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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:**

#### **Provide Feedback on State Model Evaluation System Specialized Service Professionals Rubrics So Improvements Can Be Made**

Evaluation requirements for specialized service professionals (school audiologists, psychologists, nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, counselors, social workers, speech language pathologists and specialists) went into effect this school year. The first year of implementation for specialized service professionals is a hold harmless year meaning a final rating of partially effective or ineffective will not count towards the loss of non-probationary status.

Districts using the Colorado State Model Evaluation System to evaluate specialized service professionals are encouraged to share feedback on the rubric regarding the language and expectations outlined in the rubrics which allows CDE to make informed changes to each of the nine rubrics. To provide feedback, visit: <http://svy.mk/1Hblr5A>.

#### **Study on Measures of Student Learning Illuminates Trends**

Districts and educators worked hard last year to implement measures of student learning to measure growth in educator evaluations. Developing a measures of student learning system is a complicated process and many districts are embarking on this work for the first time. With this in mind, the Colorado Education Initiative invited school districts to share information on their systems for inclusion in a statewide study of trends. Fifty-three districts, ranging from small rural to large urban, participated in the study. To review guiding questions for development and see a full report on trends and patterns in systems across the state, visit: <http://bit.ly/1rg8ZNi>.

### **What's on the Horizon:**

#### **Using the State Model Rubric with a Variety of Teacher and Teaching Roles**

The new evaluation requirements call for evaluations of all teachers to ensure every educator receives meaningful feedback to continuously improve their craft. As different groups of educators

have applied the Colorado State Model Evaluation System teacher rubric to their practice, they've had questions about making the rubric relevant to their work. To support these groups, a series of guides will be released in January that provide approaches to apply the rubric to their work. Written by practitioners for practitioners, the briefs include approaches for early childhood, librarians, English language learners, special education and arts (including dance, music, theater and visual arts) teachers.

For more information about educator effectiveness, visit:

[www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/](http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/) or contact Katy Anthes, executive director of Educator Effectiveness, [anthes\\_k@cde.state.co.us](mailto: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:***

#### **New Instructional Units Give Teachers Insights for Classroom Plans**

This month, the Standards and Instructional Support Office posted six more full instructional units (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/instructionalunitsamples>) based on the Colorado Academic Standards in math, music, comprehensive health/PE, social studies, science and English language arts. These teacher-authored units (created by Lake County educators) include learning experiences, teacher and student resources, assessment ideas and differentiation options. All of the units posted on the CDE website provide support or conversation/creation starting points, for teachers, schools and districts as they make decisions around the best instructional plans and practices for all students. For more information on how to best implement the new standards, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/contact> to connect with the appropriate content expert.

#### **READ Act Regional Technical Assistance Available Locally**

CDE provides regional technical assistance through locally-based literacy specialists. The specialists provide onsite support to teachers and administrators to support READ Act implementation. This 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://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readact/index>.

#### **READING Foundations Academy gives no-cost training**

CDE offers no-cost training on explicit and systematic Tier I reading instruction to K-3 teachers, instructional coaches and educational leaders. The training will focus on foundational reading skills and is aligned with the Colorado Academic Standards. Trainings are offered throughout the state at various times during the year. For more information including registration details, visit: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readingfoundationsacademyflyer>.

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, [colsman\\_m@cde.state.co.us](mailto:colsman_m@cde.state.co.us), 303-866-6737.

### **Overview:**

Assessments administered by the unit include summative content assessments, English language proficiency assessments, college/career ready assessments and alternate content assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

### **What's Happening Now:**

#### **State Leaders Signal Values and Priorities Around State Assessments**

When shifting to a new testing system, questions are bound to come up. Raising these questions provide a great opportunity to have meaningful conversations around the purpose and value of tests.

1. Tests are an important part of the teaching and learning process. Tests tell us how students are doing and how to help if a student isn't on track in any particular area.
2. Tests give us feedback to know if students actually learned what we taught and what we expected they learned.
3. Tests identify gaps in student learning and provide information about interventions needed for individual students.

The conversations around testing are happening locally and nationally. The commissioner and state board of education have weighed in on that conversation with their support for policies around state tests which:

1. Reduces the scope of statewide tests such as developing a system which mirrors federal minimums, plus social studies.
2. Provides requisite funding for technology for schools.
3. Provides relevant and timely data to educators and a meaningful experience for students.
4. Values student performance growth over time and uses valid measures.
5. Has a limited impact on instructional time.
6. Considers sampling where assessment purposes pertain to state interests.
7. Includes local choices from an approved menu of options with a focus on performance tasks, and with cross-district collaboration on scoring, validity and comparability.
8. Aligns closely with Colorado's graduation guidelines.
9. Exempts students from further assessment upon demonstration of mastery of relevant standards.
10. Provides transparency that includes:
  - a. Student performance on a robust set of college- and career-ready competencies including 21st century skills.
  - b. Quality information for parents and students so they can make informed choices in the system and advocate in their communities.
  - c. Quality information for educators and school leaders so they can better support students' learning.
  - d. Information that provides the state and taxpayers with an accurate view of the degree to which students are adequately prepared for college and careers.
  - e. Commitment to equity in identifying achievement gaps.

#### **CMAS and CoAlt: Science and Social Studies Clean-up Window Extended**

The final data clean-up window in PearsonAccess for the fall high school assessments is from **Dec. 9 through 12**. This window allows district assessment coordinators and student enrollment users to

update temporary SASIDs and confirm invalidation codes in PearsonAccess.

### **Attend a Dynamic Learning Maps Webinar Training**

Colorado will give the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) English language arts and math assessments to students with significant cognitive disabilities this spring. CDE will host a series of webinars related to the DLM assessments. Each webinar will be presented twice and is designed for specific roles and responsibilities. The dates and times for each role-based training are:

- District Assessment Coordinator - **Dec. 4**, 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.; **Dec. 5**, 9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
- Data Steward - **Dec. 9**, 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.; **Dec. 10**, 9:30 a.m. – 11 a.m.
- District Technology Coordinator - **Dec. 10**, 1 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.; **Dec. 11**, 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

### **Colorado Content Collaboratives Seeks New Members**

Applications are being accepted for membership in the Colorado Content Collaboratives. The Content Collaboratives have established assessment review protocols for local assessment use and have developed performance assessments aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards in all content areas. Future work includes participating in the development of resources to support the Colorado Assessment Literacy Program. Visit the Content Collaborative webpage at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/ContentCollaboratives>, or contact Angela Landrum at [Landrum\\_A@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Landrum_A@cde.state.co.us) for more information.

### **Early Learning and School Readiness**

#### **CDE Announces Flexibility with Implementation of the School Readiness Initiative**

In response to requests from district leaders and kindergarten teachers, CDE has created options to increase local flexibility for implementation of school readiness assessments through the allowable adjustments to the length of the assessments, options for the number of checkpoints, and the opportunities to use the assessment for progress monitoring for children needing intervention. For details, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness/assessment>.

In October, the state 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. In early 2015, CDE will announce a second series of meetings across the state to provide educators in-depth information and technical assistance related to assessment tools, options for implementation, funds available for assessment subscriptions and training opportunities. Please contact Sharon Triolo-Moloney with questions [triolo-moloney\\_s@cde.state.co.us](mailto:triolo-moloney_s@cde.state.co.us).

### **Draft Report Looks at Trends Based on Courses Taken and Student Test Performance**

During the 2014 legislative session, the General Assembly passed House Bill 14-1376 which requires the Colorado Department of Education to develop a course level participation and performance report. In response to that legislation, CDE drafted a data report on student course level participation and performance on state assessments. The report shows which students are enrolled in basic/remedial, regular and advanced level courses in math and English language arts and then looks at those students' performance on the state assessments. Reviews of data on science and social studies are forthcoming.

District and school leaders, educators, parents and researchers are encouraged to provide feedback on the report. For background, timeline, progress and next steps and to learn more about how to get involved in the development of the final report, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdegen/studentopportunitygaps>.

***What's on the Horizon:***

**CMAS Science and Social Studies and PARCC English Language Arts and Math Spring Administration Trainings Coming in January**

In-person spring administration trainings for CMAS science and social studies and PARCC English language arts and math will be held together in January in each region. Specific details including registration information will be sent to district assessment coordinators and superintendents.

**Districts Allowed to Update Biographical Data**

The Student Biographical Data (SBD) review allows districts to update the biographical data associated with state assessments. Districts can participate in the high school CMAS science and social studies SBD window in mid-January. District assessment coordinators will receive detailed information.

**ACCESS for ELLs Test Window Extended**

The assessment window for ACCESS for ELLs will extend from **Jan. 12 to Feb. 13**.

**Educators Invited to Review Test Items**

Educator involvement in the development and review of state assessments is essential to ensuring the content of items is appropriate for Colorado students and that items are not unfairly advantageous or disadvantageous to a particular group of students. CDE is recruiting educators for assessment item reviews. For development and review opportunities for the new science and social studies assessments, visit <http://educator.force.com/CO>.

The following upcoming assessment development opportunities are available to Colorado educators:

- **Dec. 11:** Review of high school science and social studies performance level descriptors
- **Jan. 14-15:** Item Writer Workshop (science and social studies - all grades)
- **Feb. 4-5:** Item Writer Workshop (science and social studies - high school )
- **Feb. 9-10:** CMAS science and social studies high school standard setting
- **Feb. 11-12:** CoAlt science and social studies high school standard setting

**New Performance Assessments Available in CDE Resource Bank**

The [Colorado Content Collaboratives](#) have teamed up with the [CDE District Sample Curriculum Project](#) to create fully developed performance assessments and rubrics to support many of the district-created sample curriculum units. Performance assessments will be available in comprehensive health, dance, drama & theatre arts, math, music, English language arts, science, social studies and visual arts. Performance assessments in physical education and world languages will be available in the spring of 2015. These updated resources will be available in the CDE Resource Bank beginning in January. Please visit the CDE Resource Bank at <http://www.coloradoplc.org/assessment>, or contact Angela Landrum at [Landrum\\_A@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Landrum_A@cde.state.co.us) for more information.

**National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Districts Notified of Participation**

Planning for the 2014-2015 NAEP is under way. All selected districts and schools have been notified. Please contact the Colorado NAEP State Coordinator, Pam A. Sandoval at [Sandoval\\_p@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Sandoval_p@cde.state.co.us) for NAEP-related questions.

For more information about assessments, contact Joyce Zurkowski, Executive Director of Assessment, 303-866-6760, [zurkowski\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:zurkowski_j@cde.state.co.us), or you can visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/index.asp>.

### **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 Released**

The final district accreditation ratings and an interactive data visualization of the results, including district demographics are available at

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performanceframeworkresults>. School Performance

Frameworks will be approved by the state board on **Dec. 10** and will be available at

<http://www.schoolview.org/>. School and District Performance Framework reports will be posted live in SchoolView and Data Center on **Dec. 10**.

### **What's on the Horizon:**

#### **Assessment Transition Will Impact Growth and Accountability**

The transition to Colorado Academic Standards and resulting transition to new assessments, the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS), will have an impact on growth and accountability 2015 results. CDE developed resources to describe the impact and the adjustments that will be made for the 2015 accountability cycle.

- Growth Impact: A one-page fact sheet is available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/coloradogrowthmodel> that describes the process CDE will use to determine if transitional growth percentiles (calculated from TCAP to CMAS) are appropriate to use for school and district accountability, improvement planning and/or public reporting.
- School and District Accountability Impact: A pre-recorded webinar is posted at <http://connect.enetcolorado.org/p3r1x2vqybg/> and it walks viewers through the standards and assessment changes and the resulting impact for accountability. The requirements for 2015 school and district accountability are described, along with a description of the optional request to reconsider process.
- Also, a school and district accountability transition fact sheet is available at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/assessmenttransitionhb141182>.

Please note: The 2014 school plan types and district accreditation ratings are not necessarily two-year ratings. 2015 ratings will be impacted by 2015 assessment participation rates and additional optional student performance data a district/school might choose to submit to CDE for review. As details around these processes are further developed, CDE will share information through the *CDE Update* and *The Scoop*.

### **Important Upcoming Dates and Deadlines:**

- **Dec. 10:** The state board approves 2014 school plan types; District and School Performance Framework reports are posted publicly on SchoolView.

For more information on accountability and improvement, contact Keith Owen, Deputy Commissioner, [owen\\_k@cde.state.co.us](mailto:owen_k@cde.state.co.us), 303-866-6099.

### **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:**

#### **Concurrent Enrollment Implementation Clarifications**

Updated guidance related to Concurrent Enrollment and Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment (ASCENT) is available to assist in district planning for the 2015-16 academic year. Through a review of statute and rules with Colorado's Attorney General, concurrent enrollment program guidance has been clarified for districts. A complete overview can be found in the [October Count Resource Guide](#), [CE funding determination guidance](#) and [CE attendance guidance](#). Highlights include:

- Districts are required to pay tuition directly to the college for concurrent enrollment or ASCENT courses at the rate specified in the cooperative agreement between the local education provider and the institution of higher education. In no event shall the rate be more than the in-state (resident) community college tuition rate. The parent or student may not be required to pay for tuition and subsequently reimbursed by the district or school. Districts are required to provide documentation showing payment of tuition made directly to the institution of higher education by the district.
- Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, concurrent enrollment funding will be based on the following:
  - Concurrent enrollment courses delivered at the high school will be treated consistent with other high school courses, based on teacher/pupil contact time. Tuition verification documentation is required.
  - Funding for concurrent enrollment courses delivered at the institution of higher education will be based on the number of college credits in which the student is enrolled in during the semester:
    - Full-time funding eligibility: Students enrolled in 12 or more semester credit hours as of the pupil enrollment count day.
    - Part-time funding eligibility: Students enrolled in three-11 semester credit hours as of the pupil enrollment count day.
    - This is consistent with the funding eligibility for the ASCENT program.
  - There will no longer be a requirement for evidence of successful completion of concurrent enrollment courses for funding purposes.

### **Important Upcoming Deadlines:**

- **Feb. 1:** Deadline for districts to submit a request for the number of anticipated ASCENT participants for the 2015-16 school year. Contact Michelle Liu at [liu\\_m@cde.state.co.us](mailto:liu_m@cde.state.co.us) to submit requests.
- **May 1:** Deadline for districts to submit an official affidavit with final ASCENT participant numbers for the 2015-16 school year.
- **June 1:** Districts will receive notification of the number of ASCENT slots that have been allocated to their district. For more information visit <http://bit.ly/1uS2Wzm>.

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](mailto:holmes_r@cde.state.co.us), 303-866-6938.

## Organizational Effectiveness

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

### **Overview:**

The 2013-14 Student End of Year and Finance December collections are finalized this month. Local education agencies continue submitting files for the 2014-15 Human Resources and Special Education December Count collections.

### **What's Happening Now:**

#### **Student End of Year**

Districts complete the post cross LEA validation which entails verifying transfers and dropouts within Colorado, double check graduation and dropout rates and finalize the collection by **Dec. 11**.

#### **Finance December**

LEAs finalize 2013-14 file submissions by **Dec. 31**.

#### **Human Resources**

Approvals for the 2014-15 HR snapshot will be allowed beginning **Dec. 1**. **March 14** is the close date.

#### **Special Education December Count**

The official count date is **Dec. 1**. Administrative units are working toward a **Jan. 14** initial close date with a duplicate/data validity process to follow. There are three milestone due dates in December.

### **What's on the Horizon:**

11th-grade alternate assessment for Colorado ACT activities begin in January. Please contact your district assessment coordinator to coordinate activities for this collection. Get a head start by checking Student October data in the alternate\_assessment\_participant field and verifying with your DAC that students who are enrolled in 11th-grade and also meet participation requirements for alternate standards and assessment by IEP Team decision. Enter a 0 in that field if they are NOT eligible or a 1 if they do qualify for alternate assessment.

### **Important Upcoming Deadlines:**

- **Dec. 1** – 2014-15 Human Resources snapshot approvals allowed
- **Dec. 1** – 2014-15 Special Education December Count official annual count date
- **Dec. 4** – Student End of Year Post Cross LEA validation ends
- **Dec. 11** – Student End of Year collection closes
- **Dec. 31** – 2013-14 Finance December collection closes

For more information, contact Jan Rose Petro, director of data services, [Petro\\_J@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Petro_J@cde.state.co.us), 303-866-6838. Submit questions and suggestions to [datapipeline.support@cde.state.co.us](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:goar_t@cde.state.co.us).

To access CDE fact sheets visit: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/factsheetsandfaqs>.



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

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