



# COLORADO DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

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Commissioner of Education

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Deputy Commissioner

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To: Superintendents and BOCES Directors  
From: Dr. Keith Owen, Deputy Commissioner  
Jill Hawley, Associate Commissioner, Achievement & Strategy Division  
Subject: Spanish Language Arts Assessments

Over the past two years, there have been many discussions with stakeholders regarding how to incorporate the assessment of language arts in Spanish into Colorado's future assessment system. This memo provides a brief overview of the direction that the department is taking to ensure that new language arts assessments in Spanish are available for administration in 2014-15.

## **Background**

State statute (22-7-409) requires the administration of reading and writing assessments in Spanish for third and fourth graders. Known as Lectura and Escritura, these assessments are administered to approximately 1,000 third graders and 100 fourth graders. Currently, students taking these assessments may take them in lieu of TCAP and the results are included in part in the school/district performance frameworks. This year marks the last year of administration of Lectura and Escritura, as we transition fully to the new Colorado Academic Standards.

## **New Standards – New Assessments**

Where Colorado's previous academic standards were language neutral (they were language arts standards as opposed to English language arts standards), Colorado's new reading, writing, and communicating standards are English-based. Aligned to those standards, the new assessments (which are being developed through the PARCC consortium) are designed to reflect mastery of reading, writing, and communicating in English. As a result, all students in grades 3-11 are expected to take the PARCC English language arts assessments in the spring of 2015. (Assessment and accountability options for students who have been in the United States for less than one year are being explored in light of state statute and federal guidance.)

Consistent with best practice and to meet statutory requirements, Colorado is committed to administering language arts assessments in Spanish to third and fourth grade students eligible under current state law. Over the course of this fall, the department will be exploring the best options for developing and/or procuring language arts assessments in Spanish aligned to the

new standards that can be administered in the spring of 2015 to supplement the PARCC assessment results. The department will be working with other states and vendors to explore options that best meet Colorado's needs and plans to have additional information on the assessment route selected by January 2014.

The department remains committed to incorporating the results of these assessments into the accountability system (i.e., School Performance Frameworks and District Performance Frameworks). With input from the field and key stakeholder groups, discussions on how best to do that will be incorporated into the accountability conversations addressing the new assessments that will be occurring over the course of the year.

We will continue to keep you apprised of this work and wanted to assure you of our commitment to having language arts assessments in Spanish pursuant to the law and to incorporating them as appropriate for accountability purposes.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Joyce Zurkowski, Executive Director of Assessment, at [zurkowski\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:zurkowski_j@cde.state.co.us).