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News Release

School Districts and Individual Schools Lauded

Several urban school districts and nine individual schools from around the state were highlighted during today's news conference announcing results from the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) and Colorado's Growth Model.

Commissioner Dwight Jones noted the strides among several key districts. He recognized the "major surge" in reading scores from Denver Public Schools, the "terrific growth" in writing from School District 11 in Colorado Springs, and "significant increases" in results from Aurora Public Schools.

In addition, Commissioner Jones cited progress in Greeley-Evans School District 6, which was removed from academic watch status last year for its progress then and continued to post "very strong gains" this year. Gov. Bill Ritter also congratulated all the schools and districts that were recognized. "It takes leadership," said Gov. Ritter, "and we really do appreciate it."

"These schools are lighthouses for how others may accomplish their journey," said Assistant Commissioner Jo O'Brien who invited nine schools from around the state to attend the news conference. She said the nine schools represented some 100 other schools that all deserve "meritorious" recognition for meeting an extremely high bar—performing above the state average and showing improvement in at least one CSAP subject area over a three-year period.

The nine schools recognized were Pomona High School (Jefferson County Schools); Woodland Park High School (Woodland Park RE-2

School District); Yuma High School (Yuma 1 School District); Aurora Academy Charter School (Aurora Public Schools); Challenge to Excellence Charter School (Douglas County Schools); Odyssey Charter School and Wyatt-Edison Charter School (both Denver Public Schools); Steamboat Springs High School (Steamboat Springs RE-2); and Fowler Elementary School (Fowler School District No. R4-J).

Fowler Elementary School principal Steve Grasmick, Wyatt-Edison principal Helen Hargis, and Steamboat Springs High School principal Kevin Taulman also were asked to share their strategies of success. Each in turn emphasized the importance of hiring and retaining top-quality staff and doing everything it takes to meet the needs of all individual students. Steamboat's Taulman emphasized in particular that he was looking forward to using Colorado's Growth Model (see related news release today) to assist in the continued effort to boost achievement for all students.

Colorado Lt. Gov. Barbara O'Brien, speaking prior to the comments from individual school representatives, anticipated the themes. "Students don't grow up in a vacuum," she said. "We need to keep pressing forward and hold a 'no excuses' mind set."

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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