

Frequently Asked Questions about the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP)

Section 1, General Questions

Q: What is the purpose of the TCAP?

A: *The TCAP supports the transition to the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) during the development of the new assessment, currently scheduled for 2014.*

Q: How is the TCAP similar to the CSAP?

A: *The TCAP will continue to assess those Model Content Standards that are aligned with the Colorado Academic Standards. The TCAP will also continue to assess some Model Content Standards that are not in the Colorado Academic Standards, but were deemed necessary in order to preserve the year to year comparability of the TCAP to the CSAP. The TCAP also preserves the following features:*

- *Paper and pencil test*
- *Multiple choice and constructed response questions*
- *Question formats*
- *Test blueprint and reporting categories*

Q: How is the TCAP Different than the CSAP?

A: *The TCAP will no longer assess Model Content Standards that are not aligned with the Colorado Academic Standards and that are not needed in order to preserve the test blueprint.*

Q: Are CSAP resources on the Office of Student Assessment still relevant to TCAP?

A: *Yes and no. Released items and scoring rubrics will remain the same for TCAP. Technical Resources will also be relevant to TCAP. But Assessment Frameworks and FACT Sheets have changed from CSAP and educators should consult TCAP specific resources on these topics.*

Section 2, TCAP Administration and Procedures

Q: Can parents “opt out” and not have their students take the TCAP?

A: *No. Per state law [22-7-409(1.2.a.1.d.1)], every Colorado student enrolled in a public school is required to take either the TCAP or CoAlt in the appropriate grade levels and content areas. Some have argued that State Law 22-1-123 (5) (a) gives parents an “opt out” for state assessments because it states, “Schools (etc.)... shall obtain the written consent of a student’s parent or legal guardian prior to the student being given any survey, analysis, or evaluation...” However, this law only pertains to certain types of sensitive, personal student information such as political affiliations, mental illness, and income. State required achievement assessments are not affected by this section of the code.*

Q: If parents cannot opt out of the TCAP, what is the “parent refusal” bubble used for?

A: *If, despite legal requirements, parents keep their students home on testing days and test make up days this constitutes a refusal and the “parent refusal” bubble should be shaded in. For assessment purposes, parent refusals will be accounted as a “no score”. Schools may treat parent refusals as unexcused absences and schools are not obligated to provide alternative activities for students whose parents refuse the state assessment.*

Q: Must students be allowed to read if they finish the TCAP before the end of the timed session?

A: *The State's Policy is that students may read or sit quietly if they finish a test session before the end of the timed session. The policy is explained on page 51 of the Procedures Manual and the test proctor's script for each session in the Test Proctor's Manual reads, "Sit quietly until everyone has finished and the (60 or 65) minute testing session has ended. You may read a book, but you must **not** do any writing."*

Q: Should stray marks on tests be erased by students or staff?

A: *No. In the past CDE has instructed districts to erase stray marks on test forms, but this is no longer required, nor permitted. Improved test scanning technology has reduced the need for the erasure of stray marks and eliminating the practice of erasing stray marks enhances test security while reducing school and district workload. Clear directions to students for bubbling and erasing in the test book are part of the Test Proctor's Script and active proctoring in the test environment should reduce excessive stray marks.*

Q: Can students using a process of elimination strategy put an X through answer bubbles that they believe are incorrect?

A: *No. In most cases the scoring scanner can differentiate between a shaded-in bubble and one that simply has an X through it. But to be on the safe side, students should only mark or shade one answer choice. Test Proctor read directions for all test sessions state, "For multiple choice questions, fill in the bubble that goes with the answer you choose. Be sure to fill in the bubble completely and make your mark heavy and dark. If you want to change an answer, completely erase the mark you made before making a new mark. You should erase any stray marks in all other bubbles." Students may line out or strike through the text of the answer choices they wish to eliminate, but should not make marks over the bubbles themselves.*

Q: How should test proctors handle students that are disruptive during testing?

A: *Students who are disruptive should be immediately removed from the testing environment. SACs should have a plan in place for dealing with and removing disruptive students that ensures the least possible interruption to testing. SACs should use discretion about whether a disruptive student's behavior constitutes a misadministration and invalidation of the test scores. Consider the following examples:*

- *An upset student is crying or acting out. The student is removed to another area and after collecting themselves may continue the test. This situation may be treated as though the student became ill during testing and may not require the declaration of a misadministration.*
- *A student begins loudly blurting out answers during a test session. This would violate "no talking during the test" instructions given to students and would constitute a misadministration. The student's outburst may also have caused a misadministration for the other students.*
- *A student (A) solicits or gives answers to another student (B). The student's (A) test should be declared misadministered and the other involved student's (B) test may or may not be declared misadministered depending on that student's (B) involvement or other circumstances.*

Q: How should test proctors handle students that are off task during testing?

A: *If a student is off task, but not disruptive, the teacher may not intervene or redirect the student back on task verbally, by gesture, expression, or written instruction. Redirecting student attention is a non-standard accommodation and only permitted for students with a documented need and when redirection is part of a formal education plan. However, teachers are encouraged to prepare their students before testing by creating and practicing test behavior expectations. In almost all cases, the proximity of active proctors during testing is sufficient reminder for students to remain on task.*

Section 3, TCAP Frameworks and Eligible Content

Q: What are the TCAP Assessment Frameworks?

A: *The research and assessment team, working with content area specialists and our test vendor, CTB/McGraw Hill, developed the frameworks to articulate which Colorado Academic Standards are eligible for assessment and how they align to the CSAP assessment frameworks and Model Content Standards.*

Q: Why are some Model Content Standards still assessed, even though they are not aligned with the Colorado Academic Standards?

A: *Wherever possible, assessment objectives with no alignment to the Colorado Academic Standards have been eliminated from eligibility for assessment. However, in order to preserve a meaningful year-to-year comparison of assessment results, we must retain some of the older assessment objectives. Whenever this is the case, the retained assessment objectives have been noted in the TCAP Assessment Frameworks.*

Q: Why are some Colorado Academic Standards from lower grade levels assessed at a higher grade level? For example, why is probability, a seventh grade concept, still assessed in 8th grade?

A: *In some cases this is simply because content is aligned with a different grade level in the Colorado Academic Standards than it was in the Model Content Standards but we must continue to assess the concept at the old grade level in order to preserve year to year comparability of the TCAP. But this is also because the new standards are **mastery based**. Any assessment objective that is aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards at or below grade level is eligible for assessment on the TCAP.*

Q: What is a GLE?

A: *A GLE is the Grade Level Expectation for Concepts and Skills mastery. In the CAS framework codes, there is a number next to “GLE”. This number corresponds to the number that is found under “Concepts and skills students master” in both the Online Searchable Standards and in the Printable Standards. Below, the arrow points to GLE 1 in RWC, grade 3, standard 1.*

Content Area: Reading, Writing, and Communicating
Standard: 1. Oral Expression and Listening

Prepared Graduates:

- Use language appropriate for purpose and audience

Grade Level Expectation: Third Grade

Concepts and skills students master:

1. Oral communication is used both informally and formally

Evidence Outcomes

Students can:

- a. Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace. (CCSS: SL.3.4)
- b. Distinguish different levels of formality
- c. Speak clearly, using appropriate volume and pitch for the purpose and audience

21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies

Inquiry Questions:

1. Do children talk differently to their friends than to their teachers? Why?
2. Could presenters speak passionately about a topic if their back was turned to the audience?
3. When people talk to someone who speaks a different language, how do they know that the person is happy, sad, scared, or mad?
4. Why is it important to speak clearly with appropriate volume and pitch?

Q: How can I get more information about how the TCAP and TCAP Frameworks should inform school curriculum?

A: Curriculum questions should be directed to the relevant content area personnel. Below is their contact information:

- Mathematics, Mary Pittman; 303-866-6251; pittman_m@cde.state.co.us
- Science, Barry Cartwright; 303-866-6187; cartwright_b@cde.state.co.us
- Reading, Writing and Communication, Dana Hall; 303-866-6189; hall_d@cde.state.co.us

Q: How do I read the CAS alignment codes?

A: Pictured below is the Colorado Academic Standards Reference System developed by the Office of Teaching and Learning. It can also be found online at:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/UAS/AdoptedAcademicStandards/CAS_Reference_system.pdf

