



COLORADO
Department of Education
Commissioner of Education

201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203-1799

March 22, 2017

Dear Superintendents and BOCES Directors,

As we head into the official window for our state assessments, I want to thank all of you for the hard work and coordination that I know goes into ensuring a smooth testing experience for students and educators. I also want to make sure you are aware of some important upcoming issues regarding state assessments.

CMAS Request for Proposals (RFP)

In December, I informed you that the State Board of Education had directed the department to include several requirements in our upcoming request for proposals for state assessments. The RFP is required because our current CMAS and CoAlt: science and social studies assessment contract is expiring this summer and our CMAS: English language arts and math contract is expiring next year. We issued this RFP late yesterday, and it includes the CMAS: science, social studies, math and English language arts as well as CSLA and CoAlt: science and social studies assessments.

As a reminder, the board directed us to include the following specifications in the RFP:

- The English language arts and mathematics average standard testing time for the operational assessments will not exceed four hours in length (maximum of eight hours combined).
- Individual student-level results will be available to the school districts within 30 days of receipt of all tests.
- The department will have decision-making authority over test design, form development and test administration policies.
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Depending on the result of the request for proposals, the CMAS and CoAlt: science and social studies assessments may move to another contractor next year, and the CMAS: English language arts and math assessment may move to a new contractor in the following year. Despite a potential contractor shift for the science and social studies assessments next year, the content of these assessments will remain the same in spring 2018.

CDE is committed to working with you to minimize any disruption that these changes may cause. We plan to announce our intent to award a contract in June, as required by the board, and I will keep you posted.

RFP Review Committee Nominations

Submitted proposals will be evaluated by a committee of field and CDE staff with experience in the development, administration, scoring and reporting of large scale assessments. We are seeking your help in identifying these individuals. Please consider nominating qualified candidates to be considered as evaluation committee members. The level of effort associated with being a member of the committee is relatively high, but we are hoping to find field representation in each of the areas identified below:

- Assessment administration experts (ex. district assessment coordinators)
- Content experts familiar with the Colorado Academic Standards and the process of developing items for statewide assessment. Individuals with experience in item writing, content and bias/sensitivity review, range-finding, and data review are especially needed.



- Please specify the content area (ELA, math, science, social studies) of expertise when nominating a content expert.
- Technology experts (ex. district technology coordinators)
- Individuals with expertise in K-12 special education
- Individuals experienced in teaching or directly supporting the instruction of English learners
 - Individuals with expertise in Spanish literacy and the Colorado Academic Standards are also needed.
- Individuals with psychometric expertise

If you would like to nominate a qualified candidate, including yourself, for committee participation, please include the name of the candidate(s), his or her email and phone number, current position and the individual's area of expertise from those listed above. Nominations for qualified candidates should be sent to Margo Allen at allen_m@cde.state.co.us by Friday, March 31.

PSAT 10 and SAT Student Data Questionnaire (SDQ)

As you know, students in 11th grade will take the SAT for the first time this spring, while 10th graders will again take PSAT 10. We have asked school Test Center Supervisors to take special notice of the Student Data Questionnaire (SDQ) and the accompanying Student Data Consent Forms. Students taking the PSAT 10 or the SAT will be asked to complete a voluntary student questionnaire that will collect information about the student's grades, interests, intended major and college plans, among other things. Students are not required to answer this questionnaire, but those who fill it out will have the opportunity to opt into the College Board's [Student Search Service](#). This service allows participating colleges and nonprofit scholarship organizations to better find specific student groups to share information about the opportunities their organizations provide.

Your Test Center Supervisors should be aware that, as part of their responsibilities, they will need to have a process for providing students and parents with the consent letters and receiving the signed forms. At least two weeks prior to testing, students and their parents should be provided with the opportunity to review this form, including a detailed overview of the optional questions that will be asked and how they will be used. Students who indicate that they do not wish to complete the optional questions or who do not return a signed consent form should not be allowed to complete the optional questions.

Collecting students' consent forms to participate in the optional portion of the SDQ is new to this year's administration process and stems from a change last May to Colorado's Student Data Transparency and Security Statute (C.R.S. 22-16-101). While the introduction of this process does require some additional work on the part of your schools, this is the best way to ensure that schools and the state are being transparent with students and their parents and complying with current Colorado laws.

If your staff have questions about the process, please have them contact Jared Anthony at anthony_j@cde.state.co.us.

If you have questions about any of this, please do not hesitate to contact me or Joyce Zurkowski, zurkowski_j@cde.state.co.us, executive director of assessment.

Thanks for all you do,



Katy Anthes, Ph.D.
Commissioner

