

May 14, 2010

Dear COVA Students and Families,

We want to thank you for your amazing dedication during testing season. As you know thousands of COVA students across the state completed the CSAP testing for 3 – 10th grade students in early April. This was an enormous undertaking from all perspectives for families, students, and staff. The amount of instructional preparation and learning that our staff, students and parents engages in throughout the year is commendable and very much for the benefit of students. You truly showed “COVA’s best” during the testing window! Thank you!

Unfortunately, even with the closest attention to detail and training, errors can occur in a task this global and complex. We regret to inform you that COVA has been notified that tests administered in multi-grade level settings were determined to be “mis-administration.” COVA staff and teachers were unaware during the test administration that students in different grades were unable to take tests in the same room.

In the second day of testing, COVA staff learned that the multi-grade testing may be an issue and immediately self-reported and sought clarification from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and Adams 12 School District. Although there was previously no documented prohibition on multi-grade level test settings, COVA was informed that this year’s new Proctor Manual did include a reference to a prohibition on multi-grade level testing. Unfortunately, this regulation was not included in the state’s Procedures Manual, nor was it emphasized during communication between COVA and CDE or during the training.

COVA developed and implemented a corrective action plan within 12 hours of receiving notification from the state to no longer test students in multi-grade level settings. Shortly after testing was completed, Adams 12 School District officials investigated the incident and reported back to the CDE. Adams 12, in consultation with CDE, made the determination of “mis-administration” for the reading/writing, and math tests for your student(s).

Unfortunately, there is no formal appeals process in place and CDE informed COVA that there will not be an opportunity to appeal the “mis-administration” ruling. Although we believe that the way COVA administered the tests this year in no way compromised the integrity of the students’ tests, and we are disappointed with the determination from Adams 12 and CDE, it was an error and COVA accepts full responsibility.

What does this mean for your student? You will receive a score report for your child’s reading score with a “No Score” result. The good news is that we will receive the raw scores for your child and will be able to create an achievement score for your child that is based on item level data, and probable scaled scores/probable proficiency levels. Be assured that this will not impact your child’s academic transcripts, ability to graduate on schedule, or college applications.

As all of you know, testing thousands students who reside all over the state is a significant challenge that is unique to public virtual charter schools, especially one as large as COVA. Our teachers and parents do a great job every year to meet the requirement that students take the CSAP tests. This year, in response to feedback from COVA families, COVA implemented testing procedures to better accommodate parents and students during testing week, especially those who travel considerable distances and families with multiple children.

It is important to note that this “mis-administration” ruling was not a result of any intentional infraction or unethical actions (ie. cheating, failure to proctor, etc.), but a procedural oversight. Nevertheless, to ensure an error such as this does not occur in the future, COVA will strengthen its testing planning, training and administrative procedures.

We would like to provide you with an opportunity to ask question during an Elluminate session on:

May 17th at 10:00 am

Please click on the following link to join the sessions:

<http://tinyurl.com/HS-Training-09-10>

We look forward to the opportunity to talk with you about the details regarding this decision. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to COVA!

Sincerely,

Tim Booker
President, COVA Board of Trustees

Heidi Heineke-Magri
Interim Head of School