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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 is preparing summer pilot district trainings on the state model teacher rubric. Early trainings will be conducted with a few pilot districts to gather additional feedback on the rubric before finalizing the full validation test next school year. In addition, the Unit and State Board of Education drafted and finalized a final set of rules on the appeal process for a teacher that receives a second consecutive ineffective or partially effective rating. The rules were passed by the state board on April 16. They now go to the Attorney General's office for approval and then to the General Assembly for a final vote.

What's Happening Now:

The Educator Effectiveness Unit trainers are scheduling and conducting trainings with pilot districts on the teacher rubric throughout the upcoming months. Two additional trainers will support district needs during the next school year. The Unit is working through a wait-list of non-pilot districts that want to be trained in both the principal and teacher state model rubric. In addition, the Unit is completing the collection of data from pilots on the principal rubric and the process for the principal evaluation. The Unit will present a year-one pilot report to the State Board in August or September.

What's on the Horizon:

Work continues through the summer months to calibrate and score the final state model teacher rubric with videos from the Gates MET (Measures of Effective Teaching) Project. This will give districts a standard from which they can work toward consistency of evaluator scoring within their school district. The team is also developing four potential models of how to bring the 50 percent student growth score together with the 50 percent professional practice score for pilots to practice with and give CDE feedback on before the final method is selected in July 2013.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

The legislature will vote on the appeal rules by the end of this legislative session. Districts should start planning in the upcoming school year, what evaluation model they want to use—whether they are going to create their own model (which meets state law) or use the CDE-created state model evaluation system. On the Educator Effectiveness website there is a transition guide that takes district leaders through the Top 10 readiness questions for implementation of all requirements of SB 191 in 2013-14.

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

Standards

Overview:

CDE continues to support districts and schools during transition to the new standards. Resources for standards transition can be found in the Standards Implementation Toolkit online at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/sitoolkit/index.htm>.

What's Happening Now:

- On April 25, CDE launched its first standards implementation survey. Addressed to superintendents and/or designees, the survey will gather information from across the state regarding district levels of awareness and stages of transition to the new Colorado Academic Standards. Ultimately, the results of the survey will help CDE identify the most valuable, effective and feasible support options for standards implementation and for the transformation of teaching and learning. The survey can be found at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Standards_Implementation_Survey

What's on the Horizon:

- On May 18, CDE's Standards 411 Summit brings together vendors, community partners, and instructional service providers for a half-day informational summit about the new Colorado Standards. Participants explore the unique attributes of the standards and how their organizations can learn from the Department's efforts to support school and district alignment with the new standards. Details are located at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/otl/Standards_411_May18.htm
- At the CDE Summer Symposium, the standards implementation session supports participants in gaining a clearer understanding of successful transition planning for the new Colorado Standards, the instructional shifts required by the Standards, and the ways in which the Standards are reflected in the teacher effectiveness rubric.

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:

Several research studies are underway using achievement data. Future updates will provide final results of each study:

- **Educational history of recent high school graduates.** An analysis of the educational history of 3,000 recent Colorado high school students who took the GED to end their high school careers. How do these students perform on state assessments before they made the decision to obtain a GED? How do those who admitted to college perform in college?
- **An updated look at college remediation.** In the original paper, the graduating class of 2009 was examined in terms of need for college remediation. (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/Releases/20110301remediation.html>) Since then, 2010 high school graduates have completed their first year. CDE is working with the National Student Clearinghouse to follow students attending an out of state college.
- In collaboration with the Colorado Department of Higher Education, **a study of Colorado high school graduates in the Colorado workforce.** CDE recently obtained workforce data from the Colorado Department of Labor. Work is starting on a study of high school graduates (2009 & 2010) in the Colorado workforce.

- **Study of online schools and the enrolled students.** CDE's Division of Innovation and Choice is working with the University of Colorado at Denver on a detailed study of online schools and the students who enroll in them. CDE is working to better understand what is working and what is problematic in online schools, and on strategies for improvement.
- **An analysis of kindergarten, first-, second- and third-grade students (2003-2011) who were retained a grade.**
- **Content Collaboratives to define and frame assessments appropriate for use in teacher evaluation.**

What's Happening Now:

The GED study will be complete in three weeks. The online study will be ready for the Unit of Innovation and Choice and UCD next month.

What's on the Horizon:

The analysis of the labor force data in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Higher Education will be complete in May.

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:

In April, CDE received final Unified Improvement Plans (UIPs) from the majority of districts and schools. The UIPs will soon be posted on SchoolView.org. The Department will kick off support for next year's planning process in May through trainings focused on UIP resources and data analysis. The Department is also planning for next year's district and school performance frameworks and the implementation of Colorado's NCLB Flexibility waiver, which goes into effect in 2012-13.

What's Happening Now:

NCLB Flexibility Waiver. The most recent Frequently Asked Questions include information around the 2012 district and school performance framework reports, English language proficiency (CELAPro), and Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). To view the new FAQs visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/NCLBWaiver.asp>. For additional questions, e-mail Liz Lenz (lenz_e@cde.state.co.us). CDE staff will use your questions to add to the FAQs.

Unified Improvement Plans: Posting. Thank you for submitting district-level and school-level Unified Improvement Plans (UIPs) for public posting on SchoolView.org. Those who have not submitted or have UIPs missing in Tracker will be contacted directly. All submitted UIPs will be posted to SchoolView.org this summer.

Unified Improvement Plans: Needs Assessment. More than 130 districts responded to CDE's request for feedback on UIP support and resource needs. 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 course of the year.

Accreditation Contracts. Districts Accredited with Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plans need to renew their accreditation contracts with CDE by June 30. A model accreditation contract for renewal was sent to these specific districts via an e-mail from Associate Commissioner Keith Owen in early April. Accreditation contracts for all other

districts will automatically renew without any additional action required by those districts.

Supplemental Educational Services and School Choice. As many of you know, Title I SES and School Choice options for low performing schools were retained under Colorado's NCLB Flexibility waiver granted by the U.S. Department of Education. CDE is working with stakeholder groups to develop guidance related to the new rules tied to these two requirements. CDE expects to finalize and release the guidance by May 14.

NCLB Consolidated Application. CDE is still awaiting FY 2013 state and school district NCLB allocations from the USDE but expects to receive them within the next two weeks. Once school district allocations are complete, CDE will launch the consolidated application and release a schedule of webinars and other training opportunities in support of school district and BOCES consolidated application development.

What's on the Horizon:

Requests for New School Codes. Requests for new school codes, school closures, name changes and grade changes for the 2012-13 school year are due to CDE by June 30. This information is crucial for ensuring accurate Title IA funding, NCLB ESEA waiver implementation, on-time and accurate release of the School Performance Frameworks and earlier dissemination of the pre-populated Unified Improvement Plans. Additionally, having a final 2012-13 school list earlier will allow for better reporting in SchoolView and access to grade specific assessment materials.

Alternative Education Campus Applications. The deadline for districts to submit applications for all new and current Alternative Education Campuses is July 1. Application will include (1) an assurance that the school qualifies as an AEC, and (2) a selection of measures to be reviewed by CDE for inclusion on the 2012 AEC SPF report. Additional information will be forthcoming, with the updated AEC application materials released by June.

District and School Performance Framework Reports. The Department is updating the District and School Performance Framework (DPF/SPF) reports for the preliminary August 2012 release. The 2012 DPFs and SPFs include the addition of two key measures: (1) growth in English language proficiency (CELAppro) and (2) disaggregated graduation rates. Additional information is forthcoming, and districts will have an opportunity to see initial drafts of the report template and the simulated results (2011 DPF/SPF data using the 2012 modifications) this summer.

Updated UIP Template. Based upon feedback from the field (e.g., UIP Needs Assessment) and CDE's review of plans, the UIP template is being updated for the 2012-13 school year. However, changes in the template will be kept to a minimum. Preliminary changes include: (1) updates due to the ESEA waiver (e.g., deleting references to AYP), (2) updates that reflect changes in the SPF/DPF, (3) shifts in the formatting of the data narrative to ensure that requirements are being met and (4) more programs will be requiring addenda to meet specific program requirements. The 2012-13 school and district UIP templates should be available by the end of May.

School Support Teams (SST) and Comprehensive Appraisals for District Improvement (CADI). The Department is currently working to dramatically re-work the SST and CADI standards, indicators, rubrics, and protocols. These new and improved (and less expensive) diagnostic reviews will be offered to schools and districts identified as Priority Improvement or Turnaround beginning with the 2012-13 school year.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

June 30: Deadline for districts to submit requests to CDE for new school codes, school closures, name changes, and grade changes for the 2012-13 school year.

June 30: Deadline for districts Accredited with Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plans to

renew their accreditation contracts with CDE.

June 30: Deadline for LEAs to submit Consolidated Applications for ESEA Title funding.

July 1: Deadline for districts to submit Alternative Education Campus applications for CDE review.

Summer 2012: CDE publishes final district and school UIPs on SchoolView.org.

For more information regarding 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 the work at the Department and in districts, schools and communities across the state.

What's Happening Now:

- The annual Innovation Report and the new guidance for schools and districts to pursue innovation status were presented at the State Board Meeting on April 11. The annual report provides an overview of Districts with Innovation Schools, including data about academic performance before and after innovation implementation. Both documents can be found on the Innovation Schools webpage at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdegen/SB130.htm>
- Four online teachers and three online counselors have been selected for the 2011-2012 Online Recognition Award and will be honored at the May State Board of Education meeting. These individuals were selected for their ability to use data to customize teaching strategies that resulted in a positive impact on student achievement. Profiles of the awardees can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/onlinelearning/whatsnew.htm>.
- Awardees for the Highly Effective School Library Program will be recognized at the May State Board of Education meeting and at a special reception at 3 p.m. on Monday, May 21. Librarians in these schools demonstrated through a competitive application process that they meet or exceed exemplary school library program criteria established by the State Library. The libraries submitted action plans, letters of recommendation, and 3-minute multimedia presentations showcasing the competencies required for program excellence.
- CDE and the Colorado Legacy Foundation created a video to launch the Expanded Learning Opportunities Strategic Plan and will be shared with the state board at its May meeting. The video is available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRTDDO_zMXU

What's on the Horizon:

- The last of the 3-part Blended Learning Summit will take place on May 17. This event will focus on how blended learning can be implemented under current policy, and provide a platform for discussion about changing policy to improve the quality of blended and online learning.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

None at this time.

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

Organizational Effectiveness

Race to the Top/Vision 2020

Overview:

Colorado received \$17.9 million in Race to the Top Phase 3 (RTTT) 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 grant program is focused on four key areas: 1) building capacity to implement the state's reforms; 2) implementing the Colorado Academic Standards; 3) designing the state's educator evaluation system; and 4) advancing STEM education. For more information on Race to the Top, please visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_educator_RT3.asp.

What's Happening Now:

LEA's submitted scopes of work that detail planned use of their RTTT funds to CDE for review in mid March. CDE has reviewed the scopes of work and submitted them to the U.S. Department of Education (USDoE) for final review and approval. CDE hopes to have USDoE approval in May/early June after which time award letters will be sent out that include details about accessing funds.

What's on the Horizon:

LEAs will be notified of approval or request for revisions of their scopes of work in May/early June.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

May/early June: Anticipated approval of scopes of work from USDoE; award letters sent to LEAs.

For more information on Race to the Top/Vision 2020, contact Tricia Miller, Director of the Race to the Top Program, 303-866-6938.

For More Information

If you have general 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