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**Sept. 11, 2008**

## **News Release**

### ***Board of Education Approves Legislative Priorities for 2009; Supports Designation of November 2008 As Homeless Youth Awareness Month***

The Colorado State Board of Education today approved its priorities for the 2009 session of the Colorado State Legislature.

The priorities are:

1. **School Finance**—Support efforts to improve the long-term financial stability of education funding and develop a comprehensive school finance solution.
2. **Information Services, Data Collection and Storage**—Support funding that enhances CDE’s data and information systems and personnel in order to streamline district data submission and foster efficient data sharing while providing higher levels of service, support, and usefulness to all users of CDE’s information systems.
3. **Aligning Educational Accountability**—Support legislation to streamline educational accountability in Colorado by revising School Accountability Report and Accreditation provisions to harmonize public reporting and actions required by these state accountability provisions and No Child Left Behind.
4. **Closing the Achievement Gap**—Continue efforts and funding to implement proven, evidence-based programs and strategies for closing the achievement gap.
5. **Drop-Out Prevention**—Support expansion of effective dropout prevention and recovery strategies.

6. Standards and Assessments—Support the completion of a thorough review of model content standards prior to the adoption of any new statewide assessment tools.
7. Online Education/School Choice—Support continued development and oversight of high-quality online programs, schools of choice, and other educational innovations to ensure strong student results.
8. Early Childhood—Support efforts to improve access to high-quality voluntary early childhood education and family literacy in ways that enhance the transition from early childhood education and preschool to K-12.
9. School Trust Lands—Support legislation to increase the Permanent Fund, maximize the Trust income, increase awareness of School Trust Lands and exempt school trust lands from TABOR.

### **Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness Month**

The Colorado Board of Education also approved support for a proclamation encouraging the governor to declare November 2008 as Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness Month.

To build awareness of homeless and runaway youth, the proclamation states that each night approximately 1,500 unaccompanied homeless youth live on the streets or in emergency shelters; that approximately 10 to 18 percent of youth exiting youth corrections in Colorado are discharged to a situation of homelessness; and that approximately 25 percent of youth experience homelessness within two to four years after exiting foster care.

“The citizens of Colorado are the key to preventing youth homelessness by acting as mentors and role models for youth, guiding them toward available resources, productive choices, and creating opportunities for youth to successfully transition to adulthood,” the proclamation states.

### **Changes in Adequate Yearly Progress Calculation**

Pat Chapman, Executive Director of Federal Programs Administration at CDE, briefed the board about changes in the formula for how Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is calculated.

AYP is how the federal law, No Child Left Behind, measures the achievement of schools, districts and states. AYP measures the

participation rate in the state assessment system (Colorado Student Assessment Program, CSAPA for students with significant cognitive disabilities and Lectura for qualifying English-language learners), academic performance, and graduation rate.

AYP requires the disaggregation of data by different groups of students: race/ethnicity, English language learners, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities. All disaggregated groups must make the statewide targets in reading and math.

Last year, 75 percent of Colorado schools made their AYP targets in 2007, unchanged from 2006.

Chapman did not predict what the percentage rate would be for 2008 but said it would drop due to a "perfect storm" of adjustments to the formula.

The percentage of districts making their AYP targets would drop for three reasons, he said:

- First, the targets increased. Because the federal law sets a goal of all students being proficient in reading and math by 2014, the targets are increased periodically for the percentage of students who are expected to be proficient.
- Second, in negotiations with the U.S. Department of Education, previous flexibility for students with disabilities was removed.
- Third, scores on CSAP by students with limited or no English language proficiency who had been in the state for less than three years must now be included in AYP calculations.

Chapman and Alyssa Pearson, Senior Consultant for Data and Accountability, told the board that federal officials previously had approved how students with limited or no English language proficiency were treated in the calculations, but issued new guidance this summer along with a threat to withhold federal dollars unless the formulas were changed.

Commissioner Dwight D. Jones told the board he has sent a letter to the federal government assuring that Colorado will comply with the changes.

Chapman said CDE had argued with the federal government that districts might be making terrific progress in improving a student's

grasp of English language and that scores posted by those students on CSAP, which is given in English, should not be a reason to indicate that a district might be on track for federal sanctions under NCLB.

Board member Elaine Gantz Berman asked Chapman if he could explain the federal government's rationale. "Right now there is not a lot of explanation emanating from them in sending out rejection letters," said Chapman.

And board member Peggy Littleton urged the department to do more to identify purposeful instructional strategies to help districts move English language learners toward proficiency. "Kids can, in a matter of a few years, be fluent in a new language," she said. "We can actually have them performing well."

### **Other Action**

In other action, the Colorado Board of Education:

- Recognized and honored the Colorado 2008 Online Elementary and Secondary Teachers of the Year, Chaille Cummings (Colorado Connections Academy) and Michael Clem (DPS Online High School).
- Approved requests for Type III emergency renewal authorizations (3 total)
- Approved requests for Type III emergency initial authorizations (18 total)
- Approved a waiver for timing of the passage of the content exam by alternative teachers participating in an approved program with BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services)
- Approved the alternative teacher licensing program for the Teach for American program in Denver Public Schools
- Approved the five-year re-authorization of the teacher preparation program at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley
- Approved the new University of Northern Colorado teaching endorsement: African-American Studies Bachelor's Degree Teacher Preparation Program
- Approved the principal/administrator induction program submitted by Eaton Schools Weld County RE-2
- Approved the teacher/special service provider induction program submitted by Resurrection Christian School
- Approved the teacher/special service provider induction program submitted by Southeast Christian School

- Approved the University of Northern Colorado's new secondary teaching emphasis: a social studies endorsement in Mexican American Studies Bachelor's Degree Teacher Preparation Program
- Approved a decision concerning appeal from administrative law judge's initial decision: Case No. ED2007-0001
- Approved funding to administrative units for special education programs under the Exceptional Children's Education Act, 2008-2009
- Approved payments to administrative units under the Exceptional Children's Educational Act for Evaluations of Children Ages Birth to Three, 2008-2009
- Approved state funding for Family Literacy Education Grants
- Approved a waiver request from certain statutes by the Charter School Institute on behalf of Ross Montessori Charter School
- Approved a waiver request from certain statutes by the Adams 12 Five Star Schools on behalf of Academy Charter Schools
- Approved notice of rulemaking for permanent rules pertaining to online programs
- Approved permanent rules amending the educator licensing rules
- Approved emergency rules amending the rules concerning the Public School Finance Act of 1994
- Approved rules for the administration of the postsecondary and workforce readiness assessments pilot program, 1CCR 301-75
- Approved permanent rules pertaining to early access to educational services for children less than age six
- Approved permanent rules related to administration of academic performance ratings
- Approved notice of rulemaking for amendments to permanent rules concerning the Public School Finance Act of 1994
- Approved permanent rules relation to the development, expansion, implementation and management of regional service areas.

**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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