



# The Bell Policy Center

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Bell Policy Center Calls for Major Initiatives to Expand Higher Education Access in Colorado**

Calling the “CollegeInColorado” statewide marketing campaign for higher education unveiled today by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education “a good first step,” Wade Buchanan, president of Bell Policy Center, today called upon CCHE to launch an all-out effort to expand access to higher education for all Coloradoans, and especially for underserved low-income and minority students, in a letter to CCHE Executive Director Rick O'Donnell.

Buchanan said, “Colorado's economic competitiveness hinges on a well-educated work force. We cannot continue to compete with others states and countries for high-paying jobs when we rank 48th in the nation in per capita state funding for higher education, 48th in state funding per \$1,000 of personal income, 47th in postsecondary enrollment of young minority adults, and 35th in postsecondary access for low-income students. Adjusted for inflation, state funding per resident student has reached the lowest level in over 20 years. Unless we invest in providing all students with the opportunity to access and succeed in postsecondary education, our state's future is at risk.”

The Bell called on CCHE to:

- 1. Advocate for significantly increased funding for higher education**
- 2. Significantly increase financial aid for low-income students**
- 3. Establish measurable and enforceable standards for the enrollment and retention of college-ready low-income and minority students.**

“CCHE deserves high marks for recognizing the need for better informing students and parents about what already exists,” Buchanan told O'Donnell. “But while necessary, the CollegeInColorado program is by no stretch of the imagination a sufficient response to the crisis in higher education access in Colorado. Nothing short of an all-out campaign to greatly expand access will do.”



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