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Sept. 12, 2008

News Release

Thirteen Regional Forums Begin Next Week—Defining 21st Century Skills, School Readiness, Postsecondary Readiness, and Workforce Readiness For New State Standards

Community members, parents, educators and students are invited to attend one of 13 community meetings being held around the state during the weeks of Sept. 15 and Sept. 22 to gather ideas about definitions which will modernize Colorado model content standards. The meetings will be hosted by the Colorado Department of Education.

The content standards establish by grade span and subject what students are expected to learn in school.

Each forum will run from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on the following dates and locations:

Monday, Sept. 15

- Denver School of the Arts Concert Hall, 7111 Montview Blvd.
- Jefferson County Building, Hearing Room #1, 100 Jefferson County Parkway, Golden
- Grand Junction Doubletree Hotel, Monument Room, 743 Horizon Dr.

Tuesday, Sept. 16

- Colorado Springs Doubletree Hotel, 1775 E Cheyenne Mountain Blvd.

- Durango; Miller Middle School, 2608 Junction Creek Rd.

Wednesday, Sept. 17

- Alamosa School District, Ortega Middle School, 401 Victoria Ave.
- Fort Collins, Johannsen Support Services Center (Poudre School District building), 2407 LaPorte Ave.
- Philip S. Miller Library, Castle Rock, 100 S. Wilcox

Thursday, September 18

- Leadville School District, Lake County High School, 1000 West 4th St.
- Pueblo West High School, 661 W. Capistrano Ave.
- Steamboat Springs High School, 45 Maple St.

Wednesday, September 24

- La Junta (location to be determined)

Thursday, September 25

- Fort Morgan Middle School, 300 Deuel St.

Attendees will be asked to review proposed definitions for "21st century skills," "school readiness," "post-secondary readiness" and "workforce readiness." Those definitions will guide revisions to specific content standards.

"The content standards form the bedrock of our work in schools," said Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. "They represent a joint understanding of what is expected of teachers to teach and of students to learn. It's critical that we gather the state's best thinking about defining our terms in order to help the standards revision process move forward."

Commissioner Jones announced the standards review process in September 2007.

The concept of content standards was developed in Colorado in the early 1990's. Statewide standards for the first time defined the knowledge and benchmarks that students should acquire within each grade span and in each subject. Under state law, local school districts

may adopt their own content standards as long as they are at least as rigorous as the state's version.

The Colorado General Assembly passed the standards-based education law in 1993 and standards were written for reading, writing, mathematics and science. Additional standards have been developed in civics, dance, economics, foreign language, geography, history, music, physical education, theatre and visual arts.

The standards have not changed since schools started using them in 1994. The first strand of what has become the full Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) exam was given in 1997, when fourth-grade students were tested in reading and writing based on those standards.

The department's Office of Standards and Assessment will deliver proposed new standards to the state board of education for final review December 2009.

For more information about the standards review process, visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/documents/OSA/stand_rev.html

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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