

TOPIC: DESCRIPTION OF POSTSECONDARY & WORKFORCE READINESS

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I. BACKGROUND & SUMMARY

Signed into law in 2008, SB08-212, the Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act:

- Aligns P-12 school standards and assessment measures with the knowledge and skills necessary for students to succeed in postsecondary education and in the workforce;
- Assumes that high school students need the same fundamental core knowledge and competencies, and personal skills, for postsecondary study or the workforce;
- Assumes that most students will need some postsecondary education in order to remain competitive in the 21st Century global economy and marketplace;
- Assumes that a high school diploma is a meaningful indicator of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR);
- Has implications for admissions purposes in Colorado public institutions of higher education, for those students who gain a PWR endorsement on their high school diploma;
- *Requires the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) and the Colorado State Board of Education (SBOE) to negotiate a single description of postsecondary and workforce readiness;*
- *Stipulates that the adopted description of PWR, among other provisions, shall:*
 - *Describe specific knowledge and skills that students must have to demonstrate PWR;*
 - *Ensure that PWR includes “demonstration of a sufficiently high level of comprehension or skill to successfully complete, without need for remediation,” specified core academic courses;*
 - *Ensure, to the extent practicable, that students demonstrate such “21st Century skills” as creativity and innovation; critical thinking; communication and collaboration; social and cultural awareness; initiative and self-direction; character and leadership; productivity and accountability; and information technology application skills, among others.*
- Requires the CCHE and SBOE to negotiate a consensus regarding assessment measures, including a new 11th grade PWR assessment that, “at a minimum, tests in the areas of reading, mathematics, and science and is relevant to college admission determinations by institutions of higher education throughout the United States.”

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

The attached *draft Description of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness* is derived from advice and input from numerous town meetings across the state, co-sponsored by the Department of Higher Education and the Colorado Department of Education, and from additional meetings held with the business community, higher education faculty and administrators, K-12 educators, and DHE and CDE staff.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This is an information item only. The Commission will meet on June 30, 2009 jointly with the State Board of Education to consider official action on the description of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness.

IV. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act, Title 22, Article 7, Section 1008 *et seq.*

V. ACCOMPANYING MATERIALS

A draft description of postsecondary and workforce readiness is attached as Attachment A.