

# **Educational Success Task Force**

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# Educational Success Task Force Report to Legislative Council

## **Task Force Charge**

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Created by Senate Bill 11-111, the Educational Success Task Force within the Colorado Department of Education consists of members appointed by the General Assembly, the State Board of Education (SBE), and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE). The task force is charged with:

- identifying the junctures within a student's academic career at which grade-level academic performance, or higher, is critical to a student's continued academic progress and to ensuring the student can demonstrate postsecondary and workforce readiness no later than high school graduation;
- reviewing the data and research on intervention education services and remedial education and identifying best practices and strategies for identifying students in need of intervention education services, for providing intervention education services at the appropriate junctures in the elementary and secondary education levels, and for providing remedial education at the postsecondary education level;
- reviewing the use of students' individual career and academic plans (ICAP) and making recommendations for diagnostically using a student's assessment results in creating and maintaining the student's ICAP and for including intervention strategies, where appropriate, in a student's ICAP;
- reviewing the practice of social promotion in the public schools of the state and recommending alternative strategies for ensuring students are making sufficient academic progress to demonstrate postsecondary and workforce readiness no later than high school graduation; and
- reviewing state statutes, state board rules, and the guidelines adopted by the commission and recommending any appropriate changes to assist school districts and public schools in providing intervention education services to help ensure that students demonstrate postsecondary and workforce readiness no later than high school graduation and to assist institutions of higher education in providing remedial education.

Although the task force is authorized to bring interim committee bills in accordance with Joint Rule 24 (b)(1)(D), the main charge of the task force was to submit an initial report to the SBE and the CCHE by July 1, 2012. The report submitted to SBE and CCHE discusses the task force's findings and recommendations with regard to the critical junctures for ensuring students' academic progress, best practices and strategies for providing intervention education services and remedial education services, the use of ICAPs, and alternative strategies to social promotion. If the task force makes additional findings or recommendations following submission of the first report, it must submit a second report to the SBE and the CCHE prior to July 1, 2013.

The co-chairs, who are appointed by the SBE and the CCHE, may establish subcommittees of the task force as necessary to complete the duties of the task force. A subcommittee may include persons selected by the co-chairs but who are not appointed members of the task force.

The task force is required to coordinate its work with the Education Leadership Council (ELC), created by executive order of the Governor. In addition, representatives from the task force were required to meet jointly with the House and Senate Education Committees during the 2012 regular legislative session, and will be required to meet with the committees again during the 2013 regular legislative session, no later than January 31, to report progress in fulfilling the duties. The task force reports in 2013.

## **Task Force Activities**

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The task force has held six meetings so far during the 2012 interim. The task force subgroups met independently throughout the 2012 regular legislative session. Senate Bill 11-111 authorizes the co-chairs to call meetings as often as necessary to carry out the task force's duties; however, no additional meetings have been scheduled in 2012.

**Subgroup reports.** Subgroup 1 was charged with identifying transition points in a student's academic career at which grade level performance is key to future success, and reviewing the use of student individual career and academic plans (ICAPs), social promotion, and the state statutes, rules, and guidelines that assist school districts and the system of higher education to ensure academic success. Subgroup 2 was charged with identifying the research-based strategies and best practices around developmental and remedial education, and reviewing the data and research on effective interventions designed to promote high school and college completion. The work of the subgroups is described more fully in the interim report submitted to the SBE and the CCHE in July 2012.

**Online learning.** The task force heard a presentation by Knowledge Factor, a commercial company that has created a digital platform for online learning modules.

**Developmental education.** The task force heard a presentation from the Developmental Education Task Force (DETF). The DETF reviews remedial and developmental education throughout the Colorado Community College System and makes recommendations on how the system can tailor developmental education to enhance outcomes for student learning and success. The group stressed the importance of integrating different levels of instruction, the need to change student advising, and the importance of ongoing conversations between K-12 and higher education.

**Lobby panel.** The task force welcomed the members of the education lobby to provide input concerning the 2012 legislative session and the legislative action that they foresee, or would like to see, occurring during the 2013 legislative session.

**Graduation guidelines.** The CDE made a presentation concerning graduation guidelines and endorsed diploma criteria currently being developed. School districts in Colorado currently have many different graduation requirements for students. The department reported that graduation guidelines under development are focused on creating a more meaningful high school diploma, and graduating students who are ready for postsecondary education or prepared to be successful citizens and valuable first-year employees.

**Concurrent Enrollment.** A panel from the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) made a presentation regarding concurrent enrollment, and aligning higher education admissions policies with the definition of postsecondary and workforce readiness adopted by the SBE.

**Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAPs).** CDE and CDHE provided information to the task force on the use of ICAPs. During the 2011-12 school year, all seniors in high school were encouraged to develop and graduate with an ICAP. CDE is working with the University of Northern Colorado to develop an ICAP evaluation study to measure how schools are progressing with initiatives.

**Discussion of potential legislation.** The task force devoted a meeting entirely to discussion of potential legislation. After this discussion, the task force agreed to consider five bills, three of which were approved and forwarded to the Legislative Council. The six legislative members of the task force voted to approve the bills, which include:

- Bill A, which requires that the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education implement a pilot program of 20 career and technical education certificate programs that combine basic education in information and math literacy with career and technical education. The certification programs must be designed to allow a student to complete the program within 12 months.
- Bill B, which requires that each school district and institute charter school adopt a policy for the academic acceleration of students. Academic acceleration allows a student to progress through an education program at a rate faster than, or at ages younger than, the student's peers.
- Bill C, which requires the Commissioner of Education to assign a unique student identifying number to each student enrolled in an adult basic education or high school equivalency certificate (GED) program, if the person has not previously been assigned a unique student identifier number.

Not approved were Bill 1 and Bill 5. Bill 1 would have required schools to monitor student absences and to create a plan, based on best practices and research-based strategies, to improve student attendance. The bill would have also required schools to address habitual truancy of students through a multi-disciplinary plan. A school district would be able to initiate court proceedings to enforce school attendance requirements only if implementation of the student's multi-disciplinary plan was unsuccessful. The bill would also have limited the length of detention that a court may impose on a student to enforce compulsory school attendance, and would have allowed students who are under juvenile court jurisdiction to obtain a GED.

Bill 5 would have added two ways of measuring achievement of postsecondary and workforce readiness: the percentage of students who complete their ICAP prior to graduation; and the percentage of students who attain specified skills, based on measurements developed by CDE.

## **Task Force Recommendations**

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As a result of committee discussion and deliberation, the committee recommends three bills for consideration in the 2013 legislative session.

**Bill A — Basic & Career & Tech Education Pilot Program.** Bill A requires that the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (board), in consultation with local district junior colleges and area vocational schools, implement a pilot program of 20 career and technical education certificate programs that combine basic education in information and math

literacy with career and technical education. Each certificate program must be designed to allow a student to complete the program within 12 months, and each course in a certificate program must combine information and math literacy with career and technical skills. The certificate programs will be available on a pilot basis to underemployed or unemployed adults who have insufficient levels of information or math literacy. The board may enter into memorandums of understanding with local district junior colleges, area vocational schools, and local adult education programs to implement the certificate programs locally. A community college, area vocational school, or local district junior college may choose to offer the certificate programs. Each institution that offers one or more of the certificate programs must report data concerning student participation and results to the Colorado Department of Higher Education. By fall semester of the 2013 academic year, the board is required to have developed ten certificate programs and must develop at least the remaining ten certificate programs by the spring semester of the 2014 academic year. The pilot program repeals on July 1, 2018.

**Bill B — Academic Acceleration School District Policy.** Bill B requires that, no later than July 1, 2014, each school district and institute charter school adopt a policy concerning academic acceleration for students. The acceleration policy may include academic interventions such as accelerating a student in a single subject, compacting curriculum, concurrent enrollment, credit by examination, advanced placement or international baccalaureate programs, grade acceleration, grade telescoping, early entrance to college, specialized advanced academic programs, and independent academic studies. The policy may also include, but need not be limited to, a process for referral for academic acceleration that ensures fair, systematic, and objective evaluation of students referred; a decision-making process for accelerated placement that involves multiple persons; guidelines for the practice of academic acceleration; guidelines for preventing non-academic barriers to the use of acceleration as an educational intervention; an appeals process; and an academic acceleration policy evaluation process.

**Bill C — Student ID Number for Adult Education Programs.** Bill C requires the Commissioner of Education to assign a unique student identifier for each person enrolled in an adult basic education program or high school equivalency certificate (GED) program, if the person has not previously been assigned a state-assigned student identifier in Colorado. The Colorado Department of Education is required to retain records of the state-assigned student identifiers for persons enrolled in adult basic education and GED programs.