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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.

Commissioner Robert Hammond Announces Retirement

Education Commissioner Robert Hammond last week announced he will retire effective July 1.

Hammond, age 64, has been with the Department of Education for seven years. He was hired in 2008 as its deputy commissioner and promoted by the State Board of Education to commissioner in 2011.

Hammond said he announced his retirement now in order to give the state board time to develop a plan for selecting his replacement and allow for a smooth transition. The board is expected to discuss its process for hiring Hammond's replacement at its May meeting.

For more information: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/20150424hammondretirement>

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:

State Model Evaluation Rubrics to Remain Constant Next Year

The State Model Evaluation rubrics for teachers and principals will not change for the 2015-16 school year. CDE has made adjustments to the rubrics for the past three years based on educator feedback, expert input and quantitative data. This year, the rubric will remain stable to allow educators to continue to practice with the same rubric. The CDE Educator Effectiveness team is working with external research and evaluation experts to determine the best cycle to make changes to the rubric to allow for continuous improvement, while supporting stability and understanding of the content. For questions, call Dawn Paré at pare_d@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-5926.

Districts Have Flexibility to Weigh Measures of Student Learning

Remember, Senate Bill 14-165, passed last year, gave districts flexibility to decide how much to weigh measures of student learning in educator evaluations for the 2014-15 school year. For more information about this flexibility, see the fact sheet here: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/sb14165factsheet>.

What's on the Horizon:

RANDA: Performance Management System Summer Trainings

The Educator Effectiveness team will provide several training opportunities for district/BOCES/charter school staff who will be using the Colorado State Model Performance Management System (COPMS) for the 2015-16 school year. These trainings are intended for staff new to COPMS.

Dates and locations are listed below. Additional trainings will be added for late July/August. All trainings are scheduled from 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Light breakfast and lunch will be provided.

- May 29, Colorado School District Self-Insurance Pool, Centennial (just south of Denver)
- June 1, Santa Fe Trail BOCES, La Junta
- June 5, Pikes Peak BOCES, Colorado Springs
- June 9, Eagle Valley Schools, Eagle
- June 11, Uncompahgre BOCES(UnBOCES), Ridgway
- August 3, Centennial BOCES, Greeley

For more information about who should attend the trainings and how to register, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/copmstrainings>. For questions contact Joslyn Robich, 303-866-6221, or Robich_Joslyn2@cde.state.co.us.

Learning Opportunity Offered on Measures of Student Learning

The Colorado Education Initiative invites districts to participate in a research project on how Measures of Students Learning are being used in educator evaluations this year. Participating districts will be asked to share their process for using MSLs in educator evaluations via telephone and/or mail. Participation will only take about 30 minutes depending on the complexity of the system, and participating districts will receive several resources and tools to benefit their continued work with MSLs., including:

- a district-specific MSL report giving basic information on your MSL system and comparisons with MSL systems in other similar districts across the state,
- a report on MSL trends and patterns across the state, and
- a set of tools and constructive questions for districts to consider when tackling important issues related to MSL development and administration.

This research project follows a similar opportunity for districts last year that resulted in a report on trends and patterns along with a number of resources and tools. All results can be found at <http://www.coloradoedinitiative.org/our-work/professional-learning/measures-student-learning/trends-patterns-msl-systems-across-colorado/>

CEI retained Slope Research to conduct the research. Recognizing that the end of the school year is a busy time for districts, Slope Research will work with each participating district to make involvement as convenient as possible. For more information and to participate, contact Gilad Wilkenfeld at 720-924-6609, or Gilad.Wilkenfeld@sloperesearch.com.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

RANDA: Summer Downtime Planned for Performance Management System; Preparing for 2015-16

To make the necessary updates to the Colorado State Model Performance Management System (COPMS or RANDA) for the new academic year, a **system downtime is planned from June 26 – July 19**.

Also, **Districts should wait until June 26 to begin making staff changes for the next school year in the CDE identity management system.** This includes changing buildings, positions, and adding or removing users to the system for 15-16. If you make these changes prior to June 26, it may impact the reports as well as assign rubrics/evaluations not intended.

As districts/BOCES/charter schools prepare for the new year, we recommended you request EDIDs for new employees as soon as possible to help expedite the process of receiving EDIDs due to the heavy volume of requests that come in during the fall. CDE will be hosting trainings for the EDID process, and information is posted at http://www.cde.state.co.us/datapipeline/yr_edis.

Additionally, please submit your requests for school code changes (adding/closing/updating) as soon as possible. For more information on school code changes, please visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/datapipeline/snap_studentoctober.

Contact: Joslyn Robich 303-866-6221 or Robich_Joslyn2@cde.state.co.us

For more information about educator effectiveness, visit: www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/ or contact Katy Anthes, executive director of Educator Effectiveness, anthes_k@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6654.

Standards

Overview:

The 2014-15 school year provides an opportunity for educators across the state to refocus on the opportunity high quality standards provide for Colorado's children. Student learning is at the heart of Colorado's education reform initiatives. The Teaching and Learning Unit strives to offer schools and districts resources and support to enhance student learning and achievement.

What's Happening Now:

New Instructional Units and Sample Unit Overviews Available

Instructional units based on the Colorado Academic Standards for physical education are now available for kindergarten through high school teachers. The units include learning experiences, teacher and student resources, assessment ideas, and differentiation options. Each of the units was authored by a team of Colorado educators, including general education, special education, ELL, and other school professionals. The units are intended to provide support and/or conversation starting points for teachers, schools and districts as they make their own local decisions around the best instructional plans and practices for all students.

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/instructionalunits-physicaled>.

New sample unit overviews for world languages representing each of the proficiency levels are also available. Using a Colorado-designed and refined template, the samples provide organizing structures for the grade-level expectations (GLEs), evidence outcomes (EOs) and 21st Century Skills that build students' mastery of the standards. As voluntary resources for districts, the samples offer *one* possible foundation for developing standards-based units and lesson plans.

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

Summer Training Opportunities Offered for School Readiness Assessments

CDE is hosting free summer training events for each of the school readiness assessments. Training will be offered for teachers and principals across the state throughout the summer in Teaching Strategies GOLD, the most widely adopted assessment tool. Trainings for REAL and DRDP, the other two school readiness assessment tools, are also being arranged. For information about dates, locations, and

registration, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness>.

For more information contact Daryl Gagliano, Kindergarten Readiness Program Manager at gagliano_d@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6971; or Sharon Triolo-Moloney, Director of Office of Early Learning, triolo-moloney_s@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6781.

READ Collection and Verification Timeline Revised

To expedite the notification and distribution process for READ Act funds for the 2015 school year, CDE has revised the READ collection and verification timeline. CDE will verify all data by July 1 and inform districts of funding levels by the end of July, one month earlier than in past years. An informational webinar and an updated data collection timeline is posted on the READ Act webpage, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readdatapipeline>. Please contact Whitney Westgaard at westgaard_w@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6421 with questions.

State Board to Vote on READ Act Rule Changes

The State Board of Education conducted a rulemaking hearing in April on proposed updates to READ Act rules following a recent opinion by the Attorney General's Office. The opinion allows Spanish assessments to be used to determine a significant reading deficiency for students who receive literacy instruction in Spanish and English. The board will vote on the proposed rule changes at the May 13 - 14 meeting. More information can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index.asp>. Also, resources for English Learners regarding the READ Act can be found at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ellandread>. For questions, contact Alisa Dorman, executive director of Literacy, at dorman_a@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6016.

Professional Development Available for K-3 Reading Instruction

The Office of Literacy is offering no-cost professional development through READING Foundations Academies. The academies will focus on high-quality K - 3 reading instruction with an emphasis on foundational reading skills based in the Colorado Academic Standards. Four academies are currently scheduled for this summer. To register, visit:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1wolF4PhuoVWMJ6fzOjnI8qiRGUp3doVAzDEVYNSnn2s/viewform>

Any district or schools interested in hosting a session should contact Donna Bright at bright_d@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6002.

For more information about standards, visit

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/index.asp> or contact Melissa Colman, executive director of teaching and learning, colman_m@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6737.

Assessments

Overview:

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

What's Happening Now:

CMAS: English Language Arts and Math End-of-Year Window Closes May 22

The PARCC-developed English language arts and math assessments consist of two components: the Performance Based Assessment component (PBA) and the End-of-Year component (EOY). Districts have completed the PBA component, and the official EOY window closes on **May 22**. For more information, contact Stephanie Boyd at 303-866-6849 or boyd_s@cde.state.co.us.

CoAlt Dynamic Learning Maps: English Language Arts and Math Window Closes on May 15.

The CoAlt Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) English language arts and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are administered to students in grades 3 through 11. The administration window for these assessments closes on **May 15**. For more information, contact Mira Monroe at 303-866-6709 or monroe_m@cde.state.co.us.

Colorado ACT

Students who missed the official ACT test day may take the make-up test on **May 12**.

CMAS: Science and Social Studies High School Cut Scores

The State Board of Education is expected to revisit the topic of high school science and social studies cut scores at the May board meeting. In March the board voted to reject the cut scores recommended by a panel of teachers, and in April the board tabled reconsideration of its action. High school science and social studies results will not be released to districts and students until the board takes action.

What's on the Horizon:

CMAS Data Clean-Up

Districts will have various opportunities to participate in Student Biographical Data (SBD) clean-up processes for the English language arts, math, science and social studies assessments. Science and social studies SBD is scheduled for May 15 - 22, while English language arts and math SBD is scheduled for late June/early July. Specific information about SBD windows will be distributed to District Assessment Coordinators and data respondents. There may be an opportunity for districts to confirm that final files reflect English language arts and math component-level and demographic changes made during earlier data clean-up stages.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **May 6:** CMAS Science and Social Studies UPS pick-up deadline for materials included in scoring
- **May 6:** CoAlt Science and Social Studies deadline for entering scores into PearsonAccess (Test Examiner must have PearsonAccess CoAlt Score Entry role)
- **April 13 - May 15:** Recommended assessment window for CoAlt DLM-developed English Language Arts and Math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities recommended assessment window
- **May 11- May 12:** CMAS Science and Social Studies window for cleaning data in PearsonAccess
- **May 12:** ACT Make-up test date
- **May 15 - May 22 (tentative):** CMAS Science and Social Studies SBD
- **April 27- May 22:** CMAS English Language Arts and Math End-of-Year component regular assessment window
- **May 13:** All ACT makeup and accommodations test materials to ACT via the prescheduled pickup
- **May 22:** Deadline for ACT to receive all answer documents from schools. Late-arriving documents will not be scored.
- **May 29:** Deadline for scorable CMAS English Language Arts and Math materials to be picked up by UPS
- **May 29:** Purge cached test items for CMAS English Language Arts and Math End-of-Year
- **June 5:** Return Post Test Compliance Report (upload into PearsonAccessnext) for CMAS English Language Arts and Math End-of-Year

- **After Testing:** CMAS/CoAlt: Science and Social Studies/English Language Arts and Mathematics PearsonAccess/PearsonAccess^{next} clean-up activities

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:

USDOE Denies ESEA Waiver Amendment Regarding Parent Refusals

CDE's recent request to amend its current ESEA waiver regarding parent refusals to take state tests was denied by the U.S. Department of Education on April 24. CDE requested the amendment in response to the February motion by the State Board of Education 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. The letter from the USDOE is available here: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/eseawaiver>. CDE will provide guidance to superintendents and BOCES directors following the May state board meeting.

Quick Turnaround Required for Accreditation Contracts

Districts, the Charter School Institute and BOCES that are Accredited with Turnaround, Priority Improvement or Improvement Plans must sign an annual accreditation contract. Pre-populated accreditation contracts for 2015-16 will be provided following the May 6 adjournment of the legislature to reflect any statutory changes. Contracts must be signed by the superintendent and local board president and returned to CDE by June 1 for signature at the June 10th State Board of Education meeting. If this quick turnaround presents a challenge for your district, please contact Brenda Bautsch at 303-866-6174 or Bautsch_b@cde.state.co.us.

Accountability Work Group Discusses Future Options

The fifth convening of the Accountability Work Group occurred on April 27th. This stakeholder group, consisting of regional superintendent representatives, school and district leadership and CASE, CASB, and CEA leaders will make recommendations to CDE on how to enhance the School and District Performance Frameworks for the 2016 release.

At the Accountability Work Group meeting on April 27, small groups researched and discussed various recommendations in the areas of growth/improvement; equity/disaggregation; communication and purpose; design, post-secondary and workforce readiness; and accountability pilot. The pilot discussion is focused on accountability in the future (not the 2016 version) and how we might be able to pilot something in Colorado, in conjunction with the ESEA waiver.

More information about the Accountability Work Group is available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/accountabilityworkgroup>. The next meeting is May 18.

CDE Considers Alternative Education Campuses Applications

The department is currently reviewing applications for Alternative Education Campuses (AEC) and will reach out to districts/authorizers if an AEC is selected for an audit or CDE has follow-up questions. The State Board of Education will consider CDE's recommendations for approval of AECs in August 2015. If a school would like to be recommended to the State Board of Education as an AEC for the 2015-16 school year but has not yet submitted an application, please contact Jessica Knevals at 303-866-6778, Knevals_j@cde.state.co.us.

What's on the Horizon:

Accountability and Tracker Contacts

If your district is assigning a new Accountability or UIP Tracker contact for the 2015-16 school year, please remember that CDE will need information on the new representative. The department will send information on the process for updating contacts in May.

Safe Schools Checklist for Accreditation is Coming Up

The annual safe schools checklist for accreditation is due by June 5. The assurance checklist has been distributed to district superintendents and BOCES directors (if the BOCES operates a school) via their respective field services manager. If you have questions about the checklist, please contact Jhon Penn at penn_j@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6632.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **June 1:** Accreditation Contracts are due to CDE for districts Accredited with Turnaround, Priority Improvement or Improvement Plans
- **June 5:** Safe Schools checklist for Accreditation is due.
- **June 30:** New school and closed school code requests for 2015-16 due to CDE

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

Postsecondary Readiness

Overview:

CDE supports the various ways students can enter postsecondary education by working with districts and schools in thinking through the personalization of a pathway through high school and on to college and career for every student.

What's Happening Now:

GED High School Equivalency Exam Resources Available

A summary of resources to support educators and students preparing to take the GED has been developed, including information on the exam, how to schedule, and preparation materials. Additionally, a report is available including data on the participation and outcomes of GED testers since the beginning of the school year. View GED resources for students and educators at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/ged>.

Colorado uses the GED as the qualifying instrument to award Colorado's High School Equivalency Diploma. With the updated GED aligned to more rigorous standards, this diploma will reflect test taker's readiness for postsecondary education and the workforce. The Colorado GED Testing Program provides oversight and resources to GED testing centers in the state of Colorado, as well as information and resources for test takers.

For more information about postsecondary readiness, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/choice/> or contact Rebecca Holmes, associate commissioner of innovation, choice and engagement, holmes_r@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6938.

Organizational Effectiveness

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

Overview:

Special Education Discipline, Special Education End of Year, and School Discipline and Attendance collections will open this month. Both Directory Four-Day School Week applications and the 11th Grade Alternate Assessment for Colorado ACT collection are due in May.

What's Happening Now:

Special Education Discipline

Districts should continue to collaborate with administrative units on providing the needed discipline data. This snapshot is open April 27 to August 26. Administrative units (AUs) must have generated the complete Special Education Discipline Snapshot dataset by Aug. 18, passing all interchange and snapshot validations in preparation for report review.

Special Education End-of-Year Collection Continues

The Special Education End-of-Year collection will remain open until October 13, and AUs may continue creating snapshots. September 18 is the interim date by which all changes, specifically exit information changes, are identified and fixed and the administrative unit creates its complete error-free Special Education EOY snapshot.

New Collection Due for School Discipline and Attendance

The new Data Pipeline collection for School Discipline and Attendance will be open May 11 to June 26. The data is much the same as in the former Automated Data Exchange, but it is provided in a different format.

CMAS/CoAlt Spring 2015 Administration SBD

This process is tentatively scheduled for May 15 to 22.

11th Grade Alternate Assessment for Colorado ACT

By May 8, district assessment coordinators should enter and verify student scores for accuracy. The LEAAPPROVER is responsible to submit the snapshot collection to CDE by 5 p.m. on May 8. All districts, including those that did not test any students this year, will make a submission to CDE.

Directory Submissions Due

Four-day school week applications for the 2015-16 school year are due May 8. School code change requests for 2015-16 will be accepted until June 30.

READ Collection Continues

The Reading to Ensure Academic Development collection will continue through July 1.

Teacher Student Data Link. Both the interchange and snapshot will remain open until August 28.

There are two optional goal dates:

- May 1 – both TSDL files error free, and
- May 29 – TSDL Snapshot created.

End of Year

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

What's on the Horizon:

Directory Collections Open in June

District calendars for 2015-16, CO ACT SBD, and Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) SBD collections are scheduled to open in June. The CMAS English Arts and Math SBD is scheduled for late June/early July.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **May 1:** Special Education Discipline opens
- **May 1:** Special Education End-of-Year snapshot available
- **May 8:** Four-day school week applications due
- **May 8:** 11th Grade Alternate Assessment snapshot finalized (submitted to CDE)
- **May 11:** School Discipline and Attendance opens

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.

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Access superintendent and principal tools at

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

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