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News Release

State Board of Education Supports “Voluntary Participation” in National Common Core Standards Work; BEST Grants Approved

The Colorado State Board of Education this week unanimously approved a resolution supporting the state’s “voluntary participation in the consortium to help shape the development of the Common Core Standards.”

The National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers recently proposed the development of Common Core Standards. Forty-nine states and territories have agreed to participate in the development of standards in English language arts and mathematics.

At the same time, Colorado educators, parents, business representatives, community members and higher education representatives are in the middle of an ongoing process designed to revise and update Colorado’s model content standards. The statewide work to develop “fewer, clearer and higher” standards in 13 content areas was propelled by S.B.08-212 and by the state board of education in fall 2007.

The resolution approved by the state board supported the national work on common core standards but affirmed Colorado will have the prerogative regarding adoption in the end.

“Be it resolved,” the resolution states, “That the Colorado State Board of Education intends to adopt internationally competitive, aligned

standards for 13 subjects and financial literacy preschool through grade 12 by the target date of Dec. 2009;

“Be it further resolved: That the Colorado State Board of Education supports Colorado’s voluntary participation in the consortium to help shape the development of the Common Core Standards; and

“Colorado along with each state throughout the country will make its own determination as to the voluntary adoption of the Common Core Standards.”

Said board member Peggy Littleton: “The states are the one defining what it is our children are learning and it is not the federal government’s responsibility to do that.”

BEST Grants

The state board this week approved a total of 55 grant projects under the Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) program.

Among the projects approved today were fire safety equipment, kitchens and cafeterias, classrooms, ventilation systems, boilers, telephone systems, security cameras, restroom upgrades, preschool facilities, roofs and pool and shop renovations. A complete list is posted here:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/download/PDF/FY2009-10PrioritizedList.pdf>

Recommendations forwarded from the Public School Capital Construction Assistance Board included 43 BEST Cash Grant projects for a total of \$14.9 million and matching funds of \$18.7 million. Another 12 projects will be funded with BEST Lease-Purchase Funding for a total of \$112.5 million and matching funds of \$56.9 million.

Additionally, some of the BEST Lease-Purchase Funding will use Qualified School Construction Bonds (QSCBs), which are interest free bonds established in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

In 2007, the BEST Act was enacted to provide financial assistance from the Public School Capital Construction Assistance Fund to school districts, charter schools, institute charter schools, BOCES (Boards of Cooperative Educational Services) and the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind to assist with the construction of new public schools and the renovation of existing public schools.

The source of revenue for the Assistance Fund is revenues from the

State Land Trust, lottery proceeds, matching grant funds and interest on monies in the Assistance Fund.

Passing Time

The board approved a proposed amendment to the Rules for the Administration of the Public School Finance Act that specifically permits "passing time" in the definition of "educational process" for the purposes of calculating a student's instructional hours.

The school finance rules had been silent on this issue, although many districts included passing time in their calculations.

"We are not saying passing time is or is not quality time," said Board Vice Chair Randy DeHoff, echoing the comments of others. "We are saying it is about achievement."

Board Chair Bob Schaffer urged local districts to make this issue a "point of discussion" in their planning and budgeting and said he was pleased some precision was brought to the rules. "I'd rather answer the questions than leave it unaddressed as it has been for a number of years," he said. At the same time, he added, "I hope the conversation doesn't end."

Board member Peggy Littleton echoed that message. She said she hoped the issue will "further the statewide discussion to look at achievement as the constant and time as the variable. Many of our districts and schools prove that seat time does not equate to high student achievement."

Other Action

In other action, the board approved:

- The certification of the multi-district online program submitted by Provost Academy Colorado.
- Proposed amendments to the rules for the administration of the Exceptional Children's Educational Act.
- Notice of rulemaking regarding proposed amendments to the rules for the administration concerning the Protection of Persons from Restraint Act. The purpose of these amendments is to better align the rules to the Protection of Persons from Restraint Act, to clarify language, and to reorganize the rules to provide clearer guidance for their implementation.

- Proposed amendments to the rules governing the Educator Licensing Act of 1991, Concerning Career and Technical Education Licensing.
- Nine requests for emergency initial authorizations.
- Three requests for emergency renewal authorizations.
- Disciplinary proceedings concerning an application for a license charge number 2008EC19.
- Teacher Induction Program submitted by Longmont Christian School.
- Special Education Generalist Teacher Preparation Program from Colorado State University-Pueblo.
- Teacher preparation programs from the University of Colorado at Boulder for New Applied Mathematics; Integrated Physiology; Geology; and Molecular, Developmental and Cellular Biology.
- The Teacher Induction Program submitted by the West Denver Preparatory Charter School.
- The Undergraduate and Graduate Special Education Generalist Teacher Preparation Programs from Colorado Christian University.
- The Compliance Policy Interpreting the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Rights Act of 1974. CDE developed a FERPA policy and supporting documentation as a result of legislation requiring the state board to adopt an interpretation of FERPA to support data sharing to the greatest extent possible in compliance with the regulations.
- Amendments to the rules for the administration of the Public School Finance Act of 1994.
- Alternative Education Campus Designation Schools.
- Certification of amounts payable to school districts for the Public School Finance Act of 1994.

- Denver Public Schools as a district of innovation and grant certain waivers from state statutes for the benefit of Cole Arts and Science Academy.

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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