February 21, 2017

Members of the Colorado State Board of Education


c/o Colorado Department of Education

200 Colfax Avenue

Denver, CO 80203

Dear Colorado State Board of Education members:

As your board continues with the statutorily-required standards review and revision process, I am writing to express support for revisions to the existing standards rather than a comprehensive overhaul. I encourage you to consider making minor to moderate changes to our state standards based on stakeholder input and benchmarking data comparing Colorado standards to those from other states, and not to make dramatic or sweeping changes to what is in place.

As Executive Director of the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE), I serve approximately 2,200 public education administrators from across the state. Our association has members in about 95% of our 178 school districts, and membership is structured into seven departments based on job position, including superintendents and senior administrators, principals and assistant principals, assessment and curriculum specialists, CFOs and business managers, education technology leaders, human resources professionals, and more. CASE membership is diverse and includes administrators serving in districts of less than 100 students, to urban districts with more than 90,000 students.

Colorado educators, school leaders, education stakeholder groups, and policymakers have invested a great deal of time and resources in developing the current academic standards. They were established with significant input and recommendations from the above-mentioned individuals and groups, as well as parents and community members. In the recent Standards Perception Survey administered by CDE, most respondents indicated that they believe the current academic standards need no revision or slight to moderate revision. A minority of respondents indicated that they feel the standards need substantial or complete revision. This was the case across all content areas.

Although some changes to the standards may be appropriate, CASE encourages you to keep their fundamental content intact. The existing standards work well for Colorado public education, and this fact, coupled with the financial resources and effort invested in developing them, leads me to urge you to be cautious in making any significant or dramatic revisions. Ensuring that there are no major revisions will allow for greater continuity and consistency in learning for our students.

I appreciate your consideration and the work that you do on behalf of Colorado public education. Please do not hesitate to contact me at lesscarcega@co-case.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lisa Escárcega
CASE Executive Director

CASE Executive Director

CAES
Colorado Association of Educational Specialists
CAESP
Colorado Association of Elementary School Principals
CALET
Colorado Association of Leaders in Educational Technology
CASPA
Colorado Association of School Personnel Administrators
CASSA
Colorado Association of Superintendents and Senior Administrators
CASSP
Colorado Association of Secondary School Principals
DBO
Department of Business Officials
Wednesday, February 22nd, 2017

Dear Dr. Melissa Colson,

Please accept this letter as written recommendation to keep the current Colorado English Language Proficiency (CELP) standards as they are currently, and to please keep Colorado as part of the WIDA consortium. If the CELP standards were to be changed, it would set our district and state back 8 years, both in financial and human resources, when we are currently seeing enormous growth in students and enormous progress professionally.

The current CELP standards are the solid foundation that which our program rests. Our students have seen enormous success since the implementation of the current CELP standards. Because of these standards, we have seen the quality of our curriculum, instruction, and assessments rise to the rigor needed for our students to meet high expectations, both in our English as a Second Language (ESL) programming, but also in mainstream classroom, leading to greater future potential for each student. District 51 has had enormous success embedding the standards into our programming, and using high quality resources provided by the WIDA consortium, such as rubrics and planning documents and access to the Center for Applied Linguistics, to guide us district-wide in creating high quality instruction for our English Language Learners (ELLs).

In turn, this has led to greater accountability for our program. By using the CELP standards, the resources provided, the WAPT screener, and the annual WIDA ACCESS assessment, we have better met our Annual Measures Academic Objectives (AMAOs), including meeting all three AMAOs in recent years. This includes the incredibly high challenge of closing the achievement gap for ELLs in our district. Because these standards and assessments are aligned with language acquisition research, we have seen the usefulness of our annual assessments grow. We have seen graduation rates of ELLs grow, as well as better success in mainstream content classes.

Because of the CELP standards and the WIDA consortium, we have had successful implementation of professional development in instruction of ELLs, both in the ESL classroom and the mainstream classroom. As a district that applied for and participated in the WIDA LADDER grant for professional development, many of our highly impacted schools received high intensity, targeted training, and the district ESL department received tailored support on how to facilitate effective professional development for ESL teachers and other staff. Even though the WIDA LADDER grant has ended, we have used the CELP standards and the concepts of language acquisition and embedded the standards in ongoing professional development for innovative practices in supporting ELLs in ESL classrooms, mainstream classrooms, and the school environment in general.

We believe the current CELP standards have provided our school district and state with a solid foundation and resources to help our district and ESL program to provide high quality programming and closing the achievement gap for our ELLs. We support these standards, and request to continue to be included in the WIDA National Consortium.

Thank you for your consideration.

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English Language Learner Coordinator
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Leigh Grasso
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Matthew Diers
Executive Director; Academic Achievement Secondary Schools
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(970) 254-5311
To Whom it May Concern,

In light of the current Standard Review process, I would like to advocate for only revising the standards during this review. I represent Platte Valley Weld RE 7 school district in Kersey, Colorado and where we believe it is necessary to review and revise standards, but are wary of the idea of starting over with the Colorado Academic Standards.

A total shift in standards at this time would be an inefficient use of our time and resources. The last standard revision was confusing with two different sets of standards being released within several years. Since then, schools and teachers have dug into the Colorado Academic Standards, revised curriculum and teaching strategies to match the current standards and we believe we are making progress towards helping our students reach them. We have purchased materials that reflect these current standards and we purchased them with the idea that we would be using the Colorado Academic Standards for some time. These resources are costly and it can be time consuming and inefficient for teachers to learn a new resource. Because we are a small district, we do not have content specialist to write our curriculum. Our teachers do this work! Although curriculum writing and alignment is important work, time spent on writing and aligning curriculum is time spent away from the classroom. We would prefer to use the resources of time and money (both of which are always in short demand) on refining our teachers’ professional craft of classroom teaching.

New standards rollouts are also challenging for our students and parents. Although we try to make the transitions smooth with crosswalks and other tools, student learning suffers because teachers are trying to learn the new standards as we teach them. There will always be gaps in student learning when the standards change no matter how prepared and seamless the transition is. Parents are finally understanding the Colorado Academic Standards. Shifting to a new set of standards would only be confusing for families and communities and continue feed the culture of distrust many communities have of our schools and their policies.

The use of data in our classroom has never been more important than it is today and although we have multiple data sources we rely on, we do believe we receive valuable data from the state assessments which are aligned to the standards. Over 95% of our students participate in the CMAS and because of this we believe the data is a valid representation of our students and much can be learned from it. If we start over with the standards the test will also change and we will be left without valuable academic and growth data while the transition is made. We do understand that the PARCC has not been a popular choice amongst some communities, and might be changed in the near future. If the standards are consistent though, we can continue to use the trends from state and local data knowing the standards are still intact and the data trends can be used to better understand our student’s learning.

I appreciate the ability to provide input into this process.
Sincerely,

Weld Re-7 Platte Valley Schools

Platte Valley Schools Pursuing Excellence for All
March 23, 2017

To the Office of Standards and Instructional Support,

Gifted education leaders representing the following administrative units (AUs) welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the upcoming revision of the Colorado Academic Standards.

- El Paso Harrison District 2
- El Paso Widefield District 3
- El Paso Fountain-Fort Carson District 8
- El Paso Colorado Springs District 11
- El Paso Cheyenne Mountain District 12
- El Paso Academy District 20
- El Paso Falcon District 49
- Pikes Peak BOCES
- Ute Pass BOCES
- Fremont Re-1 Cañon City

The purpose of formalized gifted identification is to ensure schools meet the unique learning needs of the gifted child. The Exceptional Children’s Educational Act (ECEA) is Colorado’s primary law with requirements for the implementation of specific elements and procedures for gifted education programs. These requirements include AU provisions for the Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). The ALP is a legal document [22-20-R-12.00, C.R.S.] outlining programming for identified gifted students and is used as a guide for educational planning and decision-making. The Exceptional Children’s Educational Act states that there will be ALP content and procedures set in Rule for statewide implementation; and that goals in the ALP are standards-based. Achievement goals are standards-based statements in a student’s strength area(s) [12.02(2)(f)(ii)].

As a result of standards driving the gifted student’s annual goal development, this letter expresses the desire of this stakeholder group to continue to have state standards that support opportunities for higher level learning. This includes standards that promote inquiry, application, real-world learning, problem solving, creativity, analysis and evaluation. Our group supports minimal revisions to the current standards and encourages a format that includes Inquiry Questions, Relevance and Application and Nature of the Discipline.

Gifted students often learn basic information more quickly. Therefore, they require standards that provide opportunities for greater depth of learning. Additionally, a format that includes vertical articulation of each standard would support classroom teachers as they develop standards-based goals for students working above grade-level. This framework supports a teacher’s ability to differentiate instruction based on a student’s readiness level.

For Colorado’s gifted students to be college and career ready, it is imperative our standards reflect a level of rigor and alignment to global expectations for achievement and growth. In summary, we recommend minimal changes for clarity only, vertical articulation of standards and opportunities for higher-level learning.

Sincerely,
Gifted Coordinators/Directors from Administrative Units listed above
March 17, 2017

To the Office of Standards and Instructional Support,

Educational leaders representing the following administrative units (AUs) are pleased to provide the following recommendations on the upcoming revision of the Colorado Academic Standards.

El Paso Harrison District 2
El Paso Widefield District 3
El Paso Fountain-Fort Carson District 8
El Paso Colorado Springs District 11
El Paso Lewis-Palmer District 38

El Paso Falcon District 49
Fremont Re-1 Cañon City
Pueblo 60
El Paso Cheyenne Mountain District 12
School for the Deaf and Blind

This letter expresses our collective desire to continue implementation of state standards that promote inquiry, application, real-world learning, problem solving, creativity, analysis and evaluation and that support opportunities for greater depth of learning.

Our consortium supports **minimal** revisions to the current standards and encourages continuing a format that includes Inquiry Questions, Relevance and Application and Nature of the Discipline. Additionally, we support the current format that includes vertical articulation, supports the development of learning progressions, and promotes differentiation of instruction based on a student’s readiness level.

For Colorado’s students to be college and career ready, it is imperative our standards reflect a level of rigor and alignment to global expectations for achievement and growth. In summary, we recommend minimal changes to clarify content and learning expectations **only**.

Sincerely,
Pikes Peak Regional Student Achievement Consortium
1. In your work around adopting local standards and curricula:
   - What opportunities will the statutory review and revision process offer?
     It will afford the opportunity for failure because around curricula alignment.
   - What challenges will the statutory review and revision process offer?
     Honoring the work that has gone into developing the current standards.

2. What would you like CDE to consider throughout the standards review and revision process?
   - Feedback - consistent and ongoing
   - Interactive throughout the process
   - Follow up implementation guidelines/Modules

3. What suggestions do you have to ensure CDE does a good job of keeping you informed throughout this process?
   - A dashboard that provides the latest information and progress throughout the process.

Are there other items you wish to share?
1. In your work around adopting local standards and curricula:
   - What opportunities will the statutory review and revision process offer?
   - What challenges will the statutory review and revision process offer?

2. What would you like CDE to consider throughout the standards review and revision process?
   Revise CO Standards minorly to keep them about the same but able to remove the Common Core label - in ELA & Math

3. What suggestions do you have to ensure CDE does a good job of keeping you informed throughout this process?

Are there other items you wish to share?
1. In your work around adopting local standards and curricula:
   • What opportunities will the statutory review and revision process offer?

   A chance for people to really reflect at standards and decide where real changes are needed.
   • What challenges will the statutory review and revision process offer?

   Dependency level of change may greatly impact district work.

2. What would you like CDE to consider throughout the standards review and revision process?

   Do not change just to change—just are becoming competent w/what current standards mean so to change will be a lot of work—only change if it will make a big difference.

3. What suggestions do you have to ensure CDE does a good job of keeping you informed throughout this process?

   I think there’s been a lot of transparency, so far—keep communicating and allowing people to be part of the process.

Are there other items you wish to share?

At a district level depending on level of change, changing 10 subjects in one year w/ 2-year rollout could be very costly. Can we look at a rolling update schedule?
1. In your work around adopting local standards and curricula:
   - What opportunities will the statutory review and revision process offer?

   - What challenges will the statutory review and revision process offer?

2. What would you like CDE to consider throughout the standards review and revision process?

   As the Office of Gifted Education presented throughout the state on developing standards-aligned ALPs, educators were strongly encouraged to use the right side of the standards to build goals that are rigorous for advanced learners. This side is very important for gifted programming.

3. What suggestions do you have to ensure CDE does a good job of keeping you informed throughout this process?
   - Keep standards rigorous
   - Focus on application, problem-solving, real-world learning, creativity, inquiry

Are there other items you wish to share?

Gifted educators have asked to have a GLE Changes from grade to grade. Similar to the document Common Core came out with. This is helpful when gifted student's learning needs to be accelerated. The format...
1. In your work around adopting local standards and curricula:
   - What opportunities will the statutory review and revision process offer?
     an opportunity to clarify standards that are difficult to interpret—clarify the "how" in the standards
   
   - What challenges will the statutory review and revision process offer?
     As a district we have invested a large unit of time in deconstruction, I would hate to have to do more than "tweak" our targets would be difficult

2. What would you like CDE to consider throughout the standards review and revision process?
   PD to support implementation of a true standards-based classroom

3. What suggestions do you have to ensure CDE does a good job of keeping you informed throughout this process?
   Updates on website ⇒ emails w/instruct to access updates

Are there other items you wish to share?
1. In your work around adopting local standards and curricula:
   - What opportunities will the statutory review and revision process offer?
     Rebranding with a sample lesson for each standard that a lay person can understand.
     Limit State Standards to the PSCs and SLEs.
   - What challenges will the statutory review and revision process offer?
     Enormous waste of time and resources to solve a non-problem. The problem is in the public perception of curriculum content but they have conflated that with the malvolent CCSS.

2. What would you like CDE to consider throughout the standards review and revision process?
   - The production of high-quality sample lessons to help parents and educators get to know a product they can trust. Stop being so afraid of publishing model lessons.
   - The product is not the standards. The products they have rejected are perceived bad curriculum they saw on Facebook and brutally long tests.

3. What suggestions do you have to ensure CDE does a good job of keeping you informed throughout this process?
   - What you are doing is great.

Are there other items you wish to share?
   - The right side of the standards document is abstract. A state should ever adopt. Districts and schools should handle the left side. Once "standards" are this detailed they become lesson plans without the lesson.
I am grateful for the opportunity to share my professional and personal opinion with you today of the harmful effects of the implementation of Common Core in our public school classrooms.

This method, far from being a benign, apolitical effort brought forth by the federal government, is less about setting adequate benchmarks for education than it is about presenting and normalizing political and sociological indoctrination, through specific methods, in place of traditional education.

If the purpose of Common Core is to undermine the self-confidence of the child, then it has been a resounding success! Please allow me to explain.

In my private practice as a licensed Psychotherapist, I repeatedly encounter students, who, through exposure to the school curriculum and reading materials, have come to question their identities. To the extent that they question whether they even belong on the planet, because their presence uses up unnecessary water and resources from the earth. Some children learn to question their sexual orientation, due to the unproven, non-empirical methods being applied in their classrooms, from history classes to health and sexuality courses, which cause both boys and girls confusion and undue suffering in the form of needless questioning regarding their gender and their very bodies.

My observations as a psychotherapist have led me to examine the Common Core Standards more closely, which I believe to be suspect in their potential for destabilizing the foundational identity of the child, leaving them vulnerable to depression, drug use, and, most worryingly and tragically, suicide.

Some of the tests administered, by the schools, such as PARCC, ask the student about suicide, potentially planting an idea in the still-developing and famously changeable adolescent mind. Removed from the careful oversight of a parent or mental health professional to give adequate moral counsel to or to evaluate the pain of a student who is suffering from mental illness, these needlessly invasive questionnaires have the potential to do more harm than good, and are inappropriate for mass-administration to our vulnerable young people.

The following examples may help to illustrate why even a very young child may internalize a message of self-hatred and even anxiety, feeling that they may not belong on the planet after being exposed to these insidious curricula. While schools that promote Common Core Standards reward behaviors such as cooperation, passivity and self-awareness, they fail to balance the scale by extolling the virtues of courage, generosity, and the triumph of human ingenuity.

Reading materials, often chosen by publishers of Common Core materials and the National Governors Association, include titles such as: "Where Do Polar Bears Live," by Sarah Thompson, an exemplar for 2nd and 3rd graders, about which Booklist at Amazon.com states, "The author covers the impact of global warming on polar bears' food sources. A shrinking Polar Cap makes seal hunting particularly challenging." The book's last two pages cover climate change, in detail, including how children may reduce their "carbon footprint."

Second and third graders used to be focused on recess, now they are being made to focus on
adult ideas which over burden their abilities and needlessly consume their emotional and mental energies. These adult issues are inappropriate and anxiety-producing for young children, who are being invited to step, unprepared, into an adult world without the benefit of a physically or mentally mature mind or the necessary critical thinking skills to process with.

The National Governor's Association, headed by Jeb Bush, is one of the enthusiastic proponents of implementing Common Core Standards in our classrooms, in exchange for funding. Unfortunately, our own teachers and school administrators, and the parents and students whom they serve, were neither consulted nor involved in developing and vetting these standards. How is it that an organization of bureaucrats and government officials has more power over our children's curricula than their parents and hard-working teachers? Did these elected officials receive some credentialing in child-rearing or education that the public is unaware of?

David Coleman, appointed by former President Obama and the head of the ACT/SAT College Boards, is largely credited with being the architect of Common Core Standards. The Annenberg Trust Schools, in Chicago and San Francisco, both based on Community Organizer models, are the basis for Common Core indoctrination in our classrooms.

Traditionally in the United States, our schools have always been managed at the local level, not managed remotely by the federal government. Our Founding Fathers believed that local parents, teachers and school boards were the best arbiters of education. This is based on the concept of "states rights," and a simple application of common sense that recognizes that what can to be done at a local level, with the investment and involvement of the actual community, should.

Common Core Standards, imposed from the top down by the National Governors Association and Jeb Bush, have Partnered with McGraw Hill Publishing Company and Microsoft Corporation to provide all textbooks and computers inside our classrooms, at an estimated cost of $15.8 billion dollars in taxpayer money for implementation. Additional costs associated with the rollout include: new audio visual aids, text books (not available for parental review, because they are on-line only on restricted sites), new software to go with new computers, and new testing materials along with innovative grading standards.

Implementing Common Core Standards is exorbitantly expensive, a needless drain on the already overburdened taxpayer. Common Core Standards violate FERPA (Family Education Rights To Privacy Act) and are a violation of the General Education Provisions Act.

While eroding states sovereignty, through further federalizing our education systems, Common Core Standards usurps parents responsibilities and rights. Common Core Standards were never internationally benchmarked. In fact, Dr. James Milgram and Dr. Sandra Slotsky, two members of Common Core Standards Validation Committee, have testified to the fact that "Common Core Standards were subpar and have failed to make our children college ready."

Since the founding of our Republic, states rights, with an emphasis on local control of education, have always been the goal. The federal government is an inefficient in inappropriate vehicle for implementation of educational goals. Common Core flagrantly violates the rights of the local school community to determine and implement their own
educational material and monitor – with the appropriate national standards as a benchmark, not as a cage – the material that will be valuable and applicable to their unique and particular student body.

On a closing note, Common Core is recklessly antagonistic and denigrating towards Christianity, selectively editing out the foundation of Western Civilization. While most save for the most critical references to Christianity are left out of the curriculum, great detail is is used to present Islam. Students are enlightened to the meaning and practice of the Muslim call to prayer, the use of a prayer rug, and how to wear a headscarf. While our students are being schooled in globalism, the original Christian foundations of our nation are purposely being undermined.

According to Thomas Jefferson, the purpose of education was not to convey an agenda, but to enlighten the mind. He said: “The whole people must take upon themselves, the education of the whole person and must be willing to bear the expense of it.” And from John Adams: " As the American Patriots imagined it, a federal relationship would be a kind of confession of first principles, or covenant, allowing states to bind themselves substantially, without entirely subsuming their sundry identities."

I encourage you to share your own concerns about the real cost that Common Core is exacting from our future – our children – with your own elected representatives. We owe a great debt to the next generation, and it is our responsibility to safeguard and guarantee a holistic, effective and uncompromising education for every American girl and boy. This is not the business of the federal government, or of Microsoft Corporation. This is our business. These are our children.

Sincerely,
Dear Commissioner Colsman:

Our Nation is entrenched in an enduring crisis. This crisis has a history that is as long as human history. Yet, it appears today that the general public, regardless of level of education achieved, is ignorant and is in need of formal education to understand this crisis. I base this statement on that these issues, to my knowledge, are not currently comprehensively studied in our public high schools and public colleges. The issues I refer to are human prejudice (of all sorts) and the misconceptions regarding, so called, race. Our education system should be vigorously addressing both of these issues.

Prejudice is addressed in the United States Constitution (our freedoms are to be free from prejudice), every state constitution (of course this was not always true), and numerous laws that exist at both levels of government, for example, civil right laws. Let us not forget that prejudice was a primary reason for this country to experience a civil war. These important aforementioned documents reject prejudice yet prejudice exists and affects, directly or indirectly, every citizen of the entire country. The dark side of prejudice is in our newspapers on a daily basis across the country and across the world. Prejudice should be recognized as a national crisis and our education system should react to it as such.

In 1962, as a teenager, I fortunately read The Nature of Prejudice by Gorden Allport (published in 1954/1979). This book is recognized as a classic, enduring publication on the subject. I realized years ago, and still to this day, that it is the most influential book that I ever read. I am now 70 years old. Recently I read a directly related and equally insightful book titled - On the Nature of Prejudice Fifty Years after Allport (2005). These publications, and of course others also, illustrate that a substantial amount of research and knowledge is available to address this subject. But it’s questionable if the citizens and especially the young people of this country are informed and educated on such an important and relevant issue.

Ignorance and the use and misuse of the term race have a strong role in this crisis. In 1942 Ashley Montague (1905 - 1999) published his most famous book, Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race. In 1950 the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) issued a statement on race. The statement declared that there was no scientific basis or justification for racial bias. Furthermore, in 1998 the American Anthropological Association (AAA) issued a statement that illustrates how little had changed since 1950. The AAA statement hardly differed in substance from the early UNESCO statements. The focus of the critique of “claims of racial differentiation remained on intragroup variability—differences within the group as opposed to between the group and any group it borders.” Today, perhaps forever, race is most commonly confused with cultures, ethnicity and religions.

Given the above, and the fact that science has firmly established that stereotyping and categorization as normal and inevitable by products of how people think, I strongly request that you give full
consideration to doing what you can to establish a requirement, or if that is not possible promote, the essential idea every public high school and public university require (promote) every student to take a class on the nature of prejudice including the history and meaning of race and it's use and misuse. These issues are on the forefront of our daily lives and it should be in the forefront of our education system. They rank right up there with reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Please understand that my career was not in the education field so I lack an understanding of how curriculum are selected and developed, and who decides. Hopefully, however, you can act on or direct the idea to the right professional people within your agency, or others within the state, for full consideration. If you can recommend a better approach to incorporating the nature of prejudice and race into our education system please advise me.

Finally, my first attempt at suggesting this idea was to the US Department of Education. And while this is a national issue, surprisingly, they could not envision a role they could undertake to promote the idea or to work with a state to develop example curriculum! In other words I got a thank you but response. They suggested I work with my local school district. In my opinion they missed the point. On the other hand, maybe a grass roots approach working from the bottom up has merit. After my second letter was unanswered I moved on. I consider the State of Colorado and the Colorado Department of Education to be progressive and I hope that you will consider developing a goal to provide relevant education addressing these perplexing issues. Our school districts need your leadership.

Thank you for your consideration.
Hi-

Thanks for opening dialog on CO academic standards for input and review. As a parent and business owner in the tech field, I appreciate the opportunity to have a voice.

I didn't see anywhere to add top level feedback in the survey at [https://www.cde.state.co.us/apps/costandardsreview/Welcome](https://www.cde.state.co.us/apps/costandardsreview/Welcome), so I'm emailing some here in hope it will also be considered. This feedback is based on the stated goal of "concepts and skills that all students who complete the Colorado education system must master to ensure their success in a postsecondary and workforce setting for each content area." If we are serious about preparing our kids for competency in the 21st century, there are some glaring omissions. In no particular order, but numbered for reference:

1- There should be a top level content area of Computing/Computation Theory. Computing is arguably the single most important human development, ever. Its reach is ubiquitous and has transformed almost every aspect of human culture radically in just the last few decades. Every adult in a first world country should be as competent with the fundamentals of computer technology as they are with the fundamentals of math and language.
This content should cover knowledge areas including the history of computing, the basic operations of computers (processing, memory, I/O, display), the basic operations of distributed computing (client/server, internet/networked communications), exposure and competencies in the dominant consumer and business operating systems and software packages, and competencies in basic programming and coding concepts with dominant computer languages.

2- There should be a top level content area of Finance, broken into Personal Finance and Systematic Finance (or generally Global Finance). Simple economics is no longer sufficient to participate effectively in the modern world. Several financial catastrophes such as the housing crisis and banking bailouts have occurred and will continue to occur, due in large part to wholesale ignorance of contemporary financial mechanisms and the unethical parties who choose to exploit that ignorance.
This content should cover knowledge areas including the history of banking, the differences between various consumer finance products (what are stocks vs. bonds vs. mutual funds etc.), world currency and what drives valuations (including the emergence of cryptocurrency such as BitCoin), the basics of the US and State tax codes and how to actually file simple tax returns, understanding of credit vs. loans vs. equity, and in depth understanding of the ramifications of consumer lending (what happens when you misuse credit cards and predatory retail loans), basic understanding of real estate ownership and leasing and accompanying rights, as well as basic study and simulations of retirement planning.

3- There seems to be a very large emphasis on many content areas of mastery of existing knowledge, instead of competency in creative application of knowledge resource towards problem solving. This should be a more balanced mix of rote knowledge with creative thinking. The problems of the future will need creative minds... automation/AI and computing trends suggest it will not be very long until all of existing human knowledge is instantly searchable as a reference. Therefore creative/imaginative thinking will become the highest prized talent. The Science category in particular needs to have some PGCs focused on creative problem solving, what
to do when you don't know what to do, and learning to "fail early and fail often" for the quickest path to success in any discipline. As a business owner that has overseen hundreds of employee hires and subsequent performance, I would take the person who knew how to find the answer over the person that knew the answer every time. Similarly, I'd always hire the person who wasn't afraid to take risks and make mistakes to figure out the right solution as quickly as possible.

Thanks again for the opportunity to provide feedback. I am proud of CO's state of education despite our voters' unwillingness to ever fund it, our sensible exploration of publicly accountable charter schools, and I'm a big believer in the public education system in general. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,
To Whom It May Concern:

I am a 6th year science teacher and teacher leader at an arts focused school in Denver. Since first year, our science teachers have been working to create rigorous, arts integrated, project-based learning opportunities that support our school vision and push students’ academic achievement. Along the way, we have had some great successes as well as some significant challenges. We are excited to push our team’s effectiveness to the next level by aligning to the Next Generation Science Standards, and hope that the state will adopt the standards. Shifting to NGSS will allow the science team to:

**Align with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and therefore better support math and literacy instruction**

Each NGSS performance expectation is broken down into three dimensions (science and engineering practices, disciplinary core ideas, and cross-cutting concepts). Each of these performance expectations is also aligned to Common Core math and literacy standards. Adopting the NGSS will not only allow us to better teach science, but also more effectively and intentionally integrate math and literacy instruction into our classrooms.

**Better prepare students for PARCC and PARCC style assessments**

Since the NGSS are driven by performance expectations, assessments of the standards build on traditional modes of assessment to include performance tasks. Assessing students using performance tasks not only provides our team with better data with regard to what students can do with what they’ve learned, but also supports movements the district has made to include performance based assessments on interim tests, and will better prepare students for performance based assessments, as well as reasoning based multiple choice items on PARCC.

**Effectively build team and classroom cultures that embody the DPS core values**

By using the NGSS to guide our team and individual planning, instruction, and practice, we will be realizing the DPS core values.

- **Students First:** Our students deserve access to the highest quality instruction available and the NGSS standards represent best practice in science education. The level of rigor required by NGSS is higher than what is required by current district curriculum and Colorado Academic Standards. The NGSS also authentically engages students in science and engineering practices rather than the memorization of scientific concepts and rote problem solving techniques, better preparing students who wish to pursue STEM careers to do so, and those who do not, to become scientifically literate citizens.

- **Equity:** The NGSS authors were intentional about writing the standards to make science accessible to all students, without sacrificing rigor. Many of the instructional shifts that we will be required to make as a result of adopting these standards—for example, shifting from teaching as transferring knowledge to facilitating the co-construction of knowledge—are inherently shifts that are also culturally responsive. See NGSS Appendix D for case studies outlining strategies to engage diverse students in the standards.

- **Collaboration:** The way the NGSS standards integrate across disciplines of science through the cross-cutting concepts and practices lends itself to collaboration. Beyond this, since beginning our exploration of the standards, our team’s conversations about best practices and how to make this shift to NGSS happen have extended beyond our scheduled content team time. We are so excited about this work and so committed to making it happen that we talk about it on the phone on weekends, in the hallways during passing period, during lunch, and after school. We hope to extend our collaboration across content areas within NCAS, and ideally, to other schools in the network.

- **Integrity:** Making the shift to the NGSS is the right thing to do for our students, and using the NGSS to guide our planning, instruction, and assessment will ensure that our team is working toward a common goal that also supports the goals of our math and literacy departments.

- **Accountability:** Teachers have already begun the process of developing new, NGSS aligned systems for data driven instruction and NGSS aligned assessments. If we are able to officially adopt NGSS, we will be able to fully align our planning, instruction, and assessment, rather than having to continually sacrifice high quality instruction because of competing and misaligned curriculum, standards, and assessments. Because the level of rigor required by NGSS exceeds that of the Colorado Academic Standards, and because the NGSS are Common Core aligned, our students will also ultimately be better prepared for high stakes tests.

- **Fun:** Doing science is much more fun than memorizing science! Making learning fun is essential to students’ academic success. Shifting to NGSS will increase fun while increasing rigor, and therefore increase engagement and achievement.

**Put our school vision into action by meaningful and intentional integration of the arts**

Thinking like a scientist or an engineer is an inherently creative process, and the Performance Expectations lend themselves to consistently building connections, risk taking, imagination, sensory experience, perceptivity, and active engagement into our classrooms.
Implement effective teaching practices outlined in LEAP

The instructional shifts inherent in the implementation of the NGSS are aligned to all of the best practices found in the LEAP framework for effective teaching, particularly I.2 (rigorous tasks) and I.8 (communication and collaboration).

I hope you will consider adopting the NGSS science standards.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,