



# STATE TESTING

## Spring 2021 Assessments



### Overview

Colorado Measures of Academic Success are annual tests given at the end of the school year to Colorado’s third through eighth graders with science tests also given in high school. CMAS tests are required by both state and federal laws and are the only common measurement of students’ progress on the Colorado Academic Standards in English language arts, math, science and social studies. They are different from

district-level tests because CMAS measures students’ progress on our state standards and allows for important analysis across the entire state and across student groups. This year’s results will help reveal the impact of COVID-19 on learning across our state, which student groups have been most affected and where the state needs to focus its resources.

### 2021 Assessments

The health and safety of Colorado educators, students and their families are our top priorities as COVID-19 responses evolve across the state.

Normally, students in third through eighth grade take assessments each year in both English language arts and math. Tests in social studies and science are taken once in elementary school and once in middle school; and science is taken once again in high school. Ninth and 10th graders take the PSAT, and 11th graders take the SAT.






This spring, however, the state legislature and U.S. Department of Education reduced the number of CMAS tests students will be required to take:

Here are Colorado’s assessment requirements for spring 2021:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	MATH	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	PSAT	SAT
GRADES 3, 5 & 7	GRADES 4, 6 & 8	GRADE 8	NO TEST THIS SPRING	GRADES 9 & 10	GRADE 11

**NOTE**

Parents and caregivers can choose to have children take both the English language arts and math tests if they would like to see how their children are progressing in both subject areas.

	 <b>ELA</b> ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	 <b>MATH</b> MATH	 <b>SCIENCE</b> SCIENCE	 <b>PSAT</b>	 <b>SAT</b>
<b>GRADE 3</b>	<b>REQUIRED</b>	<b>OPTIONAL</b>			
TEST TIME	4h 30m	3h 15m			
<b>GRADE 4</b>	<b>OPTIONAL</b>	<b>REQUIRED</b>			
TEST TIME	4h 30m	3h 15m			
<b>GRADE 5</b>	<b>REQUIRED</b>	<b>OPTIONAL</b>			
TEST TIME	4h 30m	3h 15m			
<b>GRADE 6</b>	<b>OPTIONAL</b>	<b>REQUIRED</b>			
TEST TIME	5h 30m	3h 15m			
<b>GRADE 7</b>	<b>REQUIRED</b>	<b>OPTIONAL</b>			
TEST TIME	5h 30m	3h 15m			
<b>GRADE 8</b>	<b>OPTIONAL</b>	<b>REQUIRED</b>	<b>REQUIRED</b>		
TEST TIME	5h 30m	3h 15m	4h		
<b>GRADE 9</b>				<b>REQUIRED</b>	
TEST TIME				2h 35m	
<b>GRADE 10</b>				<b>REQUIRED</b>	
TEST TIME				2h 55m	
<b>GRADE 11*</b>					<b>REQUIRED</b>
TEST TIME					3h 15m

\* The SAT Analysis in Science will serve as the Colorado grade 11 science test for this spring only.

## Protecting Health and Safety

Testing should only occur when health and safety conditions allow. Here are some of the actions schools, districts and the state are taking to keep students and staff safe:

- Limiting the sharing of materials, sanitizing materials when possible, ensuring adequate spacing between students, increasing ventilation, and ensuring students and staff wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after the test.
- The Colorado Department of Education expanded the time during which the tests can be administered, providing schools and districts more flexibility to schedule the tests when it is safe for students and staff and more time to make plans for the best health safety practices.
- Students may be allowed to take their devices home on a daily basis, helping us all to be prepared should we need to respond to COVID conditions in a way that requires all children to be at home.

We will continue to monitor health data for our community and will make any other changes to our CMAS testing plans necessary to keep students, families and staff safe.

## Parent and Caregiver Choices

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**State law continues to allow parents to excuse their children from taking required state assessments.**

This year, parents and caregivers who want to understand how their children are progressing in both English language arts and math can let their schools know they want their children to take assessments in both subjects. Parents and caregivers should contact their schools for information about the process for opting into assessments in both subjects.

As always, parents and caregiver decisions regarding state testing must be respected.



## Testing for Students Who are Learning Remotely

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Protecting the health and safety of our students and teachers is our top priority, so this year's CMAS testing will occur **only if and when** state and local health orders, as well as district policies for COVID-19, allow students and staff to be safely in school buildings. Additionally, parents or guardians will make the ultimate decision on whether they believe it is safe for their children to go in to school buildings to take the test.

## 2021 CMAS Results Will Not be Used for Accountability or Educator Evaluation Purposes

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Typically, the assessments help inform the state's school and district accountability system, which includes assigning performance ratings to schools and districts. They are also used to evaluate teachers. However, this year's tests will not be used for accountability purposes or for teacher evaluations.

## When Will Results Be Publicly Available?

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Due to the testing window extension occurring in 2021, results are expected to be available for schools and districts later than usual, most likely in July. Consistent with typical years, state level results are expected to be released in August 2021.

## Why Students Take State Assessments

Statewide assessments provide valuable information for students, parents, districts, taxpayers and policy makers about overall academic performance. The assessments provide point-in-time snapshots of what students know and can do in core academic areas. The tests help students, families and educators know how students are performing compared to their peers across the state.

In addition, the statewide assessments help provide information on how well the state's education system is meeting the goals of helping every child attain academic proficiency on the Colorado Academic Standards.

## Standards

Created by Coloradans for Colorado students, the Colorado Academic Standards provided a road map to help ensure all students are successful in college, careers and life. The standards set expectations for what students should know and be able to do across 10 subject areas, including English language arts, math, science and social studies.

They incorporate future skills and essential knowledge that students will need to be successful later in college and careers. The statewide assessments students in Colorado take every year are aligned with these standards and help determine if students have mastered grade-level expectations by the year's end.

## Key Components of the Standards

Across all 10 content areas, the standards are created to ensure students are prepared for college and careers after high school.

### 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

CMAS assessments align with the Colorado Academic Standards to measure student mastery of these skills and expectations. The assessments gauge student progress at the end of the school year in specific subject areas. The assessments are designed to be administered online. They feature a variety of interactive questions that are aligned with 21st century teaching and learning practices. The standards were updated in 2018 to ensure their continued relevancy.

## College Board's High School Assessments

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Colorado students in the ninth and 10th grades take PSAT tests, which are precursors to the SAT test that is taken by 11th-graders. The Khan Academy offers voluntary, optional and free practice resources for the PSAT and SAT, including paper tests, a daily

practice app and a partnership with the Boys & Girls Club. Additionally, students can get connections to scholarship providers, access to online college and career planning materials and feedback about rigorous coursework.

## 2021 Assessment Calendar

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### **APRIL 12 - May 14, 2021**

Official CMAS English language arts, math and science administration window

Schools may begin administering online ELA and math assessments as early as March 22, 2021

### **APRIL 13, 14, 15, or 16, 2021**

PSAT administered to ninth- and 10th-grade students

### **APRIL 13, 2021**

SAT administered to 11th-grade students

### **APRIL 27, 28, 29 or 30, 2021**

PSAT make-up dates (district choice)

### **APRIL 27 or MAY 18, 2021**

SAT make-up dates

### **SUMMER 2021**

Results for CMAS English language arts, math, as well as PSAT and SAT expected to be available to schools and districts.