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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.

Complete the Commissioner Search Survey

The state board of education recognizes that selecting a commissioner of education is one of its most important functions. The state board is interested in gaining input from constituents, staff, education groups, business groups, parents and others, before selecting the commissioner. Please take a moment to complete the online survey by Monday, Sept. 14, available at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeboard/commissionerinputsurvey>.

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:

View an Inter-rater Agreement Webinar

To deepen the understanding of the Teacher Quality Standards, the Educator Effectiveness unit is offering an opportunity for educators to participate in an Inter-rater Agreement Professional Learning Community Webinar. This opportunity is available to individuals, teams, schools or districts to share expertise, learn and grow together in a risk-free environment. Learn more about this opportunity by viewing a recorded webinar, available at <http://connect.enetcolorado.org/p8rh8h17qx5/>. Contact Dawn Paré at 303-866-5926 or pare_d@cde.state.co.us for further information.

Educator Effectiveness Support/Technical Assistance is Available

As the new school year begins, the Educator Effectiveness unit is available to provide superintendents and principals with support and technical assistance related to educator evaluation, including identifying measures of student learning during the transition to new assessments. To find the most appropriate person to assist you, visit: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/contactus>.

View a Resource Guide for Deepening the Understanding of Teachers' Professional Practices, Now in a New Format

The Resource Guide for Deepening the Understanding of Teacher's Professional Practices supports observers and coaches in accurately identifying evidence of professional practices and assists classroom teachers in reflecting on their teaching and planning for implementation of specific

practices in their instruction. In addition, the research and examples, along with the glossary, supports the development of a common language among Colorado school district employees as they analyze, reflect on and plan instruction. It's easier to find explanations of the professional practices for each element under Standards I-III at the three rating levels: Basic, Partially Proficient and Proficient. Check it out at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/resourceguide-teacherprofessionalpractices>. Contact Dawn Paré at 303-866-5926 or pare_d@cde.state.co.us with feedback, questions or additional resources.

Assurances Update: 2015

Beginning in July 2013, and by July 1 of each year thereafter, CDE is required to collect an assurance from each school district indicating that the district is either implementing the state model evaluation system, its own distinctive evaluation system, or a combination/hybrid of the two. Additionally, for 2015, CDE collected the Measures of Student Learning percentage related to House Bill 14-165. To view this information, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/sb-assurances>. If you have questions, please contact Toby King at King_T@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6964.

Reminder: 2014-15 State Assessment Results and Educator Evaluations

For districts planning to finalize 2014-15 educator evaluations this fall, remember that results from the 2014-15 CMAS, including, math, English language arts, science and social studies, may **NOT** be included in 2014-15 educator evaluations. Results from 2014-15 CMAS **may** be used as baselines to inform future evaluations.

- View more information on the 2015 legislation: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdedepcom/educatoreffectivenesschanges>
- View a fact sheet: http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/hb_15-1323_accountability_guidance
- View an FAQ: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdedepcom/faq-hb1323-ee>

What's on the Horizon:

Measures of Student Learning Guidance Update

Updated versions of the Measure of Student Learning Guidance for teachers, principals and specialized service professionals will be available soon. These guidance documents highlight possible approaches for districts and BOCES to consider when selecting measures of student learning for use in educator evaluations. The updated MSL Guidance reflects an increased understanding and emerging best practices. To provide further support, the Educator Effectiveness unit will offer professional learning community opportunities this fall. Watch the EE Newsletter and The Scoop for more information. View the current measures of student learning guidance at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/studentgrowthguide> (the updated guidance will also be posted here.)

To sign up for the Educator Effectiveness newsletter, visit <http://state.us5.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=bee6c43ae6102530cf98cadf9&id=2ec33bdd34>.

For more information about educator effectiveness, visit www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/ or contact Toby King, director of educator effectiveness, king_t@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6964.

Standards

Overview:

Now is a good time for educators to refocus on the opportunity high quality standards provide for Colorado's children. Student learning is at the heart of Colorado's education improvement initiatives. The Teaching and Learning Unit offers schools and districts resources and supports to enhance

student learning and achievement.

What's Happening Now:

New Instructional Units Available

Three new Colorado teacher-authored integrated elementary instructional units based on the Colorado Academic Standards are available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/instructionalunits-integrated>. The units integrate the arts with another content area, providing instructional units that maintain the integrity of each discipline. The units were developed by a collaborative group of elementary classroom and arts educators and community arts partners in response to requests from the field.

In the coming months, educators and arts specialists will create additional arts integrated units at each grade, beginning with kindergarten through grade five and then expanding into the middle school grade levels. These additional units will be published during the 2015-2016 school year. For more information, contact Karol Gates, arts content specialist, at gates_k@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6576.

View a Webinar on Kindergarten School Readiness

A recording of the Aug. 25 webinar on the interaction of the READ Act and kindergarten school readiness is available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness>. Questions about the school readiness initiative can be directed to Daryl Gagliano, Kindergarten Readiness Program Manager gagliano_d@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6971.

READ Act Approved Assessments

In December 2013, the state board approved a list of interim reading assessments for the purpose of identifying significant reading deficiencies pursuant to the READ Act. The READ Act allows for districts to transition to an approved assessment by **July 1, 2016**. Districts currently using DIBELS 6th edition or DRA2 will need to transition to an approved assessment. Approved assessments can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readinterimassessments>. To assist districts with the selection process, the webpage contains links to recorded webinars about each assessment tool. Literacy staff is also available to consult with districts. Please contact Alisa Dorman at dorman_a@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6016 for more information.

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.

The Colorado Measures of Academic Success are the new state tests in English language arts, math, science and social studies that were given to Colorado students in the 2014-15 academic year. The science and social studies tests were developed just for Colorado students, while the math and English language arts tests were developed in collaboration with other states through the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for Colleges and Careers (PARCC).

What's Happening Now:

High School Assessment Update

Legislation that included changes to the state's assessment system was passed last spring. Among these changes is a reduction to the frequency of social studies assessment administration within schools, a shift in the grade level of high school science and social studies assessments and the addition of a preparatory exam that is aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards and to the 11th-grade college entrance exam.

Social Studies Sampling

Senate Bill 15-056 reduced the number of schools that will administer the state social studies assessments each year. CDE and Pearson are finalizing a plan that will provide a representative state sample and that will allow each public school to administer the social studies assessments at least once every three years. Over the next three years, about 1/3 of schools will be selected to administer the elementary and middle school assessments each year. Schools that have been selected to administer the elementary and middle school social studies assessments in spring 2016 will be shared with districts by November. High school social studies assessments will not be administered this spring. The three year sampling plan for high school social studies includes zero percent of schools selected to participate in 2015-2016, about 50 percent of schools selected to participate in 2016-2017 and about 50 percent of schools selected to participate in 2017-2018. For further information, please contact Christina Wirth-Hawkins, 303-866-6979, or wirth-hawkins_c@cde.state.co.us.

High School Science and Social Studies

Legislation passed last spring requires students enrolled in public high schools to take state science (House Bill 15-1323) and social studies (Senate Bill 15-056) assessments before 12th-grade. After consideration of possibilities and discussions with district science and social studies leaders, the decision has been made to administer the high school assessments to 11th-grade students. The high school science and social studies assessments were originally intended to be administered in 11th-grade to provide local flexibility in determining scope and sequence. When Colorado joined the PARCC consortium, English language arts and math assessments were added to the 11th-grade testing load. High school science and social studies assessments were moved to twelfth 12th-grade to reduce the testing burden on 11th-grade students. The removal of PARCC English language arts and math testing in 10th and 11th-grade allows high school science and social studies to return to 11th-grade. Grade 11 students will take the science assessments in spring 2016; however, the high school social studies assessments will not be administered until spring 2017.

As Colorado moves forward with some of its other high school assessment changes, conversations with stakeholders will occur regarding how to increase the perceived relevance of the high school science and social studies assessments, as well as ways to perhaps leverage the College Entrance Exam. For further information, please contact Christina Wirth-Hawkins, 303-866-6979, or wirth-hawkins_c@cde.state.co.us.

Grade 10 Preparatory Exam, Grade 11 College Entrance Exam and their Alternate Assessments

Last spring, House Bill 15-1323 added the requirement for a new 10th-grade preparatory exam that is aligned to both the Colorado Academic Standards and the eleventh grade college entrance exam and set the requirement that the Department of Education request competitive bids and contract for these assessments every five years. Colorado is in the process of issuing a single RFP (request for proposal) for both the 10th-grade preparatory exam and the 11th-grade college entrance exam. Details regarding both of these exams for 2015-16 will not be available until the completion of the competitive RFP process, selection of a test vendor and signing of a contract. The anticipated date for announcing the winning vendor is November 2015. For further information, please contact Will Morton, 303-866-6997, or morton_w@cde.state.co.us.

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are required to take an alternate form of the preparatory and college entrance exams. In spring 2016, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities will take the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) English language arts and math assessments in tenth 10th- and 11th-grade. The 11th-Grade Alternate Assessment that has historically served as an alternate to the Colorado ACT will be available as a resource for district use; however, the DLM assessment will replace the eleventh 11th-grade Alternate Assessment for the eleventh 11th- grade College Entrance exam. For further information, please contact and Mira Monroe (DLM summative questions), 303-866-6709 or monroe_m@cde.state.co.us and Linda Lamirande (historical alternate for the CO ACT), 303-866-6863 or lamirande_l@cde.state.co.us.

District Technology Coordinators Kick-Off Meeting

A virtual meeting for district technology coordinators will be held this month. District technology coordinators will receive specific session details.

Instructional and Assessment Accommodations Training

This year's assessment accommodations training for directors of special education, district assessment coordinators and district or school personnel involved with determining and providing instructional accommodations and accommodations used on state assessments will be held via video conference on **Sept. 17**. Special education directors and district assessment coordinators have training details, including a list of remote video conference participation sites around the state. This training is jointly hosted by CDE's Exceptional Student Services Unit and Assessment Unit. For more information, contact Mira Monroe at 303-866-6709 or monroe_m@cde.state.co.us or Linda Lamirande at 303-866-6863 or lamirande_l@cde.state.co.us.

CoAlt Administration Trainings

In-person administration trainings for the CoAlt assessments will be provided for district training personnel this fall. The morning session consists of a facilitated training of the Dynamic Learning Maps for English language arts and math. CoAlt science and social studies administration will be covered during the afternoon session. Registration information has been provided to district assessment coordinators.

Dates/locations:

Sept. 24 – Greeley

Sept. 29 – Durango

Oct. 1 – Pueblo

Oct. 6 – Steamboat Springs

Oct. 8 – Grand Junction

Oct. 13 – Limon

Oct. 15 – La Junta

Oct. 23 – Denver (Jefferson County)

Sample Materials Created to Help Communicate with Parents about State Tests

The Communications Unit has created several tools to help superintendents, principals and teacher communicate with parents about CMAS in 2015-16. The materials incorporate all test reductions required by 2015 legislation as well test design changes made by PARCC. The materials include a fact sheet, frequently asked questions and templates for newsletter articles. Additional materials will be available later this fall to help parents understand the new PARCC score reports. Access the communications toolkit at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/tools>.

CMAS: Science and Social Studies Educator Meetings

The Assessment Office is often asked how educators who administer the assessments can influence test development. The best way to directly influence the content of the assessments is through

participation in the variety of educator meetings that are held throughout the development cycle. With several upcoming educator meetings, please share the link to the [Educator Pool](http://educator.force.com/CO) (<http://educator.force.com/CO>) with teachers in your district. Educators can record their qualifications to serve on assessment development/review committees. Upcoming meetings:

- **Sept. 2-3:** CMAS/CoAlt elementary and middle school social studies data review
- **Sept. 15-17:** Elementary and middle school social studies content and bias review
- **Fall:** CMAS/CoAlt alignment studies

For more information on educator meetings, contact Katie Schmidt at 303-866-6808 or schmidt_k@cde.state.co.us.

What's on the Horizon:

Assessment Administration Trainings

CDE will host multiple 2016 assessment administration trainings for district assessment coordinators around this fall. Recorded webinars will be available for individuals who are unable to attend in-person trainings. Specific information about training dates, times and locations will be sent to DACs. ACCESS for English learners:

Oct. 12 – Greeley

Oct. 13 – Aurora

Oct. 20 – Pueblo

Oct. 27 – Steamboat Springs

Oct. 29 – Grand Junction

Nov. 5 – Limon

Nov. 10 – Live Webinar

CMAS: Science and social studies/English language arts and math (PARCC): **November** (specific dates and locations to be determined)

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **Sept. 10:** CoAlt: DLM updated software release
- **Sept. 17:** Instructional and assessment accommodations video conference
- **November:** CMAS, PARCC ELA and math results available to districts

For more information about assessments, contact Joyce Zurkowski, executive director of assessment, 303-866-6760, zurkowski_j@cde.state.co.us, or 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

The Accountability Work Group met Aug. 31. The Accountability Work Group will share recommendations for the next iteration of School and District Performance Frameworks (to be released in fall 2016) and asks for feedback around the state at regional superintendent and other stakeholder meetings this fall. If you would like a member of the Accountability Work Group to share draft recommendations and collect input at a specific convening, please contact Alyssa Pearson at pearson_a@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6855. More information about the Accountability Work Group, including agendas, minutes and PowerPoint presentations are available at

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/accountabilityworkgroup>. The next meeting is **Sept. 21**.

Accountability for Alternative Education Campuses

The State Board of Education approved applications for school designation as an Alternative Education Campus (AEC) in August. The approved list is available at http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/applications_for_aec_status_15_16. As with traditional School Performance Frameworks, AEC School Performance Frameworks will not be created for 2015 (based on 2014-15 data), per H.B. 15-1323. AECs continue to implement 2014 plan types in the 2015-16 school year. For more information, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/StateAccountabilityAECs.asp>.

The Alternative Education Campus Accountability Work Group, charged with looking at revisions to the AEC School Performance Frameworks and related accountability, had its second meeting on Aug. 26. The third meeting of the work group will take place Sept. 23. For more information, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/aec-workgroup>.

District Accountability, UIP Tracker and Family Partnership Contacts

Superintendents were emailed a survey link in August to confirm and/or update district accountability contacts, Unified Improvement Planning (UIP) tracker and family partnership contact information. Please confirm or update (especially if your district email server has changed) if you have not already done so. If you need the survey link, contact Kelly Stritzinger at stritzinger_k@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6108.

Unified Improvement Planning Fall Trainings

The UIP Team is offering regional online UIP work sessions in September and October. The training includes relevant updates on the UIP process and an overview of the online system, followed by a work session. Trainings are offered in locations across the state. For more information, visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/uiip_trainingandsupport. If you'd like a customized UIP training, please let your field manager know or contact Erin Loften loften_e@cde.state.co.us; 303-866-6642.

Unified Improvement Planning Resources

- A fact sheet summarizing available state datasets and data tools during 2015-16 is available at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/sdr_fact_sheet_8_14_2015.
- A Transition Guidance Document to inform improvement planning is available at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/uiip_trainingandsupport_resources.

What's on the Horizon:

Unified Improvement Planning Submissions Dates

Districts and schools must submit a revised/updated UIP by **April 15** (small, rural districts and schools with a Performance plan type may submit plans biennially). Schools and districts with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type (2014) must submit by **Jan. 15**. CDE also offers two optional submission windows for public posting on SchoolView on both **Oct. 15** and **Jan. 15**. [View more information \(http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/uiip_trainingandsupport_tracker\)](http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/uiip_trainingandsupport_tracker).

Optional review of the revised UIP for 2015-16 is available for districts Accredited with Priority Improvement and Turnaround Plans. This support is also being offered to schools that have been awarded a Tiered Intervention Grant. Plans for the optional fall review are due **Oct. 15** via the online UIP system or through Tracker. The fall submission does not take the place of the required winter submission due **Jan. 15** for Priority Improvement/Turnaround plans.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **Early September** – Release of pre-populated 2015 Unified Improvement Plans (section I) to districts. The online UIP system will be used to share the MS Word pre-populated reports, and is accessible through the Identity Management System <http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/uiip-online-system>. Use of the online UIP system for completing the plan is still optional this year; the un-populated MS Word template is available at http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/UIP_Templates.asp.
- **Oct. 15** - (Optional) Deadline for districts Accredited with Priority Improvement and Turnaround plans and Tiered Intervention Grant (TIG) schools to submit UIPs through the Tracker system for a fall UIP (Data Narrative) review from CDE.
- **Oct. 15** - (Optional) Deadline for districts and schools to submit 2014-15 revised UIPs through Tracker for the fall public posting on SchoolView.org.

For more information on accountability and improvement, contact Alyssa Pearson, interim associate commissioner of accountability, performance and support, 303-866-6855, pearson_a@cde.state.co.us, or visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability>.

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:

Learn More About P-TECH

Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools (P-TECH), signed into law in 2015, creates a public-private partnership to prepare thousands of Colorado students for high-skill jobs of the future. To implement the program, CDE and the Colorado Department of Higher Education seek proposals from school districts, BOCES, postsecondary institutions and dedicated high-growth industry employer partners for the development and operation of six-year high schools focused on career and technical education programming that spans grades nine-14. For a full list of criteria and to submit an application, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/p-tech>. Submit your application beginning **Sept. 1**. Priority is given to applications received by **Oct. 15** for schools wishing to open in the 2016-17 school year.

What's on the Horizon:

Request ASCENT (Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment) Slots for 2016-17

School districts have until **Feb. 1** to submit a request for the number of ASCENT participants for the 2016-17 school year. Contact Michelle Liu at liu_m@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6596 for information on requesting ASCENT slots. The ASCENT affidavit is due **May 2** and notification of slots will happen by **June 1**. For more information, visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/ce_ascent.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

Apply for the Advanced Placement Incentives Program by Sept. 11

The Advanced Placement Incentives Program assists with implementation and/or expansion of AP programs to increase participation in rural and small rural school districts. Applications are available at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/advancedplacement>. Submit applications to Marina Estrada by **Sept. 11**: estrada_m@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6267.

For more information about postsecondary readiness, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/choice/> or

contact Gretchen Morgan, Executive Director of Innovation, Choice and Engagement, morgan_g@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6740.

Organizational Effectiveness

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

Overview:

End of Year and Math Science Partnership are due this month. The 2015-16 Student October snapshot opens this month. Please continue to request new student and staff identifiers as needed.

What's Happening Now:

End-of-Year Snapshots

All districts must submit their 2014-2015 Student End-of-Year snapshots and approve initial data summary reports by **Sept. 10**. The cross LEA validation Phase A, reclaiming dropouts from prior collection years begins **Sept. 28**. Do not send superintendent signatures until December collection finalization.

Math Science Partnership

This collection, due **Sept. 30**, is conducted through the Automated Data Exchange one last time for the 2014-15 school year.

Special Education End-of-Year

The snapshot remains open until **Oct. 13**. All changes, specifically exit information changes, are identified and fixed and the administrative unit creates a complete error-free Special Education EOY snapshot by the interim date of **Sept. 18**.

Directory

Collection liaisons should continue to enter 2015-16 key personnel into this year-round application.

RITS/EDIS

Submit requests for student and staff identifiers as soon as possible for the 2015-16 school year. This ensures that needed SASIDS and EDIDS are available for applicable collections.

2014-15 Finance

Continue to submit files by **Dec. 31**.

Student October

The 2015-16 snapshot opens **Sept. 1**.

What's on the Horizon:

The Student End-of-Year post cross LEA validation Phase B, verifying transfers and dropouts within Colorado, begins in late October. The 2015-16 Teacher Student Data Link snapshot opens in October.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **Sept. 10**– Student End of Year snapshots must be submitted
- **Sept. 18**–Administrative unit interim date to create error-free Special Education End-of-Year snapshot
- **Sept. 30**– Math Science Partnership deadline

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

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