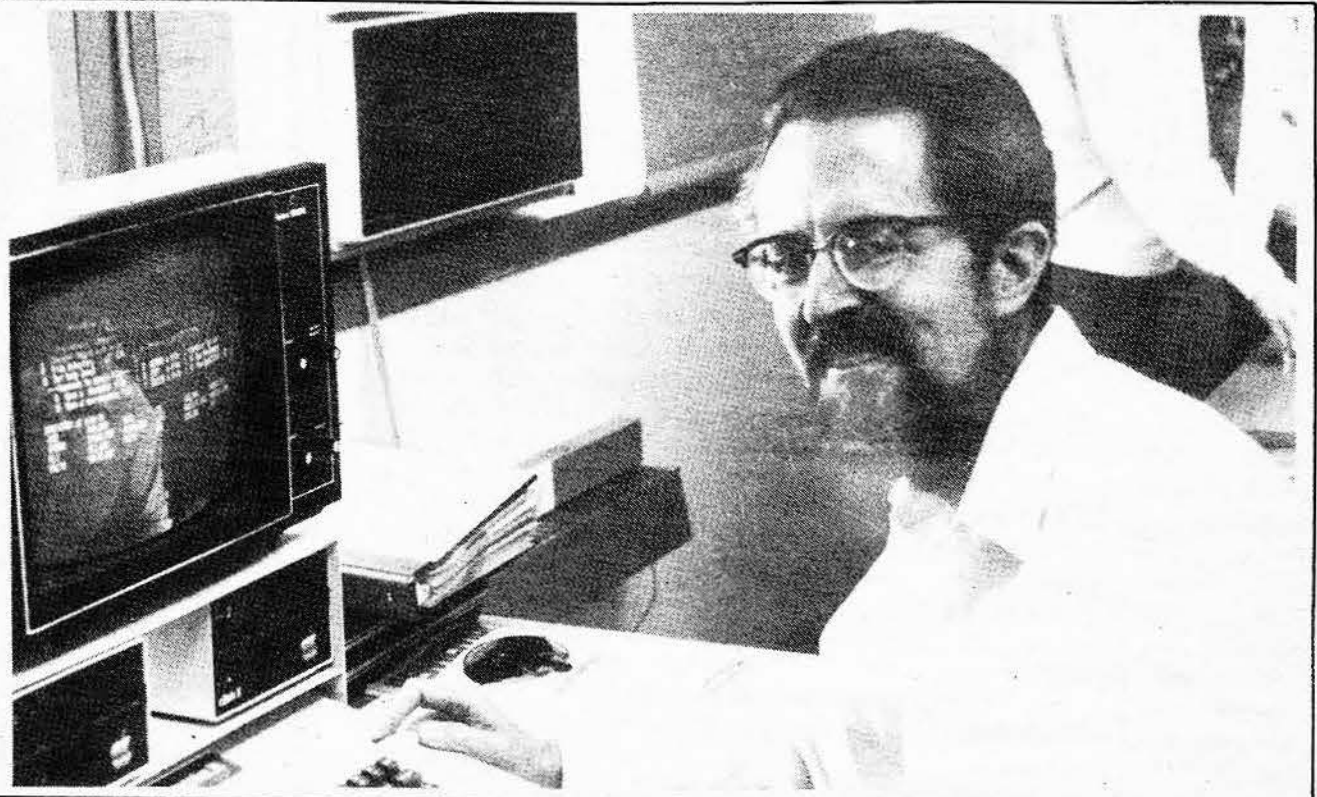


# Two Denver Public Schools' Educators Honored



**Dr. Irwin Hoffman**

**Vaughan Aandahal**

In many ways, George Washington is a typical Denver high school with the usual set of students, teachers, faculty meetings, problems, and classes.

But a day's visit to the third floor reveals some dramatic differences. There can be found what is probably the nation's largest and most active computer program, as well as the only math department able to boast of having two winners of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching.

The two teachers, Dr. Irwin Hoffman, 51, and Vaughan Aandahal, 46, are scheduled to receive the awards in a White House ceremony on October 19 from President Reagan. Each carries with it a \$5000 check to be used at the recipient's school. Aandahal plans to designate his for purchase of an Apple IIe computer and books to develop a course in AP Pascal programming. Hoffman has decided to use his to create a "shared resource network," which translates into a unique piece of computer hardware which would connect all the Atari computers in the lab together. When completed it will be a U.S. prototype, a model for other high schools to follow. DPS engineer/paraprofessional Jim Branch is the hardware expert at GW who is helping design it.

### Dr. Hoffman

Dr. Hoffman started use of computers back in the early 1960's, when they were quite large, undependable, and expensive. Since then he has been the driving force in building a program that encompasses 500 students, almost every department in the school, and a laboratory of about 40 computers.

A visit with Hoffman requires good shoes and a fast pencil, as he has much to do in various rooms, and he speaks faster than one can write. He is justly proud of what he has enabled students to do here and wants to share it.

After introducing me to Branch and Russell Anderson, his software expert paraprofessional, he leads me into a double-length classroom that is jammed with Atari, Apple, and Vector Graphic computers. At work are perhaps 10 students, a rather slow period, doing completely different things. Hoffman tries to explain what each different one is doing and my mind is immediately bogged.

The first is designing a program to solve 5th degree polynomial equations. Another works on learning Pascal language, yet another on learning one of the various word processor methods available. Then I come to where

several are concerned with finishing up a set of 40 computer instruction lessons that will teach English to monolingual students. Now there will be a ready answer to the missing link of how to get Hmong, Vietnamese, Lao, and Spanish speaking students started on learning English. The computers have even been programmed with the Oriental characters necessary for the languages to be written. A student has developed that part of the program which keeps meticulous records of every answer the user gives, and questions answered wrong are randomly brought back until done correctly. Voice synthesization of the lessons is planned down the road.

commitment to teaching students," he said. "Meet the kids at the door, smile, there are various ways. Kids watch an enormous amount of TV, play video games. In the face of this, we must be entirely positive in all we do.

"When you do make a mistake with kids, you have to internalize growth from it."

"Bring a variety of experiences and background into teaching," he continued, "so the students realize that learning is interdisciplinary. A person, to do that, needs to maintain an active interest in both the subject and other areas."

How will computers affect us in the future? "Computers will affect us more and more.

**“ My deepest concern is that people will fall through and forget it's not all available on computers. ”**

There is considerably more that could be written, but one really needs to visit to get a true taste of the amazing things happening here. It is an inspiration for anyone considering setting up a computer program in their school, or just for anyone who needs to see the academic heights which students can attain.

### Vaughan Aandahal

Vaughan Aandahal graduated from CU-Boulder with Hoffman, yet is quite different—quiet, methodic, reserved. Thirty or so students enter his Computer Science I class and soon are absorbing the finer points of Pascal language. There are numerous questions and clear but complex answers from Aandahal. His deep, bass voice never gets loud as every student listens intently, most taking copious notes.

Around the room are perhaps a hundred posters of famous people who have had a strong mathematical influence on our lives—Blacks, Orientals, Indians, Anglos, Hispanics, men and women. From these he relates stories that bring alive what they have done and why its important to us today. It's easy to imagine the powerful effect such a set of role models can have on a student. Aandahal brings the historical greats alive from the pen and ink drawings.

We talked after class at length and he responded to a variety of questions.

What do high school students respond to? "The teacher's manifestation of and sincere

Prognosticators predict that 85%-90% of the population will have to use some kind of computer interface, such as a keyboard, as part of their jobs. My deepest concern is that it will result in a change in research skills, that people will fall through and forget it's not all available on computers."

Aandahal and Hoffman represent just two of the many DPS teachers who are doing out-of-the-ordinary and exciting things in their classrooms everyday of the year. In coming months we shall meet with many more of them. Let us know whom you would like to see featured.

