



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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P-TECH schools coming to Colorado

DENVER – January 12, 2016: The Colorado Department of Higher Education and Colorado Department of Education approved two new “Pathways in Technology Early College” (P-TECH) schools, which will be the first of their kind in Colorado. The two new schools, located in St. Vrain Valley School District and El Paso County School District 49, are expected to open in fall 2016, and serve an estimated 200 students in the starting year.

P-TECH schools are innovative, public six-year high schools where students can earn an associate degree in a Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math (STEM) field, while simultaneously earning a high school diploma.

These schools are a partnership between school districts, community colleges and employers and offer an education in a high growth STEM field. The curriculum is aligned to skills that employers need. Students are paired with mentors from the business community and gain practical workplace experience through skills-based internships. Graduates will then be positioned to be first in line for job opportunities with the industry partners.

This announcement comes after Governor Hickenlooper signed legislation last May to bring P-TECH schools to Colorado.

“P-TECH schools are an example of what the state can accomplish when it pools its resources together and forms partnerships between the business and education community,” said Governor Hickenlooper. “In fewer than five years, more than 70 percent of jobs in Colorado will require some form of education beyond high school. P-TECH schools will give students the skills they need to participate in the changing workforce.”

These first two approved P-TECH schools are partnerships between the following:

- St. Vrain Valley School District, Front Range Community College, and IBM
- James Irwin Charter School (El Paso County School District 49 as authorizer), Pikes Peak Community College, Bal Seal Engineering, and Housing and Building Association of Colorado Springs

“P-TECH schools create a public-private partnership to prepare thousands of Colorado students for the high-skill jobs of the future,” said Interim Commissioner of Education Elliott Asp.

Last year, the Legislature, approved P-TECH schools with bipartisan support, including the support of Rep. Crisanta Duran, the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives.

“We saw the opportunity to bring an innovative educational concept to Colorado,” Rep. Duran said. “P-TECH schools deliver exactly what Colorado needs. I’m excited to see the first two P-TECH schools get the green light.”

The P-TECH model, co-developed by IBM, started in Brooklyn with a partnership between New York City Department of Education, City University of New York, and IBM. Now there are 40 P-TECH schools in New York, Connecticut, and Illinois, and by 2016 there will be at least 60 P-TECH schools across six states around the country.

"I thank Governor Hickenlooper, Representative Duran, and Colorado leaders and educators for their tireless efforts to bring this innovative transformation of high school to Colorado," said Stanley S. Litow, IBM Vice President of Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs and President of the IBM International Foundation. "Education is key to America's economic growth and competitiveness, and clearly, a high school diploma is no longer enough. We devised P-TECH to address the nation's skills crisis, and to do so for all students. P-TECH schools increase student achievement, but most important, get students college degrees and a ticket to high-skilled jobs. IBM is committed to help grow P-TECH, and help Colorado youth secure a meaningful future."

IBM will be partnering with the St. Vrain Valley School District.

"We are excited to be part of this forward-looking initiative. We look forward to working closely with IBM, Front Range Community College and state officials to create real-world opportunities for our students. By creating this unique pipeline to the workforce, we are preparing our students to be tomorrow's leaders in industry. Toward this end, P-TECH holds great promise," Don Haddad, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools, St. Vrain Valley School District.

The James Irwin Charter School, which will open a P-TECH in El Paso County, echoed the enthusiasm:

"James Irwin Charter Schools' Power Technical Early College is so grateful that the Pathways program allows us to offer our students a free associate's degree in a skilled trade. We look forward to working with our great partners – El Paso County School District 49, Pikes Peak Community College, the Housing and Building Association, Bal Seal Engineering and the other manufacturers and contractors who have and will step forward to meet the needs of our students and the community in the coming years," said Jonathan Berg, CEO of James Irwin Charter Schools.

For more information on P-TECH, visit www.ptech.org. IBM developed a free website to help school districts, higher education institutions, and businesses expand the P-TECH model.

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