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News Release

State Defines What It Takes For High School Graduates To Be College And Workforce Ready

In a joint meeting held today at the State Capitol, the Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education adopted a description of “postsecondary and workforce readiness.” This was the first time in state history the two boards have met to take formal action on state policy. To read the adopted description, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/download/PDF/PWRadopteddescription63009.pdf>

“It’s a historic day for our P-12 and higher education governing boards to come together to adopt a description of postsecondary and workforce readiness,” said Gov. Bill Ritter Jr. “The postsecondary and workforce readiness description serves as a guidepost to our state standards. The description outlines the skills, knowledge and behaviors that high school graduates will need in order to enter college and the workforce so they can compete and succeed in a 21st century global economy.”

The postsecondary and workforce readiness description is just one component of Senate Bill 08-212, known as the Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act, Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids or CAP4K. The purpose of the bill is to improve Colorado’s public education system through alignment of preschool through postsecondary expectations.

Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones added, “This is not the end of the conversation, but the beginning. It is not the description itself, but what we do with it, how we implement it. Similarly, collaboration across the system is just the beginning; our next challenge is to consider how we maintain momentum during implementation in the field.”

Beginning in fall 2008, CDE and CCHE hosted more than 13 regional meetings across the state to discuss and solicit feedback on the elements of “postsecondary and workforce readiness.” More than 1,000 early childhood, P-12, higher education, businesses, parents, students and other community members participated in the meetings.

“The success today is the result of input from all over the state and from the full range of interests,” said CCHE Chairman Jim Polsfut, who also facilitated the meeting. “We are all determined to carry out the purposes of CAP4K to make sure all Colorado high school graduates are ready to continue their education or enter the 21st century workforce.”

The postsecondary and workforce readiness definition is unique in American education policy, representing the nation’s only formal, jointly adopted, standards-based definition of college and career readiness — a definition Lt. Gov. Barbara O’Brien stated is required in the state’s application for Race to the Top funds.

The CAP4K timeline outlines several steps before completion:

- A school readiness description by Dec. 2008 – completed
- A postsecondary and workforce readiness description by Dec. 2009 – completed
- A set of newly developed content standards, aligned to school readiness and postsecondary and workforce readiness by Dec. 2009 – in progress
- A new system of assessments by Dec. 2010
- Implementation of CAP4K by Dec. 2011

Next steps include a postsecondary and workforce readiness assessment pilot which was started in the spring and will continue in the fall; a cost study that will evaluate implementation costs of revised standards; and assessment design conversations initiated between the Department of Higher Education and CDE once revised standards are adopted.

To read more about CAP4K visit:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdegen/SB212.htm>

To read more about the standards revision visit:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/UAS/standardsreview.html>

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