



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 Andy Kerr, Chair of the Senate Education Committee; Senator Morgan Carroll, Senate President; Representative Mark Ferrandino, Speaker of the House; Senator Bill Cadman, Senate Minority Leader

By:

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Overview

In 2008, Colorado enacted Senate Bill 212, the 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 career and college success. The goal of CAP4K is an aligned preschool through postsecondary education system to provide Colorado students with the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in college and careers.

CAP4K requires the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to provide annual reports to the General Assembly related to the implementation of provisions within the statute including the results achieved through implementation of school readiness, the preschool through elementary and secondary education standards, and postsecondary and workforce readiness pursuant to C.R.S. 22-7-1019 (2).

School Readiness

Background

CAP4K included provisions related to school readiness for both the Colorado State Board of Education and Colorado school districts. CAP4K requires:

- The State Board of Education to define school readiness.
- Colorado school districts to ensure all children in publicly-funded kindergarten programs receive an individual school readiness plan that addresses the academic standards and skill areas students needed to be ready for higher levels of learning.
- School districts to administer a State Board of Education-approved school readiness assessment to each student in kindergarten. The assessment results help inform each child's school readiness plan.

The State Board of Education defined school readiness in 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 all students enrolled in publicly funded preschool or kindergarten. School readiness is enhanced when schools, families, and community service providers work collaboratively to ensure that every child is ready for higher levels of learning in academic content.

School readiness describes the status and ongoing progress a child makes within the domains of physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language and comprehension development, and cognition and general knowledge. By monitoring each child's progress in these areas, teachers, parents, schools, and caregivers can provide needed support to ensure each child's success in school. Information gathered from school readiness assessments is to be used for supportive and instructional purposes and cannot be used to deny a student admission or progression to kindergarten or first grade.

Implementation Status

CAP4K requires the State Board of Education to adopt one or more assessments that are aligned with the description of school readiness and are suitable for measuring students' levels of school readiness. In approving school readiness assessments, CAP4K directs the State Board of Education to consider assessments that are research-based, recognized nationwide as reliable instruments for measuring school readiness; and suitable for determining the instruction and interventions students need to improve their readiness to succeed in school.

In December 2012, the State Board of Education voted to offer districts a menu of school readiness assessments. Only one assessment tool met the requirements for inclusion on the menu of assessments, *Teaching Strategies GOLD*®. In the fall of 2013, CDE conducted a Request for Information process to solicit additional assessments for inclusion on the school readiness assessment menu. No submissions met the requirements for school readiness set forth in CAP4K.

CDE is supporting a phased-in implementation of the school readiness requirements of CAP4k over the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school year in order to allow the school readiness assessment marketplace to catch up to demand in order to provide districts with more school readiness assessment options. This approach allows districts who are ready to implement *Teaching Strategies GOLD*® in 2013-14 and 2014-15 to do so. Districts that would like more options on the assessment menu can use 2013-14 and 2014-15 to prepare for full implementation in 2015-16. This will also give districts additional time to support kindergarten teachers with implementation of the new standards and the READ Act while building capacity for the school readiness work in advance of full implementation in the 2015-16 school year.

Through the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant, CDE has been able to support the implementation of school readiness assessments and plans in districts ready to move forward with *Teaching Strategies GOLD*®. In the 2013-14 school year, 90 of Colorado's 178 school districts are receiving grant funds for *Teaching Strategies GOLD*® subscriptions. Thus implementation of school readiness plans and assessments is occurring in 90 districts including 426 schools and 17, 582 kindergarten students.

For the 2014-15 school year, CDE will be able to use Early Learning Challenge grant funds to continue support for districts currently implementing school readiness assessments and plans and expand to more districts in advance of statewide full implementation by 2015-16.

The Colorado Academic Standards

Background

CAP4K required that the State Board of Education adopt standards that identify the knowledge and skills that a student should acquire as the student progresses from preschool through elementary and secondary education pursuant to C.R.S. 22-7-1005 (1). 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 2009, the Council for Chief State School Officers and the National Governor's Association initiated the development of the Common Core State Standards. The state-led effort to develop the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English language arts began as the Colorado Academic Standards were being developed. Colorado was among six states asked to provide feedback on the Common Core State Standards in the development process. Once the Common Core State Standards were released in June 2010, the Colorado Department of Education commissioned a study to compare the state's reading, writing and communicating standards and math standards with the Common Core State Standards. The study showed close alignment of the two sets of standards. Using the results of the study and feedback from the standards development committees, the State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English language arts in August 2010.

The standards for mathematics and reading, writing and communicating incorporate the Common Core State Standards while maintaining the unique aspects of the Colorado Academic Standards, including 21st century skills and prepared graduate competencies. And, as always has been the case, districts maintain autonomy to adopt their own standards that meet or exceed the state standards and are required to develop their own curriculum aligned to the standards. Teachers retain the ability to design their instruction in ways that support students in meeting the standards.

Implementation Status

From 2010 through the 2012-13 school year, districts have been preparing to transition to the new Colorado Academic Standards including adoption of local standards that meet or exceed state standards and aligning local curriculum to meet the standards. Districts are fully implementing the Colorado Academic Standards during the 2013-14 school year. This follows a three-year transition process to the new standards supported by an online standards transition planning toolkit and in-person assistance provided by the Colorado Department of Education and the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP). During the 2012-13 school year, the Standards and Instructional Support Office at CDE facilitated workshops across the state to engage educators in the development of standards implementation resources. The workshops involved educators from more than 70 of Colorado's school districts. The department developed a process guide for optional use by districts to support the development of local curriculum based on the Colorado Academic Standards. In addition, the Colorado Department of Education launched a more robust website with standards implementation resources.

Colorado's Statewide Assessment System

Background

CAP4K called for the development of an aligned assessment system to measure student learning of Colorado's new, more rigorous academic standards. The Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) are the new online state assessments that are being developed to measure student mastery of the standards in science, social studies, English language arts (reading, writing, and communicating), and mathematics. These new assessments represent the next generation in assessment technology, incorporating performance tasks designed to engage students while testing higher-order thinking and problem solving.

Implementation Status

Colorado is developing new science and social studies assessments which will be administered online for the first time in 2014. Elementary and middle school assessments will be administered in spring. High school assessments will be administered in fall. The science assessments will be administered in grades 5, 8 and 12 and the social studies assessments will be administered in grades 4, 7 and 12.

Colorado is working with a multi-state assessment consortium, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), to develop online 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 PARCC assessments will be comprised of a performance-based component as well as an end-of-year component. They will be administered for the first time in spring of 2015. Until then, the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) will continue to be administered to measure student achievement in reading, writing and math.

117 districts participated in spring and fall 2013 field testing of the new science and social studies assessment items. Across elementary, middle and high school, 62,280 science and social studies assessments were submitted by students. Data generated from the field tests are being used to evaluate the items for inclusion in the 2014 assessments.

Field tests for PARCC that reflect both the performance-based and end-of-year assessments are expected to be administered to more than one million students across the PARCC states in the spring of 2014. Field testing will be at least one full grade level per school with multiple grade levels requested in some instances. PARCC worked with Education Testing Service (ETS) to draw sample Colorado schools for the field tests and selected schools were notified in the fall of 2013.

To prepare for Colorado's shift to online assessment administration, CDE encouraged districts to participate in spring and fall 2013 field testing. CDE also used a survey instrument called the Technology Readiness Tool (TRT) to gather initial information about the devices available for assessment in schools across Colorado. Device information provided by districts to the TRT paired with district success in spring and fall field testing suggests that most districts are on track to deliver the assessments online. Additionally, CDE and its assessment contractor, Pearson, have conducted site visits to all districts that have expressed an interest in receiving additional technology readiness support.

CDE is encouraging districts to provide students with the opportunity to become familiar with sample items and the online test engine before the assessment window begins. Practice testing environments, referred to as ePATs, are currently available for the science and social studies assessments. The ePATs include sample items and will help students navigate through the online testing environment and use the embedded supports on the day of testing. Links to sample items for both the science and social studies assessments and the English language arts and mathematics assessments are available on the CDE website.

CMAS are different tests than the state's current assessments, and they measure new and updated standards. The initial test scores will provide a new baseline of student learning for the state and for districts and schools. CDE will assist with statewide communication on what the new scores mean and will work with districts and schools to interpret the new scores.

Postsecondary and workforce readiness

Background

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and the Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) worked together to develop a definition of postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR). To create the definition, the two departments jointly convened regional meetings across Colorado during the 2008-09 academic year. The purpose of these meetings was to engage local communities in conversations about the skills and competencies students need to succeed after high school. Beginning in July 2015, the Colorado State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education are required to review the PWR description every six years and adopt any appropriate revisions.

The current 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 and assessments, and 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.

Postsecondary and workforce readings: "The knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential to high school graduates to be prepared to enter college and the workforce and compete in the global economy including content knowledge, learning and behavior skills."

Source: State Board of Education and the Commission on Higher Education's joint adoption on June 30, 2009 of the description of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness.

Implementation Status

In alignment with the PWR definition for Colorado, CDE measures several factors that reflect levels of postsecondary and workforce readiness for students beyond high school, including, graduation rates, dropout rates, ACT scores, participation in concurrent enrollment courses during high school, matriculation and persistence rates to and through postsecondary education, and remediation rates for students that enter postsecondary at a Colorado public institution of higher education. State data is summarized below; district and school level data can be accessed at www.cde.state.co.us/schoolview.

The on-time, four-year high school graduation rate for the class of 2013 increased 1.5 percentage points to 76.9 percent as compared to the previous year. There were 877 more graduates in the class of 2013 than in the class of 2012. The on-time graduation rate stood at 75.4 percent for the class of 2012. The 2012-13 dropout rate for Colorado is 2.5 percent. This rate improved by 0.4 percentage points from the prior year. The dropout rate is at its lowest point since 2003 when the rate was 2.4 percent. Colorado's public schools generated 1,592 fewer dropouts in 2012-13 than in the 2011-12 academic year.

Concurrent enrollment is the simultaneous enrollment of a qualified student in a local education provider and in one or more postsecondary education courses. This program includes, but is not limited to, academic or career and technical education courses at a Colorado institution of higher education. During the 2011-12 academic year, approximately 20 percent or 24,000 Colorado 11th and 12th grade students in a public high school participated in concurrent enrollment. This reflected a participation increase of 15.5 percent over the past year. Of participating concurrent enrollment students who graduated in the 2012 academic year, more than 85 percent enrolled in college. More than three-quarters of concurrent enrollment students passed all their courses, while 12 percent received partial credit.

Of the high school graduating class of 2011, 57 percent entered college the following year. Of those who entered studies at a Colorado institution of higher education, 39 percent needed to take remedial courses in at least one subject area. This is a slight reduction from the 40 percent remediation rate for the 2010 graduating class.

CDE is also implementing graduation guidelines as established under House Bill 07-1118, requiring the development of statewide high school graduation guidelines that local school boards must meet or exceed. In May 2013, the Colorado State Board of Education voted unanimously to adopt the graduation guidelines recommendations proposed by a Graduation Guidelines Council as outlined in HB 07-1118. The purpose of graduation guidelines is to articulate Colorado's shared beliefs about the value and meaning of a high school diploma and to outline the minimum components, expectations, and responsibilities of local districts and the state to support students in attaining their high school diploma. The graduation guidelines align with the description of postsecondary workforce readiness.

Postsecondary and workforce Readiness (PWR) High School Diploma Endorsement

Background

In August 2013, the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) jointly adopted high school diploma endorsement criteria that local school districts may choose to use indicating a student's level of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR). The offering of a PWR Endorsed Diploma is voluntary for districts. The intention of this diploma is to identify student academic achievement over and above a standard high school diploma.

The endorsement guarantees that the student meets: "minimum academic qualifications for admission to, and to be eligible, subject to additional institutional review of other admission and placement qualifications, for

placement into credit-bearing courses at all open, modified open, or moderately selective public institutions of higher education in Colorado;" as well as priority consideration for admission into Colorado's selective and highly selective institutions. The Colorado PWR Endorsed Diploma signifies a student has thoughtfully planned for the next steps beyond high school and is academically prepared for credit-bearing 100-level postsecondary coursework without the need for remediation. It also means the student possesses the knowledge, abilities, and skills necessary for the 21st century workplace or postsecondary education environment, such as, critical thinking, problem solving, information literacy, collaboration, self-direction, and invention skills. At the time of submission of this report, no PWR Endorsed Diplomas have been awarded by districts in Colorado.

Implementation Status

The PWR Endorsed Diploma criteria have been developed by a statewide task force of members representing parents, high school leaders, and postsecondary administrators. The task force convened in a series of five meetings beginning in late August 2011 and concluding in October 2011. Subsequently, all governing board for public institutions of higher education in Colorado approved the criteria by June 2012 prior to adoption by the SBE and CCHE. Statewide implementation is aligned with the graduation guidelines timeline. The endorsed diploma criteria may be voluntarily piloted in several Colorado high schools and districts over the next several years. Criterion for the Colorado PWR Endorsed Diploma includes the following four steps a student must satisfy:

- Step 1 – Student is college ready in math and English language arts
- Step 2 – Student completes ICAP
- Step 3 – Student demonstrates 21st century skills
- Step 4 – Student demonstrates mastery of academic content in three content areas

Admissions and Remedial Education Policy Review and Revision

Background

Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids and subsequently state law (§23-1-113 C.R.S.) required the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (the Commission) to review and revise the admission standards policy (CCHE policy I, F) and the remedial education policy (CCHE policy I, E) by December 15, 2013. Statute required the Commission to align the admissions standards policy with the state's description of postsecondary and workforce readiness and graduation guidelines.

The Department of Higher Education appointed two task forces in May 2012 to assist in developing and vetting recommendations on revisions to both policies. Based on the recommendations, the Department developed revised admissions standards policy and a revised remedial education policy, which the Commission approved in December 2013.

Admission Standards Policy

The key elements of the new Admission Standards policy directly support the shift in focus in Colorado from enrollment to student success. The changes seek to align postsecondary admissions expectations with high school graduation guidelines. Further, the policy increases flexibility for institutions to determine their own specific admissions requirements and increases the number of tools they may use to do so. The policy presupposes that institutions will develop admissions requirements and admit students whom they are best able to serve reflecting their statutory role and mission.

The new policy requires institutions to each establish and submit to the Commission minimum admissions standards, using at least assessment scores, GPA and rigor. The Commission is charged with ensuring that each

institution's minimum standards are consistent with the institution's role and mission and that institutions with the same selectivity have comparable standards. Institutions' assessment score standards must meet or exceed college-ready standards, unless an institution shows that it is able to support the student adequately.

The new admission standards policy is effective for all students seeking admission for fall 2019 and thereafter. For students seeking admission in fall 2016, fall 2017 and fall 2018, institutions may use the new policy or the policy in place as of fall 2013, providing a two- year transition period.

Remedial Education Policy

Colorado's remedial education policy provides criteria to be used by all public higher education institutions in the state in identifying students who need remedial courses in English and mathematics. The policy lays out standards whereby institutions may offer remedial courses.

The new Remedial Education policy aligns with postsecondary expectations and with high school graduation guidelines. The policy increases institution flexibility by giving more placement options, including allowing institutions to place students into college level courses along with Supplemental Academic Instruction. The new policy also increases the number of assessment options from ACT or SAT college entrance exam scores and the Accuplacer test to include Compass, PARCC and Smarter Balanced.

Implementation Status

The 12-month implementation plan for both policies has four key elements: data gathering and analysis; the development of the minimum standards; the communication tool that will be used to communicate the new policy and the admissions standards to students, parents and counselors; and training.