

**TOPIC: UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POSTSECONDARY AND WORKFORCE READINESS (PWR) HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA ENDORSEMENT**

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## **I. SUMMARY**

This information item is an update on the development and anticipated next steps related to the PWR endorsed diploma criteria recommendation.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

Pursuant to §22-7-1009 and §22-7-1017 C.R.S., the next step for implementing the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) requires the State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education to jointly adopt high school diploma endorsement criteria indicating a student's level of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR). In August 2011, DHE and CDE staff created a task force to develop the parameters of the PWR endorsed diploma. This task force held a series of meetings to identify the recommended criteria a student must meet in order to earn an endorsed diploma upon high school graduation. A PWR "endorsed diploma" exemplifies student achievement over and above a standard high school diploma or the current "higher education admission requirements" (HEAR).

A PWR endorsed diploma signifies that a student has thoughtfully planned for post-high school life and is academically prepared for credit-bearing 100-level postsecondary coursework without the need for remediation. A PWR endorsed diploma also means the student possesses the abilities and skills required for success in a rapidly changing, 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace or postsecondary education environment (*i.e.*, critical thinking and problem solving, information literacy, collaboration, self direction, and invention skills).

## **III. STAFF ANALYSIS**

Department staff have worked extensively with the task force members to develop and vet the proposed criteria with a wide variety of stakeholders from both P-12 communities and institutions of higher education. Based on the recommended criteria, a student may earn a PWR endorsement by successfully completing all of the following four criteria:

1. **STUDENT IS COLLEGE READY IN MATH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS:** the student meets existing remedial education benchmarks, is ready for credit-bearing coursework in math and English language arts;

2. **STUDENT COMPLETES ICAP:** the student establishes and maintains an Individual Career and Academic Plan, per SB09-256;
3. **STUDENT DEMONSTRATES 21st CENTURY SKILLS;** and,
4. **STUDENT DEMONSTRATES MASTERY OF ACADEMIC PREPARATION:** the student demonstrates college readiness three content areas aligned to their post-high school goal.

School districts may elect to offer a PWR endorsed diploma, but it is not required. Several school districts have agreed to pilot the endorsed diploma. The purpose of this pilot project is to research and better understand the implications of the PWR endorsed diploma on student outcomes, implementation, technology requirements, and delivery costs. Statewide implementation will follow the pilot period.

To date, many higher education governing boards, including the University of Colorado Board of Regents, the Colorado State University Board of Governors, the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education, and the Colorado Mesa University Board of Trustees have formally endorsed the PWR criteria.

Pursuant to §22-7-1009 C.R.S., all higher education governing boards must approve the criteria before the endorsed diploma can take effect. In June 2012, the State Board of Education and Commission on Higher Education will jointly meet to take action on the PWR endorsed diploma criteria. Department staff believes that all governing boards will take action on the PWR endorsed diploma criteria before the Commission is required to take action on it.

#### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Information item only, no action required at this time. Staff has informed CCHE members of the June 28, 2012 joint meeting with the State Board of Education.**

#### **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

§23-1-108(7)(a) Duties and powers of the commission with regard to system-wide planning.  
§22-7-1017(2) High school diploma – endorsement – effect.