



ACHIEVING COMPETITIVE **EXCELLENCE**

Colorado Springs School District 11

Principal, Teacher, and Student Testimonials 2021-22 AY

CSSD11 Principals Testimonials 2021-22 AY



Michael J. Thomas, Superintendent of Schools

Inspire Every Mind.

Derien L. Latimer
Principal
(719) 328-7300

04/18/2022

To whom it may concern,

Please allow me to share with you my resounding endorsement of the Achieving Competitive Excellence (ACE) program. Madison Elementary has been fortunate to have coaches Charmas & Janice Lee working with our 3rd, 4th & 5th grade students during the 2021-2022 school year.

The principles taught weekly during ACE made an immediate and lasting impact on our students. After week 1 this fall, several students approached me asking when Coach & Mrs. Lee were returning. Upon asking why they wanted them to return, student responses included things such as "I have already tried some of the things they taught me at home", "It was fun, the time went too fast, I want them to stay longer." As the program continued, teachers in our building began to use some of the principals taught in the Ace program encouraging students to "Think, Say, Do." This was especially important for many of our students who have not traditionally had success in schools. I as a principal have had opportunities to use some of the things taught during ACE. For example, students are taught to develop three good thoughts they will have each morning. This tool has been outstanding with students who continuously struggle.

One of the most impactful things I have seen this year is not often captured by traditional measuring tools. On ACE days at Madison when Coach & Mrs. Lee arrive, they walk through the cafeteria and the reactions they receive from the students tell me that these are individuals who have made an impact. I don't believe kids give their time and attention to people who are inauthentic and do not genuinely care for their best interest. This day in age we need people who are connecting with kids and making a meaningful impact. The kids are compelled to get up to talk to them.

I know without a doubt that the ACE program has made a significant impact on the lives of the Madison students and staff. The principles taught in ACE set the stage for students to be successful as learners throughout the day. The ACE program has and will continue to have an important role in the success of students at Madison Elementary. When we look at all the things that can help a student be successful socially, emotionally, and character development I see ACE as being an integral part of this work. As the principal of Madison Elementary School I give my heartfelt endorsement of this program. I encourage you to reach out to me for further discussion at Derien.Latimer@d11.org or 719-328-7310.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Derien Latimer'.

Derien Latimer
Principal-Madison Elementary

James Madison Elementary School • 4120 Constitution Avenue • Colorado Springs, CO 80909



Dr. Michael Thomas, Superintendent
Christina Butcher, Principal
Queen Palmer Elementary
Colorado Springs School District 11

February 2, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my distinct privilege to write this letter on behalf of the ACE Project. Under the direction of Charmas and Janice Lee, Achieving Competitive Excellence is a program that provides opportunities for students to set goals, develop action steps, and accountability to meet them.

The ACE Project expects the best out of our 3rd-5th grade students when it comes to the ACE work and classroom behavior expectations. Our students have been fortunate to learn how to analyze school situations in real-time by using the Think-Say-Do strategy. This is a decision-making/self-talk strategy that students use when handling and regulating frustration or disappointment in and outside of the classroom. The outcome is to reduce behavior incidents, reinforce and re-teach desired behavior which directly impacts increased attention and better classroom performance.

One of Charmas and Janice most impressive traits is their dedication and passion for kids. They strive to engage with our 3rd-5th grade learners and provide opportunities for interactions, questions, and reflections. The ACE Project is creative and thinks outside of the box. Often times, they will differentiate the learning to target the specific needs for our students.

Teachers at Queen Palmer nominate a Capturing Kids' Hearts Star Student every day to lead our Morning Meetings. A 3rd grade student in the ACE program became a CKH Star Student this year. He was determined to achieve this goal. When he achieved it, he was asked, "What motivated you to achieve this goal?" He said, "Charmas Lee inspired me!" If this isn't perseverance, I don't know what is!

I unreservedly recommend the ACE Project. You will not find a more impactful program that supports a positive framework for student decision making. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (719) 321-1496.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christina R. Butcher".

Christina R. Butcher

April 24, 2022

Dear Coach and Mrs. Lee,

Thank you for bringing your ACE Perform Like Champions program to Fremont this year! In addition to being a Title 1 school, we have a wide variety of needs among our students, including severe behavior challenges. Your positive messaging had an impact on our students, even the most challenging ones. We would often overhear students talking about what they learned long after you were gone, and they looked forward to your visits each week. Our teachers were able to continue your messaging to respect the speaker, and many would start the day reminding students to think about their power word for the day. Students who normally have trouble calming down have made improvements to "Think, Say, Do," which is a big accomplishment.

We are disappointed that our district was not able to secure funding to continue your program for next year and hope that you will be able to find resources to support the Fremont community again.

Sincerely,
Tracy Squires
Principal, Fremont Elementary School
719.328.5600

April 22, 2022

It has been a pleasure having Mr. and Mrs. Lee implementing the ACE Program at our school. The ACE program has been a positive asset for supporting our school's social-emotional learning curriculum and PBIS culture. Most recently, all of our 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students have received ACE lessons delivered in 30-minute timeframes twice monthly. The ACE lessons equip students with skills to use for emotional regulation and building self-esteem, perseverance, and self-confidence. The ACE strategies are easy for students to remember and to apply. For example, "Respect the speaker" is a skill that students know, and it is now also a common language across the intermediate grades in our school. It is a reminder of the importance of showing respect, focusing, and listening.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee are positive role models, coaches, and advocates for students. Their lessons are engaging and often include real-world examples and models of the concepts so that students can make connections to their own life. I have observed ACE lessons and I believe the positive character traits and life skills that the Lee's teach help students to be successful in their learning and in their attitude and behavior choices.

Sincerely,
Michelle Slyter
Principal, John Adams Elementary

CSSD11 Teacher Testimonials 2021-22 AY

March 16, 2022

Ever since ACE started coming to my classroom, I have noticed a change in my students' mindsets. They are more positive, engaged, and they spread motivation like wildfire, just like Coach Lee. Coach Lee leads by example and instills the benefits of hard work and dedication to every child that he works with. As soon as my students see them in the hallway, they get so excited knowing that they have the chance to work with them that day. The ACE project has helped my students become more self-aware and allows them to reflect on their daily practices. My students loved the AM Blueprint activity so much that it became a part of our daily routine. Every morning, they reflect on what makes them amazing humans and all of the things they are grateful for. This helps my students start class with a positive mindset and I believe it helps our day run smoothly. Not only are Mrs. Lee and Coach Lee positive role models, but they also challenge students to try their best and to never give up. My favorite quote that Coach Lee uses every time he visits my classroom is, "Can I get a YES or a Yes?" He doesn't warrant excuses and has high expectations for every student. I personally believe that every child deserves this positive influence in their lives and to be challenged to never give up... even when things get rough. So, should every child live an epic life? "Can I get a YES or a YES"!

-Annis Jones 4th Grade Teacher at John Adams Elementary School

March 14, 2022

To whom it may concern:

I have had the pleasure of having Coach and Mrs. Lee in my classroom sharing their ACE program with my students over this past school year. With the pandemic and all of the challenges everyone has faced over the last two year, the ACE program has helped my students develop a growth mindset, grit, face obstacles in their learning and respecting peers and adults. I have seen my students encourage and remind each other with the topics that Coach and Mrs. Lee teach with the students. It has set a good framework in my classroom for me to continue developing the growth mindset within our classroom and school environments. His activities and lessons are engaging. My class loves the days when we have the Lee's in our room. Any classroom could highly benefit from Coach and Mrs. Lee encouraging, teaching, and coaching their classroom.

Melissa Speakman
4th grade teacher
Fremont Elementary

March 1, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

Charmas and Janice Lee have been coming to my Fourth and Fifth Grade classroom every other week this year to present their engaging program, Achieving Competitive Excellence, or ACE, to my students. The program is based on the principles of choosing positive behaviors when reacting to situations, and developing positive thoughts that will, in turn, determine your actions. The Lees deliver a powerful message for students in these sessions, keeping students actively engaged with sign language, written and oral responses, video clips, and strategies that maintain the interest and focus of the students. In the classroom, Mr. and Mrs. Lee are role models for respectful interactions and they help students apply the ACE strategies for success in their own personal lives.

The ACE Program is very closely aligned to the School District 11 Graduate Profile. Students are encouraged to achieve their personal best, taught how to set goals, and change habits, and make decisions responsibly. The ACE Program instills a positive mindset and behaviors for success. All of these skills and attributes can be applied to our students' daily lives now and in the future but are even more impactful when they can begin using them in the elementary years. My students and I have been so fortunate to have the ACE Program brought to us this year. We have thoroughly enjoyed and benefitted from the sessions, and we hope many others will have this unique opportunity!

Sincerely,

Liz Klingensmith

Keller Elementary Fifth Grade Teacher

March 30, 2022

The ACE program is excellent at motivating my students. Students have responded very positively to the coaching they received. I have often caught snippets of conversations throughout the year where students are talking about their "power words" they used that morning to set their day off in a positive manner. It has been very helpful after covid causing so much disruption to help them deal with emotions, friends, and refocusing on the positive. I wish we could have them every week instead of every other. My students have gained emotional awareness and strategies to dealing with strong emotions, as well as emotional stability through positive thinking, reflection, and goal setting.

Sincerely,

John Glisson

Keller Elementary 3rd Grade Teacher

February 3, 2022

I would like to highly recommend Charmas Lee's Achieving Competitive Excellence program. Mr. Lee has delivered this program to my 5th grade class during the 2021-2022 school year. The program is engaging for my students and has given them another set of tools to positively build their social and emotional skills.

Thank You

Kevin Fitch

5th Grade Teacher
Fremont Elementary
719-328-5647

Coach and Mrs. Lee have positively affected my class in many ways. They have taught my students to think before reacting and have taught them how to recognize conflict and to make the best choice for them at that time, whether engage in discussion or walk away until their emotions are regulated. Coach and Mrs. Lee have also taught my students how to reflect on their current thinking and make measurable goals to achieve the best versions of themselves. It has been a joy to welcome them into my classroom this year.

Becca A. Daugherty
3rd Grade Teacher
Fremont Elementary

My 5th graders are always excited when they know that Coaches Lee and Lee will be at our school! They have enjoyed all the positive character-building lessons and inspirational stories. The lessons are relatable, interactive, goal-oriented, and fun! It has been a pleasure sharing our time with them this year!

Adita Karges
Queen Palmer Elementary

My 4th grade students look forward to the time they spend with Coaches Lee & Lee! They both bring positive energy, inspirational stories, and effective goal setting during each session. It's been a pleasure having them be a part of our class this year!

Ms. Maldonado
4th grade teacher Queen Palmer Elementary

D11 Student Testimonials AY 2021-22

What Students Think About ACE at Keller Elementary:

"I have more courage."

- Fifth Grade

"It makes me calmer and happier."

- Fifth Grade

"ACE is helping me to change some habits."

- Fifth Grade

"Mr. Lee made me believe in myself, like I can do anything if I try."

- Fifth Grade

"Mr. and Mrs. Lee give me lots of hope in myself."

- Fourth Grade

"I am learning to like myself more, to speak up for myself."

- Fifth Grade

"I have learned courage."

- Fifth Grade

"I now use the ACE lessons in my life."

- Fourth Grade

"Mr. and Mrs. Lee make me happier and more independent."

- Fourth Grade

"I learned how to make people like me for good reasons."

- Fifth Grade

"This program makes me feel I have a voice."

- Fourth Grade

"Mr. Lee has helped me stop procrastination and has taught me how to make goals."

- Fourth Grade

"I have built more confidence and feel better about myself."

- Fifth Grade

"I enjoy learning sign language."

-Fifth Grade

"It has been valuable to believe in myself, to keep following my goals, and to find success when success does not find you."

- Fourth Grade