

# SUPPORTING College and Career Readiness

## Introduction to the Colorado Academic Standards

The power of Colorado’s education improvement efforts lies in having a comprehensive system consisting of relevant and rigorous standards, aligned and meaningful assessments, excellent teachers and school leaders, and high-performing schools and districts. All aspects of the system are *continuously improving* to advance student learning and prepare students to succeed in an increasingly competitive workforce.

### History

#### Senate Bill 08-212

Senate Bill 08-212, Colorado’s Achievement Plan for Kids, called for the development of rigorous standards for students. The Colorado Department of Education engaged in a year-long process to update its academic standards in English language proficiency and ten content areas: dance, drama and theater arts; mathematics; music; reading, writing and communicating; science; social studies; visual arts; and world languages. After releasing drafts of the standards for public comment, the State Board of Education adopted the Colorado Academic Standards in 2009.

#### Colorado Academic Standards and Common Core State Standards

The state-led effort to develop the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English language arts began as the Colorado Academic Standards were being developed. Colorado was among six states asked to provide feedback on the Common Core State Standards in the development process.

Once the Common Core State Standards were released, the Colorado Department of Education commissioned a study to compare the state’s reading, writing and communicating standards and math standards with the Common Core State Standards. The study showed close alignment of the two sets of standards. Using the results of the study and feedback from the standards development committees, the State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English language arts in August 2010.

While Colorado adopted the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics, the state continues to maintain “unique

### Timeline

- **2008:** Colorado Legislature passes S.B. 08-212 requiring revision of standards and alignment of the P-12 educational system. The bill mandates each local education agency “adopts standards, at a minimum, in those subject areas that are included in the state preschool through elementary and secondary education standards, including but not limited to English language competency and visual and performing arts.”
- **2009:** Colorado State Board of Education adopts standards in 10 content areas and for English language proficiency.
- **2010 (August):** Colorado State Board of Education adopts the Common Core State Standards for mathematics and reading, writing, and communicating.
- **2010 (December):** The Colorado Department of Education releases the Colorado Academic Standards for mathematics and reading, writing and communication incorporating the Common Core State Standards.

to Colorado” standards in those content areas. And, as always has been the case, districts maintain autonomy to adopt their own curriculum to meet the standards and teachers retain the ability to design their instruction in ways that support students in meeting the standards.

## Colorado Academic Standards: Design Principles and Instructional Shifts

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### Focus

The Colorado Academic Standards emphasize what students need to be postsecondary and workforce ready.

- Articulated grade level expectations express the concepts and skills every student should master at each grade level
- 21<sup>st</sup> century information literacy, collaboration, critical thinking, self-direction, and invention skills are evident throughout the standards

### Coherence

The Colorado Academic Standards establish vertical and horizontal connections.

- Grade level expectations build vertically toward the achievement of the prepared graduate competencies for each content area
- Interdisciplinary relationships in the standards connect content areas (horizontally) across grade levels

### Rigor

The Colorado Academic Standards are written for mastery.

- Fluency, application and transfer comprise Colorado’s definition of mastery
- Requirements for deeper student understanding are the foundation of the standards

### All Students, All Standards

The Colorado Academic Standards reflect the importance of teaching the whole child.

- The Colorado Academic Standards include standards for 10 content areas: comprehensive health and physical education; dance; drama and theatre arts; mathematics; music; reading, writing, and communicating; science; social studies; visual arts; world languages
- Literacy skills, the basis of academic success for all students, are a prominent focus within the standards

## Where can I learn more?

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**The Office of Standards and Instructional Support website ([www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction](http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction)) provides a variety of resources for those wishing to learn more about the Colorado Academic Standards.**

For any additional questions, contact Brian Sevier at [Sevier\\_B@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Sevier_B@cde.state.co.us)

### The Colorado Department of Education

**CONNECTING** . . . *rigorous academic standards* . . . *meaningful assessments* . . .  
*engaging learning options* . . . *excellent educators* . . . **for STUDENT SUCCESS**