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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:

As a reminder, this year is a hold harmless year for educator evaluation. In the hold harmless year, all districts are required to evaluate all of their principals and teachers on both the professional practices (50 percent) and measures of student learning/growth (the other 50 percent). Additionally, all principals and teachers must receive a final rating combining both the professional practices and measures of student learning/growth scores into a final rating of either: highly effective, effective, partially effective or ineffective. However, a final rating of partially effective or ineffective will not count towards the loss of non-probationary status. This means that districts have an opportunity to practice all parts of the new evaluation system without a negative consequence on an educator's non-probationary status. This learning period also provides time to look at what's working and what isn't as we scale-up best practices and create new methodologies to work within the new evaluation system.

2014 Webinar Training Schedule

To support districts in the new evaluation process, CDE will continue its series of hourly monthly training webinars. The monthly topics follow the part of the evaluation process districts will be in and include an opportunity to hear from the field and interact with colleagues from around the state. To view a schedule of the webinars and to register, visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2014EEwebinarseries>.

Note: In advance of each webinar, a short 10-15 minute recorded module with an overview of the webinar content will be available on the Educator Effectiveness webpage. CDE recommends watching the module prior to the webinar.

Additional Training Opportunity for Colorado State Model Evaluation System

After receiving requests for additional trainings on the State Model Evaluation System, CDE is offering a final training for any interested individuals. After this training, all future trainings on the state model system will be conducted by approved trainers. Again, this training is a

'catch-all' training meant for individuals wanting to know more about the state model system. Attending this training does allow you to train principals and people with a principal's license in your district moving forward. However, further training would be required to train "evaluator designees" (i.e. peer evaluators without a principal's license).

The final CDE training is March 11-12 at Adams 12 Training Center in Thornton. March 11 will be dedicated to the professional practices portion of educator evaluation and March 12 will be dedicated to the measures of student learning portion. These trainings are open to superintendents, principals, assistant principals, teachers, teacher leaders, HR staff and school board members. Attendees may register for one or both of the training sessions depending on their role in their district. Registration for the trainings is free, but capacity is limited so please sign up today: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/march2014training>.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

After the March training mentioned above, CDE will no longer conduct trainings on the Colorado Model Evaluation System. Trainings will be conducted by *approved* training providers. The deadline for the intent to apply to become an approved State Model Training Provider has been extended through the month of **January**. BOCES, public school districts, education organizations, for-profit providers, non-profit providers, institutions of higher education and individuals are encouraged to apply. Providers who seek this endorsement will be approved to train all evaluators, including evaluators of teachers, specialized service professionals, principals **and evaluator designees**. Applicants will be required to attend CDE trainings on the model system and depending on the time they submit their intent to apply, they may be limited in the trainings they can attend. To access the application visit, http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/EvaluatorTrainingApp_State%20Model_FINAL_Nov2013.pdf.

A couple additional points of clarification:

- If you have already attended a CDE train-the-trainer session on the state model evaluation system and are only training licensed evaluators (evaluators with principal's license) in your district, attending this training is not necessary. However, if you plan on training evaluator designees (no principal license) such as peer evaluators, you must be an approved provider.
- For any questions on what type of training is required, be sure to reach out to [Katy Anthes](#), 303-866-6654.

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 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

Fast Fact Information for All Content Areas: Located on the main page of each content area, these one-page documents highlight standards-relevant legislation and the related work of the Standards and Instructional Support Team. The documents also provide helpful links to content-specific resources and webpages/sites. More information can be found at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction>.

School Readiness

School Readiness Assessment Funding: The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund will provide resources and supports for districts with 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 2014, CDE will release a Request for Application for districts that wish to access grant funds to pay for subscriptions for kindergarten students for 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>.

The READ Act

Approval Process for New Interim Reading Assessments: The READ Act requires use of an interim assessment to determine whether a student has a significant reading deficiency in grades kindergarten through 3rd-grade. PALS, DIBELS and DRA2 are currently approved for this purpose. This fall, the department conducted a review process to identify interim reading assessments for use in 2013-14 and beyond. A review committee consisting of educators from across Colorado including teachers, assessment specialists, reading specialists and instructional coaches reviewed English and Spanish reading assessments. The committee recommended the following assessments for state board consideration:

English Interim Assessment	Spanish Interim Assessment
aimsweb	
Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills Next (DIBELS Next)	Indicadores Dinámicos del Éxito en la Lectura (IDEL)
Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST)	
i Ready	
ISIP Early Reading	ISIP Early Reading Spanish
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)	Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening Español
STAR Early Literacy Enterprise	

The department shared these recommendations with the State Board of Education at its Dec. 11 meeting. The board will vote to approve interim assessments at its Feb. 13 meeting.

Districts have until July 1, 2016 to transition to the approved interim assessments. A full description of the review process and summaries of the review rubrics for all assessments are available at <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:

ACCESS for ELLs Administration Window

The ACCESS for ELLs administration window is open from **Jan. 6 through Feb. 7.**

TCAP and CMAS: Science and Social Studies Pre-Identification Data

Districts should update their student interchange files by mid-January. The pre-identification

files will be extracted from Data Pipeline on **Jan. 15**. CDE will provide data to TCAP/CoAlt and CO ACT vendors so they can print student labels to attach to assessment booklets. Data provided to the CMAS/CoAlt vendor will also be used to pre-populate the vendor's student registration system for this spring's testing.

TCAP Training

The required annual TCAP administration training for district assessment coordinators is available as a pre-recorded webinar on the Assessment Unit TCAP training webpage. This training must be completed by **Jan. 17**.

CMAS Science and Social Studies Administration Trainings

In-person required administration trainings will be available to district assessment coordinators in late **January and early February**. Trainings will be offered in Grand Junction, Durango, Alamosa, La Junta, Limon, Greeley and Denver. Specific details regarding locations and dates will be sent to district assessment coordinators. A recording of the training will also be posted on the Assessment Unit webpage.

Area District Technology Coordinator Meetings

Area district technology coordinator meetings provide an opportunity for local DTCs to meet, exchange expertise and ideas and receive specific support for the challenges of preparing their districts for computer-based state assessments. Area meetings will be offered at the following locations:

Lamar: **Jan. 6**

Limon: **Jan. 7**

Colorado Springs: **Jan. 8**

Alamosa: **Jan. 9**

Durango: **Jan. 10**

Denver: **Jan. 15**

Eagle: **Jan. 17**

Grand Junction: **Jan. 22**

Ault: **Jan. 23**

Sterling: **Jan. 24**

DTCs may register for an area DTC meeting at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MQQD85F>. For additional information, contact Collin Bonner at bonner_c@cde.state.co.us or click on the following link: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/dtcmeetings>.

NAEP Administration Window

The NAEP administration window will be open from **Jan. 27 through March 7**. Selected schools have been contacted.

New Assessment eNewsletter

CDE recently launched an e-newsletter providing important monthly updates to help with the implementation of new assessments in Colorado. Please [subscribe!](#) (<http://bit.ly/1bfF6p3>) To view the archive, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/e-newsletters>.

What's on the Horizon:

Science and Social Studies Site Readiness

A variety of site readiness activities including site visits, face-to-face trainings, webinars and area district technology coordinator meetings have been available to help districts prepare for the upcoming online assessments. If your district has any concerns about technology readiness, please contact Collin Bonner at [303-866-6752](tel:303-866-6752) or Bonner_C@cde.state.co.us.

Paper-based assessments: A paper-based form of the assessments is expected only to be available for students who:

- Have a neurological disorder, a condition that causes seizures or another health condition that prevents the student from accessing the computer
- Need a braille form with tactile graphics
- IEP or 504 plan requires assistive technology, such as speech-to-text, that may not be compatible with the test engine
- Will provide written responses in a language other than English or Spanish

Headphone Requirements

The headphone technology requirement is the major difference between the technology specifications for this spring's science and social studies assessments and the PARCC field test. For the science and social studies assessments, headphones are not required in 2014 unless a student is using an accommodation for which they are needed, such as text-to-speech. Headphones are required for students participating in the English language arts PARCC field test (headphones are not required for mathematics assessments).

PARCC Sample Items

PARCC plans to release sample test items *on the technology platform* (vs. PDFs) in January. The next Assessment eNewsletter will provide more information. Until then, PARCC task prototypes and sample items currently available here:

<http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes>.

PARCC High School Mathematics Assessments

PARCC has two sequences of three high school mathematics assessments. CDE is looking at options that will allow some flexibility in test timing for those assessments which ensures coverage of all math standards by grade 12. Information will be forthcoming in the next few weeks.

2014-15 Assessment Schedule:

Assessment	Grade	Tentative Windows
CMAS and CoAlt: Science and Social Studies	12	Nov. 3-21, 2014
PARCC Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)*	3-8, High School	March 9-April 3, 2015
CMAS and CoAlt: Science and Social Studies	4 & 7 (Social Studies) 5 & 8 (Science)	April 13 - May 1, 2015
PARCC End-of-Year Assessment (EOY)*	3-8, High School	April 27 - May 22, 2015
CO ACT	11	April 28, and May 12, 2015

*An additional window for PARCC mathematics testing may be available in Fall 2015 for high schools with block schedules.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **Jan. 15** – TCAP and CMAS: Science and Social Studies Pre-Identification Data Pull
- **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:

2013 School and District Performance Framework data is publicly available. In addition to the PDF reports available on SchoolView (<http://www.schoolview.org/performance.asp>), interactive and PDFs are available in Data Center (<http://www.schoolview.org/schoolviewsurvey.asp>) and flat files are available on our website (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performanceframeworkresults>). A few new interactive data displays are now available to help visualize school and district performance across the state. School data can be accessed here: <http://www2.cde.state.co.us/accountability/interactivespf.asp>. District data is posted here: <http://www2.cde.state.co.us/accountability/interactivedpf.asp>.

Notice of Rulemaking – Accountability Rules

At the state board of education's January meeting, CDE will present revisions to state board rules concerning accountability for districts and schools. These updates are required as a result of new legislation passed during the 2013 legislative session and the Office of Legislative Legal Services' review of the current rules. Additionally, CDE is recommending revisions streamline this lengthy set of rules. The official hearing for the rules will occur at the Board's March meeting. Drafts of the rule revisions will be available at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/stateaccountabilityregulations>.

Following the January state board meeting, members of the public can submit written comments on the rule revisions by e-mail to state.board@cde.state.co.us, or by mail to: State Board Office, 201 E. Colfax Ave., Room 506, Denver, CO 80203-1087.

Unified Improvement Planning Winter Submission Cycle - Required Plans Due Jan. 15

Schools and districts with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type are to submit UIPs to CDE for review by **Jan. 15**. Plans are to be submitted through the online Tracker system which is now open for UIP winter submissions. Resources for UIP submissions, including deadlines, an outline of plans required for winter submission, and instructions for submitting through Tracker, are available on the UIP Submission Website: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/UIP_TrainingAndSupport_Tracker.asp.

Optional Submission of UIPs for Posting on SchoolView - Winter Cycle

CDE is offering another optional submission window this winter for any district and/or school to submit revised Unified Improvement Plans for posting on SchoolView. Any district or school choosing to submit a plan for posting on SchoolView this winter needs to submit plans through the online Tracker system. The submission window in Tracker is now open (coinciding with the window for submitting required plans for review). Plans submitted during the UIP Winter Cycle will replace the currently posted plans in February. All school and district plans must be submitted for public posting on SchoolView.org by **April 15**. For more information regarding UIP submissions, visit: http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/2013-14_UIP_SubmissionChart.pdf.

What's on the Horizon:

UIP Winter Review Process

CDE will review more than 200 Unified Improvement Plans (Priority Improvement and Turnaround) in January and February for districts and schools required to submit their plans as outlined above. CDE reviews the plans against the UIP Quality Criteria, posted at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/UIP_TrainingAndSupport_Resources.asp. Feedback based on the UIP Quality Criteria (including program specific requirements) will go back to districts and schools upon the completion of the reviews. The Quality Criteria is posted online in Word format so planning teams can format the criteria to perform their own internal reviews any time.

Pathways for Priority Improvement and Turnaround Districts & Schools

Superintendents with schools or districts on Priority Improvement and Turnaround are invited to attend a meeting on **Tuesday, Jan. 28** to outline, discuss and answer questions pertaining to the possible pathways for districts and schools progressing through the state's accountability clock. The meeting will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Holiday Inn, 455 S. Colorado Blvd., in Denver. Please register by Jan. 10 for the event at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/T628YVH>.

Important Upcoming Dates:

- **Jan. 15** – Priority Improvement and Turnaround UIPs (districts and schools) due to CDE for review
- **April 15** - School and district UIPs must be submitted for public posting on SchoolView

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

Postsecondary Readiness

Overview:

CDE seeks to support all the ways students can enter into postsecondary education by working with districts and schools in thinking through the personalization of a pathway through high school and on to college and career for every student.

What's Happening Now:

New 2014 GED

Beginning Jan. 2, there is 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.

For more information on the New 2014 GED, visit

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/gedindex>

What's New?

- The 2014 GED will be taken exclusively on the computer, 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 focuses 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.

What's on the Horizon:

The next Request for Proposal for the Expelled and At-Risk Student Services grant program, or EARSS program, is expected to be released **mid-January**. Letters of Intent are due **Feb. 14** and the deadline to apply is **April 1**. Program information is available at:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/DropoutPrevention/p_EARSS.htm.

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. Contact Michelle Liu at liu_m@cde.state.co.us to submit requests for ASCENT slots. 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/postsecondary/concurrentenrollment>

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 Organizational Effectiveness update focuses on **Data Pipeline**.*

Overview:

Local education agencies continue to submit data within Data Pipeline. CDE is strengthening the system from lessons learned as we progress through this initial year. The focus this month is on administrative units as they complete the Special Education December Count. Other open collections are Human Resources, 11th-Grade Alternate Assessment for Colorado ACT and Directory. CDE will also pull data needed for spring assessments from the student interchange.

What's Happening Now:

Local education agencies are submitting and cleaning files for **Human Resources**. Staff Profile and Staff Assignment files should be submitted through the Staff Interchange. Special Education employees are to be indicated by the Admin Unit/ SOP Code as well as the Special Education Assignment Flag. Snapshot approvals are due **March 14**.

Special Education December Count. Administrative units should submit student data through the ESSU IEP Interchange. The two files needed are Special Education Child and Special Education Participation. Data is regularly transferred into Data Pipeline in order to be able to create the December Count snapshot. A limited set of data also comes from district Student Demographic files. Administrative units and districts have collaborated to decide which will be responsible for submitting the Staff Profile and Staff Assignment files for Special Education employees.

11th-Grade Alternate Assessment. Preliminary steps to prepare for this assessment begin this month. The test administration window is **April 1 - 25**. Sign-off forms verifying the

accuracy of entered student scores are due **May 8**.

Directory. School codes changes may be submitted to CDE for entry into Data Pipeline system for the 2014-15 school year.

Local education agencies should see increased Cognos report performance as we have implemented outside vendor suggestions for improvement within the past month.

Submit questions and issues to datapipeline.support@cde.state.co.us.

What's on the Horizon:

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 Data Pipeline to address known browser inconsistency issues. CDE will also continue to investigate file processing delays. Please alert CDE if your files take an inordinate amount of time to process, providing details, so we can get to the heart of the matter. Thanks for your patience and collaboration.

The Data Pipeline collection opening in February is the four day school week within the Directory.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

Jan. 15 – TCAP/CoAlt, CO ACT and CMAS/CoAlt Pre-Coded Label data will be extracted from untagged Student Interchange files.

Jan. 24 – LAMs assign 11th-Grade Alternate Assessment user and approver roles to data respondent and district assessment coordinator to access Data Pipeline

Jan. 29 – 2013-14 Special Education December Count Snapshot due

Jan. 31 – 11th-Grade Alternate Assessment preliminary snapshot taken to verify roster and calculate number of tests needed

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.

To access CDE fact sheets visit:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/factsheetsandfaqs>. Access superintendent and principal tools at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/superintendentandprincipaltools>.

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