



Dinosaur Community Learning Center
401 School St., Dinosaur, CO 81610
Grades: k-12
Director: Carmen McKay

Carmen McKay, Director of Dinosaur Community Learning Center (DCLC) since 2006 recognized, “There was a dire need for additional educational opportunities in Dinosaur. The closest school is a 25 mile one hour bus ride away and many local students are considered at-risk,” explains Ms. McKay.

Created to stimulate wonder and curiosity, engage the mind and allow a learning environment in which all students are given the necessary tools to succeed, DCLC demonstrates the values of integrity, responsibility and respect in hopes that the student body will internalize these values both in and outside of the classroom.

Hope Online affords students individual attention and learning plans based on their academic performance. While the 20 DCLC students have varying academic needs, most of them live in low-income households.

As part of a remote mountain community, Hope Online students at DCLC are challenged to have an awareness of the world. “Socially, we must introduce these students to knowledge beyond agriculture—the arts, literature, sciences, and the like,” asserts Ms. McKay. “While they might not be exposed to these things often, we need to educate our students about available intellectual pursuits beyond our community.”

Ms. McKay has noticed significant academic improvements in the students. “At our Learning Center, progress is not measured in terms of speed or how quickly students are completing coursework. Rather, we focus on the quality of the progress and building solid academic foundations. Slow and steady wins the race—and our students are steadily progressing in a wonderful direction in both school and life. With the dedication of a highly qualified Hope Online teacher our students excel.”

“We cultivate community at our Learning Center,” says Ms. McKay. “Our lead mentor, Sarah Wagner, is fervent in her commitment to DCLC and Hope Online students. She does all that she can to guide students with individual attention. Meanwhile, her grandmother donates groceries for the lunch program, and my husband volunteers after hours. We all value learning, and each of us demonstrates a commitment to treating each child as a unique individual. These are our future leaders, and they are worth every drop of sweat and tears.”

Learning Center Administration

Carmen McKay - Director and Mentor

Prior to her work with Hope Online at DCLC, Carmen McKay worked with the Children's Justice and Family Support Center. There she worked with children and families, whose lives had been riddled with abuse, to teach them self-sufficiency and how to lead a healthy lifestyle. During this time, Ms. McKay attended many meetings regarding children's education. In 2002, she moved to Dinosaur to become part of the solution. She gained experience working with Special Education students as a Para-Professional at Parkview Elementary. Ms. McKay has an Associates degree from College of Eastern Utah.

Hope Online Teacher

Barbara Pagano – Hope Online Teacher

Barbara Pagano is a highly skilled and effective Colorado licensed teacher who brings years of experience to Hope Online. She has worked for the Cherry Creek and Jefferson County school districts, primarily as a secondary education teacher. Ms. Pagano earned a Bachelor of Arts in Home Economics Education from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, CO and a Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education from the University of Colorado at Denver in Denver, CO.