



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

## Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) 2019 Annual Legislative Report

Submitted to:  
**House Education Committee and Senate Education Committee of the  
Colorado General Assembly**

By:  
**Colorado Department of Education**

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## Table of Contents

Overview	Page 3
Kindergarten School Readiness	Page 3
Colorado Academic Standards	Page 8
Colorado's Statewide Assessment	Page 10
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	Page 11
Admissions and Remedial Education Policy Review and Revision	Page 13



## Overview

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In 2008, the Colorado General Assembly passed Senate Bill 08-212, which is also known as Colorado’s Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K). The law called for an alignment of the preschool through postsecondary education system to enable Colorado students to graduate with the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in college and careers. Central to CAP4K was the regular revision of Colorado’s preschool through high school student learning standards, an aligned state assessment system with a focus on postsecondary and workforce readiness for Colorado’s students, and expectations for postsecondary and workforce readiness for all Colorado high school graduates.

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

## Kindergarten School Readiness

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### Background

CAP4K requires the Colorado State Board of Education and school districts to implement several provisions designed to support and ensure each child’s readiness for success in school. 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.

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 kindergarten school readiness assessments should be used for supportive

### Kindergarten School Readiness Description

“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.”

Source: Adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education (April 2017).



and instructional purposes. According to CAP4K, results from the kindergarten school readiness assessment cannot be used to deny a student admission or progression to kindergarten or first grade.

The State Board of Education 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 (an abbreviated version of the GOLD assessment), (3) Desired Results Developmental Profile for Kindergarten, and (4) HighScope Child Observation Record (COR). Colorado school districts began phasing in kindergarten school readiness assessments in 2013 with full implementation in the 2015-16 school year. The state board of education adopted the reporting system for kindergarten school readiness in the spring of 2016, enabling CDE to begin collecting data from districts in the 2017-18 school year. This report provides kindergarten school readiness information from the second year of that data collection, the 2018-19 school year.

Each approved kindergarten school readiness assessment provides information on whether a kindergartner is meeting age expectations in each of the required school readiness domains at the beginning of the school year:

- physical well-being and motor development;
- social and emotional development;
- language and comprehension development;
- cognition; and
- general knowledge.

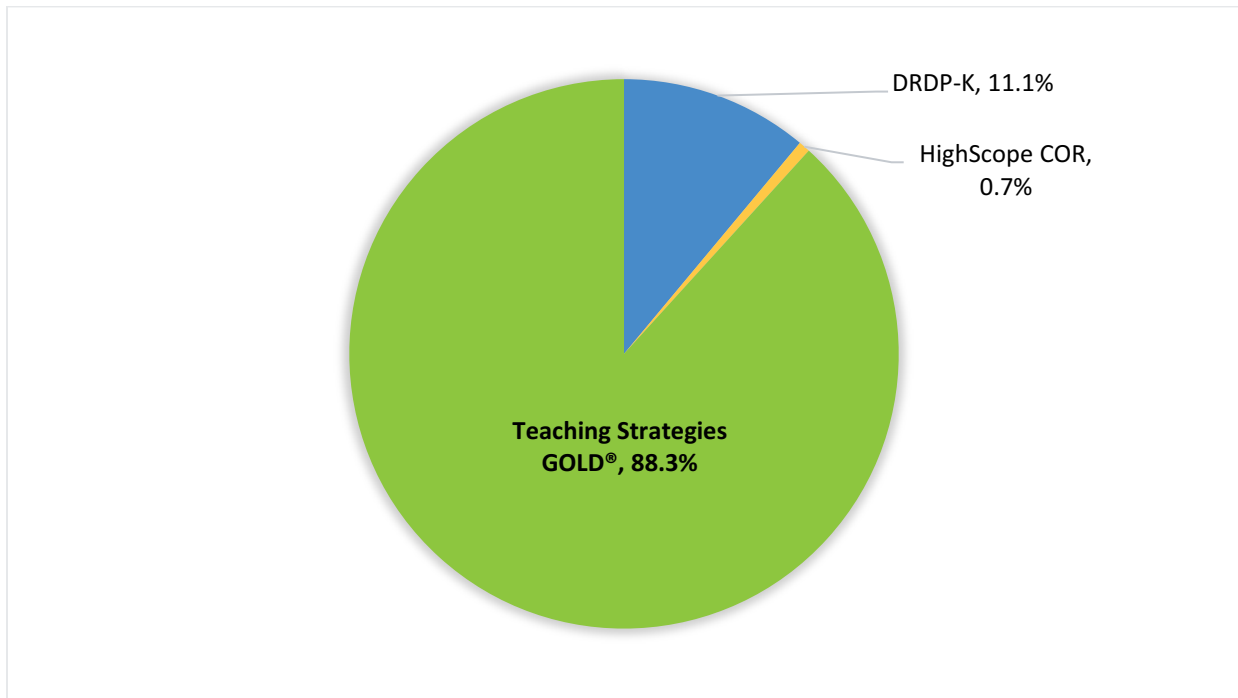
For reporting purposes, the general knowledge domain consists of mathematics and literacy, such that six domains are reported to the state.

### **Progress in 2018: Second Reporting of Statewide Kindergarten School Readiness Information**

School districts reported school readiness data from the school readiness assessment window, which is the first 60 calendar days of the 2018-19 school year. Data included in this report comes from one of the following approved assessment tools: Teaching Strategies GOLD®, HighScope Child Observation Record (COR), and the Desired Results Developmental Profile for Kindergarten 2015 (DRDP-K 2015). Teaching Strategies GOLD® was used by 88.3 percent of districts throughout the state. DRDP-K 2015 was used by 11.1 percent of districts, and HighScope COR was used by 0.7 percent of districts (Figure 1). Data for 9,026 students from the eight districts and 142 charter schools with waivers for use of a State Board approved kindergarten school readiness assessment have been excluded from this report.



**Figure 1.** Kindergarten School Readiness Assessments Used in Colorado School Districts



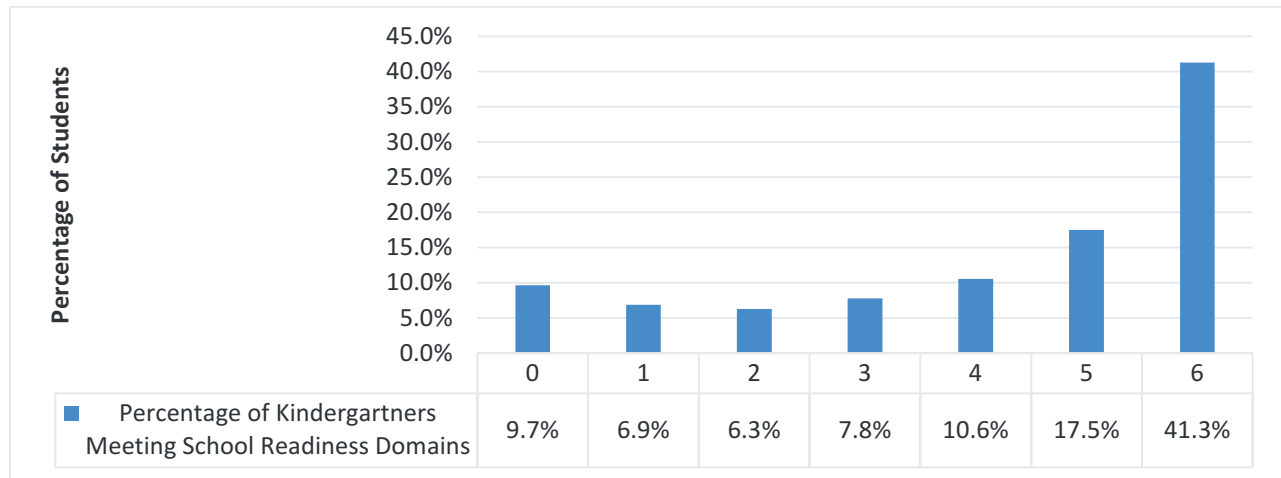
The kindergarten school readiness reporting system adopted by the state board of education requires districts to submit only aggregate kindergarten school readiness information without identifying specific domains of readiness (i.e., physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language and comprehension development, cognition, mathematics and literacy). Instead, districts submit aggregate information on the number of domains in which students demonstrate readiness. For example, if a student met kindergarten entry expectations in all domains except cognition, the district would report this information as meeting 5 of 6 domains. In contrast, if a student was only meeting kindergarten entry expectations in physical well-being and motor development, the district would report this information as meeting 1 of 6 domains.

*Kindergarten School Readiness Findings*

The following results were gathered from the 2018 reporting window. As illustrated in Figure 2, over half (58.8 percent) of Colorado’s kindergartners meet 5 or 6 of the school readiness domains.



**Figure 2: Percentage of Colorado Kindergartners Meeting School Readiness Domains**

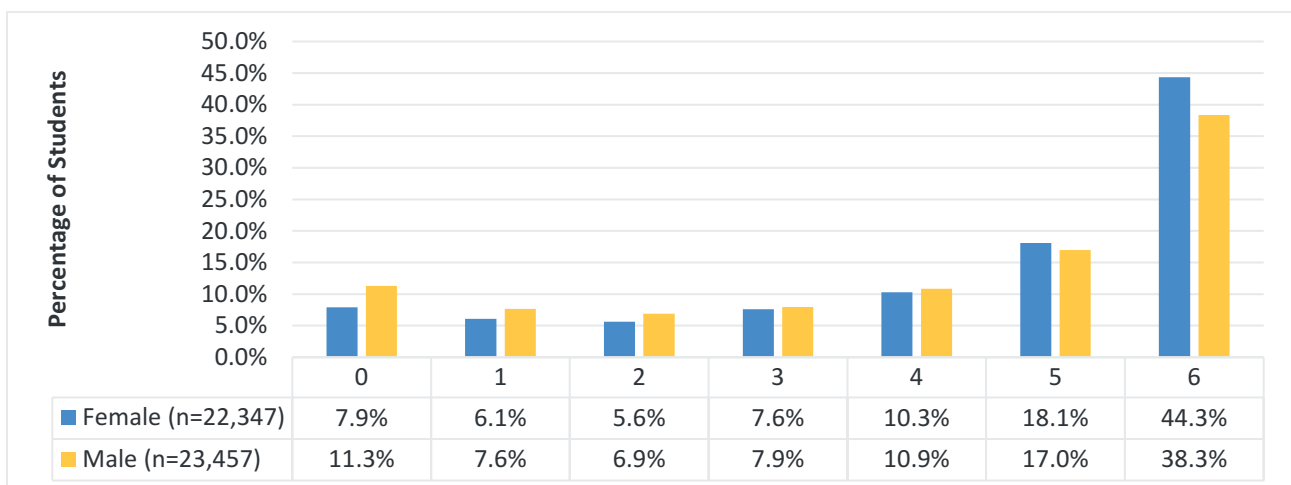


N = 45,804

Disaggregation of kindergarten school readiness information by gender, free or reduced-lunch status, and race and ethnicity can be found in the following figures. School readiness data are not collected based on half-day or full-day kindergarten status. Also, n-counts for some disaggregated categories vary due to completeness of information submitted to CDE.

*Kindergarten School Readiness By Gender:* Readiness data by gender (Figure 3) indicate a higher percentage of males compared to females meeting four or fewer domains (44.6 percent compared with 37.5 percent), with a higher percentage of females meeting five or six domains in comparison to males (62.4 percent compared with 55.3 percent).

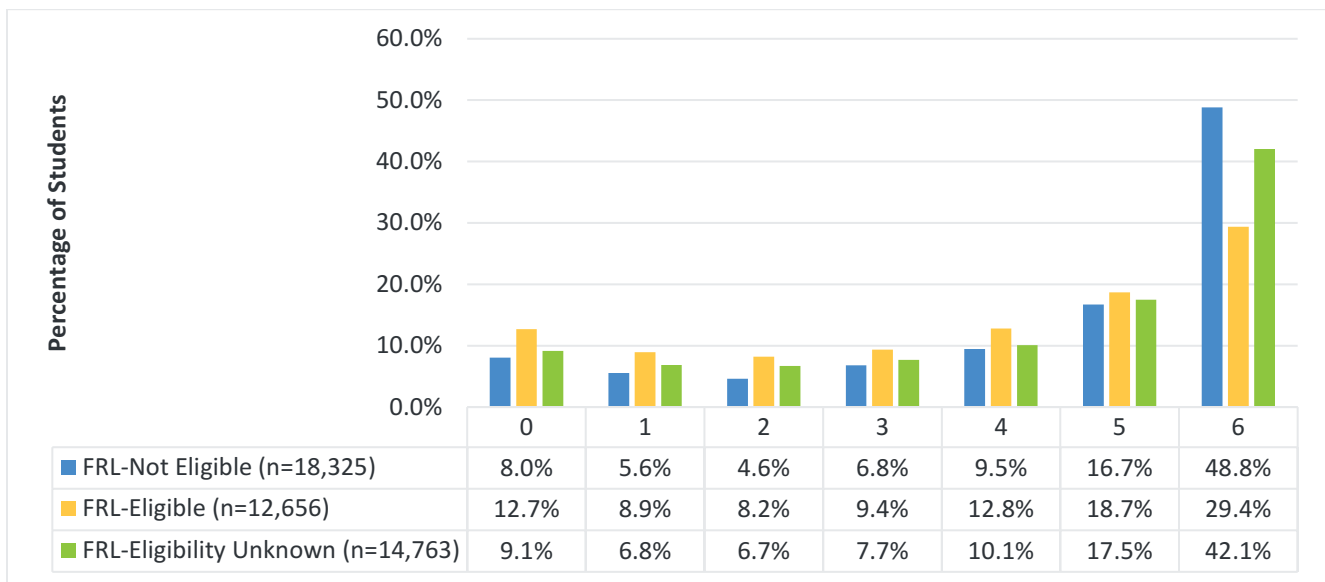
**Figure 3: Percentage of Colorado Kindergartners by Gender Meeting School Readiness Domains**





*Kindergarten School Readiness by Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility:* Readiness data by free or reduced lunch eligibility (Figure 4) indicates that just under half (48.8 percent) of students who do not qualify for free or reduced price lunches (FRL) meet expectations in all six domains. This is in comparison to students who do qualify for free or reduced price lunches (FRL), where about the same percentage (48.1 percent) meet expectations in either five or six domains.

**Figure 4:** Percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch Eligible Colorado Kindergartners Meeting School Readiness Domains



Note: FRL eligibility data is limited by the capacity of the approved assessment tools to verify FRL status.

*Kindergarten School Readiness by Ethnicity and Race:* Readiness data by ethnicity (Figure 5) indicates that there are differences in the number of domains in which students meet age expectations according to ethnicity. As shown below, just under half (46.1 percent) of students who are not Hispanic met expectations in all six domains. In comparison, just under half (48.8 percent) of students who are Hispanic met expectations in either five or six domains.



**Figure 5: Percentage of Colorado Kindergartners by Ethnicity Meeting School Readiness Domains**

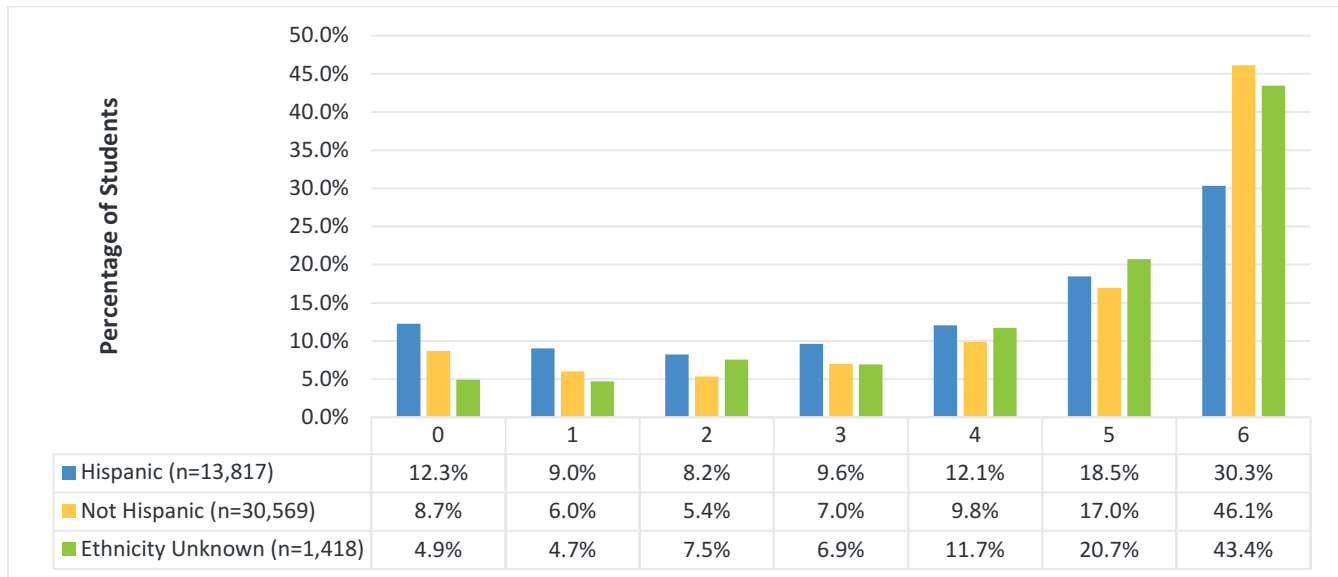


Table 1 illustrates the distribution of readiness data by race.

**Table 1: Percentage of Colorado Kindergartners by Race Meeting School Readiness Domains**

Category	Total Student Count	Domain Readiness Count						
		0 of 6	1 of 6	2 of 6	3 of 6	4 of 6	5 of 6	6 of 6
American Indian/Alaska Native	1,616	10.5%	9.2%	10.0%	10.7%	13.7%	21.1%	24.9%
Asian	1,499	15.1%	9.5%	6.7%	8.5%	10.6%	16.5%	33.0%
Black	2,498	15.0%	8.7%	6.8%	7.4%	11.8%	20.1%	30.2%
White	32,290	8.0%	6.0%	5.8%	7.6%	10.4%	17.4%	44.8%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	168	10.1%	7.7%	6.0%	13.1%	7.7%	19.0%	36.3%
Two or More Races	2,694	9.1%	7.3%	5.9%	7.8%	11.1%	18.3%	40.5%
Race Unknown	1,868	7.2%	6.3%	8.2%	8.2%	9.4%	20.1%	40.6%

Data for ethnicity and race are reported separately due to limitations in the reporting features within approved school readiness assessments.

## The Colorado Academic Standards

### Background

CAP4K required the Colorado 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 academic expectations for preschool through high school students.

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.

### **Progress in 2017-18: Standards Review and Revision Process Conducted**

A provision of CAP4K requires the Colorado State Board of Education to review and revise every content area in the CAS by July 2018 and every six years thereafter. To support these efforts, CDE created a stakeholder driven process starting in 2016 to ensure that the standards revisions were reflective of stakeholder needs while still being in scope, relevance, and rigor to the highest national and international standards (pursuant to section 22-7-1005(3)(f) C.R.S.).

To this end, CDE engaged 13 committees to review and provide recommendations to the state board for the 10 content areas within the CAS (separating the review of the comprehensive health and physical education standards into two committees) as well as to develop voluntary secondary standards for computer science as required by House Bill 16-1198. These committees were comprised of 174 members with CDE staff serving in a supportive role for the facilitation.

Once the initial draft of revisions were complete in the fall of 2017, the review and revision committees drew from public comments submitted through an online feedback system and benchmarking reports to make initial revision recommendations. Additionally, CDE staff conducted targeted outreach to solicit feedback from parent groups, business and community leaders, along with school district leadership.



Following the release of the initial revision recommendations, the review and revision committees made public presentations regarding the proposed revisions to the Colorado State Board of Education from November 2017 through January 2018. Over the course of four state board of education meetings, the chairpersons of the content area committees presented the final recommendations from their respective committees. Presentations included a summary of the feedback received through the online standards feedback system to the recommended revisions, committee responses to feedback received from state board members, and a summary of final key changes recommended by the committee. State board members also received copies of the final recommended standards.

Through the spring of 2018, the state board of education approved the revisions to each of the content areas within the CAS. The content areas were revised from 13 in the 2009 adoption to 8 in the 2018 revision. These includes content areas of visual and performing arts (previously the separate content areas of drama and theater arts, dance, music and visual arts); social studies; mathematics; reading, writing and communicating; science; world languages; comprehensive health and physical education; and the voluntary computer science standards. School districts are required to implement the revised standards by the fall of 2020.

## Colorado's Statewide Assessment System

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### Background

The Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) were developed to assess the Colorado Academic Standards adopted in 2009 and 2010. The CMAS in science and social studies were administered for the first time in 2014 with English Language arts (ELA) and mathematics added in 2015. CMAS was administered in 2018 to measure student mastery of the standards in English language arts (grades 3-8), mathematics (grades 3-8), science (grades 5, 8 and 11), and social studies (sampled in grades 4 and 7). In 2018, Colorado administered the SAT Suite in high schools (PSAT in grades 9 and 10 and SAT in grade 11). Alternate assessments (CoAlt) to the CMAS and SAT assessments were administered to eligible students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

**Table 4:** State Content Assessments

Assessment	Grades Administered
<b>CMAS and CoAlt: English Language Arts</b>	Grades 3-8
<b>CMAS and CoAlt: Mathematics</b>	
<b>CMAS and CoAlt: Science</b>	Grades 5, 8 and 11
<b>CMAS and CoAlt: Social Studies</b>	Grades 4 and 7 (sampled)
<b>PSAT and CoAlt</b>	Grades 9 and 10
<b>SAT and CoAlt</b>	Grade 11



## Progress in 2018-19: Assessing Colorado's Current Academic Standards

CMAS: English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies achievement results and participation rates for spring 2018 are available at the following location: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/cmas-dataandresults>.

PSAT and SAT results and participation rates for spring 2018 are available at the following location: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/cosatdataandresults>

## Looking Ahead

The state assessments will be reviewed and revised as necessary in the next few years to ensure alignment with the newly adopted 2020 Colorado Academic Standards.

## Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

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### 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.

### Progress in 2017-18

In alignment with the PWR description for Colorado, CDE and CDHE 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, remediation rates for students who enter college at a Colorado public institution of higher education, and implementation of Colorado's graduation guidelines. State data is summarized below; district and school-level information can be accessed at [www.cde.state.co.us/schoolview](http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolview) and <http://highered.colorado.gov/Data/Tools.html>.

### 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).



### *Graduation Rates*

The four-year high school graduation rate for the Class of 2018 is 80.7 percent, which signifies a 1.7 percentage point improvement compared to the previous year. Due to a change in state law, students that participate in the 5<sup>th</sup> year Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment (ASCENT) program are now counted in the four-year graduation rate for schools and districts, if the student has met minimum graduation requirements. As a result of this change for ASCENT students, the graduation rate for the Class of 2018 received a 0.8 percentage point increase. The Class of 2018 had 2,540 more graduates than the Class of 2017. The state's four-year graduation rate has increased 8.3 percentage points since 2010. Extended year rates for high school students taking five, six and seven years to graduate also show improvement in 2016-17. 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 2017-18 dropout rate for Colorado is 2.2 percent. This represents an all-time low in the state's dropout rate among students in grades 7 through 12. Colorado's statewide dropout rate has reduced by half over the past decade. Details on the dropout rate are available on the CDE website, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/dropoutcurrent>.

### *Concurrent Enrollment*

The state of Colorado passed the Concurrent Enrollment Program Act in 2009, which provides a structure for local education providers (LEPs) and institutions of higher education to enter into cooperative agreements to offer college courses to high school students. Most Concurrent Enrollment programs that participate in the state legislated program are Colorado Opportunity Funding (COF) eligible, tuition free in most situations, and offer courses which can apply to a program of study. Other programs exist in Colorado that do not follow the Act but also identify as concurrent enrollment. For this report, "Concurrent Enrollment" is capitalized to distinguish partnerships that follow the Act from those that do not. Under the Act, Concurrent Enrollment is defined as 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 2016-17 academic year, approximately 32 percent of all 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders in Colorado or nearly 42,000 students in a public high school participated in dual some sort of concurrent enrollment program. This reflected a participation increase of 9 percent over the prior year. In the same academic year, more than 28,000 students enrolled in a Concurrent Enrollment Act program, per C.R.S. 22-35, an increase of more than 5 percent from the previous year. Compared to the previous year, participation in Concurrent Enrollment increased 16 percent among Asian students, 8 percent among African American students, 8 percent among Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students, 21 percent among Hispanic students, 6 percent among White, non-Hispanic students and 12 percent among students identifying as more than one race. Approximately 94 percent of Concurrent Enrollment credit hours taken by students were passed, which is a one percentage point increase from the prior year. Through Concurrent Enrollment programs, 2,017 students earned some type of postsecondary credential in 2016-2017 while still in high school. This is a 35 percent increase over last year's total credential-completion number of 1,491. A previous CDHE study found that participation in a Concurrent Enrollment program 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 SAT/ACT scores constant.

### *Graduation Guidelines*

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 expectations for 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 took 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.

In partnership with CDE's Office of Standards and Instructional Support, the Office of Postsecondary Workforce Readiness updated the list of PWR-essential skills that assist students in reflecting readiness for next steps beyond high school and included these skills in the recent revisions to the Colorado's Academic Standards.

## Admissions and Remedial Education Policy Review and Revision

### **Background**

CAP4K and subsequent state law (section 23-1-113 C.R.S.) required the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) to review and revise the admission standards policy (CCHE policy I, F) and the developmental/remedial education policy (CCHE policy I, E) by December 15, 2013. Statute required CCHE 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, CCHE 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 admit students whom they are best able to serve to be successful and earn a credential.

As required by the new policy, institutions submitted their proposed admission standards which were approved by CCHE in December 2014. The admissions standards include the mid 50 percent range of assessment scores and grade point average (GPA) for each institution's previously admitted student class, as well as academic rigor details. In alignment with the upcoming graduation guidelines, academic rigor can specifically include competency based education. CCHE 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. CDHE 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](http://www.coadmissionstool.org)

### **Developmental Education Policy**

Colorado's developmental (formerly "remedial") education policy provides criteria to be used by all public higher education institutions in the state in identifying students who need developmental courses in English and mathematics. The change from "remedial" to "developmental" was made by the Commission on Higher Education in 2017 to reflect the national movement away from using the term "remedial." The policy lays out standards whereby institutions may offer developmental courses.

The developmental education policy aligns with postsecondary expectations and with high school graduation guidelines. The goal of the policy is to improve the effectiveness of developmental placement and education, and to increase the number of credentials received by Colorado high school graduates, especially by those from underrepresented backgrounds. In 2013, the policy was updated to increase institution flexibility by giving more placement options, including allowing institutions to place students into college level courses along with supplemental academic instruction. The updated 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 the General Education Development test (GED) and the two new high school equivalency exams (TASC and HiSET), Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced scores. Also, institutions may use additional means of evaluating a student's readiness such as high school GPA and prior learning experiences (e.g., work experience).