

Title: Study of Assessment Use in Colorado School Districts

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Abstract/Summary

As part of a statewide effort to help Colorado's district and state leaders understand the scope and range of student assessments currently in use, the Colorado Legacy Foundation (CLF) contracted with Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA) in November 2011 to conduct a first of its kind study intended to provide an inventory of the nature, type, and frequency of student assessments that are given in school districts in the state.

This work is particularly important in light of upcoming changes to the state's assessment system and requirements for districts as a result of recent legislation including Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) and the Educator Effectiveness bill, S.B. 10-191. The information generated through this study will inform state efforts to implement new assessment systems, as well as inform local leaders on how to best leverage existing assessments. This study was conducted in two phases. The first phase was an online survey of districts conducted from December 2011 to February 2012. Questions that were addressed through this survey included:

- What assessments are currently used by districts in Colorado and in what grades?
- In what content areas are Colorado students currently being assessed?
- What audiences receive assessment results?
- For what purposes are assessment results used?
- Do districts use additional assessments beyond what is currently mandated by the state?

The second phase of APA's study was completed in June 2012 and consisted of interviews with district assessment personnel and focus groups with school level personnel. Additional questions during this phase included:

- Are there other common assessments being used across classrooms (in addition to the assessments identified in the survey)?
- How much time is spent training teachers on assessments (administering, understanding results, and using results to inform instruction)?
- How much time do students spend taking and preparing for assessments?
- How effective are different types of assessments for certain purposes such as informing instructional practice and measuring student performance and mastery of state standards?
- How are districts considering changes to their assessment systems to meet new state requirements?

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Introduction

As part of a statewide effort to help Colorado's district and state leaders understand the scope and range of student assessments currently in use, the Colorado Legacy Foundation (CLF) contracted with Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA) in November 2011 to conduct a first of its kind study intended to provide an inventory of the nature, type, and frequency of student assessments that are given in school districts in the state.¹

This work is particularly important in light of upcoming changes to the state's assessment system and requirements for districts as a result of recent legislation including Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) and the Educator Effectiveness bill, S.B. 10-191. The information generated through this study will inform state efforts to implement new assessment systems, as well as inform local leaders on how to best leverage existing assessments. This study was conducted in two phases. The first phase was an online survey of districts conducted from December 2011 to February 2012. Questions that were addressed through this survey included:

- What assessments are currently used by districts in Colorado and in what grades?
- In what content areas are Colorado students currently being assessed?
- What audiences receive assessment results?
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The second phase of APA's study was completed in June 2012 and consisted of interviews with district assessment personnel and focus groups with school level personnel. Additional questions during this phase included:

- Are there other common assessments being used across classrooms (in addition to the assessments identified in the survey)?
- How much time is spent training teachers on assessments (administering, understanding results, and using results to inform instruction)?
- How much time do students spend taking and preparing for assessments?
- How effective are different types of assessments for certain purposes such as informing instructional practice and measuring student performance and mastery of state standards?
- How are districts considering changes to their assessment systems to meet new state requirements?

This report will: (1) describe the study methodology, (2) provided detail findings from both phases of the study, and (3) identify key takeaways and potential areas of future inquiry.

¹ Assessments related to screening or identification for services- such as for special education, Gifted and Talented, or health services- were not included in this study.

Methodology

APA used three approaches to answer the questions described above. A statewide survey was used for Phase 1, whereas Phase 2 of the study consisted of interviews and focus groups.

Survey

The survey was designed to accomplish two objectives. First, it was designed to generate an inventory of the assessments currently used by Colorado districts and charter schools.² Second, the results of the survey were used to provide the starting point for the interviews held with district staff. Procedures used for these interviews are described below.

One of the main objectives of this study is to identify the assessments being used in the state beyond the state-mandated assessments such as CSAP/TCAP, CELA and COACT and to understand how the results of all assessments, including the state-mandated assessments, are utilized. To do this, APA consulted with CLF and CDE to create a detailed survey which can be seen in Appendix A.

The survey was tailored separately for district respondents and charter school respondents. In either case, the questions were broken into three main areas: (1) what are the common assessments used in the respondent's district/charter beyond the state-mandated assessments, (2) how the results of all assessments are used, and (3) what types of assessments districts, schools or charter schools are creating on their own.

In more detail, questions about each assessment used included:

- The grade levels in which it is administered and how often it is given;
- If the assessment is given to any particular group of students or to all students;
- The content areas measured;
- Who is given the resulting data (teachers, principals, parents, etc.);
- What support is given to help teachers to use the results; and
- For what purposes the results are used.

Additional questions about the format and length of the assessment were also asked for any district or school created assessment.

In an effort to make the survey user-friendly, APA created a list of commonly-used assessments. To produce this list, APA relied on a previous review of district Unified Improvement Plans conducted by the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (Center for Assessment) and on discussions APA conducted with state agency assessment staff. Through this process, APA pre-

² Due to low participation level, APA did not believe there was sufficient charter school data to consider the responses as representative of all charters in the state and thus we do not show the results for charter schools in this report.

populated the survey with the following assessments, each having been identified as one that believed to be commonly administered by school districts:

- Two preschool specific assessments- Teaching Strategies Gold and HighScope Child Observation Record (High Scope COR);
- Several interim assessments- NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA/ MAP), Scantron Achievement Series, Acuity, and Galileo;
- Postsecondary admissions exams-EXPLORE, PLAN and Accuplacer; and
- Advanced Placement (AP) Exams and International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams which are targeted mastery assessments for students taking AP classes or in the IB program.

APA distributed the survey to every district in the state through the district's self-identified District Assessment Coordinator. APA also worked with the Colorado Charter School Institute to provide the opportunity to take the survey to all 15 of the Institute's schools and also sent the survey to ten additional district-authorized charters.

In total 79 districts and 5 charter schools participated in the online survey. Participation, including disaggregation by size and region, will be explored in detail in a following section.

Interviews with District Assessment Personnel

In the second phase, APA supplemented findings from the online survey with one-on-one phone interviews with district assessment coordinators from districts in a range of sizes and regions; about half of district assessment coordinators interviewed had also taken the online survey, while the other half had not. In total, seven assessment coordinators from different sized districts and regions were interviewed.

These interviews provided a deeper understanding of the online survey results, offered information about the amount of time students spend taking assessments as well as district administrators' perspective as to how effective particular assessments are for different purposes. In addition to identifying or reviewing the assessments used in their district, interviewees explored areas such as:

- Teacher training on assessments, including administration and understanding and using assessment results;
- Time spent by students spend taking and preparing for assessments;
- Effectiveness of assessments for purposes such as informing instructional practice and measuring student performance and mastery of state standards; and
- Potential changes and considerations for district assessments going forward.

The interview protocol used with district assessment personnel is included as Appendix B.

Focus Groups with School-Level Personnel

Following district-level data collection efforts, APA convened focus groups with school-level personnel, including teachers, instructional coaches and principals, to delve into school-level assessment practices and explore the time requirements for teachers related to the preparation, administration and use of assessments. APA convened four focus groups in conjunction with CDE's Summer Symposium series held in Grand Junction and Denver in June 2012. APA also conducted individual phone interviews with teachers and principals that attended the La Junta Symposium session. In total, 12 principals and 12 teachers/instructional coaches, from a range of different sized districts and regions, participated in these conversations.

In addition to identifying or reviewing the assessments used in their district, areas explored during focus groups included:

- Common assessments used across classrooms;
- Teacher training on assessments, including administration and understanding and using assessment results;
- Effectiveness of assessments for purposes such as informing instructional practice and measuring student performance and mastery of state standards; and
- Potential changes and considerations for school assessments going forward.

The focus group protocol used with school-level personnel is included as Appendix C.

Phase I

Survey Participation in Detail

All Colorado school districts were invited to participate in the online assessment inventory survey. After initial invitations and follow up emails, participation rates by region and district size were examined to target additional follow up efforts to ensure representation from all geographic and size categories. In the end, 79 districts completed the survey. This represents 44 percent of Colorado school districts, from a fairly representative distribution across geographic and size categories.

District participation by size (using APA designated categories) is shown in Table 1A on the following page.

TABLE 1A			
PARTICIPATING DISTRICTS BY DISTRICT SIZE			
Total Number of Students Served	Total Districts by Size Group	Districts that Participated	Participation Percentage
1-250	45	18	38%
251-1,000	60	25	42%
1,001-3,000	34	17	50%
3,001-10,000	20	12	60%
10,001-20,000	7	2	29%
More than 20,000	12	5	50%
TOTAL	178	79	44%

The majority of size categories had at least a 40 percent participation rate. The highest response rate was in districts of 3,001 to 10,000 students, with the lowest being from districts of 10,001 to 20,000 students. It is important to note, however, that there are not an equal number of districts in each category. For example, there were only seven districts in the 10,001 to 20,000 student category.

District participation by region was also considered using categories designated by CDE. The geographic distribution is shown in the Table 1B:

TABLE 1B			
PARTICIPATING DISTRICTS BY REGION			
Region	Total Districts by Region	Districts that Participated	Participation Percentage
Metro	18	9	56%
North Central	20	11	55%
Northeast	32	15	47%
Northwest	19	11	58%
Pikes Peak	26	12	42%
Southeast	28	8	29%
Southwest	23	9	43%
West Central	12	4	33%
TOTAL	178	79	44%

Participation was fairly consistent across regions. Highest participation rates were in the Metro, North Central and Northwest regions, with lower participation rates in the Southeast and West Central regions.

Additionally, 25 charter schools – 15 authorized by the Colorado Charter School Institute and 10 other district authorized charter schools – were invited to participate in the survey. Five charter schools ultimately participated.

TABLE 1C			
PARTICIPATING CHARTER SCHOOLS			
	Invited to Participate	Participated	Participation Percentage
CSI	15	4	27%
Other Charters	10	1	10%

Due to the low participation level APA did not believe there was sufficient charter school data to consider the responses as representative of the state and thus results for charter schools are not shown in this report.

Findings from District-level Assessment Surveys

Question: What assessments are currently used by districts in Colorado and in what grades?

Responses to this question are divided into two categories, including: 1) assessments used generally by districts; and 2) assessments used by grade level.

Assessments Used Generally

In Colorado, there are certain assessments that are mandated by the state that all districts (and charter schools) must administer. First is Colorado’s state summative assessment known as the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP), which replaced the former Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) for the 2011-12 school year. This assessment is administered to 3rd-10th grade students in Reading, Math, and Writing, as well as in 5th, 8th and 10th grade in Science. The CoAlt (formerly CSAPA), an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards, is also given to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Second, districts administer the Colorado ACT (COACT), a postsecondary admissions exam, to all 11th grade students. Additionally, all districts administer the Colorado English Language Assessment (CELA) to students identified as English Language Learners. A literacy assessment in kindergarten through 3rd grade under the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA) is also required; there are three approved

assessment options to fulfill this requirement: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS), Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA2), or Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS).

Note that the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessment is given to 4th graders and 8th graders in a sample of Colorado schools every year. Since not every school gives the NAEP assessment every year, APA did not include it in this study.

APA also identified a number of other assessments to include in the survey based on a previous review of district Unified Improvement Plans by the Center for Assessment and discussions with state assessment staff; these included: Teaching Strategies Gold, HighScope COR, NWEA/MAP, Scantron Achievement Series, Acuity, Galileo, PSAT, EXPLORE, PLAN, Accuplacer, AP Exams, and IB Exams. Districts were further able to identify any additional assessments used district-wide that APA did not already include in the list of potential “commonly-used assessments.” Through this process an additional vendor-created exam, STAR Math, Reading and Early Literacy, was identified which was used by over 10 percent of districts.

Note about preschool assessments: Teaching Strategies GOLD and HighScope COR are both preschool-specific assessments. While both were included in the survey, it was found that the majority of district assessment coordinators that participated could not respond to questions about their district’s preschool assessment practices. During discussions with CDE it became clear that all districts have had an assessment for preschool since 2006-07, so there was a significant disconnect between what was being reported in the survey and actual assessment use in preschool. As such, we have excluded discussion of these assessments in this report. Further, CDE provided a short report on their understanding of preschool assessment practices which has been included as Appendix D.

In review, this report will include survey results for the following state-mandated and commonly used assessments:

- *State-mandated assessments:*
 - CSAP/TCAP, as well as the CSAPA/CoAlt alternate assessment;
 - CELA (for English Language Learners);
 - COACT; and
 - Assessment to fulfill CBLA requirements- DIBELS, DRA2, or PALS.
- *Interim assessments:*
 - NWEA/MAP;
 - Scantron Achievement Series;
 - Acuity;
 - Galileo; and
 - STAR.
- *Postsecondary readiness assessments:*
 - PSAT;
 - EXPLORE;
 - PLAN; and

- Accuplacer.
- *Class/ Program specific assessments:*
 - Advanced Placement (AP) Exams; and
 - International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams.

Throughout the report, assessments will be grouped in the above categories to allow for easy comparison between similar assessments.

Table 2A below shows which of these assessments are being used in the Colorado districts that participated in the assessment survey:

TABLE 2A ASSESSMENTS COMMONLY USED BY DISTRICTS		
	Number of Districts Administering Assessment	Percentage Administering Assessment
State Mandated		
CSAP/TCAP	79	100%
CELA	79	100%
COACT	79	100%
District Selected Assessments Required to be Administered under CBLA		
DIBELS	64	81%
DRA2	18	23%
PALS	3	4%
Optional District Administered Interim Assessments		
NWEA/MAP	45	57%
Scantron Achievement Series	15	19%
Acuity	5	6%
Galileo	5	6%
STAR	11	14%
Optional District Administered Postsecondary Readiness Assessments		
PSAT	45	57%
EXPLORE	34	43%
PLAN	59	75%
Accuplacer	39	49%
Optional Program Specific Assessments		
AP Exams	33	42%
IB Exams	5	6%

When looking at each group of assessments (state-mandated, CBLA related, interim, postsecondary readiness, and class/program targeted) a number of highlights are apparent. Looking at the assessments approved by the Colorado State Board of Education to fulfill CBLA requirements, the majority of districts, 81 percent, use DIBELS; whereas 23 percent use DRA2 which also suggests that some districts use more than one of these assessments. For interim assessments, 57 percent use NWEA/MAP, while Scantron Achievement Series is the second most frequently used with 19 percent of responding districts using it, followed by STAR with 14 percent. Use of postsecondary readiness assessments varied somewhat, with EXPLORE being the least frequently used at 43 percent and PLAN being the highest used with 75 percent. AP exams are administered in 42 percent of districts, but only six percent of responding districts have IB exams.

APA also explored whether the assessments districts choose vary by district size or region. The following table illustrates assessment use by region, as reported by participating districts. However, given the size of the sample, generalizable conclusions about variation by region cannot be drawn.

	Region							
	Metro	North Central	Northeast	Northwest	Pikes Peak	Southeast	Southwest	West Central
DIBELS	67%	73%	67%	82%	83%	100%	100%	100%
DRA2	78%	36%	20%	27%	0%	0%	11%	0%
PALS	0%	9%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%	25%
NWEA/MAP	56%	27%	67%	82%	33%	38%	100%	50%
Scantron Achievement Series	11%	45%	33%	0%	33%	0%	0%	0%
Acuity	11%	18%	0%	18%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Galileo	11%	9%	0%	0%	8%	25%	0%	0%
STAR	11%	9%	0%	36%	25%	13%	0%	25%
PSAT	22%	45%	67%	73%	58%	63%	56%	75%
EXPLORE	44%	73%	40%	64%	25%	25%	11%	75%
PLAN	56%	91%	67%	82%	75%	50%	89%	100%
Accuplacer	44%	27%	80%	45%	50%	50%	44%	25%
AP Exams	56%	64%	27%	55%	58%	0%	33%	25%
IB Exams	11%	18%	0%	0%	8%	0%	11%	0%

APA also looked at assessment use by district size, as seen in Table 2C, on the following page. Again, the size of the sample does not allow for generalizable conclusions about variation by size. The following table illustrates instead shows reported variation in assessment use by size for participating districts.

**TABLE 2C
ASSESSMENTS COMMONLY USED BY DISTRICTS, BY SIZE**

	District Size Category					
	1-250	251-1,000	1,001-3,000	3,001-10,000	10,001-20,000	More than 20,000
DIBELS	94%	84%	71%	83%	100%	40%
DRA2	11%	8%	47%	17%	50%	60%
PALS	6%	0%	6%	8%	0%	0%
NWEA/MAP	39%	80%	71%	25%	50%	40%
Scantron Achievement Series	39%	4%	12%	33%	0%	20%
Acuity	0%	4%	6%	17%	0%	20%
Galileo	0%	8%	0%	8%	50%	20%
STAR	11%	16%	24%	8%	0%	0%
PSAT	56%	68%	71%	25%	100%	0%
EXPLORE	44%	44%	41%	33%	0%	80%
PLAN	78%	68%	82%	75%	50%	80%
Accuplacer	56%	64%	41%	25%	100%	20%
AP Exams	6%	28%	59%	83%	100%	60%
IB Exams	0%	0%	6%	0%	50%	60%

Additional Assessments Identified, Including District Created

As mentioned in the previous section, districts were also given the option of identifying other assessments that they use, including those that are either vendor or district-created. Additional vendor-created assessments identified by school districts were:

- ASVAB Career Exploration Program;
- Basic Early Assessment of Reading (BEAR);
- EasyCBM;
- Gates-MacGinitie Assessments;
- PHELPS;
- Scantron Performance Series;
- SuccessMaker;
- Terra Nova; and
- Test of Silent Contextual Reading Fluency (TOSCRF); Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE); and Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TOSWRF).

None of these assessments were reported as being used by more than three districts so APA did not add them to the list of commonly-used assessments for which survey results are displayed in this report.

Districts also identified if they had any district-created assessments; fewer than 20 percent of districts reported having any district-created assessments. The content areas for which district-created assessments were developed will be explored later in this report.

Assessments by Grade Level

Tables 3A-D examine assessment use by grade. CSAP/TCAP is included in 3rd through 10th grade and COACT is included for 11th grade. CELA was not included since its use is not limited to certain grades.

	Kindergarten		1st		2nd	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
DIBELS	64	82%	63	81%	63	81%
DRA2	14	18%	16	21%	16	21%
PALS	1	1%	1	1%	2	3%
NWEA/MAP	22	28%	25	32%	40	51%
Scantron Achievement Series	0	0%	0	0%	11	14%
Acuity	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Galileo	0	0%	2	3%	3	4%
STAR	4	5%	7	9%	10	13%

Table 3A looks at assessment use in kindergarten through 2nd grade. Over 80 percent of districts use DIBELS in these grades and about 20 percent use the DRA2. NWEA/MAP is also used by an increasing percentage in later grades, with the majority of districts using it by 2nd grade. Use of Scantron Achievement Series begins in 2nd grade (14 percent of districts) and the use of STAR begins in kindergarten, increasing to 13 percent of districts using it in 2nd grade; Galileo is used in a few districts in 1st and 2nd grade.

	3rd		4th		5th	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
CSAP/TCAP	79	100%	79	100%	79	100%
DIBELS	61	78%	45	58%	42	54%
DRA2	14	18%	14	18%	14	18%
PALS	2	3%	2	3%	1	1%
NWEA/MAP	42	54%	42	54%	42	54%
Scantron Achievement Series	13	17%	13	17%	13	17%
Acuity	4	5%	4	5%	4	5%
Galileo	4	5%	4	5%	4	5%
STAR	10	13%	10	13%	10	13%

Table 3B shows assessments used in 3rd-5th grades. DIBELS continues to be used in these grades, though usage decreased from nearly 80 percent to just over 50 percent. Use of the DRA2 (18 percent of districts), NWEA/MAP (54 percent), and Scantron Achievement Series (17 percent) remains consistent. Acuity and Galileo are also used by five percent of districts in all three grades.

**TABLE 3C
ASSESSMENTS USED IN DISTRICTS, BY GRADE (6TH-8TH)**

	6th		7th		8th	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
CSAP/TCAP	79	100%	79	100%	79	100%
NWEA/MAP	44	56%	45	57%	44	56%
Scantron Achievement Series	13	16%	13	16%	13	16%
Acuity	5	6%	5	6%	5	6%
Galileo	4	5%	4	5%	4	5%
STAR	8	10%	8	10%	8	10%
Explore	0	0%	0	0%	20	25%
PLAN	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Accuplacer	0	0%	0	0%	2	3%

As Table 3C shows, similar percentages of districts use NWEA/MAP, Scantron Achievement Series, Acuity and Galileo in 6th-8th grade as in previous grades; slightly fewer districts continue to use STAR in middle school grades (10 percent). EXPLORE is also used by 25 percent of districts in 8th grade, with minimal use by districts of the other college admissions assessments in this grade span.

**TABLE 3D
ASSESSMENTS USED IN DISTRICTS, BY GRADE (9TH-12TH)**

	9th		10th		11th		12th	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
CSAP/TCAP	79	100%	79	100%	0	0%	0	0%
COACT	0	0%	0	0%	79	100%	0	0%
NWEA/MAP	43	54%	43	54%	18	23%	14	18%
Scantron Achievement Series	12	15%	11	14%	7	9%	5	6%
Acuity	5	6%	4	5%	1	1%	1	1%
Galileo	4	5%	5	6%	0	0%	0	0%
STAR	6	8%	6	8%	2	3%	1	1%
PSAT	5	6%	26	33%	28	35%	3	4%
Explore	13	16%	4	5%	0	0%	0	0%
PLAN	9	11%	53	67%	2	3%	0	0%
Accuplacer	3	4%	17	22%	32	41%	26	33%
AP Exams	3	4%	12	15%	26	33%	31	39%
IB Exams	1	1%	1	1%	5	6%	5	6%

Table 3D shows that use of all the interim assessments- NWEA/MAP, Scantron Achievement Series, Acuity, Galileo, and STAR- diminishes after 10th grade, which is the last year CSAP/TCAP is currently administered. The PSAT is administered by about a third of all districts in 10th and 11th grade. PLAN is administered by 67 percent of districts in 10th grade, and Accuplacer is used by a varying percentage of districts in high school grades; the highest level of use is in 11th grade with 41% of districts using the assessment, followed by 12th grade with 33% using it. AP and IB exams are the most commonly used assessments in the last two high school years but it is important to remember that they are very targeted tests given to students taking specific courses.

Survey responses were also examined to determine how many assessments were being administered in each grade. Specifically, this analysis looked at assessments that are typically given to all students- state-mandated assessments, identified commonly-used assessments, and any other assessments

districts reported using, including those that are district-created. However, assessments that were targeted at a specific population such as CELA which is only give to ELL students, and AP and IB exams because their use is limited to students taking certain classes or in a certain program were excluded. Each identified assessment was counted once, regardless of how many content areas it was used in or number of times given a year. Table 4 on the following page shows the percentage of all districts using the identified number of assessments by grade.

TABLE 4 TOTAL NUMBER OF ASSESSMENTS USED BY DISTRICTS (INCLUDING STATE-MANDATED), BY GRADE				
	# Of Assessments Used			
	0	1	2	3+
Kindergarten	5%	39%	35%	20%
1st Grade	4%	37%	37%	23%
2nd Grade	3%	16%	53%	28%
3rd Grade	0%	1%	15%	84%
4th Grade	0%	3%	25%	72%
5th Grade	0%	3%	28%	70%
6th Grade	0%	8%	61%	32%
7th Grade	0%	9%	59%	32%
8th Grade	0%	5%	44%	51%
9th Grade	0%	6%	46%	48%
10th Grade	0%	1%	19%	80%
11th Grade	0%	25%	24%	51%
12th Grade	43%	33%	16%	8%

Again, please note targeted assessments, such as CELA, AP exams, and IB exams, are not included since they are targeted assessments. Twelfth grade is the least tested grade (43 percent having no reported assessments), with the highest number of assessments being used in 3RD grade (84 percent having three or more assessments), followed by 10th grade, then 4th and 5th grade.

Question: In what content areas are Colorado students currently assessed?

In addition to what grades assessments were used in, APA also examined what content areas they were being used to measure. Table 5, on the following page, looks at state-mandated and commonly-used assessments by content area:

TABLE 5
CONTENT AREAS DISTRICTS ARE USING ASSESSMENTS TO MEASURE

	# of Districts Using Assessment	Content Area							
		Reading	Math	Writing	Science	Social Studies	English Language Proficiency	World Languages	Other Subject Area
CSAP/TCAP	79	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
CELA	79	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
COACT	79	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
DIBELS	67	100%	4%	4%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%
DRA2	26	100%	0%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
PALS	3	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
NWEA/MAP	45	100%	100%	82%	64%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Scantron Achievement Series	14	100%	100%	50%	71%	21%	7%	7%	7%
Acuity	6	100%	100%	50%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Galileo	5	100%	100%	40%	100%	20%	0%	0%	0%
STAR	10	91%	73%	18%	9%	9%	0%	0%	0%
PSAT	40	100%	75%	65%	20%	3%	0%	0%	0%
EXPLORE	29	93%	97%	83%	90%	24%	3%	0%	7%
PLAN	52	94%	96%	75%	88%	17%	2%	0%	8%
Accuplacer	28	86%	93%	68%	18%	7%	0%	0%	11%
AP Exams	34	74%	85%	68%	82%	68%	3%	35%	12%
IB Exams	3	100%	100%	67%	100%	67%	0%	67%	33%

The current areas assessed by state-mandated assessments are Reading, Math, Writing and Science for CSAP/TCAP and COACT, and English Language Proficiency for CELA. Outside of state-mandated assessments, the table above indicates the vast majority of assessments are still assessing the same content areas. The highest percentages of assessments used are measuring Reading and Math, followed by Writing and Science. CBLA assessments are clearly literacy specific. About a fifth of districts report using Scantron Achievement Series, Galileo, PLAN or EXPLORE in Social Studies; and Scantron Achievement Series is also used minimally for language assessment. AP and IB are unique in that they are only offered to those students in the class or program; therefore, while they have the widest range of content areas measured, they cannot be truly compared with the other assessments.

In addition to the state-mandated and commonly used assessments, the following percentages of districts reported having additional district-created assessments in these content areas:

- Language Arts 18%
- Math 6%
- PE 5%
- Science 6%
- Social Studies 5%
- Vocational Ed 1%
- Writing 3%

Table 6, reports the total number of assessments used by districts, including CSAP/TCAP, COACT and CELA, in each content area. AP and IB exams are not included. *Note that figures do not mean that a district is using that number of assessments for the given content area in every grade. For example, if the table shows that a district is using four reading assessments, it does not mean that a district is using*

four different assessments in Reading in one grade, but that they use four different Reading assessments K-12 such as using DIBELS K-3, Scantron Achievement Series K-8, CSAP/TCAP in grades 3-10, and COACT in 11th grade.

	# Of Assessments Used					
	0	1	2	3	4	5+
Reading	0%	0%	1%	9%	13%	77%
Math	0%	0%	1%	11%	14%	73%
Writing	0%	0%	11%	14%	24%	51%
Science	0%	0%	10%	19%	29%	39%
Social Studies	66%	19%	8%	5%	0%	0%
English Language Proficiency	94%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
World Languages	95%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Visual Arts	96%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Dance	99%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Music	94%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Drama/Theater	99%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health	95%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Physical Education	91%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Vocational Education	96%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Reading and Math are by far the content areas where districts are using the highest number of assessments with about 75 percent of districts using five or more assessments to measure the two content areas in various grades. Writing and Science follow with 51 percent of districts and 42 percent of districts respectively using five or more assessments in that content area. Ninety-four percent of districts only use one assessment to measure English Language Proficiency (CELA). Looking at subject areas that are not presently included in state-mandated assessments, only a third of districts have one or more Social Studies exams and the vast majority of districts do not have a district-wide assessment in any of the other contents area (World Language, Visual Arts, Dance, Music, Drama/Theater, Health, PE and Vocational Education) when AP and IB exams are excluded.

Given that few districts reported having district-wide assessments in content areas outside of Reading, Math, Writing and Science, the survey also included a question about whether districts, or their BOCES, provided any guidance or framework for creating school level mastery assessments in the other content areas. The following is the list of content areas and the corresponding percentage of responding districts that provide such guidance or frameworks:

- Science 20%
- Social Studies 19%
- World Language 10%
- Visual Arts 9%

- Dance 1%
- Music 9%
- Drama 5%
- Health 9%
- Physical Education 13%
- Vocational Education 5%

About 75 percent of responding districts indicated they have not made available guidance or frameworks for their schools to use to create school-level assessments for any of these subject areas.

Question: What audiences receive assessment results?

As part of the survey, respondents were asked about what audiences in each district receive the results of each assessment. Table 7 below shows the results of this question:

	Number answering Question	Audience					
		District Admin.	School Admin.	Teachers	Counselors/ Academic Advisers	Parents	Students
COACT	60	87%	98%	90%	95%	98%	98%
DIBELS	68	74%	93%	99%	51%	82%	60%
DRA2	23	61%	87%	100%	35%	87%	52%
PALS	2	50%	50%	100%	50%	100%	0%
NWEA/MAP	45	93%	98%	100%	84%	89%	89%
Scantron Achievement Series	15	87%	93%	100%	100%	93%	93%
Acuity	6	67%	100%	100%	17%	33%	100%
Galileo	5	80%	100%	100%	40%	80%	80%
STAR	11	55%	82%	100%	82%	91%	91%
PSAT	41	71%	95%	66%	95%	95%	98%
EXPLORE	31	68%	97%	90%	97%	94%	100%
PLAN	59	71%	90%	80%	95%	95%	97%
Accuplacer	32	31%	50%	38%	88%	56%	97%
AP Exams	36	53%	86%	89%	92%	97%	100%
IB Exams	5	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	100%

Almost all assessments show that assessment results are shared with teachers. The only exceptions to this are the PSAT and Accuplacer results; both of these tests are linked to college preparedness and are not necessarily built to inform instructional practice. For assessments given to the youngest group of students (K-2), DIBELS and DRA2, results are less likely to be given directly to students and parents than other assessments. These earlier grade assessments appear to be used mostly by teachers to guide instruction.

The survey also asked if a given assessment was accompanied by an interpretive guide and/or instructional guidance for teachers to utilize the results, or if neither were provided. Table 8 below, displays these findings:

	Number answering Question	Guide or guidance with assessment?		
		Interpretive guides	Instructional guidance	Neither
CSAP/TCAP	76	0%	0%	0%
CELA	66	0%	0%	0%
COACT	60	0%	0%	0%
DIBELS	63	0%	0%	0%
DRA2	19	0%	0%	0%
PALS	4	0%	0%	0%
NWEA/MAP	44	0%	0%	0%
Scantron Achievement Series	14	0%	0%	0%
Acuity	6	0%	0%	0%
Galileo	5	40%	80%	20%
PSAT	42	93%	64%	2%
EXPLORE	31	90%	81%	3%
PLAN	59	88%	75%	3%
Accuplacer	29	48%	41%	38%
AP Exams	29	62%	34%	34%
IB Exams	2	100%	50%	0%

One key point that comes across in the results is the varied understanding of whether such supports are available for each assessment. One example is the CSAP/TCAP tests where 91% of respondents felt some level of support was provided but 9% felt none was provided. Overall, interpretive guides seemed more prevalent than instructional guidance. A few assessments had all respondents reporting some sort of guide or guidance. Most had only a small percentage reporting that neither support was provided. The assessments with the highest level of a “neither” response were the Accuplacer and the AP exams.

Question: For what purposes are assessment results expected to be used?

Table 9A and 9B examine the purposes for which the assessments results are expected to be used *from the district perspective*. It is important to note that the survey asked only if the results were used for a specific purpose, not if they are effective when used for that purpose. How assessment results are used at the school-level as well the effectiveness of each assessment’s results was explored through interviews and focus groups conducted in the second phase of the study; results from this inquiry will be shared later in this report.

Table 9A examines the survey responses associated with using the assessment results for typical purposes related to student performance. These purposes included: 1) measuring student progress within a school year, 2) measuring student end-of-year/end-of-course mastery of content standards, 3) determining student placement, and 4) providing feedback to students.

**TABLE 9A
PURPOSES ASSESSMENTS ARE USED FOR IN DISTRICTS, STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

	Number of districts answering question	Purpose			
		To measure student progress within the school year?	To measure student end-of-year/end-of-course mastery of content standards?	To determine student placement?	To provide feedback to students?
CSAP/TCAP	75	63%	71%	71%	86%
CELA	58	60%	44%	75%	63%
COACT	61	25%	38%	37%	87%
DIBELS	62	92%	52%	82%	69%
DRA2	23	73%	23%	68%	45%
PALS	4	75%	25%	75%	25%
NWEA/MAP	44	100%	60%	88%	93%
Scantron Achievement Series	15	79%	64%	86%	100%
Acuity	6	100%	33%	83%	83%
Galileo	4	100%	75%	75%	75%
PSAT	39	18%	13%	21%	92%
EXPLORE	28	24%	34%	45%	93%
PLAN	56	24%	19%	33%	91%
Accuplacer	31	13%	17%	87%	70%
AP Exams	34	13%	53%	19%	84%
IB Exams	2	0%	100%	50%	100%

The frequency with which each assessment was used for any of the four purposes varied widely. Some tests, such as the interim tests which include the NWEA/MAP and Scantron assessments, were used relatively consistently across all four categories, with Acuity and STAR less likely to be used for measuring mastery (a third or less of districts which use the assessment use it for that purpose). Other tests such as the AP and IB exams are not created to measure student progress within a year but are used for providing student feedback. Interestingly, many respondents indicated they use the CSAP/TCAP assessments to measure student progress within the school year even though these tests are often considered to be mainly summative in nature.

Table 9B examines more closely the instructional purposes for which assessments are used. Such purposes include informing instructional practice, evaluating teachers, evaluating instructional programs, and informing school/district improvement plans.

**TABLE 9B
PURPOSES ASSESSMENTS ARE USED FOR IN DISTRICTS, INSTRUCTIONAL**

	Number of districts answering question	Purpose			
		To inform instructional practice?	To evaluate teachers?	To evaluate instructional programs?	To inform improvement plans?
CSAP/TCAP	75	83%	18%	72%	88%
CELA	58	82%	7%	61%	68%
COACT	61	57%	7%	33%	45%
DIBELS	62	93%	8%	59%	72%
DRA2	23	86%	0%	45%	41%
PALS	4	75%	0%	25%	50%
NWEA/MAP	44	98%	9%	77%	84%
Scantron Achievement Series	15	86%	29%	36%	71%
Acuity	6	100%	0%	83%	100%
Galileo	4	100%	0%	25%	75%
PSAT	39	29%	0%	16%	26%
EXPLORE	28	52%	3%	28%	45%
PLAN	56	43%	2%	17%	30%
Accuplacer	31	10%	0%	3%	13%
AP Exams	34	53%	6%	44%	16%
IB Exams	2	50%	0%	0%	0%

Survey data indicates that results for most of the assessments are being used to inform instructional practice with the notable exception of the PSAT and Accuplacer. This is not surprising since both of these tests are related to college preparation and the results are not necessarily shared with teachers as shown in Table 5 above. The results from a number of assessments are frequently being used to inform improvement plans; these include the CSAP/TCAP, CELA, DIBELS, NWEA, Scantron, Acuity and STAR. Fewer tests are frequently used to evaluate instructional programs. Those used for this purpose include CSAP/TCAP, CELA, NWEA/MAP, Acuity and STAR. The majority of survey respondents indicated that they do not use the results of any of the assessments at this point to evaluate teachers; the most commonly used assessment for this purpose is the state-mandated CSAP/TCAP (18 percent of all districts report using it to evaluate teachers) and of the 15 districts that use Scantron Achievement Series, 28 percent report using it to evaluate teachers.

Question: Are districts going beyond what is required by the state?

As discussed earlier in this report, there are a number of assessments that districts are required to administer by the state. These state-mandated assessments- CSAP/TCAP, CELA, COACT and one of three assessments to fulfill CBLA- have specific requirements about the grades in which they are administered as well as the content areas they measure. CSAP/TCAP is required in grades 3-10 in Reading, Math, and Writing, and in Science in 5th, 8th and 10th grade. CELA is used to measure English Language Proficiency for ELL students in any grade. COACT is required for all students in 11th grade and tests Language Arts, Math, Writing and Science. DIBELS, DRA2, and PALS are approved by SBE to fulfill CBLA and are administered to measure literacy skills in kindergarten through 3rd grade.

As such, answering the question of whether districts are currently going beyond what they are required to do requires looking at assessments both by grade and by content area. Tables 10 and 11 show the number of assessments that are being used not including CSAP/TCAP, COACT, CELA or CBLA. Please note that if a district uses more than one assessment that fulfills CBLA, only the first instance is excluded; so for example, if a district uses both DIBELS and DRA2 the district would be considered as having one assessment additional assessment beyond what is mandated by the state. Also, AP and IB exams are again excluded because they are targeted to students in specific classes or programs.

First, we looked at whether districts are going beyond what they are mandated to do by the state by grade is shown in Table 10 below:

TABLE 10		
Number of Assessments Beyond State-Mandated, by Grade		
	No Additional Assessments	At least One Additional Assessment
Kindergarten	5%	95%
1st Grade	4%	96%
2nd Grade	3%	97%
3rd Grade	1%	99%
4th Grade	3%	97%
5th Grade	3%	97%
6th Grade	8%	92%
7th Grade	9%	91%
8th Grade	5%	95%
9th Grade	6%	94%
10th Grade	1%	99%
11th Grade	25%	75%

It is clear from the table, that the vast majority of districts are using additional assessments beyond just what is state mandated in all grades. 11th grade has the highest percentage of districts (25 percent) not using an assessment beyond the state-mandated COACT. There are no state mandates for assessments in 12th grade so these grades are not included in this table; however, as shown previously in Table 4, 57 percent of districts reported using at least one assessment in 12th grade.

Second, APA looked at whether districts are going beyond what they are mandated to do by the state by content area is shown in Table 11 below:

TABLE 11		
NUMBER OF ASSESSMENTS USED BY DISTRICTS BEYOND STATE-MANDATED, BY CONTENT AREA		
	No Additional Assessments	At Least One Additional Assessment
Reading	9%	91%
Math	1%	99%
Writing	11%	89%
Science	10%	90%
English Language Proficiency	94%	6%

In the table, it is apparent that in the content areas of Reading, Math, Writing and Science- considered the high stakes content areas- the significant majority of districts (about 90 percent on average and 99 percent in Math) use at least one additional assessment beyond what state mandates require. As noted previously, ninety-four percent of districts only use CELA to measure English Language Proficiency. The other content areas- Social Studies, World Language, Visual Arts, Dance, Music, Drama/Theater, Health, PE and Vocational Education- do not currently have state-mandated assessments and not surprisingly, almost all districts do not have assessments in them at present. Of these non-mandated areas, social studies has the highest percentage of districts, about a third, with at least one assessment in that content area; this may be in anticipation of the addition of Social Studies to be included in the replacement summative assessment for CSAP/TCAP.

These findings, in particular when looking at assessments by content area, will require further inquiry about the ability of districts to meet upcoming state requirements that expand the grades and subject areas of state-mandated assessing.

Phase II

Following the online assessment survey administered during Phase I of the study, APA conducted: (1) interviews with district assessment coordinators, and (2) focus groups with school-level personnel including teachers, instructional coaches and school administrators. The findings that follow in this section are based upon these interviews and focus groups.

Findings from District-level Interviews and Focus Groups with School-level Personnel

Question: Are there other common assessments being used across classrooms?

In addition to the assessments identified as being used district wide, the use of additional common assessments at the school-level was also explored. These assessments are typically teacher created and given more frequently (such as at the end of a quarter or unit) to allow teachers to gauge student learning on a routine basis and modify their instruction accordingly.

More specifically, related questions during focus groups sought to learn whether schools had common assessments that are used across classrooms. It was found that the present use of such common assessments varied widely as did the capacity of schools to develop and implement common assessments. Common assessments were more likely to already be in use by teachers in larger schools and districts, and their use tended to be focused in the state summative areas of reading, writing, math and science, with social studies emerging as a newer area.

There was some inequity in the ability of schools to have common assessments due to a number of challenges, primarily related to the size of the school and district. Small districts often have limited capacity to develop their own assessments, particularly at the classroom level, due to the number of staff. In many of their schools, there is only one teacher per grade, content area, or class subject. Therefore, many assessments are created by the individual teacher without collaboration with peers. To address this issue, several of the small districts are working with their local BOCES or partnering with nearby districts to develop common assessments which would allow for inter-district benchmarking and collaboration.

Having common assessments also requires having common curriculum aligned with recently revised state standards which do not exist yet in all schools. Further, if there is common timing of assessments pacing guides would also be needed. This is also a challenge in schools where there has historically only been a single teacher for a grade or content area. As such, several schools and districts that participated in focus groups and interviews were working towards developing common curriculum (and pacing guides where needed) and would explore common assessments once this foundation was established.

Overall, there was general agreement that having common assessments are valuable for instruction because it allows teachers to discuss data collaboratively and to be able to benchmark their students' performance against other students. As such, several of the schools were in the process of developing some common assessments in key areas or building the foundation needed to take that next step by creating common curriculum.

There was also agreement by many school staff members that locally developed assessments were still preferred even with noted capacity challenges. There was concern that state or vendor created

assessments would not be well enough aligned with their locally developed curriculum to be useful. However, educators did express interest in an assessment resource bank that they could use to either select or develop assessments to suit their districts. This could include complete assessments that they can elect to use as well as a bank of possible assessment questions to draw from depending on the district's needs.

Question: How much time is spent training teachers on assessments (administering, understanding results, and using results to inform instruction)?

Focus groups and interviews also explored the time required to train teachers on all facets of assessments, including administering, understanding results, and using results to inform instruction. *Given the limited number of personnel involved in interviews and focus groups, APA did not believe specific time estimates could be accurately calculated and as such will present general impressions in this section.*

During such conversations, it was found that there is not a lot of additional time spent each year by staff learning or revisiting how to administer assessments. School and district staff who participated in the focus groups and interviews felt that the limited time spent was sufficient and that training related to assessments was primarily spent on how to use assessment data. Many went so far as to say all of their professional development time was spent on using assessment data to inform instruction.

Most of this training occurs at the beginning of the school year and the concern was expressed by teachers that there was not enough support through the year to reinforce that training and help teachers apply the training to their own classroom data. One participant expressed concern about the popular "train the trainer" model, indicating she had attended very effective trainings, but the real challenge was bringing the information back and having enough time to help others not only learn it but apply it to their own data. Most schools do not have data support personnel in their schools so it is largely dependent on how well their principal understands data or if there is a peer that can fulfill that role.

It was also stressed that the time needed to use data to inform instruction is the dominant time needed for staff. Many said that the majority of their imbedded professional development time, or professional learning community (PLC) time, is spent discussing data and how to use it to tailor their instruction. This time is often during weekly common planning periods, or early release time. Further, teachers often indicated that even with this time they do not have enough time to explore data at a deep level- especially in smaller districts where teachers spend a lot of time developing their own assessments. Teachers also indicated that it is difficult to access large assessment databases and bring the data down to the level they need.

Question: How much time do Colorado students currently spend taking and preparing for assessments?

During interviews with assessment personnel and school-level staff, a number of questions were asked about the current time requirements of students in taking and preparing for assessments. From these discussions, it is clear that while there is some additional time spent by students learning test taking strategies, preparation time for assessments is imbedded in normal instruction. Therefore, time estimates below *are specific to the time required for students to take the assessments.*

Tables 12A and B identify the time required for students to take assessments as reported by district staff. Reported time estimates are shown by grade in hours and days (assuming a six hour student day, rounded to the nearest tenth). In all four tables, CELA is excluded since it is not taken by all students. It should be noted that ELL students would require an additional 3 hours of assessment time annually.

TABLE 12A					
Student Test Taking Time Requirements to Take Current State-Mandated Assessments (2011-12)					
Assessment	Early Literacy (CBLA)	CSAP/TCAP	COACT	Total Hours	Total Days
Grade					
Preschool				0.0	0.0
Kindergarten	0.5			0.5	0.1
1st	0.5			0.5	0.1
2nd	0.5			0.5	0.1
3rd	0.5	6.0		6.5	1.1
4th		9.0		9.0	1.5
5th		12.0		12.0	2.0
6th		9.0		9.0	1.5
7th		9.0		9.0	1.5
8th		12.0		12.0	2.0
9th		9.0		9.0	1.5
10th		12.0		12.0	2.0
11th			3.0	3.0	0.5
12th				0.0	0.0

Table 12A shows time requirements for an average student to take current state-mandated assessments, including CSAP/TCAP, an early literacy assessment to fulfill CBLA, and the COACT. For CSAP/TCAP, this amounts to 6 hours, or one day, in 3rd grade for math, reading and writing, then 9 hours (1.5 days) for the same subjects in grades 4 through 10. In 5th, 8th and 10th grades, students take an additional assessment in the subject area of science, so CSAP/TCAP takes 12 hours, or two full days of time, to complete in those three grades. Early literacy exams take 10 minutes or less, three times a year for students in grades K-3 (half an hour in total). COACT, taken in 11th grade, will take three hours, or half a day, to complete.

Table 12B, identifies the time requirements both to take additional assessments currently used by the majority of districts and to take state-mandated assessments:

TABLE 12B								
Student Test Taking Time Requirements of Current District Assessment Practices (2011-12)								
Assessments Used by Majority of Districts								
Assessment	Preschool	Early Literacy (CBLA)	Interim	CSAP/TCAP	PLAN	COACT	Total Hours	Total Days
Grade								
Preschool	0.0*						0.0	0.0
Kinder.		0.5					0.5	0.1
1st		0.5					0.5	0.1
2nd		0.5	12.0				12.5	2.1
3rd		0.5	12.0	6.0			18.5	3.1
4th		0.5	12.0	9.0			21.5	3.6
5th		0.5	12.0	12.0			24.5	4.1
6th			12.0	9.0			21.0	3.5
7th			12.0	9.0			21.0	3.5
8th			12.0	12.0			24.0	4.0
9th			12.0	9.0			21.0	3.5
10th			12.0	12.0	3.0		27.0	4.5
11th						3.0	3.0	0.5
12th							0.0	0.0

*Note: Observational assessment, no additional student time outside of instruction required.

In addition to the state-mandated assessments, students in grades 2-10 in the majority of districts take interim assessments (some districts use these assessments K-12, but what is depicted here what is done on average in the majority of districts). Currently, the assessments are generally given in reading, writing, math and science for one hour per subject area, three times a year, for a total of 12 hours (or two days of time). Districts also administer an assessment in preschool, but it is observational in nature and does not require time for students to “sit” for an exam. The majority of districts also continue to use an early literacy assessment in grades 4-5.

Under the current assessment system used in districts, students spend minimal time on assessments in PreK-1 and in grades 11 and 12. Starting in 2nd grade – the year right before state summative assessments begin – through 10th grade, students spend more time taking assessments; this ranges from about two to 4.5 days. On average, students K-12 spend 2.5 days taking assessments. When looking only at CSAP/TCAP grades (3-10) this average increases to 3.7 days.

Question: How effective are different types of assessments for certain purposes?

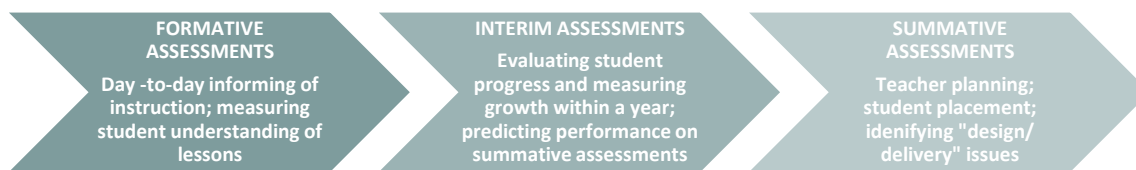
District and school-level personnel were asked how effective different types of assessments were for certain purposes, such as informing instructional practice and measuring student performance and mastery of standards.

In terms of informing instruction, there is a scale of effectiveness for available assessments- summative, interim and formative- at different levels of analysis. At the highest level, state summative data is most helpful at the beginning of the year for teacher planning and student placement. It is also effective for identifying “design or delivery” issues, meaning that these assessments can establish trends from year to year in curriculum or teacher instruction that identify areas in need of improvement. Often, such data can be helpful for identifying needs for individual teacher development. However, participants indicated that it may take a number of years of available to see these patterns and is not very timely for informing instruction.

Interim assessments are more frequent and allow for reevaluation a few times per year as opposed to only once. However, such assessments are still viewed as less effective than formative assessments for monitoring student progress and informing instruction at an individual student level. Assessments given to fulfill CBLA requirements also considered to be helpful for informing instruction. Common assessments are especially helpful because they allow comparison between classes.

When considering measuring student performance and mastery of standards, again each type of assessment is effective at different levels of evaluation. Formative assessments are seen as most helpful to measure ongoing mastery of standards frequently throughout the year, while summative assessments are the final end of year measure to capture the total learning for the year. One participant expressed that if assessments at all levels were well aligned – from formative to summative- it would allow teachers to evaluate student progress towards standards mastery more frequently.

The following chart visually displays the above discussion of the use of different assessments to inform instruction and measure student mastery of content standards:



It was also stressed that effectiveness of assessments is contingent on the ability of staff to fully understand and use the results. To that end, districts have focused much of their professional development in this area. However, as noted in an earlier section, teachers expressed that, although

they have sufficient up front training on how to understand assessment data, they often require more ongoing support and time throughout the year to address student data.

Question: How are districts considering changes to their assessment systems to meet new state requirements?

There are a number of upcoming changes to Colorado’s assessment requirements that will have an impact on district and school assessment practices. Largely due to the requirements of Colorado’s Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) and Colorado’s Educator Effectiveness bill, S.B. 10-191, districts will: (1) need to further assess students in a number of grades (K-3 and 11th) and at least one additional content area (Social Studies) beyond the assessments they currently administer; and (2) use assessment results to evaluate teachers- a purpose for which the majority of districts do not report currently using assessments.

APA explored in the second phase of the study how districts and schools are considering the impact of these legislative changes on their current assessment systems and how they plan to address existing gaps. Through conversations with district and school staff, it was learned that districts are at various stages in their thinking about future assessment needs due to new state requirements. Many understand that changes will be needed, but are at a very preliminary planning stage and necessary conversations have not been conducted- in particular with regard to use of assessments for educator evaluation and measuring student mastery in non-core content areas. Such conversations also are needed to address how well current assessments could potentially fulfill existing needs or if any additional assessments or revisions would be needed.

Several districts, particularly smaller districts, have taken the first step to revising assessment practices by developing standards based curriculum and pacing guides to align with the revised state standards, and presumably the state summative assessment. Several have indicated that it is challenging for district staff to think through developing their own assessments aligned with state expectations when they are unsure what the new state summative assessment will look like. In particular this seems to be an issue for social studies and at the high school level where standards are grade based, but course offerings might not align. This has caused a few districts to adopt a “wait and see” approach while others have elected to forge ahead so as to not lose valuable data collection opportunities.

The districts that appear to be the farthest down the path have participated in CDE and CLF efforts including serving as pilot districts for the new evaluation system and participating in state assessment development.

Summary of Study and Key Takeaways

The intent of this study was to present a clear picture of current district and school assessment practices in order to inform state efforts to implement new assessment systems, as well as informing local leaders on how to best leverage existing assessments. Information was gathered in this study during two

phases. In the first phase, APA conducted an online survey of district assessment coordinators to inform the following questions:

- What assessments are currently used by districts in Colorado and in what grades?
- In what content areas are Colorado students currently being assessed?
- What audiences receive assessment results?
- For what purposes are assessment results used?
- Do districts use additional assessments beyond what is currently mandated by the state?

In the second phase, interviews and focus groups were conducted with district assessment coordinators and school-level personnel to delve deeper into district and school assessment practice, both current and anticipated. Questions explored during this phase included:

- Are there other common assessments being used across classrooms (in addition to the assessments identified in the survey)?
- How much time is spent training teachers on assessments (administering, understanding results, and using results to inform instruction)?
- How much time do students spend taking and preparing for assessments?
- How effective are different types of assessments for certain purposes such as informing instructional practice and measuring student performance and mastery of state standards?
- How are districts considering changes to their assessment systems to meet new state requirements?

From the findings of both phases, there were a number of key takeaways:

- Districts are administering a number of assessments beyond what they are required to by the state; these additional assessments tend to be focused in grades and content areas (math, reading, writing and science) that will later be measured on the state summative assessments. By comparison, there are very few district-wide assessment practices and guidance for the creation of school-level assessments in other content areas.
- Awareness of district-wide preschool assessment practices is incomplete. In response to the online survey, only a third of district assessment coordinators could respond to questions about preschool assessments, whereas CDE reports that since 2006-07, 100 percent of state-funded preschools administer a state-approved preschool assessment.
- On average, students in grades K-12 spend 2.5 days taking assessments (3.7 days when looking just at grades 3-10). Assessment time commitments are currently minimal in grades K-2, 11th and 12th. As the number of state assessments increase, and their method of administration also changes, associated time commitments are also likely to change.
- Districts use the results of assessments for a wide range of purposes, such as informing instructional practice and measuring student mastery of content standards. However, the majorities of districts are not currently using assessments for educator evaluation and are unsure how they will do so in the future to fulfill the requirements of recently enacted

legislation requiring that 50% of educator performance evaluations be based upon the academic growth of their students.

- School and district personnel that participated in the study indicated that professional development and collaboration time is primarily focused on assessments and using data to inform instruction. Teachers also said they felt they have sufficient up front training on how to understand assessment data, but that they require more ongoing support and time throughout the year to address student data at the level needed to effectively use it to identify student needs and adjust instruction.
- There was much discussion during focus groups about the push for common assessments to be used across classrooms in schools. Participants suggested that such common assessments allow for greater collaboration amongst teachers as well as performance comparisons between classrooms.
- Participants indicated that if assessments at all levels were well aligned – from formative to summative- it would allow teachers to evaluate student progress towards standards mastery more frequently, though sufficient time to use data would still be necessary.

As changes to state assessments and requirements become finalized, it will be important to explore the impact that changes may have on student time, district and school assessment choices, and alignment of instructional practice and assessment. Further, there may be opportunities to create efficiencies which should be explored, including opportunities such as: (1) group purchasing of commonly administered assessments; (2) the work of CDE's Content Collaboratives which includes identifying assessments that are aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards and could support the growth component of educator evaluations per S.B. 10-191, as well as posting these assessments to a statewide resource bank for districts to access and use; and (3) exploring emerging methods of administering assessments that may be more efficient, instructionally based and offer more immediate and actionable data.

About Augenblick, Palaich and Associates: APA is an education policy consulting firm with nearly 30 years of experience analyzing a wide array of education issues for state and district level policymakers in every state in the country. As of 2012, APA is also a part of the Regional Education Lab for central states, including Colorado (REL-Central). Recent work at the state-level in Colorado has included analyzing the resource implications of two legislative reform efforts: Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) on behalf of the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and Colorado's Educator Effectiveness bill (SB 10-191) on behalf of the State Council for Educator Effectiveness.

Appendix A

Assessment Study Survey

Colorado Assessment Inventory

3. Are the following assessments given to all students or only to a particular group of students (in any grade PreK-12)? Select "given to all students" or all that apply. Leave BLANK if given assessment is not used.

	Given to all students	At-risk students	Students struggling academically	Special Education students	ELL students	Gifted students	Other group of students
Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scantron Achievement Series	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching Strategies GOLD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HighScope Child Observation Record (COR)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acuity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Galileo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PSAT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EXPLORE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PLAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accuplacer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced Placement (AP) Exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If assessment is given to a different group of students please specify.

Colorado Assessment Inventory

**4. What content areas are the following assessments measuring (in any grade PreK-12)?
Select all that apply to each assessment used or leave BLANK if given assessment is not used.**

	Reading	Math	Writing	Science	Social Studies	English Language Proficiency	World Languages	Other Subject Area
Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scantron Achievement Series	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching Strategies GOLD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HighScope Child Observation Record (COR)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acuity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Galileo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PSAT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EXPLORE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PLAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accuplacer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced Placement (AP) Exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If used in "other subject area" please specify.

Colorado Assessment Inventory

5. Who is given results from each of the assessments listed below? Select all that apply to each assessment or leave BLANK if given assessment is not used.

	District Administrators	School Administrators	Teachers	Counselors/Academic Advisers	Parents	Students
Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scantron Achievement Series	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching Strategies GOLD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HighScope Child Observation Record (COR)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acuity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Galileo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ACT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PSAT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EXPLORE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PLAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accuplacer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced Placement (AP) Exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there anyone else that receives assessment results?

Colorado Assessment Inventory

6. Do the results of the following assessment come with an interpretive guide and/or instructional guidance? Select all that apply to each assessment used or leave BLANK if given assessment is not used.

	Interpretive guides	Instructional guidance	Neither
CSAP/TCAP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CELA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scantron Achievement Series	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching Strategies GOLD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HighScope Child Observation Record (COR)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acuity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Galileo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ACT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PSAT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EXPLORE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PLAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accuplacer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced Placement (AP) Exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Colorado Assessment Inventory

Additional District-wide Assessments

The following questions are designed to gather information regarding any additional DISTRICT-WIDE assessments currently used in your district that were not listed or identified in the previous questions on this survey. Please name any other district-wide assessments used in core content areas, as well as the following areas: 1) World languages, 2) Visual Arts, 3) Dance, 4) Music, 5) Drama/Theater, 6) Health, 7) Physical Education, and 8) Vocational Education. Please also include any district-wide assessments used in the preschool setting.

EXCLUDE any progress monitoring assessments.

1. Does your district currently administer other assessments beyond the ones previously discussed?

- Yes
- No

Colorado Assessment Inventory

Additional District-wide Assessments- 01

The following questions are designed to gather information regarding any additional DISTRICT-WIDE assessments currently used in your district that were not listed or identified in the previous questions on this survey. Please name any other district-wide assessments used in all areas, including: 1) Reading, Writing and Communicating; 2) Science; 3) Math; 4) Social Studies; 5) World languages; 6) Visual Arts; 7) Dance; 8) Music; 9) Drama/Theater; 10) Health; 11) Physical Education; and 12) Vocational Education. Please also include any district-wide assessments used in the preschool setting.

EXCLUDE any progress monitoring assessments.

1. What is the assessment used? Select name from drop down menu or fill in blank below.

If assessment name not found in above drop down list, please specify:

2. Who created the assessment? Select all that apply.

- Colorado Department of Education
- District and/or school personnel
- Another district
- BOCES
- Community college or university
- Assessment vendor
- Other (please specify)

3. Please select all that apply to the administration and scoring of this assessment.

- Multiple choice
- Constructed response
- Essay
- Performance observation
- Portfolio
- Computer administered
- Computer adaptive
- Computer scored
- Hand scored
- One-on-one with a teacher/assessor

Colorado Assessment Inventory

4. What is the typical length of testing time per student (each time given and for each subject area)? Select one.

- Less than 30 minutes
- 30 minutes to 1 hour
- More than 1 hour
- Please describe if testing time varies (for example, either by content area or grade).

5. How many times is the assessment given in a school year by grade? Select one response per row or leave BLANK if assessment is not used in a given grade.

	1	2	3	4	5+
Preschool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kindergarten	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1st Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2nd Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3rd Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4th Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5th Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6th Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7th Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8th Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9th Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10th Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11th Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12th Grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Colorado Assessment Inventory

6. Is the assessment given to all students or only to a particular group of students (in any grade PreK-12)? Select "given to all students" or all that apply.

- Given to all students
- At-risk students
- Students struggling academically
- Special Education students
- ELL students
- Gifted students
- Other group of students

Please specify if given to other group of students.

7. What content area(s) is the assessment measuring? Select all that apply.

- Reading
- Math
- Writing
- Science
- Social Studies
- English Language Proficiency
- World Languages
- Visual Arts
- Dance
- Music
- Drama/Theater
- Health
- Physical Education
- Vocational Education
- Other Subject Area

Colorado Assessment Inventory

8. Who is given the results of this assessment? Select all that apply.

- District Administrators
- School Administrators
- Teachers
- Counselors/Academic Advisers
- Parents
- Students

Is there anyone else that receives assessment results?

9. Do the results of this assessment come with an interpretive guide and/or instructional guidance? Select all that apply.

- Interpretive guide
- Instructional guidance
- Neither

10. For what purposes are the results of the assessment used in your district? Select all that apply.

- To inform instructional practice?
- To measure student progress within the school year?
- To measure student end-of-year/end-of-course mastery of content standards?
- To evaluate teachers?
- To evaluate instructional programs?
- To determine student placement?
- To inform improvement plans?
- To provide feedback to students?

Colorado Assessment Inventory

11. If properly used, how effective do you believe the results of the assessment CAN BE for the following purposes? Select one response per row.

	Ineffective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective	No Opinion
To inform instructional practice?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To measure student progress within the school year?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To measure student end-of-year/end-of-course mastery of content standards?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To evaluate teachers?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To evaluate instructional programs?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To determine student placement?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To inform improvement plans?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To provide feedback to students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Colorado Assessment Inventory

School-level Assessments

One final question about SCHOOL-LEVEL assessments.

1. Does the district or your BOCES provide any framework or protocol for school or classroom-level end-of-year/end-of-course assessments in the following subjects? Select all that apply or "none of the above."

- Social Studies
- Science
- World Languages
- Visual arts
- Dance
- Music
- Drama/Theater
- Health
- Physical Education
- Vocational Education
- None of the above

Appendix B

Protocol for Interviews with District Assessment Coordinators

Assessment Study Interviews with District Assessment Coordinators

Review of Survey/Background Information

1. Review of survey answers, if survey completed:
 - a. Address any inconsistencies with survey responses
 - b. Are there any assessments used in your district that you did not note on the survey?
 - c. How are special needs populations assessed? (Prompt: Are different assessments used or given more frequently).
 - d. Are there any content areas that are not assessed district-wide currently?
 - e. Are there any purposes given that no assessment is used/ available for?

2. Review of assessments used, if survey not completed:
 - a. What assessments are used in your district? Are any district created?
 - i. What purposes are they used for? (Prompt: to inform instruction, to measure mastery and growth, evaluation, improvement plans, etc.)
 - ii. What content areas are you assessing district-wide? Are any not currently being assessed?
 - b. How do you assess your special needs populations?

Resources Needed for Assessments (including time and purchase costs)

1. Training/professional development
 - a. What training is involved to prepare staff to administer assessments?
 - b. What training is involved for educators to understand and use the results?
 - c. Do you think teachers have a proficient understanding of how to use the results of the assessments? If not, what would help?
2. Student Time
 - a. Do you have a sense of how much overall time students spend taking assessments (in days)? Does your district have a schedule/chart that you can share?
 - b. How much time is spent preparing students for assessments?
 - i. Any special workshops/camps/afterschool sessions?
3. Cost to Purchase Assessments/Supplies and Materials
 - a. Do you have an estimate of the cost to your district for the assessments you use? (Per student, if possible)

Effectiveness of Assessments

4. Are some assessments more effective than others for certain purposes:
 - a. Informing instruction?
 - b. Aligning with/measuring progress against new content standards?

- c. Better for predicting future performance on CSAP/future assessment on new content standards?

Areas for Improvement/Changes Going Forward

- 5. How would you change your assessment system or assessments given to provide the types of data and information you need? Are there any additional/different assessments you would use? (Probe: What are the barriers that prevent the district from using those additional assessments).
 - a. Do you feel you have sufficient assessment data in every area you need to improve performance? By subject? By special needs population?
 - b. Do you feel the assessment results you receive now are applicable to new content standards going forward?
- 6. In content areas where you do not currently have testing, how are you thinking about testing going forward?
- 7. Are there ways in which you are contemplating using assessments for evaluating teachers going forward if you do not have any used for that purpose now?

Appendix C

Protocol for Focus Groups with School-level Personnel

Assessment Inventory Focus Groups with School-level Personnel

Background Information

3. What summative and interim assessments are used in your school? In what grades and content areas?
4. Do you have any common assessments that are used across classrooms within your school?
 - a. How often are these administered? To whom are they given? (prompt: certain grades, certain student populations)
 - b. What content areas do they measure?
 - c. How are these assessments created? (prompt: department created, etc)
 - d. Any guidelines or protocols from the district to assist in their creation?
5. How do you use formative assessments in your classrooms? (prompt: informing instruction, decision-making at the classroom level)
6. Does your district provide definition, guidance, and/or support of any kind that supports teachers' formative practice?

Time Needed for Assessments

7. Teacher time
 - a. What training is involved to prepare for administering assessments? (prompt: summative, interim, common formative)
 - b. What training is involved to help understand and use the results of the range of assessments?
 - c. Do you think you have a sufficient understanding of how to use the results of the assessments? Does your understanding vary by type of assessments?
 - i. What would help you increase your understanding and use of results?
8. Student time
 - a. How much time is spent preparing students for assessments separate from instruction? (prompt: test taking strategies, reinforcing, test prep, etc)
 - ii. Any special workshops/camps/afterschool sessions?

Purpose/Effectiveness of Assessments

9. What purposes do you use assessments for? (Prompt: to inform instruction, to measure mastery and growth, evaluation, improvement plans, etc.)
10. How effective do you believe assessments are for those purposes?
11. Are some assessments more effective than others for:
 - a. Informing instruction?
 - b. Aligning with/measuring progress against new content standards?
 - c. Better for predicting future performance on CSAP/future assessment on new content standards?

Areas for Improvement/Changes Going Forward

12. Do you envision the use of data changing under the future assessment system? If so, how?
13. How would you change your assessment system or assessments given to provide the types of data and information you need? (prompt: to inform instructional practice, improve student performance, measure content mastery)

Appendix D

Report by Colorado Department of Education
on Preschool Assessment Practices

Preschool Assessment in Colorado

The results of the Assessment Study revealed some misconceptions about the assessment of preschool age children served in Colorado school districts. For example, 51% of the district personnel who responded to the survey reported that their district does not use any preschool assessments when, in fact, Colorado has had a preschool assessment mandate in place since 2005. All school districts are required to assess children who are funded through the Colorado Preschool Program, preschool special education or Title I and there has been 100% compliance with this mandate since the 2007/2008 school year.

Preschool assessment is supported through Results Matter, a national model program developed in Colorado with a one million dollar start up grant from the US Department of Education and housed in CDEs Office of Early Learning and School Readiness. Preschool programs choose one of two approved observational assessments and teachers complete these assessments using secure online systems that provide real time access to data reports at the child, class, site and district level. Results Matter supports the use *authentic assessment* which is defined by the program as assessment that occurs over time using naturalistic methods with children in their everyday routines, activities and places. After field testing four assessment systems for several years, the menu has been narrowed to the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment, used by about 98% of districts and the HighScope COR assessment.

Classroom teams observe and collect portfolio documentation such as anecdotal notes, photos, video clips and work samples that can be posted to ePortfolios in the online assessment system. Three times per year, the team considers the body of evidence collected for each child and completes a checklist rating in the online system. Children are assessed in both developmental and academic domains and the assessment systems yield both status and growth data. Results can be compared to the state standards, state early learning guidelines, national normative data or research based widely held expectations for the age group.

Results Matter currently supports assessment of 40,000 preschoolers in Colorado and reports results to the State Legislature, the Lieutenant Governor's Office and the US Department of Education – Office of Special Education Programs. In addition to the school district preschool program participation, 100% of the Head Start programs in Colorado voluntarily participate. Results Matter data is used to demonstrate how quality preschool experiences help close the achievement gap for young children with significant risk factors. Longitudinal analysis is showing that these trends are stable through the primary grades and show no sign of fade out.

In addition to using the preschool assessment data for accountability reporting, classroom teams and program administrators are becoming increasingly adept at using the information to inform instruction, intervention and continuous quality improvement efforts.

There are logical reasons why district personnel may be unaware of the good assessment working going on with their preschool age children. Distance from the preschool operations due to differences in delivery models is the most likely reason. For example, in any given district, preschool programming might be offered through one or more of the following venues:

- district sponsored classrooms housed in elementary school buildings
- district sponsored classrooms housed in standalone early childhood centers
- privately sponsored classrooms in public elementary school buildings
- contracted community sites such as private centers or Head Start programs
- BOCES

District assessment coordinators are encouraged to contact their district early childhood administrator for more information on their Results Matter assessment activities. Results Matter staff at CDE can also provide more detail about how the assessments work, how the results are used and what local and state data results look like.

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