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June 3, 2010

News Release

Rose Community Foundation And The New Teacher Project Invest \$1 Million To Improve Educator Effectiveness

The Colorado Department of Education, the Colorado Legacy Foundation and The New Teacher Project will coordinate development of state strategies to improve educator effectiveness under an \$800,000, two-year grant announced today by the Rose Community Foundation. The New Teacher Project has raised an additional \$200,000 from other private donors to support its work on the project.

“This combined effort will ensure our state is well prepared to articulate and deliver a cohesive and coherent strategy to improve educator effectiveness,” said Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. “We deeply appreciate Rose Community Foundation and The New Teacher Project for their recognition of this important cornerstone work.”

Commissioner Jones noted that the work starts as the state begins the process of implementing Senate Bill 10-191, calling for teacher evaluations to be linked closely with student achievement, and within the context of the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), which calls for a seamless Colorado educational experience from preschool through college.

Commissioner Jones said the grant will support such critical tasks as:

- Articulating statewide goals for educator effectiveness and realigning the department to reach them.

- Identifying a comprehensive set of recommended policies at the state and local levels to meet the goals.
- Ensuring that the design of critical data systems complements the state's educator effectiveness goals.
- Identifying and disseminating proven strategies in classroom and school district policies and practices that support effective teachers and principals.

"Most critical is the shift in attention from the concept of educator *quality*—as measured by what educators know—to the concept of educator *effectiveness*, as measured by the effect educators have on their students' academic growth," said Commissioner Jones. "This is a powerful shift that has drawn strong bipartisan backing. Colorado's expectations for schools and students are justifiably high, and work in this area is a key to unlocking improved performance."

Commissioner Jones noted that the grant's work will be directly complemented by the state's application for round two funds under the federal Race to the Top grant program. A successful Race to the Top application, he said, will enhance CDE's ability to sustain the activities that demonstrate the greatest results and to accelerate reform at the local school district level.

"The combination of these efforts around educator effectiveness will empower and enable all Colorado districts to develop a comprehensive focus on educator effectiveness that includes schools, students and staff," said Colorado State Board of Education Chairman Bob Schaffer. "The goal is to increase the quality of the professional skills among all teachers and boost the power of every instructional hour for all students."

The grant announcement dovetails with a resolution approved unanimously by the state board of education in May that supports 16 specific steps being taken by the Colorado Department of Education to ensure "that every child in Colorado has access to an effective teacher in his or her classroom and an effective principal in his or her school."

Among the steps being taken:

1. Setting annual targets for the number and percentage of effective and highly effective teachers and principals statewide and their equitable distribution among and within local school districts.

2. Strategically realigning the department's staff and activities in a manner that reflects the improvement of educator effectiveness.
3. Reviewing the performance of educator preparation programs, including performance indicators in the reports required to be prepared under state law and in conjunction with the annual survey of superintendents.
4. Setting annual targets and developing plans to increase the number of educator preparation programs that demonstrate their ability to prepare effective teachers and principals and decrease or eliminate those programs that consistently fail to demonstrate that they prepare effective educators.
5. Setting annual targets for increasing the number of preparation programs whose candidates demonstrate that they are effective and decreasing the number of those that fail to do so.

A complete copy of the state board's resolution is available under "resolutions" at the following link:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeboard/bdmission.htm>.

The grant from the Rose Community Foundation is being distributed among The New Teacher Project (\$208,995), CDE (\$170,000) and the Colorado Legacy Foundation (\$421,000).

"We hope the grant allows CDE and its partners to take advantage of an historic opportunity to focus our state's education reform agenda on what matters most: effective teaching," said Sheila Bugdanowitz, president and CEO of Rose Community Foundation. "The conditions are right for Colorado to seize the opportunity to emerge as a national leader in measuring, supporting and increasing teacher effectiveness."

Under the grant, the Colorado Legacy Foundation will:

- Engage The New Teacher Project for a 12-month period to assess CDE's current efforts that have a bearing on educator effectiveness; recommend state-level teacher effectiveness goals; and identify possible policy changes in state law and regulation, including changes to the licensure process and the accreditation of educator preparation programs.
- Publish an assessment of policy and practice opportunities and also detail barriers to the implementation of an effective state strategy.
- Identify and disseminate best practices among districts in the areas of educator evaluation, development and compensation.

- Along with CDE, identify highly effective educators across Colorado and publicly recognize their success and disseminate their instructional practices models.
- Convene the many groups focused on educator effectiveness with the goals of identifying unmet needs, discerning opportunities for collaboration and complementing, not duplicating, existing efforts.
- Support the implementation of up to three promising initiatives that seek to increase the preparation, identification and/or support of effective educators.

“The continuing support from the Rose Community Foundation will allow the Colorado Legacy Foundation to do what we do best—and that’s to nurture promising ideas so school districts are using tools that work, not being tested,” said Helayne Jones, executive director of the Colorado Legacy Foundation. “Improving educator effectiveness is a priority in all schools and we are excited to play a role in this team effort to boost the quality of school faculties statewide.”

A substantial portion of the funds will be used by the Colorado Legacy Foundation to engage The New Teacher Project, a national leader in the area of teacher effectiveness.

Grant funds for CDE will be used to reimburse a school district for the out-of-pocket costs of engaging a temporary teacher-on-loan. This person will be an active classroom teacher who will serve as an advisor to the commissioner of education to ensure that the development and execution of policy initiatives in this area are directly informed by the experience of classroom teachers.

The teacher-on-loan will also be an ambassador of CDE soliciting the input of teaching professionals across the state regarding the implementation and institutionalization of this work into CDE.

About the Colorado Legacy Foundation

Inspired by the Colorado Department of Education’s “Forward Thinking” strategic plan, the Colorado Legacy Foundation was established in 2007 as a nonprofit, governed by an independent board of trustees that develops initiatives to support the Colorado Department of Education’s work.

Colorado Legacy Foundation’s mission is to invest in promising strategies to improve public education. The privately funded nonprofit evaluates results, convenes education stakeholders and provides

recommendations to schools for continuous improvement. Its unique partnership with the Colorado Department of Education allows the foundation to advance innovation in public schools throughout the state.

More: <http://www.colegacy.org/>

About The New Teacher Project

The New Teacher Project (TNTP) is a national non-profit that helps school districts and states fulfill the promise of public education by ensuring that all students—especially those from high-need communities—get excellent teachers.

TNTP has been working in Colorado since 2007 helping districts recruit teachers, staff schools and analyze current human capital management policies and practice.

More: <http://www.tntp.org/>

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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