## Minutes of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) Special Meeting with the Colorado State Board of Education (SBE) October 21, 2010

CCHE Chairman Jim Polsfut called the meeting to order at 12:35 pm.

CCHE Commissioners Jim Polsfut, Hereford Percy, Dave Edwards, Happy Haynes, Jill Brake and Greg Stevinson were in attendance. Commissioner Richard Kaufman attended via conference call. SBE members Peggy Littleton, Elaine Berman, Angelika Schroder and Jane Goff were in attendance. Chairman Bob Schaffer, Randy DeHoff and Marcia Neal attended via conference call. Also attending the meeting were State Senator Evie Hudak and State Representative Nancy Todd.

Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) Executive Director Rico Munn welcomed the State Board members to the joint meeting to discuss statewide assessments. Director Munn referenced the Post-Secondary Workforce Readiness (PWR) description the two bodies passed in December 2009. He reminded Commissioners and State Board members that the two boards will discuss the school readiness assessments today and adopt an assessment system for post-secondary readiness assessments by December 1, 2010 (as required by statute).

Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Commissioner Dwight Jones told the group that the possible mutual agreement on assessments was an important outcome of the meeting. He introduced DHE's Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Cheryl Lovell and CDE's Assistant Commission for Standards and Assessments, Jo O'Brien, to give an overview of the process.

Assistant Commission Jo O'Brien led this first of two meeting to discuss a new assessment system for Colorado. Ms. O'Brien listed three qualities needed to measure PWR expectations (the PWR standards): 1) content; 2) 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (learning how to learn); and 3) planning to be successful. It is not good enough for students to know about math or literature; they need to be able to make meaning out of it and to apply it and write about it in a compelling way. Student needs to do more than just identify content; they need to be active thinkers. Ms. O'Brien gave examples of content knowledge for PWR standards; mathematical sciences, science literacy, social studies and sciences and arts and humanities. The PWR standards also list learning and behavioral skills; creativity, collaboration, work ethic, critical thinking and problem solving, civic responsibility, communication, personal responsibility and global and cultural awareness. These examples demonstrate graduate competency from pre-school through high school. The next step is to create and adopt an assessment system. The new assessments need to give an accurate signal that students are postsecondary and workforce ready and they need to be easy to use and meaningful to students. The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) test is a 20<sup>th</sup> century standard. The new assessments will become a system rather than just a test.

Dr. Cheryl Lovell reiterated that the assessment system must determine whether an individual student who leaves 12<sup>th</sup> grade is post-secondary and workforce ready. Dr. Lovell gave the definition of the ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning: assessment and problem solving; making the expectations inclusive and public; and setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning and for quality. CDE and DHE have redesigned a system that will accomplish

the above. This new system will be relevant to the student at every grade, be instructionally relevant and will quantify a student's progression toward Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness.

The redesigned assessment system will include:

- Formative (on-going) PWR measurements at every grade;
- Interim (quarterly) PWR measurements at every grade;
- Summative (end of year) PWR measurements (3-11<sup>th</sup> grade);
- P-2 PWR assessments;
- ICAP (Individual Career and Academic Plan) (8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>);
- Nationally-recognized college admissions assessment (11th grade); and
- Dashboard (hosts indicators of readiness) (P-20).

Dr. Lovell reviewed the elements in the redesigned assessment system from Senate Bill 212:

- Measures Colorado Academic/PWR Standards;
- Aligns with PWR description;
- Aligns with Child/School preparedness description;
- Leverages longitudinal growth model;
- Includes postsecondary & workforce planning, preparation, and readiness gauges; and
- Includes recognized and relevant assessment for college admission in Colorado and throughout the United States

Commissioner Happy Haynes asked what implications the new assessment system will have for changes in the post-secondary environment.

Assistant Commissioner O'Brien replied that those discussions were being held now. The Higher Education Admission Requirements (HEAR) standards were based on pre-PWR and may have to be revised. Once the PWR is fully articulated, the post-secondary community can begin discussion of the thresholds for assessment.

State Board member Peggy Littleton noted the importance of letting the public know that the new assessment will not be eliminating the CSAP. There will always be a standardized assessment. There will be something summative, along with formative and interim measurements. She believes it is incumbent on the Board of Education to ensure all elementary teachers are addressing literacy and proposed that colleges of education have some type of literacy lab that teachers have to pass in order to get their accreditation and licensure through the state to teach.

CCHE Vice Chair Percy wondered how the system will assess learning and behavioral skills the child brings from home.

The issue was raised whether the assessments will reveal when a child is performing above his or her grade level in any content area. Ms. O'Brien pointed to the Dashboard as a way to measure such performance. The goal is to have the assessment system measure adequacy and encourage an appetite and sense of urgency to move forward.

Chairman Polsfut wondered if a definitive assessment can be done with alternative test questions, rather than the multiple choice questions used today. Ms. O' Brien acknowledged the difficulty

in formulating situational examples such as the military or businesses use to demonstrate nimble thinking.

Commissioner Jones talked about the need to be mindful of what is practicable and affordable in today's economy in implementing a new assessment system.

SBE member Jane Goff asked if the matrix would be a tangible tool. She wondered how much work this will be for the schools and where parent groups and career and technical education (CTE) groups are in the conversation. Assistant Commissioner O'Brien said the CTE community has been a part of the discussions and may be the best source of examples of test questions and real-world situations. Regarding more work for the schools, she said they will be testing differently rather than more.

Executive Director Munn asked if there was consensus on the new assessment being a system rather than a test. The group agreed it would be a system; one of data collection.

Ms. O'Brien, when asked about financial issues, told the group about a \$17.8 million grant Colorado received to build the state data system and a \$100 million grant to support bandwidth throughout the state. And the state will seek to use tools that are already in place.

Commissioner Greg Stevinson brought up the idea of charging schools for remediation costs of their students, or alternately rewarding schools whose students do not need remediation. He acknowledged there would be pushback from the schools regarding this idea.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.