

August 2013

The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (the READ Act, House Bill 12-1238) required the Colorado State Board of Education to develop rules to guide the creation of a resource bank for districts in support of implementation of the READ Act. The resource bank contains lists of approved interim and diagnostic reading assessments and lists of recommended (optional) instructional programs, professional development programs, and summative assessments. Specifically, the READ Act requires the State Board of Education to adopt interim and diagnostic reading assessments that districts are required to use in the determination of significant reading deficiencies. Also, the READ Act requires the State Board of Education to approve reading assessments and charges the department to identify quality reading instructional programs and professional development programs for optional use by local education agencies. Pursuant to statute and State Board of Education rules, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has delineated processes for soliciting programs and assessments for inclusion, utilizing third-party evaluators, facilitating the review process, and conducting appeals in the development of the resource bank.

Criteria for Inclusion of Programs and Assessments for the Resource Bank

The Colorado Department of Education recommends reading assessments for State Board of Education approval and identifies quality reading instructional and professional development programs to be included in a resource bank for Colorado educators. Department recommendations are based on criteria established through the READ Act and State Board of Education rules.

Instructional Programs

Instructional and professional development programs that are included on the department's advisory list:

- Must be scientifically- or evidence-based;
- Must be proven to accelerate student progress in attaining reading competency;
- Provide explicit and systematic skill development in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency including oral language skills, and reading comprehension;
- Include scientifically-based and reliable assessments;
- Provide initial and ongoing analysis of student's progress; and
- Include texts on core academic content to assist the student in maintaining or meeting grade-appropriate proficiency levels in academic subjects in addition to reading.

Assessments

Similarly, the criteria for reviewing interim, diagnostic, and summative reading assessments are defined in the READ Act and State Board rules:

- Assessments must be scientifically based, valid and reliable.
- Assessments must be proven to accurately and effectively measure students' reading skills in the areas of phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, reading fluency, including oral language skills, and reading comprehension.
- At least one assessment must be normed for students who speak Spanish.
- Diagnostic assessments must be proven to accurately identify students' specific skill deficiencies.

The department uses these criteria to create rubrics to guide the review process for assessments, instructional programs, and professional development programs. These rubrics are included in the Requests for Information (RFI) that the department disseminates to publishers to solicit programs for review. The rubrics are also available on the [CDE website](#) for public review.

Solicitation of Programs and Assessments for the Resource Bank

CDE solicits reading assessments, instructional programs and professional development for consideration through a Request for Information (RFI) using the CDE website. Once the RFI process has been initiated on the website, a notice is placed in *The Scoop*, the weekly email newsletter from the department, and information is sent through the department's literacy email distribution lists. To be added to the distribution list, please contact Marisa Hererra at hererra_m@cde.state.co.us.

Instructional Programs

According to State Board rule, the process for soliciting instructional programs and professional development programs for inclusion on the department's advisory list must follow these guidelines:

- The Colorado Department of Education will periodically review its advisory lists of instructional programming and professional development programs and update as appropriate.
- At least one month prior to revising the lists, the department will post a notice on its web-site indicating the timeline for review and selection of new items, the process and deadline for submitting items for consideration, and criteria that will be used by the department in reviewing items.
- After reviewing all submissions, the department will notify publishers of the status of their submission to the advisory list of instructional programming and professional development programs.

The department conducted the first review cycle for instructional programs and professional development programs in March 2013. The website includes a calendar of upcoming reviews. An official request for information will be issued through the CDE Communications Office announcing the next cycle.

Assessments

According to State Board rules, the process for soliciting reading assessments must follow these guidelines:

- At least one month prior to recommending any new interim, diagnostic, and summative assessments be added to the approved assessment list, the Department will post a notice on its web-site indicating the timeline for review and recommendation of new interim, diagnostic, and summative assessments, the process and deadline for submitting assessments for consideration, and the criteria that will be used by the Department in reviewing assessments.
- After reviewing all submissions, the Department will notify publishers of recommended lists of interim, diagnostic, and summative assessments to be presented to the State Board.
- The Department will periodically review lists of approved interim, diagnostic, and summative assessments and recommend updates to the State Board as appropriate.

The department conducted the first review cycle of diagnostic and summative assessments in February, 2013. The website includes a calendar of upcoming reviews.

The Review Process

Reviewers

Valuing the perspective and expertise from the field, the department has engaged Colorado literacy educators in the review process for assessments, instructional programs, and professional development programs. Solicitation for reviewers is noticed through the official communication mechanisms of the department, the department website and *The Scoop*. Further solicitation occurs through email distribution lists directing interested parties to the CDE website.

Potential reviewers must complete an application and submit current resume which demonstrates the reviewer's expertise in literacy and an understanding of both the knowledge base and skills base of reading. The department seeks reviewers with demonstrated expertise in reading including those with specific expertise in English language acquisition and special education. All reviewer applications are reviewed by CDE staff to ensure the reading expertise of all reviewers and representation from diverse regions of the state. Applicants and CDE staff are vetted for conflicts of interest and either recused from an individual program review or the entire review process based on the nature of the reviewer's involvement with a particular publisher or program.

Principles of the Review Process

Consistent with State Board of Education rules and in alignment with established departmental grant review processes, the review process for instructional programs, professional development programs, and assessments adheres to these principles:

- Avoid conflict of interest for all evaluators.
- Protect the anonymity of evaluators, but make public the evaluation results.
- Review materials according to the criteria established in the rubrics to avoid personal bias.
- All requested materials within the RFI must be present for the review.
- Submissions must meet each criterion established within the evaluation rubrics. Though there is no established number value for recommendation, each submission has to have each criteria as an attribute of their submission.
- Review teams must have consensus on their rating.

Conducting Reviews

CDE department staff facilitates the review process for the evaluator teams.

- Teams of 2-3 reviewers are formed to review submissions against the rubric.
- The review team must reach consensus on the rating for each criterion in the rubric and on the overall recommendation for inclusion in the resource bank.
- Each submission is reviewed by at least two review teams.
- If a submission does not gain consensus across two review teams, an additional review is conducted by another review team which does not see the results of the first review.
- The group completes the evaluation rubric and submits as a PDF to CDE staff.
- CDE staff reviews the rubrics to ensure that comments and marks are consistent with rubric and have no indication of bias.

Role of CDE Staff in the Review Process

To facilitate the review process, CDE staff:

- Create evaluation review rubrics based on the criteria within statute and State Board rule.
- Review applications for evaluators.
- Train reviewers in the use of the rubric.
- Facilitate the review process by providing rubrics, materials, training, and collection of the completed evaluations.
- Facilitate additional reviews when teams do not reach consensus.
- Summarize and publicly post all decisions of the review teams.

Once the reviews have been completed, department staff compiles all decisions by the review committee and notifies publishers.

Publisher Notification and Appeals

Notification of Inclusion on the Approved or Advisory Lists

When publishers submit a program or assessment for review, the department issues a letter of receipt. The letter of receipt includes information on the timing of the review process and anticipated notification of the decision of the evaluation committee. Within a month of the review, publishers will receive notice of the decision of the evaluation committee regarding inclusion or exclusion from the department's approved or advisory lists. When a publisher's assessment or program is not approved, the notice includes information specific to the areas in which the assessment or program did not meet established criteria and information about the appeal process. All information sent to publishers is within the public domain and is available upon request to Pati Montgomery at montgomery_p@cde.state.co.us.

Appealing Decisions

State Board rules include a process for publishers to appeal the decision of CDE related to the inclusion on the state's advisory list of instructional programming or professional development programs. The rules state:

- If a publisher's assessment, instructional programming, or professional development program is not included on the approved list, the publisher may submit a written appeal to the department no later than 14 days after receiving notification. Grounds for a written appeal will be limited to an explanation of why the submissions met the evaluation criteria that was identified and posted by the department.
- No later than 30 days after receiving the written appeal, the department shall either add the assessment, instructional programming, and/or professional development program to the approved lists or respond to the publisher with a written explanation of why the assessment, instructional programming, or professional development program will not be included.

The appeal process is conducted by the Literacy Office within the department. When considering an appeal, the department carefully reviews the written appeal submitted by the publisher to determine whether the appeal adequately addresses the deficits identified through the evaluation process. The department may contact the publisher for additional written documentation as needed; however, the appeal process does not include a verbal hearing.

Where can I learn more?

READ Act website: www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index

Colorado Literacy website: www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy