



COLORADO
Department of Education
Commissioner of Education

201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203-1799

January 8, 2015

Dear Superintendents and BOCES Directors,

I hope your New Year is off to a good start and that you've settled into a productive routine since the holiday break. In my ongoing effort to keep you apprised of important decisions and events at the state level that could impact you, I wanted to let you know of a motion passed by the State Board of Education.

The State Board of Education, today, passed a motion on a 4-3 vote to direct the commissioner to grant waivers to districts that request not to administer the performance-based portion of the upcoming Colorado Measures of Academic Success tests in English/Language Arts and math.

We are consulting with the Attorney General's Office to determine the legality of the directive. We have already received guidance from the Attorney General's Office on whether or not districts can choose to administer state assessments. However, in light of the state board's motion we are asking the Attorney General's Office to revisit this matter and provide guidance. If the motion is found to be legal, we will take action in accordance with the board's directive.

It is important for all of us to remember throughout this process that a lot of important issues are discussed and only some are finalized and have the force of law. So we will continue to implement existing law as adopted by the Governor and the General Assembly as well as federal law and all State Board rules and policies. If and when any of those things change, then we will make changes to our implementation. We will communicate any changes with you swiftly so you are informed and can adjust as necessary.

We also recognize there is a lot of interest in the state assessment issue among members of the General Assembly and we know there will be a variety of bills introduced that will propose to make changes to standards, assessments, evaluation and accountability. These proposals will generate healthy discussion, but nothing changes in our work to implement those systems unless a bill passes both houses and is signed by the Governor. This kind of debate and discussion is all a part of our democratic process and is expected as a part of major systems change. We want to continue to support you in the good work you are doing and we are here to answer any questions you have. We also suggest you check our website (www.cde.state.co.us) frequently as we will update it with any new information impacting this work, and we will include appropriate updates in the *Scoop* e-newsletter and the *CDE Update*.

Thank you for the great work you are doing to ensure all students receive a world class education.

Sincerely,

Robert K. Hammond
Commissioner of Education

