CDE UPDATE
Strategic Priorities

COLORADO
DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION   cde

December 2013

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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:
Classroom teaching and school leadership are the strongest school-based factors impacting student achievement. CDE supports the state's 178 school districts to attract, prepare and support great educators as a part of meeting the requirements of S.B.10-191, the Great Teachers and Leaders Act.

What's Happening Now:
Action Required for Districts Using Excel Files to Calculate Final Ratings for the Colorado State Model Evaluation System
In November, superintendents were notified about the scales used in the State Model Evaluation System to determine an overall professional practices rating for teachers and principals. Thanks to the many districts that have partnered with CDE, it was discovered that the scales in the model system resulted in some unexpected overall professional practice ratings for a few educators.

The scale issue only affects the final professional practice rating and only with certain scoring combinations. This change does not affect the content or process of using the rubric, the self-assessment, the mid-year conversations, the ongoing evaluation process, or the selection and implementation of measures of student learning. Adjustments made to the scales are intended to make the system more fair and intuitive overall (for more detail on the scale changes visit http://bit.ly/17lUdt5).

There are several relatively easy options to fix the scales. The CDE Educator Effectiveness team has made necessary changes to the Excel files and all the files are updated on the website. Options to update your Excel files are listed below.
Please note: You will only need to take action if you are using the Excel files from the CDE website, are calculating final score by hand, or are using a vendor other than PD360 or BloomBoard to calculate the final ratings.

- Collect all Excel files from your staff into one folder (on your computer) and run an Excel "fixer" program on them. CDE has created the "fixer" file and will send it to you with instructions. It only takes a few minutes.
- Collect all Excel files from your staff into one folder and call us; we'll run the "fixer"

program for you.
- If you have not begun, or only have a few, you can download a "fixed" Excel version and start again. The new files for teachers can be found at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/smes-teacher. The files for principals are available at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/smes-principal.
- Continue using the files you have and apply the new scales to determine the final rating.
- If you are calculating the final rating by hand, use the new scales published in the user's guide (http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/usersguide).

For support, contact Toby King at King_T@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6964. He can help you if you are using your own vendor or technology solution to run the state model system, can put you in touch with staff quickly that can run the "fixer," or talk you through any questions.

Evaluator Training Providers for the Colorado State Model Evaluation System
Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, CDE will phase out of training for the Colorado State Model Evaluation System. Rather than CDE conducting training on the model system, approved evaluator training providers will conduct the trainings. CDE is beginning the process of approving evaluator training providers for the model system. The application for evaluator training providers is now available (http://bit.ly/17ISLai). BOCES, school districts, education organizations, for-profit providers, non-profit providers, institutions of higher education and individuals are encouraged to apply. Providers wanting this endorsement will be approved to train evaluators of teachers, specialized service professionals and principals. The first step in the application is to turn in an intent to apply by **Friday, Dec. 6**. To learn more, listen to the FAQ webinar at http://bit.ly/17MZzKZ.
Some additional notes:
- If your district is training designee evaluators (a peer evaluator or licensed person without a Principal or Administrator license) you must go through this formal process to become an approved evaluator training provider.

- If your district is just training principals (with a Principal or Administrator license), you do not need to go through this process. Training can be given to your principals by district personnel that have been trained by CDE.

What's on the Horizon:
State Model Online Performance Management System
CDE is working with RANDA Solutions, Inc. to create an online performance management system to support districts/BOCES in the implementation of the Colorado State Model Evaluation System. RANDA will power the State Model Online Performance Management System which is *optional* for districts. Each district has the autonomy to select a vendor or design a performance management system locally that best meets their needs. Beta testing for the State Model Online Performance Management System begins in spring of 2014 and the system will be available for optional district use beginning in the 2014-15 school year. To learn more, download the fact sheet:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/RANDA%20FactSheet%20FINAL%202.pdf.

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.

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 three-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 Implementation
New Resources Available: New online resources are available, including nationally vetted instructional resources for mathematics and reading, writing, and communicating. Content specialists have identified some of the most useful open-source resources for mathematics and English/language arts teachers at:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/common-core-instructional-resources.

School Readiness: Timeline Extended
School Readiness Assessment Menu: After a review this fall of school readiness assessments currently in the marketplace, the Colorado School Readiness Assessment Subcommittee was unable to identify additional quality school readiness assessments for the menu. In November, the state board affirmed the department's recommendation to extend the implementation timeline for full implementation of school readiness assessments and plans by one year. This extension will allow the marketplace to meet the growing demand for quality school readiness assessments. Districts now also get additional time to support kindergarten teachers with implementation of the new standards and the READ Act while building capacity for the school readiness work in advance of full implementation in the 2015-16 school year.

Districts should continue to progress with planning and implementation for the school readiness initiative. The department will continue to support nearly 90 districts already implementing TS GOLD. Districts that planned to implement TS GOLD in 2014-15 should continue as planned. Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Funds will continue to be available to districts implementing this work and those planning to do so in 2014-15. We also expect to be able to make the Race to the Top funds available for districts that choose to implement school readiness assessments in 2015-16.

Teaching Strategies GOLD Subscriptions
Colorado was granted supplemental funds from the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant to support a greater portion of subscription costs for school readiness assessment through 2016. As a result, the department is able to fund all subscriptions for Teaching Strategies GOLD for all interested districts for the 2014-15 school year. The department will initiate an application process in early 2014.

The READ Act
Approval Process for New Interim Reading Assessments: This fall, CDE chose the approved interim reading assessments for use with the READ Act. Currently, the assessments approved for the purposes of CBLA (DIBELS, PALS, and DRA-2) are approved for use with the READ Act. The department anticipates making recommendations to the state board on interim assessments at the December board meeting with a vote anticipated at the January meeting. Following the adoption of an approved interim assessment list, districts will have until **July 1, 2016** to transition to the approved interim assessments.

For more information about standards, visit
http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/index.asp or contact Melissa Colsman, executive director of teaching and learning, 303-866-6737.

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:
Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS): Science and Social Studies – Field Testing
About 114 districts participated in spring and fall field testing. Across elementary, middle and high school, 62,243 science and social studies assessments were submitted by students. Data generated from the field tests are being used to evaluate the items for possible inclusion in the 2014 assessments.

CMAS: Science and Social Studies – Technology
The science and social studies assessments will be delivered online this spring. Device information provided by districts to the Technology Readiness Tool paired with district success in spring and fall field testing suggests that districts are on track to deliver the assessments online. Use of the paper-based assessment is reserved for a very small group of students who need an accommodated paper form to access the assessments. CDE and Pearson have conducted site visits to all districts expressing interest. Site visits help districts ensure their testing environments are ready for testing. Technology coordinators for districts concerned about their technology readiness should contact Collin Bonner at 303-866-6752 or bonner_c@cde.state.co.us.

CMAS: Science and Social Studies – Educator Rangefinding Meeting
Selected Colorado educators will participate this month in the high school science and social studies rangefinding meeting. At this meeting, educators will review student responses to field tested constructed response items. Using each item's scoring rubric, educators will select exemplary student responses that represent each point category defined by the rubric. Decisions made by educators at this meeting will provide the basis for the scoring of student responses on the operational assessments. Including educators in the assessment development process is critical to ensuring that state assessments are appropriate for Colorado students. Assessment development and review opportunities will continue to be available to Colorado educators. Interested educators can visit http://educator.force.com/CO to apply. CDE is in need of educators with content and special populations expertise.

CoAlt Administration Trainings: CoAlt assessment administration trainings for district assessment coordinators will continue in December. CoAlt assessments are for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Training includes a full day event with CoAlt reading, writing and mathematics in the morning and CoAlt science and social studies in the afternoon. Four trainings were conducted last month with additional trainings slated for **Wednesday, Dec. 4 in Limon** and **Wednesday, Dec. 11 in Denver/Golden.** For more information on the trainings, visit: http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/CoAltAssess-Training.asp or contact Mira Monroe at Monroe_m@cde.state.co.us.

Colorado ACT (COACT):
The ACT accommodations Q&A session is on **Wednesday, Dec. 11**. More information will be provided by email to district assessment coordinators.

New Assessment eNewsletter: CDE recently launched a new e-newsletter with important monthly updates to help with the implementation of new assessments. Subscribe using (http://bit.ly/1bfF6p3). Past issues are at http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/e-newsletters.

What's on the Horizon:
ACCESS for ELLs Administration Window
The ACCESS for ELLs administration window will be open from **Jan. 6 through Feb. 7**.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:
- **Dec. 6** - Early Test Window Requests due. State summative assessment windows for 2014 are available at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/CoAssess-AssessmentWindow.asp.
- **Dec. 13** – TCAP Nonstandard accommodation requests due to CDE.
- **Dec. 13** – COACT off-site proposals due.
- **Jan. 15** – TCAP Pre-Coded labels will be extracted from the Data Pipeline.
- **Jan. 24** – Application for ACT-Approved Test Accommodations with accompanying documentation for each student needing accommodations due to ACT.
- **Jan. 27** – Window for ACT to receive ACT-Approved Accommodations Late Consideration Form.

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:
School and District Performance Framework Final Release
Final district accreditation ratings were made in November and are at http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performanceframeworkresults. School Performance Frameworks will be approved by the state board on **Wednesday, Dec. 11**. Following the state board presentation, frameworks will be available at http://www.schoolview.org/.

Finalized UIP Pre-Populated Templates
CDE will update the pre-populated reports for the Unified Improvement Plans once Performance Frameworks are finalized in mid-December. CDE will repopulate all district level reports, all AEC school reports and any schools with updated plan type assignments approved through the request to reconsider process. Superintendents and district accountability contacts will be notified once those reports are available. Schools and districts should use the 2013-14 UIP template when revising their plans to meet state and federal requirements. Priority Improvement and Turn-around schools and district must also attach program addenda. Instructions for that are included in the customized directions in Section I of the pre-populated report. Addenda forms and explanation of requirements are available at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/UIP_Templates.asp.

On the Horizon:
Jan. 15 - UIP Winter Submission Cycle - Required Plans Due
Schools and districts with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type are required to

submit UIPs for review by **Jan. 15, 2014** through the online Tracker system which will open on **Dec. 16**. Resources for UIP submissions are available at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/UIP_TrainingAndSupport_Tracker.asp.

Submission of UIPs for SchoolView - Winter Cycle
Another optional submission window will open Dec. 16-Jan. 15 for any district and/or school to submit revised UIPs for posting on SchoolView. Districts or schools submitting a plan for posting must use the online Tracker system. Those plans will replace currently posted plan in February. For more information, visit: http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/2013-14_UIP_SubmissionChart.pdf.

Important Dates:
- **Jan. 15:** Schools and districts with a Turnaround or Priority Improvement plan type are required to submit UIPs.
- **April 15:** All school and district UIPs must be submitted for posting on SchoolView.

For more information on accountability and improvement, 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:
GED Closeout
The current version of the GED test—the 2002 Series GED Test—will expire at the end of 2013, along with incomplete test scores. Test-takers need to finish the GED test by the end of 2013.

Educators should encourage students to take or finish their tests by **Dec. 31**. There are five sections of the test, and each section can be taken individually over time. However, test-takers need to realize that section scores from 2013 or earlier cannot be combined with section scores on the new 2014 test. On Dec. 31, all individual section scores will expire. Those who have not passed all sections of the GED by the end of year will have to start over. For communication resources about the close-out of the current GED test, visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/GEDcloseout.htm. Interested GED test-takers can find more information at www.finishtheGED.com.

"Amnesty days," where the $150 test fee will be waived, will be offered in Denver to any interested parties. The amnesty days are at Denver Human Services East, 3815 Steele St., in Denver. Test takers must pre-register by calling 720-865-5541. The dates are:
• **Friday, Dec. 6**, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
• **Friday, Dec. 13**, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
• **Saturday, Dec. 28**, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
For more information on the Denver GED Initiative, including how to register for a space, visit http://bit.ly/1eJPPpQ.

What's on the Horizon:
New 2014 GED
Beginning Jan. 2, there will be a new GED in Colorado. Colorado uses GED to issue High School Equivalency Diplomas, and with the 2014 GED aligned to more rigorous standards,

having this diploma will reflect student's readiness for postsecondary education and the work force.

What's New?
- The 2014 GED will be taken exclusively on the computer.
- The test will continue to be taken in-person at approved testing centers, **not online**.
- The 2014 GED is aligned with new state standards, so those that pass demonstrate they meet rigorous standards of high school completion and college and career readiness.
- Test takers will get their scores reported back the same day they test, within three hours of completion.
- Scores will provide detailed, personalized feedback on specific skills that can be improved for a higher score, and targeted study recommendations.
- The 2014 GED will focus on critical thinking and problem solving skills, testing four content areas: Reasoning through Language Arts, Mathematical Reasoning, Science, and Social Studies.
- Students can register, schedule, and pay for only those parts of the tests they are ready to take.

For more information on the New 2014 GED visit http://www.gedtestingservice.com.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:
Request for ASCENT Slots
Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment
Districts have until **Feb. 1** to submit a request for the number of ASCENT participants for the 2014-15 school year. This is a change from the **Sept.1** deadline, which was updated during the most recent legislative session. An updated request form will be provided to districts closer to this date. Districts will then have until **May 1** to submit an official affidavit with final ASCENT participant numbers for the 2014-15 school year. After **June 1**, districts will receive notification of the number of ASCENT slots that have been allocated to their district. For more information on the ASCENT program visit
http://www.cde.state.co.us/secondaryinitiatives/ce_index.

Tier II Submission for the Colorado Charter Schools Program Start-up Grant
The second submission period for the CCSP Start-up Grant, Tier II, kicks off in January with submissions due by charter applicants on **Feb. 18**. New school and significant expansion applicants will be accepted this year. All applicants must have their charter contract or renewal finalized and signed no later than **Feb. 18**. Key dates and information for this submission period include:
- **Jan. 8**: Start-up Grant Writers Boot Camp – mandatory training for the grant application team (if not already completed at the Aug. 21 event)
- **Jan. 14:** Intent to Submit and Eligibility Forms Due
- **Feb. 7**: Optional CCSP Grant Budget Workshop
- **Feb. 18**: Start-up Grant Applications Due (electronic and hard copies due by 11am)
- **Feb. 28**: Start-up Grant Review
- **March 4**: Start-up Grant Award Notification
- **March 6**: Start-up Grant Post-Award Webinar – for grantees and their authorizers
More information on the grant program can be found at:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/cchgrn00.asp. To register for events, visit
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/chartecalendar. For other questions, contact Gina Schlieman, Charter School Program and Grant Manager, at 303-866-6790 or
Schlieman_g@cde.state.co.us.

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 Announcement: New Executive Director of Licensure
Dr. Colleen O'Neil has been selected to fill the Executive Director of the Office of Professional Services and Licensing position that Dr. Jami Goetz will be retiring from in mid-December. Dr. O'Neil brings both district and state level experience to this role having worked for both Greely Public Schools and the South Dakota Department of Education. Read more about Dr. O'Neil here: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/news

*This month's Organizational Effectiveness update focuses on **Data Pipeline.***

Overview:
The Data Pipeline project hit a major milestone last month as districts and BOCES created and approved Student October Snapshots. The duplicate process was run and data quality strengthened. Lessons were learned and improvements have been made. Finance, Special Education December Count and Human Resources collections are in full swing

What's Happening Now:
Local education agencies are submitting and cleaning files for:
Finance. Finance December files are being submitted. Independent audits, which include a final version of the Audit Integrity Report must be submitted to CDE and the Office of the State Auditor by the end of the month. Along with the audit, the district/BOCES should mail/email the FY12-13 Accreditation Checklist, and any reconciliations for warning edits seen on the tier 2 Financial December Edit Error Report – Rollup.

Human Resources. Staff Profile and Staff Assignment files should be submitted through the Staff Interchange. Special Education employees should be indicated by both the Admin Unit/ SOP Code as well as the Special Education Assignment Flag. Snapshot approvals are due **Friday, March 14**.

Special Education December Count. Administrative units should be submitting student data through the ESSU IEP Interchange. The two files needed are Special Education Child and Special Education Participation. Data is regularly transferred into the Data Pipeline to create the December Count snapshot. A limited set of data also comes from district Student Demographic files. Administrative units and districts have been collaborating to decide which entity will be responsible for submitting the Staff Profile and Staff Assignment files for Special Education employees. There are various interim deadlines for creating snapshots, but complete December snapshot approvals are due **Jan. 22**.

CDE has been connecting with all local education agencies to ensure they have the necessary roles assigned within Identity Management to meet Data Pipeline requirements. If you still need assistance, submit questions and issues to datapipeline.support@cde.state.co.us or contact Katy Jackson (Jackson_A@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6759) or Dennis St. Hilaire (St.Hilaire_D@cde.state.co.us, 303-8666840).

What's on the Horizon:
CDE is aware that the top three concerns for districts within Data Pipeline are Cognos reports, browser inconsistency issues and file upload times. CDE has solicited and received outside vendor suggestions for improving Cognos performance and will implement the recommendations over the next month or so. LEAs have been forced to use different browsers within the Pipeline for various functions. CDE will produce a document clarifying browsers that are supported and tested, as well as offer tips about the most effective use of

browsers within the Data Pipeline application. CDE will continue investigating file upload issues. Please alert CDE when your files are taking an inordinate amount of time to load, providing details, so we can quickly resolve the issue.

Other Data Pipeline collections opening in January are the 11th-grade Alternate Assessment and the 2014-15 school code changes within the Directory.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:
Dec. 3: 2013-14 Special Education 25 percent of December Snapshot due
Dec. 4: 2013-14 Student October signature pages due
Dec. 5: 2012-13 ADE Student End of Year approvals due
Dec. 12: 2012-13 ADE Student End of Year signature pages due
Dec. 17: 2013-14 Special Education 50 percent of December Snapshot due
Dec.31: Fiscal Year 2012-13 Financial December due

For more information, contact Jan Rose Petro, director of data services, Petro_J@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6838.

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.

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