



Nov. 30, 2023

Dear Superintendents and BOCES Executive Directors,

I hope your Thanksgiving week was restful and rejuvenating. I have a few updates for you.

Today, Gov. Polis formally announced a second round of funding for Zearn Math for the 2024-25 school year.

This innovative and data-driven digital math platform aligns to the Colorado Academic Standards and includes free high-quality instructional materials, ongoing training for educators and after-school tutoring resources for K-8 students.

The state is making this investment to bolster math skills for so many of our students who have struggled in the subject due to the pandemic and multiple years of disruptive learning experiences.

Currently, 65% of Colorado school districts and more than 920 schools have opted to use Zearn Math for the 2023-24 school year to complement their core instruction and for intervention and tutoring. While it's too early for results from Colorado schools using Zearn, we know that [multiple large-scale studies](#) show students who consistently used Zearn Math each week grew state math scores 2.5 times more than matched students who did not use Zearn.

While it's critical for students to catch up on missed learning, it's also just as important for students to continue moving forward with grade-level math. Zearn Math is designed to ensure all students have the opportunity to access and engage with grade-level math concepts while providing adaptive foundational support right when students need it.

That is why we are thankful that the governor has stepped up with funding for this important math accelerator that is available free to any school district that wants to use it.

CDE is asking districts, regardless of their current use, [to fill out a survey about their interest in using Zearn for the 2024-25 school year.](#)

Update on Rulemaking for School Finance and School Codes

At the next State Board of Education meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 13, the board will vote to notice rulemaking for the School Finance Rules. Based on the work of the Blended Learning Initiative, the proposed rules would expand flexibility for student learning opportunities while building appropriate guardrails. You can access a [webinar about the draft rules here](#) as well as





the [draft rules themselves](#). After the rules are noticed in December, a hearing will be held in February. Comments are being accepted now through this [Google form](#).

The board will also vote in December on [proposed rules for the assignment of school codes](#) which were noticed at the October board meeting. While codes are largely seen as administrative identifiers, the process of designating codes becomes especially important to understand when schools are closed, merged, or otherwise restructured. The proposed rules would codify the processes and policies already in place to provide transparent and predictable criteria for how codes are assigned, Stakeholder feedback was collected through Nov. 17.

Update on migrant/refugee/newcomer resources

We have heard from many of you that supporting migrating newcomer students is a growing need in your communities. CDE is establishing a series of learning cohorts for district teams to identify shared needs and share available resources. The meetings will include learning opportunities through school and district visits highlighting successful practices.

The metro area cohort will meet Monday, Dec. 11 from 9 to 11 a.m. in Room 3A and 3B of the Jeffco Ed Center, 1829 Denver West Dr., Bldg. 27, Golden, CO 80401. [Click here to register](#) Information about a rural cohort will be available soon with an anticipated launch in January of 2024.

For more information about these opportunities, please reach out to Adrienne Cruz at cruz_a@cde.state.co.us.

Countering antisemitism and islamophobia

I hope you all saw [the message that came out from the U.S. Department of Education with important resources for countering antisemitism and Islamophobia](#). The letter references a nationwide rise in reports of hate crimes and harassment, including an alarming rise in disturbing antisemitic incidents and threats to Jewish, Israeli, Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian students on college campuses and in P-12 schools. The letter has valuable resources to support safe and welcoming school environments.

Free COVID-19 tests

Lastly, the U.S. Department of Education is making available free, rapid, at-home COVID-19 tests to interested local educational agencies. [You can learn more about the program in this letter](#).





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As we head into one of the busiest times of the year for educators, I want to wish you both the energy you need to make it through the hectic month of December and a heart full of joy to fully appreciate the beauty and warmth of the holiday season.

Susana Córdova
Commissioner
Colorado Department of Education

