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News Release

New Academic Standards in Four Subjects Available for Review: Math; Music; Reading, Writing and Communicating; and Science

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) today released the first public drafts from phase one of the K-12 Colorado Model Content Standards review process.

The new draft academic standards in four subjects – math; music; reading, writing and communicating; and science – now are available online at:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/documents/OSA/stand_rev_DRAFTS.html

"The proposed academic standards clearly spell out the most important concepts that students should learn at each grade level in all subjects," said Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. "Considering that Colorado adopted the current academic standards before most of today's high school freshmen were born, it's absolutely time to make the standards more meaningful and relevant."

The drafts offer significant adjustments to the standards originally adopted in 1994. Only math and science have been revised since then. The proposed overhaul of state academic standards:

- Organizes standards grade-by-grade instead of by groups of grades
- Incorporates 21st-century skills

- Spells out fewer, but clearer and higher standards
- Adds early childhood, higher education, and post-secondary and workforce readiness expectations
- Calls for students to master concepts rather than facts

“We expect more of students today than we did 15 years ago, so we are making sure the new academic standards will give Colorado students every opportunity to compete with the world’s best.” said Commissioner Jones, who noted that Finland and Singapore served as the international benchmarks and that Massachusetts and Virginia provided national points of comparison. “We’re comparing the new standards to those in other countries and states that have higher college graduation rates than Colorado.”

In all, standards in 13 subjects will be updated. Phase two will address four subjects – civics; economics; geography; and history. Phase three will include five subjects – dance; physical education/health; theater; visual arts; and world languages.

Regional tours following each phase will offer opportunities to provide feedback.

The State Board of Education in 2007 recommended a comprehensive revision to academic standards. Senate Bill 08-212 (also known as CAP4K – the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids) affirmed revisions and expanded outcomes to include a seamless pathway from preschool into college or the workplace.

The state board will adopt updated Colorado academic standards by December 2009. Official public hearings will be held before members of the state board in November.

The drafts from phase one will be presented to the state board at its regular monthly meeting next week (Wednesday and Thursday, May 13–14).

An eight-city tour of the state will begin Monday, May 18 to listen to feedback from parents and all community members. All meetings will begin at 5:30 p.m. The schedule is:

- Monday, May 18 – Alamosa
- Tuesday, May 19 – LaJunta
- Wednesday, May 20 – Leadville
- Thursday, May 21 – Denver
- Tuesday, May 26 – Grand Junction
- Wednesday, May 27 – Brighton
- Thursday, May 28 – Sterling
- Monday, June 1 – Littleton

Meeting locations will be announced soon via CDE's Office of Standards Web site and news releases from the Communications Office.

Unlike the lengthy adoption process that shaped the 1994 standards, the one-year K-12 Colorado Model Content Standards review process is ambitious. It includes initial research and gap analysis of states and nations with better standards, and selection of:

- Stakeholders to determine grade-by-grade articulation
- 255 volunteer educators and business leaders to lend expertise
- Eight Colorado school districts with early success in revising local content and skill standards
- Advisory committees to check rigor and relevancy
- Content subcommittees to collect data and propose revisions

Over 100 individuals throughout the state researched and informed the first public drafts from phase one of the K-12 Colorado Model Content Standards review process.

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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