Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year! I hope you had a relaxing and joyful holiday. 2013 will be a busy year as we continue to work to improve student learning outcomes for every student. Please take a minute to read through the following updates on educator effectiveness (S.B. 10-191), the new Colorado Academic Standards and assessments.

**Educator Effectiveness**Starting in the 2013-14 school year, all Colorado school districts will implement new evaluation systems that align to Senate Bill 10-191 and State Board Rules. Whether adopting the [State Model System](http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/StateModelEvaluationSystem.asp) or a system of the district’s choice, the intent of the new evaluation requirements is to provide educators with ongoing feedback and support so they can continue to refine their instructional practice and increase student learning. With the new evaluations, educators will be rated on Quality Standards that consider both professional practice (50% of the evaluation) and student learning outcomes/academic growth (the other 50% of the evaluation). The student learning outcomes portion of the evaluation must be based on multiple measures of student growth, not a single assessment.

To assist districts in measuring student learning outcomes, CDE has released initial draft guidance. While primarily intended for S.B. 10-191 pilot districts to provide feedback to CDE, the draft guidance is being released broadly to allow all districts to preview, use as applicable and provide feedback. CDE is using feedback from the field and its pilot districts to add to and improve this guidance over time.

Recently, two other resources were launched to support implementation of S.B. 10-191. In December, the CDE Resource Bank launched with optional high quality assessments aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards. This initial launch included assessments from Cohort 1 of the Content Collaboratives project: dance, drama & theatre arts, music, reading, writing & communicating, social studies and visual arts. Later this month, assessments from Cohort II will be added to the resource bank: comprehensive health, mathematics, physical education, science, world languages and career & technical education. The CDE Resource Bank will eventually include assessment options for all grades and content areas. In November, the Assessment Review Tool was released which assists districts in reviewing their assessments including rating them on their alignment to the Colorado Academic Standards, methods of scoring, degree to which the assessments are fair and unbiased, and the assessment’s ability to provide opportunities for learning.

**Student Learning Outcomes Guidance**:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/StudentGrowthGuide.asp>

**CDE Resource Bank:**   
<http://www.coloradoplc.org/assessment>

**Assessment Review Tool:** <http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness/ImplementationResources.asp>

**Colorado Academic Standards**During the 2012-13 school year, schools and districts are continuing to transition to the new Colorado Academic Standards, with full implementation occurring by the 2013-14 school year. For information on the Colorado Academic Standards including short, recorded presentations on standards 101, reading fluency, Colorado Academic Standards grade level specific booklets and instructional resources, visit CDE’s re-vamped [Standards and Instructional Support website](http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/index.asp). Because Colorado schools and districts are at various stages of the implementation process, CDE has designed a toolkit that provides support in all phases. The Implementation Toolkit can be found here: http://www.cde.state.co.us/sitoolkit/index.htm

Starting this month, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) will offer workshops in standards-based curriculum design in five areas across the state. Standards based curriculum samples created by Colorado educators will be available at the beginning of February.

**READ ACT**: The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (Colorado READ Act) focuses on K-3 literacy, assessment and individual plans for students reading below grade level. The READ Act repeals the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA) by focusing more on students identified as having a significant reading deficiency, delineating requirements for parent communication and providing funding to support intervention. Other components of the act include a competitive Early Literacy Grant and a resource bank of assessments, instructional programming and professional development opportunities. Hearings on the READ Act rules are scheduled for the January and February State Board Meetings prior to the rule adoption in March 2013.  Information about the READ Act, a link to the draft rules and an informative brochure with relevant timelines can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index.asp>

**Assessments  
Science and Social Studies Summative Assessments (including Alternate Assessments for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities):** The state legislature provided funding for CDE to pursue the development of summative assessments in science and social studies for implementation in the spring of 2014. Science assessments will be administered in grades 5, 8 and once in high school, while the social studies assessments will be administered in grades 4, 7 and once in high school. Both the science and social studies assessments will be computer-based and are designed to measure the Colorado Academic Standards, adopted in 2009.

A sample of school districts has been selected to participate in field testing for the new summative science and social studies assessments.  The sample is representative of the Colorado student population and will provide valid information from which determinations about items and assessments can be made. In February 2013, educators will review the first set of items for the new assessments.Draft assessment frameworks have been released for pubic feedback at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/index.asp>

Districts’ ability to administer the computer-based assessments is a critical factor as Colorado moves forward with its new assessment system. All districts are in the process of completing the Technology Readiness Tool, which will inform the state, districts and schools about capacity in terms of hardware, software and internet connectivity. Technology guidelines were released in December and may be found at <http://www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/PARCCTechnologyGuidelinesDecember2012.pdf>

**English Language Arts and Mathematics Summative Assessments (PARCC):** In August 2012,Colorado became a governing board member of the multi-state assessment consortium, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC). Colorado has been an active participant in the development process by attending passage and item reviews, and serving on committees that address test design, accommodation policies, research, college and career readiness and reporting.The K-12 and higher education leaders from each of the PARCC states have recently approved the College and Career Ready Determination (CCRD) Policy (<http://parcconline.org/parcc-assessment-policies>)

* The CCRD Policy clearly defines the level of academic preparation in English language arts/literacy and mathematics needed for students to be successful in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in two- and four-year public institutions of higher education. These institutions include technical colleges and other institutions that award degrees or credentials aligned to entry into middle- or high-skilled jobs.
* There are multiple benefits of the CCRDs in English language arts/literacy and in mathematics.
  + Students who attain a CCRD in English language arts/literacy or a CCRD in mathematics will be able to enter directly into certain entry-level, credit-bearing courses in those subject areas without having to take placement tests.
  + States within the PARCC consortium will have a common benchmark to define college and career readiness in English language arts/literacy and in mathematics.