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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 implementation milestones, deadlines, supports available and a look of what to expect ahead.*

### **State Board Takes Action on Upcoming Tests**

#### **Parent Refusals Won't Result in Lowered Accreditation or School Rating**

On February 18, the state board of education adopted a motion to not hold districts liable for the decisions of parents who do not want to allow their children to take the PARCC-developed tests in English language arts and math. Effective immediately, districts will not be penalized by a lowering of their accreditation rating or school rating should their student participation rates fall below 95 percent due to parent refusals. CDE is asking districts to document all parent refusals.

The state board of education has authority over the consequences for not making 95 percent participation, so its motion is being implemented immediately.

CDE has a waiver with the U.S. Department of Education from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA/NCLB) that allows Colorado to use its own state accountability system in lieu of the federal accountability system which included requirements of meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). That current waiver includes assurances that Colorado would hold schools and districts accountable for meeting a 95 percent participation rate on state tests in English, math and science. The current waiver outlines that if schools or districts fall below the 95 percent participation rate in two or more content areas, the district accreditation or school ratings would be lowered by one level. To accommodate the state board's motion, CDE is seeking an amendment to its current waiver to reflect the new policy of not holding districts liable for low participation due to parent refusals. This effort does not affect CDE's immediate implementation of the board's motion to allow for parent refusals.

Some have asked if there was a need to seek an opinion from the Attorney General's Office regarding the board's motion. There is not a need to do so because the board has the authority over the consequences for not making 95 percent participation. As a result, no request has been made for an opinion related to this motion. CDE is implementing the motion immediately and communicating its effect to districts through all available communication channels.

#### **Waivers Continue to be Accepted; Districts Asked to Continue Preparations for Tests**

The state board of education voted in February to allow continued submissions of requests from districts to waive the performance-based component of the PARCC-developed tests in English language arts and math. This is the first component of two-component tests in English and math which could be given as early as March 2. The board's decision on the waiver requests was tabled

until the next special or regular meeting of the board, which is scheduled for March 11. Since the board did not grant waivers, districts should continue preparations for the administration of the upcoming assessments.

## 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:**

#### **Sign-up to Use the Colorado State Model Performance Management System**

In the past year, CDE, in partnership with RANDA Solutions, Inc., has moved very quickly with the development of the Colorado State Model Performance Management System. If your district/BOCES isn't using the system, but is interested in using it for the 2015-16 school year, fill out the short survey at [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/COPMS\\_Intentions](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/COPMS_Intentions). The earlier you fill out the survey, the earlier your users can enter the system. This will also help the Educator Effectiveness team create a training and implementation plan for this spring/summer. If your district/BOCES is already using the system, you do not need to fill out the survey. If you have questions, contact Joslyn Robich at [robich\\_joslyn2@cde.state.co.us](mailto:robich_joslyn2@cde.state.co.us) or 303-866-6221.

The Educator Effectiveness team will conduct demonstration webinars to assist you in making a decision regarding use of the Colorado State Model Performance Management System. To log in, visit: <http://connect.enetcolorado.org/rac/>. To call in, dial: 1-866-305-5704.

They will be held on:

- Monday, March 2, 10 – 11:30 a.m.
- Friday, March 6, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

#### **Inter-rater Agreement Project Needs Candidates to Become Master Scorers**

To support fair and consistent evaluations, CDE is developing tools to promote common interpretations of teacher quality and help evaluators provide useful and actionable feedback to educators. One tool is Elevate Colorado, an online inter-rater agreement training system. In the past two years, CDE has trained educators to become master scorers to determine evidence of professional practices from lesson videos in Elevate Colorado. CDE is looking for 10-12 Colorado educators who have experience with the Colorado Teacher Quality Standards to continue the master scoring work. Those chosen for the project must attend an initial 1-day training in June (exact dates to be determined) as well as a training July 8-10 in Denver, on Elevate Colorado and best practices for aligning evidence. Other trainings will be either face-to-face or through webinars in the spring and summer. Additional work throughout the 2015-16 school year is required as CDE continues to develop plans for inter-rater agreement. Please encourage qualified educators in your district/BOCES to apply by filling out the application at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/IRAAgreementProject](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/IRAAgreementProject). Each selected master scorer will be paid \$2,000 - \$2,500 (all work is funded through the state budget process and is subject to continuation of those funds). Applications are due by 4 p.m. on Friday, March 20.

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

#### **S.B. 14-165's Impact on Educator Evaluation Requirements for the 2014-15 School Year**

As we look towards completing educator evaluation final ratings, remember additional flexibility was passed by the legislature for this school year regarding the 50 percent multiple measures of student learning (for teachers and principals) or student outcomes (for specialized service professionals). District flexibility comes in the final step of the evaluation process when determining how much

weight the measures of student learning/outcomes standard count in the educator's final evaluation rating. To learn more, download this fact sheet:

[www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/sb14165factsheet](http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/sb14165factsheet).

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:**

#### **Standards**

As additional supports for creating rich, content-specific literacy practices, the Standards and Instructional Support Office has posted Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) Modules for grades 6-2 in Reading, Writing, and Communicating, Comprehensive Health, Science, and Social Studies. Colorado educators used their expertise and content knowledge to create modules that provide support for Colorado educators working to help all students think, read, argue, and analyze as writers, scientists, historians, and health advocates. These modules complement instructional units created in the District Sample Curriculum Project and reflect the goals of LDC; to develop literacy skills across content areas that will prepare all students for the demands of college and careers. The units and associated modules can be accessed here:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/literacydesigncollaborative>.

Spanish versions of the guides to the Colorado Academic Standards for grades 6 – 12 are available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/guidestostandards-6thru12-spanish>. The Spanish version guides are an add-on to the English versions, created last month. The user-friendly 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 that 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 of the standards and offer examples of educational experiences in which students may engage and families could support during the school year.

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

*School Readiness Assessment Funding:* 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 subscription costs for assessment subscriptions for kindergarten students. The application for kindergarten school readiness assessment funding for the 2015-16 school year is available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness>. A recorded webinar is also available to learn more about the application process. Questions about the school readiness initiative can be directed to Daryl Gagliano, kindergarten readiness program manager, at [gagliano\\_d@cde.state.co.us](mailto: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](mailto:triolo-moloney_s@cde.state.co.us) or 303-866-6781.

*Colorado Preschool Program:* The CPP coordinator annual regional meetings provide CPP coordinators with opportunities to share ideas and strategies, hear updates about the program and receive resources and technical assistance that support high quality preschool programming.

Information about how the state's new Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) will apply to district based preschool programs will also be shared. To register for these meetings, visit [www.cde.state.co.us/cpp/2015regionalmeetings](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cpp/2015regionalmeetings). Questions about the Colorado Preschool Program may be directed to Nan Vendegna, CPP program director, at [vendegna\\_n@cde.state.co.us](mailto:vendegna_n@cde.state.co.us) or 303-866-6602.

### **The READ Act Rules Set to be Revised**

*English Learners and the READ Act:* At the February state board meeting, the department announced the rulemaking process to revise the READ Act rules. The rulemaking process is in response to a recent [opinion](http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/attorneygeneralsopinion) (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/attorneygeneralsopinion>) by the Attorney General's Office 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. The proposed changes to the rules 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. Providing feedback as part of the rulemaking process can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index.asp>. Also, 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 application process for the Early Literacy Assessment Tool (ELAT) project is in progress. The deadline for new applicants is **Tuesday, April 5 at 4 p.m.** The state's ELAT project provides no-cost reading assessment subscriptions for the DIBELS Next system and Burst diagnostic reading assessments. The tools allow teachers to obtain real-time assessment of the reading skill levels of students in kindergarten through third-grade that provides immediate results and recommends activities based on those results. The project covers the cost of the online software license and training. Hardware is not included. Applications and an informational webinar are posted at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readact/assessmenttool>.

*READING Foundations Academy:* The Office of Literacy is offering no-cost professional development focused on explicit and systematic Tier 1 instruction in K-3 reading with an emphasis on foundational reading skills based in the Colorado Academic Standards. Participants will dig deeper into the Simple View of Reading (decoding and language), study the connection to the Colorado Academic Standards, and explore methods for engaging students in comprehension and writing every day. Any district or schools interested in this training should contact Donna Bright at 303-866-6002 or [bright\\_d@cde.state.co.us](mailto:bright_d@cde.state.co.us). For more information, 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.

## **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 Continues Accepting Waivers Requests**

The state board of education voted in February to allow continued submissions of waivers by districts and to table any decision on those waivers until the next special or regular meeting of the board.

Since the board did not grant waivers from the performance-based component of the PARCC-developed English and math tests, districts should continue preparations for the administration of the upcoming assessments.

#### **Communication Tools Available**

Template communication materials are available to help districts and schools communicate about the upcoming CMAS tests. These materials include a take the test parent workshop toolkit, sample letters to parents and handouts. View materials in the take the test workshop toolkit at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/takethetesttoolkit>. Sample letters are available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/superintendentandprincipaltools-dropinarticles>.

**Colorado Educators to Recommend CMAS CoAlt, Science, Social Studies Cutscores to State Board**  
Standard setting for high school science and social studies assessments was held in February. About 50 educators from across Colorado participated in the process. Educators reviewed performance level descriptors, assessment items, student responses and data, and made performance standards recommendations that will be presented to the state board at its March meeting. If cutscore recommendations are approved by the board during its meeting, test results are expected to be released to districts by the end of April/beginning of May.

#### **CMAS: English and Math Testing Window Opens March 9**

The PARCC-developed English language arts and math assessments consist of two components: the performance based assessment (PBA) component and the end of year component (EOY). The PBA window is open from **March 9 – April 3** and the EOY window runs from **April 27- May 22**. Districts with approval from CDE may participate in the early administration windows. For more information, contact Stephanie Boyd at [boyd\\_s@cde.state.co.us](mailto:boyd_s@cde.state.co.us) or 303-866-6849.

#### **CMAS and CoAlt: Science and Social Studies Windows Open in April**

The CMAS and CoAlt elementary and middle school science and social studies assessment window is **April 13 to May 1**. Districts should be completing their final preparation activities. For more information, contact Sara Loerzel at [loerzel\\_s@cde.state.co.us](mailto:loerzel_s@cde.state.co.us) or 303-866-3266.

#### **Field Test of Optional Classroom-Based Assessment Resources**

Requests have been made for classroom-based assessments that represent the unique-to-Colorado portions of the Colorado Academic Standards. The unique-to-Colorado portions of the standards include personal financial literacy in math and reasoning strategies as well as the use of figurative language through poetic techniques in reading, writing and communicating.

CDE staff is working with educators from around the state to develop and review test items aligned to the unique Colorado expectations. Like the tests reviewed and developed by the Colorado Content Collaboratives, these test items will be available in the CDE Assessment Resource Bank for optional/voluntary use by educators, schools and districts. These assessments will not be administered or scored at the state level. They will be for local use only, to support educators looking for high quality assessment resources to support instruction in and gauge mastery of the Colorado Academic Standards. For more information, contact Angela Landrum at [landrum\\_a@cde.state.co.us](mailto:landrum_a@cde.state.co.us) or 303-866-693.

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

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

\*Districts were able to request approval from CDE to administer these assessments early.

\*\* DLM consortium window opens on **March 16**.

***Important Upcoming Deadlines:***

- **March 6:** Update student data in PearsonAccess for initial CMAS science and social studies orders. (Districts were given access to student data that were pre-loaded by CDE from Data Pipeline on Feb. 16.)
- **Mid-March – April 27:** ACT window for schools to conduct supervised pretest sessions for all examinees, conduct room supervisor and proctor training and arrange to meet testing requirements at school or off-site location
- **March 9 – April 3:** CMAS PARCC PBA English language arts and math administration window
- **March 16 – 20:** DACs receive preliminary ACT-approved accommodations roster for review
- **March 27:** Deadline to request changes to the preliminary ACT-approved accommodations roster
- **March 30:** Proctor caching test content begins for the CMAS science and social studies assessments; CMAS science and social studies assessment materials arrive in districts
- **March 30 – April 8:** Window for DACs to order ACT state-allowed accommodations materials online
- **Before DLM Testing:** Students must be loaded into the DLM KITE system and test administrators must be trained
- **April 10:** Deadline for UPS pickup of PARCC PBA materials
- **Before April 13:** Districts train all staff involved in the Spring 2015 CMAS and CoAlt: Science and Social Studies administration, sign security agreement forms and send verification of district training form to CDE; finalize online test preparation activities in PearsonAccess, including verifying session creation and proper test form assignments
- **April 13:** CoAlt DLM English language arts and math administration window
- **April 13 – May 1:** CMAS and CoAlt science and social studies administration window
- **April 17:** Districts return PARCC PBA post-test compliance report through PearsonAccessnext

- **April 20 – 24:** DACs receive ACT secure standard time and accommodations shipment(s)
- **April 27 – May 22:** CMAS PARCC EOY English language arts and math administration window
- **April 28:** Colorado ACT administration
- **April 28 – 29:** ACT window for DACs to submit online makeup order for standard time materials
- **April 29:** DAC returns all initial test date materials to ACT via the prescheduled pickup
- **By May 1:** Enter all CoAlt science and social studies score into PearsonAccess
- **May 6:** Return all CMAS science and social studies assessment materials to Pearson
- **May 8:** DACs send district CMAS science and social studies post-test compliance report to CDE
- **May 12:** Colorado ACT make-up administration
- **May 29:** Deadline for UPS pickup of PARCC EOY materials
- **June 5:** Districts return PARCC EOY post-test compliance report through PearsonAccess<sup>next</sup>

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:**

#### **Accountability Work Group Reviews Accountability Feedback, Rankings, Gives Feedback on ESEA Waiver**

The second convening of the Accountability Work Group

(<http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/accountabilityworkgroup>) occurred Feb. 9. This stakeholder group, consisting of regional superintendent representatives, school and district leadership and CASE, CASB, CEA leaders and Colorado BOCES staff will make recommendations to CDE on how to enhance the School and District Performance Frameworks for the 2016 release. The next meeting will be on **March 16**. The group spent time during the second meeting:

- Reviewing a Center for Assessment report on stakeholder feedback on state accountability: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/stakeholderinputforthenextversionofspfanddpfs>. Engaging in conversation about ranking purpose and design statements in small groups and sharing results. At the March meeting the group will come to consensus on these statements.
- Providing feedback on ESEA waiver (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/eseawaiver>).

#### **Deputy Commissioner Announces Resignation**

Deputy Commissioner, Keith Owen, has been named the sole finalist for the superintendent position in Fountain-Fort Carson School District 8, which is located in the Colorado Springs area. Owen will be assuming his new superintendent duties in July 2015 and will work with the CDE team to ensure a smooth transition as he concludes his work with the department through the month of June.

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:**

**Graduation Requirement Resources Available**

Because of a discussion about refining the menu of career and college ready demonstrations for graduation guidelines at the state board of education meeting in February, graduation guidelines will now be referred to as graduation requirements. Documents and resources produced and posted after March 1, 2015 will be titled Colorado graduation requirements and documents before that date will be titled Colorado graduation guidelines.

Graduation requirement resources for districts and local boards are available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/graduationrequirements>. The class of 2021 is slated to be the first class to graduate under new requirements. As a first step, superintendents and boards of education should engage with community members, staff, students and parents to identify local priorities for district graduation requirements. Look for key messages and resources in the toolkit districts can use or adapt to communicate with their school communities.

The state board of education will discuss updates to the career and college readiness menu (p. 13 and p. 14 of the Graduation Guidelines Engagement Toolkit) in the coming months, in time for boards, district staff and community members to continue community conversations and to align district graduation requirements with state graduation requirements by the end of the 2015-16 school year. This does not change the current timeline which can be found on the front page of the toolkit. For more information, contact Robin Russel at [russel\\_r@cde.state.co.us](mailto:russel_r@cde.state.co.us) or 303-866-2908.

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:**

It's a busy month with the 11th-Grade Alternate Assessment for Colorado ACT this month. Both Report Card March and Access for ELLs SBD collections occur in March. There are early April finalization dates for both of these collections.

**What's Happening Now:**

**11th-Grade Alternate Assessment for Colorado ACT**

An informational webinar will be held on **Thursday, March 12 from 3:30-4:30 p.m.** Between **March 3 and 13**, DACs will be sent test packets via mail. Between **March 10 and 13** it is very important for DACs to take a snapshot to verify and update the roster of students to be tested. By March 31, DACs should distribute test packets to trained test administrators and make sure that tests distributed match the roster.

**Report Card March**

Local education agencies should submit this data between **March 2 and April 3**.

**Access for ELLs Student Biographical Data**

Local education agencies should submit data between **March 26 and April 1**.



**Directory**

Four day school week applications for the 2015-16 school year are due **May 8**.

**End of Year**

The 2014-15 collection is currently open for data submission.

**What's on the Horizon:**

The READ collection is scheduled to open in April.

**Important Upcoming Deadlines:**

- **March 2:** Report Card March opens
- **March 13:** 11th-grade alternate snapshot taken to verify and update students testing
- **March 26:** Access for ELLs SBD opens
- **March 31:** DACS are to distribute 11th-grade alternate test packets to trained test administrators and ensure that tests distributed match the roster
- **April 1:** Access for ELLs SBD due date
- **April 1:** READ collection opens
- **April 3:** Report Card March close date

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>.

Access superintendent and principal tools at

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

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