For the past four weeks I have shared with you my view that public education in our state is going through a great deal of change all at once.

While my career as a Colorado educator has only spanned 18 years so far, when I talk with people that have been involved much longer, they agree that we have never seen large-scale fundamental change to schools like we are seeing now.

I have shared with you how new standards are causing major changes to how we assess students at the local level and with state testing. You read that we are implementing a new curriculum next year based on these standards, which will cause teachers to adjust the content of their courses and create new lesson plans to get to these ends.

Last week I wrote to you about changes to teacher evaluation in our state and how the stakes have changed, including the end of tenure as we know it, while districts create plans as to how we will use student achievement results in individual teacher evaluations.

That is quite a bit. But there is more.

In addition to the changes to standards, curriculum and evaluation, our state is currently looking at a new school finance act that will change how schools are funded. We are also still in the early years of a new accountability system where schools get labels and create improvement plans that are posted on the Department of Education's website.

Each one of these changes has merit and in nearly all the cases there was a positive outcome most school people supported when the laws were introduced.

The stress on public education in Colorado is that all of these things are happening at the same time. I think it would be very unlikely that any business would decide to change several key

elements all at the same time. However, the local Board of Education and administration are in a position where we don't get to consider the best timeline for change for our district since we are continuously responding to new legislation.

The intent of the column over the past few weeks has not been to whine or to get you to feel sorry for us. Educators in the Holyoke School District are professionals, and we can take on this challenge.

I do want people to know that it is a difficult time to be an educator. Along with all the initiatives described, teachers are also struggling to use more technology, reduce bullying, help English Language Learners achieve at the same levels as all students and face more challenges with suicide, abuse, neglect and violence in homes and throughout society.

It is my hope that through these few columns, you have had a glimpse into our schools and you see all we are asked to implement. With all of these new laws and as we attempt to work with the many challenges of our society, we will be doing business differently than we have in the past. We will have to use our time differently and approach planning and assessing differently.

Please know that we expect to be held to the same high standards that this community has held for its school for years, but we may be getting there in a different way based on the hand we have been dealt.

Thank you for reading about our work and for your ongoing support of our school. A special thanks to the many citizens in our community who have given time to serve on one of our many committees.

Our classrooms are filled with wonderful students and talented educators who care deeply about each and every student, and we are working tirelessly to live out our mission to "graduate every student with the necessary knowledge, skill and character to find success in life."

Miles is the superintendent of Holyoke Re-1J School District.

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