

Colorado Measures of Academic Success

WHAT TO EXPECT FOR THE 2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR



COLORADO
Department of Education

A resource for parents and educators

www.cde.state.co.us

Overview

In 2009 Colorado implemented more rigorous academic standards to ensure that all Colorado students are prepared for college and career success. Fully implemented in the 2013-14 school year, the Colorado Academic Standards set clear, consistent guidelines for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level across [10 subject areas](#), including English language arts (ELA), math, science and social studies. The rigorous standards were designed by educators and researchers, with significant input from higher education and workforce leaders, to help students prepare for life after high school. Prior to the adoption of the standards, too many students in Colorado were graduating from high school without the problem-solving and critical-thinking skills needed to succeed in college and in the workforce. These standards were designed to change that.

The need for rigorous standards

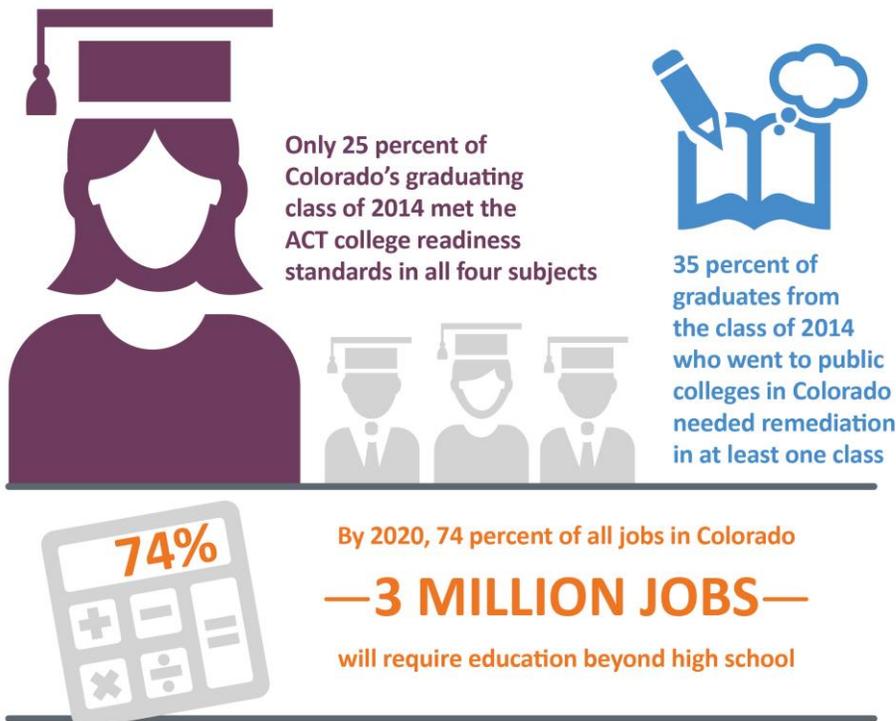


Figure 1

What is different about these standards?

Across all 10 content areas, the standards demand more of our students and teachers than previous standards

RIGOR

Students use inquiry, critical thinking and creative processes to solve problems

RELEVANCY

Students engage in real world scenarios that require the application and transfer of concepts and skills

DISCIPLINARY LITERACY

Students learn to speak, think, work and argue like mathematicians, artists, scientists, authors and historians



Assessments align with rigorous standards

To accurately measure student mastery of these skills and expectations, Colorado adopted assessments that align with the [Colorado Academic Standards](#). Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) assessments are the state's common measurement tool of student progress at the end of the school year in English language arts, math, science and social studies. Designed to be administered online, the tests feature a variety of interactive questions that are engaging and aligned with 21st century teaching and learning practices.

The standards-aligned assessments help educators and parents know how their students are performing and growing over time and how they compare to their peers across the district and the state. In the case of the English language arts and math tests, students and parents can also compare performance with students around the country.

Social studies and science tests

State science and social studies tests measuring the Colorado Academic Standards were administered online in Colorado for the first time in the 2013-14 school year. The [Colorado Department of Education](#), testing contractor Pearson, and Colorado educators collaborated to develop these assessments, ensuring alignment to the Colorado Academic Standards, as well as innovative ways of measuring knowledge and understanding.

Math and English language arts tests

As required by state law, Colorado's tests in English language arts and math were developed in collaboration with a consortium of states, known as [PARCC](#), that came together to develop a shared way to measure how students are performing academically based on more rigorous college and career ready standards. Colorado is a member of PARCC's governing board and Colorado educators were highly involved in the development of the tests.

2016-17 tests

In the 2016-17 school year, CMAS testing will take place from April 10–28. However, the Colorado Department of Education will allow districts to begin testing online earlier in the content areas of English language arts and math if they cannot complete testing within the allotted timeframe due to limitations on the number of computers or other devices needed for testing. The maximum test window for English language arts and math is six weeks.

State law allows districts to use paper versions of any online test.

Colorado State Assessment 2016-17 Calendar

AUGUST 2016

CMAS English language arts, math, science and social studies and PSAT and ACT 2016 Results publicly released

APRIL 10 – 28, 2017

CMAS English language arts, math, science and social studies administration window

APRIL 11, 2017

SAT administered to 11th-grade students

APRIL 11 or 12, 2017

PSAT administered to 10th-grade students

SUMMER 2017

2017 Results available for CMAS English language arts, math science and social studies, as well as PSAT and SAT

What tests will students take?

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	Grades 3 through 9		SCIENCE	Grades 5, 8 and 11
	MATH	Grades 3 through 9		PSAT	Grade 10
	SOCIAL STUDIES	Grades 4 and 7 To be done on a sampling basis with schools participating once every three years.		SAT	Grade 11

Why are statewide tests important?

CMAS tests are the only common measuring tool for students in grades 3 through 9 in Colorado. Participation is important because results help students, parents, schools and districts understand whether students have mastered the content they need to know by the end of the school year and are on track to be ready for college or career after graduation. At the same time, state law requires local school boards to develop a policy allowing parents to excuse their students from participating in one or more state assessments. According to the law, districts cannot impose negative consequences on students or parents if a parent excuses their student from an assessment. Likewise, districts cannot impose burdens on students to discourage them from participating in an assessment.

2016-17 State Testing Hours (Tentative)

	 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS*	 MATH	 SOCIAL STUDIES**	 SCIENCE	 PSAT	 SAT	TOTAL HOURS
Grade 3	4.25	4	-	-	-	-	8.25
Grade 4	4.5	4	(4)	-	-	-	8.5 (12.5)
Grade 5	4.5	4	-	4	-	-	12.5
Grade 6	5.16	4	-	-	-	-	9.16
Grade 7	5.16	4	(4)	-	-	-	9.16 (13.16)
Grade 8	5.16	4	-	4	-	-	13.16
Grade 9	5.16	4.5	-	-	-	-	9.66
Grade 10	-	-	-	-	2.75	-	2.75
Grade 11	-	-	-	3	-	3***	6

Tests are broken down into individual sessions lasting between 60 and about 110 minutes

**Some Colorado students will participate in the CMAS English language arts (PARCC) 90- to 110-minute field test of questions that could be used in future years.*

***Social studies assessments are administered on a sampling basis with schools participating once every three years.*

****Students who elect to take the additional optional essay will add about an hour to their SAT testing time*



How will state tests be used?

Parents should know whether their children are gaining the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in today's complex world. CMAS is the only common measurement tool for Colorado students, helping teachers and parents understand whether students have mastered the content they need to know by the end of each school year in order to be on track for college and career success. Parents can also use CMAS scores to see how their students and schools are doing compared to other students and schools across the district and state, and compared to other states in English language arts and math.

Schools and districts can use CMAS results to make improvements to instruction or to develop additional support and enrichment for students who need more help mastering the standards.

CMAS results from the 2015-16 school year will be used for school and district accreditation ratings in 2016 and for educator evaluations in the 2016-17 school year.

The Colorado Department of Education did not assign new school or district ratings during the fall of 2015, meaning schools and districts retained the ratings they were assigned at the end of 2014. Ratings will be issued again in the fall of 2016. Even after the scores become part of accountability measures, they will not serve as the sole measurement for schools and teachers – other factors will still apply.

When will results be publicly available?

The results of students' 2016 tests in English language arts, math, science, social studies, PSAT-10 and ACT will be released in August. Results from spring 2017 tests are also expected to be released in summer.

Where can I learn more?

- www.cde.state.co.us/communications/tools