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**Economic Opportunity and Poverty Reduction Task Force
Education Workgroup**

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Pursuant to House Bill 09-1064 the Economic Opportunity Poverty Reduction Task Force is required to "assess current state policies and practices that promote economic opportunity and poverty reduction with regards to:

- building family assets and financial stability
- increasing educational opportunities
- expanding the work force
- using targeted tax policies to make work pay
- addressing work-support issues.

The Process

- Held 12 meetings between July and December 2010.
 - Range of topics discussed (handout)
 - Built upon 2009 subcommittee's recommendations
- Strengths:**
- Diverse group representing K-12 teachers, parents, child care advocates, funders, higher education
 - Completed a review of the continuum of education throughout the lifespan
 - Examination of the many aspects of education and poverty (Where do we intervene?)
- Limitations:**
- Lack of time to study breadth of problem
 - Ad hoc status of workgroup limited participation
 - State's current budget influencing focus on legislative recommendations
 - Lack of dedicated coordinating staff

Turning over the Rocks

Other efforts to reduce poverty reduction promoting education and training

- Colorado Department of Higher Education – providing financial aid for needy students, allowing work-based aid, utilizing Gear-Up and TRIO programs to put high-poverty students into the higher education pipeline, maintaining funding for career and technical education and for area vocational schools and community colleges
- Center for American Progress report "From Poverty to Prosperity: A National Strategy to Cut Poverty in Half"
- Skill Build Colorado
- The National Fund for Workforce Solutions
- "Waiting for Superman" and "Race to Nowhere" campaigns – deliberation about what kinds of interventions work in high-poverty schools with low student achievement

Common themes

- Inequity in the success of education for high-poverty students
- Lack of support services for those seeking training or postsecondary education
- Job skills training misaligned with employment opportunities for mid to high level jobs
- Complexity of problem=complexity of solution/no silver bullet
- Quality child care is critical on multiple levels; family economic security, poverty intervention, child development

Assumptions

- Current Fiscal Condition-\$1 billion deficit; legislation without fiscal impact
- Seeking Bipartisanship-nature of the task force
- Legislative focus-removing barriers to opportunity
- Build on what is already working

Recommendations

- Focus on helping workers gain the skills they need to be competitive and ensuring that training and education programs match the skilled worker needs of employers.
- Develop logic model strategies that support the specific needs of populations. Move away from "one size fits all" mentality.
- Invest in programs like Promise Neighborhoods that provide support outside the school building for high-poverty schools.