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May 21, 2010

News Release

Eleven Additional School Districts Receive “Closing the Achievement Gap” Grants

The Colorado Department of Education announced today that 11 school districts in Colorado have been selected to receive one-time funding to support efforts to close achievement gaps and improve student achievement. This is in addition to the six districts participating in a three-year pilot focused on closing achievement gaps.

The Colorado State Legislature approved \$1.7 million in funding to continue work in the 11 approved districts. The State Board of Education approved new rules for the administration of closing the achievement gap program in December, providing structure for the new grants.

“We appreciate the willingness of these 11 districts to step up and participate in this effort,” said Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. “We also thank the legislature for support of this important work during what we know is a difficult economic time. Closing achievement gaps is a priority for the department and across Colorado and the work requires this kind of collaboration—and diligence.”

The revised rules include strategies for closing the achievement gap that must be used as part of the grant. A few of the eight strategies are:

- A district may use student data to set academic improvement targets in reading writing and mathematics.
- The district may examine and realign school scheduling, academic support systems and assignments of personnel.
- The district may design a plan for increasing parental knowledge and skill to support academic objectives.

For a complete list of the strategies, visit

www.cde.state.co.us/turnaround/cde_turnaround_ctagpilot_home.htm

The 11 districts are: Adams-Arapahoe School District 28J (Aurora Public Schools), Ault-Highland School District RE-9, Boulder Valley School District, Cherry Creek Schools, Colorado Springs School District 11, Douglas County Schools, East Grand School District 2, Holly School District RE-3, Littleton Public Schools, Poudre School District and Thompson School District R-2J.

The funding for the 11 districts is for one year and must be spent by June 30, 2011. Funding is limited to a maximum of \$150,000 per site. The new grantees attended a spring meeting to learn from the six school districts currently completing the second year of the pilot.

The 11 districts were selected based on persistent gaps in achievement and growth associated with race, income and low student achievement.

Background

The Colorado Department of Education announced in 2008 a partnership with six districts – Roaring Fork School District RE-1, Eagle County School District RE-50, Summit School District RE-1, Weld County School District 6 (Greeley-Evans), St. Vrain Valley School District RE-1J and Yuma School District RJ-1 – to participate in a pilot program to test strategies and solutions to eliminate achievement gaps associated with race and income. The Colorado State Legislature allocated \$1.8 million for the development of the program.

The six districts are part of a three-year pilot that began with comprehensive appraisals of district improvement needs, identification of resources to meet those needs and the development of comprehensive plans. Each district is working with an independent service provider to assist in the implementation of the project. For more information, visit

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/scripts/reforms/detail.asp?itemid=192515>

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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