

# CONNECTING Educators with Tools and Resources

## Overview of the Colorado Content Collaboratives

The power of Colorado's education improvement efforts lies in the integration and implementation of four key priorities: relevant and rigorous standards, aligned and meaningful assessments, excellent teachers and school leaders, and high-performing schools and districts all aimed at helping students succeed in an increasingly competitive workforce. In December 2011, Colorado was awarded a four year, \$17.9M Race to the Top Phase 3 grant focused on strengthening, expanding and accelerating implementation of these efforts. The grant funds enable the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to support the work of the Colorado Content Collaboratives, groups of Colorado educators brought together to review and create high-quality assessments aligned to the new Colorado Academic Standards.

### Colorado Content Collaboratives: 2012 - 2013

The goal of the first year of the Colorado Content Collaboratives' work is to review assessments in each content area to determine their degree of alignment to the Colorado Academic Standards and appropriateness for use in Colorado classrooms. The intent is to identify high quality assessments for all grades and subject areas and then load them into an assessment Resource Bank. This Resource Bank will provide districts with optional assessments to use in their classrooms.

With this goal in mind, the project began by enlisting national researchers in each content area to gather fair and reliable assessments of various types (multiple choice, performance, etc.) and from different states, countries, districts, universities and vendors.

With hundreds of assessments to review, 75 preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade Colorado educators were selected in February 2012 to form the Colorado Content Collaborative Cohort I. Cohort I reviewed assessments in the content areas of dance; drama and theatre arts; music; reading, writing and communicating; social studies; and visual arts. Cohort II was formed in the summer of 2012 and will work through November 2012. Cohort II is responsible for reviewing assessments in comprehensive health and physical education; mathematics; science; world languages; and career and technical education.

### Structuring the Content Collaboratives

The Content Collaboratives, broken into two cohorts, were staffed using an open application process. Educators were chosen based on expertise in their content area as well as a balance of expertise in the Colorado Academic Standards, assessment, working with special populations, and working with English Language Learners.

The selection committee also ensured there was representation of educators from varying grade levels, geographies and rural, suburban and urban schools within the cohorts.

#### Cohort I:

- Dance
- Drama and Theatre Arts
- Music
- Reading, Writing and Communicating
- Social Studies
- Visual Arts

#### Cohort II:

- Comprehensive Health and Physical Education
- Mathematics
- Science
- World Languages
- Career and Technical Education

Assessments identified by Cohorts I and II will be available to districts piloting the Colorado State Model Evaluation System during the 2012-13 school year . These pilot districts will help determine their utility as measures of student learning over time.

## Colorado Content Collaboratives: 2013-2015

The intention is to have enough assessments in the Resource Bank to represent the full depth and breadth of the Colorado Academic Standards for all grade levels. The Colorado Content Collaboratives will continue to refine and build the assessment Resource Bank and will work to fill any content or grade-level gaps that may exist when the bank initially launches.

The work of the Colorado Content Collaboratives does not stop with identifying measures for the assessment Resource Bank. The vision is for the collaboratives to become networks for assessment expertise. Long term goals include:

- Building instructional tools aligned to the standards and responsive to gaps in student learning
- Increasing student achievement through improved instructional and assessment practices
- Establishing authentic and active participation in reform efforts by educators across Colorado

The ongoing work of the Colorado Content Collaboratives will help to build statewide capacity and also ensures that Colorado educators continue to be highly involved in the state's reform efforts.

## Additional Involvement

The Colorado Content Collaborative project also includes a Technical Steering Committee which serves several roles:

- Review and refine the criteria tools and protocols used by the Colorado Content Collaboratives
- Review and provide the technical criteria to be considered in assessment review

Additionally, CDE is working in active and appreciative partnership with The National Center for Improvement of Educational Assessment, Inc. and the Colorado Legacy Foundation to support the efforts of the Colorado Content Collaboratives.

## Where can I learn more?

- Colorado Content Collaboratives website: [www.cde.state.co.us/ContentCollaboratives](http://www.cde.state.co.us/ContentCollaboratives)
- Colorado Educator Effectiveness website: [www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness](http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness)
- Colorado Academic Standards website: [www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction](http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction)
- Colorado Assessment website: [www.cde.state.co.us/assessment](http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment)

### The Colorado Department of Education

**CONNECTING** . . . rigorous academic standards . . . meaningful assessments . . .  
engaging learning options . . . excellent educators . . . for **STUDENT SUCCESS**