

CDE Update Strategic Priorities

March 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 rules for SB 191 (Great Teachers and Leaders) were recently approved by the legislature and signed into law by the Governor. With no debate, the Senate voted 35-0 to give final approval to H.B.12-1001, the measure that ratifies the regulations issued by the State Board of Education to implement the educator effectiveness law. The bill moved quickly and quietly through the legislature, a testament to wide agreement on the rules among education interest groups, which were developed over two years.

What's Happening Now:

CDE, in collaboration with the Colorado Association of School Executives, the Colorado Association of School Boards and the Colorado Education Association and in partnership with the Legacy Foundation will host a workshop and summit on March 5. More than 70 districts will be represented at the summit with about 500 educators participating. CASE, CASB and CEA will model the collaboration skills that districts are expected to demonstrate within their organizations. School districts will bring teams including superintendents, principals, school board members, teachers and other professional involved in implementing the educator effectiveness system. The workshop will provide an opportunity for attendees to learn from each other, the pilot districts and partner districts. Attendees will be updated on the rules and receive practical advice for implementing the legislation. District teams will work together during the workshop to plan for transitioning to a new evaluation system.

What's on the Horizon:

With the new resources coming in from our Race to the Top Phase 3 grant, the Educator Effectiveness Unit will hire two more trainers to support districts in the implementation of SB 191. In addition, the CDE Educator Effectiveness Unit will host more workshops, similar to the March 5 event so all districts can begin their transition planning for the new requirements.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

The first year of statewide implementation is 2013-14.

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

Standards:

Overview:

CDE continues its support of districts and schools during transition to the new standards. CDE recommends that 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:

- CDE's standards implementation toolkit provides resources for standards based curriculum design including Discipline Concept Maps (DCMs). DCMs provide a visual representation of the organizing and supporting concepts and skills within the standards for each content area at each grade level. DCMs can serve as a framework for standards based curriculum development by illustrating the role of concepts and skills in mastering all grade level expectations. The Discipline Concept Maps can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/sitoolkit/DesignTools.htm>

What's on the Horizon:

- In March, 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 their transition plans to include: (a) systems change, (b) curriculum and instruction, (c) professional development, and (d) stakeholder involvement and communication. Visit the Standards Implementation Toolkit at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/sitoolkit/>
- Input from participants of the March 6 Standards Implementation Summit will be used to inform standards implementation resource development, including anticipated summer curriculum development support meetings.

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:

The new state assessment Request for Proposal has been posted for vendors for response, as funding permits. The state assessment process in Colorado is underway for 2012.

What's Happening Now:

RFP update: RFP for summative, alternate and interim assessments, along with a dashboard, was posted on Feb. 11. Responses are due on March 23. Based on submitted letters of intent to respond, CDE expects a range of respondents. The RFP reflects flexibility to account for potential funding, legislative and policy decisions that may be made in Colorado.

Spring 2012 testing:

CELApro testing has concluded with all materials picked up by Feb. 6.

CoAlt testing began on Feb. 2 and will run through March 23.

The first administration of the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) began with the early grade 3 reading testing on Feb. 13. The regular window for grade 3 reading begins on Feb. 27 and ends March 9. The regular window for the rest of the grades and content areas starts on March 12 and runs through April 13. Districts select three of the five weeks for their testing.

2012-2013:

Work has begun on the development of the Spring 2013 TCAP with the start of passage review. Test dates for spring 2013 are posted online as noted below.

TCAP Grades and Content Areas	Early Testing Window	Regular Testing Window
Grade 3 Reading & Lectura	2/11/2013 – 2/22/2013	2/25/2013 – 3/8/2013
Grade 3 Writing & Escritura Grades 4 – 10 Reading & Writing Grade 4 Lectura & Escritura Grades 3 – 10 Mathematics Grades 5, 8 & 10 Science	3/4/2013 – 4/5/2013	3/11/2013 – 4/12/2013
English Language Proficiency Assessment Grades and Content Areas	Early Testing Window	Testing Window
Grades K-12: Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking	TBD	TBD
CoAlt Grades and Content Areas	Testing Window	
Grades 3-10 Reading Grades 3-10 Writing Grades 3-10 Mathematics Grades 5, 8 and 10 Science	2/6/2013 – 3/22/2013	
CO ACT	Initial Test Date	Make-up Test Date
Grade 11	Tuesday, April 23, 2013	Tuesday, May 7, 2013

What's on the Horizon:

The results of the assessment request for proposal will come in May.

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

Accountability and Improvement:
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Overview:

On Feb. 9, the U.S. Department of Education approved Colorado's ESEA flexibility request which was granted in the form of a waiver. The waiver gives Colorado the authority to use the state's accountability system in place of key federal accountability requirements, moving us closer to our goal of a single accountability system. Colorado's state accountability system will now meet many of the No Child Left Behind requirements, including the requirement to annually determine school and district progress in meeting performance targets. For more information, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/NCLBWaiver.asp>

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

What's Happening Now:

ESEA Flexibility Waiver. CDE is working with the U.S. Department of Education to identify the specifics of the ESEA waiver to develop guidance for districts regarding the impact of the waiver on ESEA accountability, including Title I choice, supplemental education services and improvement set-asides.

The State Review Panel is reviewing plans of schools and districts assigned to Turn-around Plans.

The Department uploaded feedback from the UIP reviews in the Tracker system as it was available. Feedback includes recommendations and specifications for required changes (if any). Please remind school and district staff 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, to be posted publicly on SchoolView.org.

What's on the Horizon:

ESEA Waiver. CDE will release guidance regarding the impact of the ESEA waivers on schools districts and schools in the near future.

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:

- The Schools of Choice Unit just closed its job posting on two vacant positions. The Unit will hire a senior consultant to oversee the Charter School Program Start Up and Implementation Grant. The other position is a general support position for the Schools of Choice Unit.
- Amy Anderson and Amanda Heiney represented CDE at the Colorado Cyber School Association's annual "Online Learning Day at the Capitol" on Thursday, Feb. 23. Despite bad weather, more than 1,000 people attended – the majority of which was parents and students from online schools.

What's on the Horizon:

- CDE is partnering with the Colorado Legacy Foundation and the Donnell-Kay Foundation to conduct a series of blended learning seminars this spring. The first seminar is geared toward practitioners who are integrating digital and online learning into their districts and schools. It will take place on March 22 and participation by webinar is available, but limited. If you're interested in participating, please email Jessica Fuller at fuller_j@cde.state.co.us.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- The Expanded Learning Opportunities Strategic Plan is expected to be complete by the end of March and available to share in April.

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 completing its work with LEAs that chose to participate in the grant. LEAs indicated their intent to take part in the grant late last month when they submitted a Memorandum of Understanding. CDE is now in the process of notifying LEAs of their final award amounts.

The next step is for those LEAs to 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.

What’s on the Horizon:

LEAs submit a complete Scope of Work by March 14.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

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. Contact John at 303-866-6630 or 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. Contact Jhon at 303-866-6632 or penn_j@cde.state.co.us