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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:

Approval of District/BOCES-Developed and Third-Party Provided Educator Evaluator Training Programs

Based on state statute and state board rules, all evaluators must have an administrator's license or be trained in evaluation through a state-approved program. Districts using an evaluation system other than the Colorado State Model Evaluation System will need to ensure their evaluators meet these requirements. Districts, BOCES, vendors, non-profits, universities and other organizations can all apply to be state approved trainers. The request for proposal application to become an approved evaluator trainer on a unique evaluation system is now available and is due to CDE by 4 p.m. on **June 10**. For more information, visit www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/SB-EvaluatorTrainings.asp.

For a district wanting to provide its administrators evaluation training, there will be an informational webinar on **May 6** from 10-11 a.m. This session is optional and available to any district that chooses to participate. To join, visit: <http://connect.enetcolorado.org/r8tyk5tnecc/> and/or call: 1-866-305-5704 on **May 6** at 10 a.m.

There will be a similar request for proposal process to become approved to train on the Colorado State Model Evaluation System. This process will not be in place until next year. Currently, the only state approved trainer on the model system is CDE.

Evaluator Training Requirements for Educator Evaluation Systems:

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

New Drop-in Article Available

CDE's communications team has a new drop-in article available for district leaders to help them communicate about changes in 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 on standards, assessments and educator evaluations, visit <http://bit.ly/WSmgOf>.

What's on the Horizon:

Updated Resources

Educator feedback from the state model pilot is informing improvements to the model system prior to implementation in the 2013-14 school year. An updated version of the model system rubrics (which measure professional practices) and the draft student learning outcomes guidance will be released this summer. To view an updated sample implementation work plan for districts, visit www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/downloads/SampleWorkPlan.pdf.

Online Performance Management System

CDE is the process of selecting 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. This tool 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 and initial beta tests will be available to all districts by fall 2013.

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. To view the assurances and checklist, visit www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/SB-Assurances.asp.

For more information about educator effectiveness, visit:

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 that districts use this school year to begin phasing in a standards-based curriculum in preparation for full implementation of the standards in 2013-14.

What's Happening Now:

Next Generation Science Standards Released

On April 9, the final version of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) was released. The NGSS development was separate from the development of the Common Core State Standards (which only includes mathematics and English language arts) and these are not the same as the Colorado Academic Standards -- in particular, the science standards. The NGSS process is managed by Achieve and led by three primary partners: the National Research Council, the National Science Teachers Association, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Answers to frequently asked questions about the NGSS can be found at: <http://www.nextgenscience.org/faq#3.1>

As districts are in the midst of implementing Colorado's science standards, the department plans to follow a thoughtful and sequenced approach to reviewing the NGSS. The department wants to appropriately balance the need to let districts implement the Colorado Academic Standards in science with the interest from practitioners in reviewing and considering possible merits of the NGSS. It is important to note that the new state science assessments are currently being developed to assess Colorado's science standards. The new science assessments will be administered in the spring of 2014 for fifth- and eighth-graders and in the fall of 2014 for 12th-graders.

The department will engage science specialists to review the NGSS and compare them to the Colorado science standards. This will form the basis for discussion with district leaders and science practitioners regarding the similarities, differences, strengths and weaknesses of the two sets of standards. Based on these discussions, the department will identify appropriate next steps. Changes to the standards would be recommended only after receiving significant support and feedback from the practitioners and with an ample timeline for implementation. Any changes to the state's standards would require action by the Colorado State Board of Education.

School Readiness

School Readiness Assessment Funding: The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund will provide resources and supports for districts for the implementation of school readiness plans and assessments in kindergarten. Specifically, the subscription costs for Teaching Strategies GOLD are supported for the duration of the grant and some funding for training is provided. In early May, CDE will release a Request for Application for districts that wish to access grant funds to pay for subscriptions for kindergarten students for the 2013-14 school year. A similar process will be followed next spring for districts slated to implement school readiness plans and assessments in the 2014-15 school year. More information about the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund and the school readiness initiative can be found at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness/index.asp>. To view the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund Fact Sheet: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/download/FactSheets/RTTT-ELCFactSheet.pdf>.

School Readiness Implementation Meetings: CDE is hosting a series of regional meetings designed 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). The meetings will include an overview of school readiness requirements within CAP4K; information on department supports for implementing school readiness; information from districts involved in transforming early childhood programs and kindergarten; and time for school/district team implementation planning. For more information and to register, visit:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness/index.asp>. To view the School Readiness Fact Sheet: <http://bit.ly/YtLG2F>. To view the School Readiness FAQ:

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

Sessions will be in Alamosa, May 1 from 4:30 to 7 p.m.; via online webinar, May 3, from 10 to 11 a.m.; in Pueblo, May 23, from 4:30 to 7 p.m.; and in Greeley, May 29, from 4:30 to 7 p.m.

The READ Act

READ Act Training: Through May, the department will provide training for teachers and instructional leaders on the components of the READ Act; identifying a significant reading deficiency; developing effective READ plans; and the READ Automated Data Exchange system collection. Information about the opportunity to participate in a state-sponsored license for the DIBELS Next System will also be provided. Locations and dates have been published in the *Scoop* and posted on the READ Act webpage:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index.asp>.

Early Literacy Assessment Tool Project: The 2012 School Finance Act required the Colorado Department of Education to issue a competitive request for proposals (RFP) for state purchase of an early literacy assessment tool that teachers may use to obtain real-time assessments of the reading skill levels of students in kindergarten through third grade. This allows the state to purchase software that provides individualized assessments with immediate results. The software then stores and analyzes the results and recommends activities. The contract was awarded to Wireless Generation for its DIBELS Next system and Burst diagnostic reading assessments. The funding covers the cost of the online software license and training. Hardware is not included. Interested districts must submit an application for the licenses by May 10. Read more at

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/assessmenttool.asp>.

Colorado Academic Standards Communication Toolkit. In response to district leaders' requests, CDE now has additional communication templates and support materials available online regarding the Colorado Academic Standards. The toolkit includes materials such as a fact sheet, drop-in article, sample activities and events to get your staff and community familiar with your school's work with the standards, and sample language to help explain the difference between the Common Core State Standards and the Colorado Academic Standards and how those are used. To access the toolkit, visit

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheets.html#teachlearn>.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

READ ACT Data Collection: The 2012-13 READ Act data collection is open through Monday, July 1. The data will be collected through the Automated Data Exchange system. Due to the repeal of the Colorado Basic Literacy Act, the collection will include new data elements.

Districts must report READ Act data to receive per-pupil funds for students identified as having a significant reading deficiency. New respondents must submit a respondent form to the Office of Literacy to receive user passwords. For more information, visit:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/data.asp>.

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 Colorado ACT test is slated to be administered in May with the make-up test date set for **May 7**.

What's Happening Now:

Third Grade TCAP Reading and Lectura Reports

School districts will receive printed TCAP reports of preliminary data for grade three reading and Lectura by **May 3**. Final data will be provided with all other TCAP results in July after all student biographical data corrections have been applied.

Student Biographical Data Review - TCAP and CoAlt SBD

The Student Biographical Data (SBD) Review system allows districts to verify the accuracy of demographic data submitted for each student for each content-based assessment. The **TCAP and CoAlt SBD** window runs from **May 22 – June 6**. For SBD-related questions, contact Jessica Allen at allen_j@cde.state.co.us.

ACCESS for ELLs Trainings

School districts received printed results of their ACCESS for ELL scores during the week of April 22. The Assessment Unit and the Language, Culture and Equity Office are offering statewide trainings from **May 8 – 15**. Participants will learn about ACCESS for ELLs Score Report Interpretation and they can participate in an ELD Standards in Action: Differentiation Workshop. For more information on these trainings, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/ELA-Training.asp>.

TCAP Item Review

On **May 14 – 16**, the Assessment Unit and CTB-McGraw Hill will conduct Content, Validity Alignment Review for new math, reading and writing items for use on the 2014 TCAP. Panels of selected Colorado teachers will review new items to ensure they align to and properly measure the Colorado Academic Standards and that they are free of bias with respect to gender, race, ethnicity, political affiliation, socio-economic status or other factors.

New Science and Social Studies Assessments Item Writing

Selected educators from across Colorado will participate in Item Writing Workshops **May 7 – 8**. This is the first step of item development. These educators will reconvene on **June 4 -5**, to complete their work.

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 on the new summative science and social studies assessments, contact Glen Sirakavit at sirakavit_g@cde.state.co.us. For information on the new alternate science and social studies assessments, contact Mira Monroe at monroe_m@cde.state.co.us.

Training for the New Science and Social Studies Assessments

Training for field test districts in the use of PearsonAccess was completed in April. Recordings of the trainings are available <http://bit.ly/12FZ3xt>.

Online Assessment Readiness

As Colorado began its transition to computer-based assessments, CDE requested districts to complete an online readiness survey, the Technology Readiness Tool. Initial analysis of elementary and middle schools reporting that they have at least one computer indicates that 98 percent of those schools could complete the 2014 science and social studies summative assessments within a three week window. This calculation assumes each assessment will be three sessions and schools will conduct three sections of testing a day. Multiple sections of the same session could be required, for example, schools may have to give the first session of the science assessment four times due to the number of available computers. For answers to questions about online readiness trainings, contact Collin Bonner at bonner_c@cde.state.co.us.

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium

The draft PARCC Accommodations Manual is available for public comment. Education professionals are encouraged to take time to read and respond to PARCC on the accommodations listed in the manual. PARCC is accepting comments through 3 p.m. on **May 13**. Click here to complete the survey for accommodations for students with disabilities- <http://bit.ly/129QJDi>. Click here to take the survey for accommodations for English language learners - <http://bit.ly/15T0sor>

The draft Performance Level Descriptors (PLD) for English language arts and mathematics are available for public comment until 3 p.m. on **May 8**. It's very important for educators to review and make comments, as these will drive the development of the tests. To complete the PARCC PLD survey, visit <http://bit.ly/117iiN3>.

What's on the Horizon:

Student Biographical Data (SBD) Review – CO ACT SBD

The Student Biographical Data Review allows districts to verify the accuracy of the

demographic data submitted for each student for each assessment. 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.

New Science and Social Studies Assessment Content Validity and Alignment Review

On **June 10 - 11**, selected Colorado educators will review new science and social studies items to ensure appropriateness for grade and content as well as alignment to the academic standards. Reviewers will also ensure that items are free of bias.

Educator Item Writing for the CoAlt - Science and Social Studies Assessments

Selected Colorado educators will participate in writing items for the elementary and middle school science and social studies alternate assessments on **June 18 - 21**.

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

Accountability, Performance & Support

Overview:

Improvement Planning. In April, CDE received Unified Improvement Plans (UIPs) from districts and schools which will be posted publicly soon on SchoolView.org. The department will kick off support for next year's planning process by focusing on refining UIP resources, and include a focus on how to unpack the TELL survey data for improvement planning purposes. The department is also planning for next year's district and school performance frameworks.

Still Waiting for NCLB Allocations. The Federal Programs Unit is awaiting NCLB allocations from the U.S. Department of Education for the upcoming school year. At this time the department is unsure when allocations will be released or what the full impact of sequestration will be. In the meantime, districts are encouraged to develop plans and budgets for use of funds in 2013-14 that reflect a five to 10 percent decrease in funding. The strategy-based consolidated application budget and instructions are available at http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefisgrant/NCLB_download.htm.

What's Happening Now:

New Fluent English Proficiency Guidance. The Office of Language, Culture, and Equity will provide new guidance on the re-designation criteria for English language learners transitioning from Limited English Proficiency (LEP) to Fluent English Proficiency (FEP). The new guidance will incorporate the changes in the state assessment system to include, ACCESS for ELLs and TCAP. The office has collaborated with a variety of stakeholders to include: CDE cross department representation, the NCLB Committee of Practitioners, as well as an ELL Assessment Advisory Committee. Guidance was distributed to District Assessment Coordinators (DACs), ELPA/Title III Directors/Coordinators, ELA Directors/Coordinators, and Title I Directors/Coordinators at the end of April. For more information contact Liliana Graham, director of language, culture, and equity, at graham_l@cde.state.co.us.

Unified Improvement Plans: Needs Assessment. Thank you to the districts that 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 coming year.

TELL Colorado Survey Data Release. The embargoed TELL Colorado survey data has been released to districts and schools that hit the 50 percent participation rate. If districts had at least 20 participants and 40 percent of educators complete the survey, then the data is also being released to ensure that more districts have access to data for improvement planning purposes. A URL was emailed to superintendents and accountability contacts on April 15 to share with district and school personnel.

Diagnostic process reviewed. The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Programs has two pilot schools to test the revised process of conducting diagnostic reviews of Title I schools that are struggling. The standards and indicators for these reviews were revised last year. The new process will feature a lower cost, a reduction of days onsite, a survey instrument for school staff and parents, increased up-front work to increase efficiency, and a built-in follow up with the school. The purpose of the reviews will be to identify two to three key leverage points on which schools can focus improvement.

What's on the Horizon:

English Language Proficiency Growth Metrics. Colorado transitioned to a new English language proficiency assessment, the ACCESS for ELLs assessment, which is aligned with Colorado's English language proficiency standards. Transitioning between assessments raised questions about the validity of the percentiles created by the Growth Model calculations. While the underlying English language proficiency constructs in the two assessments (CELAppro and ACCESS for ELLs) have some commonality, the ACCESS for ELLs assessment includes additional constructs. The impact of this transition on the student growth percentiles will be analyzed in May.

As a result of the unknown impact on the growth percentiles, accountability measures that use English language proficiency growth may be affected (School and District Performance Frameworks and Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO 1)). CDE is working closely across the department, with the Technical Advisory Panel for Longitudinal Growth, and with practitioners to analyze the data and make a determination for use in accountability. A decision will be shared in early June.

New Accountability and Tracker Contacts. If your district will have a transition with the assigned Accountability or UIP Tracker contact for the 2013-14 school year, please remember CDE will need information for the new representative. In May, we'll send information about how districts can update their contacts.

Alternative Education Campuses - School Performance Framework Updates. CDE and external stakeholders have been reviewing data and indicators included in the Alternative Education Campus School Performance Frameworks. Through this review, it became apparent that the AEC SPFs do not represent a complete picture of school performance based

on the four performance indicators: Student Academic Achievement, Student Longitudinal Academic Growth, Student Engagement, and Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness, as quite a few schools do not have state measures in these areas and they have chosen not to submit optional measures. As a result, the understanding of the performance is quite limited. Based on stakeholder input, CDE will implement a policy change for 2013-14 requiring districts to submit data for their AECs in each indicator area, if state level data is not available. Technical assistance is available to districts and their AECs on what additional data may be submitted, how to analyze the information and use it for both the frameworks and the improvement planning process. More information about the policy change, visit: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/StateAccountabilityAECs.asp>

Updated UIP Template. Based on districts' feedback and CDE's review of plans, the UIP template is being updated for the 2013-14 school year. It is expected that changes in the template will be kept to a minimum. The 2012-13 school and district UIP templates should be available by this summer.

TELL Colorado Survey Data Release. Information including a recorded webinar explaining how to access data and how to use the data, and a step-by-step data guide will be released this month. Also, CDE will issue an initial report on statewide trends.

Performance-Based Monitoring. The Federal Programs Unit is developing a performance-based monitoring system for use with ESEA programs. The goal is to support implementation of high-quality programs and interventions, while also meeting the state's obligation to monitor for compliance of statutes and regulations. Office of ESEA Programs is working to develop a pilot to be rolled out for the spring of 2014-15. By the fall of 2013, the Office plans to provide districts with additional information about the new system and give them a chance to critique proposed changes. For more information, contact Trish Boland, director of the Office of ESEA Programs at boland_t@cde.state.co.us.

Safety Accreditation Report. The Safety Accreditation Report is due **June 28** and has been updated to match what is stated in legislation. The report can be found in the Automated Data Exchange collection in the safety and discipline indicator collection section. For more information, contact Annette Severson at severson_a@cde.state.co.us or John Condie at condie_j@cde.state.co.us.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **May 15** – Early Literacy Grant due
- **May 15** – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Grant due
- **May 17** – Teacher of the Year applications due
- **Summer:** CDE publishes final district and school UIPs on SchoolView.org.
- **June 1** – Accreditation Contracts are due to CDE for districts Accredited with Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plans
- **June 1** – New school and closed school requests for 2013-14 must be submitted to CDE
- **July 1** – AEC applications and selection of measures are due to CDE

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:

State of Colorado Information Sharing Summits. As part of the Colorado Children and Youth Information Sharing Initiatives, regional summits are being held to discuss sharing of information across disciplines and state agencies. School and district participation is needed to represent the unique concerns and interests of the education sector. During the summits, new tools and products, such as a standardized consent form, will be made public for review. Additional topics for discussion include: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or FERPA; De-bunking the Myths; Family Perspectives on information sharing; HIPAA and 42 CFR; and other useful information.

Summit dates and locations: May 15 – Greeley; June 14 - Adams County; June 21 – Pueblo; July 19 – Aurora. For more information and/or to register, visit <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDHS-ChildYouthFam/CBON/1251639782979>. There is no cost for registration and resources may be available to support attendance.

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

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

Overview:

State statute requires the State Board of Education 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. Several drafts have been advanced based on long-term student performance information, guiding principles and field feedback.

The current draft recommendations emphasize student competency over seat time. They focus on academic competency in English, math, science and social studies; student demonstration of 21st century skills; and students' successful completion of career and academic planning. School districts may supplement these guidelines with more criteria or greater thresholds of rigor.

The draft is based on the philosophy that students who earn a diploma need to be prepared for the expectations which face them the day after graduation. To proceed to college-level classes, have choices for positions of leadership in the armed service or to earn a self-

supporting salary without need for retraining, the high school diploma guidelines represent the conditions for entrance into what is life after high school.

The proposal is predicated on the belief that while not identical, the competency proofs are approximately equal in levels of effort, and represent different ways students can play to their strengths. The competency options are choices for local districts to determine and the thresholds of rigor are selected to be beneficial for students' success after high school.

What's Happening Now:

The Colorado Graduation Guidelines Advisory Council is refining the draft recommendations based on feedback from the State Board and from constituents in preparation for submission of a final recommendation to the Board in May. A draft can be found at <http://bit.ly/10qCloU>.

What's on the Horizon:

May's state board meeting will be when the Colorado Graduation Guidelines Advisory Council submits its report. The May board meeting will also be when the state board discusses with the Council the recommendation, finalizes its decisions and adopts a set of graduation guidelines.

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, 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
- 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
- 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.

To access all CDE fact sheets visit:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheets.html>

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