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News Release

State Board's Adoption of New Academic Standards Transitions To Work on New Statewide Test; Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones Clarifies Next Steps

Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones today clarified next steps in the work to develop and implement the next state test that will replace the current Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) in spring 2012.

"Last week marked a significant milestone for students and schools as the Colorado State Board of Education adopted new academic content standards, the first time all the standards have been refreshed since they were introduced in 1994," said Commissioner Jones.

"These are grade-specific standards that meet international benchmarks for learning and set clear expectations for students," he added. "The next step for CDE is to disseminate and guide the implementation of the new standards across the state and develop and implement a statewide test that will track student achievement, continue to hold schools accountable and provide accurate, timely results for students, teachers and parents."

Commissioner Jones noted that CSAP will continue to be administered statewide in March 2010 and March 2011 as the transition is made to the new standards and the new assessment.

CSAP results form the basis of The Colorado Growth Model, a tool that provides a common understanding of how individual students and

groups of students progress from year to year toward standards based on where each individual student begins. The model focuses attention on maximizing student progress over time and reveals where, and among which students, the strongest growth is happening and where it is not.

The Colorado Growth Model results will serve as a key component of the state's new accreditation process, detailed in Senate Bill 09-163.

Commissioner Jones, following the requirements of Senate Bill 08-212, recently organized an Assessment Stakeholder Committee, a broad cross-section of representatives charged with overseeing the development of the new system of tests. The stakeholder committee is comprised of educators and representatives from the business community, higher education, the military and early childhood education, among others.

"Stakeholders are considering a range of testing specifications that will make our mandatory state assessment system more relevant for students, parents, teachers and policy-makers," said Jim McIntosh, Director of Student Assessment.

The stakeholders have met three times and are expected to meet at least three more times in full-day sessions into the spring. CDE will use input from the stakeholders group to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking bids from potential vendors. Per Senate Bill 08-212, the new assessment system will include school readiness and postsecondary workforce readiness tests in addition to the grades 3-10 assessments we currently administer.

The anticipated timeline for the assessment system redesign follows:

- January 2010—Continue work on assessment design
- February 2010—Draft beginning specifications for new assessment system
- March 2010—Confirm specifications and publish the RFP
- December 2010—Award contract to vendor(s)
- January 2011—Begin developing assessments
- March 2012—Next generation of state assessments given to students

The Assessment Stakeholder Committee has formed five subcommittees. They are School Readiness and Early Childhood Assessment; Postsecondary Readiness Assessment; Summative

Assessment subcommittee (working on federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act requirements and SB 08-212 state requirements); Formative Assessment Committee (including growth and interim/benchmark assessments); and Assessment for Special Populations.

A full list of Assessment Stakeholder Committee members and meeting minutes may be found online here:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/ASMTRev/stakeholders.htm>

Opportunities for Public Feedback

The Colorado Department of Education is seeking public input on the development of the new student achievement tests.

The department is conducting a statewide tour to hear from stakeholders across Colorado. The tour stops are seeking public comment on what aspects of the current assessment system are important and what changes should be made.

The tour is split into two parts. One is devoted to school readiness and primary grade assessments and the other is devoted to postsecondary and workforce readiness and secondary grade assessments. Meeting times and precise locations are yet to be announced. They will be posted online at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/ASMTRev/publictour.htm> when the information becomes available.

School readiness and primary grade assessments:

- January 26, 2010 – Colorado Springs
- January 28, 2010 – Ft. Morgan
- February 4, 2010 – Limon
- February 23, 2010 – Cortez
- March 17, 2010 – Steamboat Springs
- March 24, 2010 – Glenwood Springs

Postsecondary and workforce readiness and secondary grade assessments:

- January 20, 2010 – Denver
- January 21, 2010 – Boulder
- February 16, 2010 – Grand Junction
- February 17, 2010 – Gunnison
- February 24, 2010 – Alamosa
- March 4, 2010 – Pueblo

- March 31, 2010 – Greeley

Note: A school readiness tour stop was held in Pueblo in November.

The tour stops are open to all.

Online Survey

An online survey is also gathering feedback. Your information will remain confidential and all feedback will be put in summary form. The assessment survey is open through Dec. 31, 2009 and can be found at:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=toFIv6eXOEmllyJO_2bXZklw_3d_3d

Stakeholder Meetings Open to the Public

The Assessment Stakeholder Committee meetings are open to the public. These meetings provide an excellent opportunity to hear the committee conversations firsthand. Meeting agendas do not include a public comment section, but questions or comments will be collected from public attendees at the conclusion of each meeting.

If you would like to give us your feedback at any point in the process, please send all comments to Assessment_Review@cde.state.co.us.

Your emails will be relayed to the Assessment Stakeholders Committee and/or the appropriate subcommittee.

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>.

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