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Seven community college majors now will transfer seamlessly to 4-year schools

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Students working on one of seven majors at any community college in the state can now transfer their credits seamlessly to any of the 4-year colleges in Colorado.

It's a step toward what Lt. Gov. Joseph Garcia, who also is executive director of the state Department of Higher Education, outlined as his goal on Thursday: Build a strong economy in Colorado through "creating a globally competitive workforce."

"What this is about is removing a barrier," said Colorado Community College system President Nancy McCallin, who helped develop the transfer agreements. "Community college students had to retake courses costing the state money but also the students."

The seven seamless transfer agreements signed this morning are business, economics, history, math, two psychology majors and Spanish.

Garcia also said Thursday one of his primary goals is to raise "tens of millions of dollars" to implement Senate Bill 191, passed last year. The keystone of that bill links teacher performance

evaluations to student academic achievement.

"Colorado, by passing 191, has the opportunity to set the standards," Garcia said. "But the bill didn't provide money to do all that. My primary goal is to work to raise those tens of millions of dollars."

Garcia said announcements will be made "very shortly" regarding federal and local funders who have already committed money towards deploying SB 191.

He also said the state expects to be able to compete for other national grants now that Gov. John Hickenlooper signed a letter to join Complete College America.

The organization is a national non-profit working to increase the number of degrees earned by Americans, and to close the achievement gap.

"It will let us compete for national grants to help us address remediation needs," Garcia said. "But we have to do more."

He also endorsed Senate Bill 52, that would create a performance-based funding system for higher education. He said along with it, Colorado will create a statewide master plan with clear

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goals for graduation rates, enrollment numbers, and remediation rates to track that performance.

The last major initiative Garcia announced was a push to increase third grade literacy.

For now, the initiative will focus on researching what educators across the state believe they need to make sure third graders can read when they move on to fourth grade.

"This literacy initiative will take us across the state," he said. "We're simply engaging the community. We must enlist every teacher, every administrator, every parent."

Businesses, churches and non-profits also have to be involved, he said.

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