

# SUPPORTING Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

## Introduction to the Colorado Academic Standards

Standards-based education in Colorado begins with clear expectations that outline what students should know and be able to do at each grade level and content area. These expectations are outlined in the Colorado Academic Standards.

The Colorado Academic Standards include 10 content areas for preschool through 12th grade (comprehensive health and physical education; dance; drama and theater arts; mathematics; music; reading, writing and communicating; science; social studies; visual arts; and world languages) and incorporate the Common Core State Standards in reading, writing and communicating and mathematics. The updated standards are constructed backwards, starting with the competencies of prepared high school graduates to create learning expectations for what students should understand, know and be able to do at each grade level and content area. They provide clear understanding of the concepts and skills students need to master to help ensure they are successful in college, careers and life.

## Development of the Standards

### Senate Bill 08-212

Senate Bill 08-212, Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids, called for the development of rigorous standards for students. The Colorado Department of Education engaged in a year-long process to update its academic standards in English language proficiency and ten content areas. After releasing drafts of the standards for public comment, the State Board of Education adopted the Colorado Academic Standards in 2009.

### Colorado Academic Standards and Common Core State Standards

The state-led effort to develop the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English language arts began as the Colorado Academic Standards were being developed. Colorado was among six states asked to provide feedback on the Common Core State Standards in the development process.

Once the Common Core State Standards were released, the Colorado Department of Education commissioned a study to compare the state's reading, writing and communicating standards and math standards with the Common Core State Standards. The study showed close alignment of the two sets of standards with the Common Core State Standards being more rigorous. Using the results of the study and feedback from the standards development committees, the State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English language arts in August 2010.

## History

- **2008** Colorado Legislature enacts Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids mandating revised preschool through high school standards
- **2008-2009** Hundreds of Coloradans author and provide feedback on the new standards in ten content areas
- **December 2009** Colorado State Board of Education (SBE) adopts the Colorado Academic Standards
- **August 2010** Colorado SBE adopts the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to be incorporated into Colorado's mathematics and reading, writing, and communicating standards
- **December 2010** CDE reissues the improved Colorado Academic Standards for mathematics and reading, writing, and communicating which include the CCSS
- **2011-2013** Colorado school districts and teachers prepare for implementation of the Colorado Academic Standards
- **2013-2014** Full implementation of the Colorado Academic Standards



While Colorado adopted the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics, the state continues to maintain “unique 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 and lesson plans in ways that support students in meeting the standards.

## Design Principles

- **Created** by Coloradans for Colorado students.
- **Aimed** at improving what students learn and how they learn in ten 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).
- **Constructed** backwards, starting with the competencies of prepared high school graduates, to create learning expectations for what students should understand, know, and be able to do at each grade level and in each content area.

## Instructional Priorities

### **Rigor: Systematic, methodical, and deep engagement to:**

- Develop concepts and skills in each content area.
- Compel the use of inquiry, critical thinking and creative processes.

### **Relevancy: Authentic and meaningful experiences that:**

- Include real world scenarios that necessitate individual and group problem-solving.
- Require the application and transfer of knowledge, concepts and skill across situations and contexts.

### **Disciplinary Literacy: Content-specific texts and communication processes/strategies that:**

- Facilitate working, thinking, talking, arguing as mathematicians, artists, scientists, readers/writers, historians, etc.

## Where can I learn more?

- For more information, visit the CDE standards website: [www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction](http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction)
- To access standards guides for content areas by grade, visit: [www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/guidestok5standards](http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/guidestok5standards)
- To view all CDE fact sheets, visit: [www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheetsandfaqs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheetsandfaqs)