



# Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

## Description and Competencies

In 2009, the State Board of Education and Colorado Commission of Higher Education adopted a description of “Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness” (PWR). Per statute, this description must be revisited every six years and both the Colorado State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education need to approve any revisions.

To fulfill the obligation of this statute, beginning in spring of 2015 the Colorado Departments of Higher Education and Education collaborated with the Colorado Workforce Development Council to facilitate a discussion with statewide participants from business and industry, education, higher education, non-profit organizations and government sectors. Student voice was also an active part of the conversation. The goal of the work group was to identify skills to ensure Coloradans are prepared for work or education beyond high school. The group synthesized and identified the core skills from more than 100 established, industry-developed skills lists of the competencies necessary to enter the workforce or educational opportunities beyond high school. The following revised description was a result of this work:

### Description

**“Colorado high school graduates demonstrate the knowledge and skills (competencies) needed to succeed in postsecondary settings and to advance in career pathways as lifelong learners and contributing citizens.”**

*Adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education (Winter 2016).*

### Competencies

#### Skills needed for opportunities beyond high school

Ensuring students are prepared and have the in-demand skills to enter the workforce is an essential strategy to meeting economic and business needs in Colorado. At the secondary level, the goal is for all students to understand and articulate their individual skill set, how they relate to potential careers and jobs, and graduate with these in-demand skills from high school. Colorado industry representatives are clear that students who graduate from high school and seek to work in Colorado need in-demand skills that meet business, industry and higher education standards. Aligned high school graduation expectations are intended to be a roadmap to help students and their families plan for success after high school by demonstrating their knowledge, skills and abilities to enter the workforce, military or higher education without significant training or remediation.

| Entrepreneurial                       | Personal                                    | Civic                      | Professional             | Academic                              |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Critical thinking and problem solving | Initiative and self-direction               | Core academic foundation   | Time and work management | Apply skills and knowledge            |
| Creativity and innovation             | Personal responsibility and self-management | Collaboration and teamwork | Career literacy          | Critical thinking and problem solving |
| Inquiry and analysis                  | Adaptability and flexibility                | Communication              | Grit and resilience      | Inquiry, analysis, and evaluation     |

|                      |   |                               |                                     |             |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Informed risk taking | Self-awareness of learning preferences, strengths, and areas for growth | Global and cultural awareness | Work ethic; dependable and reliable | Discernment |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|

**What are competencies?**

A competency is a demonstration that a student has the ability to transfer learning in and across content areas. All forms of assessment in competency model are standards-based and criterion-referenced. Formative assessments measure learning progress during the instructional process; and summative assessments are integrated tasks requiring transfer of knowledge and skills, application, and performance in novel settings. One of the key differences in these kinds of systems is that academic grades communicate learning progress and achievement of standards.

In a competency-based system, student achievement is evaluated against common learning standards and performance expectations that are consistently applied to all students. In Colorado, we're in the process of creating a framework of competencies aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards, which will be released in summer 2016.

**Where can I learn more?**

- Office of Postsecondary Readiness: [www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary](http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary)
- For more information on competencies, visit <http://www.competencyworks.org/> or contact Christina Jean at [Jean\\_C@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Jean_C@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6897
- To view all CDE fact sheets, visit: [www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheetsandfaqs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheetsandfaqs)