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## **News Release**

### ***Rural Assessment Survey Will Identify Needs Of Rural School Districts***

In an effort to better support the needs of rural school districts in the state, the Colorado Department of Education is working with the East Central Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) on a Rural Services Needs Assessment Study.

“The study is designed to determine the specific challenges rural administrators face and identify a model of support that will allow CDE, BOCES and regional service centers to better meet those needs,” said Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. “Our intent is to be able to designate grant funds as well as identify potential legislative changes needed to better support rural districts.”

The department hopes to increase support for rural districts by:

- Improving student achievement and growth of all students as measured by the state’s assessment system;
- Reducing achievement gaps related to minority and/or socioeconomic status;
- Improving progress monitoring of subgroups;
- Increasing teacher collaboration and practices that foster a positive learning environment for all students;
- Improving the instructional skills of teachers;
- Applying for competitive grants for school and district improvement;
- Aligning resources to need;
- Recruiting and retaining quality staff; and
- Building and fostering leadership capacity.

Commissioner Jones went on to say, "We know the needs in a small or rural district can be very different than the needs in an urban or suburban district. What we hope this survey will tell us is how those differences translate to the level of support we provide."

Work on the survey began July 1, 2010 and will conclude with a final report to Commissioner Jones by March 31, 2011. Research will be conducted via interviews with superintendents, BOCES directors and local board members.

**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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