Education Commission of the States Releases Brief to Help States Reach Postsecondary Goals

Denver—The Education Commission of the States (ECS) released *Producing Quality Credentials*, the fifth of six Progress of Education Reform briefs that will be published in 2012.

Recent reports have shown that too few college graduates have the skills they need for career success. This paper examines the large body of research on student and workforce outcomes, and provides guidance on how state policymakers and higher education leaders can tackle the mismatch between graduates’ skills and employers’ needs.

The brief highlights five policy-relevant takeaways from research and connects them to common postsecondary goals.

For example, incomes have stagnated for workers who have some college experience but no credential. In 2012, Florida created a program to recruit “near completers” to finish their degrees. Programs like these increase degree completion rates and can boost the earning potential of working adults.

The brief summarizes other strategies taken by state policymakers and postsecondary leaders to ensure colleges and universities produce valuable, high-quality credentials.

*Producing Quality Credentials* can help policymakers and postsecondary leaders create systemic change in postsecondary education.

###

About ECS

ECS is the only nationwide, nonpartisan organization that works directly with governors, legislators, chief state school officers, higher education officials, and other leaders across all areas of education—from PreK to college and the workforce. Since 1965, we have tracked policy, translated research, provided unbiased advice, and created opportunities for state policymakers to learn from one another. ECS is located in Denver and maintains the nation’s most extensive clearinghouse on education policy.