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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:**

#### **Practical Ideas for Evaluating Educators with the State Model System**

Throughout the development, pilot testing and validation study of the Colorado State Model Evaluation System, groups of teachers and their evaluators requested additional guidance on using the State Model Teacher Rubric and on evidence/artifacts that may be used for evaluations. In addition, they asked about specific practices to "look-for" to guide their classroom observations and help ensure that all licensed teachers receive fair, valid and reliable evaluations.

In response, CDE initiated the development of guides written by practitioners for practitioners. The purpose of these documents is to highlight possible approaches for districts and BOCES to consider when constructing their approach to evaluating educators. The three guides (available at <http://bit.ly/1zTQG24>) are:

- [Practical Ideas for Evaluating Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education Specialists](#)
- [Practical Ideas for Evaluating Teacher Librarians](#)
- [Practical Ideas for Evaluating Teachers of The Arts](#)

This month, two additional guides will be released (available at the link above): Practical Ideas for Evaluating Early Childhood Education Teachers and Practical Ideas for Evaluating Special Education Teachers. CDE is collecting feedback to improve these guides. To submit feedback, email [Educator\\_Effectiveness@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Educator_Effectiveness@cde.state.co.us).

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

Later this month, CDE will release a report on the implementation of the model evaluation for teachers and principals. CDE continues to make improvements to the model system based on the experiences of 26 school districts that have been piloting the system since 2011. Stay tuned to the CDE Update and the Educator Effectiveness e-Newsletter for more on this report.

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 ensure that students are prepared to succeed after high school graduation. The Teaching and Learning Unit offers schools and districts resources and support to enhance student learning and achievement.

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

#### **Access User-Friendly Standards Guides for Grades Six through 12**

On **Jan. 28**, the Standards and Instructional Support Office will release user-friendly guides to the Colorado Academic Standards for grades six to 12. The guides help families better understand the goals and outcomes of the standards, describing the “big picture” purpose of the standards as road maps to help ensure that 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 educational experiences that students may engage in and that families can support. The guides will be available here: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/guidesto6-12standards>

#### **School Readiness Assessments**

- **Informational Meetings** – Beginning in **late January**, the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness will conduct a series of regional meetings across the state to provide educators with in-depth information about school readiness assessments. Participants will learn about different assessment tools, options for implementation, funds available for assessment subscriptions and training opportunities. These opportunities will be communicated via The Scoop and on the webpage at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness>.
- **Webinar** – Prior to the regional meetings on school readiness assessments, an informational webinar will be held **Wednesday, Jan. 14, from 3:30-4:30 p.m.** The webinar will cover the process districts should use to request funding for school readiness assessment subscriptions for the 2015-2016 school year. The webinar will also provide information about opportunities for training and technical assistance over the next several months. Learn more at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness>.
- **Presentation by Publishers** – CDE is arranging for publishers of each approved school readiness assessment to make informational presentations. Dates, times and locations are being identified. These events will be scheduled in late January and early February. Specifics will be posted via The Scoop and on the school readiness web page early this month at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness/assessment>.
- **Implementation Options** – Districts are encouraged to review implementation options for the school readiness initiatives announced by CDE in November. Information can be found in a school readiness assessment implementation [fact sheet](http://bit.ly/1HrO4dl) (<http://bit.ly/1HrO4dl>).

#### **English Learners and the READ Act**

Since 2013, CDE has engaged an English Learner Literacy Task Force to advise CDE on policy and practice issues related to the literacy development of English learners. In collaboration with the task force, CDE released a guidance document (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/elreadguidance>) for implementation of the READ Act in support of English learners. The guidance provides information to districts about flexibility for determining a significant reading deficiency for English learners and suggestions for development of effective READ plans with consideration to English language development.

In working with the English Learner Literacy Task Force, a question emerged regarding the assessment requirements for determining a significant reading deficiency for students who receive their literacy instruction in Spanish and English. In response to a request from Commissioner Hammond, the Attorney General's Office provided the commissioner and state board of education with a formal opinion on this question in August. The opinion states that it is permissible under the READ Act to determine whether a child who receives their literacy instruction in Spanish and English has a significant reading deficiency by testing that child using a state board-approved Spanish assessment. Please note that the opinion primarily impacts those schools/districts who provide literacy instruction in Spanish and English and who wish to use Spanish assessments to determine a significant reading deficiency.

The department will initiate a rulemaking process at the February state board meeting to revise the READ Act rules to allow for the use of Spanish assessments in the determination of a significant reading deficiency for students who receive literacy instruction in Spanish and English.

*Please note: Proposed changes to the rule are narrow in scope to align with the Attorney General's opinion on this specific issue of the use of Spanish assessments in the determination of a significant reading deficiency.*

The department will hold an informational meeting on **Wednesday, Jan. 14** from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Colorado Education Association, 1500 Grant St. in Denver. Virtual meeting participants can view meeting documents and presentations at <http://connect.enetcolorado.org/r352qocspdb/>. Audio is provided via 1-877-820-7831; use passcode 712581 when prompted. Please visit <http://bit.ly/1vbUvud> to RSVP.

Districts are encouraged to provide informal feedback to the revised rules by **Jan. 23** to Alisa Dorman at [dorman\\_a@cde.state.co.us](mailto:dorman_a@cde.state.co.us). Once the proposed rule changes go before the state board, the department will conduct a formal feedback process. Additional resources for English learners in relation to the READ Act can be found at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ellandread>.

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](mailto:colman_m@cde.state.co.us), 303-866-6737.

## Assessments

### **Overview:**

Assessments administered by CDE include the Colorado Measures of Academic Success in English language arts, math, science and social studies; English language proficiency assessments, college/career ready assessments and alternate content assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

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

#### **Preparing For and Communicating About CMAS**

As we look toward the first administration of the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) in math and English language arts this spring, there will undoubtedly be renewed questions and conversations about why we have new tests. It will be important to remind stakeholders about the purpose and value of tests, while at the same time participating in open and meaningful discussions around finding the right balance of testing.

To help communicate about CMAS, CDE is updating the communications toolkits for teachers and parents. The revised toolkits will include drop-in articles, a new brochure on the Colorado Academic Standards, videos, fact sheets and key messages. The updated toolkits will be available starting Jan.

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

### **ACCESS for ELLs**

The assessment window for ACCESS for ELLs is **Jan. 12 – Feb. 13**.

### **CMAS Spring Administration Trainings**

In-person spring district assessment coordinator administration trainings for CMAS science, social studies, English language arts and mathematics will be held in each region according to the following schedule:

Southwest Region - Alamosa: **Jan. 5**

Southeast Region - La Junta: **Jan. 6**

Pikes Peak Region - Colorado Springs: **Jan. 7**

Northeast Region - Limon: **Jan. 8**

Denver Metro Region - Lakewood: **Jan. 9**

West Central Region - Grand Junction: **Jan. 12**

Northwest Region - Eagle: **Jan. 13**

North Central Region - Brush: **Jan. 16**

DACs can register for this training at the link provided in the invitation. A recorded webinar will be available on the assessment webpage (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/trainings>) after the in-person trainings for coordinators who cannot attend an in-person session. The CDE Assessment Unit will also hold virtual office hours for new and returning DACs who have assessment administration-related questions. A schedule will be posted on the assessment unit webpage.

### **CMAS Science and Social Studies Student Biographical Data Review**

The Student Biographical Data (SBD) Review allows districts to update biographical data associated with state assessments. Districts will have the opportunity to participate in the high school CMAS/CoAlt science and social studies SBD window from **Jan. 15 to Jan. 27**.

### **Review of Performance Level Descriptors and Standard Setting for the High School CMAS Science and Social Studies Assessments**

Colorado administered the CMAS: Science and Social Studies high school assessments for the first time this fall. These assessments require the Colorado Department of Education to develop new performance level descriptors and new cutscores for the assessments. These new performance standards will be developed to interpret student results. Standard setting for the high school science and social studies assessments will be held in mid-February and recommendations from the meeting will be presented to the State Board of Education in March. The Assessment Unit is seeking individuals (teachers and administrators) with expertise in the following areas to participate:

- the concepts and skills reflected in the science and social studies Colorado Academic Standards and in student development of the concepts and skills in high school;
- working with students with disabilities; and
- working with English learners.

In addition, a draft of the CMAS: Science and Social Studies High School Performance Level Descriptors are available for field review **through Jan. 16**. Specific information about this review was distributed to district assessment coordinators.

### **Technology Readiness for Online Assessment**

The Assessment Unit will hold the following online assessment technology readiness activities:

- CMAS Spring 2015 Online Assessment Readiness Kickoff (repeated webinar) - **Thursday Jan. 8, from 9 to 10 a.m.**
- Site Readiness Technical Training - **Thursday Jan. 15 from 9 to 11 a.m.** and **Tuesday Jan. 20 from 1 to 3 p.m.**
- Virtual Office Hours for DTCs - **Tuesdays from 9 to 10 a.m. (ongoing)** and **Thursdays from 1 to 2 p.m. (begins Jan. 8)**

District technology coordinators should keep the following software release dates in mind when preparing for spring online assessment administration:

- TestNav v 8.2 release – **Jan. 15**
- Java security update - **Jan. 20**

### Join the Colorado Content Collaboratives

CDE invites Colorado educators to apply for the Colorado Content Collaboratives. Participating educators benefit from content-specific expert training, leadership development and opportunities to inform critical components of Colorado’s education system. Members will meet three to four times a year to engage with peers and recognized education experts to co-create needed instructional and assessment resources and tools. Applicants must attend a new member orientation meeting in Denver on **Tuesday, Feb. 10**, followed by a Content Collaboratives meeting on **Wednesday, Feb. 11**. The focus will be working with the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards & Student Testing on the development of content-specific elements to be included in Colorado’s Assessment Literacy Program. To apply, visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KBSBHHL>. The deadline to apply is **Wednesday, Jan. 7**.

### New Performance Assessments Available

Performance assessments developed by the Colorado Content Collaboratives (aligned to select [Instructional Unit Samples](#)) are available in the [CDE Resource Bank](#). Performance assessments in comprehensive health, dance, drama & theatre arts, math, music, English language arts, science, social studies and visual arts are available.

### Spanish Language Arts Item Review

The Assessment Unit is recruiting educators to participate in item review for the new third- and fourth-grade Spanish language arts assessment. Item review will be held in the Denver Metro area **Feb. 3-5**. Colorado educators reviewed the passages in December 2014. Please share the following URL with educators who may be interested in participating in Spanish item review: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SpanishLanguageArts>.

### *What’s on the Horizon:*

Assessment	Grade	Tentative Windows
CMAS: Math and ELA Performance-Based Assessment*	3-8, High School	<b>March 9-April 3</b>
CMAS and CoAlt: Science and Social Studies	4 & 7 (Social Studies)	<b>April 13 - May 1</b>
	5 & 8 (Science)	
CMAS: Math and ELA End-of-Year Assessment*	3-8, High School	<b>April 27 - May 22</b>
CO ACT	11	<b>April 28; May 12</b> (make-up date)
<i>*Dates may vary for districts with early testing windows.</i>		

## Comprehensive Assessment System Framework

As part of the CDE Assessment Literacy Project, the Comprehensive Assessment System Framework will soon be released along with information regarding assessment literacy professional learning modules for educators.

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

- **Jan. 7:** Application deadline to join the Colorado Content Collaboratives
- **Jan. 12 - Feb 13:** ACCESS for ELLs testing window
- **Jan. 15:** ACT test administration question and answer webinar
- **Jan. 15-27:** SBD for the fall high school CMAS/CoAlt: science and social studies assessments
- **Week of Jan. 19:** The PARCC PBA file may be downloaded and loaded into PearsonAccess<sup>next</sup> for EOY.
- **Jan. 22:** Student enrollments must be updated in the Student Interchange for CMAS/CoAlt: science and social studies spring pre-ID extract. Final day for updating student data in the Student Interchange for COACT Pre-ID labels.
- **Jan. 23:** Deadline for ACT to receive requests for ACT-approved accommodations and supporting documentation
- **Jan. 23:** Order CMAS math and ELA End-of-Year paper-based materials
- **Feb. 10:** Colorado Content Collaborative new member orientation meeting
- **Feb. 11:** Colorado Content Collaboratives assessment literacy meeting
- **Feb. 16-March 6:** Update participation counts in PearsonAccess for CMAS science and social studies initial orders
- **Feb. 16:** CMAS/CoAlt science and social studies:
  - Update/create district and school level PearsonAccess user accounts
  - Online test session set-up and accommodated form assignment begins
  - CoAlt Score Entry/teacher assignments begins

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>.

## 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 Data Publicly Available**

All 2014 School and District Performance Framework data is public. In addition to PDF reports available on SchoolView (<http://www.schoolview.org/performance.asp>), interactive results and PDFs are available in Data Center (<http://www.schoolview.org>) and "flat files" are posted (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performanceframeworkresults>). New interactive data displays are available that help visualize school and district performance across the state. School data can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1JQFrgs> and district data is posted here: <http://bit.ly/1GY1Ypf>.

Additionally, the DISH tool, a district dashboard can be accessed here:

<http://schoolview.org/dish/dashboard.asp>. DISH is a helpful tool for improvement planning, as it shows trend data on the framework metrics for multiple years. A school component is also available.

**What's on the Horizon:**

**Accountability Work Group to Hold First Meeting**

The first convening of the Accountability Work Group occurs **Jan. 13**. This stakeholder group, consisting of regional superintendent representatives, school and district leadership and CASE, CASB, and CEA leaders will work with CDE to investigate ways to enhance the School and District Performance Frameworks for the 2016 release. As a starting point, CDE will use results from last spring's accountability survey (113 district respondents) and data from focus groups conducted over the summer.

**Update on Colorado's ESEA Waiver Renewal**

CDE is working on Colorado's ESEA Waiver Renewal. Colorado's current waiver expires at the end of the 2014-15 school year. The waiver renewal requires information and updates concerning Colorado's college and career ready standards and assessments, differentiated accountability system and supports and educator effectiveness systems. The department will solicit public comment on the waiver and any proposed changes.

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.

**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:**

**Upcoming ASCENT Deadlines**

Annual ASCENT requests are due **Feb.1** for the number of students your district anticipates participating for the 2015-16 school year. More information and submission instructions can be found at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/ascent\\_requests](http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/ascent_requests). Districts have until May 1 to submit an affidavit with final ASCENT participant numbers, along with a list of participating students. Final notifications for the number of ASCENT slots that have been allocated to your district will be made no later June 1.

**Important Upcoming Deadlines:**

**Application Deadline and Amendment Window Opens for Multi-district Online Schools**

The application for certification deadline for new multi-district online schools was **Jan. 2**. The next opportunity for submission is **April 1**. The amendment application window is Jan. 2 through April 1. Major changes such as a change in authorizer, education service provider or grade level changes require an amendment to the original certification. If you have questions about the process or would like technical assistance, contact Renee Martinez at [martinez\\_r@cde.state.co.us](mailto:martinez_r@cde.state.co.us). The application and review rubric can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1CCdFSR>.

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 2014-15 Student October occur this month.

**What's Happening Now:**

**Human Resources** - Continue cleaning and submitting 2014-15 HR data; **Feb. 20** 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 and must have created a complete snapshot and approved their data, electronically verifying that staff and student data are valid and reliable. A duplicate/data validity process will follow.

**CO ACT** - Current student demographic and school association untagged files will be used to pull data extracts on **Jan. 22**. Assessment criteria will identify eligible students.

**CMAS/CoAlt Science and Social Studies** - Current student demographic and school association untagged files will be used to pull data extracts on **Jan. 22**. Assessment criteria will identify eligible students for the spring test administration. The Student Biographical Data for the 2014 fall administration will occur between **Jan. 15 and 27**. This allows LEAs to verify the associated demographic data.

**11th-Grade Alternate Assessment for Colorado ACT** - Between **Jan. 26 and 30** take a preliminary snapshot to generate roster, verify eligibility, correct errors if necessary and calculate the number of tests needed.

**Important Upcoming Deadlines:**

- **Jan. 14:** Initial close for 2014-15 Special Education December Count
- **Jan. 15:** 2014-15 Student October data released
- **Jan. 22:** CO ACT and CMAS/CoAlt Science and Social Studies Pre-ID extracts taken
- **Jan. 22:** 2013-14 Student End-of-Year data released
- **Jan. 26:** Take a preliminary snapshot for 11th-Grade Alternate Assessment to generate roster, verify eligibility, correct errors and calculate number of tests
- **Jan. 27:** Final date to complete the SBD for the fall 2014 CMAS/CoAlt Science and Social Studies assessment

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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