

Graduation Guidelines Workgroup Report and Recommendations

DRAFT Executive Summary- High School Diploma Endorsement DRAFT

The Postsecondary Workforce Ready Endorsed Diploma work group has recommended to Colorado's Departments of Education and Higher Education to suspend implementation of the endorsed diploma until reconsideration of the policy in the 2017-18 academic year or later. The work group, comprised of representatives from K-12, higher education, workforce, and industry has made this recommendation as a result of the following:

- Policy misalignment with Colorado's graduation guidelines
- Cancelled implementation by the two pilot school districts.

Other concerns were also discussed, including that an endorsement would not provide an absolute result for students applying to selective and highly selective institutions under the new statewide Admission Policy – these applicants would be granted “priority consideration”. While the endorsement may strengthen the applicant's academic profile, it is just one factor of many used by selective and highly selective institutions in making admission decisions. As such, its impact and value would vary depending on the applicant's overall academic profile. (Because of their different statutory missions, open, modified open, and moderately selective institutions would be able to provide a guaranteed admission to applicants with an endorsement.) Additionally, an applicant would not be penalized in the admissions process for not attaining an endorsed diploma.

The work group has requested to be reconvened to provide a follow-up implementation recommendation after the following milestones occur:

- CMAS and PARCC have been implemented with validated outcome data,
- Admissions and remediation updated policies are in practice,
- Graduation guidelines demonstrations menu finalized by State Board of Education,
- Capstone guidance clarified and refined, and
- Recommendation and implementation toolkit for school districts finalized and published.

It is possible that the work group may recommend permanent removal of the diploma endorsement as an option during their follow-up discussion during the 2017-18 academic year or later. The two school districts that began pilot programs have suspended these prior to the recommendation from the work group. Districts in the early stages of consideration for the endorsed diploma are strongly encouraged to discuss with CDE staff prior to taking steps toward implementation.