



Colorado Department of Education – Communications Office
201 East Colfax Ave.
Room 207
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: 303-866-3898
Fax: 303-866-6938

Oct. 21, 2010

News Release

Commissioner Dwight D. Jones Announces Launch Of Expanded Learning Opportunities Commission

First Listening Tour Stop Is Monday, Oct. 25 In Grand Junction; Ideas Welcomed Via Online Survey Too

Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones today announced the formation of the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Commission, which is working to expand the vision for the entire learning experience for students in ways that transcend the traditional school day and traditional classroom models.

“The idea is for the commission to look at every way possible for schools to maximize the learning experience for students through creative and innovative community partnerships and through increased use of technology,” said Commissioner Jones. “The commission will examine the best means of leveraging opportunities beyond the time-honored and very necessary classroom instruction in a way that fully engages and enriches all students.”

The goal, added Commissioner Jones, is to create a vision for student learning that incorporates a blend of traditional and online learning, expands the school day and standard yearly calendar and re-thinks the traditional school experience.

“This new approach to learning can only be accomplished through collaboration and partnership with community-based organizations, the business community and higher education,” said Commissioner Jones, “and that’s where the ELO commission comes in, to create a

vision for a new approach outside the traditional boundaries of classroom space and school time.”

To garner public input and support, the commission is embarking on a statewide tour to listen to educators, program providers, parents and others about the challenges and successes of expanded learning time and to discuss ideas for improving programs and strengthening community partnerships.

The first stop in the tour is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 25, in Grand Junction at the Doubletree Hotel, 743 Horizon Dr., from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Future meetings are scheduled for Monday, Nov. 8, in Limon; Wednesday, Nov. 10, in Fort Collins; and Thursday, Nov. 11, in the Sheridan School District. Locations will be announced. The Sheridan meeting will start at 3 p.m.; the meetings in Limon and Fort Collins will begin at 4 p.m.

“We encourage anyone with interest in expanding the learning experience for students to attend these meetings and provide input on expanded learning opportunities and partnerships,” said Commissioner Jones. “We want to hear about the extended-day and after-school programs and services presently available to students, what efforts are working, and what needs to be done in order to improve and expand services to engage more students in meaningful ways.”

Citizens and community members who plan to attend the meetings in person are asked to RSVP to Vanessa Roman at the Colorado Department of Education, roman_v@cde.state.co.us.

Those who cannot attend the meetings may provide feedback via an online survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/26C2Z7N>. Written comments may also be sent to Vanessa Roman at the e-mail address above.

Purpose and Overview

Expanded Learning Opportunities seek to transform the educational experience to fully engage students in their learning, their passions and their interests. ELOs foster collaboration and partnerships among teachers, schools and community partners to effectively use the school day so that it is unrestricted by walls (blended and online learning), clocks (flexible school days), calendars (expanded school week and year) or tradition. By supporting ELOs, communities are providing

more time and new ways for their students to engage in their learning, make connections within and across their community and to develop an active, successful citizenry.

The Expanded Learning Opportunities Commission grew out of work initiated through the Supporting Student Success joint initiative of the National Governors Association, Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Council of State Legislators.

Membership

The commission is comprised of state legislators, practitioners, teacher union representatives, ELO practitioners and members of the Colorado Department of Education.

Current membership includes:

Greg Anderson, Dean, Morgridge College of Education
University of Denver

Linda Barker, Director, Teaching and Learning
Colorado Education Association

Elaine Gantz Berman (Chair), Member, Colorado State Board of
Education
District 1

Shirley Farnsworth, Director of Extended Learning
Denver Public Schools

Helayne Jones, Executive Director
Colorado Legacy Foundation

Alyssa Lasseter, Director, Tony Grampsas Youth Services
Department of Public Health and Environment

The Honorable Tom Massey
State Representative (R), District 60

Linda Preston, Board Member
Colorado Alliance for Quality School-Age Programs

The Honorable Gail Schwartz
State Senator (D), District 5

Diana Sirko, Deputy Commissioner
Colorado Department of Education

The Honorable Judy Solano
State Representative (D), District 31

The Honorable Nancy Spence
State Senator (R), District 27

Jennifer Stedron, Executive Director
Early Childhood Leadership Commission

Charge

The charge of the Commission is to ensure that statewide policies support expanded learning opportunities within the ongoing education reform initiatives throughout the state.

The commission will gather input from around the state on ELO opportunities and challenges. The findings from this input will be used as the basis for the commission's report on supporting new and expanded learning opportunities into education reform efforts in effective, measurable and sustainable ways.

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>.

Follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/codepted>

#