

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

COLORADO

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The Colorado State Assessment System

The Colorado State Assessment Program (CSAP) will include assessments at all grade levels once the program is fully implemented in 2001.

• ***Grade Levels and Subjects Tested***

- 3rd grade Reading
- 4th grade Reading and Writing
- 5th grade Math (as of 1999-00)
- 7th grade Reading and Writing
- 8th grade Math and Science (as of 1999-00)
- 10th grade Math, Reading and Writing (as of 2000-01)
- 12th grade students who did not pass the 10th grade test must take it again, but are not required to pass it for graduation (as of 2003).

• ***Norm or Criterion Referenced*** – Criterion

• ***Matrix or Census Testing*** – Census

• ***Item Types***

Selected response or multiple choice questions comprise 80% of the reading, math and writing tests. The remaining 20% of the questions are constructed response or performance tasks.

• ***Student Performance Levels***

For the reading and writing assessments, four performance levels are used:

- advanced
- proficient
- partially proficient, and
- unsatisfactory.

These levels will be continued with the scoring and reporting of math and science tests for 1999-2000. Each performance level for reading and writing has been defined by outlining which standards and skills a student must demonstrate to be classified at this level.

- ***Inclusion Policies***

The state provides two options in making the decision to exclude a student from an assessment:

1. Local school officials may choose to let the student try to take the test, using approved accommodations. If the student is still not able to participate, the effort should be documented.
2. Local school officials may defer to the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) if it documents the need for individualized standards in the assessed content area and the student's inability to participate, even with accommodations.

Non-English speaking students at levels 1 or 2 (out of the most common 5-stage rubric used in English language proficiency tests) are excluded from the test; limited English proficient students (levels 3-5) must take the state test. Parents are also allowed to refuse to have their child(ren) involved in an assessment.

There are five criteria for selecting accommodations:

1. Accommodations must have been used during instruction for at least three months prior to the assessment
2. Accommodations are content area specific
3. The possible effects on a student of allowing the accommodations must be considered
4. A student may be allowed more than one accommodation
5. An LEP student is entitled to the same instructional and assessment accommodations as his/her English-speaking peers.

The following accommodations **MUST** be documented:

1. Time extension of more than ten minutes in a session
2. The assessment administered in multiple, shorter sessions (when total testing time exceeds sixty minutes)
3. Braille or large print version of the test
4. Reading or signing of the directions for reading or writing tests
5. Use of a scribe to write oral responses or fill in bubbles on test
6. Use of signing or pointing as alternative responses
7. Use of Braille or other communication device to respond to test questions.

Accommodations that **DO NOT** need to be documented:

1. Time of day or appropriate location
2. Allowing stretch breaks for groups or individuals
3. Time extension up to ten minutes
4. Use of devices normally used by students for visual, auditory or kinesthetic assistance

5. Rereading of directions
6. Spelling of words to students who request it

Alternative assessments, or more specifically “assessment processes” in reading are being developed for students with disabilities who cannot participate in the regular assessment program.

- ***Other Assessments***

1. To comply with the **Colorado Basic Literacy Act**, school districts must use evidence from two assessment categories: 1) *Individual Reading Assessments* and 2) the *CSAP Third Grade Reading Assessment* to determine the reading proficiency of third graders. *Other Reading Assessments* may also be used as part of the “body of evidence” that districts use to determine if those students below proficient on the 3rd grade reading test should remain at the 3rd grade level in reading. Together, these assessments are referred to here as the **Third Grade Literacy Assessments**.

1) Sample *Individual Reading Assessments* include:

- Reading inventories such as Flynt Cooter
- Running records with leveled books that include comprehension questions and/or retell such as Celebration Press
- District developed assessments with researched and documented results.

2) *CSAP Third Grade Reading Assessment*

3) *Other Reading Assessments* include:

- Reading series assessments
- District adopted integrated reading performance assessments such as the Terra Nova (CTB).

2. **Spanish-language versions** of the 4th grade reading and writing tests have been developed.
3. The **Bodies of Evidence** are collected by schools in reading and mathematics to show student progress, and should contain more than one kind of assessment, such as performance assessments, personal communications, observations and self-assessments. These bodies of evidence can be used to refute state claims that a school should be in program improvement in the case of Title I.

- ***State requirements for local assessment***

Districts are developing local assessments at their own discretion.

Performance Data

- ***What data are reported?***

The *District and School Academic Achievement Report Card* contains the following indicators:

- Results of statewide assessments administered as part of the CSAP, aggregated by grade and subject area, and by gender, race/ethnicity, and percentage of students eligible for free lunch

- Results of Third Grade Literacy Assessments
- Number of students taking Advanced Placement (AP) exams, number of students enrolled in AP classes, and percentage of students obtaining a passing grade on an AP examination or other indicator of high academic performance;
- Results of district assessments administered for local standards that meet or exceed state model content standards in 12 areas;
- Trend data for CSAP and for the Third Grade Literacy Assessments;
- Numbers of expelled and suspended students;
- Graduation Rates and Requirements;
- Dropout and Attendance Rates;
- Percentage of students not taking CSAP;
- Evidence of a safe, civil learning environment; and
- Number and identity of schools in each accreditation category.

Students not taking an assessment are still counted in the denominator to determine the percentage of students at each of the proficiency levels. Districts are therefore encouraged to place students in an assessment situation that is appropriate for their needs.

- ***How are the data distributed?***

Districts are required to annually report progress on district and school accreditation indicators to the public and the state board of education. State and local results are also available to the public via the Internet.

- ***How are the data disaggregated?***

CSAP results will be disaggregated by:

1. race/ethnicity;
2. gender;
3. percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch;
4. students who take CSAP using standard procedures
5. students who take CSAP using accommodations or alternate forms of the test
6. students enrolled from out of state after October 1st.

The Colorado State Accountability System

- ***Student Accountability***

Students are held accountable for their performance on the Third Grade Literacy Assessment.

Sanctions and Rewards

Third grade students who are not reading at grade level as measured by poor performance on the Third Grade Literacy Assessments may be held back in reading and have an individual literacy plan developed.

- ***School Accountability***

On March 27th, 2000 the state Senate approved Senate Bill 186, a new system to assign letter grades to schools based on state test results using a new system of state report cards. The first reports cards will be released on August 15, 2001.

Each public school will receive an academic performance letter grade based on all CSAP scores. Schools that receive C, D, or F will also get an academic improvement letter grade based on improvement measured by the percentage of one standard deviation over the previous year's CSAP scores. A and B schools will be given an academic improvement rating instead of a letter grade to indicate whether they have made significant improvement, decline or significant decline in school performance. A bell curve distribution will be used in the first year giving 2% of schools and F and 25% of schools a D.

Title I schools are held accountable for annual improvement on the **School Index**. Adequate yearly progress is based on the 1997 School Index. School indexes for 1997 were computed using CSAP reading and writing results and transitional (district-selected) math assessment scores for schools with fourth grade. Once the math CSAP is administered in 1999-2000, these scores will replace the transitional math assessment scores for elementary schools. The indexes for schools without fourth grade were based on transitional assessments in reading and math. To determine the **School Index**:

1. Determine the percentage of students coring at each of the four proficiency levels
2. Multiply the percentage of students at each proficiency level by the proficiency level's weight
 - In Progress: 0.0
 - Partially Proficient: 0.3
 - Proficient: 0.6
 - Advanced: 0.9
3. Sum the figures obtained for each subject area
4. Multiply the sum for each subject by the subject weight
 - Reading: 2
 - Math: 2
 - Writing: 1
5. Add the resulting sums for the subjects
6. Divide by 3.

Steps to determine Adequate Yearly Progress

1. Subtract the school index from 100
2. Divide the result by 10.

Annual expected adequate yearly progress growth is constant. The School Index is calculated only for Title I schools. Non-Title I schools are held accountable through district accreditation contracts.

Sanctions and Rewards

If an "F" school fails to improve after two years, the school will be chartered as an independent charter school through a process with considerable state involvement. However, the charter is ultimately between the local board and the independent charter.

SB186 also authorizes a transportation token program for students in grades 1-8 attending D or F schools and who are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Students may then use the token to pay for transportation to public or private A, B, or C schools in or outside the district.

Grants will be offered to the highest performance schools and those that have shown the most improvement. In the first year, all grants will go to A schools; after that 1/3 will go to A schools and 2/3 will go to D and F schools with A academic improvement grades.

All schools could be subject to corrective action (including the loss of their accreditation) from the district. **Title I** schools can currently be identified for program improvement if they have not made adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years.

- ***District Accountability***

Although the following accreditation system was in place for the majority of the 1999-2000 school year, it was repealed through the passage of HB 1219 in the spring of 2000. The state will now develop a new district accountability system that will align with the new system of school grading.

Through the state accreditation process, local school districts develop an **accreditation contract**, which is an agreement between the State Board of Education and the local board to “manage the accreditation of public schools within such school district, consistent with the standards and goals to be met according to the Accreditation Indicators and State Board Rules and Regulations.” The first round of accreditation contracts are due to the SBE by July 1, 2000.

The accreditation contracts designed and approved by each district must address the following proposed Accreditation Indicators, adopted October 7, 1999:

- ***CSAP Tests***
 1. Ultimate Goal: 100% of students are at the Proficient or Advanced level.
 2. Intermediate Benchmark: 80% of students are at the Proficient or Advanced level.
 3. Short-Term Benchmark: 25% increase in students at the Proficient or Advanced level over three years
- ***Results of the Third Grade Literacy Assessments***

25% percent decrease in number of students reading below grade level over a three year period
- ***Advanced Placement***

Each district sets challenging goals for progress. The key indicator would be the number of students obtaining a passing grade on AP exams and/or equivalent indicators of high academic performance as defined in the local district’s Accreditation Contract
- ***Results of District Tests Administered for all other Standards***

For these indicators each district will adopt challenging, measurable and achievable goals aligned with state content standards.
- ***Other State Accreditation Indicators***

1. Dropout
2. Student attendance, including the number of expelled and suspended students
3. Graduation requirements and rates
4. Percentage of students taking and exempt from assessment programs
5. Evidence of a safe, civil learning climate.

- *Local District Accreditation Indicators (Voluntary)*

School districts may develop other indicators, which assess progress on local district goals and objectives. These indicators would be reflected in the accreditation contract between the SBE and the local district.

District Accreditation Categories have also been developed:

Accredited: district meets or exceeds one of the following targets:

- 80% of students are proficient or advanced on CSAP and Third Grade Literacy Assessments
- Over a three year period there is a 25% increase in the base-line percentage of students who are proficient or advanced on CSAP, a 25% decrease in the number of students not on grade level as originally identified in the Third Grade Literacy Assessments, and the district meets or exceeds district-established goals for other State Indicators and local goals.

Academic Watch: did not meet any of the accreditation targets in three years.

Academic Probation: after one year of Academic Watch did not meet either:

- State accreditation targets, or.
- Show adequate growth on the district approved school improvement plan.

Non-Accredited: after one year of Academic Probation did not:

- Meet state accreditation targets, or
- Show adequate growth on district approved school improvement plan.

Sanctions and Rewards

All districts could lose their accreditation from the state. **Title I** districts can currently be put in program improvement.

Rewards are not provided by the state to schools that have been deemed successful. (*Quality Counts 99*) However, schools may be recognized as “excellent” by the state board.

- *Subgroup Performance as an Indicator*

Subgroup performance does not appear to be considered formally in the accountability system.

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools

- **Identification**

Any *school* receiving Title 1 funds and not making adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years may be identified for program improvement. The districts are responsible for determining whether a school is to be identified for school improvement. An assigned consultant from the state department will review the district recommendations and the data that led to those decisions for each possible school for final determination. The district staff and “the assigned consultant” will review the body of evidence and determine if a school should be exempted.

The CDE will aggregate school data into a *district* index for determining whether district program improvement is needed.

- **Assistance**

Under Senate Bill 186, if a school receives a D on the report card the State Board may determine that local officials have not taken sufficient steps for the students to be academically well served. The state can then establish an assessment team to make recommendations for implementing an assistance and intervention plan to address the causes of low performance.

Technical or other assistance is provided as the school develops and implements its Title I plan.

- **Who provides the assistance?**

The state has established a system of school support teams to assist schools identified in need of program improvement in developing an improvement plan. Title 1 consultants also can provide support to schools, along with district level staff.

- **Does support to Title I schools differ?**

Because program improvement is only applicable to Title I schools, these services only apply in this circumstance. Districts are responsible for accrediting schools and provide support to low achieving schools.

Alignment of the State Accountability System and Title I

The state board of education approved the state accreditation rules in October 1999. This accountability system reflects the requirements of IASA for schools to demonstrate progress toward all students meeting state standards, as measured by standards-based assessments. The general education and Title I accountability criteria overlap with CSAP scores being included for both. However, Title I and non-Title I schools operate under different systems for adequate yearly progress and may receive different consequences for poor performance.

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