



# COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

201 East Colfax Avenue • Denver, Colorado 80203-1799  
303.866.6600 • [www.cde.state.co.us](http://www.cde.state.co.us)

**Robert K. Hammond**  
Commissioner of Education

**Keith Owen, Ph.D.**  
Deputy Commissioner

February 15, 2013

The Honorable John Hickenlooper, Jr.  
Governor of Colorado

Representative Millie Hamner  
Chair of the House Education Committee

Senator Evie Hudak  
Chair of the Senate Education Committee

Senator John Morse  
Senate President

Representative Mark Ferrandino  
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 fifth such update and summarizes the state's steps taken in 2012 to continue the implementation of the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K).

I am pleased to report that the Colorado Department of Education is meeting the goals specified in the bill. The Colorado Department of Higher Education, which 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 Hammond  
Commissioner of Education





COLORADO DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

# **SB08-212 Goals and Accomplishments**

## **CAP4K: Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids**

Submitted to:

**The Honorable John Hickenlooper, Jr., Governor of Colorado; Representative Millie Hammer, Chair of the House Education Committee; Senator Evie Hudak, Chair of the Senate Education Committee; Senator John Morse, Senate President; Representative Mark Ferrandino, Speaker of the House; Senator Bill Cadman, Senate Minority Leader**

By:

**Jo O'Brien, Assistant Commissioner**

February, 2013

## Table of Contents

### Overview

---

Adoption of school readiness description	3
Adoption of postsecondary and workforce readiness description	3
Adoption and Implementation of the new Colorado Academic Standards	4
Revisions to Statewide Assessment System	5
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) High School Diploma Endorsement	6
Educator Preparation Program Update	7
Admissions and Remedial Education Policy Review and Revision	8
Cost Study Update	9

## 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.

In 2008, school readiness was defined as 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 in 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.

In advance of State Board action related to school readiness assessments, CDE conducted a ten city public tour to provide input to the department. CDE also engaged the School Readiness Assessment Subcommittee to review school readiness assessments for State Board consideration. At the December 2012 State Board of Education meeting, the Board voted to: (1) offer districts a menu of school readiness assessments, (2) approve Teaching Strategies GOLD as the first school readiness assessment tool for the menu, and (3) pending positive technical reports and final review, approve additional school readiness assessment tools for the menu. Districts will begin implementing school readiness plans and assessments in the 2013-14 school year with statewide implementation complete in the 2014-15 school year. Funds from the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund will be used to pay subscription costs for Teaching Strategies GOLD on a scaffolded basis for the duration of the four year grant.

### 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>.

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. 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).

### **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 a 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.

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.

Colorado school districts are in the final transition year to the Colorado Academic Standards. The department has recommended that districts use the 2012-13 school year to begin phasing in standards-based curriculum in preparation for full implementation of the standards in 2013-14. In the 2012-13 school year, the department has engaged hundreds of educators from across the state in standards based curriculum design training in advance of full implementation of Colorado's standards. Training will continue into the spring and summer of 2013 to support educators with the shifts in instruction necessitated by the new standards. CDE continues to expand its online resources for educators with a launch of its new standards website at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/index.asp>.

Next steps: CDE and DHE continue to provide information for higher education faculty members and leaders to raise awareness and build momentum for standards implementation across the P-20 system.

### **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 in elementary, middle and high school 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;
- 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.

#### Science and Social Studies Assessments

In 2012, the Colorado Department of Education released a Request for Proposals for new state assessments. With input from the Department of Higher Education, as well as content, special populations, and assessment experts, an Apparent Successful Offeror was identified in spring of 2012. A resulting contract for science and social studies assessments to be administered once in elementary, middle and high school has been executed. Alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities are also being developed in the same grades and content areas as the general assessment. Significant assessment development activities have been initiated:

- Item writing for the new assessments has begun. Colorado educators, as well as professional item writers, are participating in this process as writers and reviewers.
- Draft assessment frameworks have been released for public feedback. These documents represent the concepts and skills from the Colorado Academic Standards that will be assessed.
- A sample of school districts has been selected to participate in field testing for the new summative science and social studies assessments. The sample is representative of the Colorado student population and will provide valid information from which determinations about items and assessments can be made.

Districts' ability to administer the computer-based assessments is a critical factor as Colorado moves forward with its new assessment system. All districts are in the process of completing the Technology Readiness Tool, which will inform the state, districts and schools about capacity in terms of hardware, software and internet connectivity. Initial technology guidelines were released in December.

#### English Language Arts and Mathematics Summative Assessments (PARCC)

Colorado became a governing board member of the multi-state assessment consortium, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) in August 2012. This 22 state consortium is building next generation English language arts (reading and writing) and mathematics assessments.

The consortium is developing computer-based English language arts and mathematics assessments in grades 3 - 8. There will also be English language arts assessments in grades 9-11 and three end-of-course mathematics assessments in high school. The assessments will be administered for the first time in the spring of 2015. Colorado has been an active participant in the development process by attending passage and item reviews. Colorado also serves on committees that address test design, accommodation policies, research, college and career readiness and reporting.

The K-12 and higher education leaders from each of the PARCC states have recently approved the College and Career Ready Determination (CCRD) Policy found at <http://parcconline.org/parcc-assessment-policies>

- The CCRD Policy clearly defines the level of academic preparation in English language arts/literacy and mathematics needed for students to be successful in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in two- and four-year public institutions of higher education. These institutions include technical colleges and other institutions that award degrees or credentials aligned to entry into middle- or high-skilled jobs.

- There are multiple benefits of the College- and Career-Ready Determinations (CCRDs) in English language arts/literacy and in mathematics.
  - o Students who attain a CCRD in English language arts/literacy or a CCRD in mathematics will be able to enter directly into certain entry-level, credit-bearing courses in those subject areas without having to take placement tests.
  - o States within the PARCC consortium will have a common benchmark to define college and career readiness in English language arts/literacy and in mathematics.

#### The Assessment Transition Timeline

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

Spring 2013 - TCAP administered; new science and social studies elementary and middle school assessments field tested

Fall 2013 - New science and social studies high school assessments field tested

Spring 2014 -TCAP administered in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. New Colorado science and social studies elementary and middle school assessments administered.

Fall 2014 – New science and social studies high school assessments administered

Spring 20 15 – New English language arts and mathematics assessments administered. Second administration of the new Colorado science and social studies elementary and middle school assessments.

#### **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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 criteria were approved by all Colorado institutions of higher education governing boards in February 2012. It will help create a clear pathway for students to college or career, and streamline admissions and placement decisions at the institutions of higher education. It should also make student 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 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills essential to their success in college or the workforce.

**Next Steps:** Commissioner Hammond from the Colorado Department of Education and Lieutenant Governor Garcia, the Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, will request an adoption by the State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. This is scheduled to be completed this year.

Based on the Task Force recommendations, CDE and DHE are piloting the PWR endorsed diploma implementation with districts and institutions of higher education, representing unique and diverse settings, beginning in the 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) institutions of higher education have adopted these and are addressing this next key alignment step with faculty and deans statewide.

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

**Next steps:** 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 align to the new academic standards and look ahead to new assessments. In addition, CDE and DHE, in partnership with The New Teacher Project, have been 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 its Remedial Education Policy by 2014. The Department of Higher Education is facilitating this review process.

The Admission and Transfer Policy Review Task Force Advisory Board is comprised of representatives from public institutions of higher education, and K-12. The group has met since May 2012 to review the Colorado Commission on Higher Education Admission Education Policy (section I, part E). The Task Force is charged to:

- Consider the effect of the current policy on student success;
- Examine how HEAR and the Index are ensuring students are prepared for college;
- Embed Colorado Academic Standards & national consortia assessments into the policy;
- Align the statewide Admission Standards and Remedial Education policies;
- Consider how the rigor of high school curriculum impacts the development of this policy;
- Develop college admission criteria for the High School PWR Endorsed Diploma.

Through this policy, the Commission intends to provide an opportunity for all qualified individuals to attend a Colorado public institution by:

1. Informing an eligible pool of prospective students and affiliated constituencies regarding the unique roles and missions of Colorado's public institutions.
2. Establishing and clearly communicating performance based admission standards that reflect differentiated institutional role and mission to prospective students and affiliated constituents, which align to the:
  - a. Colorado High school graduation guidelines
  - b. Colorado guarantee transfer and state-wide articulation agreements
  - c. Colorado Remedial Education Policy
  - d. Appropriate alternative pathways
3. Encouraging diversity by supporting the admission of applicants from underrepresented groups, applicants with special talents, and applicants with other unique circumstances.
4. Allowing institutional flexibility for making admissions decisions to support increased enrollment, persistence and graduation rates

Next steps:

The HEAR/Mastery requirements subcommittee is considering:

- if the current HEAR is adequately preparing students for postsecondary education;
- how to include mastery demonstration in the current HEAR requirements; and
- how to align college admission criteria with K-12 Colorado Academic Standards.

The Transfer student subcommittee is considering:

- a more precise definition of a transfer student;
- if the current transfer standards ensure success for students.

The Index subcommittee is considering:

- if the current Admission Index (GPA and ACT) is an way to predict later college success;
- if another system might be more predictive;
- ways to use the distribution process in lieu of the Index;
- ways to recalibrate the Index, as a means to offset possible high school grade inflation
- ways to weight GPA and other possible assessment components of the Index

Additionally, the Remedial Education Policy Review Task Force Advisory Board is comprised of representatives from public institutions of higher education and K-12 constituents. The group began meeting in May 2012 to review the Colorado Commission on Higher Education Remedial Education Policy (section I, part F).

The Remedial Education policy is designed to prepare students to be successful in credit bearing math and English courses. It also provides accurate and timely information regarding course, degree and support options for students identified as under-prepared. Its function includes providing transparency to the public about outcomes of remediation.

The Remedial Task Force is to:

- Embed Colorado Academic Standards & national consortia assessments into the Remedial Education policy;
- Consider the effect of current policy on student success in postsecondary education
- Create a policy for implementation of Supplemental Academic Instruction (per HB12-1155);
- Align the statewide Admission Standards and Remedial Education policies;
- Consider how the rigor of high school curricula may impact the development of this policy; and
- Consider differentiating placement procedures for math based upon declared program of study.

Next steps:

The Remedial Task Force and Advisory Board will meet in February and March to continue to review state policy. In the spring, the Board will seek feedback on preliminary recommendations throughout the state. In the summer they will reconvene to finalize the draft policy and present a recommendation to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education in November.

### 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 2013 and will at a minimum include the costs associated with implementing the PWR Endorsed Diploma criteria. Discussions exist to consider the relationships of graduation guidelines, revised HEAR policies, implementation of endorsed diplomas and a final clarifying of other CAP4K costs.

ed