

*Colorado is implementing significant education reforms aimed at ensuring all students graduate college- and career-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 the latest key implementation milestones.*

### **Educator Effectiveness:**

#### **Overview:**

The Educator Effectiveness Unit co-hosted a successful S.B. 191 summit in early March with the Colorado Education Association, Colorado Association of School Executives and the Colorado Association of School Boards. The Colorado Legacy Foundation sponsored the event. Ninety-four districts were represented at the summit and the Educator Effectiveness Office continues to receive requests for training from non-pilot districts. The Office is hiring two more trainers to meet the districts' increased training needs and we ask for your patience as we work on a plan to address the training needs of non-pilot districts.

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

The Educator Effectiveness Office is determining the process for the "state approved evaluator training programs" that need to be in place per law. Criteria and an application process are being developed for these programs. The programs will need to cover the core components of S.B. 191, key concepts of effective evaluations and training on inter-rater reliability.

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

The Office will soon launch the teacher evaluation trainings for pilot districts. At least eight trainings will be scheduled across the state on teacher rubric use. After the initial training, there will be a follow-up with inter-rater reliability training for many of the pilots. These trainings will occur in spring and summer.

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

None at this time.

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 Colorado Academic Standards. CDE recommends districts use the 2011-12 school year to design standards-based curriculum and the 2012-13 school year to begin phasing in the standards-based instructional content and practices in preparation for full implementation in 2013-14.

**What's Happening Now:**

- Materials from the March 6 Standards Implementation Summit are now available online. PowerPoint presentations, handouts, web links and the newest resource in the CDE standards implementation toolkit, the Transition Action Planning Guide, can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/otl/standardsimplementationsummit.htm>. The guide will help districts evaluate and strengthen existing standards transition plans or develop a new plan.

**What's on the Horizon:**

- Data gathered from summit participants will inform the focus and development of this year's summer symposia. Districts expressed increasing interest in exemplars of both model curriculum and curriculum-creation processes. CDE is exploring the most effective means of involving stakeholders from across the state in the creation of these exemplars.
- A new survey for district leaders to provide information for standards implementation support will go out soon.

**Important Upcoming Deadlines:**

None at this time.

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

<b>Assessments:</b>
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**Overview:**

On Feb. 29 and March 1, Cohort I Content Collaborative members met in Grand Junction for the second of four meetings to establish measures of student learning for trial. Drama & Theatre Arts, Music, Reading, Writing & Communicating, Social Studies and Visual Arts are the content areas being studied. Nationally recognized researchers shared their findings and Content Collaborative members worked with them to begin reviewing considerations for content validity. You can follow the Collaboratives' progress at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/ContentCollaboratives/index.asp>

**What's Happening Now:**

Validity reviews are still underway and the final call for the 2012 measures for consideration by Content Collaborative members has been sent.

**What's on the Horizon:**

Content Collaborative members will continue the review of assessments and the identification of gaps in terms of grade levels and content standards in the third meeting in Breckenridge, on April 18 and 19.

**Important Upcoming Deadlines:**

None at this time.

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

## Accountability and Improvement:

### **Overview:**

CDE has reviewed and provided feedback on more than 300 district- and school-level Unified Improvement Plans (UIPs) submitted in January. Next, CDE will plan UIP training and resources to support districts in preparing for next year's cycle. CDE is also planning for the implementation of Colorado's NCLB flexibility waiver which goes into effect beginning in 2012-13.

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

**NCLB Flexibility Waiver.** CDE has released additional Frequently Asked Questions concerning implementation of Colorado's NCLB waiver. The FAQs include information around the state performance frameworks, AYP, Title IA School and Program Improvement, Title IA set-asides and supplemental education services and choice implementation. For more information, e-mail Liz Lenz, [lenz\\_e@cde.state.co.us](mailto:lenz_e@cde.state.co.us), or visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/NCLBWaiver.asp>. CDE staff will use your questions to add to the FAQs.

**Unified Improvement Plans: Review and Feedback.** CDE has completed its review of the 2011-12 Unified Improvement Plans (UIPs) submitted in January. The review process involved more than 100 CDE staff members representing a cross-section of programs (e.g., accountability, school and district improvement, field services, federal programs, dropout prevention, special education, Language Culture and Equity, content specialists, RtI, etc.) to review more than 300 UIPs. This included reviews for 92 district-level and 212 school-level UIPs. Additionally, the State Review Panel, educational peers appointed by the Commissioner, reviewed and gave feedback on 62 district- and school-level Turnaround plans. Districts can now access their feedback from this review process through Tracker.

Any districts that had "required changes" for their district UIP will need to submit their revised plan by March 30 through Tracker. CDE will turn this review around quickly so districts may make any adjustments prior to the April 16 deadline. Any school plans that had "required changes" will not be reviewed again by CDE. The expectation is that the district will work with the school(s) to make the appropriate revisions. All school and district UIPs, whether or not they had required changes, will need to be submitted to Tracker by April 16 so they can be publicly posted on [SchoolView.org](http://SchoolView.org).

**Unified Improvement Plans: Case Stories.** Visit the UIP website (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/index.asp>) to access resources aimed at strengthening the improvement planning process. CDE, in partnership with the Center for Transforming Learning and Teaching, recently released case stories and video interviews of Colorado district and school staff sharing their successes and lessons learned with the UIP process. CDE is in the process of developing a wider collection of written case stories, artifacts and video interviews documenting the experiences of several more Colorado districts and their schools to be shared in the "UIP in Action" section of the UIP website.

**Unified Improvement Plans: Needs Assessment.** In preparation for next year, CDE launched a statewide needs assessment survey to gather information from districts on UIP support and resource needs. District accountability contacts received an e-mail from CDE on March 23 containing the link to complete the online survey. Please limit responses to one per district.

The survey closes at 5 p.m. on April 9. CDE will use survey data, observations from the UIP review process and additional data to inform adjustments to the UIP template, trainings and resource development over the next year. For additional information, please e-mail [uiphelp@cde.state.co.us](mailto:uiphelp@cde.state.co.us).

**Data Analysis: SchoolView Data Lab.** The SchoolView Data Lab is a great tool for downloading achievement and growth data for improvement planning. It now includes disaggregations for specific disabilities and areas of giftedness. Public data is now available to view for comparisons. Check out the Data Lab on the bottom of the [SchoolView performance page](#).

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

**Unified Improvement Plans: Spring Training.** In May, CDE will offer two new work sessions for district leaders to support Unified Improvement Planning as districts prepare for the 2012-13 school year. Each session will be offered in two locations, and will focus on UIP resources and data analysis. Participants may select topics/dates/locations that best meet their needs. Both will be full-day sessions offered in partnership with the Center for Transforming Learning and Teaching, University of Colorado Denver. Register [here](#) by April 20. For session descriptions and more information, please visit: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/UIP\\_TrainingAndSupport\\_Register.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/UIP_TrainingAndSupport_Register.asp).

**Accreditation Contracts.** Districts Accredited with Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plans need to renew their accreditation contracts with CDE by June 30, 2012. A model accreditation contract for renewal was sent to these specific districts via an e-mail from Associate Commissioner Keith Owen at the end of March. The accreditation contracts for all other districts will automatically renew without any additional action required by those districts.

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

- March 30:** Deadline for districts to submit revised district UIPs to CDE for plans submitted in January via Tracker System.
- April 9:** Deadline for districts to complete UIP needs assessment.
- April 16:** Deadline for districts to submit/re-submit all district and school UIPs to CDE via Tracker System.
- April 20:** Deadline for districts to register for spring UIP training sessions.
- June 30:** Deadline for districts Accredited with Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plans to renew their accreditation contracts with CDE.
- 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:**

- CDE is partnering with the Donnell-Kay Foundation, UCD, and the Colorado Legacy Foundation to host a blended learning series this spring that will include one event per month in March, April and May. The first blended learning event was held March 22 and focused on how blended learning is being used in Colorado schools and districts today. The second event will be held April 24 and will focus on educator effectiveness in blended and online learning. For more information, please contact Jessica Fuller, [fuller\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:fuller_j@cde.state.co.us)
- The Evergreen Education Group is contacting rural superintendents to learn about opportunities and challenges with online and blended learning. Their work will culminate with a report that documents current promising practices, and identifies opportunities for growth and policy changes to expand access to high quality online courses and content for students across the state. Look for an online survey from Evergreen in the coming weeks.
- Tier II 2011-12 Grant awards were received by four charter schools through the Start-up and Implementation Grant Program in the Schools of Choice Unit. West Denver Prep-Montbello and West Denver Prep-Green Valley Ranch from Denver Public Schools, Union Colony Elementary School from Weld County School District 6, and Colorado Early Colleges-Fort Collins from the Charter School Institute each received \$195,000 to support initial start up costs.

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

- The Expanded Learning Opportunities Strategic Plan will be completed in early April and shared with the State Board in May. The plan seeks to transform the educational experience to fully engage students, and supports the idea that learning can happen anywhere, anytime for any student. CDE will begin to implement the plan in May in partnership with the Colorado Legacy Foundation.

### **Important Upcoming Deadlines:**

- The Unit of Online Learning will receive financial reports from all online programs at the end of April.
- The Unit of Online Learning will receive multi-district online school applications 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 update introduces you to RISE, Relevant Information to Strengthen Education.*

### **Overview:**

“RISE”(Relevant Information to Strengthen Education) is a secure Colorado network providing immediate information about students, educators and schools to support student success from preschool to career. You may have heard of the \$17.4 million Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) federal grant that Colorado received in 2010. That grant is the funding stream for the RISE initiative.

The overall initiative has multiple ongoing efforts. First, important information is gathered about all students and educators in the state. For students this might include educational history such as early educational background, learning strengths and areas needing more attention like test scores, grades, achievements and

more. For educators this includes educator characteristics, preparation and development. Next, a state-of-the-art network is built that will connect this kind of data with records from important state agencies such as DHE (Colorado Department of Higher Education), CDLE (Colorado Department of Labor and Employment), CDOC (Colorado Department of Corrections), CDHS (Colorado Department of Human Services) and CDPS (Colorado Department of Public Safety). This data will allow educators to see if a child benefits more when provided early childhood education as compared to peers who don't. They can see what effects different quality pre-schools have on later education success. Educators and administrators will know whether a student is home-pre-schooled or not, and whether that gave him or her a "leg-up" later on.

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

There are many components included within the RISE initiative. Here are some examples:

- The RISE program team recently teamed with Deloitte to develop an upgraded data collection system for districts. The goal of this piece is to upgrade the technology associated with the Data Pipeline used to collect and share data, and to relieve the excessive reporting burden on districts.
- The Governor's Office of Information Technology is engaging the services of Informatica to develop the internal data linking technology to ensure each student's data is kept secure and able to link with other data on students, no matter the source.
- The Teacher Student Data Link team is finalizing data elements needed to connect teachers with courses/subjects, and then to students. This connection is critical to tying students with educators for many purposes, one example being to inform the educator evaluation system.
- RISE executive governance is finalizing key data elements to be collected, questions to answer, and measurements of success for the overall initiative.
- The Colorado Growth Model team is working towards rolling out the national version of the Growth Model.
- RISE's Organizational Change Management team is working closely with all RISE project teams and CDE's Communications Office to ensure a successful rollout of the many changes that will cascade from this sweeping initiative.

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

After rolling out the technology developed for RISE, the Governor's Office of Information Technology will then use it going forward to link data between agencies for other agency purposes. For CDE's educational partners, more data will be provided for analysis over time, and data quality and timeliness will continue to improve. As this happens, predictors may be developed for evaluating learning practices, what works and what doesn't, what affects different students, and many more questions for which districts and teachers need answers. It will ultimately be up to them to utilize this data in the most effective and timely way possible.

### **Important Upcoming Deadlines:**

When RISE is first released in **June 2013**, the core data linking technology will be in place. Early childhood programs from multiple agencies (Human Services, Public Safety, Public Health and Education), K12, higher education and workforce programs will all be able to share selected data. The goal of the first iteration will be to demonstrate those connections, and to answer some very specific educational business questions already postulated by RISE executive leadership. Examples:

- What health or developmental information can an educator get on his/her students that might impact their performance in a particular class?

- What additional aggregate data is worth sending back to educators, once the individual data elements are reported to CDE? (i.e., what specific piece of data can we provide back to the districts right away that would add value?)
- How does information about a student's performance in college connect back to the student's preparation in high school? That is, what high school courses/conditions support a student's likelihood to succeed in college?
- Evaluate effectiveness of early childhood education providers; are those who participate in PreK programs better equipped for elementary school?

<b>For more information</b>
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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](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. Contact Jhon at 303-866-6632 or [penn\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:penn_j@cde.state.co.us)