



COLORADO
Department of Education

Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K)

2020 Annual Legislative Report

Submitted to:
**House Education Committee and Senate Education Committee of the
Colorado General Assembly**

By:
Colorado Department of Education

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Overview

The Colorado General Assembly passed S.B. 08-212 in 2008. Known as Colorado’s Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), the law called for an alignment of the preschool through postsecondary education system to enable Colorado students to graduate with the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in college and careers. Central to CAP4K was the regular review of Colorado’s preschool through high school student learning standards, an aligned state assessment system, and expectations for postsecondary and workforce readiness for all Colorado high school graduates.

Pursuant to section 22-7-1019 (2), C.R.S., the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is required to provide annual reports related to the provisions of CAP4K, including the results achieved through the implementation of school readiness, the preschool through elementary and secondary education standards, and postsecondary workforce readiness.

Kindergarten School Readiness

Background

Kindergarten school readiness describes the status and ongoing progress a child makes within the domains of physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language and comprehension development, and cognition and general knowledge. By monitoring each child’s progress in these areas, teachers, parents, schools, and caregivers can provide needed support to ensure each child’s success in school. Information gathered from kindergarten school readiness assessments should be used for supportive and instructional purposes. According to CAP4K, results from the kindergarten school readiness assessment cannot be used to deny a student admission or progression to kindergarten or first grade.

Colorado school districts began phasing in kindergarten school readiness assessments in 2013 with full implementation in the 2015-16 school year. The state board of education (state board) adopted the reporting system for kindergarten school readiness in the spring of 2016, enabling CDE to begin collecting data from districts in the 2017-18 school year. CAP4K requires the state board of education to: (1) define school readiness; (2) adopt assessments appropriate for determining students’ levels of school readiness; and (3) adopt a system for reporting population-level results. This report provides kindergarten school readiness information from the third year of that data collection, the 2019-20 school year.

Prior to 2019, the state board had approved a menu of school readiness assessments which included: (1) Teaching Strategies GOLD®; (2) Teaching Strategies GOLD® Kindergarten Entry Assessment Survey (an abbreviated version of the GOLD assessment); (3) Desired Results Developmental Profile for Kindergarten; and (4) HighScope Child Observation Record (COR). In August 2019, the state board voted to add the North Carolina Kindergarten Entry Assessment to the list of approved kindergarten school readiness assessments following a successful pilot in the Jefferson County School District.

Each approved kindergarten school readiness assessment provides information on whether a kindergartner is meeting age expectations in each of the required school readiness domains at the beginning of the school year:

Kindergarten School Readiness Description

School readiness describes both the preparedness of a child to engage in and benefit from learning experiences, and the ability of a school to meet the needs of all students enrolled in publicly funded preschool or kindergarten. School readiness is enhanced when schools, families, and community service providers work collaboratively to ensure that every child is ready for higher levels of learning in academic content.

Source: Adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education (April 2017).

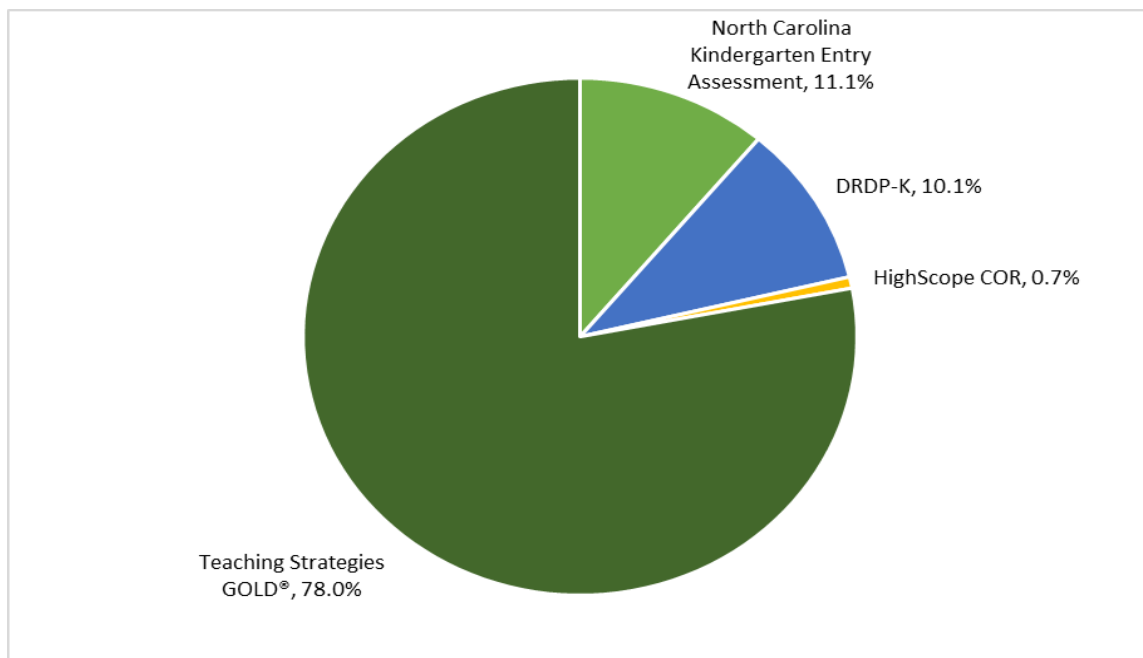
- Physical well-being and motor development;
- Social and emotional development;
- Language and comprehension development;
- Cognition; and
- General knowledge.

For reporting purposes, the general knowledge domain consists of mathematics and literacy, such that six domains are reported to the state.

Progress in 2019: Third Reporting of Statewide Kindergarten School Readiness Information

School districts reported school readiness data collected during the school readiness assessment window, which is the first 60 calendar days of the 2019-20 school year. Data included in this report comes from one of the following approved assessment tools: Teaching Strategies GOLD®; HighScope Child Observation Record (COR); the Desired Results Developmental Profile for Kindergarten 2015 (DRDP-K 2015); and the North Carolina Kindergarten Entry Assessment. Teaching Strategies GOLD® was used by 78 percent of districts throughout the state. DRDP-K 2015 was used by 10.1 percent of schools, HighScope COR was used by 0.7 percent of schools, and the North Carolina Kindergarten Entry Assessment was used by 11.1 percent of schools across the state (Figure 1). Data for 6,588 students from the eight districts and 96 charter schools with waivers for use of a state board approved kindergarten school readiness assessment have been excluded from this report due to comparability issues.

FIGURE 1: Kindergarten School Readiness Assessments Used in Colorado



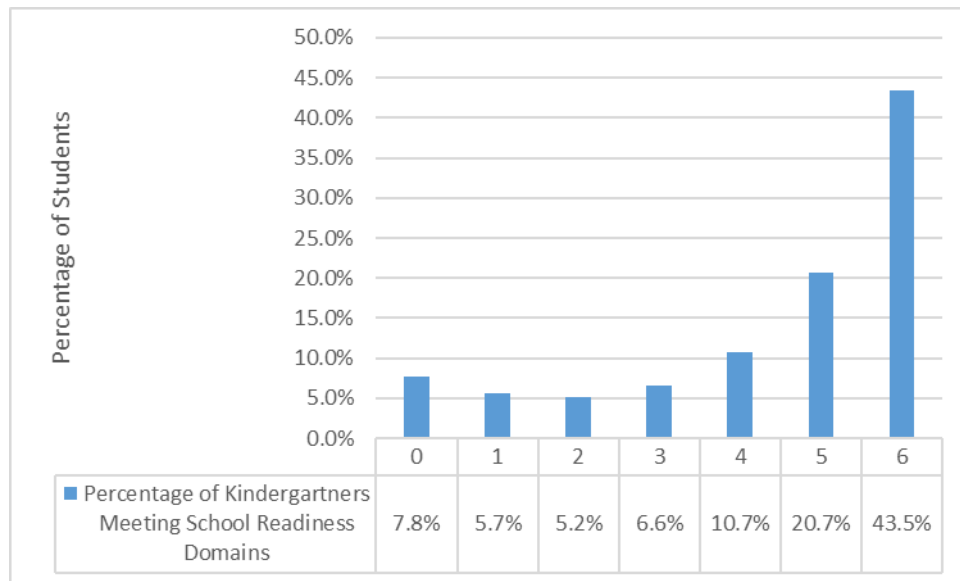
The kindergarten school readiness reporting system adopted by the state board of education requires districts to submit only aggregate kindergarten school readiness information without identifying specific domains of readiness (i.e., physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language and comprehension development, cognition, mathematics and literacy). Specifically, districts submit aggregate information on the number of domains in which students demonstrate readiness. For example, if a student met

age expectations in all domains except cognition, the district would report this information as meeting 5 of 6 domains. In contrast, if a student were only meeting age expectations in physical well-being and motor development, the district would report this information as meeting 1 of 6 domains.

Kindergarten School Readiness Findings

The following results were gathered from the 2019 reporting window. As illustrated in Figure 2, nearly two-thirds (64.2 percent) of Colorado’s kindergartners meet 5 or 6 of the school readiness domains.

FIGURE 2: Percentage of Colorado Kindergartners meeting School Readiness Domains



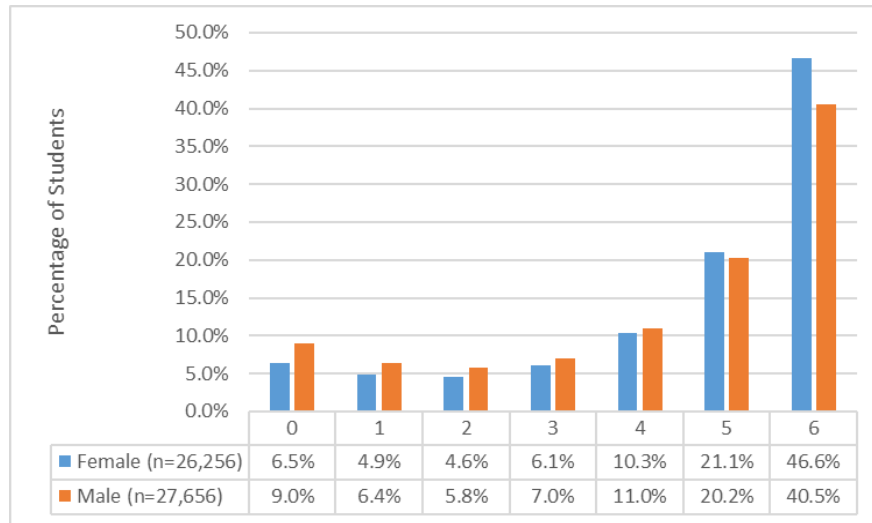
N = 53,912

Disaggregation of kindergarten school readiness information by gender, free or reduced-lunch status, and race and ethnicity can be found in the following figures. School readiness data are not disaggregated based on half-day or full-day kindergarten status.

Kindergarten School Readiness by Gender

Readiness data by gender (Figure 3) indicate a higher percentage of males compared to females meeting four or fewer domains (39.2 percent compared with 32.3 percent), with a higher percentage of females meeting five or six domains in comparison to males (67.7 percent compared with 60.8 percent).

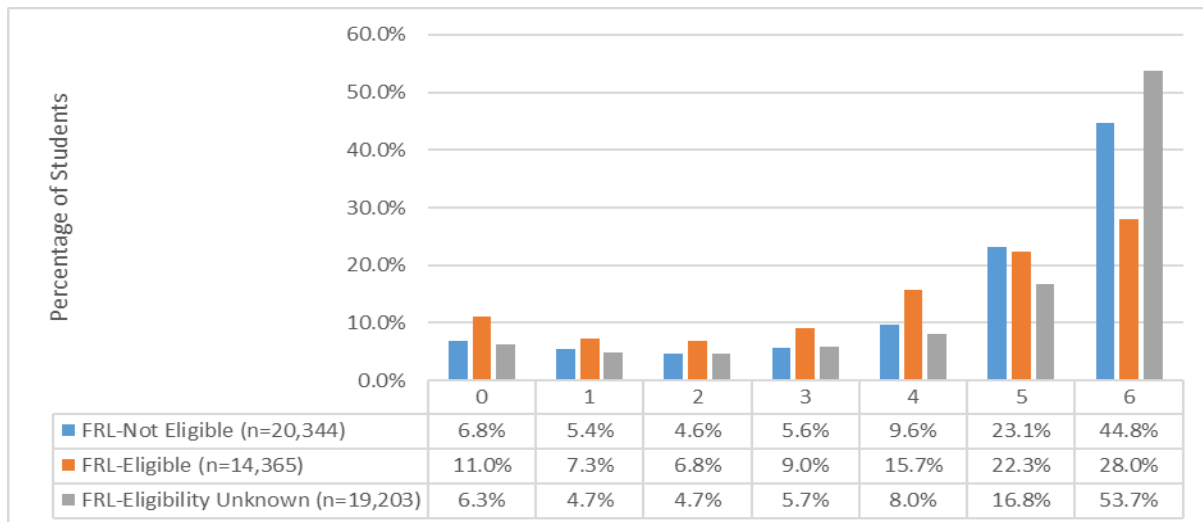
FIGURE 3: Percentage of Colorado Kindergartners by Gender Meeting School Readiness Domains



Kindergarten School Readiness by Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility

Readiness data by free or reduced lunch eligibility (Figure 4) indicates that just under half (44.8 percent) of students who do not qualify for free or reduced-price lunches (FRL) meet expectations in all six domains. This is in comparison to students who are FRL eligible, where just over a quarter of students (28.0 percent) meet expectations in all six domains.

FIGURE 4: Percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch Eligible Colorado Kindergartners Meeting School Readiness Domains





Kindergarten School Readiness by Race and Ethnicity

Readiness data by race and ethnicity (Table 1) indicates that there are differences in the number of domains in which students meet age expectations according to race and ethnicity. As shown below, over half of White students (50.7 percent) and students whose race is unknown (51.3 percent) met expectations in all six domains. In comparison, a third of Hispanic students (33.3 percent) and close to two-fifths of American Indian/Alaska Native students (39.7 percent) and Asian students (41.6 percent) met expectations in all domains. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students (43.3 percent) and students of two or more races (43.5 percent) had similar rates of meeting expectations in all six domains. Only a quarter of Black students (25.0 percent) met expectations in all six domains.

TABLE 1: Percentage of Colorado Kindergartners by Race and Ethnicity Meeting School Readiness Domains

Category	Total Student Count	Domain Readiness Count						
		0 of 6	1 of 6	2 of 6	3 of 6	4 of 6	5 of 6	6 of 6
Hispanic	16,273	9.5%	6.9%	6.6%	8.7%	13.5%	21.4%	33.3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	375	9.3%	6.4%	6.7%	7.2%	11.7%	18.9%	39.7%
Asian	1,946	12.4%	7.7%	6.0%	7.1%	9.0%	16.1%	41.6%
Black	2,579	13.3%	8.5%	6.6%	8.1%	16.2%	22.4%	25.0%
White	29,198	6.0%	4.6%	4.3%	5.2%	8.8%	20.4%	50.7%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	150	7.3%	6.7%	6.7%	8.0%	12.7%	15.3%	43.3%
Two or More Races	2,522	8.6%	5.3%	4.5%	6.9%	9.6%	21.5%	43.5%
Race Unknown	869	4.4%	6.3%	4.4%	5.8%	10.0%	17.8%	51.3%

The Colorado Academic Standards

Background

CAP4K required the state board to adopt standards that identify the knowledge and skills a student should acquire as the student progresses from preschool through elementary and secondary education, pursuant to section 22-7-1005 (1), C.R.S. In 2009 and 2010, the state board adopted new standards in 10 content areas (comprehensive health and physical education; dance; drama and theatre arts; music; visual arts; mathematics; reading, writing, and communicating; science; social studies; and world languages) and English language proficiency. This adoption provided Colorado schools with the first fully aligned academic expectations from preschool through high school.

Progress in 2018-19: Transitioning to the Revised Colorado Academic Standards

A provision of CAP4K requires the state board to review and revise every content area in the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) starting on July 2018 and every six years thereafter. The department supported the revision process from 2016 through the spring of 2018. Details about the standards revision process can be found in previous CAP4K legislative reports.



Following the adoption of the revised standards, the department initiated a process in spring of 2019 to engage general and special education teachers to update the Extended Evidence Outcomes (EEO). The EEOs are Colorado's alternate achievement standards which are appropriate for students with significant cognitive disabilities, about 1 percent of the population. The EEOs are developed for the assessed content areas (i.e., mathematics; reading, writing and communicating; science; and social studies). Students who receive instruction aligned with the Extended Evidence Outcomes will participate in the CoAlt, Colorado's alternate assessment. Colorado has had alternate achievement standards and an alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities since 2010.

Department staff are supporting districts, schools, and teachers in transitioning to the revised CAS in all 10 content areas as well as optional secondary standards for computer science. Seventeen professional development learning modules were created and posted to the department Learning Management System, Moodle, to support administrators and teachers in their understanding of the 2020 CAS. These modules were intentionally designed to be delivered at the local level to support smaller and rural districts who may not have district-level content specialists. The first set of modules was released in September 2018 and engaged educators in a close read of the standards, while the second and third sets of modules focusing on curricular alignment, gap analysis, planning, and high-impact instruction were released in February 2019 and June 2019, respectively.

Department staff continuously respond to requests for support from districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) specifically on transitioning their systems to the revised CAS, in addition to content-specific professional development for administrators and teachers. Units within the department are also working to identify districts who may need the most support and coordinate efforts to provide the assistance needed. Additionally, the department developed a communication toolkit to support districts and parents during this transition, and the department reached out to Institutions of Higher Education to make sure they understand the revisions to the CAS.

Looking Ahead

Districts will begin implementing the revised CAS in the 2020-21 school year. The department will continue to provide professional development and guidance to districts and BOCES for standards implementation.

Colorado's Statewide Assessment System

Background

The Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) were developed to assess the Colorado Academic Standards adopted in 2009 and 2010. The CMAS in science and social studies were administered for the first time in 2014 with English language arts (ELA) and mathematics added in 2015. CMAS was administered in 2019 to measure student mastery of the standards in English language arts (grades 3-8), mathematics (grades 3-8), science (grades 5, 8 and 11), and social studies (sampled in grades 4 and 7). In 2019, Colorado administered the SAT Suite in high schools (PSAT in grades 9 and 10 and SAT in grade 11). Alternate assessments to the CMAS and SAT assessments (CoAlt) were administered to eligible students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The list of assessments in Colorado's assessment system are shown in Table 2.



TABLE 2: State Content Assessments

Assessment	Grades Administered
CMAS and CoAlt: English Language Arts	Grades 3-8
CMAS and CoAlt: Mathematics	Grades 3-8
CMAS and CoAlt: Science	Grades 5, 8 and 11
CMAS and CoAlt: Social Studies	Grades 4 and 7 (sampled)
PSAT and CoAlt	Grades 9 and 10
SAT and CoAlt	Grade 11

Progress in 2018-19: Assessing Colorado’s Current Academic Standards

CMAS: English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies achievement results and participation rates for spring 2019 are available at the following location: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/emas-dataandresults>.

PSAT and SAT results and participation rates for spring 2019 are available at the following location: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/cosatdataandresults>.

Looking Ahead

The college entrance exam and the associated 9th and 10th grade assessments will go out for a fair and competitive procurement this year (FY2020) as required under state law. First implementation of the assessments under the new contract will be in spring of 2021.

The CMAS and CoAlt assessments will be reviewed and revised as necessary in the next few years to align with the newly adopted 2020 Colorado Academic Standards.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Background

CDE and the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) worked together to develop a description of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR). As required in Colorado law, every six years the Colorado State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education are required to review the PWR description and adopt any appropriate revisions.

After extensive educator, community and business input, the updated PWR description was jointly adopted by the state board of education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education in winter 2016. This description serves as the basis for the state’s alignment efforts including the Colorado Academic Standards, new

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness 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.

Source: Adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education (winter 2016).



assessments and informing student demonstrations of skills and knowledge required to be ready for college and a career upon earning a high school diploma.

Progress in 2018-19

In alignment with the PWR description for Colorado, CDE and CDHE measure several factors that reflect levels of PWR for students beyond high school, including graduation rates, dropout rates, college entrance scores, participation in concurrent enrollment courses during high school, matriculation and persistence rates to and through postsecondary education, remediation rates for students who enter college at a Colorado public institution of higher education, and implementation of Colorado's graduation guidelines. State data is summarized below; district and school-level information can be accessed at www.cde.state.co.us/schoolview and <http://highered.colorado.gov/Data/Tools.html>.

Graduation Rates

The four-year high school graduation rate for the Class of 2019 is 81.1 percent, which signifies a 0.4 percentage point improvement compared to the previous year. The Class of 2019 had 999 more graduates than the Class of 2018. The state's four-year graduation rate has increased 8.7 percentage points since 2010. Extended year rates for high school students taking five, six and seven years to graduate also show improvement in 2018-19. See the state's graduation data dashboard for more information, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/gradcurrent>. The dashboard features longitudinal data by student groups, schools and districts.

The 2018-19 dropout rate for Colorado is 2.0 percent. This represents an all-time low in the state's dropout rate among students in grades seven through 12. Colorado's statewide dropout rate has reduced by more than half over the past decade, largely due to concerted efforts at the state- and district-level to engage students more fully in their education and to re-engage those youth who have disengaged. Details on the dropout rate are available on the CDE website, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/dropoutcurrent>.

Concurrent Enrollment

The state of Colorado passed the Concurrent Enrollment Program Act in 2009, which provides a structure for local education providers (LEPs) and institutions of higher education to enter into cooperative agreements to offer college courses to high school students. Most Concurrent Enrollment programs that participate in the state legislated program are Colorado Opportunity Funding (COF) eligible, tuition free in most situations, and offer courses which can apply to a program of study. Other programs exist in Colorado that do not adhere to the requirements of the Concurrent Enrollment Program Act but also identify as concurrent enrollment. For this report, "Concurrent Enrollment" is capitalized to distinguish partnerships that adhere to the requirements in the Act from those that do not. Under the Act, Concurrent Enrollment is defined as the simultaneous enrollment of a qualified student in a local education provider and in one or more postsecondary education courses. This program includes, but is not limited to, academic or career and technical education courses at a Colorado institution of higher education.

In the 2018-19 legislative session, S.B. 19-176 was passed in an effort to expand concurrent enrollment opportunities for high school students, especially in areas with historically low (or no) student enrollment in concurrent enrollment opportunities. The majority of the provisions of this legislation will take effect in the 2020-21 school year.

The most important change that S.B. 19-176 made to the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act is that local education providers are now required to offer Concurrent Enrollment opportunities to qualified students in grades nine through 12 at no tuition cost to students and families. In addition, the bill created a grant program to fund expansion and innovation efforts. Finally, it created a statewide comprehensive website for students



and parents to inform them of what Concurrent Enrollment opportunities exist for students, what they cost, and how they differ from other advanced programming offered in schools.

During the 2017-18 academic year (the year with the most recent data available), approximately 35 percent of all high school students in Colorado, or nearly 46,000 students, participated in some sort of concurrent enrollment program. This reflected a participation increase of nearly 10 percent over the prior year. In the same academic year, nearly 31,000 students enrolled in a Concurrent Enrollment Act program, per section 22-35, C.R.S., an increase of more than 9 percent from the previous year. Compared to the previous year, participation in Concurrent Enrollment increased 11 percent among Asian students, 16 percent among African American students, 23 percent among Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students, 17 percent among Hispanic students, 7 percent among White, non-Hispanic students and 19 percent among students identifying as more than one race. Approximately 94 percent of Concurrent Enrollment credit hours taken by students were passed, which is unchanged from the prior year. Through Concurrent Enrollment programs, 2,758 students earned some type of postsecondary credential in 2017-2018 while still in high school. This is a 37 percent increase over last year's total credential-completion number of 2,017. A previous CDHE study found that participation in a Concurrent Enrollment program is associated with a 23 percent increase in the likelihood of enrolling in college and a 10 percent decrease in the need for remediation, isolating the variables of gender, income, race/ethnicity, and SAT/ACT scores in order to determine if the Concurrent Enrollment program had an effect on student outcomes.

Graduation Guidelines

CDE is also implementing graduation guidelines as established under H. B. 07-1118 and S. B. 08-256, requiring the development of statewide high school graduation guidelines that local school boards must meet or exceed. The purpose of graduation guidelines is to articulate Colorado's shared expectations for the meaning of a high school diploma and to outline the minimum components, expectations, and responsibilities of local districts and the state to support students in attaining their high school diploma. The graduation guidelines took effect for ninth graders in fall 2017, or the high school graduating class of 2021, and align with the state's description of postsecondary and workforce readiness and postsecondary entrance requirements.

In order to support local education providers in implementing the graduation guidelines, for the past two years, CDE staff has been hosting regional symposia to support collaborative conversations among interested stakeholders, including school and district administrators, school counselors, teachers, and community partners, focused on the unique ways that they are using graduation guidelines to drive programming in their schools.

In partnership with CDE's Office of Standards and Instructional Support, the Office of Postsecondary Workforce Readiness updated the list of PWR-essential skills that assist students in reflecting readiness for next steps beyond high school and included these skills in the recent revisions to the Colorado's Academic Standards.

Admissions and Remedial Education Policy Review and Revision

Background

CAP4K and subsequent state law (section 23-1-113, C.R.S.) required the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) to review and revise the admission standards policy (CCHE policy I, F) and the developmental/remedial education policy (CCHE policy I, E) by December 15, 2013. Statute required CCHE to align the admissions standards policy with the state's description of postsecondary and workforce readiness and graduation guidelines. After extensive institution and community input, CCHE approved revisions to the admission policy in November 2014.



Admission Standards Policy

The revised admission standards policy took effect for all students seeking admission for fall 2019 and thereafter. The key elements of the new admission standards policy directly support the shift in focus in Colorado from enrollment to student success. The changes included aligning postsecondary admissions expectations with high school graduation guidelines. Further, the policy increased flexibility for institutions to determine their own specific admissions requirements and increased the number of tools they may use to do so within the scope of their statutory role and mission. The policy presupposes that institutions will admit students whom they are best able to serve to be successful and earn a credential.

As required by the new policy, institutions submitted their proposed admission standards, which were approved by CCHE in December 2014 and have been evaluated on an annual basis. The admissions standards include the mid 50 percent range of assessment scores and grade point average (GPA) for each institution's previously admitted student class, as well as academic rigor and mix information. In alignment with the upcoming graduation guidelines, academic rigor can specifically include competency-based education. Institutions' assessment score standards must meet or exceed college-ready standards, unless an institution shows that it is able to support the student adequately.

An interactive web-based admission tool was created that clearly explains admission standards at each institution. The online tool is found at this link: www.coadmissionstool.org

Developmental Education Policy

Colorado's developmental (formerly "remedial") education policy provides criteria to be used by all public higher education institutions in the state in identifying students who need developmental courses in English and mathematics. The change from "remedial" to "developmental" was made by the Commission on Higher Education in 2017 to reflect the national movement away from using the term "remedial." The policy lays out standards whereby institutions may offer developmental courses.

The developmental education policy aligns with postsecondary expectations and with high school graduation guidelines. The goal of the policy is to improve the effectiveness of developmental placement and education, and to increase the number of credentials received by Colorado high school graduates, especially by those from underrepresented backgrounds. In 2013, the policy was updated to increase institution flexibility by giving more placement options, including allowing institutions to place students into college level courses along with supplemental academic instruction. The updated policy also increases the number of assessment options to use in placement. Assessment options have been expanded from including ACT/ SAT college entrance exam scores and the Accuplacer tests, to also including the General Education Development test (GED) and the two new high school equivalency exams (TASC and HiSET), Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced scores. Also, institutions may use additional means of evaluating a student's readiness such as high school GPA and prior learning experiences (e.g., work experience).

In 2019, H.B. 19-1206, titled "Concerning removing equity gaps in higher education by ensuring more student have access to supplemental academic instruction," was passed. Among other things, beginning in fall 2022 Colorado's public institutions of higher education can enroll no more than 10 percent of students into traditional stand-alone pre-requisite developmental education courses that delay degree completion. This change will also impact school districts that offer developmental education courses through Concurrent Enrollment. The Colorado Department of Higher Education is holding ongoing meetings with academic and data representatives from institutions of higher education to determine how to best implement this change effectively.