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SIX COLORADO SCHOOLS REDESIGN THE FUTURE OF STUDENT LEARNING

Denver, CO – Three Colorado school districts are on the cutting edge of redesigning the classroom of the future — better preparing students for success in the classroom, college and the workforce.

Adams County School District 50, Colorado Springs School District 11, and the Thompson School District are putting their school designs in motion starting fall 2015. Each district, with different student and community needs, chose teams from two schools to design personalized learning models to align with Colorado’s new graduation guidelines.

In partnership with The Colorado Education Initiative (CEI) and Colorado Department of Education, the districts were selected last June to develop school redesigns as part of a national effort launched by [Next Generation Learning Challenges](#) (NGLC). The effort supports learning that is personalized, competency based and often technology enabled. This Colorado coalition is one of only six regions in the nation participating in [NGLC Regional Funds for Breakthrough Schools](#), to help school districts create successful models that can be replicated in other schools.

Each school receives up to \$220,000 from CEI to implement redesigns through 2018. All six schools are focused on personalized learning to increase student engagement and ownership, providing students with safe, healthy and self-paced learning environments, and better using time and technology.

“Colorado is unique in this work because we’re the only state involving its state department of education,” said **Chief Executive Officer Glenna Norvelle, CEI**. “Next generation learning is innovative teaching designed to ignite the unique potential of every student by delivering the learning in a personalized way.”

In **District 11** — where the district motto is *The world is changing. Meet the future.* — educators developed a personalized learning model to meet the needs of more than 29,000 students in its 60 schools.

“Employers tell us that they are looking for graduates who think in innovative ways, collaborate, and communicate clearly, but also embrace mistakes as learning opportunities,” said **District 11 Next Generation Learning (NGL) Coordinator Scott Fuller**. “We’re preparing our students for a world yet to be imagined and redesigning our schools to focus on the whole child.”

District 11 gives teachers and administrators permission to take risks and increase educator engagement. “We connect educators, arrange classroom visits, incentivize and give credit for the work, and schedule face-to-face opportunities through online learning that gives teachers several ways to give input along the way,” added Fuller.

In **Adams 50**, the district’s more than 10,000 students learn at their own pace. They advance in each subject only after they have demonstrated mastery or proficiency.

“This innovative partnership supports our competency-based system, which embraces the idea that students should take ownership of their learning in an environment that requires them to be fully engaged and show mastery of their learning material,” said **Adams 50 Superintendent Dr. Pamela Swanson**.

In 2009, a third of the district’s 21 schools were the lowest performing in the state. Within two years of moving to a redesigned competency-based system, the district no longer has any schools in turnaround status, and the graduation rate keeps increasing, reaching 73 percent in 2013.

In **Thompson**, the district’s expertise in personalized instruction has improved student and teacher outcomes. Teachers focus on literacy, math and performance-based assessments to place even greater focus on experience gaps in academic, along with postsecondary and workforce readiness indicators.

“This is an exciting opportunity for Thompson to give students and families more choice and more voice,” said **Thompson Superintendent Dr. Stan Scheer**. “It allows us to improve two-way communication with our students and communities and give our public an even greater stake in the education process.”

Life beyond high school looks different to Colorado students from what it used to be. “These partnerships come at a critical time for our state as we accelerate the best ways to improve student and teacher outcomes,” said **Colorado Commissioner of Education Robert Hammond**. “CDE is eager to learn from these leader districts and share what they have learned with other districts across our state that will be doing this work in the coming years.”

[Learn more about Next Generation Learning: Breakthrough Schools in Colorado.](#)

About The Colorado Education Initiative

The Colorado Education Initiative is an independent nonprofit working in partnership with the Colorado Department of Education to unlock the unique potential of every student by incubating innovation, shining a spotlight on success, and investing in sustainable change that improves outcomes for all students. CEI envisions that every student in Colorado is prepared and unafraid to succeed in school, work, and life, and ready to take on the challenges of today, tomorrow, and beyond.

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