

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION

SCHOOLS IN OUR COMMUNITY and those across Colorado are working to meet the challenges of a new set of learning standards, called Colorado Academic Standards. This means more challenging work but also a promise of greater rewards for both students and the state as a whole. We ask that you take the time to learn about this crucial step for Colorado education at www.futureforwardcolorado.org.

Right now, these higher expectations spell out what students must learn in Math and English/Language Arts, as well as eight other content areas. What is particularly promising for our business and other employers is that the standards are focused on preparing students for both college and the workplace. Experts have been saying for years that students coming out of high school need to have a strong foundation of knowledge and skills – whether they plan to go on to college or try to find a job right away. But it has taken a while for that research to be translated into classroom reality, and that is what is happening now.

These new standards also are benchmarked to those in other countries to improve our students' ability to find good jobs and succeed in a globally competitive workplace and to strengthen the nation's position in the global arena.

Colorado needs higher expectations because, for the last 5 years, 17,000 students per year have dropped out or failed to graduate from high school on time. That means less than 75% of Colorado's students earn a diploma. Of those that do, only 23% are academically prepared for the rigors of college, leading to costly remedial classes at the college level. As a result, Colorado schools are producing less than half (49%) of the workers needed to fill the state's increasingly high-skills jobs.

The bottom line for our state and our economy is clear: Colorado's children need to be better prepared for Colorado's jobs and the first step towards success are higher expectations and hard work. That's why [COMPANY] is joining other businesses across the state to express support for our schools and the new challenges, as part of the Future Forward coalition. Learn more at www.futureforwardcolorado.org.

Because change can be difficult, some people are pushing for a return to an easier system. As a company, we want to remain Future Forward – and make sure our schools stay the course with Colorado's new standards. It is what's best for Colorado's kids.