



COLORADO
Department of Education

SB08-212 Goals and Accomplishments: 2017 Annual Report to the Colorado General Assembly

Submitted to:

House Education Committee and Senate Education Committee of the Colorado General Assembly

By:

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Overview

Senate Bill 08-212, also known as Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), passed in 2008 and called for a revision of Colorado's preschool through high school standards and the state assessment system with a focus on postsecondary and workforce readiness for Colorado's students. 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 each February 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 section 22-7-1019 (2) C.R.S..

Kindergarten School Readiness

Background

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

CAP4K requires the State Board of Education to (1) define school readiness, (2) adopt assessments appropriate for determining students' levels of school readiness, and (3) adopt a system for reporting population-level results. Colorado school districts are required to ensure all children in publicly funded kindergarten programs receive an individual school readiness plan that is informed by a State Board approved school readiness assessment.

The State Board of Education has voted to offer districts a menu of school readiness assessments, and the menu includes four options for Colorado School Districts: (1) Teaching Strategies GOLD, (2) Teaching Strategies GOLD Kindergarten Entry Assessment Survey, (3) Desired Results Developmental Profile, and (4) Riverside Early Assessment of Learning. Since 2013, the CDE has been supporting a phased-in implementation of the school readiness requirements of CAP4K. This has been necessary to allow assessment publishers to catch up to national demand for quality kindergarten school readiness assessments.

Implementation Status

CDE Support to Colorado School Districts: The 2015-16 school year was the first year of full implementation of the kindergarten school readiness initiative. As noted in the 2016 CAP4K report, CDE has worked to address implementation issues that Colorado school districts have experienced with the school readiness initiative, primarily due to functionality issues with the most widely used assessment system. In 2015, Teaching Strategies, publisher of the GOLD assessment, launched an upgraded version of their online assessment platform which



experienced functionality issues. The functionality problems significantly limited teachers from effectively using the assessment tool. CDE staff worked closely with Colorado school districts to channel communication from users of the assessment tool to Teaching Strategies executives and to ensure responsiveness from Teaching Strategies to Colorado concerns. Because of functionality issues with the GOLD assessment system, the CDE recommended to districts that the 2015-16 school year be considered as an extension of the phase-in process for the school readiness initiative. The CDE has encouraged districts to use the extension year to continuing learning to use the assessment tools and to work through implementation planning. System functionality has improved for the 2016-17 school year, allowing kindergarten teachers to implement the assessment system.

Through Colorado's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (ELC) grant, the CDE has been able to support the implementation of school readiness assessments through two full-time staff members. These consultants provide technical assistance and training to Colorado school districts with the kindergarten school readiness initiative. Specific training has been provided to school districts in the use of approved kindergarten school readiness assessments, design and use of individual school readiness plans, and high quality kindergarten instructional practice. The department has also been able to work as an intermediary with the publisher of the most commonly used kindergarten school readiness assessment, Teaching Strategies GOLD.

Adoption of a School Readiness Reporting System: In March 2016, the Colorado State Board of Education approved the data reporting elements for Kindergarten School Readiness required by CAP4K (section 22-7-1014 (2)(b) C.R.S.). Specifically, CAP4K requires the State Board of Education to “adopt a system for reporting population-level results that provide baseline data for measuring overall change and improvement in students' skills and knowledge over time.” Pursuant to Section 22-7-1019, the CDE must produce an annual progress reports to the Colorado General Assembly to include the levels of kindergarten school readiness on a statewide basis and disaggregated by school district, school, free or reduced-cost lunch eligibility status, gender, and ethnicity, and “by any other characteristic deemed by the department to be meaningful.”

The first year of implementation of the reporting system will be the 2017-18 school year. Once fully implemented, the department will be able to report out on the number of areas within the school readiness domains (i.e., physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language and comprehension development, and cognition and general knowledge) in which kindergarteners are meeting age expectations.

The Colorado Academic Standards

Background

CAP4K required the State Board of Education to adopt standards that identify the knowledge and skills 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 10 content areas (comprehensive health and physical education; dance; drama and theatre arts; music; visual arts; mathematics; reading, writing, and communicating; 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 CAS were being developed. Colorado was among six states asked to provide feedback on the Common Core State Standards in the development process. Based on the close alignment found in studies commissioned by CDE, the State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English language arts in August 2010. Upon this adoption the CAS for reading, writing and communicating and mathematics were reissued in 2010.

Colorado's standards for mathematics and reading, writing and communicating incorporate the entirety of the Common Core State Standards while maintaining the unique aspects of the CAS, including 21st century skills, prepared graduate competencies, personal financial literacy (pursuant to C.R.S. 22-7-406), research, and poetry. 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

Colorado school districts began transitioning to the CAS in 2010. The first year of full implementation of the standards occurred in the 2013-14 school year. The CDE has supported the three-year transition process through regional trainings, an online standards transition toolkit, in-person assistance, and a sample curriculum project.

CAP4K requires a review and revision of the CAS by July 2018 and every six years thereafter. Currently, the CDE is in the preparation process for the first scheduled standards review and revision process to be completed on or before July 2018 as required by statute. To support the planning for the review and revision process, the CDE conducted statewide outreach to invite educators, educational leaders, parents, students and the general public to share their perceptions of the standards through an online public opinion survey and an online standards review system. CDE conducted a perceptions survey in October and November of 2016. The survey results will be shared publicly as the department launches the review process in early 2017. In addition to the survey to gather general perceptions, CDE launched an online feedback system that enabled all Coloradoans to provide specific feedback on every expectation within the CAS. Based on the input received through the survey and online feedback tool, CDE is providing comprehensive information about the timeline and phases of the standards review and revision process as well as information about how to participate. For more information about the review process, click here: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/casreview>.

Implementation Supports from the CDE

Pursuant to section 22-7-1013 (2) C.R.S., as part of the standards transition process, Colorado school districts were required to adopt curricula aligned to the standards. The CDE Standards and Instructional Support Office, at the request of Colorado school districts, has worked to help districts develop curriculum designed to successfully implement all 10 content areas of the CAS. The grass-roots requests for this project emerged from a March 2012 Standards Summit and a letter from the leadership of CASSA (Colorado Association of School



Superintendents and Senior Administrators). These requests supplied the initial foundation and support for the CDE to begin working with educators across Colorado to build sample curriculum that districts could choose to use. The Colorado District Sample Curriculum Project is an evolving project that is oriented and guided by a fundamental principle: curriculum samples must be created by and for Colorado educators.

The project began with three major phases. Each phase built on the work before as the Standards and Instructional Support team has responded to input from educators.

Phase I: Curriculum Overview Samples (Fall 2012)

During the first phase of the Project, Colorado educators worked together in grade level and content area teams to engage in process of translating Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) into curriculum overview samples. Following the release of the curriculum overview samples in February 2013, the CDE released a process guide for translating standards into curriculum overviews released to help districts replicate workshop processes.

Phase II: Refining Workshops (Spring 2013)

During the second phase of the project, the Standards and Instructional Support team conducted area workshops across the state to get feedback on the project, the curriculum overview samples, and the curriculum support tools still needed in the state.

Phase III: Instructional Unit Samples (Fall 2013-Spring 2016)

During the third phase of the project, the Standards and Instructional Support (SIS) team traveled across Colorado to work with educators to build instructional units based on select curriculum overview samples. In three-day workshops, district-teams of general education, special education, English Language Acquisition, and gifted and talented educators and specialists worked together to plan for the instruction of all students. Following the release of the unit samples, the CDE released a process guide for creating full instructional units.

Responding to requests from the field, Phase III has been expanded to develop additional sample units to include; physical education, elementary arts integration, middle and high school course/grade specific options in all content areas, environmental literacy and personal financial literacy. Specific standards-based samples in reading, writing, and communicating and mathematics for each grade span (elementary, middle and high) were developed to embed Extended Evidence Outcomes for the 1 percent of students with significant cognitive disabilities. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coextendedeo>.

Phase IV: Standards-Based Instructional Practice (Launched Summer 2016)

Using feedback and requests from school and district leaders, the CDE launched Phase IV of the District Sample Curriculum Project during the summer of 2016. During a kick-off institute in the summer and fall of 2016, Colorado educators from across the state came together to discuss key instructional shifts within their disciplines and engaged in reflective lesson planning. Phase IV will focus on providing tools and resources developed by teachers for teachers that highlight high impact instructional strategies specific to each discipline and sample lesson plan collections.

In addition to expanded options of sample units, lesson plan collections, face-to-face and webinar professional development trainings on standards implementation through the curricular design process have been conducted throughout the state. Educators from 123 Colorado school districts have been involved in all phases of Colorado’s District Sample Curriculum Project, by authoring and/or refining the curriculum overview and instructional unit samples and participating in implementation of high impact instructional strategies through reflective lesson planning processes. Across the state, thousands of Colorado educators have voluntarily given their time and offered their expertise in service to a project designed to support all teachers in the transition to the new Colorado Academic Standards. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the districts involved in this project.

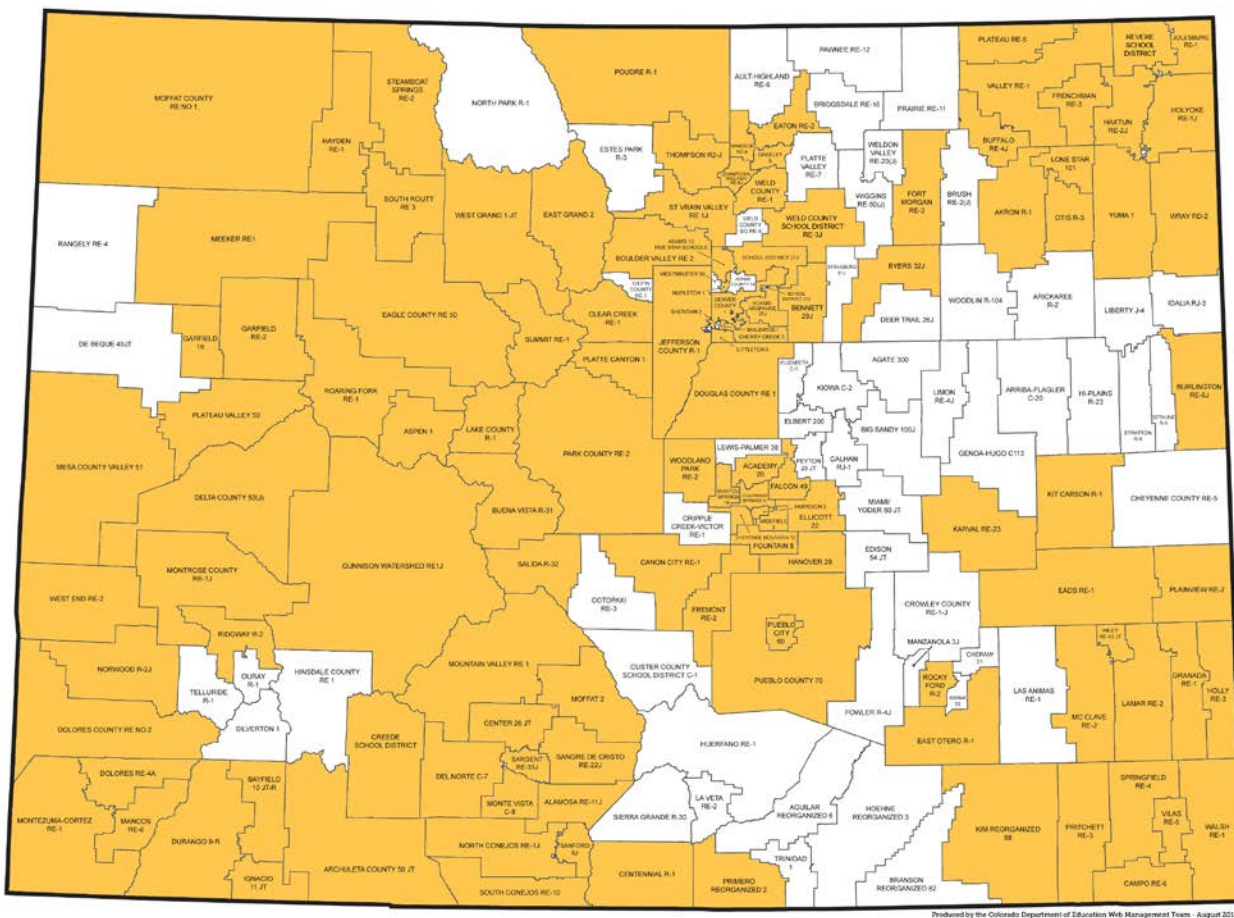


Figure 1: Colorado school districts that participated in the District Sample Curriculum Project, 2012-16







Standards Family Guides: At the request of Colorado school districts, the Standards and Instructional Support Office facilitated the development of user-friendly guides to the Colorado Academic Standards for all grades K – 12 in English and Spanish: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/guidestostandards>. The guides are intended to help families and communities across Colorado better understand the goals and outcomes of the standards. The guides describe the “big picture” purpose of the standards, as road maps to help ensure that all Colorado students graduate ready for life, college, and careers. They also provide overviews of the learning

expectations for each of the 10 content areas of the standards and offer examples of educational experiences that students may engage in, and that families could support, during the school year.

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. In response to the increased expectations, the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) are the online state assessments that measure student mastery of the standards in science, social studies, English language arts (reading, writing, and communicating), and mathematics. These assessments represent the next generation in assessment technology, incorporating performance tasks and simulations designed to engage students while testing higher-order thinking and problem solving. Colorado fully implemented the CMAS assessments in 2014-15. The CMAS: PARCC English language arts and math assessments were administered in grades 3-11. Science was administered in grades 5, 8 and 12. Social studies was administered in grades 4, 7 and 12. House Bill 15-1323 reduced high school CMAS testing requirements, replaced the 10th grade CMAS English language arts and mathematics tests with a 10th grade test aligned with the State academic standards and with the State's college entrance exam, and stated that the state science assessment would not be administered in grade 12. Starting in 2015-16, the CMAS: PARCC English language arts and math assessments were administered in grades 3-9 and high school science assessments were administered in grades 5, 8 and 11 (instead of grade 12). In accordance with Senate Bill 15-56, social studies assessments were administered on a sampling basis with about 1/3 of schools taking the assessments each year. The graphic below includes the content areas/test that will be administered in each grade level in 2016-17.

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	Grades 3 through 9		SCIENCE	Grades 5, 8 and 11
	MATH	Grades 3 through 9		PSAT	Grade 10
	SOCIAL STUDIES	Grades 4 and 7 To be done on a sampling basis with schools participating once every three years.		SAT	Grade 11

Implementation Status

CMAS: PARCC English language arts and math achievement results and participation rates are available at the following location: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/cmas-englishmath-dataandresults>.

CMAS science and social studies achievement results and participation rates are available at the following location:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/cmas-sciencesocial-dataandresults>.



Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Background

CDE and the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) worked together to develop a description of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR). As required in Colorado law, every six years the Colorado State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education are required to review the PWR description and adopt any appropriate revisions.

After extensive educator, community and business input, the updated PWR description was jointly adopted by the State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education in Winter 2016. This description serves as the basis for the state's alignment efforts including the Colorado Academic Standards, new assessments and informing student demonstrations of skills and knowledge required to be ready for college and a career upon earning a high school diploma.

Postsecondary and workforce readiness description: "Colorado high school graduates demonstrate the knowledge and skills (competencies) needed to succeed in postsecondary settings and to advance in career pathways as lifelong learners and contributing citizens."

Source: Adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education (Winter 2016).

Implementation Status

In alignment with the PWR description for Colorado, CDE and DHE measure several factors that reflect levels of PWR for students beyond high school, including, graduation rates, dropout rates, college entrance 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 college at a Colorado public institution of higher education. State data is summarized below; district and school-level information can be accessed at www.cde.state.co.us/schoolview and <http://highered.colorado.gov/Data/Tools.html>.

The four-year high school graduation rate for the Class of 2016 is 78.9 percent, which signifies a 1.6 percentage point improvement compared to the previous year. In total, the Class of 2016 had 2,040 more graduates than the Class of 2015. The state's four-year graduation rate has increased 6.5 percentage points since 2010. Extended year rates for high school students taking five, six and seven years to graduate also show improvement in 2015-16. See the state's graduation data dashboard for more information, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/gradcurrent>. The dashboard features longitudinal data by student groups, schools and districts.

The 2015-16 dropout rate for Colorado is 2.3 percent. This represents an all-time low in the state's dropout rate among students in grades 7 through 12 and marks a 0.3 percentage improvement compared to 2014-15. Colorado's public schools saw 584 fewer students drop out in 2015-16 than in the 2014-15 school year. Details on the dropout rate are available on the CDE website, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/dropoutcurrent>.

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 2014-15 academic



year, approximately 30 percent or nearly 36,000 Colorado 11th and 12th grade students in a public high school participated in concurrent enrollment. This reflected a participation increase of 15 percent over the prior year. More than 90 percent of concurrent enrollment students passed all their courses, which is a 3 percentage point increase from the prior year. Students who participated in dual enrollment programs in high school had higher first-year credit hour accumulation, grade point averages, and retention rates in college. Participation in dual enrollment is associated with a 23 percent increase in the likelihood of enrolling in college and a 10 percent decrease in the need for remediation, holding gender, income, race/ethnicity, and ACT scores constant.

CDE is also implementing graduation guidelines as established under House Bill 07-1118 and Senate Bill 08-256, requiring the development of statewide high school graduation guidelines that local school boards must meet or exceed. The purpose of graduation guidelines is to articulate Colorado's shared beliefs about the 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 take effect for ninth-graders in fall 2017 or the high school graduating class of 2021 and align with the description of postsecondary workforce readiness and postsecondary entrance requirements.

Admissions and Remedial Education Policy Review and Revision

Background

Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids and subsequent 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. After extensive institution and community input, the Commission approved revisions to the admission policy in November 2014.

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.

As required by the new policy, institutions submitted their proposed admission standards which were approved by the Commission in December 2014. The admissions standards includes the mid 50% range of assessment scores and GPA for each institution's previously admitted student class, as well as academic rigor details. The Commission is charged with ensuring that each institution's standards are consistent with the institution's role and mission and those 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. The Department of Higher Education has worked with College in Colorado to develop a new web based admission tool which clearly explains admission standards at each institution. The online tool is found at this link: www.coadmissionstool.org

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 goal of the policy is to improve the effectiveness of remedial placement and education, and to increase the number of credentials received by Colorado high school graduates, especially by those from underrepresented backgrounds. 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 to use in placement. Assessment options have been expanded from including ACT/ SAT college entrance exam scores and the Accuplacer tests, to also including GED and the two new high school equivalency exams (TASC and HiSET), PARCC and Smarter Balanced scores. Additional assessment options for placement are also being reviewed.