answers on state testing by teaching them skills for reflecting on and expanding math and writing responses.

Standardized testing requires students to explain answers and how a response was reached. The ACE method, it's believed, helps students respond more completely.

They Answer, Cite the evidence for the answer, and Expand it to other applications and experiences. In math, students learn to Answer, Compute and Explain a procedure.

Teachers practice these skills weekly with students and graph results.

"One fifth-grade teacher," Woody wrote of Perea in an Aug. 24 report, "has implemented the use of ACE very effectively in her classroom. She has developed a process that is organized and manageable. Her process should be shared as a "best

practice' in the building."

Woody has visited several ACE classrooms in New Mexico. Perea says it isn't actually an ACE board that is notable.

"It is a strategy you use that helps with the CRT (standardized test) and helps students in the way you respond," she says.

"I started it the first day of school. The way we do it is it's part of our routine. They (students) have a math problem on the board. Every morning they have a problem and they keep an ACE notebook."

"She's a very good teacher," Columbus Instructional Leader Armando Chavez says of Perea. "We find that teachers who really jump on the band wagon are positive toward different ideas. We're making some progress here. It's just phenomenal and outstanding what we've accomplished."

Columbus also uses PDSA — Plan, Do, Study, Act — a way, Chavez says, for teachers to be able to analyze their teaching and for students to understand how they learn.

"She did really well," Chavez said of Perea and her students. "It showed in their test scores."

Woody's report also recognizes Chavez and Principal Hector Madrid.

Chavez, Woody wrote, "is an excellent Instructional Coach. Through daily practice and modeling of all of the elements of continuous improvement, Armando is able to provide the support needed for the school to move to a high level of implementation. Armando provides hands-on support to all staff in many areas."

"As Instructional Coach," Chavez says, "I'm here to be a resource for teachers and help them in any way I can to help them improve instruction. I help with data analysis, testing. I'm here for them. What I also do is I help mentor new teachers who come into the school ... a bunch of different responsibilities, whatever the principal feels I need to take part in."

Columbus has six new teachers this school year. The school is on a year-round calendar, with the 2007-08 school year opening July 17.

"Hector Madrid, Principal," Woody wrote, "has set clear expectations for the staff and provides the support needed for the staff to successfully meet or exceed expectations."

Columbus School this past year made Adequate Yearly Progress in Mathematics but was .02 of a point shy of AYP in Reading.

"We're very pleased with the progress," Madrid said of Columbus School. "We barely missed AYP and we're awaiting information on the possibility of still making AYP. We'll not know until later this week or perhaps next week."

Minute errors are often found in reviewing state grading of schools, errors that when corrected bump a school to the next level.

Woody, Madrid said, noted the school's teamwork, finding it very inspirational.

"The things she had to say about the school," Madrid said, "were very positive