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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 have 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.

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:

Educator Effectiveness Leader's Retreat Update

Approximately 50 educators came together in November to share challenges and successes in implementing educator evaluation systems. The Educator Effectiveness Unit is already working on developing a training focused on Measures of Student Learning topics educators identified for the retreat in January. In the meantime, CDE encourages educator effectiveness leaders to join the EE Leaders' Retreat Discussion Board, a discussion board where educators can network, find resources and materials from others implementing S.B. 191, as well as continued support. Please contact Tricia Majors at Majors_T@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6678 to enroll, and stay tuned for more details and registration information in the coming weeks.

Mid-Year Reviews of Educators Using the State Model Evaluation System

CDE has produced a [video](https://vimeo.com/album/3011044/video/110899872) (<https://vimeo.com/album/3011044/video/110899872>) to help Colorado Performance Management System users complete a mid-year review before the beginning of the second semester of the 2015-16 school year. During this mid-year review, educator and evaluator should refine existing goals and identify barriers for completing those goals. See the [user's guide](http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/usersguide) (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/usersguide>) for more information.

Have you Hired Staff this Year?

As districts hire new teachers, principals and specialized service professionals, it is important to remember they must all be trained on the written evaluation system used by the district. Though many districts have been able to provide training to their new staff, some districts may struggle to do so once the year gets going.

Is your district/BOCES looking for training on the state model system? State model training providers can offer training for one person in your district or work with you to train a large group of educators or evaluators.

These training providers have been approved by CDE for the 2015-16 school year to provide training on the state model evaluation system and effective evaluation practices.

- [List of State Model Providers](#)
(<http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/trainingopportunitiesfromproviders>)
Access a list of districts, BOCES, institutes of higher education, or independent consultants that are approved by CDE for the 2015-16 school year as Colorado State Model Evaluation System training providers (subsequent approval will be based on program outcomes).

State Model Evaluation System Pilot District Qualitative Report

Last year, the Educator Effectiveness Unit held focus groups with S.B. 191 pilots to gather feedback on implementation of the State Model Evaluation System. Interviews were conducted with superintendents, HR directors, principals and assistant principals, teachers and other key stakeholders. As a result, specific feedback was collected about what is working and what districts are still struggling with. The information was reviewed and trends were identified in the [State Model Evaluation System Qualitative Pilot District Report](#) (<http://bit.ly/19rBxr>). This report highlights six emerging themes the unit will use to improve resources and guidance on the State Model System. If you would like to provide feedback on this report, share successes or concerns, please contact Dawn Pare at pare_d@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-5926.

To sign up for the Educator Effectiveness newsletter, visit <http://bit.ly/1Bdfwgz>. 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 Sample Arts Curriculum Units Available

By **mid-December**, the Office of Standards and Instructional Support will release additional Colorado teacher-authored instructional units in the arts based on the Colorado Academic Standards. High school units included this release are dance, drama and theatre arts, music and visual arts. All units will be available at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/instructionalunitsamples>. For more information, contact Karol Gates, interim director of standards and instructional support, at gates_k@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6576.

Kindergarten School Readiness Initiative Update

Information from the weekly town hall meetings with Teaching Strategies GOLD regarding the new online TS GOLD platform is available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness>. CDE staff continues to be in close contact with Teaching Strategies to voice Colorado challenges.

Because of functionality issues, CDE recommends that districts consider this school year as an extension of the phase-in process for the school readiness initiative and encourages districts to use this extension year to continuing learning to use the assessment tools and to work through implementation planning. In December, CDE will provide information regarding applying credits for subscription purchases for this year to next year's subscriptions.

Staff is available to work with districts on implementation planning and training for teachers. For

more information, contact Daryl Gagliano, kindergarten readiness program manager at gagliano_d@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6971.

General information about Early Childhood Assessment for school districts or programs participating in the Colorado Preschool Program, publicly funded kindergarten and programs serving preschoolers with disabilities can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/early/earlychildhoodassessment>.

READ Act Rulemaking Hearing

The State Board of Education will conduct a rulemaking hearing for the Colorado READ Act at 10:30 a.m. on Dec. 9 during its regular monthly meeting. Changes to the rules are necessary to bring the READ Act rules into alignment with H.B. 15-1323. Recommended rule revisions will be posted at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy>. For more information, please contact Alisa Dorman, executive director of literacy, at dorman_a@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6016.

READing Foundations Academy

It's not too late to schedule high quality professional development in K-3 reading for the 2015-16 school year. The Office of Literacy offers no-cost professional development through READING Foundations Academies focused on research-based K-3 reading instruction with an emphasis on foundational reading skills found in the Colorado Academic Standards. Districts 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.

The Colorado Measures of Academic Success are the state tests in English language arts, math, science and social studies that will be given to Colorado students in the 2015-16 academic year. The science and social studies tests were developed 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

Grade 10 Exam and Grade 11 College Entrance Exam Request for Proposal Status Update

Last spring, H.B.15-1323 eliminated the CMAS exams for grades 10 and 11 and added a new 10th-grade exam aligned to both the Colorado Academic Standards and the 11th-grade college entrance exam. The law requires the department to request competitive bids and contract for these assessments every five years.

Colorado issued the request for proposals for both exams at the beginning of November. Prospective contractors must submit proposals by **Dec. 4**. Details regarding these exams for 2015-16 will be available after the completion of the competitive RFP process, selection of a test vendor and signing of a contract. For further information, please contact Will Morton, 303-866-6997, or morton_w@cde.state.co.us.

CMAS and CoAlt Social Studies Sampling

Superintendents and DACs received emails in November regarding selected schools for this spring's social studies administration.

CMAS English Language Arts and Math (PARCC) Results

The following PARCC results have been released:

- State-level achievement and participation results
- District and school student-level data files and summary reports (embargoed)
- Electronic PDFs of individual student reports (embargoed)

The expected schedule for the additional spring 2015 PARCC files and reports are:

- **Dec. 4:** Media and district access to aggregated district and school level results (embargoed)
- **Dec. 11:** Embargo Lifts
- Hard copy student performance reports are scheduled to arrive in districts at the beginning of December

Supplemental Reports:

- TBD: District and School Performance Level Summary Reports (disaggregated reports)
- TBD: District and School Evidence Outcome Analysis Reports (similar to science item analysis reports)

Individual student level information contained within data files must not be publically disseminated, distributed or published. Districts and schools may use results internally for information and planning purposes but should not publically distribute or publish district/school results by any means prior to **Dec. 11**.

Communications Resources for CMAS Score Reports

CDE has created several resources to help districts and schools communicate with students and parents about the new PARCC score reports. A parent's guide to the score reports, mock score reports and drop-in articles are available on the CDE website at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/tools>. Many of the resources are available in English and Spanish.

Pre-ID Assessment Data Snapshot

Districts should update Student Interchange data by **Dec. 18** (end of day) for Assessment Pre-ID extracts. The data snapshot will be used to generate pre-identification labels for paper tests and student registration information for CMAS (science/social studies and PARCC English language arts and math) and CoAlt (science/social studies).

Unique Accommodations Requests

Unique accommodation requests for spring CMAS assessments are due to CDE by **Dec. 15**. Unique accommodations include accommodations that could potentially violate the construct of the assessment or that are not specified in the accommodations manuals and may be perceived as providing an advantage. Specific details on submitting unique accommodation requests have been provided to DACs.

What's on the Horizon:

ACCESS for ELLs 2016 Administration

The ACCESS for ELLs testing window is **Jan. 11 - Feb. 12**.

Preparation for Spring Assessment Administrations

Districts should be identifying the assessments they intend to administer via paper by grades and subjects and by school, if applicable. For CMAS, district assessment coordinators who did not provide this information to CDE during the statewide trainings should contact Stephanie Boyd at 303-866-6849 or boyd_s@cde.state.co.us.

In January, districts have the opportunity to update CMAS assessment administration mode (online or paper) at the student level, confirm student registration information and make initial material orders in PearsonAccess^{next}.

Important Upcoming Deadlines

- **Dec. 15:** Unique accommodations requests due to CDE
- **Dec. 18:** Deadline for updating student information in data pipeline (This data will be used for generating the registration files and pre-ID labels for CMAS and CoAlt.)
- **December:** PARCC test administration manuals available
- **Jan. 11 – Feb. 12:** ACCESS for ELLs testing window
- **Jan. 11 - 22:** Initial material order window opens in PearsonAccess^{next} for CMAS: English language arts/literacy, Colorado Spanish language arts, math, science and social studies. CoAlt science and social studies initial material order updates should also be made.
- **Feb. 1 through Start of Testing:** Online CMAS test sessions can be set-up

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 in November to discuss feedback from the field around the next iteration of School and District Performance Frameworks (to be released in fall 2016). The group worked to finalize recommendations to the commissioner. A report summarizing the recommendations and process will be available in January or February. Information from the meeting can be found here: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/accountabilityworkgroup>. The next meeting is **Jan. 25**.

Accountability for Alternative Education Campuses

The Alternative Education Campus Accountability Work Group, charged with looking at revisions to the AEC School Performance Frameworks and related accountability, had its final meeting in November. A final report with recommendations will be available online after **Dec. 4** at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/aec-workgroup>.

What's on the Horizon:

Assessment Transition Impact on Growth and Accountability

With the release of the CMAS PARCC data, these resources are a useful refresher on growth and accountability in 2015-16.

- **Growth Impact Fact Sheet**
Describes the process CDE will use to determine if transitional **growth** percentiles (calculated from TCAP to CMAS) are appropriate to use for school and district accountability, improvement planning and/or public reporting purposes. It can be found under Recent Briefs: The Colorado Growth Model during the Assessment Transition at <http://bit.ly/1XeCQ3E>.
- **School and District Accountability Transition Fact Sheet**
http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/hb_15-1323_accountability_guidance

Unified Improvement Planning Submissions Dates

Every district and school must submit a revised/updated UIP by **April 15** (note: 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**. For more information, visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/uiip_trainingandsupport_tracker.

Submission of UIPs for SchoolView

CDE is offering an optional submission window this winter for any district and/or school to submit revised UIPs for posting on SchoolView. The submission window is open from **Dec. 16 through Jan. 15**. Plans submitted during this cycle will replace the currently posted plans in February.

Updates to the UIP Online System

The UIP Team continues to receive positive feedback regarding the roll out of the UIP online system -- with a vast majority already in the system. Based on feedback from the field, CDE is making updates to the Action Planning form this winter. Any information already entered into the system will remain intact. However, the tool will become more dynamic, with action steps and implementation benchmarks displayed in a sortable chart format. Additionally, drafts and final UIPs will be created instantly and can be shared online or printed to PDF. UIPs will be created instantly and can be updated on Schoolview.org or printed to PDF.

Important Upcoming Deadlines

- **Early January, 2016:** UIP online system will roll out updates to the Action Plan and drafts/final copies.
- **Jan. 15:** Schools and districts with a Turnaround or Priority Improvement plan type are required to submit UIPs to CDE for review.
- **April 15:** All school and district UIPs must be submitted to CDE for posting on SchoolView

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 on the Horizon:

School Counselor Corps Grant RFP Coming Soon

The 2016-17 School Counselor Corps Grant Request for Proposal will be available in **January** to local education agencies for funding to increase the availability and implementation of effective school-based counseling within secondary schools. The grant is contingent on enacting pending

appropriations to the School Counselor Corps program for the 2016-17 school year. If funding is not appropriated, new grant awards will not be made for the 2016-17 school year.

If appropriated, \$500,000 would be available for approximately 15 grant awards. Within the first year of the four-year grant individual awards will range between \$25,000 and \$50,000. The first year will focus on program development, needs assessment and direct services. In the second, third, and fourth years of the grant, successful grantees will receive up to \$80,000 per funded school. Priority consideration will be given to LEAs that have not been previously funded. Middle and high schools are encouraged to apply with their “feeder” school(s) (if applicable). For more information, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/schoolcounselorcorps> or contact Eve Pugh, 303-866-4123, pugh_e@cde.state.co.us.

For more information about postsecondary readiness, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/choice/> or contact Gretchen Morgan, interim associate commissioner 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:

Important dates this month include the 2014-15 End of Year, Finance and 2015-16 Directory. The CMAS/CoAlt science and social studies and CMAS: PARCC English language arts and math label pull occurs **Dec. 18**.

What’s Happening Now:

Student October

Local education agencies that have not yet submitted the Student October signature page signed by the board secretary should do so as soon as possible.

End of Year

The post-cross LEA validation phase, verifying transfers and dropouts within Colorado, occurs until **Dec. 3**. Contact Duncan Anderson, anderson_d@cde.state.co.us, 303-866-6970, to have your district unlocked to make these adjustments. Superintendent signatures may be sent once the post-cross LEA validation issues have been addressed. The collection will be finalized on **Dec. 10**.

Migrant Data

By **Dec. 3** migrant regions are to conduct first level data quality checks by reviewing each regional Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR) data summary report. Explanations for any increase or decrease in the number of students from last year that is greater than 10 percent must be provided. By Dec. 18^{all} edit checks must be passed and the reports receive final approval. All regional CSPR data summary reports must be at final approval. Regional programs should refrain from entering student information into New Generation System (NGS) between **Dec. 21 and Jan. 8**. Migrant regions may begin entering info on **Jan. 11**.

2014-15 Finance

Local education agencies should continue to submit and finalize files. The due date is **Dec. 31**.

CMAS/CoAlt Science and Social Studies and CMAS: PARCC English Language Arts and Math

A single data pull will occur from untagged student files for both of these collections on **Dec. 18**.

Directory

Data Pipeline Directory contacts need to submit non-public school information and school board membership if applicable through Data Pipeline. Local education agencies are to send non-public school information into Dennis St. Hilaire at st.hilaire_d@cde.state.co.us. The submission deadline is **Dec. 1**.

Human Resources and December Count

The official count date is **Dec. 1**. By **Dec. 8** an initial snapshot should be taken.

Teacher Student Data Link

The TSDL interchange is open, continue to submit files.

What's on the Horizon:

The grade 10 exam and grade 11 college entrance exam label pulls occur in **January or February**.

Important Upcoming Deadlines:

- **Dec. 1** – Date by which districts send non-public school information to the department
 - School board membership directory updates due
 - Official count date for Human Resources and December Count
- **Dec. 3** – End of Year post cross LEA validation (verifying transfers and dropouts within Colorado) due;
 - Migrant regions conduct initial CSPR data summary report quality checks
- **Dec. 8** – Human Resources snapshot taken by districts
 - December Count snapshot taken by administrative units
- **Dec. 10** – End of Year deadline
- **Dec. 18** – CMAS/CoAlt science and social studies and CMAS: PARCC English language arts and math label pull occurs from untagged data files
 - Migrant region CSPR data summary report finalization
- **Dec. 21** – Migrant regions may begin entering NGS on **Jan. 11**
- **Dec. 31** – 2014-15 Finance 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 Education 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>

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