

The Colorado Department of Education developed a short survey to obtain feedback from the public on what aspects of the current assessment system are important, including what should be considered when potential changes are discussed. This survey contained 7 demographic questions and 12 questions regarding assessment. Seven of the assessment questions had open-ended response components to them. Those comments were compiled and the big ideas for each are presented in this document.

(1) What do you suggest would make the CSAP a more ACCURATE indicator of student knowledge?

- Need faster/immediate results
- The test is too long; need fewer sessions
- Make it untimed
- Make it a true end of year assessment – students aren't done learning all the material at the time of CSAP testing
- Give it at multiple times of the year
- Questions should be accurately aligned to the standards; based on actual courses taken
- Students should be assessed at their instructional grade level or reading level, not the grade level they are enrolled in; have adaptive testing
- Get student and parent buy-in; students see it as a waste of time and don't try to perform well (perhaps make students more accountable by instating graduation requirements, summer school , or course requirements around CSAP)
- Needs to be fair and accessible to ALL students (e.g., students have different learning/test taking styles; use plain language; less reading/writing in math and science; unfair to students of different cultural backgrounds; remember ELL and SPED students, etc.)
- Need formative assessments; portfolios, hands on performance tasks; more CR items
- Results need to be easier to interpret and more specific; give students feedback on how to make progress; allow teachers to see their students' actual responses
- Less recall/memorization items; include more critical thinking/problem solving skills/application pieces; no "trick" questions
- Give multiple questions for each concept; allow students to choose from different writing prompts so they are more engaged in the question
- Release more test items; have clearer rubrics

- It should not be the only indicator of student knowledge, but must be taken in context with a body of evidence.
- Move to an online system
- Use MAP or ACT instead for the high school assessment

NOTE: Some responses included misconceptions around the assessment and how it's developed.

(2) What do you suggest would make the CSAP a more VALUABLE indicator of student knowledge?

Greatly emphasized:

- Need faster/immediate results
 - More detailed results: give suggestions on what students need to work on; user-friendly info; return actual student responses to teachers/parents/students; have more released items; need more specific breakdown of scores
 - Make it a true end of year assessment – students aren't done learning all the material at the time of CSAP testing
 - Test what is actually taught in classrooms; questions should be accurately aligned to the standards
 - Get student buy-in (i.e., have graduation requirements that include CSAP; state sponsored scholarships to college or tech schools)
 - Shorten the test/have less sessions for each content area
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Not emphasized as much:

- Have adaptive testing
- Move to an online system
- Give it at multiple times of the year
- Less emphasis needs to be put on the CSAP; it is a one-time snapshot of what students know
- Base teacher pay on student growth (i.e., merit pay)
- Help administrators learn how to properly interpret the data

- Include less reading/writing on the math and science tests

NOTE: There were some comments on the growth model and how it has helped.

*Questions 3 and 4 were closely tied, so you will notice that many of the same comments were noted.

(3) As you think about how CSAP currently exists, which BEST describes your opinion of state assessment results? Please explain if you chose “other”.

- Results take too long to come back. As of now, they are received after students have already moved on to the next grade level.
 - They should be used as tools to help guide, but not dictate, classroom instruction. There should be no “teaching to the test”. Too much emphasis is put on the CSAP.
 - The assessment is just a “one time snapshot” of how students are doing and does not give reliable/useful results. Other classroom testing/daily observation gives much more valuable information.
 - Not all teachers and administrators understand item analysis well enough to use the data. Results need to be easier to decipher.
 - The assessment does not take into account that students have various learning styles, and tests them only in one manner, which leads to incomparable results.
 - The data is used to look at general school-wide trends, but rarely at specific individual student needs.
 - CSAP takes up too much time and tries to cover too much information.
 - Results needs to be more informative/detailed (i.e., determine student strengths and weaknesses).
 - There is no accountability in the system; students don’t take the test seriously.
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(4) As you think about the next generation of system of state assessments, which BEST describes how state assessment results should affect classroom instruction? Please explain if you chose “other”.

- They should be used as tools to help guide, but not dictate, classroom instruction. There should be no “teaching to the test”. Too much emphasis is put on the CSAP.

Public Assessment Survey Open-Ended Questions – Big Ideas

- State assessment results alone cannot affect instruction. They should be taken into consideration with other factors, such as national assessments, formative assessments, performance based assessments and student observations.
- The assessment does not take into account that students have various learning styles, and tests them only in one manner, which leads to incomparable results.
- Results take too long to come back. As of now, they are received after students have already moved on to the next grade level.
- Results needs to be more informative/detailed (i.e., determine student strengths and weaknesses).
- Test at various times of year to see student growth.
- Results should not be tied to teacher or school performance.
- State assessment results do not aid classroom instruction; they are not reliable/don't give valuable information.
- They really depend on if students try to do well.

(17) How much should state assessment emphasize 21st century skills (e.g., creativity, inquiry, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, etc.)? Comments...

- It would be very difficult to assess these types of skills objectively or accurately on a standardized test.
- These skills are what benefit students the most and are essential. They are critical skills that should be tested (and possibly reported out on), as long as they are assessed appropriately and accurately.
- It would be better to have teachers test these skills one-on-one in the classroom. They are too subjective to be tested on a broad scale.
- If these skills are going to be assessed, then schools need to be provided with the resources to teach them.
- Perhaps they could be phased into the assessment over time.
- Trying to assess these skills may do more harm than good (e.g., the length of the test shouldn't increase; be aware of monetary costs; testing situation for these skills may be highly stressful for kids; results could be used to judge schools/students unfairly)

- This question cannot be answered without an idea/examples of how the state plans to assess these types of skills.

QUOTE: “These are more difficult to measure and may require on-site rating of performance tasks, which requires huge amounts of training around the state to try to establish inter-rater reliability. Still, if they are such an important component of the new standards, we have to find a way to measure them and report them. What we measure is an indicator of what we value.”

(18) Currently, students take CSAP once a year, and how poorly or well they do is not tied to grade level advancement. Should students have the opportunity to retake the state assessment until they master it?

- Yes
 - If it’s tied to grade level advancement. Students shouldn’t be allowed to move forward (i.e., grade to grade; middle school to high school; graduate from high school) until they are proficient/have mastered the content.
 - Students would then take the test more seriously.
 - If the goal is for students to master the skills and concepts, then retakes would be appropriate.
 - If the current form of the CSAP is improved (e.g., results come back quicker, it’s shorter, more affordable).
 - It reinforces the importance of learning.
 - This would be good for high school students only/it depends on the grade level.
 - If the student is put on an intervention plan/additional instruction and support are given.
 - If there are multiple forms/versions of the test.
 - But with limits to the number of times this can be done.

QUOTE: “Colorado is moving towards a growth model, and students should have the ability to show how much they have grown along with how much they know. In my class, if a student masters a skill/concept after an assessment is given, they always have the opportunity to ‘retake’ the assessment and positively affect their grade. This is ‘best practice’ in grading, why shouldn’t it be a best practice in state assessments as well? They should not have to retake the entire assessment, just the parts where they scored below proficient.”

- No
 - This will take more time away from instruction.
 - Too much time is already spent on assessment.
 - It isn't appropriate to use the assessment in this way. It is just one piece of information that already has too much emphasis placed on it.
 - Students can demonstrate mastery/proficiency in other formats.
 - This will just reinforce the notion of teaching to the test.
 - This will discourage struggling students even more.
 - Some students would never be able to master the assessment/achieve proficiency.
 - More testing does not lead to better learning.
 - This would cost even more money.
 - This wouldn't be fair to all students (e.g., ELLs, SPED, etc).
 - The assessment isn't tied to grade level advancement (and it shouldn't be), so there is no point in retaking it.
 - Students need to be accountable for their scores the first time around.

QUOTE: "Students should have equal and equitable access to reach proficiency on state standards. It is more about providing the time and opportunities to build on what students already know then simply retaking a test until they 'master' the test."

- Maybe
 - Need to see the revised assessment before making a decision.
 - It would depend on the student's circumstances.
 - It depends on how the results will be used.
 - It could be an option for students, but it should not be a requirement.
 - Undecided
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(19) How actively should Colorado seek input from the field throughout the assessment revision process? (Comments...)

- Colorado teachers
 - Experts from content areas, special education, English language learners

NOTE: Several people wanted the term “content experts” to be defined.

- Consult with other states
- Input for the Colorado tests should come from people in Colorado
- Get input from parents, community, and business members (including engineering)
- Students
- Representatives from under-performing schools and alternative schools
- People who have a broad picture of the diversity of our students to prevent geographical and socioeconomic bias
- Equal representation from elementary through secondary
- Local and global communities
- Professions or organizations should be consulted:
 - University centers such as University of Michigan’s Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education, UCLA’s Center for Higher Education, and Penn State’s Higher Education Center
 - Organizations of experts (e.g., NCTM, NCTE, etc.)
 - Progressive think-tanks
- Use/look at other tests:
 - EPAS
 - NWEA
 - Iowa Test
- Experts in education should be guiding the test, not politicians