

# YourHub



[Adams County](#) [Arapahoe County](#) [Aurora](#) [Denver](#) [Douglas County](#) [Jefferson Cour](#)  [Q](#)

0 Crime Blotter Roundup

Like

0

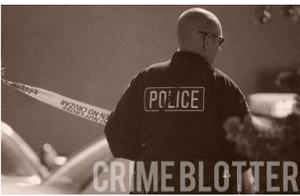
Tweet

0

8+1

1

Crime Blotter Roundup is a collection of the most interesting crime blotter reports from the top 10 weekly YourHub sections of The Denver Post. [Read more »](#)



## The Jeffco Board of Education Should Set A Measurable College and Career Readiness Goal

Posted by tc415 on November 26, 2014 in Arvada, Arvada Education, Arvada Opinion, Conifer, Conifer Education, Conifer Opinion, Edgewater, Edgewater Education, Edgewater Opinion, Evergreen, Evergreen Education, Evergreen Opinion, Featured, Golden, Golden Education, Golden Opinion, Jefferson County, Jefferson County Education, Jefferson County Front, Jefferson County Opinion, Lakewood, Lakewood Education, Lakewood Opinion, Littleton, Littleton Education, Littleton Opinion, Morrison, Morrison Education, Morrison Opinion, South Jeffco, South Jeffco Education, South Jeffco Front, South Jeffco Opinion, Wheat Ridge, Wheat Ridge Education, Wheat Ridge Opinion | 76 Views | 1 Response

Over the years, Jeffco Boards of Education have repeatedly committed the district to two overarching goals: Every student will meet Colorado grade level standards every year, and will graduate career and college ready. In reality, the former goal is really just the means to the latter, which is the cumulative result logically used by parents and taxpayers to judge the value they have received from Jeffco schools in exchange for the billion dollars we spend on them each year.

To their great credit, last year the new Board of Education unanimously adopted five quantified metrics for improving the percent of students that meet different state standard targets, as measured by the annual TCAP/CMAS tests. However, the Board has not yet set a quantitative target for improving the percentage of Jeffco students who graduate career and college ready. This is a major oversight that the Board should correct as soon as possible, because it will make a substantial contribution towards accelerating academic achievement improvement in Jeffco.

Let me explain why.

It is helpful to start with some definitions to distinguish between terms that are often used interchangeably, which can be a source of confusion in discussions about college and career readiness. I have found the definitions used by the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) to be quite useful:

### YOURHUB STAFF STORIES

[Spinelli's Sauce Co., Denver](#)  
January 1, 2015  
Interview with Chris Rogers, chef/partner

[Song's Elite Martial Arts Academy, Brighton](#)  
December 31, 2014  
Interview with Hyunsoon "Sunny" Song, director

[FusBoxe Mixed Martial Arts, Westminster](#)  
December 31, 2014  
Interview with Michael Sullivan, head coach

[Coffee Canaan, Aurora](#)  
December 31, 2014  
Interview with Tenagne "Tina" Sharew, owner

[Golden Skillet, Golden](#)  
December 31, 2014  
Interview with Elizabeth Weber, co-ownerQ: How did you get involved in this business?A: I wanted to own my own business, and food seemed appropriate.

[Soothing Sounds Acutonics, Lakewood](#)  
December 31, 2014  
Interview with Deborah Houk, ownerQ: How did you get involved in this business?A: My own experience with chronic pain led me to conclude that there is something lacking in our conventional

[Balanced Training Fitness, Littleton](#)  
December 31, 2014  
Interview with Kayla

**Our students aren't our only fans.**



Named one of The World's 50 Most Innovative Companies by Fast Company.



**WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY**

[Comments](#) [Popular](#) [Tags](#)



Jacob benEzra on [Grant Beacon Middle School to open Ideation...](#)

Wow-- nice job, Nick. We...



Littleton's Caddis Capital Investments buys Arizona properties | NOCO

TODAY on [Caddis Capital Investments finances luxury student housing...](#)

[...] "The Arizona market is..."



Littleton's Caddis Capital Investments buys Arizona properties | NOCO

TODAY on [Caddis Capital Investments finances luxury student housing...](#)

[...] "The Arizona market is..."



Connie DCSD Parent on [Your Voice: Time for the whole truth...](#)

JD, we have no way...



Connie DCSD Parent on [Your Voice: Testing madness](#)

Beware of the bait and...



JD on [Your Voice: Time for the whole truth...](#)

Thank you for the article...

- *Work Ready: Meets basic expectations regarding workplace behavior and demeanor*

- *Job Ready: Possesses specific training necessary to begin a defined entry-level position*

- *Career Ready: Possesses key content knowledge and key learning skills and techniques sufficient to begin studies in a career pathway [i.e., to begin the process of life-long learning that is critical to career success in today's world]*

- *College Ready: Is prepared in the areas necessary to succeed in entry level general education courses [beyond high school]*

Are "career ready" and "college ready" the same thing?

EPIC concludes they are:

*"Research indicates that although specific content for postsecondary success varies by field of study, institution, and certificate or degree program, both college and career share many important elements of readiness. These include skills all students need to be ready for a variety of postsecondary learning environments, such as study skills, time-management skills, persistence, and ownership of learning. Postsecondary instructors at a wide range of two- and four-year institutions stress the importance of these skills across subject areas and programs. Additionally, students need to have a range of cognitive strategies to help them tackle complex tasks and apply content knowledge in novel and non-routine ways. The goal is for high school graduates to be both college ready and career ready, enabling them to pursue a range of opportunities."*

Research by the ACT organization has reached the same conclusion:

*"Results of a new ACT study provide empirical evidence that, whether planning to enter college or workforce training programs after graduation, high school students need to be educated to a comparable level of readiness in reading and mathematics. Graduates need this level of readiness if they are to succeed in college-level courses without remediation and to enter workforce training programs ready to learn job-specific skills." – "Ready for College and Ready for Work: Same or Different?" by the ACT Organization*

From an accountability perspective, research also makes it clear that student scores on a range of college and career readiness assessments are very highly correlated, including scores on the ACT and the military's ASVAB assessment (see, "ACT and General Cognitive Ability" by Koenig, Frey, and Detterman) and scores on the ACT and the "Work Keys" assessment used by many state job centers and companies for pre-employment screening (see, "Ready for College and Ready for Work: Same or Different?").

Casteel, fitness trainer and owner

[Sysbro Fitness, Westminster](#)  
December 29, 2014  
Interview with Andrea Cordova, owner

[La Cave Wine Bar & Boutique, Lakewood](#)  
December 26, 2014  
Interview with Elizabeth Hampton, owner

[Goochie Cakes, Aurora](#)  
December 24, 2014  
Interview with Amy Gooch, owner

[Manley Man Handyman Services LLC, Golden](#)  
December 23, 2014  
Interview with Clint Hill, owner

[Jerome's Pizza, Englewood](#)  
December 23, 2014  
Interview with Jerome Graves, founder

[Kim and Cam's Taekwondo Academy, Parker](#)  
December 23, 2014  
Interview with Cameron Weber, master instructor and owner

[Denver Escape Room, Northglenn](#)  
December 23, 2014  
Interview with Brian Lacertosa, CEO

[Starling Salon, Denver](#)  
December 23, 2014  
Interview with Sonia Warden, owner

[Wilde Belle Boutique, Lakewood](#)  
December 23, 2014  
Interview with Lindsay Waldron and Karrah Bunjes, owners

[E-Mart Natural International Grocery, Aurora](#)  
December 22, 2014  
Interview with Mike Lee, owner

[Evolve Action Sports Park, Denver](#)  
December 17, 2014  
Interview with Chris Oliver, general manager

[Locavore Beer Works, Littleton](#)  
December 17, 2014

YourHub on Twitter

**Tweets** Follow

**YourHub.com** 7h  
@YourHub  
Jefferson County commissioners to study marijuana testing facilities [dpo.st/1BzGBck](https://dpo.st/1BzGBck) by @joe\_vacc  
Show Summary

**YourHub.com** 6 Jan  
@YourHub  
Wild bird rehab center raising money for new facility in Wheat Ridge [dpo.st/1wSk6sM](https://dpo.st/1wSk6sM) by @abriggs  
[pic.twitter.com/JHM2OLr15Y](https://pic.twitter.com/JHM2OLr15Y)



**YourHub.com** 5 Jan  
@YourHub  
Space in the new Aurora Cultural  
Tweet to @YourHub

YourHub on Facebook

In sum, in today's economy there is a very high degree of overlap between what it means to be "career" and "college" ready, which is reflected in the high correlations between results on different tests we use to assess these outcomes. For that reason, as a measure of the extent to which Jeffco has met its ultimate goal of every student graduating career and college ready, ACT results are a very valid and useful metric, not just for the 64% of Jeffco high school graduates who proceed directly to college, but also for their peers who go to directly to work or into the military after graduation.

In 2001, Colorado and Illinois were the first states to require all eleventh graders to take the ACT assessment, both as a means of encouraging more students to attend college, and as a universal assessment of the quality of the cumulative outcome produced by twelve years (K-11) of taxpayer investment in their education. Since then, this practice has gained momentum, and in 2015 eighteen states will require all eleventh graders to take the ACT.

An important question is the extent to which the ACT aligns with the more rigorous Common Core standards that are gradually being introduced in many states (known here as the Colorado Measures of Academic Success) in order to address the problem of state standards that were of widely varying quality. The ACT organization was involved in the formulation of the Common Core standards, and the ACT test is closely aligned with them (earlier this year, the College Board announced that it will redesign the SAT test to ensure that it also aligns with the Common Core standards).

Finally, ACT results can be disaggregated by groups whose achievement results are very important to the Board and the public, including students eligible for free and reduced lunch, and students from different ethnic backgrounds.

However, there is a critical issue with respect to the manner in which the Board sets goals related to ACT results, and the way they are reported to parents and taxpayers.

Up to now, the district has presented ACT results in the form of average scores, and has not made explicit the percent of students who have met or exceeded the ACT's benchmarks for college and career readiness. It is clear that the latter metric is much more closely related not only to the Board's goal that every student graduate college and career ready, but also to most parents' and taxpayers' common sense metric for judging the cumulative value they are receiving from Jeffco public schools.

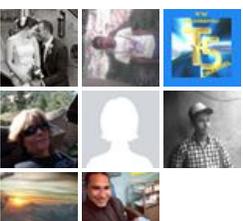
Here is a concrete example of what I mean. Which of the following two statements about Jeffco's 2014 ACT results provides Board members, parents, and taxpayers with more information?

Interview with Andy and Jen Nelson, and Jason and Cindy Reinhardt, owners

KiO Storage LLC, Greenwood Village  
December 17, 2014  
Interview with Constance Artigues, founder and president



3,996 people like YourHub.com.



• *"On the 2014 ACT, the average score for Jeffco eleventh graders was 21.5 on reading, 21.2 on math, and 21.6 on science."*

• *"On the 2014 ACT, 46% of Jeffco eleventh graders scored at or above the ACT's minimum score for college and career readiness in reading, 47% scored at or above the benchmark in math, and 45% scored at or above the benchmark in science. For students eligible for free and reduced lunch, the percentages were 26% in reading, 23% in math, and 23% in science. For students not eligible for free and reduced lunch, they were 52% in reading, 55% in math, and 52% in science. At Jeffco's six most affluent high schools (Chatfield, Columbine, Conifer, Dakota Ridge, Evergreen, and Ralston Valley), the percent of students not eligible for free and reduced lunch who met or exceeded the college and career readiness benchmarks was 58% in reading, 64% in math, and 59% in science."*

I hope my point is clear. Given the goal set by the Board of Education, ACT scores should be publicly reported in terms of the percent of Jeffco students who meet or exceed the college and career readiness benchmarks in different subject areas.

As for a quantitative improvement goal, my suggestion to the Board is to keep it simple and clear: Within five years, at least 67% of Jeffco students should meet or exceed the ACT's college and career readiness benchmarks in reading, math, and science. If at some point in the future, Colorado drops the requirement that all eleventh graders must take the ACT and replaces it with the new PARCC tests, then this goal should be adjusted to use the college and career readiness benchmarks set by the group of states using PARCC.

Nobody ever said that having every Jeffco student graduate career and college ready was going to be an easy goal to achieve. Yet that does not mean we should not relentlessly pursue it, continuously learning from our successes and failures, and constantly experimenting with new approaches that may move us closer to our goal. Indeed, we have a moral obligation to Jeffco's students, families, and taxpayers to do exactly that.

By making it clear just how far we are from reaching our college and career readiness goal, and by setting measurable near-term improvement targets, the Board of Education can further focus and energize the collective efforts of the entire Jeffco team on the ultimate measure of their success.

*Tom Coyne chairs the Wheat Ridge High School Accountability Committee, and in January 2014 joined Jeffco's District Accountability Committee. He has worked on corporate performance improvement issues for more than 30 years.*

Posted in Arvada, Arvada Education, Arvada Opinion, Conifer, Conifer Education, Conifer Opinion, Edgewater, Edgewater Education, Edgewater Opinion, Evergreen, Evergreen Education, Evergreen Opinion, Featured, Golden, Golden Education, Golden Opinion, Jefferson County, Jefferson County

Education, Jefferson County Front, Jefferson County Opinion, Lakewood, Lakewood Education, Lakewood Opinion, Littleton, Littleton Education, Littleton Opinion, Morrison, Morrison Education, Morrison Opinion, South Jeffco, South Jeffco Education, South Jeffco Front, South Jeffco Opinion, Wheat Ridge, Wheat Ridge Education, Wheat Ridge Opinion

## About the Author



tc415

Chair, School Accountability Committee, Wheat Ridge High School; business executive for 30 years

## One Response



**Frustrated Jeffco Parent** November 30, 2014 at 9:10 pm |

[Permalink](#)

I can't believe those achievement results, especially at our most affluent high schools! It is very clear that Jeffco needs to improve — we can't just keep blaming all our achievement problems on poverty.

[Reply](#)

## Leave a Reply

Name \*

Email \*

Website

Comment

POST COMMENT

# YourHub



YourHub is The Denver Post's online local news source and weekly print section. This website is for community contributions. For YourHub staff content, go to our Denver Post website at [denverpost.com/yourhub](http://denverpost.com/yourhub).

101 W. Colfax Ave.  
Denver, CO 80202  
303-954-1010  
[newsroom@denverpost.com](mailto:newsroom@denverpost.com)