

Supporting Improved Standards and Assessments

Transitioning to 21st Century Standards and Assessments

The power of Colorado's education improvement efforts lies in having a comprehensive system consisting of relevant and rigorous standards, aligned and meaningful assessments, excellent teachers and school leaders, and high-performing schools and districts. All aspects of the system are *continuously improving* to advance student learning and prepare students to succeed in an increasingly competitive workforce.

Overview of Standards and Assessments

Colorado is implementing updated academic standards in 10 content areas, called the Colorado Academic Standards, for preschool through 12th grade. The Colorado Academic Standards clearly delineate what students are expected to master in each subject and grade, with each grade level building to the next, to ensure students have the academic knowledge and skills needed to be successful in college and career.

The standards for reading, writing and communicating, and mathematics incorporate the Common Core State Standards while maintaining the unique aspects of the Colorado Academic Standards, including 21st century skills and prepared graduate competencies. The updated standards are focused and rigorous, articulating the prepared graduate competencies and the points of mastery at each grade level that lead to college and career readiness.

Meaningful and relevant assessments work hand in hand with rigorous academic standards. Assessments provide ongoing measures of student learning at each grade level. The data from assessments is critical in determining if educational goals are being met and if students are on track to graduate prepared for college and career. The Colorado Academic Standards are the foundation for the state assessments in science, social studies, English language arts and mathematics.

Good instruction and assessment cannot occur in isolation of one another. Each informs the other, and they become the checks and balances that drive measurable student learning and achievement.

Colorado's State Assessment Timeline

1997-2011

Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)

- Measured student learning of the Colorado Model Content Standards (mathematics, reading, writing and science)

2012-13

Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP)

- Allows school districts to transition their instruction from the old standards to the new standards

2013-14

TCAP and Colorado Measures of Academic Success

- TCAP continues for reading, writing and math
- First year of new Colorado-developed social studies and science assessments (part of the state's new Colorado Measures of Academic Success)

2014-15

Colorado Measures of Academic Success

- First year of new PARCC-developed English language arts and mathematics assessments
- Second year of Colorado-developed social studies and science assessments

to Colorado” standards in those content areas. And, as always has been the case, districts maintain autonomy to adopt their own curriculum to meet the standards and teachers retain the ability to design their instruction in ways that support students in meeting the standards.

Colorado Academic Standards: Design Principles and Instructional Shifts

Focus

The Colorado Academic Standards emphasize what students need to be postsecondary and workforce ready.

- Articulated grade level expectations express the concepts and skills every student should master at each grade level
- 21st century information literacy, collaboration, critical thinking, self-direction, and invention skills are evident throughout the standards

Coherence

The Colorado Academic Standards establish vertical and horizontal connections.

- Grade level expectations build vertically toward the achievement of the prepared graduate competencies for each content area
- Interdisciplinary relationships in the standards connect content areas (horizontally) across grade levels

Rigor

The Colorado Academic Standards are written for mastery.

- Fluency, application and transfer comprise Colorado’s definition of mastery
- Requirements for deeper student understanding are the foundation of the standards

All Students, All Standards

The Colorado Academic Standards reflect the importance of teaching the whole child.

- The Colorado Academic Standards include standards for 10 content areas: comprehensive health and physical education; dance; drama and theatre arts; mathematics; music; reading, writing, and communicating; science; social studies; visual arts; world languages
- Literacy skills, the basis of academic success for all students, are a prominent focus within the standards

Where can I learn more?

The Office of Standards and Instructional Support website (www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction) provides a variety of resources for those wishing to learn more about the Colorado Academic Standards.

For any additional questions, contact Brian Sevier at Sevier_B@cde.state.co.us

- To view all CDE fact sheets, visit www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheets.html

The Colorado Department of Education

CONNECTING . . . rigorous academic standards . . . meaningful assessments . . .
engaging learning options . . . excellent educators . . . for **STUDENT SUCCESS**