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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:

Educator Evaluation Requirements

Beginning this school year, all Colorado school districts will implement an evaluation system that aligns with the teacher and principal Quality Standards and Colorado State Board of Education rules. However, this first year is a hold-harmless year, meaning a final rating of partially effective or ineffective will not count towards the loss of an educator's non-probationary status. ***This gives all districts the opportunity to adjust to the new evaluation requirements in a low-stakes environment.*** The new evaluation requirements include opportunities for reflection, review, professional development and growth. For this 2013-14 school year, all districts must:

- Have annual evaluations for all teachers and principals
- Base 50 percent of an educator's final rating on their professional practice aligned to the new Quality Standards
- Base 50 percent of an educator's final rating on multiple measures of student learning aligned to state board of education rules
- Combine the professional practices and measures of student learning into a final rating of either highly effective, effective, partially effective or ineffective

Improvements to the Model System's Teacher and Principal Rubrics

Throughout the last year with the support and participation of pilot districts, CDE monitored the usability, fairness and credibility of the Colorado State Model Evaluation System. As a result, improvements to CDE's evaluation approach and to the content of the [teacher](http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/SMES-Teacher.asp) (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/SMES-Teacher.asp>) and [principal](http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/SMES-Principal.asp) (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/SMES-Principal.asp>) rubrics were recently made. Key changes include:

- Shortened rubrics
- More specific professional practices language to help set performance expectations

- Eliminated redundancies
- Most non-observable professional practices (in the teacher rubric) have been eliminated from Standards 1, 2 and 3 as many pilot districts believed them to be biased or unfair
- The lowest category on the rubric has been changed from Not Evident to Basic.

The most significant change to the rubric involves the Not Evident column. Teachers, principals and superintendents provided feedback that the Not Evident rating level was confusing due to the double-negative involved in determining what to check. There was additional confusion that marking items in the Not Evident column was not desirable, while marking them in all other columns was desirable. As a result, CDE changed the title of the Not Evident column to Basic. Along with the name change is a change in the scoring process. Basic items will be scored the same way as all of the other rating levels. This eliminates the double negatives and dual scoring rules. This important change will result in fairer, more reliable and more easily understood ratings for teachers.

To learn more, read this one-page overview: <http://bit.ly/1dYkhKn>.

You can also [watch this short video: http://bit.ly/138vp6d](http://bit.ly/138vp6d).

Resources Available for Educator Evaluations

The CDE Educator Effectiveness team has posted a number of resources to help Colorado school districts implement the new educator evaluation requirements.

Colorado State Model Evaluation System resources:

- User's guide for the Colorado State Model Evaluation System for teachers and principals: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/SMES-Teacher.asp>

Measuring professional practices:

- Colorado State Model Evaluation System teacher rubric: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/SMES-Teacher.asp>
- Colorado State Model Evaluation System principal rubric: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/SMES-Principal.asp>

Measuring student learning:

- Measures of student learning guidance: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/StudentGrowthGuide.asp>

Inter-rater agreement:

- Six, short videos of practicing educators to support fair and consistent evaluations: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/interrateragreement.asp>

Performance Management System

RANDA Solutions, Inc. was selected to create an online performance management system as an optional technology platform at **no cost to districts**. This tool will provide online web-based entry of educator evaluation data and make tracking and reporting a much more useful process. This coming year, RANDA will be creating the system. The system is expected to be available for beta tests by December 2013 and then available to all districts by the 2014-15 school year. Details on beta testing the RANDA technology platform will be released this fall. For the 2013-14 school year, districts can administer their performance management with the Excel teacher (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/SMES-Teacher.asp>) and principal (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/SMES-Principal.asp>) rubrics that are posted on the Educator Effectiveness website, or with any other system that works for the district. RANDA will be able to extract all the data from the Excel tools in a batch upload so

districts will not have to duplicate work when the RANDA system is ready. This option ensures districts can focus on implementing the new educator evaluation requirements and provide meaningful feedback to their educators in this first year of implementation. Districts may also work with any vendor that provides other technology solutions.

What's on the Horizon:

Teacher Student Data Link (TSDL)

TSDL will support state and district efforts to learn from the past, understand the present and use data to make decisions that improve education systems for students. Beginning in September 2013, all Colorado school districts can begin submitting TSDL information into Data Pipeline through an interchange. A designee from each district can upload data as frequently as needed to maintain accurate data throughout the school year. More details on TSDL will be released in September. In the meantime, to learn more, visit:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/rise/TSDL.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:

The 2013-14 school year marks the first year of full implementation of the Colorado Academic Standards, the implementation of the READ Act and the first of a two-year school readiness initiative implementation process. The Teaching and Learning Unit offers schools and districts resources and supports to enhance student learning and achievement.

What's Happening Now:

Standards

The Standards and Instructional Support Office has worked with superintendents to provide support for standards-based unit development. CDE's content specialists work with teams of teachers within districts to build full instructional units based on the samples created by Colorado teachers this past fall. The units will include learning strategies, resource suggestions, differentiation options and assessment ideas linked to helping all students master the Colorado Academic Standards. Superintendents interested in voluntarily participating can contact Brian Sevier for more information at sevier_b@cde.state.co.us. Participation details are available at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/StandardsAndInstruction/SampleCurriculum-summer2013participation.asp>

School Readiness

Teaching Strategies GOLD training: CDE added training sessions for kindergarten teachers planning to begin using the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system in their classrooms in the 2013–14 school year. Each session provides the same information as the June training sessions. Trainings will be held Friday, Aug. 2 in Eagle; Monday, Aug. 5 in Denver metro north and Wednesday, Aug. 7 in Alamosa. Registration and location information can be found at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness/goldtraining.asp>.

New school readiness resources in development: CDE will release the first version of a school readiness assessment guidance document in late August. The resource will provide background information on the school readiness initiative, guidance related to literacy assessment in alignment with the READ Act and a sample school readiness plan. A draft of the guidance document and a feedback form are available at:

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

The READ Act

The state allocated \$15.3 million to the Early Literacy Fund for the 2013-14 school year to be distributed to districts across the state according to the number of students identified with a significant reading deficiency. The department is currently validating data and anticipates the process to distribute funds will begin by mid-September.

The READ Act calls for districts to provide interventions to each K-3 student identified with a significant reading deficiency. Per-pupil intervention money for students with significant reading deficiencies must be used in one or more ways that include providing full-day kindergarten, purchasing tutoring services in reading, providing other targeted, scientifically- or evidence-based intervention services (including but not limited to those identified in the READ program advisory list) or operating a summer school literacy program. Funds may also be used to purchase diagnostic assessments on the approved assessment list.

Questions about identification of a significant reading deficiency and allowable uses of funds can be directed to Pati Montgomery, executive director of the Office of Literacy at montgomery_p@cde.state.co.us. If you would like more information about the READ Act, visit: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index.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:

Assessments administered by the unit include summative content assessments, English language proficiency assessments, college/career ready assessments and alternate content assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

What's Happening Now:

TCAP and CoAlt Results Release

State, district and school level results for TCAP and CoAlt assessments are embargoed until **Wednesday, Aug. 14**. Results may not be released, shared with the media, or presented in any public meeting until the embargo has been lifted. However, results may be shared with principals and teachers for the purpose of school improvement planning. TCAP and CoAlt score reports are scheduled to be delivered to districts during the week of **Aug. 7**, at which time, individual student reports may be shared with their parents.

Educator Recruitment for Science and Social Studies Assessments

Educator involvement in the development and review of state assessments is essential to ensuring the item content is appropriate for Colorado students and that the items are not unfairly advantageous or disadvantageous to a particular group of students. Assessment development provides a unique professional development opportunity for participating educators. CDE would like your district to be represented in the assessment development process. Educators who have been selected from the educator database will be invited to participate in assessment development activities. For those interested, visit: <http://educator.force.com/CO>. All participants will be reimbursed for travel expenses and also receive substitute pay or honorarium.

The next educator assessment development opportunity involves the review of aggregated student performance data from the summative science and social studies spring field tests. At this meeting, educators can examine and evaluate the performance of items before they are included on the operational spring 2014 assessments. The meeting will be **Aug. 21 and 22**.

For more information about the new Colorado summative science and social studies assessments, please contact Jason Clymer at clymer_j@cde.state.co.us.

English Language Arts & Mathematics Assessments: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)

PARCC is the multi-state assessment consortium for English language arts and mathematics, of which Colorado is a governing member. The consortium recently released information about the PARCC non-summative assessment components which are optional and noted below.

- PARCC's mid-year assessments will be available for use during the 2014-2015 school year.
- The K-1 and Diagnostic Assessments for grades 2-8 will be available for use during the 2015-2016 school year.

PARCC's speaking and listening assessment component is currently considered required; however, this component will not be available until the 2015-2016 school year. More information will be provided as it becomes available from PARCC.

For more information about PARCC, contact Stephanie Boyd at boyd_s@cde.state.co.us.

What's on the Horizon:

Science and Social Studies Fall Field Testing

Fall field testing will take place in mid- to late September for elementary and middle school content and in late October through mid-November for high school content. **Districts are strongly encouraged to take advantage of fall field testing.** Participation will provide districts with the benefits of testing technology capacity, training personnel and exposing students to new item types in a no-stakes environment.

The elementary and middle school field tests occur one grade higher than the intended assessed grades. Social studies will be assessed at 5th and 8th grades on 4th and 7th grade assessment frameworks. Science will be assessed at 6th and 9th grades on 5th and 8th grade assessment frameworks. If your district is interested in participating in the fall field tests, contact Christina Wirth-Hawkins at wirth-hawkins_c@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, or you can visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/index.asp>.

Accountability, Performance & Support

Overview:

CDE supports schools and districts in the continuous improvement process through its focus on implementing quality improvement plans, school and district support systems, accountability measures, federal programs and data analysis.

What's Happening Now:

Accountability and Improvement

TCAP growth and ACCESS for ELLs growth data are available for districts to download in CEDAR. The department will release preliminary District and School Performance Framework reports to districts this month.

TCAP Growth and ACCESS Growth Data Release

Districts can now download growth data for TCAP reading, writing, math and English Language Proficiency from CEDAR. The data in CEDAR are provided as flat files. The TCAP growth data are provided in the same file format as last year

(http://www.schoolview.org/documents/Flat_File_layout_2012.docx). Additionally, a tentative release date of **Aug. 7** is planned for districts to access their School and District Summary Growth Reports in CEDAR.

At the **Aug. 14** state board meeting, CDE will present the combined achievement and growth results from 2013. On that date, the Colorado Growth Model visualization tool will be populated with 2013 data and available publicly. Additionally, the 2013 School and District Summary Growth reports will be live in SchoolView as well.

By **Aug. 30**, CDE will send the bundled Individual Student Reports through the secure FTP (file transfer protocol) site and notify district assessment coordinators and superintendents on how to download their packages of reports.

Achievement and growth results will be updated in Data Lab and Data Center in **September**.

CEDAR

The Colorado Education Data Analysis & Reporting System (CEDAR) is a system designed by CDE to create customizable reports to measure and present the progress of students over time so that you can quickly address the needs of many different audiences. CDE has added new training videos that walk new superintendents, or anyone that needs a refresher, through the process of logging on and provides an overview of report choices and more. For more information, visit <https://cedar2.cde.state.co.us/>.

District and School Performance Frameworks.

The Department will release the preliminary 2013 District and School Performance Framework (DPF/SPF) reports to districts by **Aug. 21**. Reports are draft versions for district review; they are not public and are considered unofficial until adopted by the state board in December. Districts can access the reports in CEDAR using the instructions that will be e-mailed to districts on **Aug. 21**.

The 2013 DPFs and SPFs include two adjustments: (1) growth in English language proficiency (ACCESS) will be measured only by the median growth percentile, as adequate growth cannot be calculated during the transition from CELApro to ACCESS, and (2) slight adjustments have been made to the participation rate. Visit the Performance Framework website for more information:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/PerformanceFrameworks.asp>.

Trainings and Support

The Accountability and Data Analysis Unit will provide webinars and office hour opportunities to help schools and districts access and interpret the growth and accountability data available. Districts/BOCES should feel free to request additional trainings or support, as needed. Send requests to Alyssa Pearson, pearson_a@cde.state.co.us.

Districts may register for **office hours** with Accountability and Data Analysis Unit staff. Office hours are for districts/schools to ask questions about their own data and accountability reports. Fifteen-minute blocks are scheduled for call-ins, but districts may sign-up for consecutive sessions if more time is needed. Starting on Aug. 7, office hours will be held on Wednesday afternoons from 2-4 p.m. and Thursday mornings from 10 a.m. to noon, through Sept. 12. To register for office hours, visit:

www.SignUpGenius.com/go/60B0A4FA4AB2DA02-office.

Webinars will be recorded and posted on the CDE website. **Webinars** will be offered as follows:

- Colorado Growth Model- Accessing Data: **Thursday, Aug. 8 from 10 to 10:45 a.m.**

- http://connect.enetcolorado.org/cgm_accessingdata/
- Colorado Growth Model- Accessing Data: **Wednesday, Aug. 21, from 1 to 1:45 p.m.**
 - http://connect.enetcolorado.org/cgm_accessingdata2/
- School and District Performance Frameworks Webinar: **Thursday, Aug. 15, 11 to 11:45 a.m.**
 - http://connect.enetcolorado.org/spf_dpf2013/
- School Accreditation and Request to Reconsider Process Webinar: **Monday, Aug. 26, 1 to 1:45 p.m.**
 - <http://connect.enetcolorado.org/schoolaccreditation2013/>

District Accountability and Tracker Contacts

Superintendents were emailed a survey link in May to confirm and/or update district accountability and tracker contact information. Please complete the survey by **Aug. 15**. To have the survey resent, contact Lisa Steffen, steffen_l@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6676. Accountability contacts receive all state accountability-related communications for your district, including information on performance frameworks and accreditation. Tracker contacts receive all improvement planning-related communications and are also responsible for submitting improvement plans to CDE. As in previous years, improvement plans are to be submitted to CDE via the C-FIRS Tracker system. In some cases, the district's accountability contact and tracker contact may be the same individual.

Accountability for Alternative Education Campuses

The Colorado State Board of Education will review and approve applications for schools designated as an Alternative Education Campus at its September meeting. The approved list will be published on the CDE website. The department is reviewing submitted measures, metrics and cut-points and will follow up with districts as needed. Visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/StateAccountabilityAECs.asp> for more information.

Unified Improvement Planning Templates Now Posted

The 2013-14 district and school UIP templates and addenda forms are now posted on the "Templates" page of the UIP website. There are minimal changes to the templates based on feedback from the field and CDE's review of improvement plans this past year. Note that plans are designed to incorporate planning efforts for at least two school years and should be revised at least annually. The 2013-14 UIP should incorporate the plans for the 2013-14 school year as well as future plans for the 2014-15 school year. All schools, including new schools and Alternative Education Campuses, are expected to complete/revise a UIP each year. The templates, addenda and a catalogue of changes can be found at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/index.asp>.

Federal Programs

The Office of ESEA Programs has initiated an internal process to reconsider Supplemental Educational Services. This includes an analysis of what works, what doesn't, and what supports will best allow Title I schools to meet the needs of struggling students. Any resulting changes regarding the SES process will be vetted with districts. To suggest improvements to the SES program, contact Trish Boland, [Boland_T@cde.state.co.us](mailto: Boland_T@cde.state.co.us).

What's on the Horizon:

Accountability and Improvement

Accreditation Forms and Requests to Reconsider

Based on the preliminary DPF and SPF reports, districts must submit (1) the School Accreditation Form indicating the district and school board's accreditation ratings for their schools, **and, if applicable** (2) Requests to Reconsider for any district wanting to appeal the district's accreditation rating or any of the school's plan type assignments, by **Oct. 15**.

Districts are highly encouraged to notify CDE (Lisa Steffen, steffen_l@cde.state.co.us) of their intent to submit a request to reconsider by **Sept. 16**, to allow CDE staff to provide adequate technical assistance. CDE is unable to provide any follow-up or clarification to requests received after **Oct. 14**.

CDE will send districts their passwords for the School Accreditation form in late August. The form will be available online on the accountability website. Remember, the form must be completed online **and** printed, signed by the superintendent and school board president and scanned to CDE by **Oct. 15**. Visit the website for detailed policy guidance on the Accreditation and Request to Reconsider process, with samples of last year's form: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/RequestToReconsider.asp>.

Unified Improvement Planning Pre-Populated Report

School and district pre-populated reports will be released to districts about two weeks after the release of the preliminary performance frameworks. The anticipated release is on **Sept. 4**. A link to access the documents will be e-mailed to superintendents and accountability contacts.

UIP Fall Training Schedule

Regional UIP training sessions will be held this fall to support districts through the stages of the improvement planning process. Visit the UIP website for training dates, locations, session descriptions and to register: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/UIP_TrainingAndSupport_Register.asp.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **Aug. 14:** Public release of 2013 TCAP achievement and growth results
- **Aug. 15:** Deadline for districts to update or confirm accountability and tracker contacts
- **Aug. 21:** Release of preliminary 2013 District and School Performance Framework reports to districts for review
- **Sept. 4:** Release of preliminary pre-populated 2013 UIPs (Section I) to districts
- **Sept. 16:** Deadline for districts to notify CDE of their intent to submit a Request to Reconsider
- **Oct. 5:** Release of preliminary 2013 AEC School Performance Framework reports to districts for review
- **Oct. 15:** Deadline for all districts to submit the School Accreditation Form and (if desired) Requests to Reconsider district accreditation ratings and school plan type assignments.
- **Oct. 15 -** Districts with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type may submit revised UIPs for early feedback. Schools with a TIG grant may also submit a plan.

For more information on accountability and improvement, contact Keith Owen, Deputy Commissioner, 303-866-6099.

Innovation and Choice

Overview:

Graduation Guidelines

Colorado's Graduation Guidelines were adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education in May 2013 in support of this goal. This begins the 7-year implementation period and conversation around graduation guidelines as well as next steps in supporting districts in this work. Rebecca Holmes, Associate Commissioner of Innovation, Choice, & Engagement, and Misti Ruthven, Manager of Postsecondary Readiness & Policy, are leading the implementation of graduation guidelines in collaboration with schools and districts.

What's Happening Now:

During the 2013-14 academic year districts are encouraged to review the state board

approved graduation guidelines and consider adopting local graduation requirements that meet or exceed them. Districts will then begin implementation of graduation policies with the sixth grade class of 2014-15 for their graduation in 2021.

CDE will convene seven work groups to inform the implementation of graduation guidelines. We will contact the CDE experts connected with these areas over the next few weeks to discuss how you or your team members would like to be involved. Initial work groups are:

- 21st Century Skills
- Assessment
- District Capstone
- Earned Industry Certificate
- Individual Career & Academic Plans (ICAP)
- Postsecondary Workforce Readiness (PWR) Endorsed Diploma
- Special Populations (students with disabilities, gifted and talented, and English language learners)

Discussions with early adopter districts will begin in fall 2013. To learn more about graduation guidelines or the work groups see

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/SecondaryInitiatives/GraduationGuidelines.htm> or contact Misti Ruthven at ruthven_m@cde.state.co.us. A **new fact sheet** is also available online at <http://bit.ly/14gUnjy>.

What's on the Horizon:

Library Grant Opportunity

The Legislature included in the state's budget an appropriation of \$2 million for non-competitive grants for purchase of library materials as defined in statute (see [CRS 24-90-401](#)). The Joint Budget Committee designated those funds be used for educational materials in libraries which support or enhance early literacy and early learning. Applications will be available in September 2013. Funding is scheduled to begin in October, with all funds spent by June 30, 2014. A list of eligible districts and preliminary grant award amounts can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/StateGrants.htm>.

Organizational Effectiveness

*This month's update focuses on **RISE** and **Data Pipeline**.*

Overview:

Data Pipeline efficiently captures state educational data affecting every local education agency data collections process. Data Pipeline replaces the Automated Data Exchange (ADE). Superintendent support and involvement in the Data Pipeline project is important as Pipeline is a critical, integral component for the success of RISE.

For the upcoming roll out of Pipeline, Data Teams should download the new file layouts. For specific information, teams should visit:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/DataPipeline/inter_interchanges.asp

What's Happening Now:

The first wave of Data Pipeline successfully launched July 1 with Student/Educator IDs and Directory Information. The phase I pilot for special education December count is currently in progress. Phase II pilot in progress include:

- Student October
- SBD (TCAP, ACT, ACCESS)
- Report Card March
- TSDL
- Human Resources
- Title I
- 11th-Grade Alternate Assessment
- Finance

Phase II pilots are open to all local education agencies. To serve as a pilot, contact the Pipeline Project Team, datapipeline.support@cde.state.co.us.

Town halls and training webinars are held weekly. To participate, visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/DataPipeline/train_trainings.asp.

What's on the Horizon:

Phase II pilot special education end-of-year commences July 29. Data Pipeline Interchanges go live Sept. 1.

Visit the Data Pipeline home page for more information:
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/DataPipeline/index.asp>

For more information, contact Lisa Bradley, IMS project manager, 303-866-4902.

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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