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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:

Resources to Support Quality Observations

CDE can provide online and on-site support to deepen your understanding and build agreement with your staff around the teacher professional practices. With Elevate Colorado (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/interrateragreement>), an online inter-rater agreement training system, evaluators can view short videos of practicing teachers, rate the 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. CDE can also support on-site needs. For more on Elevate Colorado or to discuss on-site support, contact Dawn Pare at pare_d@cde.state.co.us.

What's on the Horizon:

Educator Effectiveness Liaison Network

CDE is building evaluator skills in quality observation and delivering effective feedback. Last month, CDE accepted applications for funds to support school districts and BOCES in building the capacity of their educator evaluators to deliver high-quality educator evaluation, observation and feedback. The funds support an individual, identified by selected districts, to receive training and serve as an educator effectiveness liaison. The liaison will work with principals or other school leaders to build their evaluation, observation and feedback skills. The liaison will also collaborate with CDE staff and a cohort of educator effectiveness liaisons from other districts/BOCES to increase his/her skills and build local capacity while implementing quality educator evaluation and support systems. Selected districts will be announced this month. For more information on the liaison network, contact Mary Bivens at Bivens_M@cde.state.co.us.

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:

This year educators are taking a closer look at how high quality standards provide for our children. Student learning is at the heart of Colorado's education reform initiatives. The Teaching and Learning Unit offers schools and districts resources and supports to enhance student learning and achievement.

What's Happening Now:

Standards Guides

Through a partnership with the Colorado PTA, CDE has released user-friendly guides to the K – 5 Colorado Academic Standards. The guides help families and communities better understand the goals and outcomes of the standards. The guides describe the “big picture” purpose of the standards, as road maps to help ensure all students graduate ready for life, college and careers. They also provide overviews of the learning expectations for each of the 10 content areas and offer examples of students' educational experiences that families can support. The guides can be found at <http://bit.ly/1Fxii0a>. Work continues with the Colorado PTA to create similar documents for grades 6-12. Look for those in the early 2015.

Content-specific appendices are available to the Instructional Unit Process Guide that reflect unique processes used in the unit-building workshops by arts, math, reading, writing and communicating and science educators to translate the unit overviews into full instructional units. These appendices better enable educators to fully understand the unit development and spark conversations about creating curriculum based on the Colorado Academic Standards. Visit <http://bit.ly/1xo7PBQ>.

Early Learning and School Readiness

Additions to Colorado's School Readiness Assessment Menu: At the October state board of education meeting, the board voted to add [Riverside Early Assessments of Learning \(REAL\)](#), [Desired Results Developmental Profile \(DRDP-K 2015\)](#) and [Teaching Strategies GOLD Survey](#) to the state's school readiness assessment menu. These assessments are in addition to *Teaching Strategies GOLD*. Through the Early Learning Challenge Fund, CDE has two kindergarten readiness specialists to assist districts, teachers and schools with school readiness assessment implementation. Amy Cameron supports the Front Range and eastern part of the state and Emily Kielmeyer supports the mountain areas and West Slope. Please contact Amy at cameron_a@cde.state.co.us and Emily at kielmeyer_e@cde.state.co.us for your support needs.

For two years, CDE has guided districts in implementing 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. In early November, CDE will announce a series of area meetings across the state to provide educators with information about the different assessment tools, options for funding assessment subscriptions and training opportunities.

Preschool Program Quality Ratings Coming in 2015-16: The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) is implementing a new early childhood and preschool quality rating and improvement system called Colorado Shines. Pursuant to HB 11-1027 (C.R.S. 26-6-604), the Colorado Shines rating system will be embedded in the licensing of all early education and care programs, including school district and charter based preschool programs. More information about the QRIS can be found on the CDHS website at <http://www.coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com/#!/gris/c5ch>.

In partnership with CDHS, CDE has initiated an advisory group to assist the departments with identification of implementation issues and potential solutions for district-based preschool programs.

Please contact Sharon Triolo-Moloney at triolo-moloney_s@cde.state.co.us to participate in the advisory group.

The READ Act

Regional Technical Assistance Available: CDE is able to provide regional technical assistance through locally-based literacy specialists. The specialists can provide onsite support to teachers and administrators in support of READ Act implementation. This support may include data analysis and interpretation, planning for instructional supports including intervention for students most at-risk and professional development. For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/1wDAkce>.

Foundations For Reading Training Opportunity Available: To support the advancement of reading for Colorado's K – 3 children, CDE has initiated a teacher training program called the READING Foundations Academy. The READING Foundations Academy is a no-cost professional development opportunity for K-3 educators to expand their knowledge of foundational reading skills to support students in 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 area, contact Donna Bright at bright_d@cde.state.co.us.

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 and CoAlt: Science and Social Studies

The assessment window for 12th-grade CMAS and CoAlt, science and social studies is **Nov. 3 – 21**.

Colorado adopted new science and social studies standards in December of 2009. For the first time this fall, Colorado will have the opportunity to get a state-wide indicator on how well students have mastered the high school science and social studies content that Colorado K-12 educators, higher education and employers deemed important in order for students to be ready for college and careers. The state assessments are intended to provide students and parents with unbiased, objective feedback beyond the more intimate circle of their local school about whether students are on track to meeting the expectations of college and careers.

Districts use the data from the state assessments to improve their work throughout their classrooms, programs and school. For the broader community, accurate test results, which measure our expectations for students, are a critical indicator of the health of the overall school and district. It is an important way in which taxpayers can gauge the results of their public investment.

State law (Section 22-7-409(1.2)(I)(A), C.R.S.) requires that **every student enrolled in a public school take state assessments**. If a student attends school during the assessment window, the school is obligated by law to ensure that the student is tested. Districts should prepare for discussions regarding attendance policies and what constitutes an excused absence. Districts should be prepared to discuss the implications of students missing instruction through the end of the testing window as well as the potential benefit of providing test results to parent, students and teachers.

Suggested Talking Points on the New State Tests

CDE recently released [talking points](#) to help teachers have a conversation with parents about the new state tests. These include points about how the new tests set higher expectations compared to past tests. With that, the scores may not be as high as some may expect which doesn't mean our students are performing any worse. Rather, it illustrates we've raised the bar of expectations. These conversations set the stage for when the new tests results are released. These points may also be used in district or principal newsletters to parents, too. The document is set up to run copies, front to back using the two pages included in the file. Then just cut them in half so each teacher can have a half-sheet with information on the front and back.

CMAS: PARCC-Developed English Language Arts and Math

Pilot for increased flexibility in administration of high school math assessments in middle school

Last school year, the department released high school math assessment options for school year 2014-2015. On an individual student basis, districts will determine which of the available options is most appropriate for students based on alignment with the content of their instruction.

Based on feedback provided by districts this past spring, the department is offering a pilot that will provide additional flexibility in administering high school assessments at the middle school level. Specifically, districts may choose to add Algebra I/Integrated I as an option for 7th-graders and Geometry/Integrated II as an option for 8th graders. In addition Algebra II/Integrated III may be given at 9th-grade. Districts interested in participating in this pilot should have their district assessment coordinator contact Stephanie Boyd, CDE's PARCC consultant at boyd_s@cde.state.co.us by **Nov. 14**.

The following table includes the possible high school math assessments that students from piloting districts may take based on their current grade. The additional assessments for districts participating in the pilot are noted in bold with "pilot" indicated after them. Note: For spring 2015, all students in grades 3-10 must take one of the assessments listed for their grade.

Grade of Student	Math Assessment Options for Districts Participating in the Pilot in 2014-2015
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3rd-grade
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4th-grade
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5th-grade
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6th-grade
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7th-grade• Algebra I (pilot)• Integrated I (pilot)
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8th-grade• Algebra I• Integrated I• Geometry (pilot)• Integrated II (pilot)
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Algebra I• Integrated I• Geometry• Integrated II• Algebra II* (pilot)• Integrated III* (pilot)
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Algebra I• Integrated I

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geometry • Integrated II • Algebra II* • Integrated III*
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geometry • Integrated II • Algebra II* • Integrated III* • <i>No state assessment for those having completed instruction in the high school math standards, typically through an Algebra II or Integrated III course in the prior year. These students may be engaged in advanced math instruction and take advanced placement or international baccalaureate exams. These students may also be participating in college concurrent enrollment.**</i>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra II* • Integrated III* • <i>No state assessment for those not enrolled in a math course addressing content covered in the above assessments. These students may be engaged in advanced math instruction and taking advanced placement or international baccalaureate exams. These students may also be participating in college concurrent enrollment.**</i>

*These assessments will be comprehensive. Although concentrating on the content reflected in their names, other content considered critical to achieving a college and career ready determination will be included.

**Future years: No state assessment for those having completed instruction in the high school math standards, typically through an Algebra II or Integrated III course in a prior year. These students may be engaged in advanced math instruction and take advanced placement or international baccalaureate exams.

Identification of High School Math Assessments for Spring 2015

As indicated above, districts will need to determine which math assessments each student will take in grades 7-10, as well as grades 11 and 12, when relevant. Keep in mind, some districts may choose to provide only one assessment at each grade level while others may utilize all of the flexibility available. The amount of flexibility offered in most cases will be reflective of the amount of flexibility in the instructional approach available to students within the district.

Identification of Paper Assessments Needed for Math, Grade 3 English language Arts and Accommodated Assessments for Spring 2015

For the spring 2015 administration, districts will have the opportunity to administer paper assessments for all grades for math, for grade 3 in English language arts and for students who require the paper-based form due to accommodation needs (ex. students are unable to take the computer-based form due to neurological conditions). Districts will need to indicate the number of students who will be taking paper-based assessments by **Nov. 21**.

What's on the Horizon:

ACCESS for ELLs

The assessment window for ACCESS for ELLs is from **Jan. 12 – Feb. 13**. Two key pre-administration activities should occur this month.

- 1.) Districts wanting pre-ID labels must have their Oct. 1 data uploaded into the Student Interchange by **Nov. 7**.

- 2.) The deadline for ordering ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs test materials through Metrittech is **Nov. 12**.

Important Upcoming Dates and Deadlines:

- **Nov. 3-21:** Grade 12 CMAS science and social studies assessment window
- **Nov. 4:** Webinar: Student Registration File for PARCC and Ordering Paper-based Materials
- **Nov. 7:** Deadline for district Student Interchange files to be updated for ACCESS for ELLs pre-coded label extraction
- **Nov. 12:** Deadline to order ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs test materials through Metrittech
- **Nov. 14:** Deadline for interested districts to notify CDE of their desire to participate in the high school math in middle school assessment pilot
- **Nov. 21: Deadline for ordering paper-based forms for math, 3rd-grade English language arts and accommodated assessments** (for students with disabilities and English learners) – additional orders may be placed later for students who move in to the district after this deadline
- **Dec. 8:** ACT test administration webcast available
- **Dec. 10:** ACT accommodations question & answer webinar
- **Dec. 19:** Districts receive ACCESS for ELLs test materials

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 Framework Requests to Reconsider

CDE is reviewing Requests to Reconsider submitted to the department. CDE received 20 district requests and 74 school requests this year. District requests will be reviewed first and determinations will be shared with the individual districts before the **Nov. 12** state board meeting, where the district ratings are shared with the board and made public. School level requests will receive a response before the **Dec. 10** board meeting, during which time the board will approve the plan types and reports will become public.

What's on the Horizon:

Public Reporting of School and District Performance Frameworks

The School and District Performance Framework reports will be public and posted on SchoolView in conjunction with the **Dec. 10** state board meeting.

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:

Engagement Toolkit Now Available

The finalized Graduation Guidelines Engagement toolkit is available at www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/graduationguidelines to assist local boards of education and districts in supporting implementation and policy discussions in communities. Educators are encouraged to review the toolkit and begin using the tools as best meets local needs.

High School Equivalency Examination Policy Manual

A draft of the High School Equivalency Examination Policy Manual is available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/ged>. The manual outlines the policies and procedures for administering the GED test as the high school equivalency examination at testing centers approved by the state and GED Testing Service. The [General Education Development \(GED\) test](#) from GED Testing Service is the state board approved high school equivalency examination used as the qualifying instrument for the awarding of the Colorado High School Equivalency Diploma. The policy manual is in draft form as CDE solicits feedback from stakeholders including superintendents and other district educators. Educators are encouraged to review the policy manual and submit feedback to Michelle Camacho Liu at liu_m@cde.state.co.us by **Dec. 5**.

What's on the Horizon:

Attend the ICAP Summit

The ICAP Summit is an opportunity to evaluate and refresh the Individual Career & Academic Plan (ICAP) process used in schools and districts. The summit will be held **Dec. 3** at the Embassy Suites in Loveland from 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. The following draft tools will be available: ICAP implementation toolkit, examples of best practices, crosswalk with the Colorado Academic and CTE Standards, middle and high school ICAP indicators and implementation rubrics. Contact Robin Russel, graduation guidelines manager russel_r@cde.state.co.us for more information.

For more information, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/choice/> 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:

There are several due dates this month for Student October. ACCESS pre-coded labels will be pulled **Nov. 10**. File clean-up processes continue for the 2013-14 Student End of Year collection. Local education agencies continue to submit files for 2013-14 Finance December and are gearing up for the 2014-15 Human Resources and Special Education December Count collections.

What's Happening Now:

Student October

The 2014-15 Student October Pupil Enrollment Count close date is **Nov. 7**. Affected LEAs should immediately follow-up with documentation submission for students found to be duplicated across districts by **Nov. 14**. LEAs should then make corrections as directed by the Field Analyst Support Team by **Nov. 21**.

ACCESS for ELLs

Assessment will pull ACCESS pre-coded labels the morning of **Nov. 10** from untagged demographic

and student school association student interchange files. Data should be as current as possible (rather than Oct. 1).

Student End of Year

Districts continue to cleanse data throughout November during the post cross LEA validation which entails verifying transfers and dropouts within Colorado.

Finance December

LEAs are working toward a final submission date of **Dec. 31** for their 2013-14 files.

Human Resources

The 2014-15 snapshot is open. Approvals will be allowed beginning **Dec. 1** working toward a **March 14** close date.

Special Education December Count

The 2014-15 snapshot is open. LEAs should ensure that Special Education IEP Child, Special Education Participation, Staff Profile and Staff Assignment interchange files are submitted by **Nov. 12**. Administrative units are working toward a **Jan. 14** initial close date with a duplicate/data validity process to follow.

What's on the Horizon:

2013-14 Finance December and Student End of Year closings will occur in December.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **Nov. 7** – Student October initial collection closes
- **Nov. 10** – ACCESS pre-coded labels pulled by CDE's Assessment Unit
- **Nov. 12** – LEAs must submit four different interchange files for December Count
- **Nov. 14** – Student October duplicate documentation due to the FAST team
- **Nov. 21** – Student October final collection closes

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/factsheetsandfaqs>.

Access superintendent and principal tools at

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

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