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Office of Lt. Gov. Joseph A. Garcia, Department of Higher Education

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Lt. Gov. Garcia releases 2012 Remedial Education Report

DENVER – Tuesday, April 16, 2013 – Lt. Gov. Joe Garcia and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education today released the Colorado Department of Higher Education’s 2012 Remedial Education Report to the Legislature.

Overall, the percentage of 2011 high school graduates assessed as needing remediation or enrolling in remedial classes in at least one subject was 40 percent, a slight decrease from the previous year of 41 percent. At the institution level, 66 percent of students enrolled in a community college and 24 percent of students at a four-year institution needed remediation. Most students required remediation in mathematics (51%), followed by writing (31%) and then reading (18%).

“Remediation is rightly a serious concern for educators, policymakers, parents and students,” said Garcia. “The initial results of remedial education reform are promising and Colorado will continue its strong press forward to see that all students earn a postsecondary credential.”

The report finds that Colorado is succeeding in retaining more students who entered college in need of remediation. For the first time since annual reporting began in 2001, there was no difference in the first-year retention rates of remedial and non-remedial students at community colleges. At the four-year level, the retention rate for students not assigned to remediation was 79 percent compared to 60 percent for those needing remediation. These improvements suggest that institutions throughout the Colorado postsecondary system are realizing noteworthy gains in addressing students’ academic needs.

This report uses a new method of calculating remediation rates that provides a more complete depiction of the remedial needs of the Colorado high school Class of 2011. Changes include 1) focusing on a high school graduating class and 2) incorporating both students assessed as needing remediation *and* those enrolled in remedial classes. Three years of remedial rates using the new method are included for context; rates provided in prior reports and calculated under the previous method are not comparable.

Numerous efforts are underway at all levels of the P-20 system to reduce the need for remedial

education and improve student success in college. In February, the state board overseeing the Colorado Community College System approved policy changes designed to shorten the amount of time students spend in remedial courses. Full implementation is set for fall 2014 but campuses already are moving to eliminate some courses, combine others and create new supports for students that accelerate their remedial work. For example, some students assessed as needing remediation will go straight into college-level courses but will also participate in a companion lab class to ensure they're progressing. The overall goal is to reduce time spent in remediation to one semester or less.

Colorado high schools are making greater use of concurrent enrollment to prepare students whose high school exams show they are likely to need remediation. With this strategy, high school seniors enroll in college remedial courses so they can complete those classes and go straight into college-level work when they arrive on campus. Between 2010-11 and 2011-12, concurrent enrollment in remedial courses grew by 39 percent, with the largest such enrollments at Community College of Denver and Community College of Aurora.

Lastly, through its federally-funded GEAR UP program, the Department of Higher Education is piloting a program in schools with high proportions of free/reduced-lunch eligible students. This pilot offers remedial math courses to students as early as the eighth grade. The results are promising: 100 eighth- and ninth-graders already have completed their first remedial math course; 99 of those are working on the second course and 1 student has finished his third course. Another 589 eighth- and ninth-graders are working on their first remedial course, with at least a third of those expected to complete the class by the end of the school year; the others will pick up where they left off this fall. With remedial classes completed, students then begin college courses as early as grade 10.

A complete copy of the 2012 Remedial Education Report can be found at the Department of Higher Education's website, <http://highered.colorado.gov/dhedefault.html> under the "What's New" section.

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About Concurrent Enrollment

Concurrent enrollment programs include all programs where students are simultaneously enrolled in high school and in one or more postsecondary level courses. Approximately 24,000 or 19 percent of Colorado's high school students participate in dual enrollment programs. Overall participation increased by 15.5 percent over the past school year. On average, more than 85 percent of the participating students enrolled in college. Seen as a key strategy of Colorado's Master Plan for college completion, concurrent enrollment programs improve academic success for first-year college students. These students have higher first-year retention rates, a positive predictor for future degree attainment.

About GEAR UP

GEAR UP, a federally-funded grant program, serves low-income students who typically are the first in their families to go to college. The program places full-time pre-collegiate advisors in two dozen middle and high schools across the state. Through intense advising and innovative strategies such as early remediation, GEAR UP students graduate high school, enroll in college and persist through the first year of college at higher rates than state averages. To learn more, visit www.ColoradoGEARUP.org.