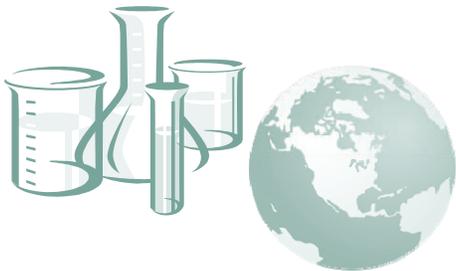


## How to support your child taking the CoAlt—Science and Social Studies Assessments

- Make sure your child comes to school ready to learn.
- Assist the school in learning about your child.
- Review your child's CoAlt—Science and Social Studies results with your child's teacher to decide if any changes need to be made to your child's program.
- Ask your child's teacher if there are activities you can do at home to supplement school work.



## Who developed the CoAlt—Science and Social Studies assessments?

The CoAlt—Science and Social Studies assessments were developed in close collaboration with CDE, Colorado science and social studies teachers who were teamed with teachers of students with significant support needs, and NCS Pearson, Inc.

Items were written by Colorado educators and professional item writers. The items were then reviewed by a panel of Colorado teachers to ensure items align to the Extended Evidence Outcomes and are free from bias. Finally, the items were field tested by students who qualify for alternate standards and assessments to ensure their appropriateness prior to use on the state assessment.



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## CoAlt— Science and Social Studies 2013-2014

**Colorado's Alternate  
Assessments for students  
with significant  
cognitive disabilities**

Science:  
Grades 5, 8 and 12

Social Studies:  
Grades 4, 7 and 12



## Colorado Alternate Assessments—Science and Social Studies



Colorado has a standard-driven system for all students. Colorado Academic

Standards and the Extended Evidence Outcomes drive the IEP, instructional strategies, and assessments for students identified with a significant cognitive disability.

The CoAlt is a standards-based assessment designed specifically for students with significant cognitive disabilities for whom participation in the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) is inappropriate, even with accommodations. Your child's involvement in the CoAlt can help inform and enhance classroom instruction by providing information on your child's areas of strength and/or areas for improvement.

The CoAlt—Science and Social Studies is administered annually in Science (grades 5, 8 and 12) and Social Studies (grades 4, 7 and 12).

For each academic area assessed, items are administered to each student individually by a licensed school professional who has worked with the student and is trained in the assessment procedures. The items and tasks allow students to respond in a variety of ways by selecting or manipulating objects, pictures or words that represent the correct answer.



### Why should students with significant cognitive disabilities participate in academic instruction and assessment?

The primary reason to teach academic content to students who also require instruction in life skills is to promote equal opportunity to receive the same educational opportunities that all students receive. Educators are finding that once this opportunity is provided, many students gain useful skills that benefit them now and in the future. Students may not master all of the grade-level content, but they may master some content for their grade level. The CoAlt—Science and Social Studies provides a way for them to demonstrate this mastery.

There are also laws that require all students to participate in academic instruction and assessment. Both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 1997 and IDEA 2004) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), require the state provide an alternate assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities that is linked to grade-level academic content standards. Colorado state law requires all students must be included in the state accountability system.



### What are Extended Evidence Outcomes?

Extended Evidence Outcomes are the key concepts of the Colorado Academic Standards with reduced levels of complexity. They ensure access to the standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities at the same grade level as their peers.

Extended Evidence Outcomes identify *what* a student should know at each grade level.



### What are Performance levels?

Performance levels are developed by a panel of Colorado Educators who determine a minimum raw score a student must achieve in order to attain a designated Performance Level. Panelists review the assessment, actual student scores and discuss the performance level descriptors differentiating between the knowledge, skills and abilities typically associated with each Performance Level.

Performance levels indicate *how much* of the content a student demonstrates on the assessment.