



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

**July 30, 2008**

## **News Release**

### ***New Report Shows Progress on “Forward Thinking” Goals***

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) today announced the release of “Forward Thinking Progress Report,” a document that tracks advancement on the goals established in “Forward Thinking.” To view the 10-page report, visit

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/download/PDF/20080730forwardthinkingprogressreport.pdf>

In September 2007 CDE and the Colorado State Board of Education jointly announced the launch of “Forward Thinking,” an ambitious plan “to create a purpose-driven and dynamic system of educational leadership, service and support that relentlessly focuses on the learning of ALL students.”

“Part of my promise with “Forward Thinking” was that I would report back about our progress on an annual basis,” said Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. “I’m happy to report that of the 20 goals drafted in “Forward Thinking” eight have gained traction and we are just a couple steps from attaining those goals. A majority of the other goals are in the project launch stage.”

The overarching goal outlined in the plan is, “to develop tools to eliminate gaps and increase achievement for all.” Goal 3A solicits support for districts and schools in ways that narrow and eliminate the race and income gap. The department received approval for \$1.8 million in new funding to support efforts designed to close the achievement gap. Six districts were selected to participate in a three-year pilot and work with a set of providers with a record of closing

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

The goal closest to completion, Goal 5D involves the implementation of quality standards for the operation and administration of multi-district online educational enterprises and the infrastructures to support the effort. Certification has been granted to seven programs and seven others are revising portions for their applications. The unit of online learning is developing a template for the annual report required to be submitted by all programs.

Goal 6B is another goal close to execution. It calls for an increase on the reliance on longitudinal data within the state system of educational accountability. In May, CDE rolled out growth model data and displays that were based on 2007 data. A training video has also been produced. On August 15 the 2008 growth data will be released and will change the way the state looks at test scores.

Commissioner Jones added, "Forward Thinking requires teamwork, leadership and creativity and we thank everyone who has contributed to date."

**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>.

# # #