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*Colorado is implementing significant education improvements 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 our strategic priorities including implementation milestones, supports now available, and a look of what to expect ahead.*

## Educator Effectiveness

### Overview:

The CDE Educator Effectiveness team supports districts and BOCES with guidelines, trainings and resources for implementing the educator effectiveness law (S.B. 10-191). The team's ultimate goal is to support educators as they continually improve their impact on student learning.

### What's Happening Now:

#### **Implementation Resources Available**

CDE is using pilot experiences and feedback to inform strategies for S.B. 10-191 statewide implementation. A new implementation brief highlights key ideas and insights from a panel discussion held in January. Recently, a video was also released from the same panel that highlights the benefits pilot districts are seeing from implementing the new evaluation requirements. To access the **implementation brief**, visit: <http://bit.ly/Y1BsXy>. To watch the **video**, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/SMES-Pilot.asp>.

#### **New Drop-in Article Available**

The Communications team creates tools to support district leadership as they communicate about education topics such as changes to educator evaluations, new assessments and the transition to the Colorado Academic Standards. Taking advantage of drop-in articles is like superintendents having their own PR agency with a professional ghost writer. The updates on key initiatives are pre-written thus saving you time and ensuring you're communicating the most recent, accurate and relevant information. To view the new drop-in article, visit <http://bit.ly/WSmgOf>.

#### **Early Childhood Educator Evaluations**

The new evaluation requirements under S.B. 10-191 provide meaningful evaluations for all state licensed education professionals including licensed positions in early childhood. Learn more about how S.B. 10-191 applies to early childhood educators through this fact sheet: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/downloads/FactSheets/ECE.pdf>.

## **Determining the 50 percent student learning outcomes/student growth**

The Educator Effectiveness team is conducting student learning outcomes/student growth work sessions. This one-day technical guidance work session is focused on the technical guidance to determine the 50 percent portion of teacher and principal evaluations for student learning outcomes/student growth. The sessions are scheduled through area regional BOCES. If your district is a member of a BOCES, contact your executive director to find your scheduled work session. Not a member of a BOCES and want a work session with your district team? Just contact [Mike Gradoz](mailto:mike.gradoz@cde.state.co.us), director of field services, at (303) 866-5194 or [gradoz\\_m@cde.state.co.us](mailto:gradoz_m@cde.state.co.us).

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

#### **Online Performance Management System**

CDE is beginning the request for proposal process for an online performance management system to provide an optional performance management technology platform at no cost to districts. This technology infrastructure will help districts organize their data from the state model evaluation system including their educator data, progress tracking, professional development and information from rubrics, for example. This technology support will make data tracking and reporting a much more useful and meaningful process for educators and districts. A vendor is expected to be selected by late May.

#### **Specialized Service Professionals (Other Licensed Personnel)**

New evaluation requirements require annual evaluations for all licensed personnel including principals, teachers and other state-licensed education professionals. The State Council for Educator Effectiveness has identified nine categories of specialized service professionals referred to as "other licensed personnel" (now called specialized service providers) in state rule. After working with workgroups of specialized service professionals from around the state, the Council will give standards and elements recommendations to the State Board of Education in May to guide the creation of evaluation systems. These recommendations will begin the state board rulemaking process on the evaluation system for these professional through 2013. Evaluation requirements for specialized service providers go into effect in 2014-15. To view the preliminary recommendations, visit <http://bit.ly/149YG1d>. A webinar will be held on Tuesday, April 9 to provide more information. To register, contact Katy Anthes at [anthes\\_k@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthes_k@cde.state.co.us).

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

By July 1, all districts must provide CDE an assurance that specifies if they are implementing the Colorado State Model Evaluation System or another evaluation system that is aligned with S.B. 10-191 and state board rules. Based on recent field feedback and to support districts during the planning stages for S.B. 10-191, an "in progress" option has been added to the assurances and checklist. To view the updated assurances and checklist, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/SB-Assurances.asp>. If you have additional questions, please contact [Toby King](mailto:toby.king@cde.state.co.us) at [king\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:king_t@cde.state.co.us).

For more information about educator effectiveness, visit:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/> or contact Katy Anthes, executive director of Educator Effectiveness, 303-866-6654.

## Standards

### Overview:

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

### What's Happening Now:

#### **Common Core Questions**

Recent news articles have sparked renewed interest in the Common Core State Standards. To assist superintendents in responding to questions or concerns that may arise, the CDE Communications team has developed a set of communication tools including key messaging on Common Core State Standards; sample response letter; standards events and activities ideas; Colorado Academic Standards drop-in article; and Colorado Academic Standards Fact Sheet. Find these at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheets.html>

It's important to understand not only the practical implications of using the Colorado Academic Standards, but the statutory standpoint, too. By law, neither districts nor parents can opt out of meeting the state's standards. Here are the specific statutes:

- Districts are required by law to meet the state's standards (22-7-1013, C.R.S.).
- Parents cannot opt their children out of meeting the state's standards or ask to be placed in classes that do not adhere to the state standards.
- In addition, every student enrolled in a public school is required to take the state assessment. The law does not allow students to "opt out" of the state assessments (22-7-409 (1.2)(d)(I)(A), C.R.S.).

These statutory requirements may prove helpful as superintendents talk more in-depth about the issues with school board members about the district's obligations regarding state standards and assessments.

#### **School Readiness**

A new **frequently asked questions** document is available with answers to questions related to requirements for school readiness plans and assessment as well as information about the approved menu of school readiness assessments. Find it at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness/FAQ.asp>. A school readiness fact sheet is available at: <http://bit.ly/YtLG2F>.

*School Readiness Implementation Meetings:* CDE is hosting five regional meetings to support kindergarten teachers, elementary principals, preschool program directors and district leaders with implementation of the school readiness provisions of S.B. 08-212, Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K). Participants will be provided with (1) an overview of school readiness requirements within CAP4K, (2) information on department supports for implementing school readiness, (3) an opportunity to learn from districts involved in transforming their early childhood programs and kindergarten, and (4) time for school/district team planning for implementation.

Meetings times are from 4:30 to 7 p.m. Specific locations will be posted as venues are secured

at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness/index.asp>. Register at <http://bit.ly/Xq63uc>.

- Denver metro area, Tuesday, April 16
- Grand Junction, Monday, April 22
- Alamosa, Wednesday, May 1
- Pueblo, Thursday, May 23
- Greeley, Wednesday, May 29

### **The READ Act**

*READ Act Rules:* The State Board of Education adopted rules for the READ Act in March. The rules are posted at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index.asp>. The READ Act also requires the state board to approve interim, diagnostic and summative reading assessments. Approved interim assessments for the 2013-14 school year are the same as those approved pursuant to the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA): DRA2, DIBELS and PALS. The board will take action in the fall to approve an updated list of interim assessments to align with the READ Act. The state board has approved a list of diagnostic and summative reading assessments pursuant to the READ Act; the list is posted at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/resourcebank.asp>.

A READ Act fact sheet is available at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/download/FactSheets/READActFactSheet.pdf>

*READ Act Training:* Through May, the department will provide training sessions for teachers and instructional leaders focused on (1) components of the READ Act, (2) identifying a significant reading deficiency, (3) developing effective READ plans, and (4) the READ Automated Data Exchange (ADE) system collection. Information about participating in a state sponsored license for the DIBELS Next System will be shared. For dates and locations, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index.asp>.

*Early Literacy Assessment Licenses:* Applications for the Early Literacy Assessment Program are available on the READ Act webpage and due to CDE on Friday, May 10, by 4 p.m. The Early Literacy Assessment Program will provide licenses for the DIBELS Next system and Burst diagnostic assessment to districts for kindergarten through 3rd-grade reading assessment.

The Legislature and Wireless Generation have come together with funding we anticipate will cover all districts that apply for funding to start their implementation of the READ Act. In particular, the state has allocated \$3 million for district license costs for the first year of implementation. In addition, Wireless Generation will also provide funding for licenses above the state's allocation for district's choosing to use their product.

Looking ahead, CDE will continue to request funding from the Legislature to support the ongoing implementation of the early literacy assessment program. That request, along with all other education funding requests, will be considered by the Legislature as it determines the rest of the state budget each year. To download the application and learn more, visit: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/assessmenttool.asp>.

**What's on the Horizon:**

The Department is facilitating work groups to develop sample school readiness plan templates and READ plan templates that districts may voluntarily implement or use to inform the design of their own forms.

**Important Upcoming Deadlines:**

Applications for DIBELS Next software licenses are due **Friday, May 10, by 4 p.m.**

For more information about standards, visit

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/index.asp> or contact Melissa Colman, executive director of teaching and learning, 303-866-6737.

**Assessments**

**Overview:**

The table below displays testing windows for state assessments administered in April.

Assessment	Early Testing Window	Regular Testing Window
TCAP	March 4 – April 5	March 11 – April 12
Colorado ACT	–	April 23 (Make-up test date: May 7)

**What's Happening Now:**

**Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) Administration**

Colorado is currently administering the TCAP. The administration window closes on **April 12**. For more information, contact Jason Clymer at [clymer\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:clymer_j@cde.state.co.us).

**TCAP Anchor Review**

CDE asked educators interested in reviewing TCAP items to submit their names and qualifications to a reviewer database. On **April 9 and 10**, selected Colorado educators may provide guidance for the TCAP constructed response scoring process.

**Field Test for the New Science and Social Studies Assessments**

The field test for the new science and social studies summative and alternate assessments is scheduled from **April 22 to May 10**. The sample of students from the spring field test will consist of students from across the state in grades 4, 5, 7 and 8.

**Online Assessment Readiness**

As Colorado begins its transition to computer-based assessments, it's important for districts to participate in the **online readiness survey**, the Technology Readiness Tool. Districts were asked to provide initial data by **March 31**. As of March 22, only 35 percent of districts have participated. For districts that have not yet submitted data, it is important to provide information **as soon as possible** so the district's data is reflected when decisions are made for both the PARCC and the Colorado-developed assessments. **It is most important for districts to provide information about their number of devices meeting minimum requirements and bandwidth capacity.** For the FAQs, click here: <http://bit.ly/105BueW>.

The next step in preparing field test districts for online testing is the site readiness training. This training consists of verifying minimum system requirements, running a system check to validate bandwidth, proctor caching and session management. Site readiness trainings have been provided to field test districts and will be expanded to all other districts before the Spring 2014 assessment administration. For questions about online readiness trainings, contact the Assessment Unit's technology specialist, Collin Bonner, at [bonner\\_c@cde.state.co.us](mailto:bonner_c@cde.state.co.us).

### **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Consortium Update**

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), the consortium developing English language arts and mathematics assessments of which Colorado is a governing member, recently released information about technology expectations and administration of the PARCC assessments. Information about testing time, testing windows and recommended student-to-device ratios was made public. Districts are encouraged to distinguish between the PARCC expectations that were recently released for 2015 and CDE's expectations for the science and social studies assessments in 2014. CDE will adjust its expectations for student-to-device ratios based on the information submitted by districts through the Technology Readiness Tool. Information about estimated PARCC testing times is available at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/NewAssess-PARCC.asp>.

### **Educator Recruitment**

Educator involvement in the development and review of state assessments is essential to ensuring that the content of items is appropriate for students and that items are not unfairly advantageous or disadvantageous to a particular group of students. The Assessment Unit is recruiting educators for assessment item development meetings. Please distribute the information below to help recruit reviewers. We are especially interested in candidates who represent minority racial/ethnic groups, as well as educators who work with students with special needs and English learners.

For development and review opportunities for the new science and social studies assessments, please visit <http://educator.force.com/CO>. For more information, contact Glen Sirakavit (new summative science and social studies assessments) at [sirakavit\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:sirakavit_g@cde.state.co.us) or Mira Monroe (new alternate science and social studies assessments) at [monroe\\_m@cde.state.co.us](mailto:monroe_m@cde.state.co.us).

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

#### **Student Biographical Data Review**

The Student Biographical Data Review allows districts to verify the accuracy of the demographic data submitted for each student for each assessment. There are three distinct SBD processes: ACCESS for ELLs SBD, TCAP/CoAlt SBD and CO ACT SBD. The ACCESS for ELLs SBD occurred in March. The TCAP CoAlt SBD window runs from **May 22 – June 6**, and the CO ACT SBD window runs from **June 21 – July 2**. For SBD-related questions, contact Jessica Allen at [allen\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:allen_j@cde.state.co.us).

#### **Third Grade TCAP Reading and Lectura Reports**

School districts will receive printed TCAP reports for grade 3 reading and Lectura in early



May. The statewide results will be released at about the same time.

### **TCAP Content Validity and Alignment Review**

CDE asked educators who were interested in reviewing TCAP items to submit their names and qualifications into a reviewer pool database. From **May 14 – 16**, selected educators will review new TCAP items to ensure appropriateness for grade and content as well as alignment to the academic standards.

### **Educator Item Writing for the New Science and Social Studies Assessments**

Selected educators can participate in writing items for the elementary and middle school science and social studies summative assessments in **May**.

### **Training for the New Science and Social Studies Assessments**

PearsonAccess trainings, trainings related to preparing district assessment coordinators, school assessment coordinators, and others involved in the assessment administration process, began for field test districts in February and will continue in April. PearsonAccess trainings are open to all districts, with invitations sent to DACs. Recordings will be available on the PearsonAccess website a few days after the last training event. A list of PearsonAccess trainings for the 2013 field test is available at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/NewAssess-PATraining.asp>. For more information, contact Mira Monroe at [monroe\\_m@cde.state.co.us](mailto:monroe_m@cde.state.co.us).

For more information about assessments, contact Joyce Zurkowski, executive director of assessment, 303-866-6760, [zurkowski\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:zurkowski_j@cde.state.co.us), or you can visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/index.asp>.

## **Accountability, Performance & Support**

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

#### **Unified Improvement Plans: Review and Feedback**

Any districts with “required changes” for their district UIP was required to submit their revised plan by April 1 through Tracker. School plans with “required changes” do not need to be resubmitted to CDE this year for another review. 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 have required changes, need to be submitted to Tracker by **April 15** to be posted on SchoolView. For some districts and schools, this submission is in addition to any previous submissions for review purposes.

#### **Release of TELL Colorado Survey Data**

This year 1,083 schools and 91 districts got at least 50 percent of staff to participate in the TELL Colorado survey. Data will be available by late April. CDE will host a webinar, post guides on how to unpack the data and weave technical assistance into other opportunities.

#### **A New Era in Grants Management**

After reviewing, designing and training, the Competitive Grants and Awards Office is in the final stages of testing the state of Colorado Grant Management System. The new system standardizes the grant application process and is housed on a secure, web-based

platform. The system allows applicants to apply and request funds electronically. The Early Literacy Grant will be the first grant to use the system and is scheduled to go live on Thursday, April 4. The Competitive Grants and Awards Office will begin to convert the paper application process into the new system as soon as possible. For more information, contact Lynn Bamberry: [bamberry\\_l@cde.state.co.us](mailto:bamberry_l@cde.state.co.us).

**Important Upcoming Deadlines:**

- April 15 Deadline for districts to (re)submit district/school UIPs via Tracker
- April 17 School Improvement Support grant due
- April 17 Tiered Intervention grant due
- April 19 Talent Pool Application forms due
- Summer 2012-2013 district/school UIPs on SchoolView

For more information, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/> or contact Keith Owen, deputy commissioner, 303-866-6099.

## Innovation and Choice

**Overview:**

The Division of Innovation, Choice and Engagement develops partnerships, ideas and thinking about education to create bold solutions that launch and sustain learner success inside and outside the classroom.

**What's Happening Now:**

The **21st Century Community Learning Centers program** has received a flexibility waiver as part of our ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) waiver. This enables the program the flexibility to support expanded learning opportunities during the school day and extend out-of-school time activities for inclusion in the school day. The waiver does not impact current grants, but will be applied to the next round of cohort funding. The program is piloting expanded learning opportunities through a competitive, summer supplemental grant for current grantees. Out of 17 applications, 10 supplemental grants were awarded.

For more information, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/choice/index.asp> or contact Rebecca Holmes, associate commissioner of innovation, choice and engagement, 303-866-6938.

## Organizational Effectiveness

*Special Note:* This month, the Department of Higher Education, in partnership with CDE will release its annual remediation report with information on the percentage of students going to college still needing to take remedial courses. Because of some changes this year to data-gathering methodology, the remediation rates may look different for districts as compared to previous years. A communications toolkit is available to help superintendents explain the changes to staff, community members and the media. To download the toolkit, log onto <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheets.html>. For more information, contact Nancy Mitchell, director of communications, Colorado Department of Higher Education, [nancy.mitchell@dhe.state.co.us](mailto:nancy.mitchell@dhe.state.co.us).



This month's update focuses on developing **Colorado's high school graduation guidelines**.

**Overview:**

State law requires the State Board to adopt a set of guidelines for high school graduation by May 2013. Local school boards may use their own locally developed graduation requirements so long as they "meet or exceed" any minimum standards or core competencies/skills adopted by the state board. Districts will have the 2013-14 school year to review the guidelines and adopt their local graduation requirements that meet or exceed them. Districts will then implement their requirements with the 9th-grade class of 2014-15 for their graduation in 2019.

**What's Happening Now:**

The Graduation Guidelines Council is meeting monthly to draft and refine recommendations. CDE staff attend various constituent meetings statewide to gather feedback and update the State Board periodically. Principles of belief, a calendar of constituent conversations, Graduation Guideline Council members, components on the table being discussed and the Endorsed Diploma criteria already adopted, can be reviewed and responded to at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/SecondaryInitiatives/GraduationGuidelines.htm>

**What's on the Horizon:**

At its next meeting, April 10-11, 2013, the State Board will receive recommendations for high school graduation guidelines from the Graduation Guidelines Council.

**Deadlines:**

The State Board will adopt the final set of guidelines in **May**.

For more information, contact Jo O'Brien, assistant commissioner of strategic projects and research, 303-866-6852.

**For More Information**

If you have general questions or need assistance, please contact:

- John Condie, field services manager for the Northwest, 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 and Metro regions. Contact Jhon at 303-866-6632 or [penn\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:penn_j@cde.state.co.us)
- Tina Goar, field services manager for the Southeast and Southwest regions and the Rural Council. Contact Tina at 303-866-6608 or [goar\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:goar_t@cde.state.co.us).

To access all CDE fact sheets visit:

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