



Jeffery Ferguson, Ph.D., Board of Education,
1987-2003/2009-2013

Jeffery Ferguson, Ph.D.

When Dr. Jeffery Ferguson talks about the Lewis-Palmer School District, he often emphasizes, "People really care about what's going on here. Day in and day out, they're doing hard work. The teachers in classes, the bus drivers, the maintenance and food staff, everybody on the front lines is so important. That's what excellence is about – it's the people."

Jeff is one of those people. He committed more than 20 years and incalculable personal investment to making a difference in the lives of children. He served twice on the Board of Education from 1987 to 2003 and again from 2009 and 2013, ten years of which he was Board President. He says that he and fellow Board members shared a common focus on the same thing: the students. "We would do whatever it takes to do what's best for kids. At the end of the day, that's why we're here."



Jeff Ferguson interviews a young robotics engineer about his project. Ferguson said the very best Board meetings were the ones that kids attended to talk about their education.

He was twice awarded the McGuffey Award by the Colorado Association of School Boards for committed and passionate service. Ferguson has consistently been a champion for quality education and emphasizes the importance of schools in the community. He was also named a member of the All-State School Board, and received the Colorado Athletic Directors' Association School Board Member Honor Award. In his "day job" as Professor of Business at CU-Colorado Springs, his work on the Lewis-Palmer School Board contributed to his receiving the University of Colorado Community Service Award.



During his tenure on the Board, Ferguson had responsibilities over all hiring, budget, and policy considerations of the district. He helped manage years of intense growth in his early terms, as the district added three new elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. In 1996 a bond issue helped fund an addition for the high school, but the population growth was still relentless. There were many discussions, intense and lengthy, about how to accommodate the increasing number of high school students. That question also lead to

Ferguson and fellow board member, Robb Pike, receive navy And orange hoodies, symbolic of the cooperation and camaraderie between the two high schools in the district

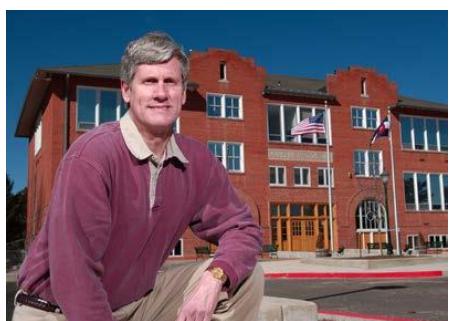
debate about what would be the next question to ask voters, and when to ask it. Ferguson helped break ground for the new middle school in 1993. By 1994 the district was growing at an even faster rate, with a ten percent increase over a single summer. During his service, the district developed a contract and operating guidelines to work with a brand new kind of school: a charter academy that opened in September, 1996. Our fourth elementary school opened, and acquired the name of long-time teacher Grace Best.

Ferguson helped pass four ballot issues for taxpayer funding, including funds to build Prairie Winds Elementary and Creekside Middle School, and for other capital improvements like elementary school ventilation systems and technology improvements. A mill levy override vote was also successful, to enhance reading programs, expand gifted and talented services, reduce class size, and provide instructional materials.

Ferguson directed the long-range facilities planning committee, chaired the transportation committee, and developed means for the district to assess and improve public communications. He helped develop a 20-year long-range plan that considered growth projection, facility capacities, and future funding options. School safety and security, a growing concern, was added to the comprehensive management plan. Ferguson thinks having a long-term vision and explaining that to residents helped secure voter approval when it was needed.

He later saw the district through some unexpected economic and enrollment downturns. He admits that made his work more challenging, especially when he returned to office in 2009 in the face of severe budget shortages. “We had to make some very real cuts, it was terrible. We always wanted to keep budget decisions from directly impacting students and teachers but we just couldn’t.” He says he was amazed at the responses he and the Board heard from employees throughout the district, “Every time we’d go to staff we’d get the same response: We’ll get it done.” And “get it done” they did, maintaining Accreditation with Distinction and numerous honors for academics, student activities, athletics, and arts in spite of money issues.

Jeff was on the Board when the district took possession once again of an additional elementary school, one that would not house students but would be a reminder of our long history and our commitment to excellence in education that started in rural communities. In 1998, the Pine Grove School, a one-room school house from a rural part of the district, was moved to the grounds of Kilmer Elementary as a permanent tribute to history and tradition.



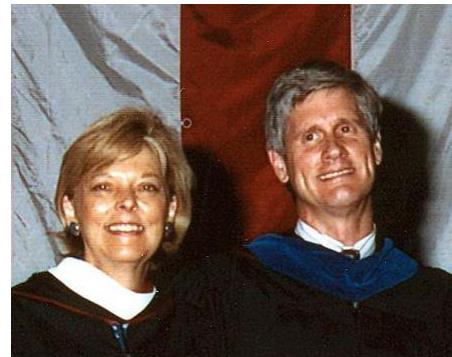
About his selection for the Hall of Fame Award, Ferguson humbly credits everyone who has been part of the Lewis-Palmer School District for its success. “It’s critical we never lose touch with the heritage of our school district, because the tradition of excellence didn’t just happen – it’s the result of a lot of people in the trenches that worked to make it exceptional. So many people have given so much of their lives to make a difference for students. They may be out of the spotlight, but they’re making an

Ferguson in front of Big Red

impact. Excellence has been built into our system. It's a legacy that lives on, built by a lot of people with a real commitment to kids."



Jeff Ferguson teaching



Board members Ferguson and Tommie Plank in robes for commencement