CDE UPDATE
Strategic Priorities

CDE | COLORADO
Department of Education

February 2015

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 Evaluation System
Last month, three guides were released to provide additional guidance on using the State Model Teacher Rubric for evaluations of different groups of teachers. Guides were released on evaluating culturally and linguistically diverse education specialists, teacher librarians and teachers of the arts. This month, one new guide is available: Practical Ideas for Evaluating Early Childhood Education Teachers. Another new guide is expected next month titled Practical Ideas for Evaluating Special Education Teachers. To access these guides, visit: http://bit.ly/1zTQG24. CDE is collecting feedback to improve these guides. To submit feedback, email Educator_Effectiveness@cde.state.co.us.

New Report on Implementation of the State Model Evaluation System
CDE recently released a report which provides an update on how the State Model Evaluation System for teachers and principals is being implemented in 26 school districts that have been piloting the system since 2011. It also describes how CDE continues to make improvements as the new evaluation requirements are rolled out in the state's 178 districts. To access the report, visit www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/reportcoevaluationsystem.

New Communications Toolkits
CDE recently released new communication resources to support district communication during testing season and around standards and evaluations. Two toolkits are available including tools for districts or schools to communicate with teachers or staff (http://bit.ly/15CNC0h). Another toolkit is for a district, principal or teacher to communicate with parents (http://bit.ly/15CNCxf). Included in the toolkits are:
- Updated messaging for new standards, assessments and educator evaluations
- Drop-in articles (pre-written email/newsletter content) for new standards, assessments and educator evaluations
- Short videos on new standards, state tests and educator evaluations

- Parent friendly brochure with a brief introduction on the Colorado Academic Standards
- User-friendly guides to the K-12 Colorado Academic Standards
- Frequently asked questions for new standards, assessments and educator evaluations
- Fact sheets on various topics

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 ensure 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:
Schools have been incorporating the Colorado Academic Standards into their lessons and instruction since 2010. In fact, the law called for the new standards to be fully implemented by the 2013-14 school year. However, given different schools' availability of resources to support that transition, CDE recognizes that not all schools are at the same level of implementation. Because the Colorado Academic Standards are the foundational element to making students fully prepared for college, a career and life after high school, and they're a key component of students being highly successful on any state test, CDE wants to support schools that want additional help incorporating the standards most effectively in your schools. To learn how CDE's Standards and Instructional Support Office can help, contact Brian Sevier, director of standards implementation, at 720-498-2132 or sevier_b@cde.state.co.us.

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Guides to the Standards Clarify Expectations for Families and Communities
User-friendly guides to the Colorado Academic Standards for grades 6 – 12 in English (with Spanish translations, forthcoming) are available on the Standards and Instructional Support webpage: http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/guidesto6-12standards. 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 ensure all Colorado 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 students may engage in, and families could support during the school year.

Early Learning and School Readiness
School Readiness Initiative Informational Meetings: The Office of Early Learning and School Readiness is conducting a series of meetings across the state with online webinars to provide educators with in-depth information about the school readiness initiative and assessments. Participants will learn about assessment tools, options for implementation, funds available for assessment subscriptions and training opportunities. For more information, check out:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness.

School Readiness Assessment Information: Information about each of the approved school readiness assessments is available on the School Readiness webpage: http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness. Fact sheets and recorded presentations from the publishers of each approved school readiness assessment are available. Districts should review the 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://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/schoolreadinessassessmentimplementationoptions

School Readiness Assessment Funding: Applications are available beginning the week of **Feb. 9** for school readiness assessment funding for the 2015-16 school year. Colorado's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant provides resources and supports for districts with implementation of school readiness plans and assessments in kindergarten including costs for assessment subscriptions. A webinar to learn more about the application process for kindergarten school readiness reimbursement will be held **Feb. 10 from 3:30 to 5 p.m.** To learn more, visit: http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness/trainings.

If you have more questions, contact Daryl Gagliano, kindergarten readiness program manager at gagliano_d@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6971 or Sharon Triolo-Moloney, director of the office of early learning at triolo-moloney_s@cde.state.co.us.

READ Act Rule Revisions
English Learners and the READ Act: The department will initiate a rulemaking process at the Feb. 18 - 19 state board of education meeting to revise the READ Act rules. The rulemaking process is in response to a recent opinion (http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/attorneygeneralsopinion) by the Attorney General's Office to allow for use of Spanish assessments in the determination of a significant reading deficiency for students who receive literacy instruction in Spanish and English. More information is available at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index.asp. Resources for English learners in relation to the READ Act can be found at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ellandread.

Early Literacy Assessment Tool Project: The Office of Literacy has initiated an application process for the Early Literacy Assessment Tool project. The state's Early Literacy Assessment Tool project provides no cost reading assessment subscriptions for the DIBELS Next system and DIBELS Deep diagnostic reading assessments. These tools allow teachers to obtain real-time assessment of the reading skill levels of students in kindergarten through third-grade that garner immediate results and recommend activities based on those results. The project covers the cost of the online software license and training. Hardware is not included. Districts currently participating in the project as well as districts interested in participating for the 2015-16 school year must submit an application for the licenses. The deadline for continuing applicants is **Thursday, March 5 at 4 p.m.,** and the deadline for new applicants is **Tuesday, April 5 at 4 p.m**. Applications and an informational webinar supporting the application process are posted at: http://bit.ly/1Cvdlnt.

Through the School Finance Act in 2012, CDE was authorized to purchase an early literacy assessment tool for the state through a competitive request for proposals process. The contract was awarded to Amplify in 2013 for its DIBELS Next System.

For more information about standards, visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/index.asp or contact Melissa Colsman, executive director of teaching and learning, colsman_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:
State Board of Education Discusses Testing Waivers
Schools are preparing to give the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) tests this spring which were developed by PARCC in English and math. Like the state tests previous to CMAS, the CSAP and TCAP tests were singular tests in reading, writing, math and science. However, each of those tests were divided into multiple components. CMAS is constructed in the same way in that each test has two components – a performance-based component and an end-of-year component. The performance-based component is the part of the test which is given about three-quarters of the way through the year and allows students to demonstrate their knowledge of the standards. Likewise, the end-of-year test is given about 90 percent of the way through the year and shows educators and parents if students met the standards for that grade in that subject for the year.

Like CSAP and TCAP, students had to complete all components of the test to receive a valid score. The same is true of the CMAS tests. At its January meeting, the state board of education passed a motion to direct the commissioner to approve waivers for districts requesting it allowing them to waive out of administering the performance-based component of the English and math state tests. Advice from the Attorney General's Office indicates neither the state board nor the commissioner have the authority to grant such waivers. CDE received at least one waiver request as of the end of January. The state board will again discuss this matter at its February meeting (either Feb. 18 or 19). Check the state board webpage for details (http://bit.ly/1JtfAKh) as agendas are posted a week prior meetings. If you can't attend the meeting, but want to listen in, click the "Listen Live!" link.

New Communications Toolkits
CDE recently released new communication resources to support district communication during testing season and around standards and evaluations. Two toolkits are available including tools for districts or schools to communicate with teachers or staff (http://bit.ly/15CNC0h). Another toolkit is for a district, principal or teacher to communicate with parents (http://bit.ly/15CNCxf).

ACCESS for ELLs
The assessment window for ACCESS for ELLs ends **Feb. 13**.

CMAS: PARCC English Language Arts and Math Materials
Test materials are scheduled to arrive in districts two weeks prior to the scheduled start date.

Colorado Alternate Assessments (CoAlt)
The Colorado alternate assessments (CoAlt) are administered in English language arts, math, science and social studies to students with significant cognitive disabilities who are instructed and assessed on alternate achievement standards. Similar to the move to the CMAS assessments for the general population, Colorado has transitioned to CoAlt for the new alternate assessments.   Specific questions related to student eligibility qualifications for the CoAlt should be directed to the Exceptional Student Services Unit's Linda Lamirande (lamirande_l@cde.state.co.us).

Learn About Deadlines for CoAlt Math and English Language Arts, Developed by Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)
Districts should enter users and students into the Educator Portal by **Feb. 22**. Districts that want CDE to upload preliminary student data into the portal should contact Jasmine Carey (carey_j@cde.state.co.us) for details by **Feb. 9**. The CDE recommended window for the CoAlt test in English language arts and mathematics is from **April 13 – May 15**. However, given the number of new activities districts are undertaking this spring, districts may choose to assess outside of this window starting as early as **March 16.**

CMAS and CoAlt: Science and Social Studies High School Standard Setting
Standard setting for high school science and social studies assessments is the week of **Feb. 16**. About 50 educators from across Colorado will participate in the standard setting process. Educators will review performance level descriptors, assessment items, student responses and data. The panels of educators will use this review to make performance standards recommendations that will be presented to the state board of education for approval in March.

Get Your Assessment Questions Answered, Attend CMAS Office Hours
The Assessment Unit will host webinar-based office hours on Thursdays from 3 to 4 p.m. through May 28. Office hours provide an optional time for district assessment coordinators to ask questions related to the administration of CMAS: PARCC-developed English Language Arts and Math and CMAS: Science and Social Studies assessments to Assessment Unit staff. District assessment coordinators received detailed information via email about accessing office hours.

What's on the Horizon:

Assessment	Grade	Window
CMAS: PARCC-developed Performance-Based Assessment Component: English language arts and math*	3-8, high school	March 9-April 3
CMAS and CoAlt: Science and Social Studies	4 & 7 (social studies) 5 & 8 (science)	April 13-May 1
CMAS: PARCC-developed End-of-Year Component *	3-8, high school	April 27-May 22
CoAlt: DLM English and math	3-11	April 13-May 15 (recommended)
CO ACT	11	April 28; May 12 (make-up date)

*Districts were able to request approval from CDE to administer these tests prior to the above window. For a printable version, visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/statetestingwindows.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:
- **Feb. 16 – March 6:** Add new students to PearsonAccess and update participation counts for initial material orders for the CMAS science and social studies assessments
- **Prior to PARCC PBA testing:** Add new students into PearsonAccess[next]. Update personal NeedsProfile for students prior to testing so that students receive appropriate testing forms
- **Feb. 12:** ACT test administration question and answer session
- **Feb. 19:** ACCESS test materials must be shipped to Metritech
- **Feb. 23:** Proctor caching of test content for the PARCC PBA assessment component is

available
- **Feb. 23-March 27:** Additional orders window for secure materials for the PARCC PBA assessment component
- **Feb. 23-April 10:** Additional orders window for non-secure materials for the PARCC PBA assessment component
- **March 16-20:** Districts receive preliminary ACT approved accommodations roster for review
- **March 16-20:** Districts receive shipments with ACT non-secure materials
- **March 27:** Deadline to request changes to preliminary ACT approved accommodations roster
- **March 30:** Proctor caching of test content for the CMAS science and social studies assessments is available
- **March 30-April 8:** Window for districts to order state-allowed ACT accommodations materials online

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:
Accountability Impact from the Assessment Transition Resources
A new webpage (http://bit.ly/1yyqSJA) provides a one-stop location for information about the impact of the assessment transition on school and district accountability. The webpage contains:
- A pre-recorded webinar (http://bit.ly/1yTJmpT) outlining the impact and timelines for school and district accountability in 2015.
- A fact sheet (http://bit.ly/1Biucs4) on the availability of growth data in 2015.

As additional resources are developed, they will be announced and posted here.

Input on School and District Performance Frameworks 2.0
Last spring, 113 districts participated in the annual UIP/Accountability Needs Assessment. Last year's survey focused on the measures, metrics and design of the school and district performance frameworks to get input for the release of the next iteration of frameworks in 2016. The Center for Assessment analyzed the results and conducted additional focus group conversations for CDE. The Center released a report summarizing the results and recommending next steps. Check out the report at http://bit.ly/1zAmmMy.

Accountability Work Group
The first convening of the Accountability Work Group occurred Jan. 13. This stakeholder group, consisting of regional superintendent representatives, school and district leadership, CASE, CASB and CEA leaders will make recommendations to CDE on how to enhance the School and District Performance Frameworks for 2016. At the first meeting, the group set norms, learned about each other's experiences, reviewed artifacts from previous accountability systems and began conversations around the purpose of school and district accountability in Colorado. More information about the meetings and work of the group can be found at:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/accountabilityworkgroup**. The next meeting is Feb. 9.**

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

Organizational Effectiveness

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

Overview:
Data Pipeline is a streamlined approach to efficiently move required education information from school districts to the Colorado Department of Education. Data Pipeline reduces data redundancy, captures closer to real-time data, streamlines the data collection process and allows districts to exchange information on transferred students.

What's Happening Now:
Data Pipeline Status
Despite a number of enhancements made to the Data Pipeline infrastructure over the past year, the system is not operating as efficiently as necessary. The majority of the issues are related to the reporting tool that is integrated within the Data Pipeline application. To address these issues, CDE is embarking on a major database upgrade over the next several months that will provide additional processing power, more storage and faster speeds, thereby reducing the delays users are experiencing. At the same time, CDE staff continue to trouble shoot overall issues with the reporting tool and rewrite code as necessary to solve specific issues. Additionally, a user group is being convened to help prioritize issues and solicit new ideas for Data Pipeline enhancements. For more information or to get involved in the user group, please contact Marcia Bohannon, chief information officer at bohannon_m@cde.state.co.us.

Human Resources
The close date is **Feb. 20.** Continue cleaning and submitting 2014-15 HR data.

Special Education December Count
The close date is **Feb 5.** All administrative unit final reports are signed and submitted to CDE by 3 p.m.

11th-Grade Alternate Assessment for Colorado ACT
Test orders are due between **Feb. 2 and 6**. District assessment coordinators will be sent a link to the Survey Monkey webform.

CoAlt: ELA and Math
Districts, with at least 10 students, who would like help loading students into KITE need to have their alternate assessment students updated and untagged in the Student Interchange by **Feb. 23.** *(This is only required if the district is asking the state to load student data into KITE.)*

What's on the Horizon:
Report Card March and Access for ELLs SBD collections opens in March.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:
- **Feb. 5:** 2014-15 Special Education December Count final close
- **Feb. 6:** Test orders due for the 11th-Grade Alternate Assessment for Colorado ACT
- **Feb. 20:** 2014-15 Human Resources deadline
- **Feb. 23**: DLM students will be pulled from untagged Student Interchange data

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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