

CDE Update Strategic Priorities

October 2011

Colorado is implementing significant education reforms aimed at ensuring all students graduate career and college ready. While much research and discussion has gone into the policy development, we're now putting those policies into action. Here's a brief snapshot of the most significant initiatives and key implementation milestones.

Educator Effectiveness:

Overview:

CDE is currently working diligently to put the rules and structures in place to effectively implement the Great Teachers and Leaders legislation. We are in the middle of drafting the first set of rules based on the State Council for Educator Effectiveness recommendations and public input. A strong focus is to build the right balance of support, guidance and rules to allow for local flexibility, yet strive for high quality and consistency across districts. At the beginning of implementation, year 2011 and 2012, there will be flexibility built-in for districts as we learn about the best, most fair and useful way to evaluate educators.

In addition to the ongoing focus on the implementation of a statewide educator evaluation system, CDE is also working with The New Teacher Project and the Colorado Department of Higher Education to develop an effectiveness-based system of preparation, licensing and induction that is aligned with the state's educator evaluation system. The Rose Community Foundation and the Daniels Fund are providing funding for the initiative.

The project will be divided into two phases. The first phase will focus on designing a new system of licensure and new requirements for induction programs. High-level design options will be presented to the state board in January. Once design options have been selected, the redesign will be completed in summer 2012. Once approved by the board, legislation will be presented to the General Assembly for the 2013 session. The second phase will look at educator preparation and will follow one year behind, with the goal of legislation for the 2014 session.

What's Happening Now:

Piloting the first draft of the State Model Evaluation System is an important part of the implementation process. CDE has selected 15 pilot districts, based on a public application process, to test the state model. The 15 districts are: Jefferson County, St. Vrain, Moffat, Platte Canyon, South Routt, Kiowa (Eads), Crowley, Custer, Miami-Yoder, Salida, Center, Del Norte, Mountain Valley, Wray and Valley RE-1. In addition to the 15 pilot districts, several districts have already begun this work and will "partner" with the department to align and map their current evaluation systems to the rules and expectations from S.B. 10-191. Current partner districts are Harrison, Douglas and Brighton. A third opportunity for collaboration comes from a grant opportunity secured by the Colorado Legacy Foundation. Five "Integration" districts and one BOCES have been selected by the Colorado Legacy Foundation to implement both the evaluation system and the new Colorado Academic Standards. Those districts and BOCES are Centennial, San Juan BOCES (Archuleta, Bayfield, Durango, Dolores RE-2, Dolores RE-4, Ignacio, Mancos, Montezuma-Cortez, and Silverton), Thompson, Eagle County and Denver Public Schools. All of these efforts align and work together to help us learn and make the necessary mid-course corrections during the two-year pilot phase of the state model evaluation system.

Training will begin soon for the 27 pilot districts that are testing the principal professional growth portion of the state model of evaluation. Districts will receive training on rubrics and a user's guide, which are both available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/>. CDE plans to eventually videotape the trainings so they are available to all districts via the web. The two-day trainings cover the intent of the state system, specific elements in the principal rubric, change management strategies for schools and districts and how to objectively evaluate someone on the system. The trainings will be held in Wray, Del Norte, Sterling, Durango, Longmont, Loveland and Hayden. Additional trainings in the metro area will take place in November and December.

CDE is continuing to develop the rules to implement educator effectiveness legislation based on the State Council's recommendations and public input. The Colorado State Board of Education will hold its last public hearing on the rules October 5. The licensure and induction alignment initiative is in its early stages, research and analysis is currently in progress that will inform the process and the design options. The Educator Pipeline Task Force, co-chaired by Jami Goetz, executive director of educator licensing at CDE and Ian Macgillivray, assistant deputy director for academic affairs at the Colorado Department of Higher Education began meeting last month and will provide input and feedback related to licensure and induction. The task force is composed of representatives from multiple districts including a teacher and a principal, Institutions of Higher Education, the Colorado Education Association and BOCES. In addition, the project team has a robust schedule of outreach geared toward soliciting input from stakeholders across the state. A more formal update will be provided at the October 5 state board meeting.

What's on the Horizon:

- The state board of education will vote on the S.B. 10-191 rules and send to the legislature for approval in January.
- Pilot trainings on the principal rubric and professional practice portion of the evaluation. Data collection will begin to track implementation and learn from the process.
- The next task force of the Educator Pipeline Project will be October 21 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **October 2011:** Next draft of S.B. 10-191 rules presented to state board of education. Rulemaking hearing will be held for input.
- **November 2011:** State board of education approves rules to send to the legislature for approval.
- **February 2012:** General Assembly reviews the rules and either approves or repeals provisions.
- **May 2012:** For any provisions that are repealed by the General Assembly, the state board promulgates emergency rules and re-submits to the General Assembly for review.

Standards:

Overview:

School districts across the state are in the process of transitioning to the Colorado Academic Standards and English Language Proficiency Standards which provide districts with clearer and higher expectations to guide local curriculum development. CDE is supporting school in this transition by following a standards implementation support plan with four phases: (1) awareness, (2) transition, (3) implementation, and (4) transformation. Awareness involves communication about the revised standards; transition involves making curriculum changes based on the revised standards; implementation involves adjusting instructional practices to the revised standards; and transformation involves innovation in teaching and learning based on the standards.

What's Happening Now:

- CDE is in the midst of a statewide, 10-city training tour on the Colorado English Language Proficiency (CELP) Standards to support all students in attaining the new Colorado Academic Standards. While focus is on English language learners, CDE's delivery stresses that learning academic language found in the CELP is essential for all students in order to master content, then there should be differentiate and supports provided to address individual student's needs.
- CDE in partnership with the Department of Higher Education has begun an outreach campaign to institutions of higher education related to Colorado's new standards. Implications for both educator preparation programs and postsecondary readiness will be the focus of conversations. Outreach is initially targeted to educator preparation programs and will extend to content area faculty. The partnership between CDE and DHE illustrates the enactment of the principles within Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids.

- Academic and Instructional Support Online Office Hours provide an opportunity for Colorado educators to stay informed on the latest standards implementation efforts and provide input to the Colorado Department of Education. Online office hours will take place on the first and third Tuesdays of the month.
- Opportunities for content-specific support are available from the Office of Academic and Instructional Support. Information can be accessed on the CDE Standards Implementation web page or by signing up for our bi-weekly e-updates at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/standardsupdateregistration>

What’s on the Horizon:

- CDE will provide training for districts with the curriculum development tools in the Standards Implementation Toolkit
- CDE will begin providing support to districts designated as Integration Grant districts by the Colorado Legacy Foundation.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

CAP4K requires that each district review its standards in comparison with the standards adopted by the state board by Dec. 15, 2011 and revise its standards as necessary.

Assessments:

Overview:

A critical component of the state’s education reforms is a robust assessment system that is aligned with the state’s new academic content standards and that provides timely results that inform instruction.

With the adoption of new academic standards, a new assessment system that is aligned to the new standards must be put in place by 2014. In order to transition to the new state tests, CDE will begin using the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) in 2012 and 2013 which will measure a blend of old and new standards and will allow school districts to transition their instruction from the old standards to the new ones. The transitional assessments will also allow for continued growth calculations using state tests to maintain-comparability from year to year until the system is completely transitioned to the new standards and assessments. This will also preserve the comparability of the school and district performance framework accountability system until 2014.

What’s Happening Now:

The state board of education adopted the action plan regarding advancing an RFP for summative assessments in math, reading, writing, science and social studies, interim assessments and advancing a WiDA assessment contract. The funding of this action plan now resides in the legislature. The recommendation for turning online state assessments on in phases was approved. The early childhood assessments in school readiness and in numeracy will be investigated and piloted, the third and fourth-grade CELA was not changed, the administration of the ACT was not changed, and the recommendation for three social studies assessments was not removed.

What’s on the Horizon:

The state board of education will present its budget request for the new state assessments to the legislature which will incorporate that request into its budget process.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

Upcoming deadlines relating to the assessment RFP will be released no later than November.

Accountability and Improvement:
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Overview:

Colorado is in the second year of implementing its new state accountability system pursuant to the Education Accountability Act of 2009. CDE annually generates district and school performance reports to evaluate districts and schools on four key performance indicators: achievement, growth, gaps and postsecondary and workforce readiness. Based on the data in these reports, the department accredits districts and recommends school improvement plan types to the state board. Districts then develop and adopt improvement plans, using data both from the framework reports and from local sources, to identify their performance challenges, analyze their root causes, and decide appropriate improvement strategies. Simultaneously, the state runs a parallel accountability system to meet federal requirements under ESEA, including checking AYP targets. To align state and federal improvement planning requirements and to allow districts and schools to meet the requirements within a single plan, CDE has created the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) template. Districts use this template to develop their school and district improvement plans, and submit them annually for CDE review and public posting on [SchoolView](#).

What's Happening Now:

Unified Improvement Plans. Districts and schools are currently updating and modifying last year's unified improvement plans using the revised 2011-12 unified improvement plan template. To support this, CDE has pre-populated the UIP template with state and federal data; CDE is currently emailing the reports to districts (AECs by Oct. 3). Districts and schools must submit plans by Jan. 2012 or April 2012 depending on their accreditation rating or plan type and improvement designations under ESEA (i.e., Titles IA, IIA, III). To submit plans in 2011-12, districts will use the online Tracker System as they did in 2010-11. As a part of the communication regarding the pre-populated reports, each district is being asked to identify a Tracker Contact who will be responsible for submitting their improvement plans to CDE. The Tracker Contact will receive all Tracker-related communications for the district. A web-based [Tracker Contact Form](#) was created and is expected to be completed by November 1, 2011.

What's on the Horizon:

The UIP resources previously found on the SchoolView Learning Center have been moved to CDE's Accountability & Improvement website at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/UnifiedImprovementPlanningResources.asp>.

Districts can find helpful guidance documents such as the UIP Handbook, the UIP Quality Criteria and actual plans identified from the 2010-11 school year that demonstrated strong sections that meet elements of the UIP Quality Criteria. Annotations have been added to the examples to highlight areas of strength and areas for further development. Other UIP supports coming soon include:

- UIP Addenda to supplement district and school improvement plans (e.g., Title I school-wide programs for schools and 2141c under Title IIA for districts). All forms are being posted to the UIP website this week.
- UIP Basics Online Tutorial on the key components of the UIP process. This has been completed and is being loaded onto the UIP website this week.
- UIP Cadre to expand capacity across the state. CDE has been working with a group of current and former educational leaders who have a background in data analysis and improvement planning. The intent has been to deepen their understanding of the UIP process to become trainers or technical assistance providers that schools and districts can hire.
- As CDE wraps up another year of trainings in partnership with CTLT, a professional development plan is being developed to address internal and external needs over the next year.

CDE is expected to review all district and school Turnaround plans, as well as any plans identified through ESEA. Because of the large volume of plans, however, CDE is considering options to streamline efforts while still providing helpful feedback to schools and districts. Work around the State Review Panel, a panel of educators nominated by the commissioner and appointed by the state board who review all district and school Turnaround plans, is also beginning.

These review processes begin in Jan. 2012.

Enhanced SchoolView data reporting continues to be a priority within Accountability and Improvement. The department is enhancing the SchoolView Data Center to include additional public data on district/school postsecondary readiness, staff/HR, finance, health and programs. Enhancements are in progress for the Colorado Growth Model, as are plans for how to make SchoolView a better resource for districts and other stakeholders.

In another effort to align Colorado's systems of accountability, CDE will be taking advantage of Secretary of Education Duncan's offer to waive certain provisions of NCLB. CDE sent a team to Washington D.C. last week to meet with the Secretary to learn more about the process. Although work with the USDE is ongoing in an effort to determine exactly what can be waived and under what conditions, CDE expects to be among the first states to submit a request in mid-November. CDE will utilize a variety of methods to ensure there is ample opportunity for school districts, professional organizations, and the general public to weigh in on Colorado's waiver request during the latter part of October.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **October 17:** Deadline for districts to submit school accreditation ratings and Requests to Reconsider to CDE via [School Accreditation and Request to Reconsider Form](#)
- **November 1:** Deadline for districts to update Tracker Contact to access the Tracker System via [Tracker Contact Form](#)
- **November 15:** CDE finalizes district accreditation ratings and recommends school plan type assignments to the state board of education
- **November:** CDE updates and re-releases pre-populated UIP templates with final accountability results
- **December:** State Board of Education finalizes school plan type assignments; CDE publishes final DPF and SPF reports on [SchoolView](#)
- **January 17:** Deadline for districts to submit district and school UIPs to CDE for: Districts on Priority Improvement or Turnaround; Districts on Dropout/Reengagement designation; Districts identified for improvement through ESEA Title I, IIA and/or III; Schools on Priority Improvement or Turnaround via [Tracker System](#)
- **March 30:** Deadline for districts to submit revised district UIPs to CDE for plans submitted in January via [Tracker System](#)
- **April 15:** Deadline for districts to submit/re-submit *all* district and school UIPs to CDE via [Tracker System](#)
- **Summer 2012:** CDE publishes final district and school UIPs on [SchoolView](#)

Innovation and Choice

Overview:

CDE works to foster innovation and expand quality choices designed to meet the needs of all students. CDE's Innovation and Choice division provides support and oversight for charter and online schools across the state, assists districts in pursuing innovation status for their schools, manages the state library, oversees GED testing and supports adult and family literacy programs across the state.

What's Happening Now:

The Expanded Learning Opportunities Commission presented its findings to the state board of education in September. The report unveils a vision for breaking down the barriers of walls, clocks, and calendars to transform our education system and to customize learning for all students. Given connections in the report to choice and innovation and CDE's involvement in its creation, the Division of Innovation and Choice is working in partnership with the Colorado Legacy Foundation to raise funds and develop a strategy for seeding and supporting expanded learning opportunities in districts and schools across our state.

Draft rules for charter school and authorizer standards will be reviewed by the state board at its October meeting. These rules stem from recommendations presented to the board by the H.B.10-1412 committee at the September board meeting.

The board will also review draft rule changes concerning online schools. These rules reflect changes required as a result of H.B 11-1277 passed by the legislature last May. Feedback from the field on both of these rules was gathered at a public meeting held on September 26 at CDE.

What's on the Horizon:

Senate President Brandon Shaffer has requested an emergency audit of online schools prior to the 2012 legislative session. The state auditor's office has until November to respond to this request, including the feasibility of completing this type of audit prior to the legislative session. This request for the audit stems from concerns about student performance and completion rates in online schools—concerns that are also being investigated by a handful of media outlets whose stories we expect will be released in the coming week. CDE is taking these concerns seriously and working on a variety of strategies to better understand the issues and determine the right next steps for the Department.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

The state board will adopt the online rule changes and those related to standards for charter schools and charter school authorizers by January 2012.

Organizational Effectiveness

This month's report focuses on Race to the Top Round Three.

Overview:

In mid September, the United States Department of Education released draft guidance for round three of the federal Race to the Top grant program, which is open to the nine finalist states from round two. A total of \$200 million will be distributed between the nine states based on the size of state. Colorado is eligible to receive \$12.25 million; however, this amount may increase should any of the nine eligible states choose not to apply or not meet the application criteria.

Colorado's application must focus on the four major areas of the original Race to the Top application: 1) standards and assessments; 2) data systems; 3) educator effectiveness; and 4) turning around the state's lowest performing schools. Additionally, the application must include how the state plans to promote STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education.

The application is comprised of two parts. Part 1 requires states to describe how they meet the assurances detailed in the final guidance, which is scheduled for release in mid-November. Eligible states must submit part 1 by late November. The USDOE will review the part 1 applications and inform those states that meet the assurances how much money they are eligible to receive. These states will then be required to submit part 2 of the application which consists of a detailed plan and budget for how the states will use the funds. Part 2 applications are due in December. Funds are to be awarded and disbursed by the end of December. As with the prior rounds, 50 percent of the funds are to be awarded to participating LEAs.

CDE views the current Race to the Top funding round as a powerful opportunity to focus resources on deepening the implementation of the state's strong reform agenda which is anchored by the state's new standards and assessment system (S.B. 08-212 – Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids), accountability and improvement system (S.B. 09-163) and educator effectiveness reforms (S.B. 10-191).

What's Happening Now:

CDE is in the process of reviewing and commenting on the draft guidance. The public comment period on the guidance ends October 12. CDE is also preparing responses to the assurance areas outlined in the guidance.

What's on the Horizon:

As the state receives further guidance from USDOE, we will be communicating with districts regarding participation in round 3.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- October 12 – Comments on draft guidance due to USDOE
- Mid November – Final guidance expected from USDOE
- Late November – Part 1 applications due
- Mid December – Part 2 applications due
- By December 31 – Awards announced and funds disbursed

For more information...

If you have questions or need assistance please contact:

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