



COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

201 East Colfax Avenue • Denver, Colorado 80203-1799
303.866.6600 • www.cde.state.co.us

Robert K. Hammond
Commissioner of Education

Diana Sirko, Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner

Keith Owen, Ph.D.
Associate Commissioner

February 15, 2012

The Honorable John Hickenlooper, Jr.
Governor of Colorado

Representative Tom Massey
Chairman of the House Education Committee

Senator Robert Bacon
Chairman of the Senate Education Committee

Senator Brandon Shaffer
Senate President

Representative Frank McNulty
Speaker of the House

Senator Bill Cadman
Senate Minority Leader

Dear Sirs:

Senate Bill 08-212 calls for the legislature to receive periodic written updates documenting the progress on this project. The following constitutes the fourth such update and summarizes the state's steps taken in 2011 to continue the implementation of the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K). This report complements the update report given at the joint House and Senate education committee on February 1, 2012 by the Colorado Department of Education.

I am pleased to report that the Colorado Department of Education is on track for the goals specified in the bill. The Colorado Department of Higher Education, who contributed to this effort, continues to be a close partner working to create a seamless system of public education standards and expectations.

We look forward to the next steps outlined in the CAP4K legislation which calls for the ongoing implementation of the new Colorado Academic Standards in local districts and the next generation of assessments that are more useful and relevant to students and educators. Additionally, with higher education partners we foresee review and revision of the state's higher education admission, remedial education policies, and the alignment of our educator preparation programs.

Most sincerely,

Robert K. Hammond
Commissioner of Education

SB08 212 Legislative Update report
February 15, 2012
Colorado Department of Education and Department of Higher Education
SB08-212 Goals and Accomplishments

CAP4K: Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids

Overview:

In 2008, Colorado enacted Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), which legislated the next-generation of standards and assessments to ensure that Colorado students exit high school prepared for postsecondary and workforce success. CAP4K outlined higher academic standards and the development of 21st century skills for pre-school through after high school study in Colorado. Additionally, CAP4K put a focus on critical points of transition with statewide standards and assessments for *school readiness* and *postsecondary and workforce readiness*.

Adoption of school readiness description:

Throughout 2008, a series of conversations among and between the pre-school through third grade (P-3) community, the Lieutenant Governor's office, CDE's Early Childhood Initiatives and national model experts occurred. Colorado found its values about early school readiness grounded in the idea of dual responsibility between child/family and school/community services.

After analysis of the draft CAP4K expectations and policy and practitioner discussions, a statewide conversation with the public was conducted in eleven Colorado cities between September 15 -30, 2008. Public comment was held before the Colorado State Board of Education on November 12, 2008 and the state board adopted the description in December, 2008.

School readiness describes both the preparedness of a child to engage in and benefit from learning experiences; and, the ability of a school to meet the needs of children who are of age in a publically funded pre-school or kindergarten. School readiness is enhanced when schools work collaboratively with families and community service providers to ensure that every child is ready for higher levels of learning in academic content.

Links to the comprehensive schedule of public conversations and adoption can be accessed at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/UAS/UpdatesandPress.html>

Adoption of postsecondary and workforce readiness description:

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and the Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) worked together to develop a "postsecondary and workforce readiness" (PWR) description that includes the knowledge, skills and behaviors essential for high school graduates to be prepared to enter college and the workforce and to compete in the global economy. To accomplish this, the two departments jointly convened 13 regional meetings around the state between November 2008 and June 2009. The purpose of these meetings was to engage local communities in conversations about the skills and competencies students need to succeed after high school. To this end, CDE engaged more than 1,000 P-12, higher education, community college, business, parents, board members and other local stakeholders. Feedback captured at each regional meeting can be accessed at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdegen/SB212.htm>.

A report of survey findings can be accessed at:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdedocs/ASMTRev/LegislativeReport_2011_finalWattachments.pdf.

Members of the public were invited to provide comment at the State Board meeting on June 10, 2009 (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/download/PDF/20090605postsecondaryreadiness.pdf>). The final PWR definition was jointly adopted by the State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education at a meeting on June 30, 2009.

After an extensive state-wide engagement and feedback process, the State Board and Colorado Commission on Higher Education jointly adopted the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Description. This definition continues to serve as the basis for the state's alignment efforts including: creating the new academic standards, assessments, and more recently, the informing a set of criteria for a high school diploma endorsement indicating a student has demonstrated the skills and knowledge required to be ready for college or a career upon exiting high school (see below for more information).

Next steps: the state is currently grappling with communication and alignment needs associated with the national policy context in which most other states and organizations use the phrase "college and career readiness (CCR)" rather than "postsecondary and workforce readiness". In addition, the state departments are responding to public feedback about having both the skills outlined in the PWR description, and the 21st century skills that are embedded in the new academic standards.

Teacher Tour:

In collaboration with the Colorado Education Association (CEA), CDE conducted a 13-stop tour across the state between January and March 2009 to identify teacher understanding of CAP4K, its relevance to practice, its impact on teaching and learning and the kind of help that teachers would find useful for classroom implementation. Following this tour, CDE and CEA released a report that captures findings from all 13 stops, titled "CAP4K Teacher Tour, Aligning State-Level Support with Classroom-Level Needs." This report highlights discussion, particularly the conclusion that teachers want to be involved in education reform, regional themes, and next steps, and contains meeting notes for each of the 13 locations. Feedback from the tour has been used to help CDE organize professional development and other support for teachers related to CAP4K. Specifically, it has guided and informed revised standards rollout and implementation, revised assessment design, the CAP4K cost study, design and implementation of a statewide system of accountability and support and Colorado's Race to the Top proposal.

Adoption and Implementation of the new Colorado Academic Standards:

In 2009, CDE initiated a year-long process of revising academic standards in all ten content areas (the arts, comprehensive health and physical education, mathematics, reading and writing, science, social studies, and world languages) and English language proficiency. Following this year-long standards revision process, the Colorado State Board of Education adopted the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) in December 2009, creating Colorado's first fully aligned preschool-through-high school academic expectations. The standards were developed by a broad spectrum of Coloradans representing Pre-K and K-12, higher education, English learners, students with disabilities and business, and utilized the best national and international exemplars. Seven hundred and eighty-six people applied to fill 255 unpaid roles on content subcommittees. Selection was made by Colorado stakeholders in a name-blind process using the merits of both the application and resumes. National experts also provided advice and continuity editing, structural technique and research feedback on the drafts and public recommendations. Official public hearings also followed at each relevant State Board of Education meeting.

In 2010, the State Board of Education adopted the Common Core standards in Mathematics and Reading and Writing. The Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) reflects the content of the 2009 standards adoption and the Common Core. In 2011, local school boards have revised and adopted academic standards and are developing new curricula to align with the new grade-level expectations.

In the transition to new standards, the department has planned carefully a multi-year transition process that includes four phases: (1) awareness (school year 2010-11); (2) transition (school years 2011-13); (3) full implementation (school year 2013-14); and (4) transformation - an ongoing process of continuous improvement in teaching and learning. Awareness involves communication about the CAS; transition involves planning for required changes; implementation involves instituting the necessary changes; and transformation represents the intended outcome of implementing college- and career-ready standards.

Next steps: CDE is providing online and in-person professional development support for local review process; gap analysis tools; and facilitating cross-district collaboration. Crosswalk documents, implementation toolkit resources, discipline specific concept maps and other guiding documents have been created and are available to all schools and districts. The link to these resources is: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/UAS/StandardsImplementation.html> In addition, jointly CDE and DHE are providing outreach and workshop experiences for higher education faculty members and leaders to raise awareness and build momentum for standards implementation across the P-20 system. This is a fundamental element to ensuring Colorado continues to take steps toward building an aligned and collaborative education pipeline. A Higher Education P-20 Spring Awareness Tour is currently underway and successfully reached over 100 faculty members to date.

Revisions to Statewide Assessment System:

In November 2010, the Colorado State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education jointly adopted the assessment design attributes. In December 2010, the state board voted to unanimously approve the assessment components that included more specific attributes, concluding the process to design the new system. The attributes of the new system include:

- statewide summative assessment for grades 3-11 to measure math and reading and writing;
- statewide summative assessments in science and social studies at least once in elementary, middle and high school;
- school readiness measurements for grades preschool through grade 2;
- formative instructional supports and interim assessments;
- the Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP);
- an 11th-grade nationally recognized college placement assessment; and
- Assessments are capable of being administered online over time.

In 2011, CDE conducted a series of focus groups to consider the specific design elements of the high school mathematics assessment. In addition, research and work groups convened to determine the best strategy for aligning and updating P-3 assessments, including both the school readiness assessment design and the existing assessments required in the Colorado Basic Literacy Act.

During the course of 2011, CDE and DHE jointly developed specific indicators for the Individual Career and Academic Plan required per SB09-256 and subsequently adopted as part of the Assessment Attributes. CDE and DHE collaborated with the Community College System's Career and Technical Education Division to assist districts in implementing students' ICAPs through statewide trainings and workshops, webinars and online materials.

Over the past year CDE has worked to create a thoughtful and realistic transition plan to the new assessment system. The new assessment system will not be implemented until 2014, pending funding. Colorado is also part of both national assessment consortia and may consider the use of any such assessments once they present their potential in 2014-15. In the meantime, the state begins the transition to the new system this spring of 2012, with the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP).

The transition assessment will look like the current assessment but will only test, where possible, the material found in both old and new standards. CDE has issued a description of what content that means for each grade. The TCAP will have no new content, such as the personal financial literacy or summative social studies assessments. Finally, the use of the same test blueprint will not change growth model interpretations or accountability ratings until 2014. Please see below for the assessment transition timeline:

The Assessment Transition Plan

Spring 2011 - CSAP as usual

Fall 2011 – Implementation of ICAPs

Spring 2012 - Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) administered. Where the current blueprint allows, TCAP items will represent the overlap between the old Colorado Model Standards and the new Colorado Academic Standards.

Spring 2013 - TCAP administered; new assessment field test conducted

Spring 2014 - New Colorado assessment administered measuring only the new academic standards.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) High School Diploma Endorsement:

CAP4K calls for the State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education to jointly adopt high school diploma endorsement criteria indicating a student's level of postsecondary and workforce readiness, on or before July 1, 2011, or as soon as fiscally practicable. This timeline has been pushed back to spring of 2012 to incorporate discussion related to graduation guideline considerations and conversations necessary with institutes of higher education. High school diploma endorsement criteria *may be used* by districts to indicate a student has achieved postsecondary and workforce readiness or to indicate extraordinary academic achievement, but it is not required.

A student who graduates from high school with a PWR endorsed diploma is guaranteed (subject to additional institutional review of other admission and placement qualifications): to meet minimum academic qualifications for admission to all open, modified open, or moderately selective public institutions of higher education in CO, and to be eligible for placement into credit-bearing courses, *without the need for remediation*, and to receive priority consideration, in conjunction with additional criteria, for placement into credit-bearing courses at all other public institutions of higher education in CO.

Through the continued partnership between CDE and DHE, the effort to develop the endorsed diploma criteria was launched in 2011. The process was designed to ensure the decision on the endorsement criteria was informed by: state and national best practices, a task force made up of key stakeholders, and public input. The Endorsed Diploma Task Force members represent a rich mix of K12 practitioners and school leaders, higher education faculty and admissions staff, counselors, career and technical educators, representing community colleges and four-year institutions. The Task Force met over a series of six meetings and ultimately reached consensus on their recommendations. The endorsement provides students with multiple and diverse pathways to demonstrate their readiness for credit-bearing postsecondary coursework. The recommended endorsement criteria requires students to complete their Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP), excel in at least three of seven academic content areas, apply their 21st century skills in and outside of the classroom, and meet existing minimum admission requirements. The recommended criteria allow for many different paths to demonstrating a student is ready beyond typical "seat-time" measures. The pathways include concurrent enrollment, career and technical education, AP and IB coursework, arts, world languages, and among many others.

The endorsed diploma will help create a clear pathway for students to college or career, and streamline admissions and placement decisions at the institutions of higher education. We also believe it will make a student's assessments, classes, activities, and planning more meaningful, while ensuring more students leave high school without the need for remedial education. This effort will also help open the door to higher education for more students over time. The endorsed diploma also means higher education will be able to more easily identify students who will not require remediation and, perhaps even more importantly, the students who possess the 21st century life skills essential to their success in college or the workforce.

Next Steps: In order to take effect, the endorsed diploma criteria must be approved by the institutions of higher education governing boards. Upon approval, Commissioner Hammond from the Colorado Department of Education and Lieutenant Governor Garcia, the Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, together will request an adoption by the State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. This is scheduled to be completed during spring 2012.

Based on the Task Force recommendations, CDE and DHE plan to pilot the PWR endorsed diploma implementation, partner with a minimum of three districts and institutions of higher education, representing unique and diverse settings, beginning in 2012-13 school year to inform state-wide implementation, projected to begin in the 2014-15 school year.

Educator Preparation Program Update: CAP4K requires that educator preparation programs align with the new Colorado Academic Standards, including the definition of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness, by December 15, 2012. Through the leadership of the Colorado Council of Deans of Education (CCODE) and in partnership with CDE, the Department of Higher Education (DHE) is pleased with the progress to and strategies institutions of higher education are taking to address this next key alignment step.

Additionally, DHE convened two meetings of the Counselor Prep programs from across the state to introduce them to the CAS, the assessment attributes and the ICAPs. These meetings were P-12 and higher educator attended events.

Next steps: DHE will continue to convene faculty across the state in the Spring Awareness Tour, outreach activities and communication efforts. Both CDE and DHE continue to respond to the needs of educator preparation program faculty in addition to sharing best practices and approaches other states are using to address this need. In addition, CDE and DHE, in partnership with The New Teacher Project, are reviewing the state's licensure, induction, and preparation programs to ensure the expectations and state policies support the alignment efforts and focus on educator effectiveness and student outcomes.

Admissions and Remedial Education Policy Review and Revision:

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education is statutorily required to revise its Admissions Policy and the Remedial Education Policy by 2014. The Department of Higher Education will be facilitating this review process. Last year, a great deal of planning went into developing this review process. Our first strategy was communicating with many of the councils at the Department of Higher Education that the review process is coming.

Next steps: we are currently identifying which constituents should participate on the review task forces. We anticipate that this group will consist of admissions directors, chief academic officers, student advisors, P12 representatives, pre-collegiate program advocates and other key stakeholder groups.

Cost Study Update:

CDE, in consultation with DHE, contracted with an independent entity to conduct a study of the costs of implementation of SB 08-212. At a minimum, this study is to include the anticipated costs to be incurred by four distinct groups: 1) CDE, 2) Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), 3) Colorado School Districts (Districts) and, 4) Institutions of Higher Education (Higher Ed).

Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA) was awarded the contract to conduct an analysis of the cost implications of CAP4K. APA is working closely with the Colorado School Finance Project (CSFP) in completing the analysis and has successfully delivered the first two of three cost studies.

Next steps: The third and final study is to be delivered in Fall 2012 and will at a minimum include the costs associated with implementing the PWR Endorsed Diploma criteria. Discussions exist to have clean up legislation push back this deadline in order to more fully permit actual costs of graduation guidelines, new assessments, HEAR policies, implementation of endorsed diplomas and other CAP4K costs become more clear.