



# STAYING INFORMED

## Keeping Stakeholders Informed

Implementation of Colorado's landmark educator evaluation law is being watched nationally and is expected to pave the way for similar efforts in other states. The State Council for Educator Effectiveness wants to ensure its work is transparent, widely shared and communicated in a timely, accurate manner.

Communications outreach will:

- Provide regular updates about the Council's work.
- Gather and document feedback from stakeholders about the Council's recommendations to develop a new educator evaluation system.
- Disseminate information about the final recommendations and the rationale behind the recommendations.
- Assist Council members and other education leaders in speaking with one voice about the recommendations — and why they are significant to student success in Colorado.
- Document the process used in Colorado to inform stakeholders in other states exploring similar initiatives.

## *Spread-the-word strategies*

- *Key messages and talking points.* Develop three key messages about the Council's work on educator effectiveness. Draft talking points after every monthly meeting so Council members can provide consistent, timely information to constituents. These talking points would also lay the foundation for blurbs, e-newsletters and website updates.
- *Regular reporting of meeting highlights.* Proactively communicate with constituents with the help of a short, monthly blurb and more detailed e-newsletter featuring "headlines" from Council meetings; what's next; upcoming speaking engagements; one to two select FAQs; and website promotion. While the e-newsletter and blurb would be distributed through the Colorado Department of Education's listserv, Council members also could forward them to their own networks.
- *Backgrounder.* Disseminate an informational pamphlet that provides context about the Council's purpose, key areas of focus, challenges, timeline and more. The piece also would address common misconceptions (for example, recommendations are due in April, not December — or the Council continues its work for the next couple of years; it doesn't disband after providing recommendations).

- *FAQs.* Develop a two-pager of the most frequently asked questions – questions that also mirror critical core messages the Council must convey. Cross-promote the website and house more in-depth, technical FAQs there.
- *Calendar of speaking engagements.* Continually update and promote a calendar of speaking engagements where Council members will be talking in public settings about their work. Seek out speaking opportunities as appropriate.
- *Website.* Revise and update Web page on educator effectiveness, including section about the Council's work.
- *Podcasts.* Explore a series of monthly podcasts (budget permitting). Each podcast would feature one major component of the Council's work and help tell the story about strengthening educator effectiveness in Colorado. The podcasts might be one-on-one interviews and/or produced packages.
- *PowerPoint.* Develop one master PowerPoint presentation that Council members can use at different speaking engagements. The presentation could be easily customized to include new or tailored information.
- *Public input on draft recommendations.* Design a process (focus groups, small-group discussions, etc.) to gather input on draft recommendations. Identify what the Council wants to glean from public input, how it will be used and how the Council will report back to participants.

Other potential communications-related work: communications training for key spokespersons, media outreach, public report, and informing newly elected officials and current legislators about the Council's work.

### ***Critical time pegs for communications planning***

- *November 2010:* Council provides an update to the Colorado State Board of Education about its progress.
- *January 2011:* Council holds its retreat January 13-15 to produce recommendations for design of new evaluation system.
- *February 2011:* Council shares recommendations with Colorado State Board of Education, including work expected after March 1.
- *February – March 2011:* Council solicits and reviews stakeholder reactions to recommendations.
- *April 2011:* Council releases complete set of final recommendations.