



Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K)

2025 Annual Legislative Report

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

By:
Colorado Department of Education

March 2025

Student Learning Division
201 E. Colfax Ave., Denver, CO 80203
For more information, contact:
Joanna Bruno, Ph.D., Chief Academic Officer
(303) 919-3907
Bruno_J@cde.state.co.us



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Overview	5
Kindergarten School Readiness	5
Background	5
Kindergarten School Readiness Assessment	6
Kindergarten School Readiness Findings	7
Overall Results	8
Kindergarten School Readiness by Gender	9
Kindergarten School Readiness by Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility	12
Kindergarten School Readiness by Ethnicity and Race	14
The Colorado Academic Standards	18
Background	18
Standards Review and Revision Process	18
Colorado's Statewide Content Assessment System	19
Background	19
2024 State Assessment Results and Interpretation Considerations	20
Students Instructional Experiences	20
2024 State Assessment Results Provide Insight into Student Learning	20
Participation Information is Critical to Interpretation of State, District and School Results	20
Looking Ahead	20
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	20
Background	20
Progress in 2023-24	21
Graduation and Dropout Rates	21
Concurrent Enrollment	21
Graduation Guidelines	21



Executive Summary

The Colorado General Assembly passed the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids, SB08-212, creating alignment from preschool through postsecondary education. The law requires a regular review of academic standards, state assessments, and postsecondary and workforce readiness. In addition, annual reporting needs to include implementation of school readiness through postsecondary education.

Kindergarten School Readiness

The Kindergarten School Readiness (KSR) Data for the 2024-25 school year, reported to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), provides insights into the readiness of Colorado's kindergarteners. This data is reported in aggregate at the school level and includes the number of students assessed in various KSR domains, the number of students meeting or exceeding expectations, and demographic data by gender, Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL) status, and race/ethnicity.

The KSR data for 2024-25 indicates that while a majority of kindergarteners in Colorado are meeting or exceeding expectations in various developmental domains, notable disparities exist based on gender, FRL status, and race/ethnicity. These disparities highlight areas for targeted interventions to ensure equitable school readiness for all students.

The changes in cut scores and assessment tools in the 2024-25 school year, along with the reporting pause in 2020-21, suggest caution when comparing year-over-year data. Future efforts should focus on addressing the disparities between student groups to improve school readiness outcomes for all demographic groups.

Colorado Academic Standards

The Colorado Department of Education has initiated a comprehensive three-phase process to review and revise academic standards across various content areas. All standards are reviewed on a six-year cycle with approximately one-third of the standards reviewed every two years. The phased approach allows for comprehensive stakeholder involvement and provides local education providers ample time to transition to revised standards. The ultimate goal is to enhance the quality of education for students in Colorado. This process aims to ensure that the standards remain relevant and effective in providing quality education to students. The current phase of review and revision addressed the standards for comprehensive health, mathematics, reading, writing and communicating, and science. The board made the decision to keep the comprehensive health and the reading, writing, and communicating standards in their current form without revisions so they are finalized for this phase. The board also decided to move forward with revisions to high school mathematics and science specifically focused on climate literacy.

State Assessments

In the 2023-24 academic year, districts and schools continued to implement several academic support measures. These included high-impact tutoring, high-quality mathematics curricula, and evidence-based summer and afterschool programs.

The spring 2024 state assessment results highlighted progress in student achievement across various grades and subject areas. In some instances, certain grade levels even exceeded pre-pandemic performance levels. However, significant achievement gaps persist among different student groups. These gaps, in terms of the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on CMAS or PSAT/SAT assessments, were notably large:



- Race/Ethnicity: 25-37 percentage points
- Disability Status: 26-47 percentage points
- Free/Reduced Lunch Eligibility: 28-33 percentage points
- Multilingual Learner Status: 30-63 percentage points

Interpreting the 2024 district and school results requires careful consideration of participation information. Despite relatively high participation rates at the state level, particularly in elementary grades, participation rates for individual districts, schools, and specific student groups vary widely. Some student groups participate at higher rates than others, necessitating a nuanced approach to understanding the assessment results.

Postsecondary Workforce Readiness

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) have been actively measuring various factors to reflect the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) for students beyond high school. These measures include graduation rates, dropout rates, college entrance exam scores, participation in concurrent enrollment courses, matriculation and persistence rates, remediation rates, and the implementation of Colorado's graduation guidelines.

The four-year high school graduation rate for the Anticipated Year of Graduation (AYG) 2024 cohort is 84.2%, marking a 1.1 percentage point increase compared to the previous year. This cohort had 1,506 more four-year graduates than AYG 2023. Since 2010, the state's four-year graduation rate has increased by 10.7 percentage points. Improvement is also seen in the extended year rates for students taking five, six, and seven years to graduate. The 2023-24 overall dropout rate is 1.9%, a decrease of 0.2 percentage points from the previous year, with 8,947 dropouts in grades 7-12, a reduction of 718 students compared to 2023.

The Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (CEPA) passed in 2009, providing a framework for local education providers and institutions of higher education to offer college courses to high school students. Changes under S.B. 19-176 expanded concurrent enrollment opportunities, especially in areas with historically low participation. S.B. 19-176 also created a grant program to fund expansion and innovation efforts and a statewide comprehensive website to inform students and parents about concurrent enrollment and other dual credit opportunities, including costs, benefits, and challenges.

CDE continues to implement Graduation Guidelines established under H.B. 07-1118 and S.B. 08-256. These guidelines articulate shared expectations for the meaning of a high school diploma and outline minimum expectations for Reading, Writing and Communicating and Math proficiency for local districts and the state. To support local education providers, CDE staff has offered multiple opportunities for school and district leaders to learn from each other. This includes capstone workshops and regional trainings focusing on increasing postsecondary and workforce readiness.

The progress made in 2023-24 highlights improvements in graduation and dropout rates and the continued implementation of Graduation Guidelines. These efforts aim to enhance Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness for all students in Colorado, ensuring they are prepared for success beyond high school.



Overview

In 2008, the Colorado General Assembly passed S.B. 08-212. 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. CAP4K requires the regular review of Colorado’s preschool through high school student learning standards, an aligned state assessment system, 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

Background

CAP4K includes an emphasis on kindergarten school readiness, calling for the State Board of Education (SBE or “state board”) to define it and for educators to annually measure it. Specifically, CAP4K requires the SBE 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.

The state board has defined school readiness as the preparedness of a child to engage in learning as well as the ability of the school to meet the needs of all students in partnership with families and the community. The kindergarten school readiness provision allows for the monitoring of the skills, knowledge, and abilities of students as they enter kindergarten. Additionally, it provides an indicator of children’s experiences prior to kindergarten to better inform partnerships, prioritize needs, and select effective strategies to support ready systems.

Under CAP4K, local education providers are required to administer state board-approved kindergarten school readiness assessment tools to each student in kindergarten and to ensure that all children in publicly funded kindergarten receive an Individual School Readiness Plan.

To inform statewide progress toward school readiness, the kindergarten school readiness assessment informs:

- Individual kindergarten readiness plans and classroom instruction;
- Families of their child’s progress toward school readiness; and
- Reporting to the legislature and public through this CAP4K report.

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 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.

State Board of Education, April 2023.

Kindergarten School Readiness Assessment

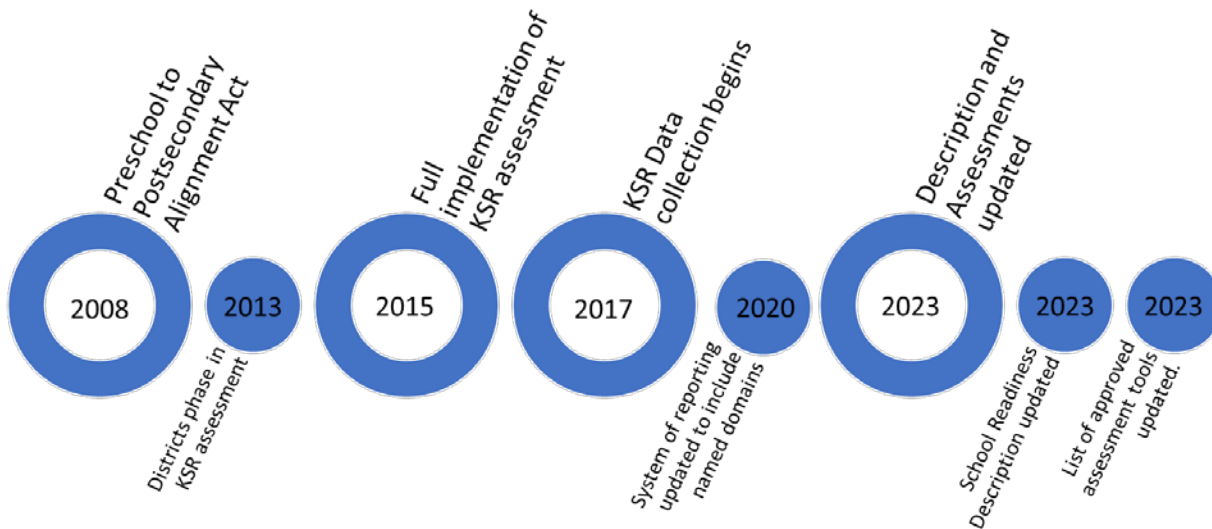
Kindergarten school readiness assessment tools measure students' knowledge, skills, and abilities as they enter kindergarten and progress toward grade-level expectations. Districts select assessment tool(s) from the State Board of Education approved list of assessment tools.

As a snapshot of school readiness, CDE collects aggregate data on the percentage of students meeting grade-level expectations at the beginning of the year, as determined by the assessment tool. Districts annually submit aggregate assessment data for each of the required school readiness domains:

- Physical well-being and motor development;
- Social and emotional development;
- Language and comprehension development;
- Cognition; and
- General knowledge (mathematics and literacy).

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

Figure 1: Timeline of Kindergarten School Readiness



Colorado school districts began phasing in kindergarten school readiness assessments in 2013 with full implementation during the 2015-16 school year. The SBE adopted a reporting system for kindergarten school readiness in the spring of 2016, enabling CDE to begin collecting data from districts during the 2017-18 school year.

In March 2020, the state board updated the reporting system to include specific data around the different domains. Previously, districts submitted only aggregated information by number of domains in which students demonstrated readiness. Beginning in the fall of 2021, the new system reported population-level kindergarten school readiness data in each of the required domains. The system collects statewide results of aggregate student data. The data is disaggregated by school district, school, grade level, free or reduced-cost lunch eligibility status, gender, and ethnicity as required in statute.

The Colorado SBE updated the description of school readiness during the March 2023 board meeting. Additionally, the SBE updated the list of approved kindergarten school readiness assessment tools to align with this description during the June 2023 board meeting, and assessment cut scores were updated.

Individual child data may be used to inform instruction and to inform families of child progress, but it may not be shared publicly and cannot be used to deny a student admission or progression to kindergarten or first grade.

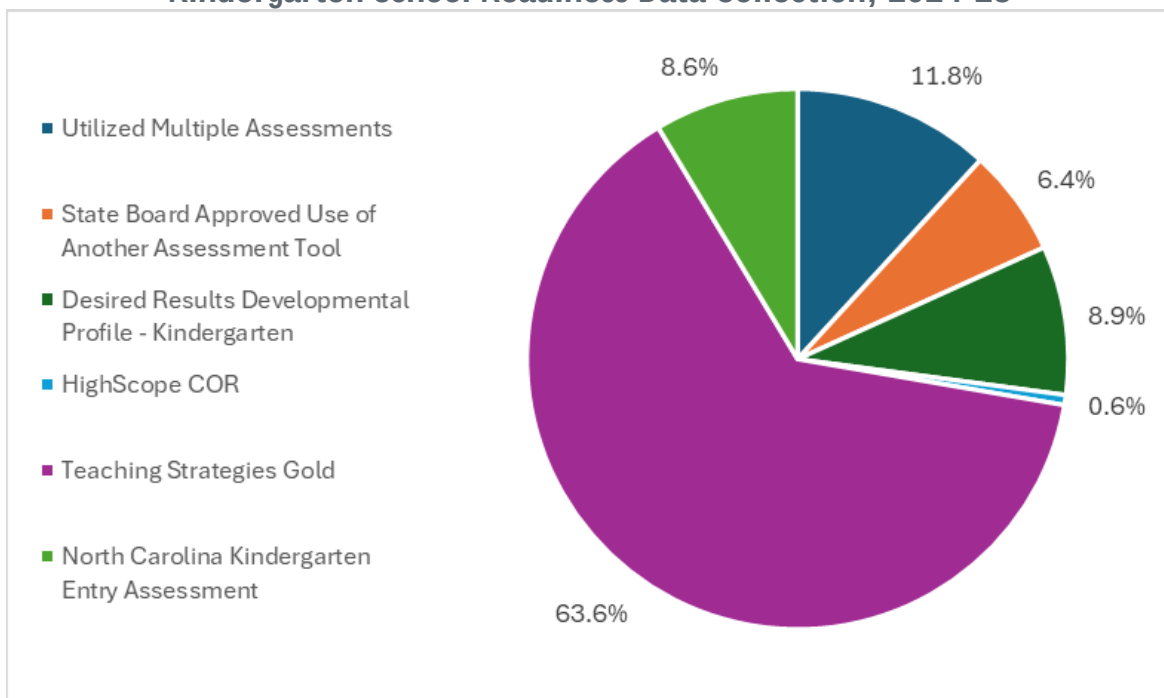
This report details data from the kindergarten school readiness collection from the fall of 2024.

Kindergarten School Readiness Findings

School districts reported school readiness data collected during the school readiness assessment window, which occurred in the first 60 calendar days of the 2024-25 school year. Student data was collected using the assessment tools approved by the SBE. Teaching Strategies GOLD® was used by 63.6 percent of schools throughout the state. Desired Results Developmental Profile- Kindergarten (DRDP-K) was used by 8.9 percent of schools, North Carolina Kindergarten Entry Assessment was used by 8.6 percent of schools, and HighScope COR was used by 0.6 percent of schools across the state. With the addition of single domain assessments to the menu, 11.8 percent of schools utilized multiple assessment tools to assess the six required domains (Figure 2).

The data from the 6.4 percent of schools which have received a waiver to use an assessment tool other than a state board approved Kindergarten School Readiness assessment tool have been excluded from this report due to compatibility concerns. The excluded population represents 4,706 students from schools or 7.3 percent of the total number of students assessed.

Figure 2: Schools' Use of Approved Assessment Tools for the Kindergarten School Readiness Data Collection, 2024-25





Overall Results

The Kindergarten School Readiness Data is reported to CDE aggregated at the school level. Districts report the following information for each of their schools:

- Total number of students assessed for each of the KSR domains
- Total number of students who met or exceeded expectations for each of the KSR domains
- Aggregated demographic data for the students who met or exceeded expectations within each of the KSR domains
 - Gender
 - Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Status
 - Race/Ethnicity

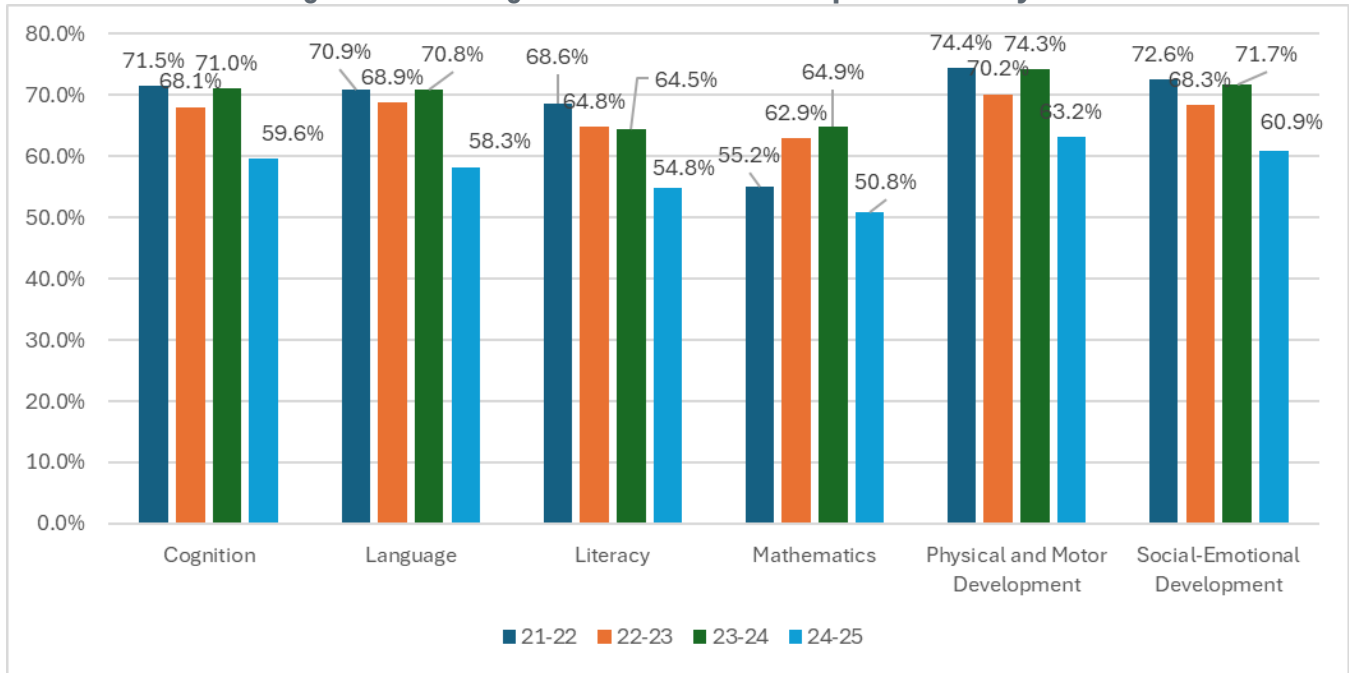
As illustrated in Figure 3, the results from the 2024-25 reporting window reveal that 63.2 percent of Colorado's kindergarteners met or exceeded age expectations for physical and motor development. A total of 60.9 percent met or exceeded age expectations in social emotional development, followed by cognition (59.6 percent), then followed by language (58.3 percent), literacy (54.8 percent), and math (50.8 percent). When compared to last year (2023-24 school year), the percentage of kindergarteners meeting expectations dropped across all domains; however, this is partially attributable to a change in threshold for some of the more widely used assessment tools.

Following the 2023 review and SBE approval of the current list of KSR assessment tools in June of 2023, all beginning-of-year kindergarten benchmarks and cut scores were updated to reflect the assessment tool review process, the assessment's most recent technical studies, and Colorado's 2020 academic standards. An update was required for 2 assessment tools, GOLD® and NCKEA. Data from the 2023-2024 school year fully reflects updated cut scores for all assessment tools for the beginning of kindergarten. This may impact the total percentage of students meeting or exceeding in each domain.

To illustrate, for schools using the same assessment in the 2024-25 school year and the 2023-24 school year, HighScope COR saw an average decrease of 19 percent (only used by two schools), followed by Teaching Strategies GOLD at -17 percent, DRDP-K and Approved Waiver fell 2 percent, and North Carolina KEA increased by 7 percent.

Due to the pause in reporting kindergarten school readiness data in 2020-2021 and the change in state board approved reporting system in 2020, annual data is only included for the 2021-22 through 2024-25 school years.

Figure 3: Percentage of Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Expectations by Domain



*The 2024-25 school year reflects a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

The disaggregation of kindergarten school readiness information by gender, free or reduced-lunch status, and race and ethnicity is included in the following sections. School readiness data are not disaggregated based on half-day or full-day kindergarten status. In addition, the data reported are for those students who met or exceeded readiness expectations and does not include the students who did not. As a result, we cannot report the percentage of student data by disaggregated groups like gender, Free and Reduced-Price Lunch status (FRL) and race/ethnicity. The state kindergarten enrollment data is provided for context, so it is clear where the number of students meeting expectations falls within the broader enrollment numbers. But the enrollment data may not exactly match the KSR data reported.

Kindergarten School Readiness by Gender

In 2024-25, based on the October enrollment count data, the total number of female students comprised slightly less than half of Colorado's enrolled kindergarten population (26,166 students). Male students comprised slightly more than half of the enrolled kindergarten population (27,493 students).

Table 1 provides the number of students by gender who met or exceeded expectations in each of the KSR domains in the 2024-25 school year.

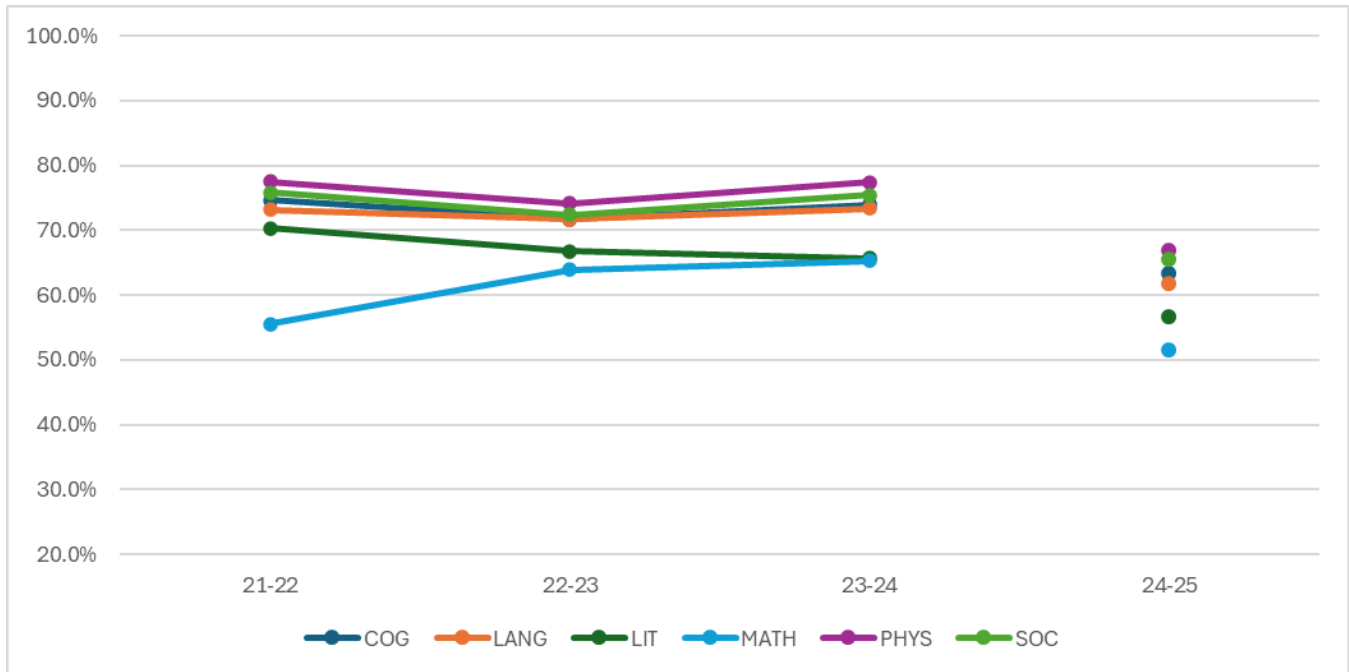


Table 1: Number of Colorado Kindergartners by Gender Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains in 2024-25

	Male	Female	Nonbinary
State Kindergarten Enrollment	27,493 (100%)	26,166 (100%)	*
Students meeting or exceeding in Social-Emotional Development	15,539 (57%)	17,114 (65%)	*
Students meeting or exceeding in Physical and Motor Development	16,420 (60%)	17,485 (67%)	*
Students meeting or exceeding in Cognition	15,427 (56%)	16,577 (63%)	*
Students meeting or exceeding in Language	15,136 (55%)	16,128 (62%)	*
Students meeting or exceeding in Literacy	14,600 (53%)	14,806 (57%)	*
Students meeting or exceeding in Math	13,797 (50%)	13,477 (52%)	*

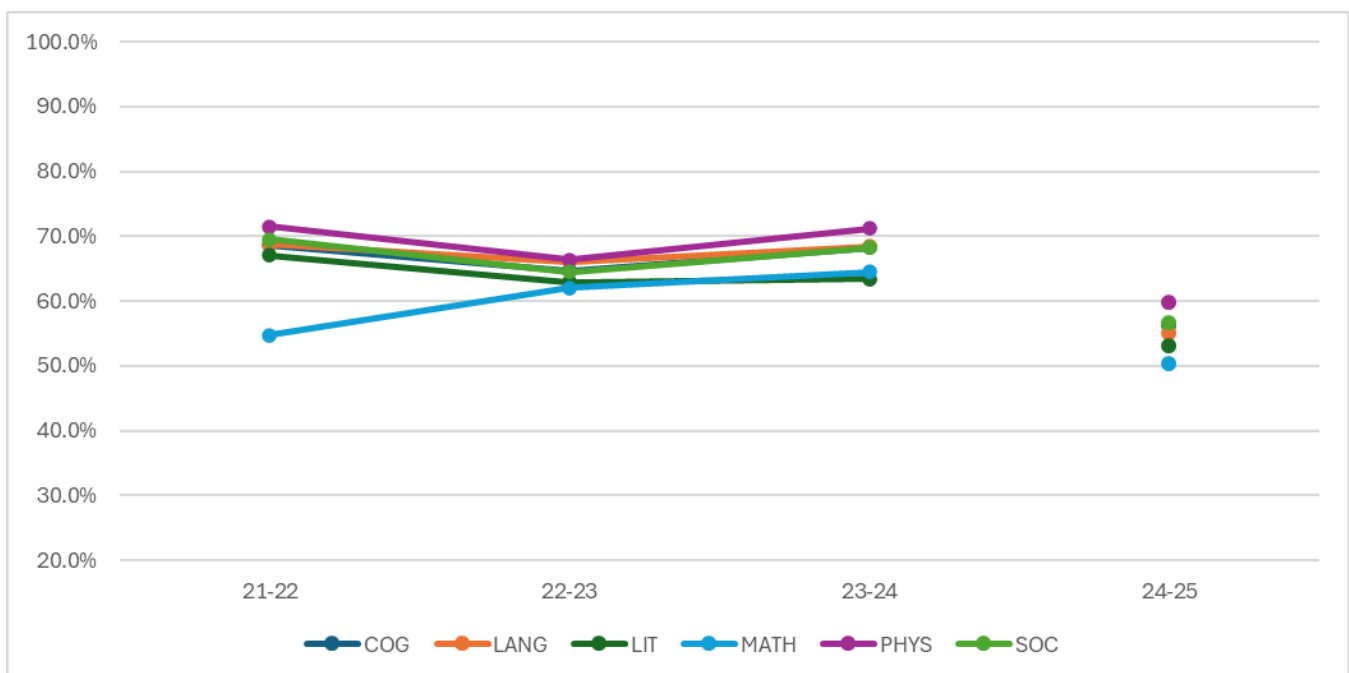
*N-size does not meet the minimum reporting threshold of 16.

Figure 4: Percentage of Colorado Female Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



*The 2024-25 school year reflects a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 5: Percentage of Colorado Male Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



*The 2024-25 school year reflects a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

**Kindergarten School Readiness by Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility**

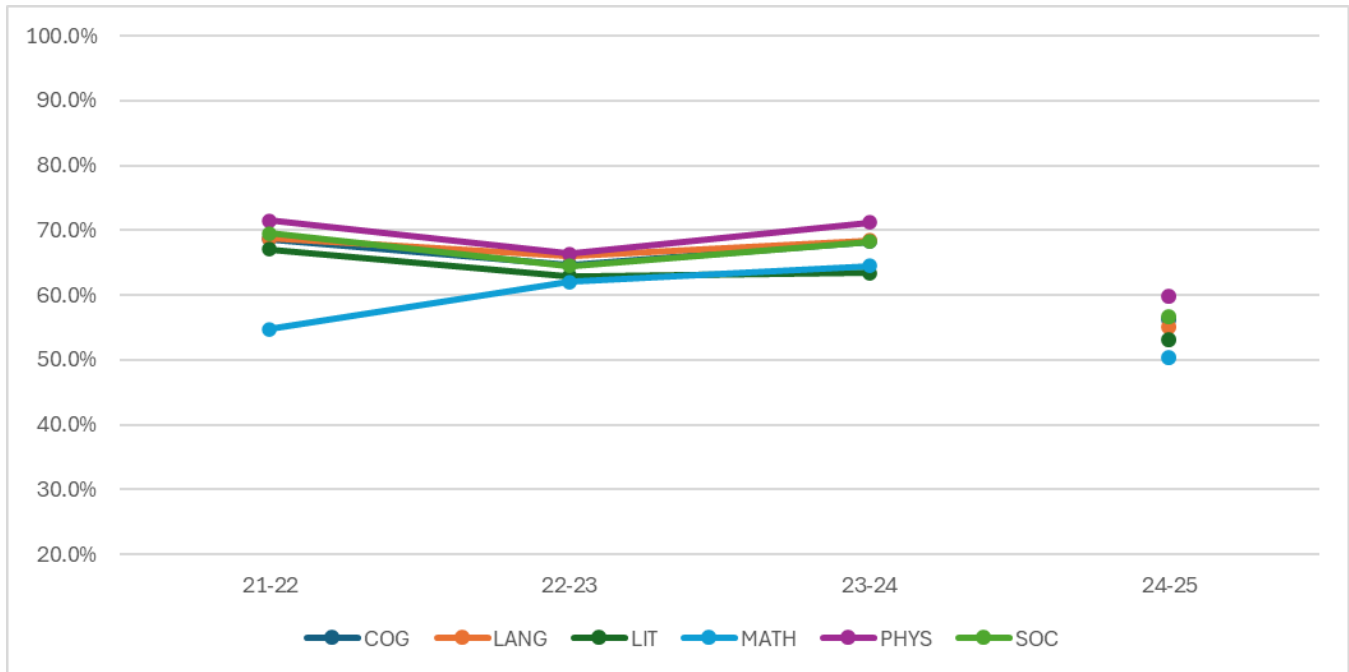
In the 2024-25 school year, based on the October enrollment count data, 29,903 students in Colorado's enrolled kindergarten population were not eligible to receive Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL), and 23,761 students were eligible to receive FRL.

Table 2 provides the FRL eligibility status for the students who met or exceeded Kindergarten Readiness expectations in each domain. When reporting state baseline data, it is important to note that the Kindergarten School Readiness data collection allows districts to use the FRL Eligibility Unknown option when reporting their student numbers. The State Kindergarten Enrollment data is collected without this option. Therefore, in the data table below, the number of students in the "FRL Unknown" category is shown as "zero."

Table 2: Number of Colorado Kindergartners by Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains in 2024-25

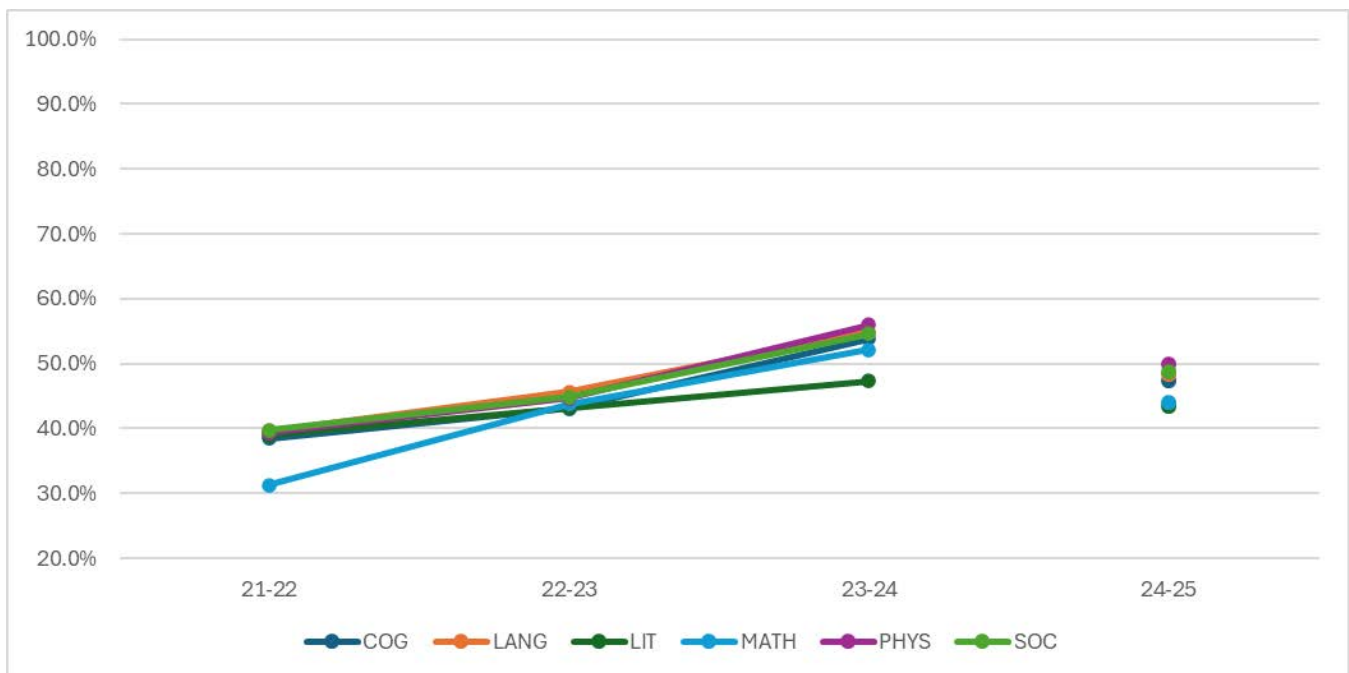
	FRL Eligible	FRL Not Eligible	FRL Unknown
State Total Kindergarten Enrollment	23,761 (100%)	29,903 (100%)	0
Students meeting or exceeding in Social-Emotional Development	7,453 (31%)	14,517 (49%)	10,687
Students meeting or exceeding in Physical and Motor Development	7,933 (33%)	14,896 (50%)	11,080
Students meeting or exceeding in Cognition	7,153 (30%)	14,153 (47%)	10,702
Students meeting or exceeding in Language	6,761 (29%)	14,428 (48%)	10,080
Students meeting or exceeding in Literacy	5,348 (23%)	12,936 (43%)	11,126
Students meeting or exceeding in Math	5,810 (25%)	13,123 (44%)	8,345

Figure 6: Percentage Colorado Kindergartners on Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



*The 2024-25 school year reflects a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 7: Percentage Colorado Kindergartners Not on Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



*The 2024-25 school year reflects a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.



Kindergarten School Readiness by Ethnicity and Race

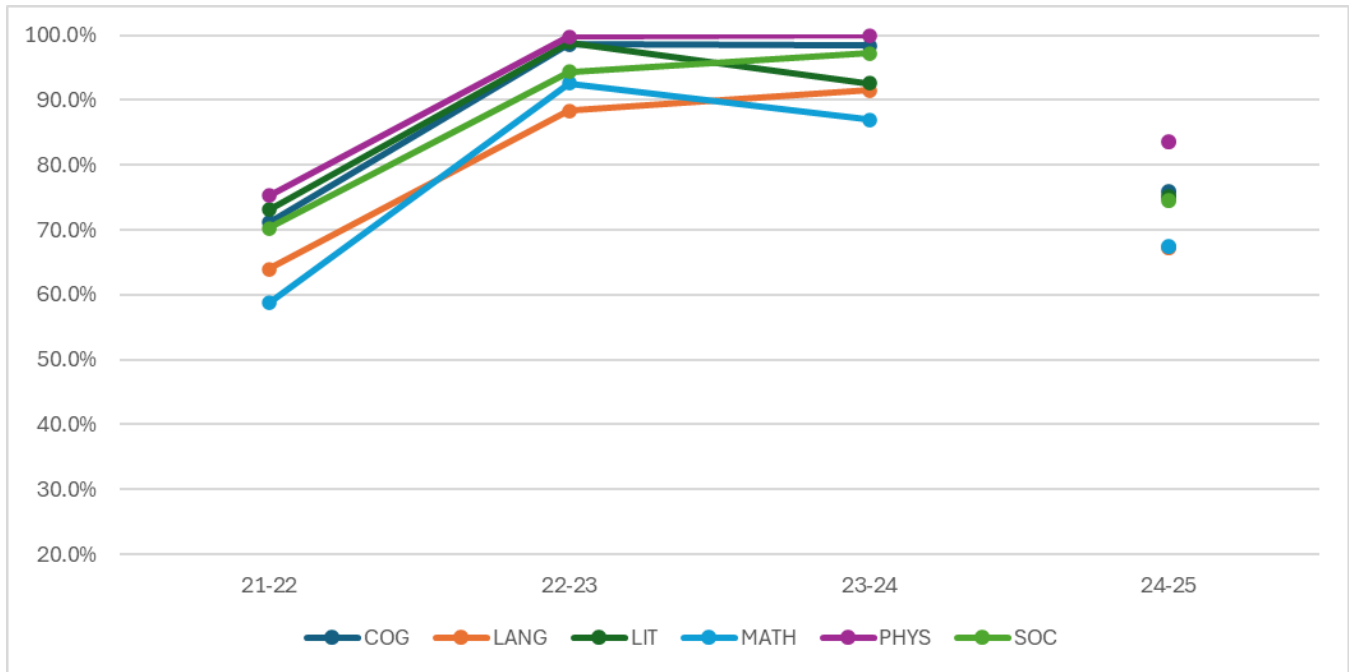
In 2024-25, based on the October enrollment count data, the majority of Colorado’s enrolled kindergarten population identified as White (24,979 students). This was followed by Hispanic (20,508 students), Two or More Races (3,384 students), Black (2,613), Asian (1,719), American Indian or Alaska Native (264 students) and Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (197 students).

Table 3 provides the racial and ethnic compositions for the students who met or exceeded expectations in each Kindergarten School Readiness domain. When reporting state baseline data, it is important to note that the Kindergarten School Readiness data collection allows districts to use the Unknown Race/Ethnicity option when reporting their student numbers. The State Kindergarten Enrollment data is collected without this option. Therefore, in the enrollment row of the data table below, the number of students in the “Unknown Race/Ethnicity” category is shown as “zero.”

Table 3: Percentage of Colorado Kindergartners by Race and Ethnicity Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains in 2024-25

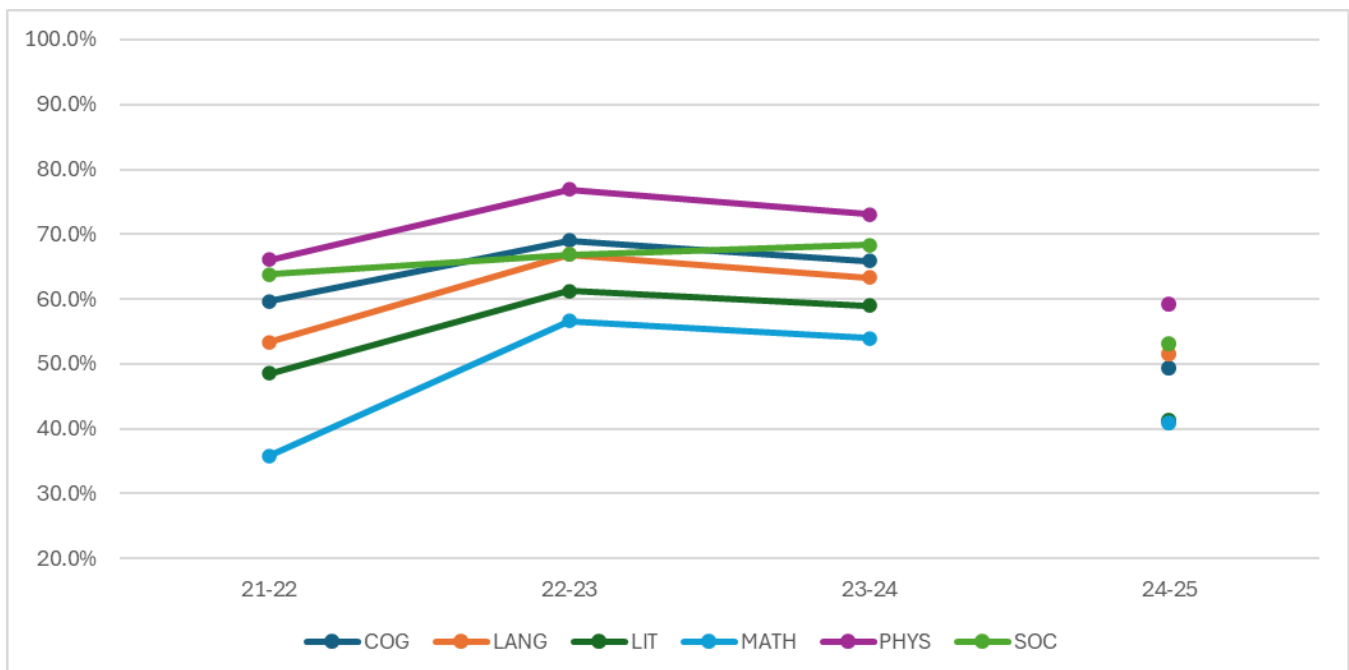
	Asian	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Black	Hispanic	White	Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Unknown Race / Ethnicity
State Kindergarten Enrollment	1,719 (100%)	264 (100%)	2,613 (100%)	20,508 (100%)	24,979 (100%)	197 (100%)	3,384 (100%)	0
Students meeting or exceeding in Social-Emotional Development	1,280 (75%)	140 (53%)	1,336 (51%)	10,953 (53%)	16,768 (60%)	100 (51%)	1,888 (56%)	192
Students meeting or exceeding in Physical and Motor Development	1,434 (83%)	156 (59%)	1,517 (58%)	11,597 (57%)	16,978 (61%)	105 (53%)	1,957 (58%)	165
Students meeting or exceeding in Cognition	1,302 (76%)	130 (49%)	1,365 (52%)	10,450 (51%)	16,627 (59%)	94 (48%)	1,849 (55%)	191
Students meeting or exceeding in Language	1,154 (67%)	136 (52%)	1,323 (51%)	9,452 (46%)	17,070 (61%)	100 (55%)	1,865 (55%)	169
Students meeting or exceeding in Literacy	1,290 (75%)	109 (41%)	1,131 (43%)	8,169 (40%)	16,592 (60%)	75 (38%)	1,839 (54%)	205
Students meeting or exceeding in Math	1,159 (67%)	108 (41%)	1,117 (43%)	7,962 (39%)	14,972 (54%)	78 (40%)	1,745 (52%)	137

Figure 8: Percentage of Asian Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



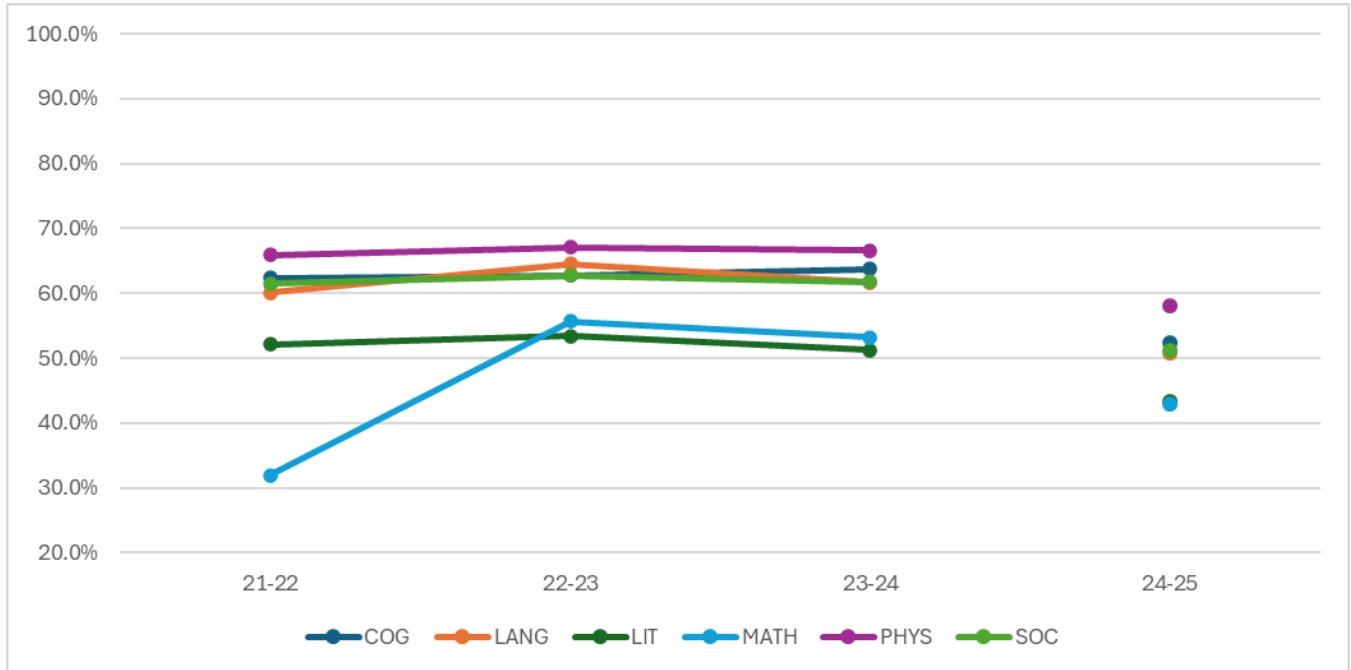
*The 2024-25 school year reflects a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 9: Percentage of American Indian or Alaskan Native Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



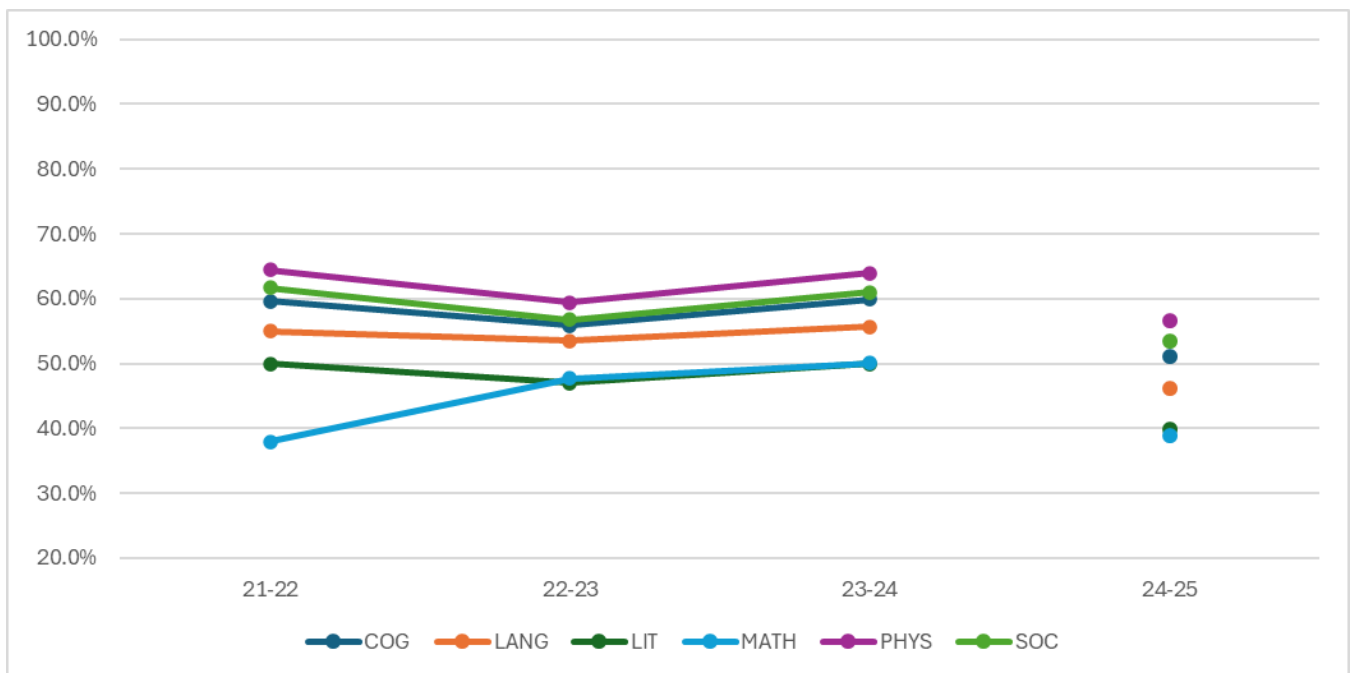
*The 2024-25 school year reflects a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 10: Percentage of Black Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



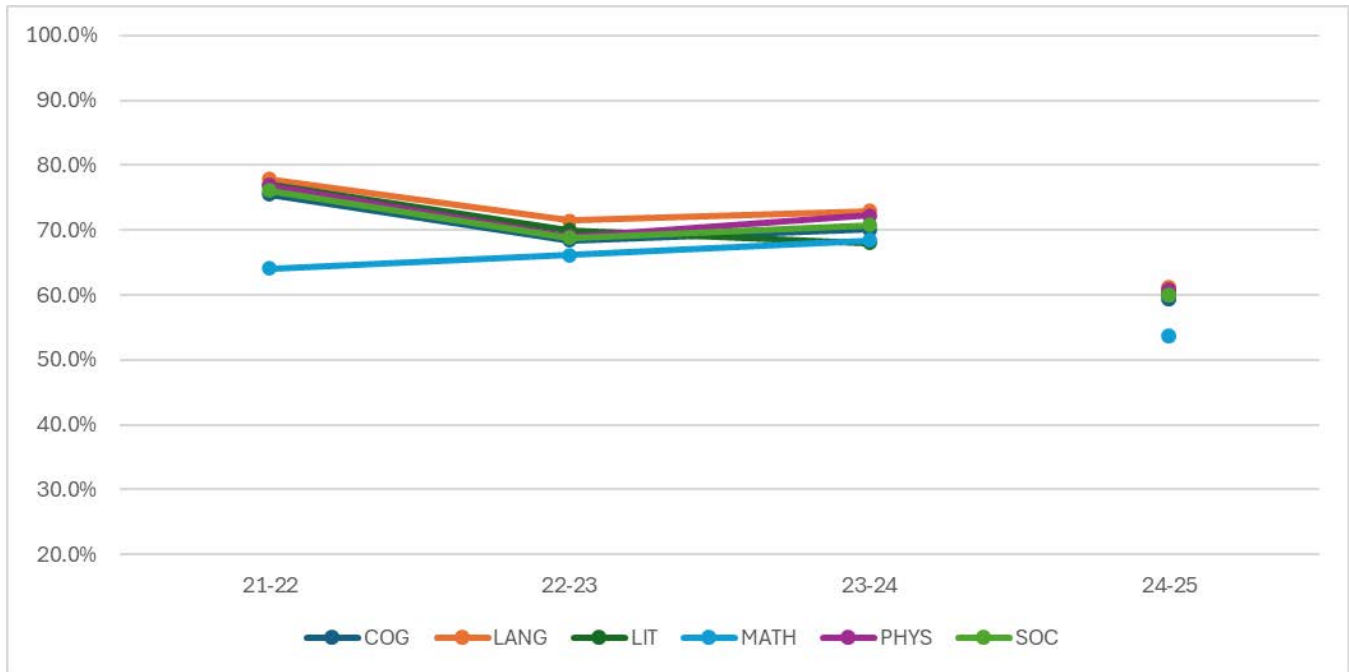
*The 2024-25 school year reflects a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 11: Percentage of Hispanic Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



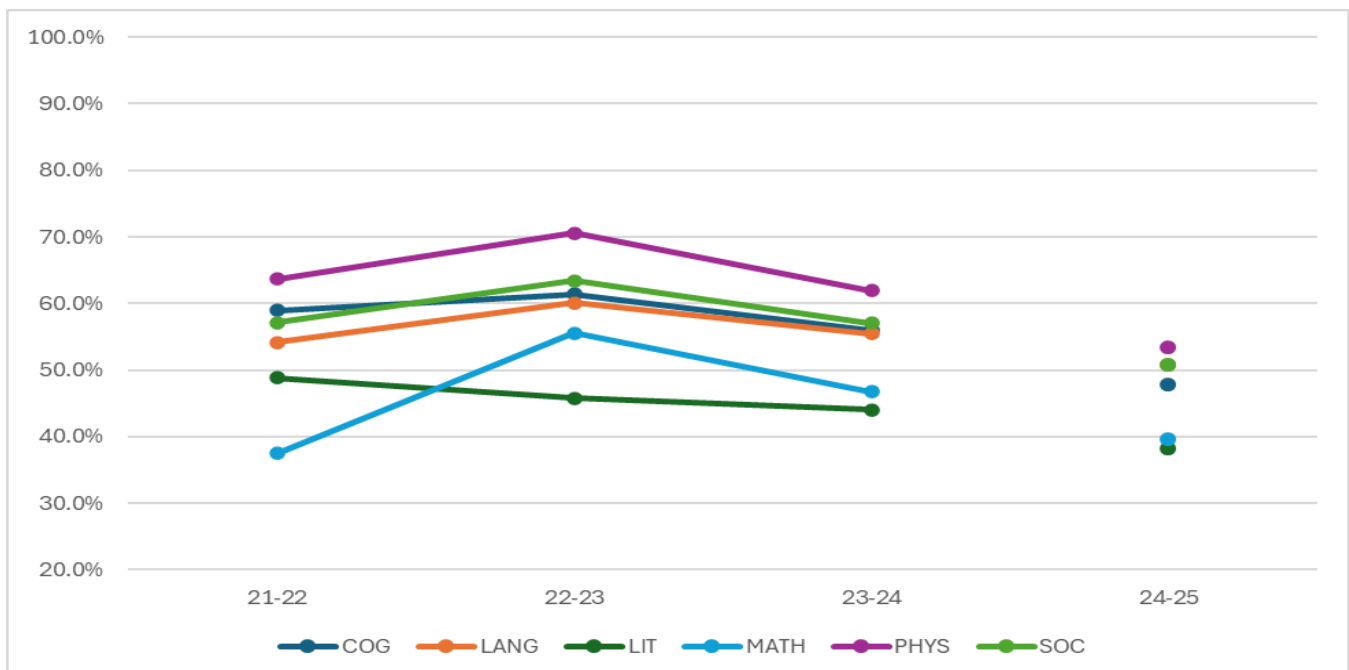
*The 2024-25 school year reflects a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 12: Percentage of White Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



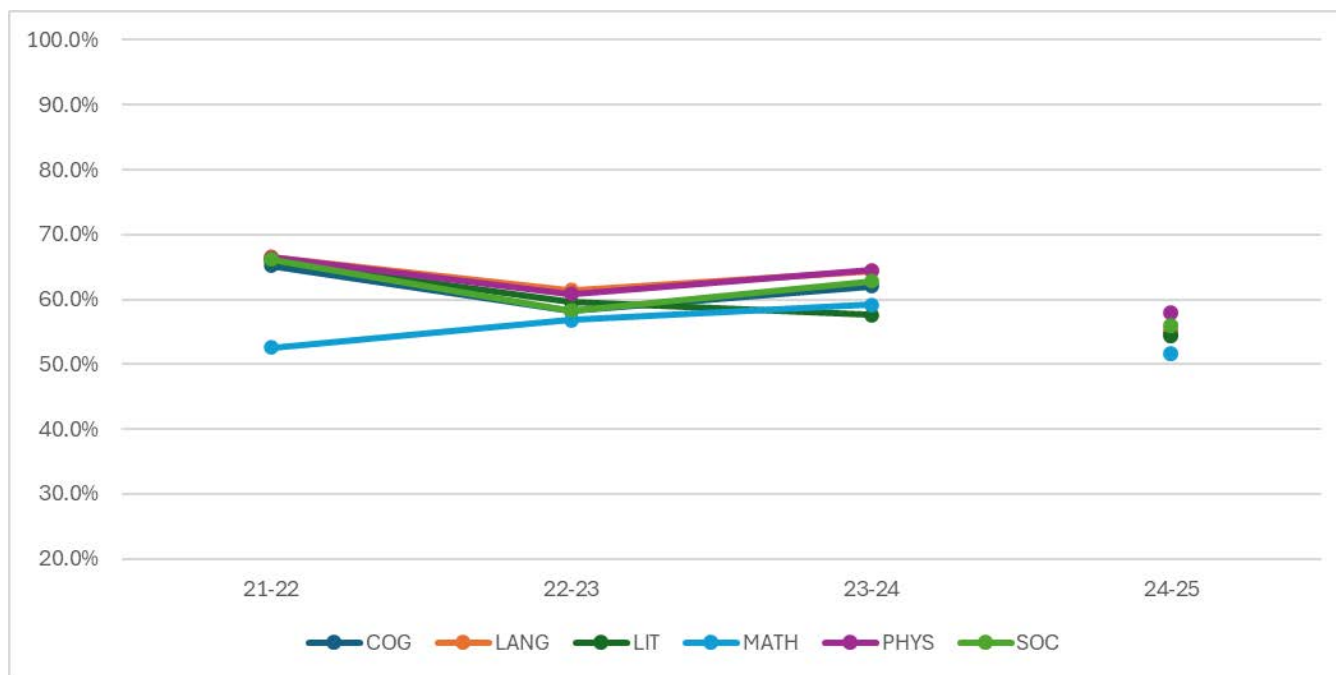
*The 2024-25 school year reflects a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 13: Percentage of Hawaiian / Pacific Islander Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



*The 2024-25 school year reflects a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 14: Percentage of Two or More Race Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



*The 2024-25 school year reflects a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

The Colorado Academic Standards

Background

CAP4K required the state board to adopt standards that identify the knowledge and skills a student should acquire as the student progresses from preschool through elementary and secondary education. It further requires the state board to review and revise the standards every six years. In the spring of 2020, the General Assembly passed H.B. 20-1032, which amended the standards revision timeline. The state board has since then been required to review and revise approximately one-third of the standards beginning in 2022 and an additional one-third every two years thereafter.

Standards Review and Revision Process

The arts and social studies standards revisions were included in the first phase of the three-phase process. The content areas in Phase II include English Language Proficiency, world languages, physical education, and computer science. Content areas planned for Phase III overlap with state-level assessment contracts for the tested content areas of mathematics, reading, writing and communicating, and science. In addition to the tested subjects, comprehensive health will also be reviewed in Phase III.

During the 2023-24 school year, the department convened a stakeholder committee to make recommended revisions for the computer science standards, as part of Phase II. This committee was composed of 8 members who have computer science expertise (i.e., industry leaders, teachers, district leaders, higher education, parent) with CDE staff serving in a supportive role.



Initial recommended revisions were presented to the state board in November 2023, made available to the public for feedback in December 2023.

Following the adoption of revisions to the computer science standards in June 2024, local education providers will have the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years to transition to the revised standards, with implementation beginning in the 2026-27 school year.

In the Fall of 2024, the State Board of Education began the review process for the Phase III content areas: comprehensive health, mathematics, reading, writing and communicating, and science. In December 2024 the board made the decision to keep the comprehensive health and the reading, writing, and communicating standards in their current form without revisions, so they are finalized for this phase. The board also decided to move forward with revisions to high school mathematics and science specifically focused on climate literacy, so decisions about revisions for these two content areas will be made in the 2025-2026 school year.

Colorado's Statewide Content Assessment System

Background

The Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) assessments in English language arts, math, science, and social studies are developed to assess the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS). 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. The adaptive digitally-based PSAT/SAT assessments were administered for the first time in spring 2024. The previously administered paper-based versions of the assessments were discontinued by the vendor. Digital versions of the PSAT/SAT assessments administered in spring 2024 featured numerous enhancements, including online administration, new item types, adjustments to content distributions, and different technical approaches that may have affected student testing experience and scores. Comparisons with results from prior years based on the paper-based version of the PSAT/SAT should be made with caution, especially in math.

Table 4 shows the spring 2024 administration by assessment and grade.

Table 4: 2024 State Content Assessments

Spring 2024 Assessments	
CMAS/CoAlt ELA	Grades 3-8
CMAS/CoAlt Math	Grades 3-8
CMAS and CoAlt Science (Developed to align to 2020 CAS)	Grades 5, 8, and 11
PSAT/SAT and CoAlt	Grades 9, 10, and 11

2024 State Assessment Results and Interpretation Considerations

Students Instructional Experiences

Districts and schools continued to implement academic support, including high impact tutoring, high quality mathematics curricula, and evidence-based summer and afterschool programs.

2024 State Assessment Results Provide Insight into Student Learning

State assessment results from spring 2024 highlighted continued progress in student achievement across various grades and subject areas, with some grade levels exceeding pre-pandemic performance levels. However, results continued to reveal notable double digit achievement gaps among student groups. Gaps in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on CMAS or PSAT/SAT assessments were particularly large based on race/ethnicity (25-37 percentage points), disability status (26-47 percentage points), free/reduced lunch eligibility (28-33 percentage points), and multilingual learner status (30-63 percentage points).

Participation Information is Critical to Interpretation of State, District and School Results

Participation information must be reviewed carefully when interpreting 2024 district and school results. Although participation rates are relatively high at the state level, especially in the elementary grade levels, participation rates for districts, schools and student groups show widespread differences across and within districts with some student groups participating at higher rates than other groups.

CMAS: English language arts, mathematics, and science achievement results and participation rates for the spring 2024 assessments are available on the [Spring 2024 CMAS Data and Results](#) webpage.

PSAT and SAT results and participation rates for spring 2024 are available on the [Colorado SAT and PSAT Data and Results](#) webpage.

Looking Ahead

CMAS and CoAlt social studies assessments will be administered in spring 2025 on a sampling basis. These assessments have not been administered since spring 2019 as the Colorado Academic Standards in social studies were undergoing a revision and implementation process.

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. Staff from the Department of Education and the Department of Higher Education conferred and recommended that the state board and commission affirm the current description, as is. The description was reviewed and re-confirmed by the state board in October 2022 and by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education in February 2024. This description serves as the basis for the state's alignment efforts including the Colorado Academic Standards, assessments and informing student demonstrations of skills and knowledge required to be ready for college and a career upon earning a high school diploma.

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.

Progress in 2023-24

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 exam 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.

Graduation and Dropout Rates

The four-year high school graduation rate for the Anticipated Year of Graduation (AYG) 2024 cohort is 84.2 percent, which signifies a 1.1 percentage point increase compared to the previous year. AYG 2024 had 1,506 more four-year graduates than AYG 2023. The state's four-year graduation rate has increased 10.7 percentage points since 2010 when Colorado moved to the Anticipated Year of Graduation cohort method for calculating graduation rates. Extended year rates for high school students taking five, six and seven years to graduate also showed improvement in 2023-24. See the state's [graduation data dashboard](#) for more information. The dashboard features longitudinal data by student groups, schools, and districts.

The state's 2023-24 overall dropout rate is 1.9 percent, which is a decrease of 0.2 percentage points from the previous year. There were 8,947 dropouts in grades 7-12—a reduction of 718 students compared to 2023. [Details on the dropout rate](#) are available on the CDE website.

Concurrent Enrollment

The state of Colorado passed the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (CEPA) in 2009, which provides a structure for local education providers and institutions of higher education to enter into cooperative agreements to offer college courses to high school students. Due to changes in CEPA per S.B. 19-176, to expand concurrent enrollment opportunities for high school students, especially in areas with historically low (or no) student enrollment in concurrent enrollment opportunities, local education providers are required to offer Concurrent Enrollment opportunities to qualified students in grades nine through 12 at no tuition cost to students and families. S.B. 19-176 also created a [grant program](#) to fund expansion and innovation efforts and created [a statewide comprehensive website for students and parents](#) to inform them of Concurrent Enrollment and other dual credit opportunities for students, what they cost, and the benefits and challenges of each option.

For more information about statewide student participation in Concurrent Enrollment and other dual credit programs, please see the Colorado Department of Higher Education's [Concurrent Enrollment webpage](#).

Graduation Guidelines

CDE continues to implement [Graduation Guidelines](#) as established under H.B. 07-1118 and S.B. 08-256, requiring the development of statewide high school Graduation Guidelines that local school boards must meet or exceed. The purpose of the Graduation Guidelines is to articulate Colorado's shared expectations for the meaning of a high school diploma and to outline the minimum 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, and with a one-year delay due to COVID, were required of all graduates in 2022 and beyond.



Graduation Guidelines align with the state’s description of postsecondary and workforce readiness and postsecondary entrance requirements.

To support local education providers in implementing the Graduation Guidelines, CDE staff has provided multiple opportunities for school and district leaders to learn from one another about the local implementation strategies that are proving effective for each learner. From capstone workshops focusing on meaningful capstone processes for all, to regional trainings focusing on strategies to increase postsecondary and workforce readiness, the Office of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness regularly seeks to highlight the best of what is happening in the field from which others can learn.