News Release - CDE announces pause on 2019-20 state assessments, accountability

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State working on possible solution for PSAT, SAT

DENVER - The administration of end-of-the-year assessments, including the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS), will be paused for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year due to extensive school closures throughout Colorado to prevent the spread of COVID-19, Colorado Education Commissioner Katy Anthes announced today.

“With the extraordinary actions we are taking to prevent the spread of COVID-19, it’s clear that we need to press pause on our CMAS tests this year,” Commissioner Anthes said. “Students and educators need to feel a sense of stability and normalcy before state tests can be administered and produce valid results. This also means we plan to pause our school and district state accountability system as it relates to state assessments for a year.”

CDE is working with The College Board to generate possible solutions for the administration of the PSAT and SAT tests, which offer unique roles in Colorado’s system in terms of scholarships and college entrance. Additional information will come from CDE as it becomes available.

CDE intends to engage with the U.S. Department of Education to address implications, including those related to federal accountability, and will complete waiver documentation as necessary, Anthes said.

"I’m a big fan of accountability and transparency in public education, but we will simply have to forgo incredibly useful data on student achievement for a year to help contain the virus,” said Colorado Gov. Jared Polis. “Right now, students, families, and educators need to be focused on doing everything they can to keep families safe and stable. It is clear that COVID-19 will put extraordinary stress on our education system for the coming weeks and months. In order to ensure our schools and educators are able to spend as much time as possible on online instruction in a difficult situation, I support the decision to pause assessments and school accountability for this year only.”

Making the decision to pause testing now allows schools and districts to concentrate on determining ways to deliver continued instruction to the extent they are able during this unprecedented disruption in education, Anthes said.

The Department will continue working with schools and districts that are already identified for improvement to help support instruction, including options for instruction during and after school closures.

CDE has compiled resources about Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) for schools and districts on its website here: http://www.cde.state.co.us/safeschools.

For further information on how the assessment pause will impact the state's accountability system, please visit this webpage.

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