



ELA Think Tank / Leadership

April in Colorado: snow, rain, sun all in one day. The PARCC (and other) assessments are underway. And I know that teachers are moving through the 4th Quarter and preparing for all the end-of-year celebrations, farewells, graduations – all while keeping students’ attention on the learning rather than all the changes Spring brings into view out of the classroom window.

News from the Office of Standards & Instructional Support

District Visits: Over the past month, I had the opportunity to visit two districts and the San Luis Valley BOCES. I had a great day in Garfield Re-2 talking with instructional coaches there about PARCC expectations in writing and why it is so important to have Social Studies and Science teachers involved in this literacy work. I spent a portion of one morning in Brighton in the 27J School District and heard about the very thoughtful curriculum work they are doing as a district. And this past week, I spent time with teachers in the San Luis Valley talking about instructional shifts – close reading, working with multiple texts, and writing “from” and “based on” texts students are reading. It’s so great to talk with teachers doing the meaningful work every day with their students.

2016 Legislative Session

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 (e.g. PARCC results, the new PSAT and SAT – see Interim Commissioner Asp’s letter [here](#)), teacher evaluation, graduation requirements, and other issues. You may follow the legislative actions by accessing Chalkbeat’s “Education Bill Tracker 2016” at [this link](#).

The **Every Student Succeeds Act** (ESSA) will shape our work in the future. CDE will launch a state-wide “listening tour” to gather feedback on the ESSA legislation and its implementation in Colorado. You can find more information about the “listening tour” [here](#). CDE has also set up an [ESSA Blog](#) to help gather and disseminate information.

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](#).

NCTE has just published its [Professional Knowledge for the Teaching of Writing](#) statement. This is a revised statement

replacing the *NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing*. I would be interested in hearing your thoughts, and those of your colleagues, about this position statement. In addition, you may be interested in reading the *NCTE Beliefs about Students’ Right to Write*. That position statement is found [here](#).

CLAS: The [Colorado Language Arts Society](#) has information posted for its [2016 Regional Fall Conference](#) -- “For the Love of Teaching / Reclaiming the Classroom.” This year’s speakers include Taylor Mali, Jimmy Santiago Baca, and Sarah Brown Wessling. CLAS is also accepting proposals through July 1, 2016 for the [2016 Conference](#).

Have you ever considered writing an article for [Statement](#), the [Journal for the Colorado Language Arts Society](#)? They publish articles from Colorado teachers on a range of recurring topics: teaching ideas, outstanding lesson plans, vignettes from the classroom, expressive writing by Colorado teachers, and more.

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

CCIRA: The [Colorado Council International Reading Association](#) is planning its 2017 Conference: “Golden Ingredients for 50 Years of Literacy.” Proposals are being accepted until June 15, 2016. More info [here](#).

Research & Resources

Grammar / Mechanics. I have had a request from one of our Colorado districts that you may be able to help me fulfill. The folks there are looking for examples of how some other districts may have **vertically aligned the grammar and mechanics expectations in the K-12 Colorado Academic Standards**. If you have any sort of scope and sequence document or other alignment efforts you have made, would you mind emailing the document? Thank you.

Speaking of which ... I had an opportunity to revisit the [Writing Next](#) document published by the Carnegie Corporation a few years ago. I like its brief discussion of grammar instruction for adolescent writers on page 21.

Another document that I find very informative, and glean more from each time I read it, is the [Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing](#). I’m sure many of you have seen both documents; it’s interesting to look at two documents with varying philosophies and see how they can mesh.

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.