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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:

Review the Colorado State Model Evaluation System Annual Orientation

Annual orientations are an important part of the Colorado State Model Evaluation System process. District personnel that lead staff training should review the 2014 orientation webinar and share it with users of the model system in their district. This year's orientation covers topics like S.B. 14-165 and evaluation requirements, the evaluation process, revisions to the rubrics, the Colorado State Model Performance Management System, inter-rater agreement and more. To view the recorded webinar and access the orientation PowerPoint, visit

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/trainingtools>.

Updates to Elevate Colorado (Inter-rater Agreement System)

Elevate Colorado (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/interrateragreement>) is an online inter-rater agreement training system that helps evaluators develop a deeper understanding of the professional practices embodied the Colorado State Model Evaluation System's teacher rubric. Using the system, evaluators can view short videos of practicing teachers, rate videos according to the Colorado State Model Evaluation System rubric and receive feedback showing how closely they rated the videos relative to ratings from master scorers Colorado.

If you currently use Elevate Colorado for staff development, it's important to note that the plans are being updated to reflect revisions to Colorado State Model Evaluation System teacher rubric. Plans are comprised of one or more video clips of a teacher's lesson as well as any artifacts, such as the lesson plan or student worksheets. Please encourage your staff to use these updated plans. Remaining plans will be updated so that they best represent the revised rubric. Currently, three updated plans are available:

- 2014-15 Master Plan –Grade 5 Math 1
- 2014-15 Master Plan – Middle School English Language Arts
- 2014-15 Master Plan – High School Science 1

Back to School Communications Toolkit

Back to school is an opportune time for districts to provide information on Colorado's new academic standards, state tests and educator evaluations. To that end, CDE recently released [new communications resources](#) to jump-start district communication efforts for the new school year. Two separate toolkits are available. The first toolkit includes tools for districts or schools to communicate with teachers or staff (<http://bit.ly/1rmu21x>). The second toolkit is intended for a district, principal or teacher to communicate with parents (<http://bit.ly/1z1q0tE>). Included in the toolkits are:

- Messaging for new standards, assessments and educator evaluations
- Drop-in Articles (pre-written email/newsletter content) for new standards, assessments and educator evaluations
- Customizable PowerPoints - Overview of the Colorado Academic Standards and Common Core; overview of PARCC-developed English language arts and mathematics assessments and Colorado-developed science and social studies assessments; overview of the Colorado State Model Evaluation System
- Frequently asked questions for new standards, assessments and educator evaluations
- Fact sheets on various topics
- Links to other resources like the Council of Great City Schools' Common Core video, National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Parents' Guide to New Assessments in Colorado, etc.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

Colorado State Model Performance Management System

The Colorado State Model Performance Management System

(<http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/copms>) is an optional tool to support the implementation of the state model evaluation system. Several districts/BOCES have committed to using the system for the 2014-15 school year and have received training.

If your district/BOCES hasn't committed to using the Colorado State Model Performance Management System but would like to, you can still sign up. To do so, please contact Joslyn Robich at Robich_Joslyn2@cde.state.co.us as soon as possible. After October, districts will need to contact CDE to assess whether it is possible to start using the system mid-cycle for the 2014-15 school year.

For more information about educator effectiveness, visit:

www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/ or contact Katy Anthes, executive director of Educator Effectiveness, anthes_k@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6654.

Standards

Overview:

The 2014-15 school year provides an opportunity for educators across the state to refocus on the opportunity high quality standards provides for Colorado's children. Student learning is at the heart of Colorado's education reform initiatives. The Teaching and Learning Unit strives to offer schools and districts resources and supports to enhance student learning and achievement.

What's Happening Now:

New Preschool Development Grant Opportunity

A Preschool Development Grant program was recently announced by U.S. Department of Education. Colorado is eligible to apply for an Expansion Grant of up to \$15 million per year for four years. Successful state applicants must demonstrate an ambitious and achievable plan to implement and sustain high-quality preschool programs that can reach and serve additional children from low- and moderate-income families in two or more high-need communities. CDE will act as the lead agency on this grant in close partnership with the Colorado Department of Human

Services. Opportunities for school districts to engage in the grant development process will be announced in *The Scoop* and at <http://1.usa.gov/1I0V8Zf>. For more about the federal initiative, visit <http://1.usa.gov/1I0V8Zf>.

New PLC Bytes Available

This month, the Standards and Instructional Support Office is posting brand new PLC Bytes for all content areas of the Colorado Academic Standards. PLC Bytes are 7-10 minute segmented presentations designed to be used in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) or faculty meetings. Topics for the latest Bytes include: Mathematics (“Enactive, Iconic, and Symbolic Levels of representation”), Reading, Writing, and Communicating (“Close, Comparative, and Critical Reading”), Comprehensive Health (“Health Integration for all Students”), Science (“Scientific and Engineering Practices”), Arts (“Arts Integration Possibilities”) and Social Studies (“Factual and Conceptual Questions in Unit Design”). PLC Bytes are located on the content-specific web pages at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction>

Early Learning and School Readiness: Additions to Colorado’s School Readiness Assessment Menu

This summer, the department conducted a Request for Information process to solicit additional assessments for consideration for the state’s School Readiness Assessment Menu. The School Readiness Assessment Subcommittee met in August to review submissions in order to make recommendations for additions to the menu. Recommendations will be presented to the state board of education in September, with a vote anticipated at the October meeting. In 2012, the state board approved *Teaching Strategies GOLD* as the first school readiness assessment tool for the menu. Over the past two years, CDE has been guiding districts to implement school readiness provisions of CAP4K in either the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years with full implementation scheduled for the 2015-16 school year. This has allowed districts who wish to use *Teaching Strategies GOLD* to move forward with implementation while providing time for additional assessments to be added to the menu of options.

School Readiness Guidance Document for 2014-15 Available

The 2014-14 version of the school readiness assessment guidance document is available at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness/index.asp>. The document provides background information on the school readiness initiative, guidance related to literacy assessment in alignment with the READ Act and implementation recommendations.

Distribution of School Readiness Assessment Funds

In July, the department sent grant notification documents to districts that requested funds for kindergarten subscriptions to *Teaching Strategies GOLD*[®]. Districts should be working directly with *Teaching Strategies* to purchase licenses in compliance with district procurement rules and processes. Districts can request the funds once they have set up the agreements with *Teaching Strategies*. For more information, contact Sharon Triolo-Moloney at triolo-moloney_s@cde.state.co.us.

Kindergarten Technical Assistance Available

Through the Early Learning Challenge Fund, CDE has two kindergarten readiness specialists to provide assistance to districts, teachers and schools: Amy Cameron who supports the eastern part of the state and Emily Kilmeyer who supports the western part of the state. Please contact Amy at cameron_a@cde.state.co.us and Emily at kilmeyer_e@cde.state.co.us for your support needs.

The READ Act: Foundations For Reading Training Opportunity Available

In the department’s continued efforts to support the advancement of reading for Colorado’s K – 3 children, the Office of Literacy has initiated a teacher training program called the READING Foundations Academy. The READING Foundations Academy is a no-cost professional development

opportunity for Colorado educators in grades K – 3 that will provide teachers an opportunity to expand their knowledge of foundational reading skills to support their students in developing and advancing their reading ability. CDE will partner with districts and BOCES to arrange regional academies and provide highly trained instructors. To arrange an academy in your region, contact Donna Bright at bright_d@cde.state.co.us.

READ Act Per Pupil Fund Distribution

The Office of Literacy has been working with district READ contacts to ensure accurate data submissions for the purposes of calculating per pupil funding for the 2014-15 school year. By Sept. 10, final numbers of students identified as having a significant reading deficiency will be posted on the READ website (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index.asp>) and emailed to district READ contacts. CDE anticipates distribution of funds by the middle of September based on this count.

Allowable uses for the per-pupil intervention money for students with significant reading deficiencies include: (1) providing full-day kindergarten; (2) purchasing tutoring services in reading; (3) providing other targeted, scientifically- or evidence-based intervention services (including but not limited to those identified in the READ program advisory list); or (4) operating a summer school literacy program. As part of the allowable use around scientifically-or evidence-based intervention services, funds may be used to purchase diagnostic assessments on the approved assessment list and to provide the professional development needed for teachers to use READ assessments or provide scientifically- or evidence-based intervention services. Further flexibility in the use of per-pupil intervention funds was provided in [H.B. 14-1204, the Rural Flexibility bill](#). This bill allows small rural districts to purchase the services of a literacy specialist from a BOCES to provide professional development in literacy or other supports for implementation of the READ Act.

Questions about the data collection, identification of a significant reading deficiency and allowable uses of per-pupil funds can be directed to Dian Prestwich at Prestwich_d@cde.state.co.us. For more on the READ Act, visit www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index.asp.

Back to School Communications Toolkit – new resources available to communicate about the Colorado Academic Standards. See the Educator Effectiveness section for full details.

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, colman_m@cde.state.co.us, 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:

CMAS Science and Social Studies Assessment Results

In August, the state board of education adopted performance level descriptors and cut scores for the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) and Colorado Alternate Assessment (CoAlt) science and social studies assessments. As anticipated, the adopted cut scores reflect the increased rigor of the Colorado Academic Standards.

Science and social studies score files and PDF reports are expected to be available to districts in

electronic format in PearsonAccess in early September, while hard copies of individual student reports are expected to be sent to districts from Pearson the third week of September. Specific dates will be provided through district assessment coordinators as they become available.

Score Interpretation and CMAS Science and Social Studies Training for DACs

In September, the Assessment Unit will conduct regional CMAS trainings for district assessment coordinators. The session will include administration and technology training for the upcoming fall high school assessments. Trainings will also include information about interpreting the elementary and middle school science and social studies assessment results. District assessment coordinators will receive detailed information about the below training sites:

- West Central Region – Grand Junction: **Sept. 8**
- Northwest Region – Vail: **Sept. 9**
- Denver Metro Region – Englewood: **Sept. 11**
- North Central Region – Brush: **Sept. 12**
- Southwest Region – Alamosa: **Sept. 15**
- Southeast Region – La Junta: **Sept. 16**
- Northeast Region – Limon: **Sept. 18**
- Pikes Peak Region – Colorado Springs: **Sept. 19**

CMAS Science and Social Studies PearsonAccess Training Site

PearsonAccess (<http://www.pearsonaccess.com/>) is used for the registration, setup, preparation and management of both the CMAS and CoAlt assessments. PearsonAccess is scheduled to be available on **Sept. 8** for the science and social studies high school assessments. Within the training site, district and school level personnel will be able to engage in the activities available in PearsonAccess, including uploading student data, in a practice environment. Infrastructure trial forms that will allow districts to test their technology environments will be available in PearsonAccess on **Sept. 22**.

H.B. 1202 Task Force to Study the Implications of the Statewide Assessment System

The H.B. 1202 task force was established through legislation by the Colorado General Assembly to study the implications of the statewide assessment system for school districts, public schools, educators and students. A final report from the task force must be submitted to the legislature no later than **Jan. 31, 2015**. The next meeting is **Sept. 15**. All meetings are open to the public and will be held from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. in the Denver metro area, location TBD. Upcoming meeting dates are: **Sept. 15, Oct. 20, Nov. 17, Dec. 15** and **Jan. 12, 2015**. For updated information and meeting materials and a list of task force members, visit: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdedepcom/taskforce>.

Back to School Communications Toolkit – new resources available to communicate about the new Colorado Measures of Academic Success assessments. See the Educator Effectiveness section for full details.

What's on the Horizon:

Educator Involvement in Item Development

The next opportunity for educator involvement in the assessment development processes is the science and social studies content, bias and sensitivity review meeting that will be held on **Oct. 21-23**. For development and review opportunities for the new science and social studies assessments, please visit <http://educator.force.com/CO>. For more information, contact Katie Schmidt at schmidt_k@cde.state.co.us.

ACCESS for ELLs® Training

ACCESS for ELLs test administration trainings will be held during the last two weeks of October.

Trainings will be in Aurora, Grand Junction, Greeley and Pueblo. Training dates will be sent to DACs and EL Coordinators when they are finalized.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **Oct. 4 – 17:** Establishment Online Profile Forms Submitted to ACT
- **Nov. 3-21:** Grade 12 Science and Social Studies Assessment Window

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 school and district support systems, accountability measures, improvement plans, federal programs and data analysis.

What's Happening Now:

School and District Performance Frameworks

The 2014 school and district performance framework reports are available to districts through CEDAR. Sharing the framework reports with key central office staff and principals, can spur conversations about student performance in preparation for UIP planning. For resources to support this work, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/PerformanceFrameworks.asp>.

Click on “Resources” to find the following tools:

- [Annotated DPFs/SPFs](#);
- [A summary of changes from the 2013 to 2014 SPF and DPFs](#); and
- [An online tutorial of the SPF](#);

CDE has staff available to assist districts via phone during its specific office hours. [Sign up for this consultation](#) at <http://bit.ly/1vnex7q>.

CDE will not release preliminary performance framework ratings publicly. Finalized performance frameworks will be published in December. You may choose to share the preliminary results with your local board, media or others in the meantime. If you choose to release results, please know that CDE will respond to any questions concerning the data you release, but will not reference statewide results.

Intent to Submit Request for Reconsideration

If districts wish to submit a request to reconsider of the district’s accreditation rating or a school’s plan type assignment, the district must notify CDE via the accountability@cde.state.co.us email address by **Sept. 15** in order to receive technical assistance from CDE staff. Guidance around the request to reconsider process is posted here: <http://bit.ly/1wenG6e>. Final requests to reconsider are due to CDE by **Oct. 15**. All requests submitted on **Oct. 15** will become public record. For questions, contact Jessica Knevals at knevals_j@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6778.

2014 Data in SchoolView

With the release of the 2014 TCAP and growth data, SchoolView is updated. The following online tools are available:

- [Colorado Growth Model visualization tool](#) includes achievement and growth results for 2014. This is a good tool for comparing schools and districts visually.
- [School and District Growth Summary Reports](#) and the [Data Center](#) include a static report providing growth results comparing school, district and state performance. Also included are dynamic views to see performance of individual schools and districts.

- [Data Lab](#) includes a tool that looks at large data sets to query the achievement and growth results in reading, writing and math.

Unified Improvement Planning Templates and Pre-Populated Reports

The 2014-15 UIP templates for districts, schools and AECs are available at http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/uiip_templates. The school and district level pre-populated unified improvement plan reports are scheduled to be released by Sept. 2 in Word format. The online UIP will also contain pre-populated data, but will not be released until later in the fall. Schools and districts may choose to use either format (MS Word or the online system).

Bear in mind that the pre-populated reports will include preliminary data from the frameworks. Pre-populated reports will only be re-generated if there are data changes, such as an approved Request to Reconsider that changes a school's plan type.

Unified Improvement Planning Fall Training Schedule

Trainings will be offered throughout the fall (including UIP Basics, Online UIP trainings, SAC/DAC trainings) at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/uiip_trainingandsupport_register. If you'd like a customized UIP training (e.g., half-day work session, facilitating root cause analysis, refining progress monitoring measures) in your region, please contact your field manager or the UIP office at uiphelp@cde.state.co.us.

What's on the Horizon:

School Accreditation Forms and Request for Reconsideration

Districts must submit an accreditation category for each of their schools to CDE by **Oct. 15**. If the framework or category used differs from the state framework, it must be submitted through the request to reconsider process. Districts can request that CDE reconsider its district accreditation category or any of the assigned school plan types by submitting additional evidence. Detailed guidance on submitting accreditation categories and requests to reconsider is provided in the [policy guidance](#) at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/RequestToReconsider.asp>.

Unified Improvement Planning Submissions for Posting on SchoolView

There are two optional submission windows for publicly posting updated Unified Improvement Plans on SchoolView which are in addition to the required windows in January and April. Every district and school must submit a revised/updated UIP by **April 15**; schools and districts with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type must submit by **Jan. 15**. The **Oct. 15** and **Jan. 15** submission dates for publicly posting plans are optional for districts and schools. Click here for more information: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/uiip_trainingandsupport_tracker.

Unified Improvement Planning Optional Fall Review for Select Districts

Optional review of the revised UIP for 2014-15 is available for priority improvement and turnaround districts. This support is also being offered to all schools that have been awarded a Tiered Intervention Grant to give feedback sooner in the process to ensure the plan is stronger as the district and/or school begins implementation. Plans for the optional fall review are due by **Oct. 15** and will be submitted via the Tracker system. This fall submission does not take the place of the required winter submission due **Jan. 15** for Priority Improvement/Turnaround plans. [View more information](#) here: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/uiip_trainingandsupport_tracker.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **Sept. 2** - Release of preliminary pre-populated 2014 Unified Improvement Plans (Section I) to districts.
- **Sept. 15** - Deadline for districts to submit an intent to submit a school or district request to

reconsider.

- **Oct. 6** - Release of preliminary 2014 AEC School Performance Framework reports to districts for review.
- **Oct. 15** - Deadline for all districts to submit School Accreditation Form and (if desired) Requests to Reconsider district accreditation ratings and school plan type assignments.
- **Oct. 15** - (Optional) Deadline for priority improvement and turnaround districts and Tiered Intervention Grant (TIG) schools to submit UIPs through the Tracker system for a fall UIP (Data Narrative) review from CDE.
- **Oct. 15** - (Optional) Deadline for districts and schools to submit 2014-15 revised UIPs through Tracker for the fall public posting on SchoolView.org.

For more information on accountability and improvement, contact Keith Owen, Deputy Commissioner, owen_k@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6099.

Postsecondary Readiness

Overview:

CDE supports the various ways students can enter 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:

Access Resources Aligned to Standards and Instruction

Discounted prices on many online products aligned to standards and instruction, are available for schools through the Colorado Library Consortium, a partner with the State Library. Library staff, curriculum directors, technology leaders and principals are encouraged access these. Many titles can be used in school or home (via school login), and will save schools money. See more at <http://clicweb.org/save-money/database-subscriptions/k-12>.

What's on the Horizon:

Request for ASCENT Slots: Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment

Districts have until **Feb. 1, 2015** to submit a request for the number of ASCENT participants for the 2015-16 school year. This is a change from the Sept.1 deadline, which was updated during a past legislative session. More information on submitting requests will be provided to districts closer to this date. Districts have until **May 1, 2015** to submit an official affidavit with final ASCENT participant numbers for the 2015-16 school year. After **June 1, 2015** 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/ce_ascent.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **Sept. 12:** Eligibility form for 2014-15 State Grants to Libraries due - <http://bit.ly/1twwYqF>.

For more information, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/choice/index.asp> or contact Rebecca Holmes, associate commissioner of innovation, choice and engagement, holmes_r@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6938.

Organizational Effectiveness

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

Overview:

The rollover to the 2014-15 school year is occurring for certain interchanges and will continue over the next few months. A post submission data cleanup process is occurring for Special Education

Discipline. This month there are due dates for End of Year and Special Education End of Year and Math and Science Partnerships. Local education agencies also continue to prepare for the upcoming Student October count.

What's Happening Now:

Special Education Discipline

From Aug. 28 through Sept. 25 CDE will review discipline data submitted for possible duplicates, inconsistencies and data validity issues. Administrative units will be notified if data validity issues are identified. CDE will work with each affected AU to correct any data necessary. Changes to the data may result in resubmission and re-signing of reports. AUs need to be available to research discipline data issues during this time.

Special Education End of Year

Administrative units are working toward final approval on Thursday, **Sept. 18**. Duplicate and data validity check processes will follow.

Student End of Year

Colorado administrative rules require local education agencies to initially approve data by **Sept. 11**. This will precede the cross-LEA validation processes of reclaiming dropouts from prior years.

Math and Science Partnerships

This collection is open in the Automated Data Exchange system and is due **Sept. 30**. It will move into Pipeline next year.

Student October

The official Student October Pupil Enrollment Count date for the 2014-15 school year is Wednesday, **Oct. 1**. 2014-15 is officially open for loading interchange files. Alternate count date documentation is due Sept. 15.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **Sept. 11:** Districts submit End of Year snapshots and approve initial Data Summary reports. This deadline is mandated under Colorado Administrative Rules.
- **Sept. 15:** Alternate count date documentation is due.
- **Sept. 18:** Administrative units must approve their completed Special Education End of Year snapshot and electronically submit the data to CDE.
- **Sept. 30:** Impacted local education agencies must approve their Math and Science Partnership data in ADE.

For more information, contact Jan Rose Petro, director of data services, Petro_J@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6838. Submit questions and suggestions to datapipeline.support@cde.state.co.us.

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/factsheetsandfaq>.

Access superintendent and principal tools at

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/superintendentandprincipaltools>.

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