

**TOPIC: PROPOSAL TO OFFER A MASTERS IN EDUCATION AT
 COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY - PUEBLO**

PREPARED BY: HEATHER DELANGE, JULIE CARNAHAN

I. SUMMARY

The Board of Governors of the Colorado State University System has submitted a proposal for a Masters in Education degree. This program will impact the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms in southeastern Colorado.

The degree is built on research on teacher change and is designed to prepare teachers to lead school reform. The program will require completion of one of three high need emphasis areas (Special Education, Linguistically Diverse Education, or Instructional Technology); completion of core pedagogy courses focusing on literacy, instructional technology, and differentiation of instruction; and a core of courses focusing on professional growth.

Graduates of this program will be prepared to increase educational opportunity for PK-12 students. These teachers will also be prepared in critical shortage areas for regional schools and districts.

Department of Higher Education staff recommends approval of the proposed Masters in Education degree. The Masters in Education (M.Ed.) is a degree conferred by educational institutions for professional educators. Teachers choose to enroll in this degree to increase their knowledge in their field of teaching or to branch into another area within education.

II. BACKGROUND

The following is summarized from the Colorado State University proposal for the Masters in Education degree.

CSU-PUEBLO ROLE AND MISSION:

There is hereby established a University at Pueblo, to be know as Colorado State University-Pueblo, which shall be a regional, comprehensive university with moderately selective admissions standards. The University shall offer a broad array of baccalaureate programs with a strong professional focus and firm grounding in the liberal arts and sciences. The University shall also offer selected masters level graduate programs. (Colorado Statutes 12-55-101)

Colorado State University-Pueblo is committed to excellence, setting the standard for regional comprehensive universities in teaching, research and service by providing leadership and access for its region while maintaining its commitment to diversity.

EVIDENCE OF NEED FOR THE PROGRAM:

Currently, there are no higher education institutions in Colorado that offer a masters degree similar to CSU-Pueblo's proposal. CSU-Pueblo has based its conclusions concerning need on information from interviews with administrators and human resource directors in regional schools, survey data of area teachers and CSU-Pueblo students, a formal survey of employment needs conducted for the Pueblo Education Consortium, and data on national trends in employment.

Need for Special Education Component

Inclusion of an emphasis are in Special Education results from data from national, local and regional sources that consistently identify an unmet demand for licensed Special Education teachers:

The U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that employment of special education teachers is expected to increase faster than the average for all occupations through 2012, suggesting that employment opportunities in special education teaching are expected to grow 21-35% through 2010, an increase of over 150,000 positions. (*Occupational Outlook Handbook* available at <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos1070.htm#outlook>). The U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics also reports that bilingual special education teachers and those with multicultural experience also will be in demand to work with an increasingly diverse student population.

The Pueblo Education Consortium, a group comprised of the educational and economic development organizations in Pueblo – School Districts 60 and 70, Pueblo Community College, CSU-Pueblo, the Pueblo Economic Development Corporation, and the Pueblo and Latino Chambers of Commerce – contracted with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to conduct an assessment of educational needs in Pueblo and southern/southeastern Colorado. Their research found that “the industry with the next greatest need is education, specifically public school teachers in the following areas: math, science, special education, and bilingual education. The mandates of the ‘No Child Left Behind’ legislation requiring all students to be taught by fully qualified teachers will only increase the pressure in these areas” (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2003, p.40).

A survey of 10 regional school district human resource personnel directors indicated that special education was the teaching area they would have most difficulty filling.

A survey of jobs available in Colorado schools: On May 8, 497 current job openings for teachers were listed on the statewide *Teach in Colorado* job site sponsored by the Colorado Department of Education. Of these over 10% were for special education teachers.

In the last two years, it has been reported that approximately 1000 teachers were enrolled in special education licensure programs (Legislative Report on Teacher Education, 2005). The majority of these teachers were graduate students (many already employed in classrooms) and the majority was completing training in “front range” schools in northern Colorado. The rural nature of southern Colorado makes it difficult for partner districts to recruit and retain special educators. One recent national survey reported that a majority of beginning special educators did not relocate to accept teaching positions, and over 80% accepted positions close to where they lived. Sixty-five percent did not move at all, and 16% moved fewer than 50 miles (www.spense.org). In the last 5 years, 56% of CSU-Pueblo graduates have been employed in schools in southern/southeastern Colorado (Pueblo county and South). Among these graduates, 92.02% have remained in teaching 3 years after completing the program. A program centered at CSU-Pueblo would assist school districts in rural southern Colorado to recruit and retain special education teachers.

In visits made by the Associate Dean for Teacher Education to professional development administrators in six regional school districts in September 1006 (East Otero, Fremont RE-1, Fremont RE-2, Pueblo D60, Pueblo D70 and Trinidad), all rated the need for Special Educators as the top priority for a master’s program.

The design of the Special Education emphasis area supports the Response to Intervention (RTI) delivery model. At the present, no education program in Colorado has been designed exclusively to prepare teachers as Special Educators in inclusive settings, though many districts in CSU-Pueblo’s service area are utilizing this model.

Need for Linguistically Diverse Education Program

The impact of regional issues has driven the inclusion of an emphasis area in Linguistically Diverse Education. Given the increase in numbers of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students throughout Colorado, the high percentage of LEP students in the early elementary grades, and the failure rate in reading of these LEP students throughout Colorado, an emphasis on language and literacy for the culturally and

linguistically diverse student is essential. In addition, only one in five teachers told a national survey they felt “very well prepared” and confident to work with students from diverse backgrounds, with limited English proficiency, or with disabilities (*Teacher Quality: A report on the Preparation and Qualifications of Public School Teachers* prepared by the National Center for Education Statistics, 1998) The same situation still exists in 2007.

Achievement of students in area schools reflect at risk factors, with children in many schools performing below proficiency on state tests of reading, writing, and math. Proficiency rates for minority and Limited English Proficient students consistently fall below those of their non-minority peers. According to the results of the Colorado Department of Education Colorado State Assessment Programming 2004-2005 (CSAP) only 27% of students of Hispanic descent scored proficient or above on the reading assessment in grades 4-10. That means that 73% of all Hispanic students in grades 4-10 were failing in reading in Colorado. (www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/results/2004/CSAP2004%20State%20Summary%20Rdg4-10.pdf). Of the students identified as LEP in Colorado in grades 4-10, only 2% score at proficient or above on the reading assessment. State assessments are not administered in Colorado until grade 4; however, the clear majority of LEP students in Colorado’s public schools are in grades K-3 (53.53%), indicating growth in their numbers in recent years.

Need for Instructional Technology Program

Preparing teachers to use technology for instruction and assessment has been identified as a strength of CSU-Pueblo’s undergraduate teacher education program at recent state and national accreditation reviews, and three federal grants of approximately \$5.8 million have provided the University with resources and expertise to prepare teachers to integrate technology. Research on the effectiveness of applications of technology to teaching and local experiences in preparing pre-service teachers have convinced CSU-Pueblo that the future of education is tied in part to teachers’ ability to use technology to raise achievement.

In 2004-2005, CSU-Pueblo conducted a survey of teachers and administrators in a sample of three elementary, one middle school, and one high school in Pueblo School Districts 60 and 70. Among the 68 respondents, 51% responded that they *definitely* had an interest in completing a Master’s Degree and 15% of the sample responded that they *may* have an interest in entering a master’s program. When asked about interest in a master’s in Instructional Technology, 16% reported a *high interest*, 40% reported a *moderate interest*, 26% reported *some interest*, and 19% reported *no interest*. In rating factors for choosing a master’s program, 44% reported cost was the top concern, 31% reported quality of program, and 24% reported the location. This survey was conducted in partner schools in which CSU-Pueblo had provided professional development in instructional technology for some teachers. Since the survey, no Colorado graduate program in Instructional Technology has been available to teachers in the region.

Both Pueblo districts have incorporated plans for instructional applications of technology in future plans. Pueblo City Schools is implementing a new, totally on-line school (Ridge Academy) and is in the process of developing a strategic plan that highlights the need for educators with expertise in technology. Pueblo District 70 currently includes a magnet high school that focuses on technology (The Tech Academy), and the superintendent and members of its Board of Directors have proposed interests in a number of technology-related initiatives. These will require teachers with special expertise in the use of technology to raise student achievement.

EVIDENCE OF STUDENT DEMAND

Following are expected enrollments based upon the survey data:

Enrollment Projections:	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Full Implementation
In-state Headcount	10	20	40	60	60	60
Out-of-State Headcount	0	0	0	0	0	0
Program Headcount	10	20	40	60	60	60
Program Graduates	0	10	20	30	40	60

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

The Department staff have reviewed this proposed program to ensure that it meets the State's performance measures outlined in C.R.S. 23-1-121. This program meets all performance measures.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission approve the request of the Board of Governors of the Colorado State University System to offer a Masters in Education at Colorado State University-Pueblo.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. 23-1-121