

RISLEY INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF INNOVATION

D60 educator named to fellowship

Amanda Arellano is one of 34 across the state

BY JON POMPIA
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

An educator at Risley International Academy of Innovation has been named to the America Achieves' Colorado Educator Voice Fellowship as a fellow for 2016-17.

As Advancement Via Individual Determination site coordinator and AVID elective teacher, Amanda Arellano is overseeing the implementation of the AVID program at Risley, adopted as part of Pueblo City Schools' (D60) Innovation Zone Plan.

Additionally, Risley recently received International Baccalaureate World School authorization and AVID accreditation.

The highly selective Colorado Educator Voice Fellowship empowers outstanding teachers such as Arellano to elevate their voices in public conversations about teaching and learning, assume leadership roles in schools and communities, and influence education policies at the local, state and national levels.

"By including educators in the policymaking process, the fellowship will elevate the public's perception of the teaching profession," said a representative for the fellowship.

Together with 34 fellows from across the state, Arellano will develop skills to signifi-



Amanda Arellano

cantly impact students and educators locally and statewide.

Arellano has met and collaborated with fellows, participated in skill-building sessions, and engaged in discussions with Colorado policymakers and thought leaders.

"I didn't realize what an honor it was to be selected for fellowship until I was actually at the Fall Convening," Arellano said. "I was impressed by all of the expert educators I was networking with from across the state.

"The Fall Convening allowed me to learn how to find my own voice on educational policy that is impacting our local community."

By sharing their expertise and experiences, the fellows will expand their reach beyond the walls of individual school buildings and generate more constructive conversations about the future

of public education in Colorado.

Arellano and Risley recently hosted a visit from Republican state Rep. Clarice Navarro as part of the Bring Your Legislator to School initiative and recent classroom studies about the legislative process.

Navarro shared with students her story about growing up in a small community and the importance of education and a strong work ethic. The students asked a number of questions about her role as a lawmaker and working with a varied group of fellow legislators.

"Our students were a little shy at first, but they still had some very good questions for Rep. Navarro," said Arellano.

At the end of the day, students, staff, community partners and parents met for a group discussion on how to address challenges Risley students are facing and how each group can work together to ensure the school and its community can grow and succeed.

jpompia@chieftain.com

**HAVE
A**