



Unified School District 470

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Arkansas City elementary school one of 74 in state
to receive Inaugural Challenge Award

Roosevelt Elementary's fourth grade math class was one of 74 schools in the state to receive the Challenge Award from the Confidence in Kansas Public Education Task Force yesterday.

This is a new recognition program established by the Task Force. The Challenge Awards are designed to recognize Kansas schools making a significant difference in student achievement despite facing significant challenges in school population.

The 74 schools will receive Certificates of Merit at a special ceremony in November for having exceeded normal expectations on their assessment results based on the ethnicity and socioeconomic status of those taking the test. Task Force President Charles Volland made the announcement yesterday during the State Board of Education meeting in Topeka.

Data gathered through the Quality Performance Accreditation process has shown that the greatest achievement gap occurs in schools with high ethnic populations, as well as high percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches. The schools receiving the Challenge Award all have such populations, but have managed to post state assessment scores above what would normally be expected.

Roosevelt Principal Tom Bauer said that last year was the first year that the fourth grade math classes reached the state's Standard of Excellence. He said that Darla Mann is the teacher, but that credit should also be given to all the Roosevelt staff.

"Our entire staff has worked on math standards and indicators and worked hard on test-taking skills," he said. "We're very proud of our students and staff, and we're working hard again to reach this measure of success."

Superintendent Perry L. Perkins said that he also is proud of the staff and students at Roosevelt.

"The entire school district, but especially Roosevelt Elementary School, has reason to celebrate Roosevelt's Challenge award," he said. "This award recognizes a school that achieved the state's high Standard of Excellence on the fourth grade 2002 math state assessment. This award recognizes a school that knows all children can learn to high standards, one of the basic beliefs and values in the Arkansas City public schools. We are very proud of the students, teachers, administration and parents at Roosevelt Elementary School."

"Both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Quality Performance Accreditation program have as a foundation the belief that all children can learn," Volland

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said. "The purpose of this new award is to further affirm that belief."

In addition to recognizing schools for their achievements in reaching challenging populations, the Task Force also wanted to provide a way for other schools to learn how Challenge Award winners are making a difference in student achievement. Each of the Challenge Award winners will be asked to provide narrative information on the instructional strategies and techniques used to achieve their success. That information will then be made available to other schools.

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