



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education  
Commissioner of Education

201 East Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203-1799

July 21, 2017

Dear Superintendents,

I hope you've all been enjoying the summer! I'm looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Breckenridge next week at the CASE conference. I know I won't be able to talk with all of you, so I wanted to make sure you are all aware of assessment news that happened over the summer, our release schedule for 2017 assessments and other high-priority work that's coming up in August. We did send some of this out earlier in the summer but knowing summer schedules we thought we would do a refresher.

#### Assessments Contract

In June we announced that [Pearson was selected to continue as our contractor](#) for our CMAS Science, Social Studies, English Language Arts and Math assessments. Pearson has served as our contractor for these assessments for the last four years, so the transition to the new contract should be seamless for educators and students. The new assessment contract will allow us to take steps toward meeting the board's directives toward adjusting operational testing time and returning results more quickly.

You may remember that the State Board of Education also directed the department to maintain decision-making authority over math and ELA test design, form development and test administration policies. We are working diligently to implement the board's directives, and together with Colorado educators we will be developing our own items to appear on future years' CMAS assessments. We continue to need educators to participate in development activities, including item review. If you know of educators who are a good fit for this role, please ask them to submit their names through the following link to be added to the educator pool from which educators are selected for each assessment development meeting: <https://pearson.cvent.com/ColoradoEducatorDatabase>.

Additionally, students in 9<sup>th</sup> grade will take the PSAT assessment in spring 2018 in place of the CMAS assessments. We are working with College Board to ensure that this transition is effectively implemented.

#### 2017 Assessment Achievement and Growth Results

We are planning to release school-, district- and state-level achievement results from our 2017 CMAS, PSAT and SAT assessments on August 17 at our regular state board meeting. You all received your individual student results in June. Your district and school summary reports, as well as electronic student score reports for all of the CMAS assessments are also available at the district and school levels within PearsonAccess. Hard copy student score reports for all CMAS assessments will begin arriving in districts next week with all hard copy reports scheduled to arrive by Friday, August 28. We plan to provide you with the state overall summary and disaggregated information as well statewide school- and district-level overall summary results as soon as they are prepared. We are aiming for August 14 for the embargoed release of this information prior to the public release on August 17.



We received requests from many of you to release growth at the same time as achievement results. I know this was important to a number of districts, so I'm pleased to share that we are also planning to release CMAS Math and English language arts growth data on August 17. If feasible, we will also release the PSAT to SAT growth at this time too. Your district will receive the student level growth percentiles before the public release.

#### **Performance Frameworks and Request to Reconsider**

We are planning to release preliminary school and district performance frameworks at the end of August, with final ratings planned for December. CDE staff will be available to assist schools and districts with understanding the performance frameworks, as well as with the request to reconsider process this summer and fall. If you would like assistance with a request to reconsider, your draft request to reconsider is due to CDE by Friday, Sept. 15, so our staff have enough time to provide adequate technical assistance. Final requests to reconsider are due Oct. 16.

#### **Communications Support**

As with past years, we'll also provide you with sample communications materials to help you share this information with your parents and communities.

#### **Standards Review**

The 13 committees formed to make recommendations on the review and revision of the Colorado Academic Standards, including many of your educators, continued to work over the summer. We really appreciate all of their time, expertise and commitment to this process! And in August, we will launch an opportunity for Colorado educators and other stakeholders to provide feedback on updates to Colorado's 21st century skills. The 21st century skills are the essential skills students should develop to be successful in the post-secondary education and the workplace, such as initiative and innovation. In addition to presentations at CASE and through webinars, we are also presenting the draft essential skills to a variety of business and parent groups in August and September, including the Colorado Workforce Development Council. Look for a link to the feedback form for the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in the August [CDE Update](#).

If you have any questions about any of this, I'll be at CASE with my executive team. Any of us would be happy to provide additional information to you. And if you can't make it to CASE this year, you can, of course, reach out to me any time!

Enjoy the last days of your summer!



Katy Anthes, Ph.D.  
Commissioner

