

STATE OF COLORADO



DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

John Hickenlooper
Governor

Lt. Gov. Joseph A. Garcia
Executive Director

For immediate release
June 11, 2013

Contact: Nancy Mitchell
303-866-4742, 303-478-4573

PRESS RELEASE: SUMMIT KICKS OFF P20 PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE TO EASE STUDENTS' TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO HIGHER EDUCATION

High school teachers and higher education faculty members on Monday kicked off a state initiative to improve the transition of students moving from K-12 to college.

The Core-to-College P20 Partnerships Summit, held at the University of Denver campus, was a daylong event designed to launch 18 months of collaboration between instructors who sometimes have very different ideas of what it means to be college-ready.

A recent ACT survey found 89 percent of high school teachers nationally report their students are prepared for college in the subject they teach while just 26 percent of college instructors agree.

Colorado K-12 schools are implementing new academic standards, including the Common Core State Standards in math and language arts. New state tests tied to those standards begin in 2015.

“Students will be coming to us in higher education with a very different set of skills and knowledge based on these new standards,” said Emmy Glancy, academic policy officer for P20 initiatives for the Department of Higher Education. “We want to make sure higher education faculty are aware of these changes and identify any of the potential impacts they might have on our first-year, credit-bearing courses.”

Two dozen math and English teachers and faculty, representing school districts such as Jefferson County Public Schools and higher education institutions including Colorado State University, attended the summit.

Over the next several months, the high school and higher education teachers will meet in smaller groups by region: Denver Metro, Northeast, Western Slope and Southeast. They'll reconvene for an Oct. 11 state summit and, by December, will identify a specific set of competencies high school graduates need to enter and successfully complete college math and language arts courses.

In 2014, partnership members will conduct a gap analysis based on the identified competencies and determine the indicators that will tell educators whether students have met the competencies.

Monday's summit featured a panel discussion with Steve Jordan, president of Metropolitan State University of Denver; Monte Moses, member of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and past superintendent of the Cherry Creek School District; Elliott Asp, special assistant to state K-12 education Commissioner Robert Hammond; and Jill Hawley, associate commissioner, Colorado Department of Education.

Moses said decreased state funding for higher education, which has resulted in larger financial burdens for students, lends urgency to the need to improve the K-12 to college transition.

"We have an even larger responsibility to ensure we've done everything humanly possible to make success feasible for these kids, given those personal costs they're absorbing," he said. "And it's not just the money, it's the time that they're investing. Years of their lives are being invested and sometimes leading absolutely nowhere."

Melissa Colman, executive director of teaching and learning for the Colorado Department of Education, provided an overview of the state's new K-12 academic standards. Many higher education faculty members indicated they knew little about them before her presentation.

Ian Macgillivray, assistant deputy director for academic affairs for the Colorado Department of Higher Education, asked participants to discuss potential impacts on the state's guaranteed transfer curriculum, also known as gtPathways. These are college courses typically taken by freshmen and sophomores that are designed to transfer easily from one state institution to another.

"You will be looking at, should this still be taught in this class?" he said, citing first-semester communications as an example.

Colorado is one of more than 10 states participating in the national Core-to-College Initiative, funded by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. For more information on this project, please visit the DHE webpage on P20 partnerships at <http://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/P20/>.

###