

DROP-IN ARTICLE

Colorado Measures of Academic Success

***A resource for parents and educators***

Letter to teachers

*Use this entire article or just portion of it to communicate with parents about the value of assessments and the necessity of participation.*

In a few weeks, Colorado students from third to ninth grade will begin taking the Colorado Measures of Academic Success tests, assessments aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards. The goal of the tests is to measure students’ progress at the end of the year in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The assessments are designed to be administered online with a variety of interactive questions to gauge critical thinking skills and how the students solve problems – key skills for the 21st century.

While that is broader description of what the tests are all about, parents may have more focused questions about the tests. We put together this fact sheet to give a more general understanding about this year’s tests.

**How many sections will students take?**

All students from third through ninth grade will take tests in English language arts and math. Students in the fourth and seventh grade will take tests in social studies. Students in grades five, eight and 11 will take tests in science. A college preparatory exam, the PSAT, will be administered for 10th graders. And 11th graders will take the college entrance exam, the ACT.

What tests will students take?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS** | Grades 3 through 9 |  | **SCIENCE** | Grades 5, 8 and 11 |
|  | **MATH** | Grades 3 through 9 |  | **PSAT** | Grade 10 |
|  | **SOCIAL STUDIES** | Grades 4 and 7  To be done on a sampling basis with schools participating once every three years |  | **ACT** | Grade 11 |

**How long and how much time will students have for each section?**

Tests are broken down into individual sessions that last between 60 and about 100 minutes. [The times vary per grade level.](http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/cmas_testing_multiple_grades)

How much time will tests take?

**2015-16 STATE TESTING HOURS**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**\* | **MATH**\* | **SOCIAL STUDIES** | **SCIENCE** | **PSAT** | **ACT** | **TOTAL**  **HOURS** |
| **Grade 3** | 4.25 | 4 | - | - | - | - | 8.25 |
| **Grade 4** | 4.5 | 4 | 4 | - | - | - | 12.5 |
| **Grade 5** | 4.5 | 4 | - | 4 | - | - | 12.5 |
| **Grade 6** | 5.16 | 4 | - | - | - | - | 9.16 |
| **Grade 7** | 5.16 | 4 | 4 | - | - | - | 13.16 |
| **Grade 8** | 5.16 | 4 | - | 4 | - | - | 13.16 |
| **Grade 9** | 5.16 | 4.5 | - | - | - | - | 9.66 |
| **Grade 10** | - | - | - | - | 2.75 | - | 2.75 |
| **Grade 11** | - | - | - | 3 | - | 2.95 | 2.95 |

***Tests are broken down into individual sessions lasting between 60 and about 100 minutes***

*Some Colorado students will participate in PARCC’s 90- to 110-minute field test of questions that could be used in future years.*

\**PARCC-developed tests in English language arts and math are 90 minutes shorter this year.*

**When will the tests be given?**

CMAS tests in science, social studies, English language arts and math will be administered in one window from April 11-29. However, the Colorado Department of Education will allow districts to begin testing one to three weeks early if they cannot complete testing within the allotted timeframe due to limitations on the number of computers or other devices needed for testing. Colorado 10th-graders will take the PSAT tests this year on April 19 or April 20. The state’s 11th-graders will take the ACT on April 19.

**When will the results be available?**

The English language arts and math scores are expected to be available to the schools before the beginning of the next school year. Science and social studies scores will be available in July. Parents and students will likely see the test results at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year. ACT and PSAT results are expected to be delivered directly to students three to eight weeks after taking the tests.