Karen A. Shaw  
Columbia Elementary School  
Colorado Springs School District 11  
Colorado Springs, Colorado  
karen.shaw@d11.org

Karen Shaw has been a Principal for thirteen years, with the past seven served at Columbia Elementary School. As a military spouse with twenty-five years of experience in education, she has helped students all across the United States become more successful learners. In 2013, Columbia Elementary School received a Blue Ribbon Award based on continued growth in student achievement. Shaw encourages community partnerships including collaboration with Concrete Couch, a community art organization, a Rotary Club “Butterfly” grant for student legacy art projects, and a partnership with the Russell Grinnell Foundation for upgraded technology in each classroom. With a focus on reading, Shaw implemented a “Walk to Intervention” program where all students receive regular intervention at the appropriate level. Columbia outperformed forty local elementary schools in District 11 with the highest third grade reading scores in 2013 and 2014. Half of the students attending Columbia Elementary choose to attend this school from outside the local neighborhood, and Shaw capitalizes on these drop-off and pick-up opportunities to develop strong relationships with parents and families. As described by a community member, Shaw always takes a challenge and turns it into an opportunity. She holds a Bachelor’s in Science from Montana State, Billings and a M.A. from California State Long Beach.