

State of Colorado K-12 Mandate

Below is a partial list of state and federal mandates for school districts in Colorado:

Minimum Number of Days of Instruction

Every child who has attained the age of six years and is under the age of seventeen years shall attend public school for at least 1,056 hours if a secondary school pupil, or 968 hours if an elementary school pupil during each school year; except that in no case shall a school or schools be in session for fewer than 162 days.

Requirements for Students with Diverse Needs

1. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
2. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
3. Preschool for special education students
4. Participation of students with disabilities in the state assessment system
5. Requirements for gifted students
6. Advance Learning Plans (ALP)
7. Requirements for limited English proficiency (LEP) students

Direct staff required for meeting these mandates include, audiologist, behavior specialists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, psychologists, registered nurses, social workers, and speech and language specialists. Classroom teachers are also responsible for ensure these needs and mandates are met.

Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K)

School Readiness

In December 2008, the State Board of Education adopted the following description of school readiness as part of CAP4K:

School Readiness describes both the preparedness of a child to engage in and benefit from learning experiences, and the ability of a school to meet the needs of all students enrolled in publicly funded preschool or kindergarten. School Readiness is enhanced when schools, families, and community service providers work collaboratively to ensure that every child is ready for higher levels of learning in academic content.

Using this description, school districts are required to assess incoming kindergartener and/or first grade children on the following indicators of school readiness:

1. Social and emotional development
2. Communication and language development
3. Approaches to learning
4. Content knowledge
5. Physical well-being and motor development

Districts will create and implement individualized readiness plans (IRPs) for each child to address any areas where improvement is needed. IRPs are intended to inform teacher practice and help students progress towards school readiness.

There is a component which also addresses the ability of a school to meet the needs of kindergarten students by working collaboratively with families and community service providers. Schools will need to demonstrate capacity in the following areas:

1. Professional proficiency for teachers and leadership about child development.
2. Coordination with local community service agencies (like health, parent education, social service, and family support) and family engagement practices.
3. School structure and resources (such as developmentally appropriate materials and resources, small class size, availability of full-day kindergarten, appropriate facilities).

New Content Standards

As part of CAP4K, the state updated Colorado's state content standards. Previously, Colorado Model content Standards existed in the areas of civics, dance, economics, foreign language, geography, history, mathematics, music, physical education, reading and writing, science, theater, and the visual arts for grades K-12. CAP4K required the Colorado Department of Education to revise the standards in three ways:

1. To expand the standards to preschool through grade twelve;
2. To align the standards with the new expectations for school readiness and post-secondary and workforce readiness; and
3. To meet the highest national and international standards that have been implemented successfully and that incorporate other statutory requirements. School districts must revise their standards to meet or exceed the new state standards, at a minimum, in those subject matter areas that are included in the state preschool through elementary and secondary education standards, including but not limited to English language competency.

New content standards and depth of knowledge indicators, by grade level, were created in the following areas:

- Dance
- Drama and Theater Arts
- Comprehensive Health and Physical Education
- English Language Proficiency
- Mathematics
- Music
- Reading, Writing and Communicating
- Science
- Social Studies
- Visual Arts
- World Languages

Post-secondary and Workforce Readiness

The definition of post-secondary and workforce readiness jointly adopted on June 30, 2009 by the Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education is as follows:

“Post-secondary and workforce readiness” describes the knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential for high school graduates to be prepared to enter college and the workforce to compete in the global economy. The description assumes students have developed consistent intellectual growth through their high school career as a result of academic work that is increasingly challenging, engaging, and coherent.

Post-secondary education and workforce readiness means that before graduating high school, students are ready and able to demonstrate the following without the need for remediation:

1. Content knowledge in the areas of (1) literacy; (2) math; (3) science; (4) social sciences; and (5) the arts and humanities.
2. Learning and life skills in the areas of (1) critical thinking and problem-solving; (2) finding and using information/information technology; (3) creativity and innovation; (4) global and cultural awareness; (5) civic responsibility; (6) work ethic; (7) personal responsibility; (8) communication; and (9) collaboration.

Additionally, schools will also need to provide additional services and supports for 11th and 12th grade English language learners if they are unable to meet English language competency standards or demonstrate Post-secondary and Workforce Readiness.

Assessments

New assessments are currently being created to measure student mastery of the new content standards, as well as their post-secondary and workforce readiness (PWR). The Assessment Subcommittee charged with redesigning the assessment system Colorado Department of Education made its recommendations to the State board in November 2010. The intent is to create “A balanced system combining formative and summative components that measure both growth and status.” Further, “Colorado’s P-12 Assessment System must be relevant for students and teachers in that it is tied directly to students’ learning and preparation for PWR, and it provides data/information on growth status that informs instruction and is easily understandable by students, teachers, and parents.” Specifications for a system will also include that it must “measure mastery of the Colorado Academic Standards for all students (including) the application of content through the demonstration of 21st century skills and readiness competencies, at appropriate grade levels” and be “easy to use, meaningful, and timely.”

Individual Career and academic Plan (ICAP)

All students are required to develop an ICAP starting no later than 9th grade in collaboration with their school counselor, school administrators, school personnel and/or approved Post-secondary Service Providers that is used to help establish personalized academic and career goals, explore post-secondary career and educational opportunities, align course work and curriculum, apply to post-secondary institutions, secure financial aid and ultimately enter the workforce school. “Each ICAP shall include a career planning, guidance and tracking component and a portfolio that reflects, at a minimum:

1. Documentation of the student’s efforts in exploring careers including a written post-secondary and workforce goal for the student, yearly benchmarks of reaching that goal, interest surveys that the student completes, and anticipated post-secondary studies
2. The student’s academic progress including the courses taken, any remediation or credit recovery and any concurrent enrollment credits earned
3. An intentional sequence of courses reflecting a progress toward accomplishment of the student’s post-secondary and workforce objectives
4. Relevant assessment scores
5. The student’s plans for and experiences in contextual and service learning, if applicable
6. A record of the student’s college applications or alternative applications as they are prepared and submitted
7. The student’s post-secondary studies as the student progresses through high school
8. The student’s progress toward securing scholarships, work-study, student loans and grants
9. Other data reflecting student progress toward post-secondary and workforce readiness, including the student’s understanding of the financial impact of post-secondary education.”

ICAPs should be easily accessible to students, guardians, and educators and be transferable in print or electronic form for internal and external district use.

Higher Education Admission Requirements

In 2003, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education adopted the Higher Education Admission Requirements, which are entry requirements for students planning to attend any of Colorado’s public four-year colleges or universities. Academic Area	2010+ Graduates
English	4 years
Mathematics (Must include Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or equivalents)	4 years
Natural/Physical Sciences (two units must be lab-based)	3 years
Social Sciences (at least one unit of U.S. or world history)	3 years
Foreign Language	1 year
Academic Electives	2 years

Concurrent Enrollment

In May 2009, the Colorado State Legislature passed HB09-1319 and SB09-285 (“Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act”). “The collective intent is to broaden access to and improve the quality of concurrent enrollment programs, improve coordination between institutions of secondary education and institutions of higher education, and ensure financial transparency and accountability.” Additionally, the legislation created the Accelerating Students

through Concurrent Enrollment (ASCENT) program, which would allow eligible students to be retained for a “5th year” in high school during which they can take classes at a qualified post-secondary institution.

In order to comply with this legislation, districts are required to:

- Enter into a cooperative agreement with a qualified institution of higher education to operate a concurrent enrollment program.
- Reimburse concurrent courses at the in-state (“Resident”) community college tuition rate and all concurrently enrolled students will be classified as Colorado residents for tuition setting purposes.
- Allow students to concurrently enroll into any career and technical education course, certificate program community college course and traditional college course, at a qualifying institution.
- Ensure that all college credit hours earned concurrently apply toward the student’s high school graduation requirements as defined in the student’s academic plan.

Accreditation

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) originally established a system of accountability through educational accreditation in 1998 to comply with House Bill 98-1267. The State Board revised the accreditation rules in May 2009 under the directive of SB 09-163 to emphasize student results, particularly focusing on student growth and post-secondary readiness, and to improve and streamline the accreditation process for schools and districts across the state. The purposes of accreditation are numerous and include aligning conflicting accountability intervention systems; improving the reporting of performance data; creating a clear, fair, and effective support and intervention system; and enhancing oversight of improvement efforts. New rules created by CDE are further designed to make explicit links between school accreditation and improvement planning.

District Accreditation

CDE accredits districts based upon the following Performance Framework Indicators:

1. **Achievement** – Percent of students scoring proficient or advanced in Reading (on CSAP, Lectura, and CSAPA), Writing (on CSAP, Escritura, and CSAPA), Math (on CSAP and CSAPA) and Science (on CSAP and CSAPA).
2. **Growth** – Normative and criterion-referenced growth using CSAP (Reading, Writing and Math), median student growth percentiles and adequate median student growth percentiles using the Colorado Growth Model.
3. **Gaps** – Looking at median student growth percentiles for disaggregated groups: poverty, race/ethnicity, disabilities, English proficiency, and below proficient.
4. **Post-secondary and Workforce Readiness** – Measures include student performance on the Colorado ACT, graduation rate, and dropout rate.

School Accreditation

Districts are required to accredit their schools using a performance framework that is more exhaustive or stringent than the one used by CDE based upon the same Performance Framework Indicators (Achievement, Growth, Gaps, and Post-secondary and Workforce Readiness) as used for district accreditation. Schools will be similarly categorized and have to develop improvement plans as needed. Districts are responsible for reviewing school improvement plans and providing support for school improvement efforts.

No Child Left Behind (Federal) Requirements

Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) Targets

In order for a district or school to make AYP, all of the following requirements must be met:

Achieve a 95% participation rate in state reading and math assessments.

Reach proficiency performance targets for either proficiency or decrease in non-proficiency in reading and math (see the following table).

Reach targets for one other indicator-advanced level of performance for elementary and middle schools in reading and math and graduation rate for high schools.

The Department of Education has set the following AYP goals:

Year	Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Math</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Math</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Math</i>
2008	88.46%	89.09%	86.81%	79.75%	89.83%	73.50%
2011	94.23%	94.54%	93.41%	89.88%	94.92%	89.75%
2014	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Highly Qualified Teachers

Under NCLB, all K-12 core content teachers, which include regular and special education teachers, must be “highly qualified.” The core content areas this applies to are: English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, social studies, and the arts. To be highly qualified these teachers must hold a degree, be fully licensed, and demonstrate subject area competency; which may be through content testing or an endorsement, certification, or degree in the subject matter field depending on whether the teacher is in elementary or secondary education.

Educator Effectiveness: SB191

SB191 codifies the Governor’s Council for Educator Effectiveness and tasks the Council with studying and making recommendations on the implementation and details of the evaluation system, ensuring meaningful opportunities for educators to improve their effectiveness, and providing a means for educators to share effective practices across the state. The bill applies to educators employed by Colorado school districts, Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES), and charter schools. Implications of this legislation include:

- Development of new educator evaluations
- Organization of classrooms, schools, districts
- Integration of staff development, technology, new standards, assessments, and accountability into teacher evaluation
- Data reporting.