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News Release

Parent Advisory Council Formally Established by Colorado State Board of Education; Launch Awaits a Gift or Grant

The Colorado State Board of Education today formally established a new statewide parent advisory council, envisioned under Senate Bill 09-090. The council will be charged with recommending strategies to increase parent engagement.

The formal name of the group is the State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education and will report to the commissioner of education and the state board.

Under the bill, the council will “review best practices and recommend to policymakers and educators strategies to increase parent involvement in public education, thereby helping to improve the quality of public education and raise the level of students’ academic achievement throughout the state.”

The council is now waiting for financial resources to support their work. Under the law, the state board is not required to establish rules for the council’s work or launch the grant program until a minimum of \$20,000 has been secured to fund the grant program. The funding for the council, as identified by the bill, is gifts, grants and donations.

The 20 members of the council are appointed by the state board to three-year terms, although four members initially will serve one-year terms and four will serve two-year terms. Appointees include a cross section of representatives from the public school community including

parents; parent information and resource centers; parent training and information centers; nonprofit organizations; statewide parent organizations; parents or students who advocate in the areas of equality and justice in education, racial justice for youth and immigrant rights; school executives; local boards of education; teachers; charter schools; career and college guidance counselors; career and technical education teachers; and early childhood education.

Legislative Priorities

The Colorado State Board of Education also reviewed draft legislative priorities in preparation of the 2010 session of the Colorado State Legislature.

The 10 topics identified in the draft are:

- **School Finance**—Support efforts to improve the long-term financial stability of education funding and develop a comprehensive school finance solution.
- **Great Teachers and Leaders**—Support legislation that will align state policies and practices to support educator effectiveness.
- **Statewide System of Accountability and Support**—Continue to develop a consistent and comprehensive statewide system of support that helps schools and districts build the capacity needed to achieve ambitious student outcomes.
- **Closing the Achievement Gap**—Continue efforts and funding to implement proven, evidence-based programs and strategies for closing the achievement gap.
- **Standards and Assessments**—Continue statewide transition to and implementation of internationally benchmarked standards and aligned assessments that provide a clear path to postsecondary and workforce readiness.
- **Innovation and Choice**—Support legislation enabling the state to assure a high-quality public school choice for every student in Colorado.
- **Early Childhood Education**—Support efforts to increase access to family literacy and high-quality, voluntary, early-childhood education.
- **Data Collection and Access**—Support approaches to measuring postsecondary and workforce readiness beyond student scores on state assessments.
- **CDE Fiscal Management**—Support legislation that will increase the department's ability to deliver operational excellence,

- research and development, while decreasing the constraints associated with federal resources.
- **State Board Authority**—Support the Colorado State Board of Education's constitutional responsibility for public schools through collaboration opportunities with the legislative and executive branches and with the private sector and through designation of the rulemaking authority rather than prescriptive statute.

Each of the listed priorities contain more detail and board members discussed a variety of refinements within the document but left the main themes intact.

The state board will consider formally approving the priorities in November.

Protection from Persons of Restraint Act

The board this week held a rulemaking hearing on the proposed amendments for the administration of the Protection of Persons Restraint Act.

Ed Steinberg, director of exceptional student leadership, told the board that the new amendments to the rules, promulgated following the 1999 original legislation, were seen primarily as a "tightening" and "reorganization" of the rules. "The department does not see the proposed amendments to the rules as a radical reworking but as a greater clarification to the field," he said.

A task force of stakeholders has been working on proposed changes since Aug. 2007.

A variety of speakers provided public comment, including representatives from the Colorado Association of School Executives, district officials, the legal community, the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) and parent training and resource centers, among others.

Kathleen Sullivan, director of CASB's Legal Services Program, said the proposed amendments to the rules will assist teachers by providing them with common language. Currently, she said, teachers have three sources for information about what constitutes proper restraint—state statute, promulgated rules and CDE guidelines. "Those documents were inconsistent," she said. "We have made a one-source document for educators."

The state board may vote on the amendments at its November board meeting.

Consent Agenda Items

The board also approved all the items on its regular meeting agenda.

The agenda items included requests for emergency renewal authorizations (five total); requests for initial emergency authorizations (13 total); the Early Childhood Education Teacher Preparation Program submitted by the University of Phoenix; the New Instructional Technology Specialist Endorsement Teacher Preparation Program submitted by Colorado State University—Pueblo and the new K-12 Spanish Teacher Preparation Program submitted by the University of Northern Colorado.

Approved items also included disciplinary proceedings concerning an application for a license charge No. 2009EC09 and disciplinary proceedings concerning license no. 404812.

In addition, the board approved notice of rulemaking pertaining to the authorization of charter schools as Food Service Authorities; approval of rules governing Food and Nutrition Services, 1 CCR 301-3.; approval of notice of rulemaking pertaining to 1 CCR 301-69, amendments to the rules for the administration of Closing the Achievement Gap.

The board also approved a waiver request from certain statutes by the Adams 12 Five Star School District on behalf of Academy of Charter Schools (although one waiver request was denied because the statute in question has been repealed) and tuition rates for Rocky Mountain Deaf School for the 2009-2010 school year.

Eight “Perfect ACT Score” Students Recognized

The Colorado State Board of Education also recognized eight students with perfect scores on the ACT exam.

Jo O’Brien, assistant commissioner for standards and assessment, told the board that 50,530 students took the state-sponsored administration of the college-entrance ACT exam last spring and eight students posted a perfect score of 36. Nationally, less than one-tenth of 1 percent of all students who took the ACT scored a perfect 36. The national average composite score is 22.

"This morning we honor excellence," said O'Brien. "These students performed flawlessly."

The eight students are Daniel Bragg (Fairview High School, Boulder Valley Schools); Catherine Chen (also Fairview High School); Joshua Burns (Liberty High School, Academy School District 20); Hannah McGehee (George Washington High School, Denver Public Schools); Thomas Rueter (Thornton High School, Adams 12 Five Star Schools); Richard Shulte (Fort Collins High School, Poudre School District R-1); Amani Moin (Loveland High School, Thompson School District R-2 J) and Margaret Koehler (Lewis-Palmer High School, Lewis-Palmer School District 38).

State Furlough Day

The Colorado Department of Education offices will be closed Friday, Oct. 9 for a state-mandated furlough day.

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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