

Colorado Content Collaboratives Technical Steering Committee  
December 12, 2012  
Denver, CO

**Attendees**

TSC Members

Timothy Brophy  
Laura Goe  
Todd Morse  
Jacqueline Law  
David Webb  
Guillermo Solano-Flores (absent)  
Kristen Huff (absent)  
Sue Bechard (absent)

CDE Staff

Toby King  
Angela Norlander  
Teresa Yohon  
Sed Keller  
Tiffany Deines  
Joyce Barrett  
Dian Prestwich  
Tricia Miller

Guests

Margie Ruckstuhl (Harrison School District)  
Bob Good (Denver Public Schools)  
Patrick Mount (Thompson School District)  
Lanny Hass (Thompson School District – Math  
Content Collaborative)  
Dale Zalmstra (Cherry Creek School District -  
Visual Arts Content Collaborative)  
Caryl Reinhardt (Cheyenne Mountain School  
District – Social Studies Content  
Collaborative)  
Traci Wodlinger (Eagle County Schools)  
Heather Eberts (Eagle County Schools)  
Ken Jensen (Aurora Public School - Science  
Content Collaborative)

**Meeting Notes:**

**Review of Meeting Objectives**

Toby King (CDE) began the meeting by welcoming all members and guests and thanking the TSC members for their service. Mr. King then reviewed the objectives for the current meeting:

- Provide feedback on CDE's plans to collaborate with districts on measuring student learning over time for Colorado's teacher and principal evaluation systems.
- Provide feedback to CDE on the guidance for the combinations of multiple measures that can be used to determine student growth.

**Update on Content Collaborative work and future plans**

Angela Norlander (CDE) provided an update on the work of the Content Collaboratives and plans for future work (PowerPoint attached)

- Update of Content Collaborative work
  - Phase I of the Content Collaborative work, identification of high quality assessments, has been completed.
  - The CDE Resource Bank, which will house the assessments and other resources, was launched December 6, 2012 with assessments reviewed by Cohort 1. Assessments reviewed by Cohort 2 will be loaded into the bank by January 31, 2013.
  - Areas of need include:

- Lack of assessments aligned to the new standards (RWC – Standard 4, Research and Reasoning in all grades; Music – Standards 2 and 4, Creation of Music and Aesthetic Valuation of Music in Middle School; Comprehensive Health – All standards Preschool through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade);
- Lack of performance-based and innovative assessments (Science – Standards 2, Life Science; Social Studies – All standards at Elementary school)
- Future plans for the Content Collaboratives (Phase II)
  - Create performance tasks, scoring rubrics and templates for content areas and grade level expectations for which no assessments – or no open source assessments – were identified.
  - Create guidance documents with directions and examples to support on-going professional development and development of additional assessments.
  - Trainings will be recorded and posted for use in districts

Ms. Norlander also provided an overview of the District Sample Curriculum Project

- templates of sample curriculum for every subject in every grade level. Need in rural-smaller districts that do not have the capacity to create curriculum. In the summer 2013, CDE will start linking assessments and performance tasks to the curriculum templates (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/StandardsAndInstruction/SampleCurriculumProject.asp>).

TSC Feedback:

- Sustaining the work of the beyond 2015 (when Race to the Top (RTTT) funding ends)
  - Tim Brophy: How will you review future assessments from teachers?
    - CDE has provided the assessment review tool (presented later in the agenda) used by the Content Collaboratives for in the CDE Resource Bank so districts may use it to review their own assessments. It is hoped they will submit these assessments for posting to the Bank.
  - Tim Brophy: Recommended CDE start looking at Colorado for assessments to fill gaps.
- Phase 2 work – Creation of assessments
  - Laura Goe: It's easy to create horrible assessments. CDE should start trainings by looking at bad assessments and reviewing why the assessment is questionable and ineffective. Then move into what our vision of a perfect assessment is
    - CC members have begun the process of identifying a bad assessment and determining how to fix it or supplement it appropriately.
  - Laura Goe: It is also important to test out the assessments. Is the assessment going to work? Tweaking it to make sure it is working for teachers in CO and identifying which teachers are having success and which ones are not (piloting). Best looking isn't always going to produce the best results.
- Assessment Review Tool
  - Todd Morse: Could the assessments/process be tiered. Example: Tier 1-It has gone through the review tool and has ratings, Tier 2- has been reviewed and piloted (has data on the assessment), and Tier 3-has been reviewed, piloted, and has been reviewed by the CC and augmented to be considered fully vetted assessments. By doing a tiered system, it would provide assessments to the districts now, as well as move assessments into the different tiers of what is truly recommended by CDE. (Three tiers and always cycling). Assessments get old quickly – stops being innovative. To stay innovative assessments need to keep cycling.

- Recommendations for Future work
  - Bob Good: CDE might want to think about a guidance document to include for high stakes purposes (teacher evaluation), like information to consider when choosing an assessment and have it upfront. The guidance document should include: use, administration, documentation, etc. Evolve with the process too. There will be conflicts with accountability down the path if we don't have guidance.
    - Guidance on intentional use of the assessments- CDE needs to be clear if used for a certain purpose then you should use the assessment in this way (i.e. evaluation growth scores).
  - Dawn Zalmstra: Recommend building partnerships with state/national organizations/nonprofits for non-tested areas (arts) and being part of a continuance system.
  - David Webb: CDE should include some piece/component of the purpose for the teacher decision making process. When they look at student work, how do they view/grade it? Not a well-articulated part of the process. Some of the assessments will generate student work that could inform instruction. Clarify teacher decision making process – needs to happen before you see the growth.
    - CDE's next phase is embedding assessments in the Sample Curriculum template – making guidance to how this looks and how a district/teacher could use it.
  - Ken Jensen: If this tool and the ideas around it are going to get noticed and assessed, teachers need to understand it deeply. The assessment review tool took the CC Science team over eight hours to truly understand it. Next steps should be about the training on the tool and how to use it correctly.
  - Laura Goe: Focus on teachers. Teachers should complete a standards form for each student. The form would show which standards a students should have mastered and what teacher is tied to it. This information would move with the student from grade to grade. This will not be an easy process but is necessary for student achievement and accountability. A collaborative culture among teachers will need to occur. It would also need an audit process – look at student work, how are you arriving at these decisions that a student is passed certain standards.
  - Tim Brophy: Peer review teams in Tennessee for Arts ...great model and is self-sustaining. Tennessee is now expanding it into the other content areas. Could be a consortium of districts for this process or done virtually for smaller districts. Another option is to assess the content organizations/nonprofits too.
  - Laura Goe: How do you manage looking at assessment with the review tool when the CC groups are divided into discrete services? Is there a mechanism to assess the different standards/multi-disciplinary? Could project based learning be used?
    - CDE: How would you put together a district team to use the assessment review tool? A team should be comprised of people from different content areas to provide a wide perspective.

### **Overview of Resource Bank**

Teresa Yohon (CDE) provided an online demonstration of the Resource Bank, including its content, functionality and connection to other CDE initiatives. Feedback from the TSC was very favorable. TSC members wanted to make sure there was a process for providing feedback and a way for districts to keep certain assessments protected. Feedback and comments can be provided through the Resource Bank through the homepage or for each assessment. For districts who want to have their assessments in

the bank but need them protected, CDE will provide the districts contact information for other districts who want to use them instead of the actual assessment attached. The CDE Resource Bank is available at: <http://www.coloradoplrc.org/assessment>.

Sed Keller (CDE) provided an overview of the Assessment Review Tool

- Recommendations:
  - Create guidance for different purposes (maybe an additional tab). Example, what a teacher should have in place if the assessment is to be used for 50% growth for classroom teachers
  - Team, rather than an individual, should review any assessment to be used for high stakes.
  - Consider adding an additional sheet asking is the assessment is aligned to the standards AND to the curriculum being delivered in the district.

Angela Norlander (CDE) requested feedback on the glossary that is included in the CDE Resource Bank. TSC members will email any feedback directly to Ms. Norlander.

### **CDE's plans for peer review and testing of assessments to measure student growth**

Sed Keller (CDE) provided an overview of CDE's plans to field test/peer review assessments in the districts and determine how best to measure student learning over time for the teacher and principal evaluation systems (PowerPoint and Handout attached).

- Plan for field testing/peer review assessments in the districts
  - Lanny Hass: Being more strategic in ways of using professional development and the purpose of the use
  - Jacqueline Law: Not required by law that assessments are approved by DAC; can provide feedback/ input. Be cautious when creating the assessment review flow chart
- Sed Keller reviewed two different assessments and asked the TSC members on what data CDE should collect. CDE is considering doing a task or two out of a unit and piloting it for 1-3 months next semester.
  - Laura Goe: Doing this pilot (2-3 month period), you believe they are going to show growth? Set learning objectives then use this information to say what? The pilot timeframe isn't long enough. Also, you need to evaluate the whole unit not just one task of a unit.
  - Lanny Hass: The tasks have to be embedded in the process...multiple tasks under the unit structure to evaluate.
  - Bob Good: One of the problems –Different content areas viewed tasks in a unit in different ways. Does the task represent an important piece in one content area or multiple content areas?
  - Laura Goe: Do the pilot as it like real instead of pieces to gain real knowledge from this pilot. Not getting the full evidence that is meant to be measured when doing just one task then multiple tasks. To see growth in a short timeframe, tie the data back to evidence you have on students prior achievement from those content areas for the teacher to then use it for a growth piece. It will be a more dramatic gain if you look at it from the beginning of the year to second part of the year vs. beginning of the month to end of the month. Look at data that is growth not just performance.

- Tim Brophy: An assumption of growth is that there is a period of time between the two points, but your time frame of two months will not show growth. Start at the beginning of the year and take a year vs. CDE's plan of 1-3 months.
- David Webb: Have anchor items to see where students are to give a better understanding of potential growth
- Laura Goe: When I think of a pilot, I see it as a whole year of looking at the data and seeing what we change/improve to see greater improvement in student growth. Recommend CDE uses the assessments in real time and try hard to replicate the conditions (i.e. talk about how they are going to use the assessments, score them). Those processes you can get useful information on vs. growth. Then use the results for variations. If it's new learning, you could measure that too.
- David Webb: Some variations among different teachers would be valuable information too
- Caryl Reinhardt: Recommend using an assessment whose timeframe is 4-6 weeks.
- Laura Goe: Collaboration scoring and setting objectives, how and when to give assessments, great for lessons learned and what leads to better processes– increases rigor and accountability
- Caryl Reinhardt: Piloting the assessments within a district with multiple schools
- Laura Goe: Recommend dividing students into three categories of performance and setting objectives for each group at the beginning of year then set standards/benchmarks throughout the year to show progress. Another method is decide the standards being assessed; do the kids understand the standards before and after ....how far do I need to get these kids. Use assessments tools to see where are my kids now and where do they need to be by the end of the unit/semester/school year.

### **Overview of draft guidance on measuring student growth**

Toby King (CDE) facilitated a discussion on the document created for CDE (sent prior to the meeting) to provide guidance to districts on how to select and combine multiple measures of student growth. The draft document provided to the TSC members was a summary of the 50 page full draft guidance.

- Guidance Structure and Contents
  - Principles of Guidance, Continuous Improvement, Respect Teachers, Fairness, Ability to Grow
  - Guidance Levels
    - Architecture: Teacher Evaluation – 50% Professional Practice and 50% on Individual Growth and Shared Growth
    - Specific Examples for teachers with and without state test data
  - Guidance on Measuring Growth
    - Requirements for measuring growth
      - Definition: Student learning over time
    - Steps to arrive at Student Learning portion of teacher evaluation score
      - Identify assessments that will be used to measure growth, where any gaps exist and what the district will do to address gaps
        - conduct an assessment inventory and determine extent to which they are aligned to Colorado Academic Standards, level of confidence the district has in the assessment and its ability to measure growth
      - Determine how growth on the selected assessment will be measured

- Assign weights and combine measures to arrive at a final growth score
    - Assign weights based on level of confidence and extent to which it reflects teacher influence
    - Growth criteria should always strive to evaluate a year's worth of growth and/or achieving adequate growth
    - Growth scores must be available by end of evaluation cycle
- Other Tools and Resources
  - CDE has created an online tool to assist in the Selection, Weighting, Scoring Tool for measuring student learning over time
    - Includes four main rules for growth listed to the right
    - Input assessments, their weight and the justification for the selected weights
    - Tool generates a pie chart for the 50% growth portion
  - Flow chart for selecting measures for student growth and developing processes for educator evaluation – still in draft form; needs to be revised

TSC comments, questions and recommendations:

- David Webb: Are districts deciding what adequate growth is? How can districts handle this requirement and actually know what is adequate growth?
  - Toby King: Process of auditing what is the evaluation results and the body of evidence. If CDE sees a disconnected rating, then they will go in and see how they are getting this growth and scores. Check out rigor too...growth could be too low because the rigor is too high.
- Tim Brophy: For arts in particular, where there is only one teacher doing that content area, will really need a district decision or just one person will decide. Do you have recommendation/standards to make them reliable or consistent for teacher created assessments?
  - CDE: We want it, but we have to get there – gold standard. It's where the assessment review tool comes into play.
- Tim Brophy: I hope CDE can into a school district at random and look at how everyone's evaluation system is doing, like an audit. CDE is putting a lot of faith and trust in the districts to do the right thing for their evaluation system when it comes to the growth component. CDE needs some kind of way to verify what is being done and making sure what's being done is correct.
- Dian Prestwich: Can you talk about the levels of weight and the ability to change those weights over time? If a teacher weights an assessment heavily and the kids do badly on it or if the assessments isn't as good as the teacher/school originally thought, can they change the weight or the assessment?
  - CDE: Target weights set are through the whole cycle but can be amended during the mid-year review. The district/school/teacher would need to explain the reason for the amendment. The purpose of the growth weight tool is to give people something to practice with and see what growth weights should be used, as well as giving people something to use for visualization.
- Margie Ruckstuhl: Harrison has 96 pie charts. (The number of pie charts has increased because of new groups.) In May Harrison has a group of teachers for each pie chart come together to review the assessments and weights and make modifications when necessary.
- Dian Prestwich: What about Special Ed who works with different grade levels? Could they weigh different grade levels at differently?

- CDE: Can be based on IEP goals. For shared attribution, I want to share with one teacher who is doing a great job and helping with the planning but I don't want my growth tied to teacher X. The principal will then needs to work with teacher X, and have an intervention on what teacher X needs to improve.
- Lanny Hass: How can we use this as a thermometer that adjusts in real time to effect changes in instruction?
- Jacqueline Law: Some districts might use assessments that are not aligned to CO standards? Like using a textbook that isn't aligned to the CO Standards and the teacher will use the test at the end of chapter as their assessment for growth. Then augmenting the assessments/curriculum would need to occur to align it to the standards. Sample Curriculum will help with this, but it's a work in progress. We are moving in the right direction.
- David Webb: We haven't talked about non TCAP areas. CDE should be careful what you propose in these areas because it will change practice. A large number of teachers don't look at growth, look at other measures instead. I hope we have more than pre-/posttest model to turn too
- Bob Good: It requires some big things...assessments that have been equated from year to year and a huge burden on the assessment development of a district. One of the things behind the SLOs is not to make them complicated. Districts will have some hard decisions to make on what cut scores they are going to make
- Student teachers
  - Colorado has some programs that do not want interns in their classrooms without insurance that it won't affect their evaluations. Even if you have a student teacher, the main teacher is still held accountable for those kids' growth. The main teacher has to monitor the student teacher and if the main teacher can trust the student to teach they can or they cannot let the student teach, but have to tell the teacher prep program that the student isn't ready to teach. Teacher prep programs are now aligning their programs with standards and teacher evaluation rubric with student outcomes.
  - Todd Morse: Only the rockstar teachers should have student teachers anyways, and these teachers should realize it is in the benefit of their industry. These teachers are growing the profession.
- Laura Goe: What are other states doing about scoring and what can we learn from them? Louisiana, Indiana, New York, Rhode Island, DC, all doing Student Learning Objectives and have a similar process – involves someone doing the collaboration, setting targets based on baseline information, mid-year meeting – make adjustments if needed, then year-end evaluation. Relies on principals being good evaluators. Money into the training process for principals being amazing evaluators/judges. Really think about why CO is choosing a different path then other states. CO is on a unique path and in a lot of ways way over our head. Don't know what is the answer or the best path. We should take our time and be cautious, because Colorado's system is really complex.

**Recommended Next Steps from TSC Members:**

- Tim Brophy: I'm impressed with what CDE has accomplished in the past few months. Overall thoughts: Don't overcomplicate it. For assessments in the assessment bank, you might want to consider some additional ways to determine fair, valid, and reliable. Consider artistic growth in the glossary. Concerned about: Clear role for schools, districts, in weighting and scoring growth...lots of freedom and trust. Make clear roles of what all of this looks like and samplings in large programs. Variation in instructional time should be accounted for the growth

component, especially for arts, music, etc. (i.e. 30 minutes every two weeks vs. 30 minutes every day)

- David Webb: I'm impressed with a lot of things. The selection progress and review of the assessments and all the tools are quite useful and informative going forward. It's impressive what the CC has endorsed, and if those can be the types of tasks our students and teachers use in the classrooms, it is all for the better. Don't over complicate things....might need to have some abbreviate forms to pilot before going deep. I'd hate to see some assessments not be analyzed because the tool is too onerous. My only main concern is tied to growth and assessing it. Teachers are just now starting to talk about growth and with teacher preparation...it is not well understood what growth is. It would be worth investigating what teachers' knowledge is and CDE's professional development moving forward. Cut score decision...where is prior data gathered from. Lots of questions around cut scores. If you can invest more time into this, it would be useful to the process...involve more districts in getting this data/knowledge. Look at how the cut scores with the choosing tasks and how many....need a lot more of our time and knowledge invested into it. Transparency in the progress has been amazing and needs to stay...so valuable.
- Laura Goe: Something from Maryland, trying really hard to focus on the process not product, and how we can get teachers to focus on what are the best assessments for our standards. CO needs to keep focusing on the role of the teacher in these processes and be careful in our messaging about is it top-down or about the teachers and with student achievement as the end goal. Why we don't want to do what Delaware did? Got teachers from content areas and create tests for content areas and all grades. The problem is a paper test can't measure everything we care about in all subjects. Thank goodness we are not Delaware, and I think you are moving in the right or better direction.
- Todd Morse: Keep it simple whenever possible. Love to see the assessment review tool that is tiered and piloted to fill in the rest of it before it becomes fully vetted/recommended. The first three months of the technical steering committee meetings, it looked like we were crawling, but between August and this meeting, the progress is really encouraging and exciting to see. Very confirming from a district view of what CDE is creating and bumps that everyone is hitting.
- Jacqueline Law: Really happy we got to the nitty gritty...causes nightmares at the district levels. Careful on how you define stakeholders' roles so you don't pin down a district. How do districts track the lessons learned and share these valuable lessons in a thoughtful way so multiple districts don't waste time making the same mistakes? Don't over complicate it.
- Caryl Reinhardt: Great to see the process. (Used to be in Chicago – rigid system that wasn't collaborative). I enjoyed seeing the collaboration around assessments and growth. Looking at it from the view of a teacher and shifting the view from getting fired to it's about the improving practice and a higher outcome for students.
- Bob Good: It's interesting that 21 years ago we had to define unsatisfactory and a huge benefit of this law, is that it ups the bar. Opportunity for how people can improve their practice. I see a lot of improvement around attitudes dealing with observations and feedback, and it has been extremely rich. CDE creating guidance documents would be very helpful. The system is not perfect, and we are new to this...I hope we can keep as much professional judgment as practical, and never conveying to principals that their opinions don't matter. I like the openness I am seeing with the process.
- Patrick Mount: Thanks! This has been terrific and seeing the perspective of experts from across the US. The guidance from CDE has been phenomenal, and thank you for the tools. I feel like I can now go back to my teachers with better answers.

- Margie Ruckstuhl: Appreciate the time here and being heard. Harrison tries hard not to lose sight of the student and their achievement by improving practice it will help students. I think CDE is moving in the right direction and definitely a learning and acceptance curve. EE has done a great job.
- Candy Myers: exceptional student services at CDE – Excited about the inclusive of ESS and our students from input and services to outcomes for our students and the accountability of teachers for the improvements of these teachers. All kids can grow and the flexibility with the process is great when not all kids are starting in the same place.