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Nov. 2, 2009

News Release

Colorado Department of Education Receives ACT Award for “Systems of Excellence”

To celebrate 50 years of helping students achieve education and workforce success, ACT last week honored the State of Colorado for dramatically improving the college and career readiness of students.

ACT presented the Systems of Excellence Award to the Colorado Department of Education at the “Recognizing Exemplary Achievement in College and Career Readiness” ceremony on Wednesday, Oct. 28 in Washington D.C.

Peggy Littleton, member of the Colorado State Board of Education, and Jim McIntosh, director of student assessments at CDE, attended the event and accepted the award on behalf of the department.

Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones thanked ACT for the recognition. “This award reflects on the dedication and focus of the department’s entire staff,” said Commissioner Jones. “This recognizes the teamwork within the department as well as the shared work and shared vision with school district leadership across the state as we continue to focus on brightening the future for all students.”

Added state board of education member Littleton: “Colorado’s approach to school accountability strikes a good balance between strong statewide expectations and considerable flexibility at the local school district level. We appreciate ACT’s recognition of the state’s existing efforts and we fully expect the standards to become clearer

and higher for all students with the content standards revision process now underway.”

The Systems of Excellence Award honors states that have increased the likelihood of success for students, their families, and educators through the implementation of coherent policies and initiatives that raise the expectations for and performance of all students.

“Colorado was one of the first states in the nation to send a clear message to all of its students that they were expected to reach a level of college and career readiness by the time they graduated from high school,” said ACT CEO and Board Chairman Richard Ferguson at the Oct. 28 event. “Today we honor Colorado for their outstanding accomplishments.”

The knowledge and skills measured by the ACT test are closely aligned with Colorado’s challenging state learning standards.

“Colorado’s students work hard every day to realize their dreams of going to college and creating a better future for their families and communities,” said U.S. Senator Michael Bennet. “The Systems of Excellence Award recognizes their efforts, as well as those of teachers, school administrators and parents across our state who are doing everything they can to help kids achieve those goals. We are making important progress and will continue to work to ensure that all of Colorado’s kids have access to the highest quality education.”

“Colorado’s entire education community is to be commended for making college and career readiness for each and every student a statewide priority,” said Colorado Congressman Jared Polis. “Together, we are working to ensure that Colorado’s kids are prepared to go to college, enter the workforce, and compete in the global economy.”

All Colorado juniors take the ACT test. Since the first high school juniors were tested in 2001:

- Academic achievement as measured by average ACT scores has increased for all high school graduates in the state. These increases more than double the national increase.
- College readiness has improved across all racial/ethnic groups in all four subjects—English, mathematics, reading, and science — whereas improvements in college readiness nationally were seen only in mathematics and science.

- College access and opportunity have dramatically increased among Hispanic, African American and lower-income students.
- More Colorado students have enrolled in college—including many students who had not previously considered postsecondary education. College retention rates remained constant even as the number of students increased by 14 percent.

About ACT

ACT is an independent, not-for-profit organization that provides a broad array of assessment, research, information, and program management solutions in the areas of education and workforce development. Each year, ACT serves millions of people in high schools, colleges, professional associations, businesses, and government agencies – nationally and internationally.

Now celebrating its 50th anniversary, ACT offers a wide variety of solutions that share one guiding purpose – to help people achieve education and workplace success. For more information about ACT, visit www.act.org.

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