



COLORADO
Department of Education
 Commissioner of Education

201 East Colfax Avenue
 Denver, CO 80203-1799

March 26, 2021

Dear Superintendents and BOCES Directors,

Here is the news you have been waiting for. We were just notified from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) (attached) of our request for a partial [waiver](#) of federal assessment requirements for this spring’s assessments. The partial waiver solely addressed CMAS/CoAlt English language arts (ELA), Math and Science assessments. We did not seek any changes regarding PSAT/SAT and their associated CoAlt assessments. [We received official notification from USED late this afternoon granting most of our request.](#)

The USED approved assessing alternating grades for CMAS/CoAlt ELA and Math. Under the spring 2021 waiver, districts and schools must administer CMAS/CoAlt ELA assessments to all students (except those with a parent excusal) in third, fifth, and seventh grades, and CMAS/CoAlt Math to all students (except those with a parent excusal) in fourth, sixth, and eighth grades. Parents may also choose to have their children take both the ELA and math assessments. Parents of third, fifth, and seventh graders may opt their students in to CMAS/CoAlt Math and parents of fourth, sixth, and eighth graders may opt their students in to CMAS/CoAlt ELA (see table below). Districts and schools must administer these assessments to students whose parents opt them in. All grades and content areas will be publicly reported as long as minimum n size and student data privacy requirements are met.

	Required ELA/Math Test	Required Opportunity ELA/Math Test
Students in Grades 3, 5, and 7	English language arts	Math
Students in Grades 4, 6, and 8	Math	English language arts

USED did not grant a blanket waiver for CMAS/CoAlt Science. While USED did not waive grade 8 CMAS/CoAlt Science, the grade 5 CMAS/CoAlt Science assessment requirement was waived, and a one-year replacement of grade 11 CMAS Science with SAT was granted. The currently provided SAT *Analysis in Science* cross-test score will be publicly reported. CoAlt will continue to be the alternate science assessment in 11th grade (see the table at the end of this message for the spring 2021 testing schedule).

At your district’s discretion, [this message to District Assessment Coordinators](#) includes a template that can be incorporated into your parent communications regarding the opt-in assessment opportunity. The template is also available on CDE’s website in both English and Spanish along with other [communication resources](#). We understand that communication will vary based on the status of testing in schools (e.g., some schools have started testing while others have not) as well as community needs and preferences. Whatever the strategy for planning and communication, districts should make parents aware of their right to have their children take both ELA and math



assessments and ensure that opt-in assessments are administered under standardized and reasonable assessment conditions. All assessment administrations must, of course, reflect appropriate health and safety protocols.

There is more information and detail in the attachment. For additional CMAS implementation questions, please contact Sara Loerzel: Loerzel_s@cde.state.co.us

Thank you so much,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katy Anthes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Katy Anthes, Ph.D.
Commissioner

