



## Coral Canyon Elementary 1st Utah school to receive national Ashoka recognition

Written by [Holly Coombs](#) on August 19, 2014 in [Community News](#), [Education](#), [News](#) - [2 Comments](#)

**WASHINGTON CITY** — Coral Canyon Elementary School has been formally recognized as one of the 60 most influential schools in the nation by global social entrepreneur network Ashoka.

The formal title recognizes the school as a National Title 1 Distinguished School within the Ashoka Changemaker School Network, which categorizes Coral Canyon as an influential educational institution.



Coral Canyon Elementary School Principal Jennifer Eggleston looks over good behavior tickets awarded to students as part of her Principal's 200 Club, Washington, Utah, August 13, 2014 | Photo by Holly Coombs, St. George News

Coral Canyon Elementary School is the only Utah school out of 60 within the network, Coral Canyon Elementary School Principal Jennifer Eggleston said.

Changemaker schools are chosen for their examples of helping kids receive the best education and maintain the best behavior.

"They demonstrate a commitment to ensuring students not only excel academically, but are also equipped with the skills to address the needs of their community through empathy, teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership," a press release said.

Coral Canyon received the Changemaker title in May. In 2012, the school's literary scores had become stagnant, Eggleston said, so a school-wide effort commenced to improve the scores.

"The public saw us as a failing school," Eggleston said. "After a full year with training and state analyzing, our scores jumped incredibly within a year."

After two years working to raise the literacy scores, the national recognition came, Eggleston said.

The call from Ashoka came in the spring of 2013, letting Eggleston know someone had recommended the school for the national title.

"We have no idea who recommended us," she said.

The process to be admitted included four steps: completing a 12-page survey, an hour-long phone interview with the highest managers in Ashoka, another survey and three conference calls, Eggleston said.

The characteristics Ashoka focuses on when choosing Changemaker schools are empathy, problem solving and critical thinking.

"The way Ashoka describes it, it means being outside the box," Eggleston said. "It's not just this cookie-cutter school. We realize kids are learning differently than even when I was growing up, and we are finding ways to help them learn."

One way Eggleston said she is strengthening her school is through a staff group called PBIS, which stands for positive behaviors interventions support. The PBIS committee encourages students to be their best. One way the PBIS committee positively influences students is through the Principal's 200 Club. A board with a 20-by-20-cell table is set up in the hallway at school, and sticky notes, known as tickets, are displayed with messages about students' positive behavior.

“Any student being caught following a school rule by a teacher gets a ticket,” Eggleston said. “Their name and what they did and who the teacher was that referred them is put on the ticket and put on the board.”

When a row fills up on the Principal’s 200 Club board, the students are awarded with a party with the principal and snacks. If the teachers are consistent with their referral tickets, a party takes place at least once per month, Eggleston said.

Eggleston also awards the teachers in her school, giving them an hour free to come in late, leave early or have a longer lunch on their birthdays.

“That was another thing Ashoka noticed as they recognized us as a network school was the appreciation I show to my staff for their work,” she said.

As a principal, Eggleston said she feels like a celebrity in her own school as she works with students and helps them recognize her as a friend and teacher, not just an authority figure.

In addition to the principal parties, Eggleston said she also reads to the kindergarten through third grade students and brings in a stuffed animal to go with each story. Getting kids interactive with stories and having them recognize she is there to serve them are some of Eggleston’s goals as she reads. At the end of each story, she said she hides the stuffed animal, and when the kids find it and bring it back, they are rewarded with a prize.



Coral Canyon Elementary School Principal Jennifer Eggleston reads to a class, Washington, Utah, August 13, 2014 | Photo by Holly Coombs, St. George News

As employees at a Changemaker school, Coral Canyon Elementary School staff members are involved in giving presentations at conferences and on the Internet, sharing the tools that have been successful for them in helping their students learn effectively.

“Last year we went to an international reading conference in Ohio, which is where the more elite schools present,” Eggleston said. “I had emails for a month to answer after that.”

Involving the community with the school is another attribute Ashoka looks for in its Changemaker schools, which Eggleston said she had already been doing.

Coral Canyon’s community involvement ranges from its partnership with the Susan Hansen Realty to activities like career day. Eggleston said knowing that Ashoka recognized the school’s community efforts was a “good testimonial that we are making good steps and good strides, because I have always been a big believer to bring the community into the schools,” she said.