

**TOPIC: GRADUATION GUIDELINES AND POSTSECONDARY
AND WORKFORCE READINESS ENDORSED DIPLOMA**

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I. SUMMARY

This information item provides an update on the CDE graduation guidelines and an update on the postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR) endorsed diploma process, per S.B. 08-212/Cap4Kids. A PWR endorsed diploma taskforce, consisting of high school and college administrators from around the state, has been formed and is staffed by CDE and DHE. This task force is charged with developing recommendations concerning the criteria for PWR diploma endorsement, advising on college and career readiness, and identifying core competencies and skills necessary to classify high school graduates as ready for post-secondary education and the workforce. State Board of Education and CCHE will be asked to approve the task force's recommendation in Spring 2012.

II. BACKGROUND

Senate Bill 08-212, also known as "Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids" or CAP4K, was a landmark education reform initiative that is creating, for the first time in Colorado, an aligned preschool to postsecondary educational system (P20 alignment). The bill has impact on high school graduation requirements and guidelines. The bill also requires recognition of college readiness through demonstration of mastering the new P12 Academic & PWR Standards, and may be noted on high school diplomas (the PWR Endorsement).

Graduation Guidelines

Pursuant to C.R.S. 22-2-106(1)(a.5) and 22-32-109(1)(kk)(I), it is the duty of the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt, on or before December 15, 2011 a comprehensive set of guidelines for the establishment of high school graduation requirements to be used by each school district board of education in developing local high school graduation requirements. Graduation guidelines adopted by the SBE will identify minimum standards or core competencies or skills expected from all high school graduates. These guidelines can be thought of as "what is needed to exit high school," whereas the PWR Endorsement and Higher Education Admission Requirements (HEAR) can be thought of as "what is needed to enter higher education." Development of the graduation guidelines will be done in alignment with the timing, to the extent possible, and development of the PWR endorsed diploma criteria. CDE will collaborate with the DHE to ensure the graduation guidelines align with the PWR Endorsement and HEAR.

PWR Endorsed Diploma

Per the legislation, SBE and CCHE shall jointly adopt the criteria (based upon the recommendations of the taskforce) for the PWR Endorsement. A student with PWR endorsed

diploma will be guaranteed (subject to additional institutional review of other admission and placement qualifications):

1. To meet minimum academic qualifications for admission to all open or selective public institutions of higher education in CO, and to be eligible for placement into credit-bearing courses.
2. To receive priority consideration, in conjunction with additional criteria, for placement into credit-bearing courses at all other (highly selective) public institutions of higher education in CO.

The Endorsed Diploma Task Force will be meeting at least once per month this fall, with the first meeting on September 16th at Pikes Peak Community College. On November 10, 2011 the SBE and CCHE will hold the first of two joint meetings and will review and discuss endorsed diploma criteria. CDE and DHE will provide online and in-person opportunities to vet with the public the task force recommendations for the PWR endorsements. The PWR diploma endorsement shall not take effect unless the Governing Boards of State IHEs approve the criteria. In December 2011, DHE will meet with the Governing Boards of IHEs to seek approval of the PWR endorsed diploma criteria. In January/February 2012 the task force will update SBE on Governing Board approval of the criteria. In March/April 2012, the task force will attend the second of the two SBE and CCHE joint meetings to seek joint approval of the PWR endorsed diploma criteria. In May/June 2012, districts will decide if they will offer endorsed high school diplomas. In 2012 and beyond, districts may begin offering diploma endorsements to graduating students. In fall of 2014 students with the PWR endorsement will begin enrolling in Colorado IHEs and receive priority consideration.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

No action required. This is an information item only.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. 22-2-106 (1)(a.5)
C.R.S.22-32-109(1)(kk)(I)
C.R.S. 22-7-1017(2)(a-b)