

Update from the Director of Exceptional Student Services



Happy New Year to all of the Inside Exceptional Student Services readers! As you read this edition you will come to understand why we are so proud of all of our work in Colorado on assessment of students with exceptional needs.

IDEA 97 required the participation of all students with disabilities in any formal assessments administered to all other students. In 1993, several years prior to the IDEA reauthorization, Colorado legislators passed HB 1313 that required all students with disabilities be included in the assessment process for accountability.

Additionally, our District Accreditation addresses accountability for the achievement of students with exceptional needs whether due to a disability or giftedness. IDEA 97 also required that there be an alternate assessment available for students who are unable to participate in the general assessment due to their disability. NCLB only strengthened the accountability processes that we were already putting in place.

Colorado has been proactive in responding to this charge for an alternate assessment. From the onset of development, we were committed to

measuring our students against the same content standards that were set for all students in Colorado. We wanted a formalized measure that was performance-based and allowed for all of the adaptations needed to assure a true measure of a student's learning. Stakeholders, including parents of students with disabilities, teachers, and administrators worked with experts in assessment and content areas to develop the assessment frameworks and tests.

The assessments that are in place to date are:

- Reading and writing grades 3-7 and 9-10;
- Math grades 5-6 with 8th grade pilot completed in 2003; Science pilot completed in 2003.

Current assessments in development are:

- Reading & writing grade 8; Math grades 3-4, 7-10;
- Science grades 5 and 10.

Colorado has been a leader in the design of a quality alternate assessment and was therefore chosen for the multi-state Enhanced Assessment Grant (EAG) that is described in another article in this edition.

Call for Articles

WE INVITE YOU TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE FOR A FUTURE ISSUE OF THE INSIDE EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN. BELOW ARE LISTED DEADLINES AND FEATURE TOPICS, ALTHOUGH OTHER TOPICS ARE WELCOME AS WELL.

THE DEADLINE DATE FOR ARTICLES FOR THE SPRING 2004 ISSUE IS MARCH 1, 2004. FEATURE TOPICS WILL BE TRANSITION, AND SELF DETERMINATION.

EDITING ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE/ PROVIDED AS NEEDED. TO DISCUSS SUBMISSIONS, OR FOR A LIST OF ADDITIONAL ARTICLE IDEAS TO CONSIDER, CONTACT JENNIFER JACKSON @ JACKSON_J@CDE.STATE.CO.US.

MAILING ADDRESS FOR PHOTOGRAPHS OR LOGOS TO ACCOMPANY ARTICLES IS:

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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

We are pleased to see how well students are gaining in achievement as measured by the general CSAP and the CSAPA. The feedback we are receiving from teachers about how they have modified and improved their instruction as a result of standards-based IEPs and the awareness raised in administering the CSAPA is positive.

Beginning with this next testing cycle we will be able to disaggregate data on how our students who are gifted and talented are achieving. All of this good news and more is affirmed in the following articles. Enjoy!

Lorrie Harkness,
State Director.
Exceptional Student Services



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INSIDE CDE SPECIAL EDUCATION NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED AND EDITED BY THE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES UNIT AT THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 201 EAST COLFAX, ROOM 300, DENVER, CO 80203. PHONE: (303) 866-6694.

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THE *INSIDE CDE SPECIAL EDUCATION* NEWSLETTER STAFF:

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THE PURPOSE OF THE *INSIDE SPECIAL EDUCATION* NEWSLETTER IS TO SERVE AS A MEDIUM FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION PERTAINING TO SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF COLORADO AND THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CDE SPECIAL EDUCATION UNIT. THIS NEWSLETTER IS DESIGNED TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ON PROFESSIONAL ISSUES, PROCEDURAL CHANGES, AND UPCOMING EVENTS TO COLORADO EDUCATORS.

ALL VIEWS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OR THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO-DENVER.

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COLORADO STUDENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM ALTERNATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Colorado Student Assessment Program Alternate Advisory Committee is to provide direction and feedback on the development of alternate assessments in the state of Colorado. With the guidance and support of this group, quality, standards aligned alternate assessments have been created for students with disabilities in the state of Colorado. Many of the articles in this edition were written or developed by the advisory committee.

The Colorado Department of Education wishes to give credit and thanks to the following committee members for their valuable contributions in assisting in creating the CSAP-A assessments.

Julie Armentrout, Professor, UCCS	Amanda McConathy, SpEd Teacher, East Grand
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Sue Bechard, SpEd Dir., Measured Progress	Alison Montana, SWAAAC Coordinator, Adams 14
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Kelli Kingsbury, Falcon Creek Middle School	Patsy Wagner, Teacher, Columbia MS- Aurora PS
Sue Loeffler, Speech Language Specialist, ATRT	Mary West, Teacher, Montrose High School
Pat Longo, Reg Dir, Douglas County, SpSvcs	

ASSESSMENT & STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

ASSESSING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN COLORADO

By Janet Filbin, Senior Consultant, ESSU & Assessment Accountability Team

Current legislation (IDEA '97 and No Child Left Behind) mandates that students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) must participate in state and district assessments. Therefore, all students with IEPs in Colorado will take the CSAP or the CSAPA.

The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) is assigned to provide a measure of student achievement in relation to the Colorado Model Content Standards. These standards are expectations specify what students should know at particular points in their education. As a result, CSAP provides a series of snapshots of student achievement in reading, writing, math and science as they move through grades 3-10.

There are a few students with Individual Education Plans, or IEPs, who will not be able to take the general CSAP because of the nature and intensity of their disability. Even if accommodations to the testing administration are provided, the content assessed and materials used in the CSAP are at a significantly different instructional level than these students may be working on day to day. Although unable to take the general state assessment, these students may still be working on the underlying skills necessary to access and achieve the standards. Therefore, the students who will not be able to participate in the general CSAP will have to have a different way to demonstrate their abilities

and what they can do to accurately assess their skills in relationship to the content standards. The Colorado Student Assessment Program Alternate (CSAPA) was developed to measure progress for students who are beginning to demonstrate skills as related to expanded benchmarks in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science.

Since the number of students who will qualify to take the CSAPA is limited, determination of which assessment is most appropriate for the student must be made by the IEP team after giving consideration and/or opportunity, when appropriate, for students to participate in the general CSAP.



Decisions must be based on **the child's individual needs** rather than the category of his or her disability, expected performance or where they receive educational services.

In addition, teams should consider which content area the specific grade-level CSAP will be assessing and the curriculum content the student is currently learning. Remember, the CSAPA assess emerging literacy, math and science skills.

Eligibility checklists and criteria have been developed to help IEP teams make the appropriate determinations as to whether or not the student qualifies to take the CSAPA. It is important to remember that the eligibility checklist is just one factor to take into considerations when making this decision.

CSAP vs. CSAPA

<p>Based on Colorado Standards</p> <p>Measures a student's yearly progress toward standards</p> <p>Criterion-referenced assessment</p> <p>Developed with teaching community</p> <p>Paper and pencil measure of performance</p> <p>Scored on correct responses to multiple choice and constructed responses</p> <p>Standardized accommodations allowed</p> <p>4 performance levels</p> <p>Administered in Spring each year</p>	<p>Based on Colorado Standards</p> <p>Measures a student's yearly progress toward standards</p> <p>Criterion-referenced assessment</p> <p>Developed with teaching community</p> <p>Activity-based measure of performance</p> <p>Scored on level of support needed to complete each indicator</p> <p>Any adaptation necessary for student to perform the task is allowed</p> <p>5 performance levels</p> <p>Administered in Spring each year</p>
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In Colorado, students on IEPs will either take the general Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) or the Colorado Student Assessment Program Alternate (CSAPA). The most important similarity between the two assessments is that they are both based on Colorado State Content Standards. The most significant difference is CSAP is a paper/pencil measurement, while the CSAPA is an activity based measurement.

RELIABILITY & VALIDITY OF THE COLORADO STUDENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM ALTERNATE

VALIDITY (CONTENT AND CONSTRUCT)

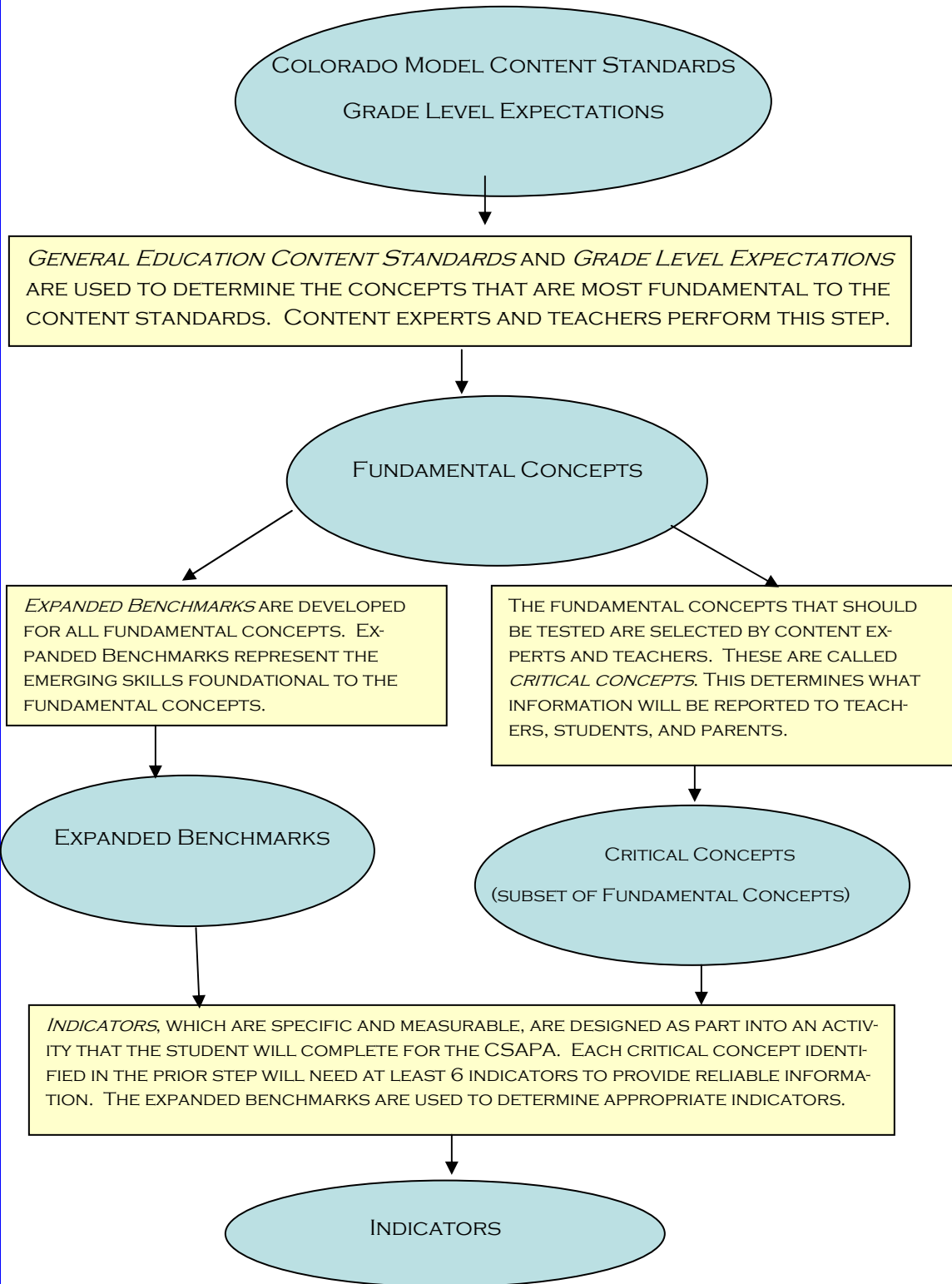
- CONTENT EXPERTS INVOLVED IN DEVELOPMENT OF INDICATORS AND ITEMS
- EXPERT PANEL REVIEW AND INITIAL ADMINISTRATION BY CONTENT EXPERTS AND EXPERIENCED EDUCATORS
- FACTOR ANALYSIS OF PILOT DATA
- ONGOING ITEM ANALYSIS WITH SUBSEQUENT ADMINISTRATIONS
- BIAS REVIEW

RELIABILITY

- CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS RUN ON PILOT DATA SHOWED HIGH INTERNAL CONSISTENCY WITHIN ALL ASSESSMENTS
- INTERRATER RELIABILITY STUDIES ON 3RD & 4TH GRADE LITERACY HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED
- ITEM ANALYSIS REVIEW FOR CONSISTENCY OF SCORING

DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS OF THE CSAPA

Development of the Colorado Alternate



CSAPA ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

DEVELOPED BY THE CSAPA ADVISORY COUNCIL

THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES ARE INTENDED TO ASSIST IEP TEAMS WHEN DETERMINING APPROPRIATENESS OF THE CSAPA STUDENTS WITH THE MOST UNIQUE LEARNING NEEDS.

1. STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON THE GENERAL CSAP.

IEP TEAMS SHOULD REVIEW OVERALL SCALED SCORES, AS WELL AS PERFORMANCE LEVELS ON INDIVIDUAL CONCEPTS, TO DETERMINE HOW A STUDENT IS PROGRESSING ON THE GENERAL ASSESSMENT. WHEN STUDENTS RECEIVE THE **LOWEST** SCALED SCORE IN THE CONTENT AREA CSAP, IEP TEAMS SHOULD BE CAREFULLY REVIEW ALL OTHER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR APPROPRIATENESS FOR THE CSAPA .

2. STUDENT CURRICULUM

IN MAKING ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION FOR THE CSAPA, IEP TEAMS SHOULD CONSIDER THOSE STUDENTS WHO WORKING ON EXPANDED BENCHMARKS OF THE COLORADO STATE STANDARDS THAT ARE VERY DIFFERENT THAN WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED IN THE GENERAL CSAP. WHERE STUDENTS ARE WORKING ON FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS TOWARD THE BENCHMARKS, IEP TEAMS SHOULD REVIEW THE INDICATORS BEING ASSESSED ON THE CSAPA FOR APPROPRIATENESS AND ALIGNMENT WITH THE STUDENT'S CURRENT CURRICULUM.

3. ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

AN ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST HAS BEEN DEVELOPED FOR EACH GRADE AND CONTENT AREA THAT THE CSAPA IS BEING ADMINISTERED. THE CHECKLIST IS DESIGNED TO HELP TEAMS DETERMINE WHEN STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE SKILLS THAT ARE BETTER ASSESSED ON THE GENERAL CSAP, SINCE THESE SKILLS INCLUDE THE TOP END OF THE CSAPA ASSESSMENT. IF STUDENTS ARE CAPABLE OF PERFORMING MOST OF THE INDICATORS INDEPENDENT OF TEACHER SUPPORT, THEN THE CSAP WILL BE THE MOST APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT.

4. RESPONSE ACCESS TO THE CSAP ADMINISTRATION

SOME STUDENTS MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY PHYSICALLY ACCESSING THE ADMINISTRATION MATERIALS FOR THE GENERAL CSAP OR RESPONDING IN A WAY THAT A SCRIBE CAN DETERMINE A STUDENT'S ANSWER TO A QUESTION. STUDENTS WITH INTENSE MOTORIC AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS, SUCH AS THOSE WHO REQUIRE PICTORAL REPRESENTATIONS OR UNIQUE TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT TO COMMUNICATE AND HAVE DIFFICULTY RESPONDING TO MULTIPLE CHOICE OPTIONS OR CONSTRUCTING A RESPONSE MAY REQUIRE AN ASSESSMENT OTHER THAN A PAPER AND PENCIL TEST TO DEMONSTRATE SKILLS.

5. GRADE-LEVEL ASSESSMENT

FOR MOST STUDENTS, GRADE LEVEL IS DETERMINED BY THE AGE OF THE STUDENT. HOWEVER, SOME STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES MAY NOT BE ASSIGNED TO A GRADE LEVEL OR MAY BE ASSIGNED TO A DIFFERENT GRADE LEVEL THAN AGE-APPROPRIATE PEERS AS DETERMINED BY HIS/HER IEP TEAM. SINCE ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION WILL ALSO INCLUDE GRADE-LEVEL IDENTIFICATION, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR TEAMS TO CONSIDER THAT RESEARCHED

SCAFFOLDING FOR INSTRUCTION & ASSESSMENT

BY GINA QUINTANA, SR CONSULTANT, CDE

Scaffolding is just one component of Systematic Instruction. Educators define scaffolding as a technique for providing support to allow a child to think for him or herself. The scaffolding structure assists students as they work on a performance task. It requires the teacher to rely on both observational skills, as well as, his/her decision-making skills.

The goal of the teacher, using scaffolding as a teaching or assessment strategy, is for the students to become an independent, self-regulating learner and problem solver. The degree of scaffolding changes with the abilities of the learner, the goals of instruction or assessment and the complexities of the task. In order to do this, it is important that educators provide scaffolding in a way that a student understands and is accustomed to. Educators need to be aware of the students:

- ✓ Expressive Communication forms
- ✓ Receptive Communication forms
- ✓ Physical Response
- ✓ Motor Abilities
- ✓ Vision and Hearing



Just like the scaffolding around a building, instructional and assessment scaffolding are temporary.

There are 7 essential components of effective scaffolding:

1. Clear directions are provided.
2. A purpose is defined.
3. A model is provided.
4. Students take an active role in their learning.
5. A high level of affective support and nurturance is offered.
6. Student's comments and questions drive the process.
7. Appropriate wait time is allowed for student responses.

“Teaching is leading development instead of responding to it.”

Vygotsky

The CSAPA measure how independent a student can perform an indicator within an activity based on the Level of Independence Performance Rubric. The teacher scores the performance across 5 levels to demonstrate how much support a student needs to successfully respond to an indicator.

Level 5: The student performs the indicator or task *without* assistance.

Level 4: The student performs the indicator or task *with repetition of cues or refocusing of attention*.

Level 3: The student performs the indicator or task with *general prompts*.

Level 2: The student performs the indicator or task with *specific prompts*.

Level 1: The student is unable to perform the indicator or task with *any level of support*.

What Teachers Say about the CSAPA

Reflections on the CSAPA

BY PATSY WAGNER, COLUMBIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Educators have seen many changes as a result of “educational reform.” In fact, it seems as if our educational system is in a constant state of “reform.” Although this seems awkward and downright uncomfortable, at times, maybe this is not as bad as it appears on the surface.

The introduction of state standards and the notion of assessment on those standards has certainly been one of those times when educational reform has been awkward and downright uncomfortable.

I remember when the first CSAP rolled out. It was painful! Teachers were saying things like: “You can’t expect these kids to do this! It is unrealistic. This test was designed by people who have not been in a classroom for a long time!” Now that CSAP has been administered for several years, teacher conversations have changed. The conversations are centered around changing strategies to improve student performance rather than complaining

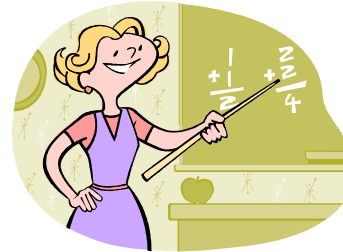
“I’ve always known that my students could learn, but it was hard for me to prove that to some people, especially general educators. Taking the CSAPA actually gave my students a chance to show everyone how much they really know.”

Mary West, Montrose High

about it being an “impossible” test.

The downright pain surfaced when the notion of assessment for **all** truly meant **all**. Teacher

conversations sounded like this:



“Surely you can’t be talking about standardized assessment for this student. He can’t walk or talk, much less read!”

Teachers seemed somewhat relieved when the notion of an alternate assessment was introduced. They were relieved thinking they did not have to hold their students, who have significant support needs, to the same standards. Then the alternate became a reality. They were shocked that CSAPA was aligned to the same standards as CSAP. I heard the exact same conversations from teachers, who administered CSAPA for the first time “You can’t expect these kids to do this! It is unrealistic. People who have not been in a classroom for a long time designed this test. You can’t possibly be talking about this kid!”

CSAP-A is aligned to standards. Like CSAP, it is designed to increase the bar of learning for the kids it tests. It is uncomfortable. It is hard. Yet, it is the most exciting test I have ever administered! Through CSAPA, I truly have discovered the fact that the students I serve know a whole lot more than I thought they knew! In addition, it is so aligned with what is happening in regular education, that it allows me to develop goals and objectives for students who have the most significant disabilities.

As we look at the data of CSAP, we are seeing significant improvements toward proficiency of standards. The data for CSAPA is just

CSAPA: A Strategy For Assessment

BY MARY WEST, MONTROSE HIGH SCHOOL

When asked to write an article for the CDE newsletter I felt the same way I felt when I first heard about testing students with significant disabilities. There was a feeling of being overwhelmed and having to add one more thing to the "to do list"! However, after a few deep breaths and slowing down I was able to put the task into perspective (just like I was with the CSAPA the first year during the pilot.)

I have always known that the students I work with are able to learn, but it was hard for me to prove that to some people, especially general educators. Taking the CSAPA actually gave my students a chance to show everyone how much they really know. This was especially true for my students that are slow to respond. So often in the classroom someone else would answer for them or they would just mimic the answers others were giving. In a one-on-one situation, with unlimited time I was able to let them answer on their own. By using the provided pictures it has helped me to become better at scaffolding in order not to "over prompt" students.

The CSAPA confirmed for me that what was being taught in my classroom was appropriate and made links to the curriculum and to the standards-based IEP. Literacy is a life-long skill and I want the students I work with to learn to enjoy reading or listening to books. However, it is important for them to be able to listen and answer questions. In reality this ties directly to being able to listen to directions and follow them. What better way to help high school students make the transition to listening and following directions at a job. The personal profile section in the 10th grade test presented a challenge to me initially. So often it is difficult for students to tell me their likes and dislikes and to turn these into their strengths. I developed a fun activity for students to do at home with their parents to help overcome this obstacle. I bought each student a disposable camera and sent it home with a note explaining that over the next week (including a week-end) they should take pictures of things that are important and special to them. Before they left school we practiced picture-taking and made sure they knew how to make the flash work and how to wind the camera. Students were to take the pictures with some help from parents (and you could certainly tell which pictures they took

on their own!).

For my students that are physically unable to operate a camera I enlisted the help of siblings or parents. Once the camera came back we took a "field trip" to Wal-mart and they were able to practice several life skills, including finding the photo department, filling out the information on the film envelope and paying for the developed film. We even learned how to make duplicate pictures on the machine so we could have pictures for the test and for their own book later.

The test section that had students watch the video of the interview, helped me tune into the fact that although my students are watching lots of TV (at home and also the school news and Channel 1 here in our room) they really were not listening or learning from that activity. Our entire school watches Channel 1 news on a daily basis. I developed a lesson to help my students listen and really watch the Channel 1 news. Students must tell me 3 specific things that were talked about during the news program or they can cut correlating pictures from the newspaper or Newsweek. My thought was "If we are going to spend the time doing this, then lets really learn something from it. I really hope to see my students score differently on that section of the test this year!

Lastly, I feel the CSAPA has given my students the same privileges as other students. They are being allowed the opportunity to show what they have learned. Parents of my students have expressed to me how glad they are that their children are finally allowed to have this experience and to actually get back valid results. This also provides a common bond with their peers in general education by giving them a topic to discuss over lunch, ie. "you won't believe the test I had to take today". It is interesting to me that while many of the students in general education complain about all the testing most of my students look forward to it. They enjoy the uninterrupted time spent with me. I have already had students that were tested last year ask me, "Do we get to go take that test again this year?" Even though the answer is "no", I am working on finding time to go and spend some individual time with each student away from the hustle and bustle of the classroom. Then I will have time to sit down and really listen to each student and let them share with me what they really have learned. I feel that is the primary purpose of testing and it is a goal that CSAP-A is helping my students achieve.

Enhanced Assessment Grant Update: Colorado Leads the Alternate Assessment Collaborative In



Validity and reliability of state-wide assessments are essential under the increased accountability requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Most states have substantial evidence of the validity and reliability of their general state-wide assessments. To date, however, little work has been published defining how to establish technical adequacy of alternate assessments intended for students with significant disabilities who are working on academic content standards at foundational levels. As states quickly ramp up development of alternate assessments to meet the requirements of NCLB, a clear need to ensure technical adequacy has emerged. Anticipating needs such as this, NCLB legislation offered Enhanced Assessment Grants “to enhance the quality of assessment instruments and systems used by States for measuring the achievement of all students.” (USDOE) In March 2003, the Colorado Department of Education was awarded a \$1.7 million Enhanced Assessment Grant (EAG) to lead the Alternate Assessment Collaborative in an investigation of two different models of alternate assessment, the Performance Task (similar to the Colorado Student Assessment Program Alternate) and the

Instructionally Embedded (a highly structured approach to portfolio assessment). During the twenty month life of the project, alternate assessments in elementary science, middle school English language arts, and high school mathematics will be developed and piloted. The results will then be examined for evidence of validity, reliability, and compatibility of the two “multiple measures.”

The Alternate Assessment Collaborative includes eight states, four non-profit organizations, and an independent contractor: Colorado, Iowa, Missouri, New Hampshire, Oregon, South Carolina, West Virginia, Wyoming, the Center for Applied Special Technologies (CAST), Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessments (ILSSA), Measured Progress, the Research and Development Center for the Advancement of Student Learning at Colorado State University, and Dr. Patricia Almond. The role of each Collaborative member is included in Figure 1.

Grant Products.

Several products will be developed as components of the Enhanced Assessment Grant. All products will be owned by the Collaborative states and the United States Department of Education (USDOE), who will determine when and how the materials are disseminated.

A timeline for the grant project is included in Figure 2. To date, the Consensus Frameworks and the Expanded

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Benchmarks are completed and will be made widely available when they are submitted to the USDOE in Spring 2004. The assessments are currently under

⇒ *Consensus Frameworks*

- A crosswalk of all member state general education standards in mathematics, science, and English language arts
- Grade level expectations that reflect all member state standards in mathematics, science, and English language arts

⇒ *Expanded Benchmarks*

- Foundational concepts and skills for each of the consensus frameworks statements in mathematics, science, and English language arts
- The benchmarks become the assessment frameworks for both types of assessment
- *Instructionally Embedded Assessments*
- Developed in High School Math, Middle School English language arts, and Elementary School Science
- Focus is on concepts from the Expanded Benchmarks prioritized by the Project Leadership Team

⇒ *Performance Task Assessments*

- Developed in High School Math, Middle School English language arts, and Elementary School Science
- Focus is on concepts from the Expanded Benchmarks prioritized by the Project Leadership Team

⇒ *Instructionally Embedded Assessment*

⇒ *Development Process*

⇒ *Performance Task Assessment Development Process*

⇒ *Training materials for administration of assessments*

⇒ *Assessment administration materials*

⇒ *Research reports regarding reliability, validity, and nature of information from each assessment type*

development and will be ready for piloting in Fall 2004. Brief descriptions of the different assessment models are included in this newsletter on p. 9-10.

The Pilot.

During the pilot, each of the assessment types in a given content area and grade level will be administered on the same students. Because of the collaborative nature of the pilot, only ten students per state per content area will need to take the pilot assessments for the study to yield useful information. Selected students should qualify for the CSAPA. Further eligibility criteria will be available in Spring 2004. During the study, teachers will gather student information, administer and rate student performance on the assessments, and give feedback through surveys, interviews, or via conference calls. Possible incentives for Colorado teachers are currently under review.

Each teacher and student pair will spend approximately three (3) hours of classroom time on the Performance Task assessment. The teacher will also teach a unit based on state content standards and gather data about the student's performance. This Instructionally Embedded Assessment (IEA) will take approximately one (1) class period each day for 10 days. In addition, the teacher may spend up to five (5) hours of "prep" time to assemble assessment results, complete surveys, and compile student information for submission.

The participating teachers will fit the schedule and duration of these activities to the individual student's needs. No personally identifiable student information will be reported as part of this study. Student confidentiality will be maintained. State members of the project leadership team have been asked to act as a contact within the state and to correspond with the project and participants periodically through e-mail, surface mail, and telephone.

Every project participant will receive an executive summary of the study results, including a description of similarities and differences in each of

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the assessment approaches. Collaborating states will conduct a review of findings and will assist in interpreting results and drawing conclusions. All analyses will incorporate the states' perspectives in the discussion and comments sections. Publicly reported findings will not identify individual students, schools, school districts, or states without explicit advance permission of an authorized official.

If you are interested in more information, or would like to participate in the pilot, please contact Michelle Derbenwick, EAG Project Director, at derbenwick_m@cde.state.co.us or (303) 866-6732.

Following are brief descriptions of each of the assessment models studied by the Alternate Assessment Collaborative Enhanced Assessment Grant Project.

The Performance Task Assessment.

Three of the Collaborative states currently use a form of Performance Task alternate assessments.

A Performance Task alternate assessment is a point-in-time view of what a student knows and can do. Administering a snapshot like this on several occasions over time can inform decisions regarding curriculum and instruction and conclusions about student growth. Typically, the performance task assessment is administered in a one-on-one situation to students in a variety of educational settings.

During administration, students are observed as they participate in academic content area-related activities. Each activity combines a number of performance indicators that have been validated as emerging related content standards. Since each student taking the assessment requires individualized supports to aid their learning, test administrators have the flexibility to adapt materials and presentation when needed.

Performance Task alternate assessments may be scored on several dimensions. In the example given on the following page, the student is scored based on the prompt level the student needed to

answer the question or perform the task correctly. Across the collaborative states, dimensions that are assessed with performance tasks include: student demonstration of correct responses, prompt fading, and opportunities for students within age appropriate standards-based curriculum.

Test administrators, often the students' teachers, are trained to administer and score student responses on the performance task assessment consistently, including training on providing prompts to the student in a systematic and uniform manner.

To date, there are a few studies on the reliability and validity of Performance Task Assessments as they are seen in Collaborative states. To investigate validity of the assessments, alignment of assessments to expanded benchmarks and standards is under review by panels of content experts and experienced field educators, both at state and national levels. In addition, Colorado regularly performs factor analysis on pilot data (among other things, this indicates whether the items are likely to measure the same intended construct). Colorado also conducts item analysis on all administrations to determine if the items are functioning properly in the assessment (for example, if students who score very high on the assessment tend to get a specific item incorrect, and students who score very low on the assessment tend to get the same item correct, there is an indication that the item is functioning poorly and does not measure what it was intended to measure).

Reliability studies on Performance Task alternate assessments seem to be confined to states investigating their own assessments. This makes sense, given that reliability is a property of a test given to a particular group of individuals and some reliability measures are typically investigated after every large-scale assessment administration. To address reliability of the CSAPA, Colorado has contracted studies on two grade levels of the CSAPA to investigate administration fidelity, inter-rater reliability, and the internal consistency of the

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assessments. While these studies need to be followed up with larger numbers of students, preliminary reliability information seems to be promising for Performance Task alternate assessments.

The Instructionally Embedded Assessment.

Seven of the Collaborative states currently use some form of portfolio alternate assessment (note that two states use a combination of performance task and portfolio assessments). The IEA is essentially a highly structured process for collecting portfolio materials within a standards-based unit of study. The IEA is a new model for alternate assessment, never developed prior to this grant. For this reason, prior information regarding technical adequacy of the IEA is not available, and research on portfolios will guide some of the research questions for the IEA.

Instructionally Embedded Assessment is a process in which multiple assessments are used to collect evidence of student performance throughout instruction on a pre-specified unit of study which relates to the content standards. The assessment process and products are directly linked to daily classroom instruction.

This highly structured instructional/ assessment approach is designed to reduce the variables that occur in alternate assessment portfolios by specifying the content and assessment methodology. In addition, the IEA is designed to provide special education teachers and students with high quality examples of standards-based lessons based on the Universal Design theoretical model. The units of study are designed so they can be taught across the continuum of service delivery models and from single student to whole class formats. Each unit should take approximately ten one-hour lessons to complete and mirrors the typical instruction delivery seen in general education classes.

There are four assessment components of IEA: a) constructed responses, b) products,

c) performances, and d) processes (McTighe & Ferrar, 1997 in Glatthorn, 1997).

The four assessment components are:

- 1) Constructed Responses: short answers, diagrams, concept maps, or other visual response
- 2) Products: log or journal, poem, science exhibit, model, spreadsheet, audio, slide show
- 3) Performances: oral report, science demonstration, Power-point presentation. For assessment purposes, these will be videotaped.
- 4) Processes: instructional data collected by the teacher or other observer, learning log, record of thinking processes, anecdotal data.

These four types of data are necessary to provide internal validity of the student's responses.

Each of the assessment types will be customized for individual students by the teacher using low and hi-tech assistive technology. In addition, instructional data will be collected as the teachers make systematic decision-making processes.

To date, most reliability data gathered on portfolios is inter-rater reliability, or how closely the scorers score the information submitted in portfolios. The grant project will also investigate administration fidelity (how closely the teachers follow the administration protocol for instruction and assessment) and internal consistency of data collected as part of the IEA.



Understanding the CSAP Unsatisfactory Category

JANET FILBIN, SR CONSULTANT

There are numerous merits to capturing the performance of students with IEPs on the CSAP. Districts, schools and educational teams now have the ability to track and analyze the longitudinal achievement data for a group of learners that historically have had minimal to no involvement in large scale assessment efforts.

To date, there has been little information about the collective academic performance of students receiving special education services. The progress of learners with disabilities has been primarily monitored through attainment of individual goals and objectives on the IEP. However, IDEA and NCLB have paved the way for an inclusive accountability system at the national, state and district level that will eventually provide a complete picture of student performance.

Fortunately, Colorado was forward thinking in this regard and has included students with IEPs in the CSAP since 1994, when the 4th grade reading and writing test was first administered. The data collected and reported since that time reveal that learners with IEPs have made measured, steady increases across all content areas assessed. In fact, of the subpopulations discussed in annual state CSAP press releases, students with IEPs and students identified for Title I services are the most frequently cited as making significant gains.

This is no small feat, considering that participation rates have increased each year and now range from 90% at the high school level to 98% at the elementary level.

Although great strides have been made, students with IEPs continue to be the lowest performing subgroup. While Colorado includes the partially proficient category for the purposes of Adequate Yearly Progress calculations, there are still a significant number of students who score in the unsatisfactory category. The task of bringing all students' scores to up to the AYP target or at least to decrease the number of students scoring unsatisfactory seems daunting. That said, it is important for educators and family members to understand that, even though a number of students with IEPs receive a proficiency rating of unsatisfactory, the majority score in the upper third of the category (see Table 1). This means that these students are demonstrating most of the skills related to the partially proficient category. In fact, even those scoring within the lowest third on the CSAP must be able to do some to most of the skills in the unsatisfactory performance descriptors for that grade and content area to receive a score. With accountability weighing heavily upon schools and districts, it will be essential for educators and families to understand and interpret CSAP scores and competencies associated with those categories to identify next steps for students to gain skills in reading, writing and math.

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT WITH IEPs IN THE LOWEST, MIDDLE, AND HIGHEST SCALE SCORE RANGE OF 2003 CSAP READING UNSATISFACTORY

Grade	Lowest Scale Range	Number/% of students	Middle Scale Range	Number/% of students	Highest Scale Range	Number/% of students
3	150-255	76=4%	256-361	173=10%	362-465	1559=86%
4	180-292	95=4%	293-405	244=9%	406-516	2335=88%
7	300-388	237=7%	389-477	568=18%	478-566	2303=74%
10	370-448	260=14%	449-527	295=16%	528-606	1273=70%

Table 1 illustrates the range of **scale scores** associated with the bottom, middle and upper third of the unsatisfactory category for the 3rd, 4th, 7th and 10th grade CSAP reading assessments. Scale scores are raw scores that have been statistically converted to allow for comparability. The individual scale scores a student receives is based on the number and difficulty of items he/she scored correctly. Scale scores give educators and family members an idea about how solid a student is in performing the proficiencies required for that category. The information can also help teams to determine the skills the student may currently be demonstrating and to identify skills within the next category the student will need to work toward. For example, if a student receives a scale score of 565 on the 7th grade reading CSAP, the student will score in the unsatisfactory category. The range of scale scores for the unsatisfactory category in 7th grade reading is 300 to 566 so this student is actually scoring in the top third of the category. That means that the learner is performing most skills related to the partially proficient category but at a very basic level. When designing this student's educational plan, the IEP team should refer to the Grade Level Proficiencies and Performance Level Descriptors for the next steps in the sequence of skills that will support this student toward proficiency. Performance Level Descriptors for each grade and content level are located on the CDE website (reference resource

When interpreting scores it will also be important for educators and families to keep in mind that the test results are a descriptive, point in time performance by the student. Since the CSAP is a single measure, the score may not represent the student's true abilities.

page).

Scale scores can also serve other useful functions. Since the range of scores within each content area has been equated across grade levels, educational teams can track gross movement in scale scores from year to year. To do so, teams will need to familiarize themselves with the scale score ranges since these are progressive for subsequent grade levels and different for each content area. Scale scores can be found on the CDE website (reference resource page).



A very simple way for teams to determine if a student is making progress from year to year is to break the category down into thirds (as illustrated in Table 1) for the previous and current grade levels. If the student's scale scores for the current year are in the same or higher category and the same or higher third of that category than the previous year, then the student has made progress. For example, if a student scored 355 on the 3rd grade reading assessment and 400 on the 4th grade, then that student has made progress.

When interpreting scores it will also be important for educators and families to keep in mind that the test results are descriptive, a point in time performance by the student. Since the CSAP is a single measure, the score may not represent the student's true abilities. For any given test, there will always be some measurement error. Therefore, scores are reported reflecting a confidence interval as an estimation of where the student's true score is likely to fall. That means that although a student may have received a score that was proficient, the 95% confidence interval may indicate that the student could have scored partially proficient if given the test the next day. Conversely, a student who scored an unsatisfactory may be in the confidence interval for partially proficient.

Table 2 and 3 illustrate the percentage of students with IEPs who scored in the unsatisfactory category but who were in the 95% confidence interval for partially proficient and those who scored partially proficient with scores in the 95% confidence interval for proficient. These data are encouraging, given that with directed instruction in specific skill areas, these students could be scoring in categories that are considered “proficient” for the purposes of AYP calculations. Teams that use the above information to help guide the instructional programming for students may find that the gains we have seen for students on IEPs can be even greater.

Table 2: Percentage of Scores of Students with IEPs in the Confidence Interval for Partially Proficient and Proficient on the 2003 Reading CSAP

Grade	Reading	Grade	Math
3rd	42	5th	38
4th	29	8th	21
7th	26	10th	17
10th	34		

Table 3: Percentage of Scores of Students with IEPs in the Confidence Interval for Partially Proficient and Proficient on the 2003 Math CSAP

Grade	Reading	Grade	Math
3rd	61	5th	36
4th	47	8th	34
7th	43	10th	22
10th	32		

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY TEAM FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Colorado Department of Education Assessment and Accountability team for students with disabilities operates out of the Exceptional Student Services Unit. This team is responsible for assuring that curriculum, instruction and assessment coordinates with current legislation and state academic content standards for students with disabilities. Many of the articles in this edition were written or developed by this team or the CSAP-A Advisory Committee.

Terri Rogers Connolly, Supervisor/Lead
Janet Filbin, Sr. Consultant-Assessment & Accountability
Tanni Anthony, Sr. Consultant-Deaf Blindness
Gina Quintana, Sr. Consultant-Autism & Deaf Blindness
Jennifer Jackson, Sr. Consultant-Secondary Services

ABC's of Adequate Yearly Progress & Students with IEPs

by Janet Filbin, Sr. consultant

Since the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation has taken root, an increased energy has been directed toward the learning of students with disabilities in Colorado and across the nation. Although the 1997 reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) requires that all learners with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) be assessed through the general state assessment with or without accommodations, or through an alternate measurement, there are no accountability consequences tied to the results. NCLB, like IDEA, directs that all students be assessed; however, there are a number of additional stipulations that schools, districts and states must meet with regards to minimized subgroups defined under this law (ethnicity, language, IEP and socioeconomic). This high stakes legislation mandates that:

1. All students with IEPs, except those taking the alternate assessment, must be measured against the same grade level content standards in reading, math and science as their typical peers. The alternate assessment must address the same content standards but at a different performance levels.
2. At least 95% of students with IEPs within the school and district must participate in the CSAP or CSAPA in grades 3 through 10 for reading and math (grades 3 and 4 math will be available by 2005). This includes every student in the school and in those grades at the time of the assessment window. Schools and/or districts that do not meet the 95% participation criteria in one or both content assessments for two consecutive years will be identified for year 1 improvement.
3. Schools and/or districts must show adequate yearly progress (AYP) for all students. Under Colorado's definition of AYP, schools and/or districts with 30 or more students with IEPs that have been in the school or district during the past year must demonstrate that students are achieving the state target of proficient for

both reading and math to meet AYP. For the purposes of AYP calculations, proficient includes the categories of partially proficient, proficient and advanced.

4. If schools and/or districts fail to show that students with IEPs are meeting the target, the school or district can apply the "safe harbor" provision of NCLB. This means that the school and/or district will need to show that the number of students receiving scores in the unsatisfactory category have decreased by 10% from the previous year. That is, if a school with 45 students on IEPs has 10 students that scored unsatisfactory in 2002 and does not meet the target in 2003, the school must verify that 9 or less students scored in the unsatisfactory category in 2003.

At least 1% of the students on IEPs within the school and/or district must score in the advanced category at the elementary and middle school level in reading and math. High schools must show increased graduation rates for students on IEPs.

Schools that fail to make AYP for 2 consecutive years and are in year 1 improvement are required to notify parents and to provide information about other schools within the district that are not in improvement. For students with IEPs, however, the team may determine that the current school continues to be the best placement. If the school fails to make AYP a second year, the school must provide supplemental services that are specifically designed to increase student achievement on CSAP. These services must be in addition to regular daily instruction, such as after school tutoring programs. Parents may choose these services from a list of approved providers. For students with disabilities who receive supplemental services, the services must be consistent with the student's IEP.

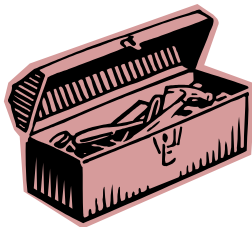
The spirit of NCLB is to ensure that every child is held to a high standard of learning. To achieve this end, educational teams need to provide meaningful opportunities for students to engage in a rich, standards-based curriculum and accommodations that maximize their ability to demonstrate what they know and can do. Of utmost importance, however, is that students receive the responsive, direct instruction that is structured to aid them in skill development. For

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students that are fairly removed from grade level expectations, there are a set of **expanded benchmarks** available through CDE (2003) that address the core concepts within each standard and a sequence of skills for students demonstrating emerging skills in a given content area up to grade level expectations. Teams should develop and implement formative classroom assessments based upon the expanded benchmarks and off grade level expectations to capture the best picture a student's current functioning. This type of approach to classroom assessment offers teams the next steps in instruction and informs the development of the most appropriate goals and objectives for a student's IEP. In addition, where it is difficult to determine a student's level of skill development based upon his/her CSAP scale score, educational teams can track the progress of students through a richer, more rigorous method.

For more information on meeting **Adequate Yearly Progress**, please visit the CDE website at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/ayp/index.asp>.



Using CSAP to Focus Instruction

by Janet Filbin, Sr. consultant

A recent study conducted by the CDE ESSU found that, in addition to the implementation of researched reading practices, schools that use CSAP data to create formative assessments resulted in greater gains for students on IEPs on the reading assessments (CDE, 2003). There are a variety of useful tools available on the CDE website that can aid in the development of formative assessments by providing the curricular scope and sequence associated with the Colorado content standards, the CSAP, and the CSAPA. Unfortunately, informal polls of Colorado special educators indicate that there are many teachers who have not taken advantage of these resources that can help focus the instructional programming for

individual students. Resource links to each of the tools listed in this article can be found on the Resource Page.

Colorado State Content Standards are general statements of what students should know by the time they exit the public education system.

Benchmarks of the standards are the concepts students should be taught within a grade span.

Expanded Benchmarks are core concepts within each standard and a sequence of skills for students demonstrating emerging skills in a given content area up to grade level expectations.

Grade Level Expectations are the further refinement of the benchmarks into objectives for each grade level.

CSAP Assessment Frameworks are the knowledge and skills that will be assessed by the CSAP at each grade level and in reading, writing, math and science.

CSAPA Assessment Frameworks are the knowledge and skills that will be assessed by the CSAPA at each grade level in reading, writing, math, and science.

CSAP Item Maps indicate the order of difficulty of the items on the test; identify whether the item was multiple choice or constructed response; show the score associated with that item; indicate the standard and subconcept related to each item; and, indicate the location on the scale.

Performance Level Descriptors are detailed descriptions of the types of knowledge and skills that must be demonstrated by students classified in each level on the CSAP assessments.

Constructed Response Rubrics illustrate the expected level of skill demonstration associated with scoring of the constructed responses in writing and math

TIPS (Tools for Improving the Performance of Students) provide information and suggestions about the skills that students will need to better access the CSAP, including vocabulary, writing and editing strategies.

RESOURCES*



Benchmarks for standards

http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_stnd.htm

Expanded Benchmarks for standards

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/StuDis-Sub2.htm>

S
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Grade Level Expectations

http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_stnd.htm

CSAP Assessment Frameworks

www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/csap/frameworks/index.htm

CSAPA Assessment Frameworks

www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/StuDis-Sub2.htm

CSAP Item Maps

www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/csap/asitemmap_index.htm

Performance Level Descriptors

www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/csap/PLD/index.htm

Constructed Response Rubrics

www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/csap/rubrics/as_wri_rubrics.htm

www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/csap/rubrics/as_math_rubrics.htm

TIPS (Tools for Improving the Performance of Students)

www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/CSAP_Tips.pdf

Scaled Scores

www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/csap/as_contscales.htm

CALENDAR 2004*

*THIS INFORMATION IS PROVIDED AS A SERVICE. WE BELIEVE IT TO BE ACCURATE, BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONFIRM WITH THE CONTACT LISTED. TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND TO SUPPLY IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES, PLEASE CONTACT US AT THE NUMBER BELOW.

January 2004

8-28 CSAPA Training

February 2004

5-6 Legal Conference & Director's Meeting
For more information, contact Patty Lucio at 303-866-6645 or Faye Gibson at 303-866-6887.

19 **Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting** at Red Rocks Community College from 8:30—4:30. For more information, contact Katherine Keck at (303) 866-6943.

22 **Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting** at Red Rocks Community College from 8:30—4:30. For more information, contact Katherine Keck at (303) 866-6943.

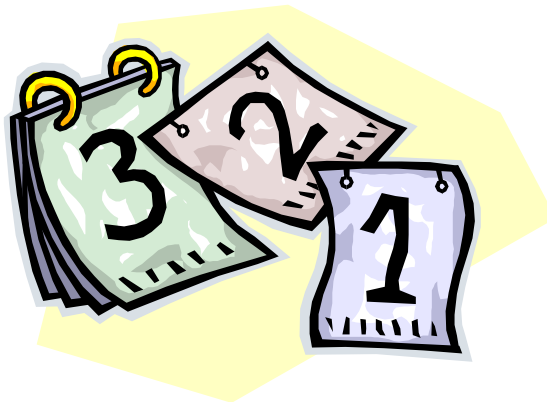
April 2004

1-3 **Parents Encouraging Parents Conference.** A conference for parents of children with disabilities and the professionals who support those families. For more information contact Renee Walbert at (303) 866-6846.

State Advisory Committee for Gifted and Talented Student Education, Denver, CO. For more information contact Kathy Lenz, Chairperson at tklenz@lamar.colostate.edu

May 2004

6-8 **State Conference on Visual Impairment**, Aurora, CO. For more information, contact Tanni Anthony at (303) 866-6681.



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