
November 26, 2008

update



DWIGHT D. JONES

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION



2008 has been a busy year! What follows are brief updates on various initiatives being implemented in Colorado public education. Contact information is provided should you have questions. I also encourage you to visit the department's Web site: <http://www.cde.state.co.us> for more information.



COLORADO GROWTH MODEL BUILDING-LEVEL DEPLOYMENT

Chances are good that you've seen the Colorado Growth Model in action. [For an online demonstration, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/growthmodel.html>.] We've distributed district-wide data to all 178 school districts across the state, and we are working hard toward providing principals and teachers access to building-level data. In order to do so, we are creating a secure, FERPA-compliant log-in system, which will ensure each school receives only data for its students and that confidential information is protected. We are also updating the functionality of the interface to include features requested by the field. A refreshed public-facing display, similar to the version we provided to districts in September, is also in the works.

On Nov. 19, refreshed public-facing 2008 growth charts were unveiled. Future delivery dates are reflected in the timeline below. Please know that while our goal is to "come in ahead of time," unforeseen technical or financial difficulties could cause delays.

- **January 2009:** Deploy updated public-facing data displays, which will be the same as those deployed to districts
- **February 2009:** Conduct *pilot* deployment of building-level displays to schools within selected districts and BOCES
- **March 2009:** Conduct *statewide* deployment of building-level displays to all schools within all districts
- **April – July 2009:** Request/receive feedback and refine system
- **August – September 2009:** Deploy displays with current data statewide

We recognize that a February pilot and a March deployment coincide with assessment preparation time and the CSAP test window, and we certainly do not want to place an additional burden or undo stress on the people we aim to serve. This timeline simply reflects

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a reasonable timeframe in which we can complete the necessary tasks. Once the system is indeed ready, districts can receive their building-level data at the time of their choosing, be it March, April, May or June. Contact Richard Wenning at wenning_r@cde.state.co.us to let us know your district's preference.

School districts and BOCES are actively providing input to CDE regarding technology development and training through a growth wiki. To become involved in this network, please send an e-mail to Bill Bonk at bonk_b@cde.state.co.us. Please use this wiki also to let us know your thoughts regarding student-level reports for parents.

ACCREDITATION – QUESTIONS FROM THE FIELD

On Nov. 13, the department convened a meeting of members of the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) on longitudinal growth. The purpose was to discuss questions the department has received from superintendents and educators concerning the Colorado Growth Model as it applies to the calculations used for district accreditation. These questions addressed a range of topics including the growth model's quadrant displays, subgroups with very small n quantities and median growth percentiles.

The department welcomes inquiries and suggestions designed to improve accreditation, especially during this "hold harmless" year, and the TAP continues to play an important role in reviewing these questions and comments, forwarding any opinions to department staff, who may further discuss them with the commissioner. If the commissioner determines that changes need to be made to accreditation rules, hearings will be held before the state board. For more information, contact Ken Turner at 303.681.5408 or turner_k@cde.state.co.us.

ACCREDITATION – THE NEW PROCESS

Six areas of importance are evaluated during an accreditation onsite review: a district's educational improvement plan; evidence of a parent/community-based accountability committee; changes in standards or goals the district wishes to make in its six-year contract; CDE's district accreditation and growth summaries; practices and strategies the district employed to meet standards and achievement goals; and a review of the district's financial accreditation report and safety assurance form. Information gathered during this onsite review is used to inform and further explain the district's accreditation report's results review summary.

Based on the general concept that achievement and autonomy go hand in hand, the new accreditation process grants relief from annual onsite reviews to districts that are realizing desired results. The following chart shows the rate of review frequency as determined by accreditation status.

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ONSITE REVIEW CYCLE PERTAINING TO DISTRICT ACCREDITATION IN COLORADO

| <i>Accreditation Status</i> | <i>2008-2009</i> | <i>2009-2010</i> | <i>2010-2011</i> | <i>2011-2012</i> | <i>2012-2013</i> | <i>2013-2014</i> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Accredited With Distinction | | | ■ | | | ■ |
| Accredited | | ■ | | ■ | | ■ |
| Accredited, Letter of Support | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Accredited, Notice of Support | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Probation | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |

Please note: Except in a few extraordinary cases, during this transition year no changes have been made to the accreditation status of districts.

As this table shows, districts that are *accredited with distinction* will participate in an on-site review every *three* years; districts that are *accredited*, every *two* years; and those that fall into other categories will be evaluated *annually*.

During the 2008-2009 “hold harmless” year, on-site reviews are being done and will continue through May 2009. Reviews for subsequent years will be complete by the end of each October. Districts presently in the *probation; accredited, notice of support; and accredited, letter of support* categories submitted improvement plans in October. Districts that are *accredited or accredited with distinction* will turn in their improvement plans by June 1, 2009. The submission cycle for future years is yet to be determined.

For more information, please contact Jhon Penn at penn_j@cde.state.co.us. (*Superintendents, please contact your regional manager.*)

NEW TITLE I REGULATIONS

In late October, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) published new Title I regulations. While most of them will not go into effect until the 2009-2010 school year or later, these new regulations will affect districts’ annual reporting requirements, the requirements for districts with schools on *improvement*, and the way graduation rates are calculated. The new regulations and summary documentation can be found on the ED Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/reg/tite1/index.html>.



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The department's office of federal program administration is working with the student assessment and data collections offices to determine how CDE will fulfill these new regulations. They are also working on guidelines to assist districts in working within the new parameters, which will be announced in *The Scoop* in the upcoming weeks.

In the meantime, please contact Trish Boland (boland_t@cde.state.co.us or 303.866.6998) or Alyssa Pearson (pearson_a@cde.state.co.us) with questions.

BEST CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION

The Capital Construction Assistance Board has met almost weekly since members were appointed by the governor late last summer. Initial meetings focused on capital construction rules for all-day kindergarten facility applications and their review. In mid-October, however, due to the economic downturn Gov. Ritter placed a freeze on the \$34.5 million designated for these specific facility requests.

Though the all-day kindergarten facility funds are "on hold," the BEST board has continued work toward establishing rules to ensure fair processes in this grant program. A public hearing was held on Monday, Nov. 17, for the Rules for the Public School Facilities Guidelines and the Full-Day Kindergarten Construction Assistance Program. The board will take action on these rules on Wednesday, Nov. 26, so that grant monies can be distributed once they are made available.

The Statewide Facility Assessment RFP will be awarded within the next few weeks to consistently assess every school district building in the state. These assessments will provide apples-to-apples comparisons that will allow us to better prioritize awards of capital construction grants.

For more information, please contact Ted Hughes at Hughes_t@cde.state.co.us.

SENATE BILL 08-212 OR CAP4K

Per Senate Bill 08-212, the Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education are required to adopt a description of *postsecondary and workforce readiness* by Dec. 15, 2009. In an effort to establish this common definition, the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Department of Higher Education are co-hosting regional, town hall forums* across the state to garner input from educators, students, parents, business and community leaders and other interested citizens.

The first of these forums was held Monday, Nov. 10, in Gunnison. The second is planned for Wednesday, Dec. 3, in Colorado Springs (at El Pomar Foundation's Penrose House, 1661 Mesa Ave, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.). Both the executive director of higher education, David Skaggs, and I will facilitate this meeting.



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The forum will focus on such questions as, *What do students need to be workforce ready? Postsecondary ready? Are there special considerations for the workforce or for higher education in your region of the state? And, Certain themes emerged from previous 212 regional meetings; which of those should be included as we create a description of postsecondary/workforce readiness?*

The description of *postsecondary and workforce readiness* will provide a bookend to the description of *school readiness*, due to be adopted by the state board of education at their December 2008 meeting.

*2009 Forums are also planned (*tentative plans in italics*):

- Tuesday, Jan. 27 – Denver metro area (*time and location tbd*)
- Thursday, Feb. 12 – Fort Collins – Colorado State University, Lory Student Center (4 - 6 p.m.)
- Wednesday, March 4 – Grand Junction – DoubleTree Hotel (*time tbd*)
- *Tuesday, March 17 – Alamosa*
- *Thursday, April 16 – Pueblo*
- *Wednesday, April 22 – Sterling*
- *Thursday, May 16 – Glenwood Springs*
- *Tuesday, May 19 -- Durango*



The department's communications office does a great job in getting word of events and department highlights to people across the state. To begin receiving department new releases, please visit the communication office's Web page:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html> to sign up.

As always, thank you for your interest in and support of the Colorado Department of Education's efforts to reform, transform and improve public education for all of Colorado. Thank you also for all you do in your local communities to provide the best possible opportunities for your students. I wish you and yours a very safe a wonderful holiday season.



UPdate is a periodical review of matters and issues pertinent to education across Colorado. Written by Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones, this brief is distributed via e-mail to board members, superintendents, staff, legislators, community leaders, educators, parents and all other concerned citizens.