

# CDE Update

## Strategic Priorities

February 2012

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*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:**

The Educator Effectiveness Unit is completing the first draft of the State Model Teacher Rubric and providing several presentations this month, beginning with the CASE Winter Conference on Thursday, Feb. 2. Presentations will provide updates on the principal pilot process and opportunities to look at initial drafts of the teacher rubric. The Unit will also host focus groups (with pilots, partners, teachers and higher education) regarding the teacher rubric to gather additional feedback on the draft. For more information on the focus groups, and to sign up and provide feedback, visit the Educator Effectiveness webpage (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/>).

In addition to continuing to develop the components of the state system, the Unit continues to work with the General Assembly to pass the Great Teachers and Leaders rules through the Legal Services Committee and the General Assembly. In addition, the Unit is working through the Joint Budget Committee to secure funding for the implementation of the Great Teachers and Leaders law.

#### **What's Happening Now:**

CDE's Educator effectiveness Unit is preparing for testimony and updates to several legislative bodies including the Joint Budget Committee and the House and Senate Education committees. The next set of trainings and activities for the pilot districts are being scheduled. These will include the review of the teacher rubric, a work group on the creation of the decision matrix (where you bring the 50 percent professional practice and 50 percent student growth components of the evaluation together), and a pilot to share lessons across the districts implementing the state model system.

#### **What's on the Horizon:**

A toolkit is in development for districts to assess their implementation readiness. The toolkit includes a step by step process for preparing to implement all the tenants of the law. The toolkit will be available in March. CDE is also working in partnership with CASE, CASB, and CEA to host a workshop on March 5. CDE will launch the draft toolkit at the workshop and districts will work through the various aspects of the transition plan (from their current evaluation system to the new one as described in S.B. 10-191).

#### **Important Upcoming Deadlines:**

The general assembly will vote on the current set of Great Teachers and Leaders rules on or before Feb. 15.

For more information about educator effectiveness, contact Katy Anthes, executive director of educator effectiveness, 303-866-6654.

## Standards:

### Overview:

CDE continues to support Colorado districts and schools during transition to the new standards. CDE recommends districts use the 2011-12 school year to design curriculum based on the standards and the 2012-13 school year to begin phasing in the standards-based curriculum in preparation for full implementation in 2013-14.

### What's Happening Now:

- Registration for the *Colorado Standards Implementation Summit: Transforming Standards Based Learning for Colorado* opened on Jan. 26. The event will be held on Tuesday, March 6 at the Westin Hotel in Westminster. Superintendents are encouraged to select a diverse team of district, school and teacher leaders to attend. District teams that travel more than 120 miles to the event site will be reimbursed for mileage; details are provided on the event website at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/otl/standardsimplementationsummit.htm>. Registration is limited to the first 400 participants that register.
- CDE will lead two sessions related to the Colorado Academic Standards during the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE) Winter Leadership Conference this month. One session introduces the newest tool from CDE, a district standards transition planning guide. The second breakout focuses on the Literacy Design Collaborative project, a framework for supporting disciplinary literacy in middle and high school content areas.

### What's on the Horizon:

This month, CDE will add the newest resource to the CDE standards implementation toolkit, a comprehensive Transition Action Planning Guide. The guide will help districts develop or expand transition plans to include: (a) systems change, (b) curriculum and instruction, (c) professional development, and (d) stakeholder involvement and communication. Check out the Standards Implementation Toolkit at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/sitoolkit/>.

### Important Upcoming Deadlines:

None at this time.

For more information about standards, contact Melissa Colman, executive director of teaching and learning, 303-866-6737.

## Assessments:

### Overview:

Seventy-five educators have been selected to work on the 2012 Content Collaboratives for Reading/Writing/Communicating, the Arts and the Social Studies. This year the primary focus of the work of the Colorado Content Collaboratives is the development of valid, reliable and fair student measurement tools which indicate student academic growth and can be used to evaluate educator effectiveness. Colorado educators along with state and national experts will establish examples of student growth measures within each content area. These will be piloted in select districts, undergo revision and then be disseminated to all districts.

CDE, in partnership with the Center for Assessment, will facilitate and support the work and meetings of the Content Collaboratives. Researchers will pool many of the assessments that the collaboratives will discuss and review. A Technical Steering Committee will be in charge of ensuring the technical reliability of the identified assessments.

**Researchers:** National researchers with expertise in the assessment of each content area will pool a qualified batch of assessments for each standard and grade to be considered by content collaborative members. These measures of student academic growth may come from national universities, assessment providers, and/or districts and states engaged in educator effectiveness work.

**Technical Steering Committee:** A technical steering committee will be established with psychometric expertise from Colorado and other states to refine assessment options. This committee will establish a framework for measuring student academic growth which verifies those instruments used or created by districts but not currently in the resource bank.

As years progress, the writing of student academic growth measures by Colorado educators or the piloting of new assessments will rely on the standardizing skills and expertise of the technical steering committee.

**What's on the Horizon:**

- January-May 2012: Launch Cohort 1 Content Collaboratives in order to establish measures of student academic growth in Social Studies; Reading/Writing/Communicating; Music; Dance, Drama and Theatre Arts; and Visual Arts
- Summer 2012: Launch Cohort 2 Content Collaboratives in order establish measures of student academic growth in World Languages; Science; Mathematics; Physical Education; and Comprehensive Health
- Fall 2012: Launch pilot of Cohort 1 products in districts participating in CDE's Educator Effectiveness pilot
- January 2013: Launch pilot of Cohort 2 products in districts participating in CDE's Educator Effectiveness pilot
- Bank of example measures identified will begin to populate after the first pilot has concluded (Summer 2013)

For more information about assessments, contact Jo O'Brien, assistant commissioner for assessments, research and evaluation at 303-866-6852.

<b>Accountability and Improvement:</b>
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**Overview:**

CDE's accountability and improvement work is focused on reviewing and providing feedback on Unified Improvement Plans that were submitted to the Department last week. Districts and schools will have the opportunity to revise their plans prior to the final UIP submission on April 16.

**What's Happening Now:**

**UIP Submissions and Review Process.** CDE staff are reviewing the approximately 350 Unified Improvement Plans for districts and schools that submitted plans on Jan. 17. Plans that were due to CDE by this first deadline were:

Under State Accountability:

- Schools: Turnaround Plans or Priority Improvement Plans
  - Districts: Turnaround Plans or Priority Improvement Plans; High Priority or Priority Graduation designation.
- Under NCLB Accountability

- Schools: None (districts review their schools' Title I improvement plans)
- Districts: Title I Program Improvement or Corrective Action; 2141c Identification under Title IIA; Title III Program Improvement (missed AMAOs).

The State Review Panel is also reviewing the plans of schools and districts assigned to Turnaround Plans.

The Department will upload feedback from the UIP reviews in the Tracker system as it becomes available over the next six weeks. Feedback will include recommendations and specifications for required changes (if there are any). Remind school and district personnel to continue implementing strategies articulated in the plans. They should not wait for "approval" from the state.

All districts and schools will need to submit their UIPs on April 16, 2012 to be posted publicly on SchoolView.org.

**UIP Resources.** CDE has added new UIP resources to the CDE Accountability and Improvement website. The website includes resources specific to the UIP process, including accessing and organizing data, trends/performance challenges, root causes, target setting, and action planning. Updates include an online UIP 101 tutorial and a preview of UIP case stories. Access the website at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/index.asp>.

**What's on the Horizon:**

**ESEA Waiver.** CDE is awaiting approval of its waiver application from the U.S. Department of Education and anticipates an announcement early this month. Colorado's proposal, as well as those of the 10 other states that submitted in November, can be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility>.

**Important Upcoming Deadlines:**

- **March 30:** Deadline for districts to submit revised district UIPs to CDE for plans submitted in January via Tracker System.
- **April 16:** 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.org.

For more information on accountability and improvement, contact Keith Owen, associate commissioner, 303-866-6099.

**Innovation and Choice**

**Overview:**

The Division of Innovation and Choice is focused on expanding access to quality education options for Colorado students and infusing innovative and promising educational practices into our work at the Department and in districts, schools and communities across the state.

**What's Happening Now:**

Gretchen Morgan is now on board at CDE as its director of the schools of choice unit. Gretchen oversees charter school work at the Department including managing the Charter School Program grants for new charter school start-ups. She can be reached at: [morgan\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:morgan_g@cde.state.co.us).

CDE is partnering in two research projects focused on online learning in Colorado. The first project, in partnership with the University of Colorado Denver's School of Public Affairs, will examine the characteristics of students seeking and attending online schools and the resulting impact of these schools on students' learning and success. The second project will focus on strategies for utilizing blended and online learning in Colorado to expand access and educational opportunities for students in rural schools and districts. This paper will be completed by Evergreen Education Group, based in Durango. We expect to complete both of these projects by June.

**What's on the Horizon:**

The Division of Innovation and Choice is developing a strategic plan for expanding learning opportunities for students. This effort, in partnership with The Colorado Legacy Foundation (CLF), takes the recommendations stemming from the Expanded Learning Opportunity Commission's work in 2011 and turns them into action. CDE and CLF are working with The Parthenon Group, a strategy and management consulting firm, to develop the strategic plan which will focus on how to use time, technology, community partnerships, and other strategies to implement Colorado's current reforms and to ultimately customize the learning experience for every student.

For more information on innovation and choice, contact Amy Anderson, assistant commissioner of innovation and choice, 303-866-6938.

## Organizational Effectiveness

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

### **Overview:**

The U.S. Department of Education announced Colorado will receive \$17.9 million in Race to the Top Phase 3 (RTT3) funds. The funds are split evenly between the state and local education agencies (LEAs), with each receiving \$8.9 million. The local share is disbursed to participating LEAs based on the Title 1A allocations. The Race to the Top application is focused on building capacity to implement the state's reforms, implementing the Colorado Academic Standards, designing the state's educator evaluation system, and advancing STEM education.

### **What's Happening Now:**

CDE is working with LEAs to secure their participation in the grant. All Title IA eligible LEAs are eligible to participate in the grant. To participate in the Race to the Top program, LEAs must complete a two-step application process.

Step 1: Submit a signed Memorandum of Understanding by Feb. 24. Please note that all LEAs must complete Step 1 to indicate if they are accepting or declining the Race to the Top Funds. Based on the LEAs that submit MOUs indicating acceptance of the funds, CDE will notify LEAs of their final award amounts.

Step 2: Submit a complete Scope of Work by March 14.

To access the Memorandum of Understanding, Scope of Work, and more detailed instructions, visit:  
[http://www.cde.state.co.us/index\\_educator\\_RTTT3.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_educator_RTTT3.asp).

### **What's on the Horizon:**

LEAs must turn in their Memorandum of Understanding by February 24.

### **Important Upcoming Deadlines:**

February 24	Signed district Memoranda of Understanding due to the state to confirm participation in the grant (the state will then calculate award amounts for all participating districts)
February 29	Award amounts released to participating LEAs so that LEAs can complete their scopes of work and budgets.
March 14	LEA scopes of work and budgets due
April	U.S. Department of Education review of state and local scopes of work
May	Anticipated awarding of funds

## For more information

If you have questions or need assistance please contact:

- John Condie, field services manager for the Northwest, Southwest, West Central and Pikes Peak regions. 303-866-6630 or [condie\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:condie_j@cde.state.co.us)
- Jhon Penn, executive director of field services, and field services manager for the Northeast, North Central, Southeast and Metro regions. 303-866-6632 or [penn\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:penn_j@cde.state.co.us)