

SUMMIT DAILY NEWS

Runners brave challenging conditions in Breck Crest
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MONDAY
SEPTEMBER 1, 2014
HIGH: 64°
LOW: 39°
WEATHER PAGE A23

FIRE DANGER: LOW

YOUR SUMMIT COUNTY, COLORADO NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1989

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FREE

A new year for The Peak School

More students and new staff join community at renovated building **PAGE A2**

SCORING BIG



DEBBIE NELSON / SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

Summit High School's Drew Chastain breaks a run for the Tigers' first touchdown in their 35-18 win over Skyview Friday. *See full story, page A13.*

FRISCO

FRISCO MAIN STREET CLOSURE

The intersection of Main Street at Madison Avenue will be closed Tuesday and Wednesday to make up for weather-related construction delays.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

BLOTTER

A Vail Resorts employee crashes his boss' brand-new Porsche, a man uses the post office as his crash pad and more in this week's police blotter.

PAGE A5

COLORADO

PLANE CRASHES NEAR DENVER

Three people were killed and two others injured when their small plane crashed near an airport north of Denver.

PAGE A10



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CROSSFIT LOWOXYGEN

Peak School expands with new head of school, more students, renovated building

By Allie Langley
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Steve Coleman wasn't convinced he would move across the country for a position at The Peak School when he visited in June. Then he met some of the school's students.

During an interview, he said, one teen said the school recently went through a huge transition and asked Coleman what he would do to bring everyone together.

The student's mature question and desire for unity within the school community stood out to Coleman. He soon heard more students speak glowingly about their experience at the school and witnessed the passion and commitment of its parents and teachers.

"I just knew that whatever's going on here is working," he said. "I just wanted to be part of this enthusiasm for a school."

Coleman, 64, starts this fall as head of school of The Peak School, Summit County's only private option for middle and high schoolers.

The school opened in 2012 in the original Breckenridge schoolhouse with 23 students and joined the Coalition of Essential Schools, a network of hundreds of progressive schools founded by education reform leader Ted Sizer in the 1980s.

NEW ENGLAND TO ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Coleman originally hails from New York's Hudson Valley and has experience working as a high school history teacher and administrator at a couple private progressive schools in New York.

After attending a small private liberal arts college, he worked for four years as a social worker in Vermont helping children, teens and families who dealt with child abuse, neglect and delinquency.

He likes the Summit County



ALLIE LANGLEY / ALANGLEY@SUMMITDAILY.COM

Steve Coleman, 64, is the new head of school for The Peak School, Summit County's only private alternative education option for middle and high schoolers.

community, he said, as he feels comfortable in small towns and is familiar with large second-home owner populations after living in the Sag Harbor of the Hamptons, a popular summer resort community on Long Island. He sent his kids to a private high school there, and he served on the public school board.

Coleman later served on the Board of Trustees of Goddard College, his undergraduate school in Vermont, and earned a Ph.D. in American history from Columbia University. For his doctoral work, he specialized in the history of progressive higher education.

Most recently he was director of admissions at Bard College of Simon's Rock in Massachusetts.

The Peak School fit well with his study of and experience with progressive education, as well

as his desire to help develop the fledgling school.

HOW THE SCHOOL WORKS

At The Peak School, students aren't given exams and don't earn grades. The kids are divided into Division I, which typically corresponds to students in sixth and seventh grade, Division II, which equates to eighth and ninth, and this year the school will add Division III, equal to grades 10 to 12.

They are required to take humanities (which combines literature, history and social studies), STEM (science and applied math), math and a language (Spanish or Chinese), and the school's elective offerings change often.

Each classroom has a lounge area, called basecamp, where students meet with a teacher who

serves as their counselor and adviser before and after regular classes.

A few times a year, outside community members teach art and other skills, and the school integrates outdoor education.

All the students and staff recently participated in a camping trip to Turquoise Lake near Leadville, and students are encouraged to participate in athletics, theater, debate team and other afterschool clubs and other extracurriculars at Summit Middle School and Summit High School.

Compared to schools where he worked previously, Coleman said, the Peak School is more intentionally structured to have students working together collaboratively.

Their courses combine subjects, the divisions combine different

ages and their classwork involves a lot of group projects as well as individual attention.

"We're not reinventing the wheel here. We are using a model that's been successful at other schools," Coleman said.

STEADY GROWTH

In 2013, the school moved to its current location at 40 W. Main St. in Frisco and doubled its student body to 47 students.

Renovations to the building began in the spring and completed in time for the school's opening this fall with five new full-time teachers and 67 students who will attend the first day of class Tuesday, Sept. 2.

The renovated building has the capacity for about 100 students, and Coleman said he hopes to grow the school in the next few years to about 200, which would mean adding a second building to the property.

Before The Peak School opened, Coleman said, he thinks about a dozen Summit County students in each grade were going to the Vail Mountain School. He said The Peak School's growth is evident of pent-up demand for an alternative in Summit and expects the student body to keep growing.

"Obviously we've tapped into something," he said.

One of Coleman's goals is to grow the school financially. Tuition revenue doesn't meet the school's costs, so he is in the process of launching a fundraising campaign.

For 2014-15, the school will charge \$14,585 per child for tuition and will serve students who would traditionally be in grades six to 10. Of the school's about 60 families, maybe 10 receive some amount of tuition assistance.

The school sets aside 10 percent of its budget for that purpose and

PEAK SCHOOL, A11

Get a JUMPSTART on your news.

You already check in throughout the day for news updates, but now you can read tomorrow's top stories tonight with our hourly updates from 6 to 10 p.m.



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PEAK SCHOOL

From page A2

gave nearly \$100,000 in financial assistance this school year, Coleman said.

'AN UPHEAVAL'

When Rebekah Jordan, the previous head of school, resigned in May so did the school's board chair Chris Renner, owner of Pinnacle Mountain Homes in Breckenridge. Coleman called the changes the school went through in the spring were "rather an upheaval."

He said he feels the board is going in a positive direction. After being more involved in running the school in its first few years, the board now is separating some from its management. Renner is still involved as a parent.

Jordan, who now works as a head of school at a progressive school in her home state of Connecticut, built a solid foundation in terms of the academic program, Coleman said.

She had plenty of teaching experience but not much running schools from the business- and institution-side, he said, which are skills he brings. Coleman traveled extensively as CEO of a multinational

distribution company for 20 years before going to graduate school.

GOING GLOBAL AND FIGHTING INEQUALITY

Coleman's main goals for the school are developing its brand-new curriculum for older students and achieving accreditation by the time those teens graduate.

He also wants to further develop and incorporate a global focus into everything the students study and create international student exchanges.

His educational philosophy aligns with John Dewey, a progressive education giant from the early 20th century, who believed education's goal is to help correct unfair advantage and deprivation instead of perpetuating them.

Coleman called the growing inequity in the U.S. the biggest problem facing the country, and he said he wants to instill a consciousness that will help combat that issue and an awareness among students of their role in larger communities.

"Regardless of the background of students," he said, "I want them to be aware not just of themselves but of how they can serve others."

BLOTTER

From page A5

COUPLE FINDS LOCAL MAN'S LOST BICYCLE NEAR ILLINOIS CREEK TRAIL

On Sunday, Aug. 11, Breckenridge police officers responded to a report of a found bicycle behind the Stephen C. West Ice Rink near the Illinois Creek trailhead.

The call was issued by a couple who had been hiking in the area for several days. The couple first noticed the bike on Thursday, Aug. 14. Although they thought

it was odd a bike was left at the trailhead, they opted not to report it to law enforcement. After seeing the bike in the same location over the course of the next several days, the couple decided to alert the police department.

Police department detectives conducted an investigation and came across a stolen bike advertisement on Craigslist. The description of the bike matched the one that had been left at the Illinois Creek trailhead. The owner was contacted and he picked up his bike on Monday, Aug. 18.

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