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NEWS RELEASE

Educators Convene to Fix Holes in State's Education Pipeline

CHARLESTON, WV – More than 300 teachers, counselors, education administrators and community members joined forces to help more of West Virginia's students succeed — and to stop students from falling through the cracks. Education experts ranging from pre-school teachers to college presidents convened during the 2011 "Student Success Summit." The two-day event provided a unique opportunity for participants to work together to create a more seamless, life-long education system that supports student development at every level.

"Collaborative initiatives such as the Student Success Summit are an absolute necessity if our state hopes to increase educational attainment rates and meet the workforce development demands of the global, 21st century economy," Dr. Brian Noland, Chancellor of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, said. "We are losing too many students at every stage of the education system, and we simply must do a better job of developing comprehensive support structures to ensure the academic success and achievement of all West Virginians."

Data from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) predict that for every 100th ninth grader in West Virginia, 72 will graduate from high school on time; 43 will enter a four-year college or university; 28 will remain in college after their first year; and 17 will graduate from college within six years of starting. Noland said the State must find ways to prevent students from dropping out of the education pipeline and to encourage those who have stopped their education to return.

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“We must prevent our young people from dropping out of high school, and we must ensure that all students pursue postsecondary education. But focusing on the traditional high school student is not enough. We also must work to reengage the adults in West Virginia who stopped short of earning a college degree, and help them return to school to complete some form of education or training beyond high school,” he said.

The Student Success Summit featured a series of presentations and facilitated discussions aimed at bridging gaps between education systems, easing student transitions, and developing holistic student support programs. The Summit focused on the issues of high school dropout prevention, college access, and college completion. Dr. Jorea Marple, State Superintendent of Schools, said developing school and community partnerships to support student development is a top priority for the West Virginia Department of Education.

“Community-wide collaboration is one of the most effective research-based strategies for increasing both attendance and graduation rates,” Dr. Jorea Marple, State Superintendent of Schools, said. “The West Virginia Board of Education has embraced the involvement of all stakeholders in improving public education as one of its four strategic priorities. We must all provide a seamless support system that encompasses a variety of educational opportunities, preventative measures and student and family services.”

The Summit was sponsored by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and the West Virginia Department of Education, with support from the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education and the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts.

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