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| Oklahoma wins $2 million statewide grant for early college, career initiatives**OKLAHOMA CITY (Jan. 11, 2017)** –State Superintendent of Public Instruction Joy Hofmeister said Oklahoma’s win of a $2 million, three-year statewide grant by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and JPMorgan Chase & Co. will help implement individualized academic plans for kids, redefine the senior year, increase concurrent and dual enrollment with earned college credit and career certification, and better connect schools directly with business and industry.Announced today, the grant is part of a $75 million, five-year New Skills for Youth (NSFY) initiative aimed at strengthening career-focused education in 10 U.S. states.“We are thrilled that Oklahoma is among a select few states to win this highly competitive grant,” Hofmeister said. “This will enable families to engage early with their own student’s academic strengths, needs and aspirations for the careers and jobs of the future and will equip schools to support that work. We look forward to working with the Governor’s Oklahoma Works initiative and our partners to create opportunities that lead to high-demand, highly skilled, well-paying jobs for Oklahoma’s successive generations. We are very grateful to JP Morgan Chase for the resources to make great things happen.”College and career readiness are of particular importance in Oklahoma, where, by the year 2025, three-fourths of Oklahoma jobs will require postsecondary credentials.“The workforce of tomorrow will be highly specialized, requiring college degrees and industry credentials in far greater numbers than Oklahoma is currently generating,” said Natalie Shirley, Secretary of Education and Workforce Development for Oklahoma. “Through the Governor’s Oklahoma Works Initiative, we are taking serious steps to close the workforce gap, and the Phase Two grant will provide key funding to allow us to continue and expand this important work. I am proud that education and workforce stakeholders joined with the State Department of Education and Oklahoma’s New Skills for Youth cross-sector team to draft a winning proposal and presentation. I look forward to continued collaboration on college and career readiness projects and initiatives.”Oklahoma received the grant after a rigorous review process that included an evaluation of how the state plans to transform the way it designs and develops programs for college and career readiness. In March 2016, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) won $100,000 as a NSFY Phase One recipient, with funding subsequently used for planning and early implementation.“As a member of the New Skills for Youth grant team, I consider this grant a great step forward for Oklahoma,” said Marcie Mack, director of the state’s Department of Career and Technology Education. “CareerTech, along with many other partners, is ready to make sure the state’s workforce pipeline is filled and our state’s economic health prospers. CareerTech delivers high-quality education that prepares students for future career success and the demands of Oklahoma companies. We stand ready to meet the goals of the NSFY grant and carry on the outstanding work of the team.”  With Phase One funds, OSDE mobilized cross-sector groups from public education, CareerTech, business and industry and higher education to develop an action plan to broaden and strengthen career education, beginning in middle school, with an end goal of every student obtaining a postsecondary degree or credential aligned with high-skill, high-wage jobs. “This grant will allow Superintendent Hofmeister and the Oklahoma State Department of Education to continue the great work they are doing to prepare our youth for career advancement,” said David Stewart, chief administrative officer of MidAmerica Industrial Park in Pryor and a member of the New Skills for Youth grant team.Initiatives that will develop further as a result of Phase Two include Individual Career Academic Plans (ICAPs) for Oklahoma students, an engaging website with career pathways information and redefining the senior year for students to pursue meaningful work toward college and career success, whether in the form of concurrent or dual enrollment, internships, mentorships, industry certifications or other individualized pathways.“Because Oklahoma is leading the way with innovative approaches to bridge the skills gap, JPMorgan Chase is proud to make this grant that will support educational efforts across our state,” said David Page, vice chairman for JPMorgan Chase, Oklahoma. “It’s essential that we continue to bring employers and schools together so that our students have ample opportunity to gain the career skills that will help them get a good job at a good wage.”Today’s announcement took place at 1:30 p.m. in Midwest City at Carl Albert Middle School, where an innovative pre-engineering program, Project Lead the Way, is offered to students from 6th grade through high school study at Mid-Del Technology Center. “Mid-Del Schools is excited to learn that the Oklahoma State Department of Education will have the added resources of this grant to help redefine the high school experience for students,” said Rick Cobb, superintendent of Mid-Del Public Schools. “The best learning comes when students can pursue individual goals rather than merely completing courses. Our Project Lead the Way Programs exemplify this type of learning, and we are glad to showcase them for state leaders.”Hofmeister said the grant will help ensure success.“Together, we can shape a new, prosperous Oklahoma workforce,” she said. “There is no time to waste.”Other recipients of the grant are Delaware, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Nevada, Ohio, Rhode Island, Tennessee and Wisconsin.### |

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