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News Release

State Board of Education Invites Public Comment on School Readiness Description Wednesday, Nov. 12

The Colorado State Board of Education invites public comment on a description of “school readiness,” one of the fundamental concepts to be established as part of the ongoing reforms called for under Senate Bill 08-212.

The public comment session will begin at 1:15 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 12 as part of the board’s monthly work session. The meeting will be held in the first-floor board room at the Colorado Department of Education, 201 E. Colfax Ave., in Denver. Seating is limited to 20. The door will open at 1 p.m. Citizens who are unable to attend the meeting may offer comments by e-mail to standards_review_com@cde.state.co.us

Senate Bill 08-212 is also known as the “Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act” or more informally as the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids. The legislation requires that a description of school readiness be adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education by December, 2008.

The state board will consider a parallel description for 21st century skills and postsecondary and workforce readiness by December, 2009. Combined, the two descriptions will form expectations for schools and students during the entire arc of a student’s academic career, beginning with preschool or kindergarten through postsecondary options. Public comment is welcome only on the school readiness description; another public comment period will be held prior to the

state board's adoption of the descriptions for 21st century skills and postsecondary and workforce readiness.

The school readiness description to be considered by the Colorado State Board of Education is the product of a statewide survey of educators, citizens, business leaders, parents and other stakeholders coupled with results of community meetings held around the state over the past three months.

"The conversations and survey responses that led to the development of the school readiness description were rich and meaningful," said Jo O'Brien, Assistant Commissioner for Standards and Assessment. "We thank all who have participated by contributing their thoughts to this important work."

The description of school readiness being considered by the Colorado State Board of Education is:

School Readiness

School Readiness describes both the preparedness of a child to engage in and benefit from learning experiences, and the ability of a school to meet the needs of all students in preschool and kindergarten. School Readiness is enhanced when schools work collaboratively with families and community service providers to ensure that every child is ready for higher levels of learning in academic content. Colorado School Readiness includes:

Child preparedness:

- Social and Emotional Development (e.g. ability to form human relationships, to get along in a group setting, self-confidence, sense of right and wrong, sense of empathy)
- Communication and Language Development (e.g. verbal and non-verbal skills, awareness of representation and meaning, ability to be understood and understand others)
- Approaches to Learning (e.g. participate and complete tasks, independently choose activities, age-appropriate level of concentration, problem-solving skills)
- Content Knowledge (e.g. basic knowledge of numbers, basic understanding of concepts, i.e., heat/cold, more/less)
- Physical Well-Being and Motor Development (e.g. rate of growth, motor skills, medical care)

School capacity:

- Professional Proficiency (e.g. highly trained and qualified adults, knowledge of growth and social development of typically and atypically developing children, ability to translate knowledge into developmentally appropriate practices, application of knowledge of research proven practices to meet the developmental needs of all students)
- Strategic Thinking in Leadership (e.g. school leadership which works invitingly with young families, hospitals, child care providers and all P-3 educators to maximize the learning outcomes; leaders who analyze their success and communicate progress and needs in a way which compels parents and local citizens to get involved)
- Community Services and Family Engagement (e.g. provide an inventory of all available service providers in neighborhood range – [health, parent education, social service, family support; arrange regular meetings and executive director briefings to facilitate active participation and communication about on-going needs and services; measure outreach, enrollment, alignment of student attendance and satisfaction survey by internal and parent consumers])
- Structures and Resources (e.g. salaries commensurate with professional expectations, developmentally appropriate materials and resources, small class size, availability of full-day kindergarten, appropriate facilities)

To sign up for the public comment session, please look for a sign-up sheet on the table located outside the board room on Wednesday, Nov. 12. Testimony will be taken in the order of the names listed. Depending on the number of those wishing to testify, the state board may limit testimony to three minutes per speaker.

The description of school readiness, 21st century skills and postsecondary and workforce readiness is part of ongoing effort to revise all of the Colorado Model Content Standards.

These standards are the expectations of what students in kindergarten through twelfth grade must know and be able to do. They were first created and adopted beginning in 1993. This work to modernize state standards will review the current standards with an eye to incorporate 21st century skills, postsecondary readiness, career/workforce skills and early school readiness.

For more information on 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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