**Colorado Department of Higher Education**

This letter was prepared as a tool for K-12 school leaders to use to communicate with parents and families in their communities. School leaders are welcome to use the content of the letter in full or in part and may edit the letter as needed.

[Date]

Dear Parents and Families:

I am reaching out with some important news about how our district and our state are working together to improve the success in college of our students. As educators, we care about how our students perform when they leave us and enroll in postsecondary education. We want them to excel in their chosen career paths and beyond. It’s important we have complete information to help them do that.

This year, the Colorado Department of Higher Education’s annual report on remedial education will look a little different. Because of improved data-sharing between K-12 and higher education state agencies, a more complete method of calculating how many students need remedial help in college is being used.

**What’s Different?**

Previously, researchers started with recent high school graduates aged 17, 18 and 19 who were tested and found in need of additional reading, writing or math help before they were prepared for college-level work. They then tried to track those students back to their individual Colorado public high schools to create a picture of students needing remedial classes by school.

This year, after conducting a pilot project to test various methods, researchers started with a single high school graduating class and followed them forward to college to see if they need remediation. They also included students enrolled in remedial classes – not just those assessed as needing help – to get a more complete picture of remediation in Colorado.

**Why Make the Change?**

The most important reason is to provide more comprehensive data to schools, colleges and universities. This data can help pinpoint the need for earlier and more focused student interventions. It also will allow the state to better highlight success stories so schools and districts, if they choose, may implement strategies that work on a wider scale.

**How Does this Impact You?**

In some cases, it may appear that your high school is losing ground in ensuring students are college-ready. This likely is not the case. To provide context and allow for comparisons, the state has calculated three years’ worth of school data under the new method. Statewide, the remedial rate actually declined this year.

Remediation rates calculated under the old method are not comparable to those calculated with the new method. Please keep in mind: *Increased remedial rates are not a reflection of a higher number of students needing remediation but are an example of improved data quality and measurement.*

Colorado is leading the nation in its data-sharing partnership between K-12 and higher education. The state agencies are working hard to ensure that comprehensive information is being provided to schools, colleges and universities so all of our children benefit on their chosen paths to college and career.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

[Contact information]