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News Release

“P-3 Successful Practices: A Guide to Instruction and Assessment” Now Available

The Colorado Department of Education today announced the publication of “P-3 Successful Practices: A Guide to Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.”

The 33-page guide examines successful curriculum, instruction and assessment practices for students in preschool through grade three and also examines the systems that support implementation of high-quality early education programs.

“The sobering reality is this,” the guide states. “For some young children, an achievement gap exists before they enter the schoolhouse door. In particular, the language and cognition skills of young children living in poverty are often significantly lower than their peers from higher income families. Fortunately, high quality early interventions have proven successful in closing these gaps. Research shows that a consensus is emerging in curriculum, instruction and assessment practices for preschoolers, kindergarteners and children in the first years of grade school.”

“The research around early childhood education is clear and powerful in giving students a strong start. We strongly encourage schools and districts to use this publication as a guide for improving education for young learners,” said Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. “Furthermore, this guide is part of a growing library of resources available from the department to educators and policy makers across the state. As *Forward Thinking* spelled out, schools and school districts

may look to the department for analysis of the best thinking available regarding critical supports to improve student achievement.”

The *Forward Thinking* document contains the details of the department’s ongoing transformation as an agency that supports and serves local school districts around the state. The document is the operational plan for the State Board of Education’s strategic plan and includes a goal to develop and disseminate research on best practices.

Additionally, the guide makes eight policy recommendations:

- Develop a coherent P-3 continuum that aligns standards, instruction and assessments;
- Identify model curricula for P-3;
- Develop a system of accountability and support that ensures increased student outcomes by third grade;
- Improve teacher preparation in ways that ensure P-3 educators can lead all young students to high levels of performance and success;
- Provide state level professional development for P-3 educators and administrators;
- Create incentives to promote interagency cooperation in ways that increase effectiveness and enhance the efficiency of services to early learners;
- Identify federal, state, local and private sources of financial support and apply them to increase the access of young children to high-quality, research-based P-3 programs; and
- Disseminate research on effective P-3 practices to educators, administrators, parents, community, and policy makers.

A copy of the guide will be available at the CDE web site:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/download/PDF/20081113p3report.pdf>.

“P-3 Successful Practices” was developed with contributions from the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and Mid-continental Research for Education and Learning (McREL). The guide also includes input from Gov. Bill Ritter’s P-20 Council and its P-3 Subcommittee, as well as several other early childhood partners.

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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