

The Colorado Academic Standards and the Colorado English Language Proficiency Standards provide the basis for teaching and learning in the state. The state's assessment system supports the teaching and learning process by providing a range of assessments to inform classroom instruction and school and district improvement. This system of assessments includes school readiness; early literacy (READ Act); English language proficiency; summative content assessments, including college/career ready assessments; and alternate content assessments. Many of these assessments are state-administered, others, like the school readiness and early literacy assessments, are locally procured with guidance from the state. This communication provides important updates on the state's assessment system. The 2014 Colorado state testing calendar is provided on the last page.

Colorado Science and Social Studies Assessments

New state science and social studies assessments will be administered online in Colorado for the first time in the 2013-2014 school year. These assessments are being developed collaboratively by the Colorado Department of Education, assessment contractors Pearson and ETS, and Colorado educators to measure the Colorado Academic Standards. Alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities are also being developed. Elementary (4th grade social studies and 5th grade science) and middle school (7th grade social studies and 8th grade science) assessments will be administered in the spring of 2014. High school (12th grade science and social studies) assessments will be administered in the fall of 2014.

Field Testing

The initial round of field testing for the elementary and middle school assessments ended in May. More than 25,000 students from about 50 Colorado school districts participated in the summative assessment field test and about 800 students from 26 school districts participated in the alternate assessment field test for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Many participating districts reported that field testing was a positive experience that provided an opportunity for testing technology capacity, interacting with the online testing environment, and training personnel. Districts can continue to take advantage of practice opportunities in a no-stakes environment as more field test opportunities will be available in the fall. The field testing will take place in mid-late September for elementary and middle school and in late October for high school. The elementary and middle school field tests will occur one grade higher than the intended assessed grades. Social studies will be assessed at 5th and 8th grades on 4th and 7th grade assessment frameworks. Science will be assessed at 6th and 9th grades on 5th and 8th grade assessment frameworks.

If you are interested in participating in the fall field tests, please contact Margo Allen at allen_m@cde.state.co.us.

Practice Tests

Practice tests, referred to as ePATs (electronic Practice Assessment Tools), that help to familiarize students with the online testing environment can be accessed at www.pearsonaccess.com. Select Colorado from the drop down box and click on the "Support" tab. On the Support page, you will find the ePATs, along with practice guides. **Districts are strongly encouraged to give students time to practice the tests before actual testing.** The practice tests will help students navigate through the online testing environment and use the embedded supports on the day of testing.

Educator Recruitment

Educator involvement in the development and review of state assessments is essential to ensuring that the content of items is appropriate for Colorado students and that items are not unfairly advantageous or disadvantageous to a particular group of students. Assessment development provides a unique professional development opportunity for participating educators, and CDE would like your district to be represented.

Please direct educators interested in participating in science and social studies assessment development and review to the following link: <http://educator.force.com/CO>.

Assessment Frameworks

Assessment frameworks specify the Evidence Outcomes that are eligible for inclusion on the state assessments. They also list the percent representation and number of score points for each of the reporting categories/standard areas that will appear on the summative assessments. Feedback from content experts and Colorado educators has been incorporated into the final versions of the frameworks. Final assessment frameworks for the general science and social studies assessments have been posted to the CDE website at the following link

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/NewAssess-Sum.asp>.

For questions or issues related to the new science and social studies assessments, please contact Jason Clymer at clymer_j@cde.state.co.us

English Language Arts & Mathematics Assessments: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is the multi-state assessment consortium for English language arts and mathematics of which Colorado is a governing member. PARCC is in the process of developing computer-based assessments for English language arts in grades 3-11 and mathematics assessments in grades 3-8. In addition, there will be two high school assessment sequences: 1.) Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II; and 2.) Integrated/International I, Integrated/International II and Integrated/International III. The assessments will consist of two parts: the performance-based assessment given at about 75 percent of the school year and the end-of-the-year assessment given at about 90 percent of the year. The attachments entitled "Estimated Time on Task by Grade and Session" and "Estimated PARCC and Current State Testing Time" provide additional information regarding test sessions and time expectations.

Colorado has chosen to include both of the high school mathematics pathways in its system. This results in districts having options in terms of how they approach the assessment and fosters continued control of scope and sequence at the district level. For your convenience, we have reattached a communication sent to you in April that discusses some of the issues districts will want to consider as they determine whether they wish to provide one or both sequences.

PARCC has created model content frameworks to support implementation of the English language arts and mathematics standards and to inform assessment development. Content frameworks for [English language arts](#) and [mathematics](#) are available on the PARCC website. PARCC has also released [sample items](#) for both content areas. Most recently, PARCC has released [assessment blueprints and test specifications](#), which provide more detailed information regarding the actual

structure of the assessments (types of items, number of items, etc.). The underlined text is hyperlinked to the noted resources. You can also go directly to www.parcconline.org should you have difficulty accessing the hyperlinks. During the summer, PARCC plans to release information related to the following:

- Timeline for professional development modules
- Final accommodations manual for students with disabilities
- Final performance level descriptors for all grades/courses in ELA/literacy and mathematics
- Windows for traditional and block scheduling
- Final English Language Learner policy
- Additional sample items

Additional information regarding PARCC may be found at www.parcconline.org. For questions or issues related to PARCC, please contact Stephanie Boyd at boyd_s@cde.state.co.us.

Technology and Online Assessment Readiness

Technology Readiness Tool (TRT)

PARCC and CDE will use device-to-student ratio information submitted to the Technology Readiness Tool (TRT) to set testing windows and to make policy decisions. **Information from districts that have submitted information to the TRT will inform determinations and policy decisions.** Districts are strongly encouraged to submit information into the TRT as soon as possible. Currently, some data from about 70% of Colorado schools has been submitted. For those districts reporting at least one computer, results indicate that they can complete science and social studies testing next spring in three weeks. PARCC makes determinations about technology readiness based on snapshots of information taken from the TRT at distinct points in time. Upcoming PARCC TRT data snapshots are June 14, 2013 and December 13, 2013. These data will be used on an ongoing basis to influence both Colorado-specific and PARCC policies and procedures. If data from your district has not yet been submitted to the TRT, please work with your District Technology Coordinator (DTC) to make sure that your district's data, including your charter schools' data, are represented.

Technology Guidelines

Technology requirements for the Colorado science and social studies summative assessments and the PARCC assessments can be found in the [Technology Guidelines for PARCC Assessments: Version 2.1](#). Chromebooks and tablets such as the iPad may be used for the assessments; however, districts are encouraged to read the restrictions for these devices that are outlined in the aforementioned technology guidelines. Additional information related to the technology guidelines, including the requirement for headphones, may be found in the attached "Technology Update" document. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/NewAssess-DTC.asp>.

For questions or issues related to online readiness, please contact Collin Bonner at bonner_c@cde.state.co.us

School Readiness Assessments

School readiness describes the status and ongoing progress a child makes within the domains of physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language and comprehension development, and cognition and general knowledge. By monitoring each child's progress across multiple domains, teachers, parents, schools and caregivers can provide needed support to ensure each child's success in school. Information gathered from school readiness assessments is to be used for supportive and instructional purposes and cannot be used to deny a student admission or progression to kindergarten or first grade.

S. B. 08-212 (CAP4K) requires that all students in publicly funded preschool programs and kindergarten have an Individual School Readiness Plan. For kindergarteners, the Individual School Readiness Plan must be informed by a

school readiness assessment. In December 2012, the State Board of Education voted to offer districts a menu of school readiness assessments. The first approved assessment tool for the menu is Teaching Strategies GOLD. Pending positive technical reports and final review, the State Board will approve additional school readiness assessment tools for the menu. In approving school readiness assessments, the State Board of Education considers assessments that are research-based, recognized nationwide as reliable instruments for measuring school readiness; and suitable for determining the instruction and interventions students need to improve their readiness to succeed in school.

The department is supporting a phased-in implementation of these assessments over the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. Those districts who are ready to implement TS GOLD in 2013-14 may begin doing so; those needing more time and interested in accessing possible additional assessments that may be added to the approved menu in the next year can use 2013-14 to prepare for implementation in 2014-15.

As school readiness assessment is phased in for kindergarten students during 2013-14 and 2014-15, Colorado's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund grant will cover the initial cost of Teaching Strategies GOLD subscriptions. Applications for funding for the 2013-14 school year were due on May 31, 2013.

Additional information regarding school readiness assessments may be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness/index.asp>. For questions or issues related to school readiness assessments, please contact Sharon Triolo-Moloney at triolo-moloney_s@cde.state.co.us

Early Literacy (READ Act) Assessments

H. B. 12-1238 (The READ Act) requires that all K-3 students be administered interim assessments three times per year. The approved interim assessments for the 2013-14 school year remain the same that were used for Colorado Basic Literacy Act. Those include DRA2, PALS, and DIBELS. All children must be tested within 30 days of enrollment on the interim assessment. Any child scoring at or below the cut-off must be retested within 30 days on the same state board approved interim assessment. A child scoring at least twice at or below the cut-off score category established by the interim assessment within a school year is considered to have a significant reading deficiency. For students in grades K-3, upon determining a child has a significant reading deficiency, the teacher must administer a State Board approved diagnostic assessment to identify the student's specific skill deficiencies in one or more of the components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The teacher must then monitor the ongoing progress of students determined to have a significant reading deficiency by administering the selected State Board approved interim assessment periodically throughout the school year until the student demonstrates grade level proficiency and is removed from a READ plan.

On March 12, 2013, the State Board of Education approved the following diagnostic assessments: Curriculum Associates, i-Ready; Pearson, AimsWeb; Pearson, AimsWeb Spanish; PALS Marketplace Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS); Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening Espanol (PALS Espanol); Renaissance STAR Early Literacy Assessment; Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Children's Progress Academic Assessment (CPAA); Pearson Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test; Test de Covabulario en Imagenes Peabody (TVIP); Pearson Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, 3rd edition; Cambium Education, Inc. d/b/a Sopris Learning DIBELS Deep: PA (Phonemic Awareness) WRD (Word Reading Decoding); Wireless Generation Burst Reading Assessments: Vocabulary, Advanced Phonics/Decoding, and Comprehension.

A review process will be conducted during the fall of 2013 to determine any possible additions or deletions to the approved list of interim assessments. A final list of approved interim assessments will be available for the 2014-15 school year.

For questions related to the READ Act assessments, please contact Pati Montgomery at montgomery_p@cde.state.co.us

ACCUPLACER

Last year, legislation concerning the administration of basic skills college placement assessments to public school students was passed. Specifically, the legislation stated that the state shall allocate moneys to offset the costs incurred in administering each of the college placement test units once per student while he or she is enrolled in grades nine through twelve.

To meet the legislative requirements, CDE, the Department of Higher Education and the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) worked collaboratively this year to provide support and resources for administration of the ACCUPLACER to Colorado public high school students. As CCCS was familiar with ACCUPLACER and is trained in its administration procedures, CCCS agreed to go into interested high schools and administer the assessments. This prevented districts from having to be involved in procurement/purchasing, test administration training and the processing of reimbursements. Based on the number of assessed students, CDE will provide reimbursements directly to CCCS. This program is currently expected to run in a similar manner next year.

For questions or issues related to the administration of ACCUPLACER under this program, please contact Christine Deines at deines_c@cde.state.co.us

Contact Us

We realize that your district is managing many changes that are occurring in education and in assessment specifically. We hope to work closely with you over the next few years to facilitate a smooth transition to the new assessments and to provide your district with needed support. Please do not hesitate to contact CDE if you have any questions, comments or suggestions about how we can provide you with support. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Information will be updated throughout the year at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/NewAssess.asp>

2014 Colorado State Testing Calendar

The table below presents the testing windows for the Colorado state summative assessments that will be administered during the 2013-2014 school year.

Colorado State Testing Calendar – School Year 2013-2014

TCAP	State Early Testing Window	Test Window
Grade 3 Reading & Lectura	2/10/2014 to 2/21/2014	2/24/2014 to 3/7/2014
Grade 3 Writing & Escritura Grade 4-10 Reading & Writing Grade 4 Lectura & Escritura Grade 3-10 Mathematics	3/3/2014 to 3/21/2014*	3/10/2014 to 4/11/2014**
Colorado Summative Assessment – Science & Social Studies		
Grade 5 & 8 Science Grade 4 & 7 Social Studies		4/14/2014 to 5/2/2014***
Grade 12 Science & Social Studies		Fall 2014, TBD
CoAlt – Reading, Writing & Mathematics		
Grades 3-10 Reading, Writing, & Mathematics		2/5/2014 to 3/14/2014
CoAlt – Science & Social Studies		
Grade 5 & 8 Science Grade 4 & 7 Social Studies		4/14/2014 to 5/2/2014
Grade 12 Science & Social Studies		Fall 2014, TBD
ACCESS for ELLs® Alternate ACCESS for ELLs		
Grades K-12 Reading, Writing, Speaking, & Listening		1/6/2014 to 2/7/2014
CO ACT	Initial Test Date	Make-up Test Date
Grade 11	Wednesday April 23, 2014	Wednesday May 7, 2014

*Note that the TCAP Early Test Window for grade 3-10 may be extended to 3/28/2014 if the school calendar includes a spring break.

** It is strongly suggested that all districts finish testing by March 28 in order to provide separation between TCAP and the new science and social studies assessments.

*** This window may be lengthened pending the updated results of the technology readiness tool.