

STATE OF COLORADO



DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

John Hickenlooper
Governor

Lt. Gov. Joseph A. Garcia
Executive Director

Aug. 22, 2013

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

PRESS RELEASE: LT. GOV. GARCIA SUPPORTS PRESIDENT OBAMA'S COLLEGE ACCOUNTABILITY PROPOSAL, SAYS COLORADO ALREADY ON ITS WAY

Denver – Lt. Gov. Joe Garcia, executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, today said he supports President Obama's goal of making college more affordable for middle-class families. He also noted Colorado has already implemented many of the strategies outlined in the president's proposal.

"Colorado higher education leaders and state policymakers understand that performance should be measured," Garcia said, "and that means how well our public and private institutions are doing in terms of graduation, not just enrollment.

"We also recognize the need to successfully educate students from all of our demographic groups, to close degree attainment gaps and to build a competitive workforce."

President Obama released [his proposal](#) early today. Some elements, such as awarding financial aid based on student progress toward completion, providing clear data on the outcomes of graduates and encouraging dual enrollment opportunities, are already underway in Colorado.

"We have already adopted a state financial aid allocation plan that rewards persistence and completion," Garcia said, "and we have successfully adopted other proposals in the President's plan, such as concurrent enrollment, which gives students the opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school."

Colorado awards state student financial aid on the basis of financial need. But in December, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education added an innovative twist – students are rewarded with more funding as they accumulate more credits toward graduation. And one in five Colorado high school students enrolls in college courses before high school graduation, according to the state's most recent annual report on concurrent enrollment.

Garcia also pointed out the department in March unveiled a [website](#) detailing the first-year earnings of graduates from the state's public colleges and universities.

"All of this information will help students and families make wise choices," Garcia said. "We recognize that tuition costs are increasing at a rate much higher than inflation and that the state and the institutions must continue to work together to keep tuition reasonable and financial aid available, if we want to maintain access for our working-class and middle-class students."