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Governor: Governor Rendell congratulates Commission for bold education proposal.

HARRISBURG -- Governor Edward G. Rendell today said the hard work of the Commission on College and Career Success has resulted in a bold proposal that could transform public education in Pennsylvania and better prepare more students for careers.

In its final report, the commission unanimously called for Pennsylvania to establish state high school graduation requirements in English, math, science and social studies that are better aligned with college and career expectations.

The commission has been charged with developing a vision for a high school experience that would prepare all students for success after graduation regardless of whether they choose to attend college or enter straight into the workforce.

“The commission’s report represents the best thinking of educators, business leaders and elected officials from across the commonwealth and is nothing short of the bold vision needed to truly transform Pennsylvania’s high schools,” said Governor Rendell. “Global competition demands that Pennsylvania have a highly-skilled workforce. Creating a single standard for high school graduation is a critical step in this direction.”

In the report’s 12 recommendations, the commission recommends changing Pennsylvania’s high school graduation requirements so that anyone with a high school diploma would have a core skill set to make them more attractive candidates to employers and colleges.

“In today’s economy, Pennsylvania employers have a hard time finding high school graduates with the skills they need to be successful workers,” said Dan Fogarty, Carpenter Technology Corporation’s director of salaried personnel and development. “The commonwealth must ensure that students from Altoona graduate with the same competencies as students from Bethlehem. The time has come to restore value to the Pennsylvania high school diploma.”

To meet the higher requirements for graduation, the Commission proposed steps to help students be successful.

“In the early part of the 20th century, high schools were expected to prepare only a select few of their graduates for college,” said Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Chancellor Dr. Judy Hample. “Today, we expect the majority of our students to enter college, but the way we educate students has not undergone the kind of transformation necessary to ensure their success.

“If we are to prepare every student to succeed in college and the workplace, all students must experience a rigorous curriculum, intensive educational and career counseling, and, when necessary, instructional support.”

Creating a high school experience that prepares students for the demands of today’s economy is a core component of ensuring Pennsylvania’s long-term economic competitiveness. Under Governor Rendell’s leadership, Pennsylvania has already taken a significant step in this direction through initiatives like Project 720, Dual Enrollment, Classrooms for the Future, and college and career counseling grants.