



CHIEFLINE

Colorado Department of Education
William J. Moloney, Commissioner



***“To everything there is a
season, and a time to every
purpose under the heaven”:***

November 14, 2002

- Ecclesiastes 3:1

I. SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS: AN UPDATE

On October 23, 2002, Dr. Roscoe Davidson sent to all superintendents a preliminary schedule for the 2002 School Accountability Reports. A key element of that memo was the assurance that school districts would receive their SAR information prior to any release to the media.

Some aspects of that December schedule were however incomplete such as the timing of Governor Owens' press conference. Now we are in a position via this communication to give all superintendents and principals a finalized schedule for the SAR release. It is as follows:

A. November 27th (Wednesday)

By this date, all superintendents shall be in receipt of specimen copies of their SARs for every school in their district. Though this information must remain under public embargo at this point, superintendents are authorized to share this information with their principals and other appropriate school personnel.

B. December 2nd (Monday)

As Dr. Davidson noted in his earlier memo, on this day we will commence delivery of actual SARs to your schools. Also, as noted in that memo, allowing for the variation in local mail delivery, we expect 100% of the SARs to have arrived by the following week of December 9, 2002.

C. December 2nd (Monday)

On this same day, staff members from the Governor's Office and CDE will offer a confidential briefing to invited media personnel. At that time, they will receive the disks, which will give them the full data needed to prepare their post embargo stories. Again, it will be strictly enforced to media folks that none of this information can appear or be used anywhere until the Governor's press conference.

D. December 5th (Thursday)

At 11:00 a.m., at a location to be determined, probably a hotel downtown as was the case last year, Governor Owens will hold his press conference for the purpose of publicly releasing the SARs. At the very same time as was done last year, all SAR data will go up on the State website. This timetable will ensure that school people will have all of their information prior to release of data to the press and lifting of the embargo.

In urging the importance of this priority for schools, we pointed out to the Governor's staff that over the last two years we had dealt with a five-day preliminary release without a single breach of the embargo in any district in the state. Needless to say, I enjoin all concerned to take the greatest possible care in maintaining this admirable record in the present year.

With this schedule finalized, it is our hope that all districts can make provisional plans to share information with the schools and expedite the legally required delivery of the SARs to your communities. I would again note, as we indicated last year, the inclusion of any and all supplementary data or information to your communities along with the SARs is entirely appropriate. Whatever gives the fullest possible picture to your community is an appropriate complement to the SARs.

Finally, in reflecting on the enormous amount of work involved in the SAR task, I would like to thank all those whose work is the foundation of this vast enterprise, in particular, the SAR Workgroup under the direction of Roscoe Davidson – the several department people and the fine professionals from the field, such as Elliot Asp, Beth Celva, and Vera Dawson.

I would also commend the important work of the select committee on the implementation of SB 02-94 – those most able individuals who were recruited for us by our education organizations.

Most of all, I would single out and specially thank our Chief of Staff, Karen Stroup, who has had the indeed burdensome responsibility of being the general overseer of this project for CDE.

We will keep everyone updated as we go forward. As you have further questions, please don't hesitate to contact Karen Stroup.

II. THE STATE BUDGET

There is little that I can tell you that you have not read in the newspapers or heard from the folks at CASE.

Much of this is still very new. Much of this is still to be defined.

We do know this – Governor Owens performed a singular service to education in throwing a protective mantle over K – 12 in his austerity budget.

We should all be particularly appreciative of the sacrifices he made in other sectors of the budget, because he continues to see education as a central priority in the State of Colorado.

Our Finance Director, Vody Herrmann, has been usefully in contact with all of you by general memo and many of you by individual contact. Her counsels for care and prudence as you proceed fiscally are right on target.

Things are going to accelerate rapidly on this front now. As we know more, we shall promptly pass it along.

III. AN ELECTION SEASON PASSES – A LEGISLATIVE SEASON LOOMS

In a democracy, elections do matter; they do have consequences.

From the national to the state level there was drama and there are implications.

At the national level, this much is evident – the elections constitute a powerful reinforcement of HR – 1 and all that it stands for. Also, more than ever the themes of HR – 1 will powerfully shape the forthcoming and very important reauthorization of IDEA.

At the state level, Colorado mirrors the national phenomena of one-party government.

The results were barely in before the wheels began to spin rapidly – changes in already planned legislative entries, the initiation of new pieces of legislation based on the new reality, and accelerated calls for fiscal notes, which as usual are all important. Indeed, those fiscal notes reflecting budgetary austerity may well be the best guarantee of restraint.

As always, thoughtful leadership will be a key to rendering electoral consequences useful rather than harmful. Continuity and stability are our watchwords.

Those watchwords of continuity and stability will also be the key themes for the new State Board of Education. Happily, as Board members noted at their meeting today their unanimous commitment to the broad theme of reform will be unchanged.

Sincerely yours,

William J. Moloney
Commissioner of Education

cc: Governor Owens, General Assembly, State Board of Education, CDE Cabinet, CDE Staff, BOCES, CASB, CASE, CEA, and CFT