CDE UPDATE
Strategic Priorities

COLORADO
DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION **cde**

February 2014

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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:
Apply to Beta-Test the State Model Online Performance Management System
The Educator Effectiveness team, in partnership with RANDA Solutions, Inc., has been working on the development of the State Model Online Performance Management System (http://bit.ly/1bkSQJK). The system will include electronic interfaces and data collection tools for the evaluation rubrics, measures of student learning, the final effectiveness rating, and reports with useful and actionable feedback for educators. Pending no major development issues, the State Model Online Performance Management System will be available as an option for all school districts in the 2014-15 school year.

The application for schools and districts interested in beta-testing this system is available at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SLN7NBJ and is due **Feb. 14**. Technical and personnel requirements for participation are outlined in the application. Questions about the process can be answered by Joslyn Robich at Robich_Joslyn2@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6221.

Evaluation Process Webinars
To provide timely assistance on the new evaluation process, CDE will continue its series of monthly training webinars. The monthly topics follow the part of the evaluation process districts are in and include an opportunity to hear from the field and interact with colleagues from around the state. February's webinar is on **Tuesday, Feb. 25** from 4-5:30 p.m. and will focus on evaluator assessment and differentiated evaluator support. To register for the webinar, 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 at http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/smes-trainings. CDE recommends watching the module prior to the webinar.

Additional Training on the Colorado State Model Evaluation System
CDE is offering an additional in-person training on the basics of the state model system. Attending this training allows you to train principals and people with a principal license in your district moving forward. However, further training is required to train "evaluator designees" (i.e. peer evaluators without a principal license).

The 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.

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
The CDE Standards and Instructional Support Office continues to support standards based curriculum design workshops across the state.

Media Panel Discussion
CDE is coordinating a panel discussion on key education reform efforts (new standards including common core, new assessments and educator evaluations) at the upcoming Colorado Press Association annual conference in Denver on **Feb. 22**. More than 300 Colorado reporters and editors are expected to attend. Attendees will hear from CDE, a teacher and a superintendent about the work happening in education and how implementation of these efforts is going. A *Denver Post* reporter will also be on the panel to give personal insight on how she researches education stories, finds sources and the types of stories she chooses to write. Reporters will leave the session with increased education knowledge and story ideas. Superintendents should be prepared for local media to be in touch with them. The CDE Communications team will follow up after the event and share insights on the topics of particular interest to reporters.

School Readiness
Fact Sheet Available for Parents: Informational fact sheets for parents on school readiness, the Colorado Preschool Program and *Teaching Strategies GOLD®* are available on CDE's Office of Early Learning and School Readiness webpage: http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/factsheetsandfaqs-schoolreadiness.

School Readiness Initiative Support: CDE's School Readiness team supports districts and educators with implementation of school readiness plans and assessments. The team provides technical assistance upon request, conducts Teaching Strategies GOLD Open Labs and posts resources to the school readiness webpage http://bit.ly/1l6lmc2. The School Readiness team is hosting area meetings in February and March to provide information on

the school readiness initiative and assessment funding. Information on meeting dates and locations is at http://bit.ly/1l6lmc2. Contact Suzanne Rougier at rougier_s@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6971 with questions or requests for support.

School Readiness Assessment Funding: In early February, CDE released a Request for Application for districts to access Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds to pay for subscriptions to *Teaching Strategies GOLD®* for kindergarten students for the 2014-15 school year. Colorado's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant provides resources and supports for districts with implementation of school readiness plans and assessments in kindergarten including the subscription costs for school readiness assessments for the duration of the grant. An informational webinar for 2014-15 subscriptions will be held **Wednesday, Feb. 19** from 10 - 11 a.m. More information about the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund and the school readiness initiative is on the School Readiness webpage: http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness/index.asp.

The READ Act
Approval Process for New Interim Reading Assessments: In the fall, CDE conducted a review process of interim reading assessments for state board adoption in relation to the READ Act. At the December State Board of Education meeting, seven assessments were recommended for board approval. Information about the recommended interim reading assessments can be found at http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readact/resourcebank.

Three publishers have submitted appeals: Pearson Education for Developmental Reading Assessment, 2nd edition, Let's Go Learn Publishing for Diagnostic Online Reading Assessment (DORA), and Northwest Evaluation Association for Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). A review of appeals will be conducted by CDE's Office of Literacy as well as reviewers from the field with assessment expertise who either assisted in creating the review rubric or who served as assessment reviewers for the department in the fall. Assessment appeals that meet the review criteria will be recommended for consideration and approval by the state board at the February board meeting. A full description of the review process and summaries of the review rubrics for all assessments can be found at http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readreviewprocess. **Districts have until July 1, 2016 to transition to the approved interim assessments.**

English Learner READ Guidance Released: In collaboration with the department's English Learner Literacy Task Force, CDE has developed guidance for implementing the READ Act with English learners. The guidance document provides information on an allowable exemption to the requirements of the READ Act and guidance for determining significant reading deficiencies for English learners - 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 Colsman, 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:
Mathematics Assessment Options for 2014-2015

Colorado students will take the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) mathematics assessments for the first time in spring 2015. PARCC has developed two series of mathematics assessments for high school:

> Series 1: Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II
> Series 2: Integrated I, Integrated II and Integrated III

The expectation set by the Colorado Academic Standards is that all students will complete instruction in the entirety of the mathematics high school standards. The structure and timing of that instruction has some flexibility. Accordingly, the new high school mathematics assessment system will also provide for more flexibility than was previously available under CSAP/TCAP where all students within a grade took the same assessment. CDE has created a mathematics assessment system for high school that maximizes flexibility while maintaining fidelity with the high expectations of the Colorado Academic Standards. The new assessments will allow for a closer alignment between instruction and assessments in high school. Districts always retain curricular and course decision-making responsibilities and are provided with an increased flexibility when choosing the most appropriate assessment for students. Depending on the timing and order in which students take the appropriate math assessment, student growth percentiles may or may not be available. The 2014-15 mathematics assessment options for each grade level are available at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment. If you have questions regarding selecting an assessment based on local instructional approaches, please contact Mary Pittman, CDE mathematics content specialist, at pittman_m@cde.state.co.us or 303-854-4560.

PARCC Sample Test Questions

PARCC has posted sample test items for every grade *on the computerized testing platform* students will use when taking the field test later this spring. Teachers, students, parents and others will be able to engage with the sample items using computer-based tools such as drag-and-drop, multiple select, text highlighting and an equation builder. PARCC also released online tutorials that demonstrate how students will navigate the test; how to use the computer-based tools; and features that make the test more accessible for all students, including those with disabilities and English learners. The sample items were available previously as downloadable printouts and are now available at www.parcconline.org/computer-based-samples. PARCC went through a rigorous review process to ensure the sample test items are high quality and are similar to the types of items students will see when the test is fully operational in spring 2015.

Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment Consortium

Colorado joined the Dynamic Learning Maps, a multistate initiative in developing an instructionally relevant, computer-based assessment system designed to help students learn. The consortium is developing the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These assessments will replace the current CoAlt reading, writing and mathematics assessments, paralleling PARCC. In addition to the traditional summative assessment, the system is being designed to simultaneously support teacher instruction and student learning by having assessment tasks model good instruction and by being embedded within teachers' classroom activities throughout the school year. The assessments are slated to be administered for the first time during the 2014-2015 school year. Assessment and special education will work together to provide additional information and supports regarding the instructional and assessment tools being developed by Dynamic Learning Maps throughout the next year. As a starting point, additional information may be found at http://dynamiclearningmaps.org.

Site Readiness Preparation

A variety of site readiness activities are in place to help districts prepare for the upcoming online assessments. These activities include site visits, face-to-face trainings, webinars and regional district technology coordinator meetings. Site visits help districts ensure that their testing environments are ready for testing. CDE and Pearson have conducted in-person technology consultations to districts expressing interest, totaling 49 site visits thus far. Additionally, CDE has conducted four site readiness webinars and 10 regional DTC meetings. If your district has concerns with low bandwidth, reliance on thin clients, Linux systems or high student to device ratios or any other issues impacting online testing, contact Collin Bonner (bonner_c@cde.state.co.us) at 303-866-6752.

Assessment Communications Toolkit

CDE released new communications resources to support districts in successful implementation of new Colorado Measures of Academic Success assessments. Items include:

- Assessment Messaging - Educator Audience
- Assessment Messaging - Parent Audience
- Drop-in Article
- PowerPoint - Overview of PARCC-developed English language arts and mathematics assessments and Colorado-developed science and social studies assessments
- National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Parents' Guide to New Assessments in Colorado
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Assessment Pocket Guide
- Fact Sheets: Assessment Overview, Transitioning to 21st Century Standards and Assessments, PARCC-Developed English Language Arts and Mathematics Assessments, Introduction to the Colorado Academic Standards, Common Core English Language Arts Standards, Common Core Mathematics Standards

All items are available at http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/superintendentandprincipaltools-assessments. More resources will be added as implementation progresses.

What's on the Horizon:

Science and Social Studies Spring Test Administration

Here are some suggestions to best prepare for administering the Colorado Measures of Academic Success - science and social studies assessments:

- Schedule three sessions for science and three sessions for social studies.
- For now, CDE suggests scheduling the sessions two hours apart. This recommendation will be refined based on field testing data.
- To the extent possible, all students within a grade should be assessed at the same time. Should that not prove possible, all students should be assessed within the shortest timeframe possible (back-to-back sessions, within the same day or consecutive days if you need four or more sessions, etc.). Based solely on current device information, CDE anticipates the majority of schools will be able to have all students in a grade complete one test session in a day.
- Students must not be able to see each other's work from a normal testing position. If students cannot be placed far enough away from each other to prevent this, dividing screens may be used.

PARCC Field Testing

Field tests slated to begin in late March, are an opportunity for students and teachers to play a significant role in the development of our state's future tests. Hundreds of educators from all participating states have been instrumental in developing and reviewing the test items.

Students and schools will not be scored on the field tests, which are designed to make sure test items and the technology function correctly, and to work out any glitches. PARCC will update items and tutorials this month based on feedback from the field. Approximately 1.2 million students in 14 of the PARCC states – roughly 10 percent of students in grades 3 through 11 across the consortium -- will take the field test this spring. All students in the PARCC states will have access to practice tests this spring so students not participating in the field test can become familiar with the types of test items and the functionality of the online testing.

New Assessments and Impact on Accountability
A large part of Colorado's educational accountability system (District and School Performance Frameworks (DPF/SPF)) is based on the results from state assessments; implementing new state assessments will have an impact on district and school accountability. To ensure validity and fairness of our accountability system, adjustments will need to be made during the assessment transition period. CDE recently released a proposed transition plan which requires legislative approval. Under this proposed plan, the majority of accountability adjustments are made for the 2015 accountability frameworks. Because the results from the new English language arts and mathematics assessments will be delayed for the first year and growth scores may be difficult to interpret, accountability ratings for 2015 will be based on the 2014 framework rating, and for districts, continued compliance with their accreditation contract. More information on the accountability transition from 2014-16 and impact on educator effectiveness can be found on the CDE website:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/factsheetsandfaqs-assessment

__Important Upcoming Deadlines__:
- **Feb. 13:** ACCESS materials need to be en route to MetriTech. An email ("ACCESS for ELLs® resources and reminders") with instructions was sent to DACs on Jan. 10.
- Upcoming State Assessment Windows:

Assessment	Assessment Window
CoAlt Reading, Writing and Math	Feb. 5 – March 14
TCAP Grade 3 Reading and Lectura	Feb. 24 – March 7
TCAP (all other grades and content areas)	March 10 – April 11
CMAS and CoAlt Elementary and Middle School Science and Social Studies	April 14 – May 2

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:__
UIP Review
CDE is reviewing more than 200 plans submitted to CDE in January. Plans under review

include district and school level Priority Improvement and Turnaround plans.

UIP Feedback to Districts
CDE will review plans throughout February and feedback will be provided to districts regarding district and/or school plans on a rolling basis. Feedback will be posted in the Tracker system and district tracker contacts will be notified once the feedback has been uploaded. District and school staff will be invited to "just in time" work sessions in March/April to incorporate CDE feedback into their plans. More details to follow.

UIP Postings
Districts that submitted UIPs for posting to SchoolView will see their updated plans replace the currently posted plans within the month of February. As a reminder, all district and school UIPs must be submitted to CDE each year on or before **April 15** for public posting to SchoolView.

Notice of Rulemaking – Accountability Rules
At the January state board of education, CDE presented revisions to the state board's rules concerning accountability for districts and schools (SB 163). 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 a few revisions that will better streamline this lengthy set of rules. The official hearing for the rules will occur at the March meeting. The draft rules are posted at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/stateaccountabilityregulations. Written comments may be submitted to state.board@cde.state.co.us or by mail to: State Board Office, 201 E. Colfax Ave., Room 506, Denver, CO 80203-1087.

Family Partnership Trainings
CDE, in collaboration with the State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education, is conducting trainings about promising practices in engaging all families as partners in education. This event is free and open to all interested participants wanting to learn strategies to implement family partnerships initiatives for student success. This may include family partnership liaisons, district personnel, school personnel, parent leaders, and district or school accountability committee members. CDE recommends attending the training as a district team. Trainings take place from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on:

- **Feb. 11**, in Greeley
- **Feb. 13**, in Pueblo
- **Feb. 14**, in Lamar
- **Feb. 19**, in Denver Metro
- **Feb. 25**, in Durango
- **March 4**, in Grand Junction

For more information, and to register, visit: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/familyengagement.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:
- **March 30:** Districts and school with required changes must submit their revised UIPs to CDE for re-review (plans accepted by **March 31**).
- **April 15:** All district and school unified improvement plans must be submitted to CDE for public posting to 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:
Based on a request from the Northern Superintendents' Association, this month's Update focuses on the graduation guidelines.

The graduation guidelines timeline has been updated at www.cde.state.co.us/Postsecondary/graduationguidelines. CDE is also working on a timeline clarification document that should be posted shortly to accompany the revised timeline.

Districts and school boards are not required to take action in adopting local guidelines until the 2015-16 academic year. In 2014-15, please consider reviewing your district's current graduation criteria to determine how these meet or exceed the guidelines at www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary.

This timeline reinforces alignment with the graduation guidelines work groups that are convening over the next six months. To date, 21st century skills, capstone and individual career and academic plan work groups have met. Industry certificates and special populations groups will begin their work this month. The graduation guidelines work groups have one year from when they begin meeting to provide implementation recommendations, best/promising practices and tools/resources in relation to their topic area to graduation guidelines. If you have questions about the timeline or work groups, contact Misti Ruthven, Office of Postsecondary Readiness at ruthven_m@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

*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. This month administrative units focus on the resolution of duplicates within the Special Education December Count. Other open collections are Human Resources, 11th-Grade Alternate Assessment for Colorado ACT and Directory.

What's Happening Now:
Local education agencies are submitting and cleaning files for **Human Resources.** Staff Profile and Staff Assignment files are to be submitted through the Staff Interchange. Snapshot approvals are due **Friday, March 14.**

Special Education December Count
Administrative units should have submitted student data through the ESSU IEP Interchange and staff data through the Pipeline. Complete December Count Snapshots should have been taken. This month CDE will work with administrative units to resolve duplicates and finalize data.

11th-Grade Alternate Assessment
Preliminary steps continue to prepare for this assessment. The test administration window is **April 1 - 25.** Sign-off forms verifying the accuracy of entered student scores are due **May 8**.
Directory
The four day school week application opens this month. The annual four-day school week application can be accessed in the Data Pipeline through the directory.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:
- **Wednesday, Feb. 26** – 2013-14 Special Education December Count final report review and approval deadline
- **Thursday, Feb. 27** - 2013-14 Special Education December Count report signatures
- **Friday, May 9** – Four day school week applications due

Please submit your questions and suggestions to datapipeline.support@cde.state.co.us.

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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