



Be a Part of Excellence

Brand Awareness and Community Engagement Campaign

Entry Category

Marketing/Branding Campaign

District

Cherry Creek School District (Colorado)

Communication Staff Size: 11 School District Size: Over 50,000

Team

Abbe Smith, Chief Communication Officer Ashley Verville, Director of Communications Jeremy Chavez, Digital Media Production Manager



Synopsis

The <u>Cherry Creek School District</u> (CCSD) serves 53,000 students across 108 square miles south of Denver. CCSD is known to its community and across the state as a school district at the forefront of innovation and committed to excellence. While polling of voters in the district shows continued support for CCSD, the district is facing new challenges including:

- Declining enrollment for the first time
- Misconceptions about our identity as the district becomes more diverse
- Increasing need for mental health and SEL supports for students
- Pressure from a national anti-public school political narrative

Two years ago, CCSD embarked on a comprehensive community engagement campaign to determine what student success looks like post-graduation and how we can support students in their educational journeys. Through these conversations, which engaged over 550 parents, guardians, students, staff, and community partners, the district agreed upon five Core Values to drive our work.

District leaders are writing a strategic plan that aligns with the <u>Core Values</u> and sets every student up for success. The Core Values of Growth Mindset, Equity, Whole Wellbeing, Relationships, and Engagement are at the center of our work.

We analyzed feedback from the community, as well as research from polling, surveys, social media stats, and engagement data, to build a <u>comprehensive marketing and brand awareness campaign</u> designed to accomplish three goals.

- 1) To build awareness and create shared ownership for the ways that CCSD positively impacts students and the community and bolsters the local workforce and economy.
- 2) To tell our own story and thereby combat national narratives about public education that seek to divide people and erode confidence in public schools.
- 3) To engage a broad array of stakeholders in a unified call to action Be a part of excellence.

The Be a Part of Excellence campaign seeks to bring together families, students, staff, and community partners to build on the longstanding CCSD mission of "Dedicated to Excellence." By telling our story and building a network of advocates, we can address challenges and set the stage for future bond/budget campaigns, BOE elections, and overall shared commitments to helping students achieve success.













Research

Primary Research – Community Conversations

The Cherry Creek School District values parent, student and staff voice and regularly engages in community engagement campaigns and research efforts that include conversations about the direction of the district, surveys, polls, and focus groups. In 2021, the district led a community engagement effort that spanned 20 community conversations with over 550 people engaged and over 1,613 individual pieces of feedback. Our community told us loud and clear that the goal for students is not achievement on standardized assessments or even acceptance to a top college, but rather the eventual attainment of a meaningful career, a fulfilling future, a role in improving society, and general happiness. It was also determined that there is no single path to that future. Students' journeys may take them to an apprenticeship, the military, college, or a career right out of high school. The feedback was analyzed and used to identify five Core Values to drive the work of the district in the mission to empower every student to discover a unique Pathway or Purpose.

Primary Research – Polling

The district worked with Frederick Polls to conduct a survey of registered voters in the Cherry Creek School District in October 2022 with a sample size of 855 people. The poll surveyed parents and residents on topics including satisfaction with CCSD, potential support for a future bond question, priorities for the district, and response to messaging from anti-public school national narratives.

The polling found that voters overwhelmingly support CCSD, with 77% of respondents indicating they believe CCSD does a "good" or "excellent" job of providing a high-quality education to students. Further, the poll asked voters to identify areas of priority for the school district. Responses identified the following as priorities

for CCSD:

- High-quality and well-trained teachers
- Inspiring every student to think and learn
- Valuing all students
- Teaching students critical thinking so they can make their own informed decisions in life
- Dedicated to excellence
- Working to continuously evolve and improve
- Having every student engage in their own Pathway or Purpose so they graduate with the skills they need to thrive in their choice of college, a technical job, career, or the military
- Providing equitable opportunities to all students

The Communications Office is looking to build on the strong foundation of support by addressing the priorities identified by respondents.

Primary Research – Surveys

In fall 2022, the Communications Office sent out a survey to all parents/guardians in the district to better understand their communication needs and preferences. The survey was sent via direct email and was included in the districtwide Parent Connection newsletter. The survey, which was sent in English and Spanish, garnered over 6,000 responses, and provided valuable insights into how parents/guardians prefer to receive communication and how they consume news and district information.

View the survey results here.

Several actions were derived from the survey outcomes. Specific to the Be a Part of Excellence campaign, we decided to spend the bulk of our digital dollars on advertisements on Facebook and Instagram.

Secondary Research

We are also looking to combat misinformation and negative anti-public school sentiments that are getting local and national media attention. (Examples of this narrative can be found in this Time op-ed, this Washington Post article, and this NBC News story about book-banning efforts in schools.) The poll sought to get information about how voters in our district respond to this messaging and found that overwhelmingly voters support professional educators making decisions and being in charge of educational decisions.

In addition, the Communications Office considered opinions and comments shared during Board of Education meetings, on social media, and throughout the most recent Board of Education campaign.

Planning

The Communications Office analyzed data and research collected from community conversations, polling, surveys, local and national media stories, public feedback at Board of Education meetings, and other parent engagement meetings to build a framework for the Brand Awareness and Community Engagement Campaign. The campaign was presented to the Board of Education and District Leadership Team to ensure the strategic objectives of the campaign align with district vision, mission, and values.

Goal Setting

The Communications Office identified three goals to serve as the foundation of this campaign. We broke each goal into metrics which we monitored through the year and used to evaluate the campaign's success.

- 1) To build awareness and create shared ownership for the ways that CCSD positively impacts students and the community and bolsters the local workforce and economy.
 - a. Metric 1 Digital marketing campaign that reaches a saturation/frequency of 10 or more touchpoints with audience targets over course of the campaign.
 - b. Metric 2 Future polling to gauge the public reception of various stakeholder groups to the campaign.
- 2) To tell our own story and thereby combat national narratives about public education that seek to divide people and erode confidence in public schools.
 - a. Metric 1 Increase the number of positive earned media stories with a specific goal of 10 positive media stories per month.
 - b. Metric 2 Future focus groups expected to be conducted in the summer of 2023.
- 3) To engage a broad array of stakeholders in a unified call to action Be a part of excellence.
 - a. Metric 1 Creation of a cadre of parent, staff, and community ambassadors with at least three engagement opportunities before year-end.
 - b. Metric 2 Measurable and significant increase in stakeholders engaged to "Be a part of excellence" using the following metrics:
 - i. Visits to Building Forward webpage
 - ii. Visits to Mapping Our Future interactive tool
 - iii. Impressions, reach, and click rate of digital campaign

















Audience

Through a series of staff retreats, the Communications Office identified the target audience for the campaign by walking through the five Core Values and paying close attention to stakeholder groups that traditionally have not been reached by district efforts.

By looking at polling data, survey results, and voter data from the 2020 bond and budget election, we determined that two high school feeder areas needed additional and more targeted engagement. We decided to create specific messaging and graphics for each of the district's six feeder areas and to disseminate that information via feeder-specific messaging tactics.

We also determined that 70% of the residents who live within the boundaries of the Cherry Creek School District do not have children or grandchildren in our schools. Those residents include significant populations of retirees, as well as millennial-generation residents who may live and work within our district boundaries, but do not have school-age children.

Finally, we wanted to ensure our campaign reflected the diversity of students, staff and families in our district, including racial and ethnic diversity, gender and gender identity, ability, grade level, and geographic area.

Identifying Strategies and Tactics

The Communications Office dedicated two staff retreat sessions as well as regular strategies throughout the school year to apply the learning from the research and planning phases to create a matrix of communication tactics with audience targets and intended impacts.

We broke the campaign into two phases. Phase I took place August – December 2022 and included tactics such as initial polling followed by identifying key messages and sharing message-aligned storytelling on website and social media, electronic newsletters, branded and message-focused presentations to internal and external audiences, a fall mailer, printed activity guide, various brochures and one-pagers, and earned media efforts. Phase II is from January through June 2023 and includes similar tactics as Phase I with the addition of the targeted digital media campaign, launch of redesigned Mapping Our Future tool, launch of ambassador engagement campaign, and an HR recruitment campaign aligned to the Be a Part of Excellence theme.

The full Communications Plan for this campaign can be found here.

The Communications Office had in-house capacity to develop the graphics, videos, static ads, publications, and other content. The digital marketing and digital buy component of the campaign was put out to bid and COMPETE Digital, a results-driven digital firm, was ultimately selected to complete the work.

Implementation

The tactics and messages employed during Phase I of the campaign were designed to introduce the Core Values, Pathway of Purpose vision, and key messages to a broad audience of diverse stakeholders. Phase II of the campaign utilized a deeper investment in delivering strategic messages to specific audiences.

For the launch of the digital campaign, our team produced six feeder-specific 30-second video ads. Examples include this Cherry Creek High School feeder ad and this Overland High School feeder ad. We also created a

series of static ads to run as a carousel ad on Facebook and Instagram. Ads featured polling-informed messaging for specific feeder areas. Examples include this artboard of Excellence-themed static ads.

Each month of the campaign features a different theme based on key messaging. The theme for January was **"What is Excellence?"** The February theme was **Mental Health and Wellbeing** (:30 video and static ads). The April theme is **Innovation** (:30 video and static ads).

The <u>spring mailer</u> and additional collateral materials were designed to mirror the messaging in the digital campaign and direct stakeholders to strategic webpages, including the newly redesigned <u>interactive tool</u> <u>called "Mapping Our Future</u>." Targeted earned media efforts focused on the bond-funded Mental Health Day Treatment School, a first-in-the-nation project that has been featured nationally and locally, including this <u>national CBS News story</u> and this <u>local 9News story</u>. Mental health was identified as a priority by parents/guardians, staff, and community stakeholders in polls.

The following Tactics and Target Audience table shows the full implementation of the comprehensive plan during the 2022-23 school year.

Tactics and Target Audiences

Tactic	Platform	Audience	Timeline	Success Metric
Districtwide	Districtwide	All community –	April 2023	Sent to printer for
<u>mailer</u> – Spring	mailer – 112,000	including those without		printing/mailing. Will review QR
2023	homes	kids in district.		code and Google analytics.
Districtwide	Districtwide	All community –	Late fall 2022	Implemented,
<u>mailer</u> – Fall	mailer – 111,000	including those without		Google Analytics report: 365
2022	homes	kids in district.		page views
Digital marketing	Video and static	Parents/guardians,	April 2023	Will analyze reports provided by
campaign – April	<u>ads</u>	residents in district		Compete Digital
2023	Fb and Ig, linking			
	to <u>CCIC website</u>			
Digital marketing	Video and static	Parents/guardians,	March 2023	Fb - Reached 58,061 people
campaign –	ads	residents in district		315205 times for saturation of 5
March				(time of submission)
				Report 3/14-20
Digital marketing	Video and static	Parents/guardians,	February 2023	Fb - Reached 48,294 people
campaign –	<u>ads</u>	residents in district		929,321 times for saturation of
February	Ads appeared on			19.97
	Fb and Ig, linked			Ig – 23,322 people reached
	to <u>Building</u>			181,792 times for sat of 8
	<u>Forward</u>			Report 2/21-27
				Report 2/14-20
				Report 2/7-13



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Mapping Our	Website	Parents, staff and	Launch of	Design engagement campaign
<u>Future –</u>		community – with target	redesigned	and roadshow to promote.
Interactive map		of residents without	site – March	Review analytics and talk to
		students in district	2023	focus groups
Building Forward	Website	Updated to provide	Ongoing	Periodic review of Google
<u>website</u>		detailed info about bond		analytics
		program and dollars		
		spent		
Parent and	Electronic	Parents/guardians and	Each	Average open rate of 12-18%.
Employee	newsletter	staff	newsletter	
newsletters		Parent Connection – 80k	sent twice a	Deep dive into newsletter data
		Employee Connection –	month	to analyze open rates, most
		9k		viewed stories
Social Media	Facebook,	Parents/guardians,	Ongoing	2.2M impressions Sep22-Mar23
	Instagram,	Staff, students,		– up 42%, 116K impressions – up
	Twitter, YouTube	extended community		12% Full report here
Comprehensive	Printed collateral	CCSD community at-	January 2023	Printed and distributed as part
one-pager		large		of ongoing community
				engagement efforts
Getting to Know	Printed collateral	Parents/guardians, staff	August 2022	Printed and distributed to 66
Us				schools
Sentinel Activity	Printed collateral	Parents/guardians	October 2022	Printed and distributed to 66
Guide		. a. c , gaar arano	March 2023	schools and community at-large
Core Values one-	Printed collateral	Parents/guardians, staff,	Fall 2022	Printed as needed. Shared
pager	Timeca conacerar	community	1 4.11 2022	digitally.
Increase in	External media	Community,	Ongoing	Tracking shows we are
earned media	Lxternal media	parents/guardians, staff	Oligonia	exceeding goal of 10 positive
carried media		parents/guaraians, stan		stories/month
HR Teacher	Digital marketing	Prospective teachers,	February –	In-state campaign for first
Recruitment	campaign	community	April 2023	month:
	Carripaign	Community	April 2023	Impressions: 790,749
<u>Campaign</u>				' '
Manning Com	Ambassadar	Loadorchia Charm	Carina 2022	Clicks: 1,893
Mapping Our	Ambassador	Leadership Cherry	Spring 2023	Three engagement
Community	engagement and	Creek, list of		opportunities –
	grassroots effort	ambassadors coded by		Intro email, stories to share,
		affiliation		groups to join, "how to" guide
Branded and	Presentation	Staff, parents/guardians,	Ongoing	Increased exposure to Core
message-aligned	slide deck	community		Values, Pathway, district
presentations				priorities
BOE feeder	Video – here is	Community	Spring 2023	Will look at analytics of video
welcome videos	one example			views
BOE email	Email campaign	Parents, families and	Spring 2023	Will review open and click thru
campaign to		community members		rates
share videos and				
interactive map				







Evaluation

The Communications Office has analyzed the key metrics tied to our three main goals, as well as secondary success metrics related to specific tactics in the plan. The majority of the data collected so far points to a successful campaign. We will continue to monitor our progress toward meeting specific goals and make adjustments as needed to respond to messaging and tactics needed to achieve desired results.

Goal 1 - To build awareness and create shared ownership for the ways that CCSD positively impacts students and the community and bolsters the local workforce and economy.

- Metric 1 The digital marketing campaign has reached an overall saturation/frequency of 14, thus
 exceeding our goal of 10. Videos and ads running on Facebook and Instagram have been viewed over
 1 million times and reached over 50,000 people.
- Supporting reports can be viewed here:
 - o Report 2/21-27
 - o Report 2/14-20
 - o Report 2/7-13
- Metric 2 We plan to initiate another poll/survey to parents and residents in our district in the coming 6-12 months.

Goal 2 - To tell our own story and thereby combat national narratives about public education that seek to divide people and erode confidence in public schools.

- Metric 1 The number of positive media stories about CCSD has increased dramatically in 2022-23 school year, reaching an average of 15 positive media stories per month. This exceeds our goal of 10 per month. In all, CCSD has been featured in nearly 100 positive media stories, addressing key messaging topics like mental health, equity, great teachers, and innovation.
- Metric 2 We have focus groups planned for July 2023.

Goal 3 - To engage a broad array of stakeholders in a unified call to action – Be a part of excellence.

- Metric 1 In fall 2022, we sent a <u>letter and Google sheet to 66 principals</u> asking them to list 10 influencers in their community to serve as ambassadors. We are planning a communication and engagement campaign launching in April that will invite these ambassadors as well as other engaged parents, such as Leadership Cherry Creek enrollees and alumni to share key messages, combat misinformation, and get involved.
- Metric 2 Social Media analytics show that impressions have reached over 2.2 million over the course of the campaign so far, an increase of 42%. Video views are up 104%. More data can be found here.
- We have measured an increase in the number of stakeholders accessing the Building Forward webpage. The following reports show bumps in page views that align with our fall 2022 mailer (<u>December Google Analytics report</u>) and the February digital marketing campaign (<u>January-March</u> Google Analytics report).
- We will continuously monitor traffic to the Mapping Our Future tool after full implementation. Reports on impact of our digital campaign (as detailed in Goal 1, Metric 1) also support progress.

In addition to quantitative measures described above, we are continuously analyzing qualitative feedback to our branding, communication, and community engagement efforts through discussions with staff and parent/guardian groups, and through review of comments on social media posts associated with our digital marketing campaign and organic storytelling posts. We are excited by the positive direction of engagement within our school district and around the messaging at the core of this campaign. We look forward to building on this progress, addressing challenges as they arrive, and continuing to have conversations that empower stakeholders and community.

Supplemental Materials

The following materials provide visual examples of the artwork and collateral created for use in communicating to specific target audiences using a range of differing tactics.

Artboard for Digital Marketing Campaigns









































Districtwide Mailers – Spring 2022 and Fall 2023

Fall 2022





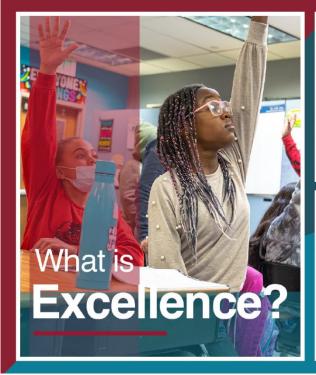




Investing in our community From a first-of-its-kind mental health day treatment facility to a new elementary school to high school innovation spaces, Cherry Creek Schools is building on excellence.



4700 South Yosemite Street Greenwood Village, CO 80111













"It's an honor to represent the same schools my children attended and where they received an excellent education. This year, I am most looking forward to the completion of the district's Mental Health Day Treatment School."

Anne Egan,
Board of Education



4700 South Yosemite Street Greenwood Village, CO 80111

In Your Community

- Cherry Creek High School and 8 feeder schools honored as John Irwin Schools of Excellence for academic growth and achievement.
- New partnership with Hazel Health offers free mental telehealth services for all students in grades 6-12.
- COMING FALL 2023: Traverse Academy, the first-of-its-kind mental health day treatment center operated by a school district.



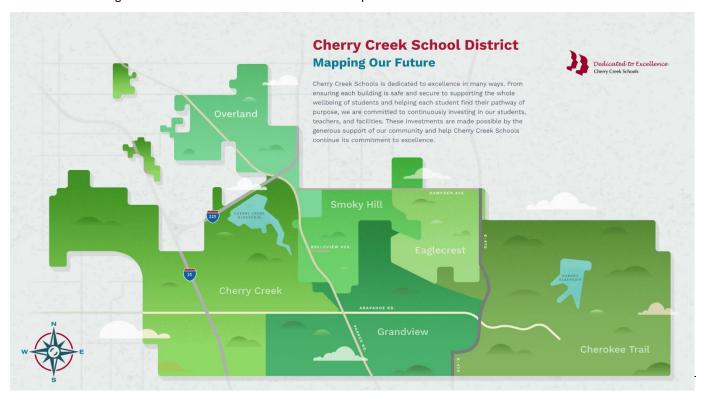






Mapping Our Future

Mapping Our Future is an interactive, districtwide map designed to showcase bond improvements and highlights of each school. The digital tool was first launched in 2019 with an updated version launched in March 2023.



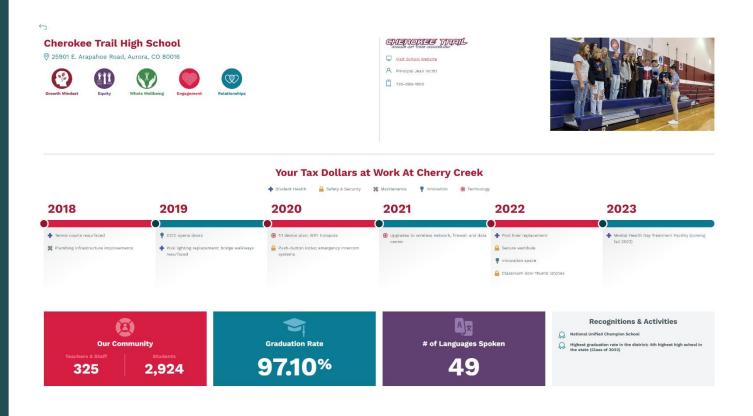
Users can click on each of the six feeder area maps for an overview of all the CCSD schools in their community.



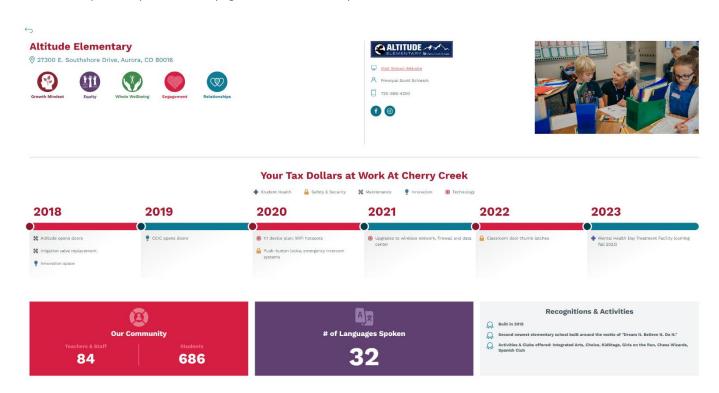




From the feeder area map, users can click on individual school pages which provides specific information about the bond improvements and highlights from that school (e.g. high school example).



Second example of a specific school page from an elementary school.



Getting to Know Us Brochure



GETTING TO KNOW US

2022 - 2023 School Year















Dedicated to Excellence

OUR VISION:

Pathway of Purpose

OUR MISSION:

To inspire every student to think, to learn, to achieve, to care





WHAT WE BELIEVE



We believe in developing our abilities through hard work and dedication to continuous improvement.

To do this, we must model as a district the power of growth and evolution; from classrooms to cafeterias to central administration -- we are all learners.

Growth Mindset



Equity

We recognize that based on factors including, but not limited to race, disability, gender, geography and socio-economic status, students might not receive equitable educational opportunities. It is our role to break down these barriers to provide fair access to all.

We believe in providing all students with the support and opportunity they need to forge their Pathway of Purpose. We must incorporate equity into every part of our district to create meaningful, positive change.



We believe in ensuring that our students, teachers, and staff are healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged so that they can thrive in school and in life.

To do this, we must focus on our constituents' mental, physical, emotional and social needs.

Whole Wellbeing



We believe in encouraging curiosity and investment in learning so that students feel seen and valued.

To do this, we must redesign how we encourage and measure student engagement.

Engagement



We believe in the power of relationships in helping students and staff grow and thrive.

To do this, we will build and nurture meaningful relationships throughout our school community that let us trust, empathize and belong.

LEARN MORE

Relationships

CherryCreekSchools.org/CoreValues

HOW WE LEAD



Christopher Smith Superintendent

What does it mean to be dedicated to excellence?

Through conversations with our community over the past two years, we've identified five core values that guide our work and help every student find a pathway to a fulfilling future. Those five core values – Growth Mindset, Equity, Whole Wellbeing, Engagement and Relationships – are the grounding force for empowering every student with what we call a Pathway of Purpose. When we practice these values with integrity, we can see incredible results in our students, our staff and our community. I have so much hope and optimism for the 2022-23 school year. Thank you for being part of our Cherry Creek Schools community!

Supporting Students



- Leading the way in Career and Technical Education with the nationally-recognized Cherry Creek Innovation Campus and seven industry pathways for students
- Building the nation's first district-run mental health day treatment facility to support students in crisis
- Providing expanded on-campus health services with School-Based Community Health Centers
- **Ensuring the next generation of dedicated teachers** with the Grow Your Own Educator Pathway





- Equipping students with STEM skills starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school
- Expanding access to academic programs including Gifted and Talented, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate for all students, especially students of color
- Connecting students with leaders via the Superintendent Student Advisory Council in order to drive conversations about the district and elevate student voice
- Upgrading and modernizing district facilities, including sustainable energy-saving initiatives



WHO WE ARE

67 SCHOOLS

- 43 elementary schools (with full-day kindergarten)
- 24 preschool sites
- 11 middle schools
- 8 high schools
- 3 charter schools
- 1 magnet school
- 1 Cherry Creek Innovation Campus

54,000 STUDENTS

11.8% African-American

0.5% American Indian / Alaskan Native

9.0% Asian

20.9% Hispanic

0.4% Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander

49.6% White

7.8% Two or more races

77 Career & Technical Education programs



2 School-Based Community Health Centers





29% qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch



150+ languages spoken

80 nurses across the district



91% graduation rate



67% participation in athletics and activities

\$53+

earned in grants and scholarships by Class of 2022



3-2-1 model

with 3 mental health professionals at every high school, 2 at every middle school and 1 at every elementary school

FOLLOW US

to see how we are living our values









303.773.1184 | CherryCreekSchools.org

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES CENTER | 4700 SOUTH YOSEMITE STREET | GREENWOOD VILLAGE, COLORADO 801111