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News Release

“Benchmarking For Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education” Now Available

The Colorado Department of Education announced the availability of “Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education.” The report was released today by the National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers and Achieve, Inc.

Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones served on an International Benchmarking Advisory Group that provided the three partner organizations with valuable insight and helped frame the bipartisan “Call to Action.”

Other members of the advisory group include Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano, Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue and Mitchell Chester, Commissioner of Education for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, among others.

“This report provides a strong argument for establishing benchmarks that are competitive internationally and focused on increased expectations for students and educators,” said Commissioner Jones. “I look forward to the conversations that will result from the dissemination of this report.”

The report states that although state leaders are already deeply engaged in efforts to raise standards, advance teaching quality and improve low-performing schools, the U.S. is rapidly losing its historic edge in educational attainment. As recently as 1995, the United States

was tied for first in college and university graduation rates, but by 2006 had dropped to 14th.

In the report, partner organizations and the International Benchmarking Advisory Group call on state leaders to take the following actions:

- **Action 1:** Upgrade state standards by adopting a common core of internationally benchmarked standards in math and language arts for grades K-12 to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be globally competitive.
- **Action 2:** Leverage states' collective influence to ensure that textbooks, digital media, curricula and assessments are aligned to internationally benchmarked standards and draw on lessons from high-performing nations and states.
- **Action 3:** Revise state policies for recruiting, preparing, developing and supporting teachers and school leaders to reflect the human capital practices of top-performing nations and states around the world.
- **Action 4:** Hold schools and systems accountable through monitoring, interviewing, interventions and support to ensure consistently high performance, drawing upon international best practices.
- **Action 5:** Measure state-level education performance globally by examining student achievement and attainment in an international context to ensure that, over time, students are receiving the education they need to compete in the 21st century economy.

For a full copy of the report, visit

<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0812BENCHMARKING.PDF>.

A Frequently Asked Questions document is also available at

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/download/PDF/BenchmarkingFAQs121809.pdf>.

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

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