

Section 3.1 Challenging State Academic Standards

Instructions: Each SEA must provide evidence that it has adopted challenging State academic standards, including challenging academic content standards and aligned academic achievement standards; as applicable, alternate academic achievement standards; and English language proficiency standards, in compliance with section 1111(b)(1) of the ESEA.

- A. *Challenging Academic Content Standards and Aligned Academic Achievement Standards. Provide evidence at such time and in such manner specified by the Secretary that the State has adopted challenging academic content standards and aligned academic achievement standards in the required subjects and grades consistent with section 1111(b)(1)(A)-(D) of the ESSA.*

Requirements to address: (1) assurance that the state has adopted challenging standards, (2) the standards apply to all public schools, (3) the standards include at minimum the subject areas of mathematics, reading or language arts, and science, and (4) the standards are aligned with credit-bearing coursework and state career and technical education standards.

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Colorado's Commitment to Challenging Standards

Standards for student learning are not new in Colorado. Passed in 1993, House Bill 93-1313 initiated standards-based education in Colorado. The statute required the state to create standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, civics, geography, economics, art, music and physical education. This first generation of standards in Colorado remained in place with only minor modifications until the passage of Senate Bill 08-212, Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), which initiated a thorough revision of Colorado's standards. The goal of CAP4K is an aligned preschool through postsecondary education system to provide Colorado students with the knowledge and the skills needed to be successful in college and careers.

Preparing all students adequately for college and career success is the established goal of Colorado's public education system. Colorado's complete commitment to college- and career-ready standards is demonstrated by CAP4K which grew out of the recognized need for higher and clearer preschool through postsecondary aligned standards for students in *all* content areas, including: comprehensive health and physical education; dance; drama and theatre arts; mathematics; music; reading, writing, and communicating; science; social studies; world languages; and visual art. CAP4K called for next generation, standards-based education to prepare Colorado's students for the increasing expectations and demands for higher-level critical thinking skills, and national and international competition in the workforce. A separate law, House Bill 08-1168, required personal financial literacy to be included in the mathematics standards and any other relevant content area. Taken together, the key components of the CAP4K legislation created the path for aligning Colorado's education system from preschool through postsecondary education and ensuring a rich, balanced, and well-rounded education for Colorado's students.

CAP4K: Ensuring Challenging Academic Achievement Standards for Colorado

Key components of CAP4K are driving the alignment and continuous improvement of preschool through postsecondary education in Colorado: (1) defining school readiness, (2) defining postsecondary and workforce readiness, (3) creating, adopting, and implementing challenging preschool through high school academic standards that lead to postsecondary and workforce readiness.

To begin with, through CAP4K, the Colorado General Assembly called on Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (governing bodies for K-12 and higher education, respectively) to create a seamless system of public education in Colorado that is “sufficiently relevant and rigorous to ensure that each student who receives a public education in Colorado is prepared to compete academically and economically within the state or anywhere in the nation or the world” (section 22-7-1002(4)(e) C.R.S.). Specifically, CAP4K required that the Colorado State Board of Education adopt a description of school readiness and, through consensus with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, a description of postsecondary workforce readiness. To ensure the definitions remain relevant over time, CAP4K required that the definitions be reviewed, revised, and re-adopted by July 2017 and July 2015, respectively, and every six years thereafter.

To ensure an aligned and coherent learning trajectory beginning with school readiness and resulting in postsecondary and workforce readiness, the Colorado General Assembly, through CAP4K, directed the Colorado State Board of Education to adopt preschool through secondary school standards. The requirements of CAP4K ensure the highest quality, challenging standards for Colorado's students. First, Colorado's standards “consider the needs of the whole student by creating a rich and balanced curriculum” (section 22-71-1002(3)(a) C.R.S.) by requiring standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, geography, visual arts, performing arts, physical education, world languages, English language competency, economics, civics, and financial literacy. Upon the next standards review and revision process, CAP4K requires the addition of optional computer science standards at the secondary level. Next, to promote college- and career-readiness, Colorado's standards are required to be aligned with the state's definition of postsecondary and workforce readiness, and to the extent practicable, to the state's career and technical education standards. Furthermore, CAP4K requires that Colorado's standards “are comparable in scope, relevance, and rigor to the highest national and international standards” (section 22-7-1005(3)(f) C.R.S.). CAP4K also requires the Colorado's standards promote the development of critical skills to prepare students for the 21st Century workforce and active citizenship: creativity, innovation, critical-thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, social and cultural awareness, civic engagement, initiative, self-direction, flexibility, productivity, accountability, character, leadership and information technology application.

Clearly, the requirements for Colorado's standards within CAP4K provide a firm foundation for challenging standards for Colorado's students.

Implementation of CAP4K Policies: Defining Challenging Expectations from Preschool through Postsecondary

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With the new law in place, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and the Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) worked together to develop a postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR) description that includes the knowledge, skills and behaviors essential for high school graduates to be prepared to enter college and the workforce and to compete in the global economy.

To a foundation for postsecondary and workforce readiness, the two departments jointly convened 13 regional meetings around the state between November 2008 and June 2009. The purpose of these meetings was to engage local communities in conversations about the skills and competencies students need to succeed after high school. To this end, both entities engaged over 1,000 P-12, higher education, community college, business, parents, board members and other local stakeholders.

Additionally, CDE partnered with *Colorado Succeeds* and a number of prominent business and community college leaders in online surveys targeted toward the specific needs and interests of these groups. Based on local input, CDE and DHE jointly drafted a PWR description for review and feedback by the State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education. Members of the public were invited to provide comment at the State Board meeting on June 10, 2009. The final PWR definition was adopted by the State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education for joint adoption at a meeting on June 30, 2009.

At the same time, CDE supported the development of a school readiness description for the Colorado State Board of Education to consider. In December 2008, the Colorado State Board of Education adoption the following definition:

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.

With school readiness and postsecondary and workforce readiness descriptions in place, CDE initiated a year-long process of revising academic standards in all of its 10 content areas and the Colorado English Language Proficiency (CELP) standards in 2009. The standards were developed by content areas committees consisting of a broad spectrum of Coloradans representing early childhood education, K-12 education, higher education, English learners, students with disabilities, business, and parents. Each committee began their work defining "prepared graduate competencies" (PGCs) in order to begin with postsecondary and workforce readiness in mind. From the point of postsecondary and workforce readiness, the committees worked backward to define expectations for high school, middle school, elementary grades, and preschool.

In May 2008, CDE convened a stakeholder committee consisting of leaders in K-12, early childhood and higher education as well as leaders from business and the military whose role was to advise the department on the development process and content of Colorado's new standards. Each stakeholder

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committee meeting was publicized in advance, open to the public, and followed up with detailed minutes posted to CDE's website. The parameters of research-based, inclusiveness, and transparency were visible throughout the steps of the revision process.

In total, 786 people applied to fill 255 unpaid roles on content committees. Selection was made by Colorado stakeholders in a name-blind process using the merits of both the application and resumes. The committees were supported by benchmarking reports of the best national and international exemplars.

The standards writing process began with an analysis of old Colorado standards compared to national and international benchmarks and educational research appropriate for each content area. Content specific reports are available on our website. Reference of the benchmarking states and nations used as well as other resources and research can be found within the introduction of each of the Colorado Academic Standards documents. Using the research provided, over 250 Colorado education and business professionals and parents participated on standards development subcommittees to write Colorado's new academic standards. The names of the subcommittee members are also included in the standards documents.

Drafts of each set of standards were disseminated to the Colorado public and national content experts for review. In addition to public feedback gathered through feedback meetings held throughout the state, individuals could provide line by line recommendations on each draft through an online feedback system. After this review process, subcommittees made final revisions and the revised drafts were presented to the State Board of Education for adoption on December 10, 2009. National experts also provided reviews and feedback on the drafts of each content area standards. Official public hearings also followed at each relevant State Board of Education meeting.

Following this year-long standards revision process, in December 2009, the Colorado State Board of Education adopted the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) in ten content areas comprehensive health and physical education; dance; drama and theatre arts; mathematics; music; reading, writing, and communicating; science; social studies; world languages; and visual art, with standards for personal financial literacy included with the mathematics and social studies standards. Doing so, Colorado created its first fully aligned preschool-through-high-school academic expectations that forms basis for a system that strives to prepare all of Colorado's schoolchildren for achievement at each grade and, ultimately, successful performance in postsecondary institutions and/or the workforce.

Upon the release of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for mathematics and English/language arts in June 2010, the Colorado Department of Education commissioned a thorough, independent gap analysis process between the CAS in mathematics and reading, writing, and communicating and the CCSS for mathematics and English/language arts. The gap analysis confirmed the close alignment of the Colorado Academic Standards with Common Core State Standards. However, the report noted some critical instructional elements which existed in the Common Core State Standards, but were not evident in the 2009 Colorado Academic Standards. In addition, the report recommended inconsistencies between the two sets of standards be considered and reconciled, where appropriate, to benefit

Colorado teachers and students. Based on the gap analysis report, the Colorado State Board of Education adopted the CCSS in August 2010 and requested the integration of the entirety of the CCSS for mathematics and English/language arts with the CAS for mathematics and reading, writing, and communicating, respectively. This decision was made with the expectation that CDE would honor the work and values of the CAS previously written by Colorado educators and adopted by the board to create the best mathematics and reading, writing and communicating standards for the State of Colorado. In December 2010, CDE re-released the CAS in mathematics and reading, writing and communicating.

Through a separate state level process, in 2011, Colorado's Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) engaged Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) to facilitate the development of Colorado's Early Learning and Development Guidelines (ELDG). The ELDG articulate research-based developmental trajectories for children from birth through grade 3 across multiple domains. As the ELDGs were being developed, CDE partnered to align the ELDGs with the Colorado Academic Standards.

Implementing Colorado's Challenging Standards

CAP4K required all local education providers (public school districts, boards of cooperative services, district charter schools, or Colorado Charter Institute schools) in Colorado to adopt local academic standards that meet or exceed the CAS or choose to adopt the CAS. Furthermore, local education providers are required to adopt curricula aligned to the standards. Thus, CAP4K assures that all public schools in Colorado have challenging standards.

A key to supporting implementation of Colorado's new, challenging standards was a communication plan to facilitate district-level transition planning. Colorado has been committed to engaging all necessary stakeholders in the transition to college- and career-ready standards, including educators, administrators, families, and institutions of higher education (IHEs).

Educators and Administrators

The purpose of outreach to educators and administrators follows the four-phase transition plan: awareness, transition, implementation, and transformation. Representative outreach and dissemination activities and resources are described below. In its transition to new standards, Colorado carefully planned a multi-year transition process that includes four phases: (1) *awareness* during the 2010-11 school year; (2) *transition* during the 2011-13 school years; (3) *full implementation* during the 2013-14 school years; and (4) *transformation* – an ongoing process of continuous improvement in teaching and learning. Awareness involved communication about the CAS; transition involved planning for required changes; implementation involved instituting the necessary changes; and transformation represents the intended outcome of implementing college- and career-ready standards.

CDE provided a Transition Overview (see Table 1 below) to inform district and school leaders about the transition process, including recommended focus areas for the district, school, and teacher level. The transition overview was designed to guide districts in fulfilling the legislative requirements of CAP4K,

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and a web-based Standards Implementation Toolkit which contained resources and tools. According to CAP4K, districts were required to review and revise local standards relative to the CAS and Colorado English Language Proficiency (CELP) standards by December 2011. Subsequent to the review, districts were required to adopt standards that meet or exceed state standards, design and adopt curriculum based on the standards, and adopt assessments in areas not assessed by the state.

Although all Colorado school districts are required to adopt the CAS or standards that meet or exceed the CAS, it is by no means the final step of implementation. After adoption, the new standards needed to be addressed in the curriculum and classroom teaching practices at every grade. The Transition Overview below (Table 1) included specific guidance related to curriculum design. As a local control state, Colorado does not have a state curriculum, nor does the state require or recommend that districts use state-selected textbooks or instructional materials. Instead, Colorado defines curriculum as “an organized plan of instruction for engaging students in mastering standards.” Thus, Colorado’s transition plan was intentionally designed to support districts in the adoption of new standards-based curricula. CDE’s guidance to districts was to use the 2011-12 school year to design a standards-based curriculum and begin phasing it in during the 2012-13 school year. By using the two school years to design and begin implementation of standards-based curricula, districts would support a thoughtful standards transition process.

Table 1: Transition Overview for Colorado School and District Leaders

	2011-12 Transition Year 1	2012-13 Transition Year 2	2013-14 Full Implementation
What Should Districts Do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Initiate district standards transition plan – Review local standards by December 2011 and make needed revisions, pursuant to SB 08-212 – Design/redesign curriculum based on the new standards – 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Use and refine redesigned curriculum based on the new standards – Adjust grade level content to reflect the new standards – Phase out content no longer in the standards – Professional development on the standards-based teaching and learning cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fully implement curriculum based solely on the new standards – Professional development on the standards-based teaching and learning cycle
What Should Be Educators’ Instructional Focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 21st century skills – Organizing concepts of the new standards – Familiarity with standards-based teaching and learning cycle – Develop familiarity with new grade level content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 21st century skills – Organizing concepts of the new standards – Implement standards-based teaching and learning cycle – Integrate formative practice into instruction – Develop expertise with new grade level content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 21st century skills – Organizing concepts of the new standards – Integrate formative practice into instruction – Refine standards-based teaching and learning cycle – Ensure focus is on the CAS; eliminate extraneous content

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	2011-12 Transition Year 1	2012-13 Transition Year 2	2013-14 Full Implementation
What Support is CDE Providing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Protocols for districts to review and revise standards/curricula – Summer Learning Symposia – Curriculum development tools – Standards-based teaching and learning cycle resources – Model instructional units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Leadership transition toolkit – Curriculum examples – Instruction and formative practice resources – Models of next generation standards-based instruction – Web resources for educators – Interim assessment resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Curriculum exemplars – Resources of student growth measures for all tested and non-tested content areas – Examples of student mastery – Video resources for teaching
What is Happening with Assessment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) – As blueprint flexibility allows, assess only content shared by Colorado Model Content Standards and the CAS – Release of TCAP assessment blueprint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – TCAP – As blueprint flexibility allows, assess only content shared by Colorado Model Content Standards and the CAS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Start of new Colorado summative assessment in social studies and science

In addition to communicating this broad, transitional plan, CDE provided technical assistance across the transitional years. These activities are detailed here.

Awareness (2010-11)

- Regional Awareness Trainings were held in 12 cities across the state during the summer of 2010. Trainings focused on the standards revision process, design features of the CAS and the CELP standards, and increased rigor and thinking skills required by the new standards.
- Comprehensive awareness outreach was conducted throughout Colorado in 2010 through presentations at Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) and regional superintendent meetings and at all professional educator conferences (e.g., Colorado Association for School Executives, Colorado Association of School Boards, Colorado Education Association, Colorado Staff Development Council, Colorado Council for Teachers of Mathematics, Colorado Council International Reading Association, Colorado Special Education State Directors’ meetings and the Colorado Charter School Institute).
- Regional principal awareness trainings were conducted during Fall 2010, in partnership with the Tointon Principal Institute at the University of Northern Colorado.
- Monthly online office hours were offered throughout 2010. These live and archived webinars were designed to inform Colorado educators about the development and design features of the CAS and the CELP standards.

Transition (2011-12): Leadership Transition Planning Focus

- Regional Transition Trainings were held in five cities across the state as a part of the CDE Summer Symposium 2011. The training focused on transition resources and planning for school and district leaders.
- Monthly online office hours were held via webinars designed to keep district and school leaders informed of tools and resources to assist with standards implementation.
- An online Standards Implementation Toolkit was launched in June 2011 to support district and school administrators in leading standards awareness and transition.
- A series of 10 training sessions for the CELP Standards to provide English Learners access to the CAS was conducted in the fall of 2011, involving CDE staff from the Language, Culture, and Equity office (now called the Office of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education), the Office of Federal Programs Administration (Title III) and the CDE content specialists team.

Transition (2012-13): Professional Development Focus

- During the 2012-13 school year, CDE continued outreach for the transition phase to the new standards which included an intensive professional development focus for administrators and educators on the CAS and the CELP standards.
- CDE staff, including content specialists in mathematics, literacy, science, social studies, comprehensive health and physical education, and the arts, as well as English Language Development (ELD) experts through the Language, Culture and Equity Office and Title III staff, trained educators across the state in the WIDA™ English Language Development (ELD) standards which Colorado adopted as the Colorado English Language Proficiency (CELP) standards.
- CDE based its educator and administrator professional development on a revised version of the Colorado Standards Based Teaching and Learning Guide. The guide was updated to reflect the rigor of the new standards as well as to support educators and administrators in using instructional materials aligned with those standards and data on multiple measures of student performance (e.g., from formative, benchmark, and summative assessments) within the context of the standards-based teaching and learning cycle. Rubrics for supporting the standards-based teaching and learning cycle at the classroom, school, and district level were also revised. Together, these materials formed the foundation of department support to Colorado educators, administrators, and district leaders in leading instructional transformation.
- During Fall 2012, CDE engaged more than 500 Colorado educators, representing 61 school districts, to participate in curriculum design workshops that resulted in the creation of 670 curriculum samples based on the CAS. As voluntary resources for districts, the samples, (1) represent the translation of the CAS into unit overviews for all ten content areas, grades K-12, (2) illuminate possibilities for sequencing grade-level and content-specific standards across courses/years, (3) offer one possible foundation for exploring standards-based unit and lesson-plan development. The samples, the blank template upon which they are based, and a standards based curriculum development process guide can be accessed on the CDE website:
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/samplecurriculumproject>.

Implementation (2013-14): Professional Development Focus

From September 2013 to February 2014, the content specialists within the Office of Standards and Instructional Support traveled across the state to work with educators in district settings to build fully differentiated units based on the overview samples, which was Phase III of the District Sample Curriculum Project. These developed units included learning strategies, resource suggestions, differentiation options, and assessment ideas linked to helping all students master the CAS. During a three-day workshop delivered within a district, a team of educators produced one full instructional unit for one grade and content area in each participating district (e.g., one 1st grade math unit or one 3rd grade science unit, etc.). This process reflected a model of educators working together to plan for the instruction of *all* students including English learners, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged, and low achieving students. Teams were comprised of:

- 2 General Education teachers (content specialists)
- 1 English Language Development (ELD) teacher
- 1 Gifted and Talented teacher
- 1 Special Education teacher
- 1 Title I teacher (or one additional general education/content teacher)

The CDE plan for facilitating sample curriculum depended on the participation of dedicated teachers throughout Colorado who are responsible for the instructional delivery of standards-based curricula. As with the first phase workshops, CDE diligently pursued the participation of educators to ensure representation of the diverse teaching force and districts across Colorado. Upon the completion of Phase III, hundreds of educators were involved in creating at least one instructional unit. As of December 2014, more than 100 full instructional units have posted on the Standards and Instructional Support website alongside the 700+ unit overview samples (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/samplecurriculumproject>). This project involved more than 2000 Colorado educators from 121 of Colorado's 178 school districts.

Implementation (2014-15): Building District Standards-Based Curriculum Development Capacity

To augment the face-to-face workshops in standards-based curriculum design, the Office of Standards and Instructional Support created process guides to allow districts to replicate and customize the curriculum overview development and instructional unit development processes for local contexts. The process guides have been disseminated through the curriculum project resource webpage:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/districtsamplecurrproject-resources>.

By district request, the Standards and Instructional Support Office transitioned from working with teachers from multiple districts across the state to produce curriculum samples, to facilitating cross-district curriculum development projects to complete secondary units. This work has been co-led by districts leaders and the Director of the Standards and Instructional Support Office and is designed to develop deeper capacity within participating districts to develop standards-based curricula.

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In addition to these projects, additional workshops are being conducted to expand the bank of sample units and to create performance assessments for selected units. Specifically, workshops will result in the creation of additional sample units for personal financial literacy, physical education, arts integration, and content area units focused on building reading, writing, and communicating skills.

Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)

The CAP4K legislation required that all educator preparation programs at institutions of higher education align their content to the new CAS by December 15, 2012. The Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) and CDE engaged these institutions actively through 2015 to bring about these changes. As a result, students now in the pipeline, preparing to enter the educator workforce in Colorado colleges and universities, already will have been trained on the new standards when they begin working in Colorado's school districts.

Colorado was the recipient of an alignment grant from three foundations in support of K-12 postsecondary alignment activity around college- and career-ready standards and aligned assessments in 10 leading states. The goal of the grant was to promote successful implementation of the standards and the aligned assessments and shared ownership of college readiness by the K-12 and postsecondary sectors. A specific focus of the grant was the use of the aligned assessments as one element in the determination of a student's readiness for placement into credit-bearing courses by postsecondary institutions. In partnership with the DHE, CDE communicated to IHE faculty related to align academic expectations for preschool through postsecondary students and revision of educator preparation programs through the Council of Colorado Deans of Education. Regional meetings with both content and education faculty were conducted through 2012 to introduce the new standards and promote shared understanding of increased academic expectations. Specific training on the CELP Standards was provided to higher education faculty to provide English Learners access to the CAS as well as a means of teaching all students the academic language necessary to meet content area standards.

In 2013, the Colorado Department of Higher Education, in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Education, partnered to create a full-time position to (1) provide outreach and training opportunities to Colorado institutions of higher education on the new educator evaluation system and CAS; (2) launch a pilot project to embed the tools, materials and strategies already in use in many Colorado school districts within their preparation programs; and (3) provide technical assistance to institutions of higher education focused on scaling up emerging best practices to support the alignment of all preparation programs to the new expectations by 2015.

Simultaneously, CDE and DHE partnered with The New Teacher Project (TNTP) to identify options for a system of educator licensure, induction, and preparation that was aligned with the new standards and educator evaluation system. The Colorado Educator Pipeline Task Force, created in August 2011, provided recommendations and input to guide and inform the first phase of the initiative, which will focus on educator licensure and induction. The task force was comprised of key stakeholders, including Human Resources leaders from local school districts, teachers, administrators, and educator preparation program representatives. Recommendations and input of the task force were provided to CDE, DHE, and

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other stakeholders in redesigning licensure and induction to better meet the needs of educators and to help Colorado achieve its vision of effective educators for every student and effective leaders in every school.

The task force provided input and recommendations to guide project staff in the production of these key deliverables:

1. Design options for the new system to be presented to the State Board of Education for their consideration (December 2011).
2. Design options and considerations for state legislature as they consider new legislation governing licensure.
3. A starting point for staff to consider the implications of and options to redesign the current licensure system.

Combined with outreach efforts to IHEs, the Colorado Educator Pipeline Task Force deliverables created information and policy levers to impact programs to prepare educator and principals to meet Colorado's college- and career-ready standards.

Parents

In 2014-15, CDE worked with the Colorado Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and other statewide parent networks to provide outreach materials specifically made for parents. The National PTA has developed materials specific to the college- and career-ready standards. Colorado worked to create similar materials for content areas not included in the standards in order to provide families with a comprehensive understanding of the CAS in all content areas. In November 2014 and January 2015, the Standards and Instructional Support Office released user-friendly guides to the CAS. The guides are now available to help families and communities across Colorado better understand the goals and outcomes of the standards. The guides describe the "big picture" purpose of the standards, as road maps to help ensure that all Colorado students graduate ready for life, college, and careers. They also provide overviews of the learning expectations for each of the 10 content areas of the standards and offer examples of educational experiences that students may engage in, and that families could support, during the school year. The guides can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/guidestostandards>

Maintaining Colorado's Challenging Standards

Finally, to ensure Colorado's standards continue to meet the intended outcome of statute, CAP4K requires the regular review and revision of the school readiness and postsecondary readiness descriptions and the standards.

Per statute, the postsecondary and workforce readiness description must be revisited every six years and both the Colorado State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education need to approve any revisions. The first review and revisions process began in spring of 2015 with the collaboration of CDE and CDHE in conjunction with the Colorado Workforce Development Council to

facilitate a discussion with statewide participants from business and industry, education, higher education, non-profit organizations and government sectors. Student voice was also an active part of the conversation. The goal of the work group was to identify skills to ensure Coloradans are prepared for work or education beyond high school. The group synthesized and identified the core skills from more than 100 established, industry-developed skills lists of the competencies necessary to enter the workforce or educational opportunities beyond high school. The following revised description was a result of this work and adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education in December 2016: "Colorado high school graduates demonstrate the knowledge and skills (competencies) needed to succeed in postsecondary settings and to advance in career pathways as lifelong learners and contributing citizens."

The school readiness description is set to be reviewed and revised by July 2017 and every six years thereafter, and the CAS will be reviewed and revised by July 2018 and every six years thereafter.

B. Alternate Academic Achievement Standards. If the State has adopted alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, provide evidence at such time and in such manner specified by the Secretary that those standards meet the requirements of section 1111(b)(1)(E) of the ESSA.

Requirements to address: The alternate achievement standards must: (1) be aligned with the state academic standards, (2) promote access to the general education curriculum, (3) reflect professional judgment as to the highest possible standards achievable by students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, (4) are designated in the individualized education program for each such student as the academic achievement standards that will be used for the student, and (5) are aligned to ensure that a student who meets the alternate academic achievement standards is on track to pursue postsecondary education or employment.

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Colorado's Commitment to Standards for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Colorado has a strong commitment to ensuring that standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in all grades are clear and rigorous, so that our public educational system gives all students the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to succeed in postsecondary environments and the workforce, to be well-informed and responsible citizens, and to lead fulfilling personal lives. Colorado is committed to the federal requirement specific to alternate assessments and achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The Colorado Exceptional Children's Education Act corresponds to federal guidance: 5.01 (24) Requirements regarding the participation of all children with disabilities in general state and district-wide assessment programs as established in 34 CFR § 300.160.

Defining Colorado's Alternate Achievement Standards

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A team of educators, including content specialists and special educators, was convened by the CDE in the Fall of 2009 to develop alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. This workgroup worked collaboratively with staff from the CDE Exceptional Student Services Unit and the then Office of Standards and Assessment. In addition stakeholder input was gathered from field experts, parents of students with significant cognitive disabilities, higher education faculty, and school administrators. Over the next two years the workgroup formulated the Colorado Extended Evidence Outcomes (EEOs) with due diligence that they were aligned with the corresponding grade level Colorado Academic Standards, represented an appropriate foundational level of expected knowledge and skill, and maintained academic content and rigor. This team was reflective with their collective expertise to promote and to embed the highest possible standards achievable by students with the most significant cognitive disability.

On August 3, 2011, the State Board of Education unanimously adopted the Extended Evidence Outcomes (EEOs) to the Colorado Academic Standards. The EEOs provide the alternate standards in mathematics, science, social studies and reading, writing and communicating for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who qualify for the alternate assessment. These alternate achievement standards are directly aligned to the student's enrolled grade level expectations and promote access to the general education curriculum.

Only students who are eligible to receive special education services, have an IEP, have a documented significant cognitive disability, and who through the IEP team process, are determined to have met participation requirements to receive instruction based on alternate academic achievement standards (EEOs) will participate in an alternate assessment. It is the existence of the significant cognitive disability, regardless of a certain special education eligibility category, that allows the IEP team to consider the option of alternate achievement standards and assessment. All other students receive instruction based upon the grade-level academic achievement standards and take assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards, with or without accommodations.

The *Alternate Standards and Assessment Participation Guidelines Worksheet and Companion – Participation Guidelines: Alternate Academic Achievement Standards for Instruction and Alternate Assessment* can be found at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/AssessmentDisability>. Both of these documents can be found in both English and Spanish.

Implementing Colorado's Alternative Achievement Standards

Colorado is committed to ensuring access to grade-level content and learning expectations for students with disabilities. CDE's Standards Implementation Team includes members from the Exceptional Student Service Unit (ESSU) to ensure that resources and support materials are inclusive and that outreach and communication to the field is consistent throughout the department. CDE offers training and support documents for instructional and assessment accommodation guidance to school districts. In the fall of school year 2010-11, ESSU staff offered a series of webinar training on using the EEOs to provide access to the general education curriculum across all grade levels. Training on the EEOs, eligibility for instruction on the alternate achievement standards, and evidence-based practices to support specialized

instruction has occurred on an annual basis since this time. The ESSU has worked jointly with the Unit of Student Assessment to create and annually update an Accommodations Manual for this purpose. ESSU offers professional development training opportunities on effective instruction and instructional accommodations. The state IEP form continues to be updated to include allowable accommodations for each state assessment, including the alternate assessments. Additionally, the ESSU monitoring process has included IEP file reviews specific to the appropriate documentation of accommodations for instructional and assessment purposes. Expectations for students with disabilities to achieve the college- and-career ready standards are the same as for students without disabilities. Additionally, CDE has designed and adopted alternate achievement standards in mathematics, science, social studies, and reading, writing, and communicating for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities under section 602(3) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The CDE ESSU is currently participating in a project under the auspices of the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform Center (CEEDAR). The project is designed to enable intensive work with institutions of higher education that prepare teachers to provide services to students with disabilities. The focus of the project is improving and enhancing the preparation of teachers in those skills required for literacy instruction. During academic year 2014-2015, the ESSU will receive targeted technical assistance from the CEEDAR Center; in 2015-2016, intensive technical assistance will be provided in order to better align higher education literacy curriculum to meet the tenets of the Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Act and to support actualizing the State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR). The Colorado READ Act, passed by the Colorado Legislature in 2012, addresses early literacy development for all students and especially for students at risk for not achieving third grade reading proficiency. The READ Act focuses on the literacy development of all kindergarten through third grade (K-3) students, including those with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Both the READ Act and the SiMR work are not exclusively targeted to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who qualify for instruction in alternate achievement standards, but are inclusive to this population. Additionally the ESSU, under the leadership of the state consultant on intellectual disabilities and multiple disabilities, oversees the work of the Colorado Significant Support Needs Advisory, which meets quarterly and addresses preservice and inservice training needs specific to personnel working with student with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The advisory membership includes faculty from five institutions of higher education who train personnel who will work with this population. All five university programs have embedded content specific to the EEOs, eligibility process for alternate achievement standards, and evidenced-based instructional strategies aligned with the EEOs.

Maintaining Colorado's Alternate Achievement Standards

Ensuring the ongoing alignment to Colorado's Academic Standards is a high priority for the Colorado Department of Education. Once the Colorado Academic Standards undergo a review and revision process by July 2018, the department will conduct a process to review and revise the EEOs accordingly. The close working relationship between the Office of Standards and Instructional Support and the ESSU will continue through the review and revision process to ensure that any changes with the EEOs are fully

aligned with the amended Colorado Academic Standards and preserve expectation of content and academic rigor.

C. English Language Proficiency Standards. Provide evidence at such time and in such manner specified by the Secretary that the State has adopted English language proficiency standards that meet the following requirements: (1) are derived from the four recognized domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, (2) address the different proficiency levels of English learners; and (3) align with the State's challenging academic standards.

Commented [CM3]: Federal requirements. Will be removed in final draft.

Colorado's Commitment to English Language Proficiency Standards that Align With the Colorado Academic Standards

Colorado is firmly committed to making sure that the civil rights of English learners are met through English Language Proficiency (ELP) instruction that provides access to grade level academic content area standards. State law, CAP4K, required the Colorado State Board of Education to adopt English language proficiency standards along with the academic content areas. On December 10, 2009, the Colorado State Board of Education voted unanimously to adopt the World Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA™) standards as the Colorado English Language Proficiency (CELP) standards. WIDA advances academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse students through high-quality standards, assessments, research, and professional development for educators. The new standards were a major change in English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards for Colorado, thereby creating a need for intentional professional development throughout the state. The CELP standards facilitate content instruction, impact curricula through academic language and create a bridge to the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) for English learners.

The Colorado English Language Proficiency Act (ELPA), under state law, provides a supplemental grant to support Colorado districts and schools serve the increasing number of Colorado's English Learners.

Defining Colorado's English Language Proficiency Standards

Among the committees CDE engaged to inform the standards development process in 2009 was a committee designed to make recommendations for English language proficiency standards. The committee conducted a thorough review of existing state standards and concluded that the WIDA™ English Language Development (ELD) standards would best serve the needs of Colorado's English learners. The WIDA standards provide English learners with the social and instructional language necessary for the school experience, as well as access to grade level academic content area standards and instruction in the four recognized domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing at 6 levels of English language proficiency.

The state adopted the WIDA™ English Language Development (ELD) standards as Colorado's English language proficiency standards using the same timeline and process as content area standards in

DRAFT of the Standards Section of Colorado's ESSA State Plan

December 2009. To emphasize that the WIDA™ ELD standards are Colorado's standards, Colorado has named its new ELP standards the Colorado English Language Proficiency (CELP) standards.

The CELP standards meet all of the federal requirements through ESSA. They are derived from the four recognized domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. They address six different English language proficiency levels (1-Entering, 2-Emerging/Beginning, 3-Developing, 4-Expanding, 5-Bridging, and 6-Reaching). Finally, because the CELP standards provide access to the Colorado Academic Standards through direct instruction of the academic language of each content area, the CELP standards align with Colorado's challenging State academic standards.

Implementing Colorado's English Language Proficiency Standards

In response to the new CELP standards, CDE developed a professional development plan that would target, not only ELD teachers, but also content area teachers, specialists and school and district leaders. The trainings were conducted as a collaboration between CDE's Standards and Instructional Services Office and the Office of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education. The CELP development and implementation team included CDE content specialists in all disciplines as well as English Language Development Specialists. The trainings helped to insure that school districts would include the new CELP standards as part of the larger CAS implementation effort and helped build district capacity to implement them.

Maintaining Colorado's English Language Proficiency Standards

Ensuring the highest quality English language proficiency standards for Colorado's English Learners is a high priority for the Colorado Department of Education. In fact, CAP4K requires the regular review and revision of the CELP standards on the same timeline as the academic standards, on or before July 2018 and every six years thereafter.

CDE's Office of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education continues to offer statewide professional development that provide support to districts' in the implementation of all Colorado's standards with a focus on academic language and connections between CELP standards and CAS. CDE models for districts the work of cross-unit teams that include content and English language development specialists. Educators' consideration and understanding of linguistic demands while teaching challenging and relevant academic content ensures that English learners have the opportunity to access and achieve Colorado's college-and career-ready standards on the same schedule as other students.