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News Release

State Board of Education Hears Update on Federal Stimulus Package

The Colorado State Board of Education heard an update at its meeting Wednesday (Feb. 18) on the elements of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act that are designed to support funding for K-12 schools.

During the monthly board meeting, Associate Commissioner Richard Wenning outlined the various categories of federal spending that may assist Colorado. He cautioned that all amounts are “moving targets” and many of the spending programs await rules from the U.S. Department of Education.

“A lot is going to be worked out over the next few weeks as the U.S. Department of Education digests this bill and issues guidelines,” said Wenning.

In all, Colorado stands to receive \$2 billion through all stimulus programs, Wenning told the board, under “Division A” of the act, which covers appropriations. (Division B includes changes in tax code, unemployment programs, health, state, fiscal relief and other provisions).

Wenning told the board:

- Colorado may collect \$900 million in total education funding from the act.
- Of this, \$611.5 million is for Colorado school districts, public colleges and universities to restore education spending to 2008 or 2009 levels. Wenning said the division with higher education is unclear at this point.

- Nationally, \$5 billion will be available through State Incentive Grants for Education. Governors will apply to the U.S. Secretary of Education for these funds. Colorado is well positioned to meet the criteria and receive a portion of these funds given the work with Colorado Achievement Plan For Kids, the pending accountability alignment legislation and other initiatives, said Wenning.
- The Education Innovation Fund – Achievement Awards grant program could provide \$650 million (nationally) to school districts or partnerships between nonprofit organizations and local education agencies. These could be grants related to teacher quality, leadership development, new school development and many more innovations.
- Formula grants through Title 1 would yield \$110.9 million for Colorado.
- Title 1 School Improvement Grant increases could generate \$30 million for Colorado.
- Special Education State Grants (IDEA Part B, C & Infants and Families) could generate \$148.7 million for Colorado.
- Additional resources will be available through:
 1. Vocational Rehabilitation grants
 2. Impact Aid for emergency repairs and modernization of elementary and secondary schools that receive Impact Aid
 3. Homeless Children and Youth programs
 4. Technology grants (ESEA Title II, Part D-1)
 5. Teacher Incentive Fund grants (ESEA Title V, Part D Subpart 1)
 6. State Longitudinal Data Systems funds
 7. School Modernization and Repair programs

Emergency Rules for Charter School Institute

Also yesterday, the board approved emergency rules that were intended to clarify that a School Food Authority may be either a school district or the Charter School Institute. Such a change would permit the Charter School Institute to contract directly with independent food service providers for one or more of their charter schools who would desire such a service.

Under current Colorado state statute, charters can independently contract with an independent food service vendor but only if they do not receive reimbursement for students eligible for free or reduced-priced meals under the federal meal program. If they do receive federal reimbursement, they must receive their food services through the local school district.

The State Board of Education has the authority to change the designation for the Charter School Institute but it cannot extend the same designation to all individual charter schools, according to an opinion provided by the Attorney General's office.

Assistant Commissioner Vody Herrmann told the board that the legislature is drafting a bill to make the necessary changes in state statute and to allow the board to promulgate the necessary rules to govern such a new process. The emergency rules governing the Charter School Institute, she said, are a “place-setter” while the bill is being drafted. This would allow a district charter school to transfer to the jurisdiction of another School Food Authority, if a district chooses not to provide this service. This option would be solely for the purpose of participation in the federal child nutrition program.

The board will be take oral testimony at a public rulemaking hearing on permanent changes to the Food and Nutrition Rules—based upon the proposed legislative change—on Thursday, March 19, 2009, at 3 p.m. in the state board room at the Colorado Department of Education, 201 E. Colfax Ave., Denver. If you would like to provide your thoughts to the state board on this issue, please send an e-mail to state.board@cde.state.co.us. Oral testimony is limited to three minutes per speaker on March 19.

Other Action

The Colorado State Board of Education approved:

- Emergency renewal authorizations (total of four).
- Emergency initial authorizations (total of 61).
- The Teacher/Special Services Provider Induction Program for Douglas County School District.
- The Principal/Administrator Induction Program submitted by Montrose County School District.
- Disciplinary proceedings concerning a license charge (no. 2007EC41).
- Disciplinary proceedings concerning a license charge (no. 2007EC52).
- Disciplinary proceedings concerning a license charge (no. 2007EC22).
- Certification of amounts payable to school districts for the Public School Finance Act of 1994 (as amended).
- Excess cost rates for eligible facilities for fiscal year 2008-2009.
- Tuition rate for Rocky Mountain Deaf School for the 2008-2009 school year.

- Appointment to the Facility Schools Type 1 Board.

Rulemaking

- The board held a rulemaking hearing and then adopted rules for the administration of the Alternative Teacher Compensation Plan Grant Program.

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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