



Interpreting 2021 Assessment Results



COVID-19 Disrupted Learning for Many Students

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on many aspects of education last year, including reducing or disrupting learning opportunities for some students, schools and districts. In addition, students across Colorado had to adapt to a variety of learning models over the course of the year, including in-person, remote and hybrid instruction. Due to reduced in-person instructional time, some districts may have had to adjust the content for students, and it's likely the impact of these learning disruptions was uneven within districts and across the state.

Learning Conditions Were Different Last Year

Students may have experienced reduced or disrupted learning opportunities

Students received instruction under in-person, remote and/or hybrid models

Schools may have adjusted or reduced covered content *

2021 State Assessment Results Provide Important Insight into Student Learning

Spring 2021 state tests and expectations were consistent with tests from previous years. Because the scale scores and performance levels (e.g., approached expectations, met expectations, etc.) had the same meaning from previous years, results provide important insight into what individual students know and can do in relation to the grade-level expectations of the Colorado Academic Standards. Results for students who had a relatively typical testing experience may be able to be interpreted with reasonable confidence. For example, a student's CMAS math score of performance Level 4: Met Expectations or Level 5: Exceeded Expectations are an indicator of mastery of the standards.

State assessments provide point-in-time snapshots of what individual students know. It is important to take this year's circumstances and other available information about a student's learning into consideration when reviewing results. In addition, any significant difference in test administration conditions from past years should be considered on an individual basis.

State Tests Did Not Change

Colorado did not shorten or adjust test content

Scale scores and performance levels hold the same meaning as previous years

Individual student results can be interpreted with reasonable confidence for students who had a relatively typical testing experience *

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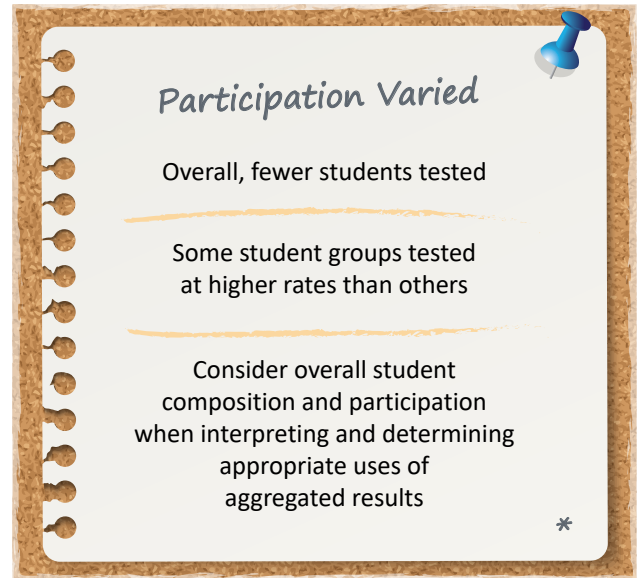


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Participation Rates Look Different this Year

Some students did not take state assessments this year because of safety concerns or other considerations. As a result, some participation rates for districts, schools or student groups are lower than in past years. As participation rates decrease, challenges with interpreting results increase. In addition, the wide availability of different learning settings – in-person, remote learning or hybrid – means students had varying access to take state tests. As a result, some student groups will be overrepresented in the results and others may be underrepresented. Districts and schools are encouraged to closely review their participation rates when interpreting local aggregated results as participation rates are critical to interpretation, and they will vary greatly across the state this year.

Due to these factors and many more challenges experienced during the pandemic, districts and schools may not be able to make direct comparisons within or across years using 2021 assessment data. However, districts and schools can use this year's results, combined with other data, at an individual student level and as a temperature check to better address and track future COVID-19 school recovery efforts.



* Colorado state assessments are the only standards-based statewide indicators of student achievement. Spring 2021 results can be used as a temperature check to identify where the pandemic may have differentially impacted learning across Colorado student groups and as a baseline to support the evaluation of future COVID-19 recovery efforts.

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