



COLORADO
Department of Education
Commissioner of Education

201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203-1799

Dec. 23, 2015

Dear Superintendents and BOCES Directors,

Last May, the Colorado legislature passed H.B. 15-1323 which, among other things, required the department to go through a competitive procurement process for both a college entrance exam and a new 10th-grade exam. The new law requires the college exam to be administered throughout the United States and relied upon by institutions of higher education. In addition, the new 10th-grade exam must be aligned to both the Colorado Academic Standards and to the college entrance exam. The department issued a request for proposals for these exams in November and received bids from two vendors, College Board and ACT.

After a thorough review of the proposals, sample tests and student reports, a 15-member selection committee made up of educators and district administrators from urban, rural and suburban communities across Colorado, with a single CDE representative, recommended College Board's SAT as the college entrance exam and PSAT as the 10th-grade exam.

The College Board assessments were selected in part because of their alignment to the content knowledge and cognitive complexity of the high school Colorado Academic Standards. The College Board also offers a reporting system that connects students to resources and activities designed to help identify next steps for extra support or possible acceleration. Following the state's procurement procedures, the intent to award has been issued today. The official award will be issued after a required protest period of seven business days.

Knowing that the ACT has been given to Colorado juniors since 2001, the selection committee, the department and I are fully aware that this choice will mean a major shift for our educators and students. Therefore, I am committed to working with you and other stakeholders to explore options for flexibility that we may have for this year's 11th-grade students who expected to take the ACT this year.

As you discuss this shift with educators and students, be sure to remind them that the PARCC exams in English language arts and math, part of the Colorado Measures of Academic Success system, will no longer be taken by 10th- and 11th-grade students in Colorado.

I have faith in the selection process and I know the committee recommended the assessment they found, after a thorough and in-depth review, would most benefit Colorado students over the long term. Thank you, in advance, for your support in implementing this decision. The department will issue a [news release](#) on this shortly. As always, if you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Elliott Asp, Ph.D
Interim Commissioner of Education

