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News Release

Arts Education Week In Colorado Is Sept. 12–18; Commissioner Jones Will Read Gov. Bill Ritter's Proclamation Monday

In late July, the U.S. Congress designated September 12-18, 2010, as "Arts in Education Week" to promote and showcase the important role that arts education plays in producing engaged, successful students who are prepared for college or career success.

Taking the opportunity to confirm Colorado's commitment to a rich and balanced education as well as his personal support, Gov. Bill Ritter Jr. has designated this same week as "Arts in Education Week in Colorado."

In partnership with the governor's office, Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones will offer his support for arts education and read the governor's proclamation on Monday, Sept. 13, 2010, at 3:30 p.m. in the lobby of the Colorado Department of Education, 201 E. Colfax Ave., in Denver. Commissioner Jones will be joined by Elaine Mariner, executive director of Colorado Creative Industries Division (formerly Colorado Council on the Arts) and Colorado State Board of Education Vice Chair Randy DeHoff.

The public is invited to hear the proclamation and express their support for a full complement of visual, performing, literary and media arts offerings in Colorado schools.

The proclamation underscores the arts as core academic subjects and essential elements of a complete and balanced education for all

students. The document also notes that arts education is uniquely positioned to teach 21st century learning skills and critical thinking and problem solving abilities, imagination and creativity, discipline, alternative ways to communicate and express ideas, and cross-cultural understanding, which supports academic success across the curriculum as well as personal growth outside the classroom.

A 2008 study of arts education in public schools by the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Creative Industries Division shows that while most schools offer some formal arts education to a majority of students, an estimated 29,000 students attend public schools that do not offer any formal arts education. The study also revealed that Colorado public high schools offering more arts education have higher scores on state tests in reading, writing and science—regardless of student ethnicity or socioeconomic status—along with lower dropout rates.

Offering the arts is a choice for many public schools in Colorado. The 2008 study also revealed school leaders believe time is the biggest barrier to providing more in-depth arts education to hone in-demand work force skills such as imagination, creativity and innovation.

Understanding the vital role of creativity in postsecondary and workforce readiness, the general assembly and Gov. Ritter passed House Bill 10-1273, Arts Education for Workforce Development on May 18, 2010. This statute encourages all public schools to provide courses in performing and visual arts. Courses may include traditional arts classes, on-line study, internships, externships, mentor experiences or independent study. Schools are encouraged to use innovative ways to deliver arts education, such as technology, software and forming partnerships with other school districts or community colleges. Schools must include arts education in students' individual career and academic plans.

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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