



Colorado Department of Education – Communications Office  
201 East Colfax Ave.  
Room 501  
Denver, CO 80203  
Phone: 303-866-3898  
Fax: 303-866-6938

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## **News Release**

### ***Commissioner Dwight D. Jones Raises Concerns About Rush to Adopt Assessments Before Standards***

Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones today expressed his concern that amendments to Senate Bill 212 approved today may tie the hands of the department in choosing the best possible standards and assessments for Colorado students.

“It is essential that the department be able to exercise the due diligence expected by the public in making critical choices that will impact our students for years to come,” said Commissioner Jones. “By selecting a specific assessment before adopting new standards, we are putting on shoes before our socks. While we appreciate the pilot nature of the bill’s amended language, we look forward to a deliberative process once the pilot is complete that determines next steps.”

Commissioner Jones acknowledged there is a range of opinion on the questions raised by this amendment. Many view it as the department does, he noted, including local boards of education, the professional organization representing assessment directors from 178 school districts, nationally known testing experts and many superintendents. “We are committed to making thoughtful improvements in state standards followed by adjustments to the assessment, but let’s approach solutions with care,” said Commissioner Jones.

Commissioner Jones cited four main concerns:

- **Alignment with standards.** The ACT/EPAS products are not based on content standards adopted by 178 school districts across the state. It's unknown if standards for the proposed ACT/EPAS products will be aligned with the standards adopted under this bill. "We are committed to and we are undergoing a standards review now," said Commissioner Jones. "Assessment decisions will follow."
- **Achievement gap information.** "Our vision of accountability relies on the ability to understand where gaps based on race and poverty exist and to hold ourselves accountable for the performance of all students," said Commissioner Jones. "The Colorado public needs an assurance that any proposed system would provide a similar or better view of achievement gaps."
- **Costs.** "No state in the country has gained federal approval for what is being proposed today," said Commissioner Jones. "No costs have been projected or identified for the process of gaining federal approval and I believe it's a good idea when you are buying something to know what it's going to cost."
- **Growth model.** "The growth model is something that has widespread bi-partisan support from legislators and superintendents. It alters how we understand student's performance towards state standards. The growth model is laying the foundation for how the state department approaches district accreditation. "It's unclear what adjustments are needed to fit a new test into the growth model," said Commissioner Jones.

Commissioner Jones underscored the department's support for the initial version of Senate Bill 212, the "Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act." The bill has its sights on the right target, Commissioner Jones said, with the intent to mesh the P-12 and higher education environments in a way that prepares all students to be successful as they enter college or the workforce.

**For more information, contact** Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Megan McDermott, 303-866-2334, in the CDE Office of Communications. To sign up for the CDE e-mail news service, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html>.