



Colorado Academic Standards Key Messages

Communicating with Educators

This document was developed to help educators communicate about the Colorado Academic Standards. Included are an elevator speech and talking points with general messages that convey what the standards are, how they were developed and why they are a positive change for Colorado students.

Although listed as talking points below, the messages in this resource may be used for any type of communication about the Colorado Academic Standards, including presentations, newsletters to parents, websites, social media or other communication vehicles.

Elevator Speech

1. Colorado is raising the bar to ensure all students receive a world-class education.
2. Across the state, new academic standards in 10 content areas, called Colorado Academic Standards, were fully implemented in the 2013-14 school year to ensure our students have the academic knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college, career and life.
3. The Colorado Academic Standards not only improve what students learn, but how they learn by teaching critical-thinking, problem-solving and effective communication skills.
4. Together with highly trained, well-supported teachers and aligned, meaningful assessments, the standards will better prepare our students for success in college and career.

Talking Points

Colorado has raised the bar to ensure all students receive a world-class education.

- The world has changed. Today's and tomorrow's careers value postsecondary education and training more than ever.
- By continually improving our education system, we are giving Colorado students the knowledge and skills they need to have more options and opportunities after high school.
- The Colorado Academic Standards provide the necessary foundation upon which the rest of the education system is built.
- The Colorado Academic Standards are critical to the business community because they were designed to prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow.

Colorado has implemented new academic standards for grades K-12 in 10 content areas, called the Colorado Academic Standards, to ensure our students have the academic knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college, career and life.

- The Colorado Academic Standards are the expectations of what students need to know and be able to do at the end of each grade. They embody the 21st century skills, content and competencies that are the foundation of postsecondary and workforce readiness for Colorado students.
- The Colorado English Language Proficiency (CELP) standards are essential for English language learners to access all Colorado standards concepts and skills. Academic language is needed by all students to master the Colorado



Academic Standards and prepare students for college and career.

- The standards were benchmarked against countries with top-notch education programs to ensure our future generations are ready to compete in the global marketplace.
- When Colorado students have the skills and knowledge needed in today's job market, our communities will be strong and competitive in the global economy.
- The Colorado Academic Standards for math and reading, writing and communicating incorporate the entire Common Core State Standards while maintaining the unique aspects of the Colorado Academic Standards, including 21st century skills and prepared graduate competencies.
- The Common Core State Standards is an initiative led by states to raise the bar and ensure all students are prepared for college and career. States worked together to develop the standards and assessments that will be consistent across states, including Colorado.
- Consistent and rigorous standards and assessments will allow schools, districts and states to monitor student performance in a way that is not possible now.

The Colorado Academic Standards not only improve what students learn, but also how they learn by teaching critical thinking, problem-solving and effective communication skills.

- Designed with the end in mind, the Colorado Academic Standards articulate the prepared graduate competencies and the points of mastery at each grade level that lead to career and college readiness.
- The standards are relevant to today's real world and reflect the academic knowledge and skills our students need to be successful after high school.
- The Colorado Academic Standards place more emphasis on deep understanding of materials, not just basic memorization and test-taking skills.
- The standards help prepare our students today with the knowledge and skills they will need to thrive in a world of tomorrow.

The development of the Colorado Academic Standards was research-based and fully inclusive of Colorado's diverse communities.

- A diverse group of teachers, subject matter experts, parents and school administrators – including some of Colorado's best and brightest leaders – worked together to create the standards that reflect both our aspirations for our children and the realities of the classroom.
- The Colorado Academic Standards exemplify the mantra "all students, all standards." The development process created new standards for each of our 10 content areas: arts – music, visual arts, theatre, dance; comprehensive health and physical education; math; reading, writing and communicating; science; social studies and world languages.

Districts have complete local flexibility on how to implement the standards in the best way for their students.



- Standards establish *what* students need to learn, but do not tell teachers *how* to teach. Teachers and school leaders will continue to establish curriculum, create lesson plans and tailor instruction to the unique needs of their students. The best understanding of what works in the classroom comes from teachers, and the standards allow each teacher in each classroom to figure out what works best.
- The Colorado Department of Education assisted districts by providing implementation support tools including the transition action planning guide, standards graphic organizers, vertical progressions and standards-based curriculum design.

Together with highly trained, well-supported teachers, the standards will better prepare our students to achieve in K-12 and beyond.

- The Colorado Academic Standards are designed to have teachers go more in depth in their subjects, provide clear and consistent learning targets and mitigate challenges with student mobility.
- The standards provide students, parents and teachers with a clear understanding of what students are expected to learn at every grade level, and as such, serve as a roadmap to quality education. Outcomes improve when students, parents and teachers are on the same page working together toward shared goals.
- The implementation of the standards is a crucial step in improving education in Colorado. The Colorado Academic Standards are one part of the larger solution and are important in providing the necessary foundation for building college and career readiness for all Colorado students.
- Parents, educators and business and community leaders must remain committed over time to ensure Colorado's kids are successful in college, career and beyond.