



**February 14, 2011**

## **Weld Re-5J School District Announces Four-Year “On-Time” Graduation Rate**

Using a new “on-time” formula established by the U.S. Department of Education, data recently released by the Colorado Department of Education sets the “on-time” graduation rate for the Weld Re-5J School District for the Class of 2010 at 77.4 percent. The statewide on-time graduation rate for the same class is 72.4 percent.

Last year, using the previous formula, the graduation rate for the Weld Re-5J School District for the Class of 2009 was also 77.4 percent. Had the previous formula been applied to the new data for the Class of 2010, the graduation rate for Weld Re-5J would have been 81.7 percent.

The new “on-time” formula does not allow students who do not graduate in four years to be counted. For instance, late graduates (those who interrupt their coursework for a semester or more for work, health issues or any reason at all) are not considered as “on-time” graduates. Students who leave to complete a GED course are also not counted. **These changes in the new “on-time” formula have a negative effect on the District’s graduation rate for 2009-10 when compared to previous year’s graduation rates.**

The new four-year formula defines “on time” as only those students who graduate from high school four years after entering ninth grade. It is important to note that this new formula yields a rate that cannot be compared directly with prior year data. With the old system, students who took longer than four years to graduate were factored into the formula.

Under this four-year “on-time” formula, a student is assigned a graduating class when they enter ninth grade. The graduating class is assigned by adding four years to the year the student enters ninth grade. In other words, the formula anticipates that a student entering ninth grade in fall 2010 will graduate with the Class of 2014. CDE will also calculate a five-year and a six-year “on-time” rate to provide a more complete picture when the data are available in 2012 and 2013.

The new “on-time” formula allows for students who legitimately transfer into the school. For instance, a student entering the school as a 10th-grade transfer is given three years to graduate. The new formula also allows for students who transfer out of one school or district and into another.

The shift to the new graduation rate is required in order to comply with the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The formula and methodology are based on the standards set by the National Governors Association “Graduation Counts Compact.” By the end of the 2011, 48 states are expected to have adopted this approach to measuring graduation rates.

### **Dropout Rate**

A 77.4 percent graduation rate does not mean that 22.6 percent of our students are dropping out of school. This new formula simply tells us how many students are graduating from high school in four years. Many other students will continue to require additional time to graduate beyond four years.

The 2009-2010 annual dropout rate for the Weld Re-5J School District was 2.3 percent. The dropout rate reflects the percentage of all students enrolled in grades 7-12 who leave school during a single school year.

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**Superintendent of Schools**