



Colorado Essential Skills

Updated May 2021

NOTE: This document was created for Standards Revision Purposes only. Updates to formatting and language may occur during implementation planning to occur summer 2021-summer 2023.

In 2008, Colorado passed legislation (Senate Bill 212, also known as CAP4K) that requires the State Board of Education to adopt content standards that prepare students for the 21st century workforce and for active citizenship upon receiving a high school diploma. In addition to the requirement that students meet those content standards, students must also (to the extent practicable) develop and demonstrate skills essential for success in professional life. New legislation passed requiring the State Board of Education to review and revise approximately one-third of the standards beginning in 2022 and an additional one-third every two years thereafter (22-7-1005(6) C.R.S.).

The new revision cycle, in addition to needing an updated Post-Secondary Workforce Readiness description, afforded the opportunity to update the Colorado Essential Skills (CES) in May 2021 (Fig. 1). The revisions were informed by the 2021 Colorado Talent Pipeline report, the research and evidence used to inform the 2016 CES, and the CASEL standards. Definitions of categories and skills can be found on subsequent pages.

Colorado graduates have the necessary attitudes, skills, and knowledge (Colorado Academic Standards) that can be applied in an interdependent, interdisciplinary way, and leveraged in a variety of situations both locally and globally. Colorado graduates are:

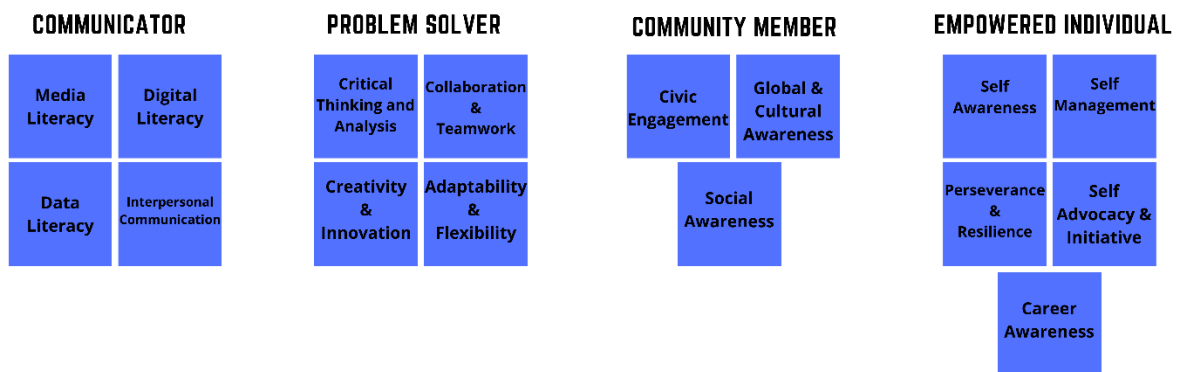


Figure 1: Revised Colorado Essential Skills

Communicator: Communicates experiences, ideas, information, and feelings effectively through verbal and non-verbal language, media, art, and data, as well as listening to others' experiences, ideas, and feelings. Communicators use literacy, numeracy, and computational thinking skills to interpret and create new understanding from spoken language and writing, and from a wide variety of visual representations and media.

- **Interpersonal Communication:** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships, including: the capacity to communicate clearly by successfully conveying information and feelings, listening actively, setting boundaries, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking or offering support and help when needed.
- **Media Literacy:** The ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act through the various forms of media, including: the ability to analyze the reliability of information, claims, and sources presented in the various forms of media.
- **Digital Literacy:** The ability to learn, access, and evaluate information through digital platforms and networks using digital devices, including: the practice of digital citizenship and the prevention of cyberbullying, norms of appropriate, and responsible behavior and discourse.
- **Data Literacy:** The ability to identify, collect, evaluate, analyze, interpret, present, and protect data.

Problem Solver: Generates, evaluates, and implements solutions to problems. A capable decision-maker can identify alternatives, think computationally, and weigh trade-offs to make well-reasoned decisions and solutions individually or in collaboration with others.

- **Critical Thinking and Analysis:** The ability to apply a deliberate process of identifying problems, gathering information, and weighing possible solutions, including: making choices rooted in understanding patterns, cause-and-effect relationships, and the impacts that a decision can have on the individual and others.
- **Creativity and Innovation:** The ability to demonstrate curiosity and imagination through experimenting with new and emerging ideas.
- **Collaboration and Teamwork:** The ability to work with individuals from diverse backgrounds to identify the goal of a team, understand roles and responsibilities -, contribute by fulfilling those roles and responsibilities, and include all members of the team.
- **Adaptability and Flexibility:** The ability to recognize emotional responses that differ from one's own and demonstrate a willingness to compromise to reach workable solutions.

Community Member: Demonstrates concern for the welfare of others, for cultural resources, and for the natural world. Community members are respectful and inclusive, consider multiple perspectives, and honor others regardless of differences.

- **Social Awareness:** The ability to understand the perspectives of, empathize with, feel compassion for, and recognize strengths in others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts and how they affect social interactions.
- **Civic Engagement:** The ability to develop and apply knowledge, skills, and habits gained from experiences - within communities of diverse perspectives - to address issues, affect change, and/or solve problems.
- **Global and Cultural Awareness:** The ability to collaborate with individuals from diverse backgrounds and/or cultures to address national and global issues, and to develop complex, appropriate, and workable solutions.

Empowered Individual: Empowered to make a difference by understanding strengths and limitations, acting on curiosity, taking leadership roles, demonstrating respect and responsibility, taking informed risks, and persisting in the face of challenges.

- **Self-Awareness:** The ability to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values, and how personal actions and emotions influence behavior across contexts, including: the capacity to recognize one's strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence and purpose.
- **Self-Management:** The ability to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations, including: the capacity to delay gratification, manage stress, stay productive and accountable, and feel motivation & agency to accomplish personal/collective goals.
- **Self-Advocacy and Initiative:** The ability to effectively communicate personal interests, desires, needs, and rights, and take action to request and/or acquire them.
- **Career Awareness:** The ability to apply the knowledge and understanding of how one's dreams, experiences, and interests translate into career fulfillment and lifelong pursuits in local, regional, national, and global career pathways and opportunities.
- **Perseverance and Resilience:** The ability to endure and overcome challenges to achieve desired outcomes and in doing so, building the confidence to believe that one's abilities can improve over time with determination and continued effort.