



Reconnecting

I am pleased to let you know that I have returned to the Colorado Department of Education as Literacy Content Specialist. I am looking forward to working with you again! Someday, perhaps over coffee rather than via email or an e-update, we can chat about the brief hiatus away from CDE. ☺

I wanted this initial eUpdate to serve as a reconnection as we head into the spring semester, but I did want to touch base on a few of the major topics which will be important to watch in the spring and which will be the focus of our conversations in the near-term and over the next several months.

ELA Think Tank / Leadership

We will begin our “Think Tank” conversations soon. Feel free to send me any topics you would like to discuss with your peers from around the state, and I can begin to form an agenda for our discussions. We will have a webinar in February and schedule another one at a time that is the least intrusive in your schedule after spring break. An additional goal I have is to be out in different districts / regions between now and June to have some face-to-face conversations with you and your colleagues. I have discussed tentative plans and dates with some folks; if you would be interested in such a face-to-face, please let me know.

News from the Office of Standards & Instructional Support

Middle School teachers from Wray, Colorado drafted new standards-based units this past summer as part of the District Sample Curriculum Project. In addition, high school teachers from Garfield RE-2 in Rifle, Colorado wrote units that completed the 9th grade sample curriculum. Those units are posted [here](#).

2016 Legislative Session, Board Discussions, New Commissioner

We will, of course, be listening to the key issues that the legislature will identify and discuss over the next few months. If last year is any indication, I think we can anticipate discussions around assessment (PARCC results, the new PSAT and SAT – see Interim Commissioner Asp’s letter [here](#)) and other assessment-related issues.

In addition, we have a new Commissioner, [Richard Crandall](#), beginning January 19th. As with any leadership change, it will be important and interesting to hear his vision for Colorado.

NCTE, CCIRA, CLAS Notes

NCTE: The National Council of Teachers of English ([NCTE](#)) provides great resources for English teachers. If you have not done so, you should check out the #nctechat on Twitter. These are great sessions! To see the archives of #nctechat and a calendar of upcoming chats, click [here](#).

CCIRA: The Colorado Council International Reading Association’s ([CCIRA](#)) outstanding conference is fast approaching: February 3-6 at the Marriott Tech Center. This year’s theme is “A World of Wonder.” More info may be found [here](#).

CLAS: The [Colorado Language Arts Society](#) has information posted for its [2016 Regional Fall Conference](#). This year’s speakers include Taylor Mali, Jimmy Santiago Baca, and Sarah Brown Wessling.

CLAS and the **Denver Writing Project** will have an afternoon of writing on February 20, 2016, at the [Denver Art Museum from 12 - 3 pm. The \\$25 fee includes museum admission, instruction, and a three-hour professional development certificate](#). The Denver Writing Project also has a morning event at the Clyfford Still Museum from 9-11 am, and information is available at the above link.

Be sure, too, to check out the [CLAS Writing Contest](#), open to all Colorado K-12 Students!

A moment to reflect ...

Kylene Beers recently posted beliefs that guide her thinking and actions. Here are some of them:

- There is great value in being a lifelong reader far beyond gaining employment.
- A democracy is more likely to succeed when ALL members of its population are highly literate.
- It is better to be a nation that reads than one that does not.
- Each child deserves the type of teacher I would want for my own child.
- Teachers can change the trajectory of a child's life.
- The value a teacher adds to a child's life cannot accurately be measured by a test score.
- Books do far more than open doors. They save lives.
- I'm a better teacher when I'm a learner.

She made me ponder: what beliefs are guiding my thinking and actions as we enter into this new year?

Contact Info

Please feel free to contact me with any feedback on this e-update or to suggest topics or questions you would like to see addressed in future updates. I want this monthly newsletter to be useful as you do the vital day-to-day work with your students and colleagues. I may be reached at Puzick_v@cde.state.co.us or (303) 866-6583.