



Colorado Department of Education – Communications Office
201 East Colfax Ave.
Room 501
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: 303-866-3898
Fax: 303-866-6938

May 14, 2008

News Release

State Launches Pilot Program with Districts to Close Achievement Gaps

The Colorado Department of Education announced today that it has formed partnerships with six districts in the state to participate in a pilot program to test strategies and solutions to eliminate achievement gaps associated with race and income.

The six districts are: Eagle County School District 50J, Greeley-Evans School District 6, Roaring Fork School District, St. Vrain Valley School District, Summit School District and Yuma School District-1.

All six districts fit two criteria to be included in the initiative. First, achievement gaps in all six districts are larger than the state average, and second, district leadership in all six districts demonstrated willingness and capacity to take on the project.

“These six districts were selected based on their exceptional leadership capacity, their focus on improving student achievement for all students and their commitment to change,” said Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. “In addition, these districts demonstrated a willingness to work with the department to develop a model that can be implemented in other districts around the state. As a state department, we are committed to forming partnerships with local school districts to tackle persistent problems head-on. We deeply appreciate the willingness of districts to identify achievement gaps as an issue and their eagerness to work together toward solutions.”

The three-year pilot will begin with comprehensive appraisals of district improvement needs, identification of resources to meet these needs and the development of comprehensive plans.

A visiting team of eight evaluators will share informal feedback on their findings shortly after their visit. A more formal report will be presented in August and recommendations for changes at the district level will emerge from that analysis.

CDE will provide each of the six districts with an achievement gap consultant, instructional programming and professional development.

Through a request for proposals process, CDE has identified providers with proven records of assisting districts in closing achievement gaps associated with race and income. CDE will work with each of the six districts to determine which provider will best meet their needs.

“One of the non-negotiable tenets of our work at the department is that the achievement gaps associated with race and income will be closed,” said Commissioner Jones. “This is a complex issue that will require sustained effort and dedicated partnerships focused on the same objective—improved achievement for all students.”

For more information, contact Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Megan McDermott, 303-866-2334, in the CDE Office of Communications. To sign up for the CDE e-mail news service, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html>.

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