

In the 2012-13 school year, Cañon City Schools and Pueblo City-County Health Department began working together to bring an exciting new way of learning to Fremont County. Through the Colorado Active Learning Project, schools applied for mini grants that would fund playground markings, brain booster resources and peer-led game resources.

Cañon City Schools RE-1 has seven schools that received CALP funding: McKinley Elementary School, Lincoln School of Science & Technology, Cañon Exploratory School, Washington Elementary School, Mountain View Core Knowledge, Cañon City Middle School, and Harrison K-8. Both elementary schools in Fremont County RE-2 school district received funding: Fremont Elementary School and Penrose Elementary School. Cotopaxi K-12, which is RE-3 school district's lone school, also got funding and has recently become more involved.



A compass rose at Fremont Elementary School in Florence.

“It was beyond exciting to be able to fund all of the elementary schools in Fremont County and one middle school,” said Miranda Stovall, Project Coordinator from Pueblo City-County Health Department. “The support of the Fremont County District wellness staff really made it all possible as they were true champions of CALP. We are so grateful that we were able to work with so many great schools and teachers.”

More than \$23,000 was given from Pueblo City-County Health Department to Fremont County schools to implement CALP.

All the schools are at different places in their CALP journeys. Some schools such as Fremont Elementary and McKinley Elementary were quick to get started and had beautiful finished products. The other schools soon followed and students across Fremont County began to benefit from the grants.

“I used the map in back for my middle school kids to show which state they were born in by standing on the state, stand on which state is their favorite and name the capitols, to incorporate geography,” Cañon Exploratory School physical education teacher Carrie Hanenberg said.

“The black top remains looking great and students utilize it,” Lincoln School of Science & Technology librarian Karen Patrick said.

The schools have definitely had some road blocks they've faced with the CALP paintings. In many schools, the heavy-duty highway paint has chipped off the concrete and in some cases the markings have become illegible. At Fremont Elementary, it's gotten so bad that some paintings are completely gone.



A loco-motor pattern at McKinley Elementary School in Cañon City.



Cotopaxi's high school art students recently helped start the painting process for CALP.

Cotopaxi is the one of the schools to just recently get started on their paintings, and they used the knowledge of the other schools' bad luck to choose a different route. Instead of using paint, Cotopaxi CALP champion Jennifer Lang used H&C Shield Plus Concrete Stain. Lang said the stain has gone on easily and is water-based. Only time will tell if the stain holds up better than the paint did.

"I am happy to report we actually got something painted and have used our 100s chart," said Lang, the school's kindergarten teacher. "I have an artist who is 'in charge,' but I am also using our high school art class for help. Our next step is a compass and a water cycle."

Even where paint has been chipped, it has still been a positive for the schools. The bright-colored paint has dressed up the once-dull concrete, and, if nothing else, the kids enjoy being active on them. The various loco-motor patterns attract students and promotes physical activity just by being there.

The paintings aren't the only part of the CALP grant, though, and that's why we can still call the grant a major success. All teachers who took the trainings were equipped with knowledge about brain boosters and peer-led games that can be played to give a break to students' rigorous schedules.

Dozens of games were explained in an easy-to-read notebook that each teacher was given and they feature categories of: General brain breaks, vocabulary/spelling brain breaks, math brain breaks, social studies brain breaks, and science brain breaks.



A snake at McKinley Elementary doubles as the alphabet to help young students learn their ABCs.

"We are having monthly drawings for teachers using movement breaks, which include the CALP games," McKinley principal Drenda Manning said. "Our art teacher just started an art club and ... one of the things they would like to do is to re-do the paintings outside."

"Our returning teachers are in to the CALP activities at least twice a week," Penrose physical education teacher Tony Royer said. "I will be offering some gift cards from our wellness money."

The goal of the peer-led games is to establish a fun environment for students that encourages physical activity, leadership, social cohesion, and conflict resolution. Students rotate through different roles so

each gets a chance to fill a leadership position. There are 10 peer-led games including: Catch Me If You Can, Crazy Glue, Scram Sam, Tail Tag, and Topsy Turvy. Each school has numerous kits that include all the necessary equipment to play the games.

“We have three full CALP kits. Many classroom teachers use the games and brain breaks in class and during our Fun Fridays,” Fremont Elementary School physical education teacher Kim Wilson said. “... We also use the games a lot in P.E. as warm-ups and fill in times.”

“One of the most exciting things for me is to see the collaboration between the schools, the District wellness staff and CALP staff,” Stovall said. “The CALP strategies tie in so perfectly with all of the great things that Fremont County schools were already doing and the ownership and pride that all of the schools have taken of the project is so refreshing! Seeing the project come to life at all of the schools has demonstrated how truly successful the project can be with the right people leading it!”