**TOPIC:** RE-APPROVAL OF POSTSECONDARY AND WORKFORCE READINESS DEFINITION

**PREPARED BY:** CARL EINHAUS, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SUCCESS AND P-20 ALIGNMENT AND COLORADO GEAR UP PROJECT DIRECTOR

**I. SUMMARY**

This item is a recommendation for re-approval of the current Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) definition.

In 2009 the State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education adopted the first description of “postsecondary and workforce readiness” (PWR). The current PWR definition was updated and approved in December 2015. C.R.S. 22-7-1008(3)(a) dictates that this description be revisited and reviewed for approval. The Department of Education (CDE) re-approved the current definition in October 2022.

**II. BACKGROUND**

In 2008, the state legislature passed the “Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids Act” (CAP4K), aligning Colorado’s preschool through postsecondary education system to enable students to graduate ready for success in college and careers. The Act required the Colorado State Board of Education and Colorado Commission of Higher Education to jointly adopt a description of postsecondary and workforce readiness, and to periodically review and update the description. The description was last approved by the board in December 2015. Staff from the Department of Education and the Department of Higher Education have conferred and recommend that the state board and commission affirm the current description, as is:

*"Colorado high school graduates demonstrate the knowledge and skills (competencies) needed to succeed in postsecondary settings and to advance in career pathways as lifelong learners and contributing citizens."*

**III. STAFF ANALYSIS**

CDE and CDHE staff are confident that the current PWR definition is clear to the entire Colorado community and is in alignment with the workforce.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**CDE and CDHE staff recommend re-approval of the current PWR definition.**

1. **sTATUTORY aUTHORITY**

C.R.S. 22-7-1008(3)(a)

22-7-1008. Postsecondary and workforce readiness description - postsecondary and workforce planning, preparation, and readiness assessments - adoption - revision.

Statute text

(1) (a) On or before December 15, 2009, the state board and the commission shall negotiate a consensus and adopt a description of postsecondary and workforce readiness. In describing postsecondary and workforce readiness, the state board and the commission shall, at a minimum:

(I) Describe the knowledge and skills that are required for a student to demonstrate postsecondary and workforce readiness;

(II) Ensure that postsecondary and workforce readiness includes demonstration of postsecondary planning skills and the ability to apply those skills;

(III) Describe the level of English language competency that a student must demonstrate in order to demonstrate postsecondary and workforce readiness;

(IV) Ensure that postsecondary and workforce readiness includes demonstration of a sufficiently high level of comprehension or skill to successfully complete, without need for remediation, the core academic courses identified by the commission pursuant to section 23-1-125 (3), C.R.S.; and

(V) Ensure that, to the extent practicable, postsecondary and workforce readiness requires a student to demonstrate creativity and innovation skills; critical-thinking and problem-solving skills; communication and collaboration skills; social and cultural awareness; civic engagement; initiative and self-direction; flexibility; productivity and accountability; character and leadership; information technology application skills; and other skills critical to preparing students for the twenty-first-century workforce and for active citizenship.

(b) Based on the data received by the department of education from the operation of the pilot program pursuant to section 22-7-1007, the state board and the commission may modify the description of postsecondary and workforce readiness as appropriate to ensure alignment of the standards for grades nine through twelve, the postsecondary and workforce planning, preparation, and readiness assessments, and the description of postsecondary and workforce readiness. The state board and the commission may further modify the description of postsecondary and workforce readiness as necessary based on the recommendations received through the peer review process on the amended state plan pursuant to section 22-7-1012 to ensure alignment of the postsecondary and workforce readiness description with the standards and assessments.

(2) (a) On or before December 15, 2010, or as soon thereafter as fiscally practicable, the state board and the commission shall negotiate a consensus and adopt one or more postsecondary and workforce planning assessments, postsecondary and workforce preparation assessments, and postsecondary and workforce readiness assessments that local education providers shall administer pursuant to section 22-7-1016. The state board and the commission shall base the selection of the postsecondary and workforce planning, preparation, and readiness assessments on the information received through the operation of the pilot program, ensuring that the selected assessments are aligned with the standards for grades nine through twelve and with the description of postsecondary and workforce readiness.

(b) Following adoption of the postsecondary and workforce planning, preparation, and readiness assessments, the state board and the commission shall negotiate a consensus and adopt scoring criteria for the postsecondary and workforce planning, preparation, and readiness assessments to indicate a student's level of postsecondary and workforce readiness, based on the student's level of performance on the assessments. The state board and the commission shall ensure that the scoring criteria for the postsecondary and workforce planning, preparation, and readiness assessments are aligned with the scoring criteria that apply to the system of assessments for preschool through elementary and secondary education standards.

(c) The state board and the commission shall negotiate a consensus and modify the postsecondary and workforce planning, preparation, and readiness assessments adopted pursuant to this section as necessary in response to comments received through the peer review process and to reflect the contents of the state plan approved pursuant to section 22-7-1012.

(3) (a) On or before July 1, 2015, and on or before July 1 every six years thereafter, the state board and the commission shall review, negotiate a consensus, and adopt any appropriate revisions to the description of postsecondary and workforce readiness. The state board and the commission shall ensure that any revisions adopted pursuant to this paragraph (a) meet the requirements for the description of postsecondary and workforce readiness specified in subsection (1) of this section.

(b) Every six years after the adoption of the postsecondary and workforce planning, preparation, and readiness assessments pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of this section, the state board and the commission shall review, negotiate a consensus, and adopt any appropriate revisions to such assessments. The state board and the commission may adopt revisions to the postsecondary and workforce planning, preparation, and readiness assessments, regardless of whether they adopt any revisions to the postsecondary and workforce readiness description. In adopting revisions to the assessments, the state board and the commission shall ensure that the assessments continue to meet the requirements specified in subsection (2) of this section. The state board and the commission shall also review and adopt any appropriate revisions to the scoring criteria.