

TOPIC: UPDATE ON SB08-212/CAP4K

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I. SUMMARY

SB08-212, the Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act, was passed (also known as Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids, CAP4K). CAP4K was designed to align Colorado's educational system from pre-school to college with a particular focus on the readiness of all children at key transition points and to prepare them for **postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR)**. The legislation stipulates that students who graduate from high school "ready by exit" be eligible for automatic admission into the moderately selective colleges in Colorado. Additionally, the 2009 School Finance Act (SB09-256) added a requirement that all students, starting in the 9th grade at the latest, have an ICAP, or Individual Career and Academic Plan.

Specifically, the Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act:

- Aligns P-12 school standards and assessment measures with the knowledge and skills necessary for students to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce;
- Assumes that high school students need the same fundamental core knowledge and competencies, and personal skills for postsecondary study and the workforce;
- Assumes that most students will need some postsecondary education in order to remain competitive in the 21st century global economy and marketplace;
- Assumes that a high school diploma is a meaningful indicator of PWR;
- Has implications for admissions purposes in Colorado public institutions of higher education, for those students who gain a PWR endorsement on their high school diploma;
- Requires the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) and the Colorado State Board of Education (SBE) to negotiate a single description of postsecondary and workforce readiness;
- Stipulates that the adopted description of PWR, among other provisions, shall:
 - ❖ Describe specific knowledge and skills that students must have to demonstrate PWR;
 - ❖ Ensure that PWR includes "demonstration of a sufficiently high level of comprehension or skill to successfully complete, without need for remediation" specified core academic courses;
 - ❖ Ensure, to the extent practicable, that students demonstrate such "21st century skills" as creativity and innovation; critical thinking; communication and collaboration; social and cultural awareness; initiative and self-direction;

character and leadership; productivity and accountability; and information technology application skills, among others.

- Requires the CCHE and SBE to negotiate a consensus regarding assessment measures, including a new 11th grade PWR assessment that “at a minimum, tests in the areas of reading, mathematics, and science and is relevant to college admission determinations by institutions of higher education throughout the United States.”

II. BACKGROUND

In June 2009, the CCHE and SBE jointly voted to formally approve the state’s PWR description. The next step of the CAP4K legislation entailed the adoption of state standards that are “fewer, clearer, and higher” *and* benchmarked internationally. In December 2009, the SBE formally approved the new P-12 academic standards for the state. The new standards cover not just academic content area but also “21st century skills” defined as “Learning and Behavior Skills.”

The third step of the alignment legislation requires the specification and development of new state assessments to measure the expectations of PWR, which includes the state’s new P-12 academic standards. Per legislation, the assessment must include: the state summative assessments, postsecondary and workforce readiness assessments, school readiness measurements, English language acquisition, screening and placement tools, and assessment accommodations for special populations.

A process began in October 2009, including professionals from across the P-20 education and business communities, in collaboration with staff from the CDE and DHE, to establish terms and principles for a new, re-designed assessment system. The following groups were formed: the Assessment Stakeholders Advisory Committee (ASAC), and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)¹. Five subcommittees were created by ASAC (1) the School Readiness and Early Childhood Assessment Subcommittee, (2) the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Subcommittee, (3) the Summative Assessment Subcommittee (NCLB requirements), (4) the Formative (Interim/Benchmark) Assessment Subcommittee, and (5) the Subcommittee for Special Populations. Over one hundred experts and practitioners were selected from across the state to serve on these subcommittees and to make recommendations about each component of the new assessment system.

Additional data collection regarding the re-designed assessment system occurred through a second series of CDE and DHE co-convened, co-facilitated 212 meetings around the state. These second round of meetings took place in spring 2010. Close to 400 Colorado residents participated in these thirteen meetings which focused on assessment specifications for the re-designed assessment system. Data collection has also occurred with postsecondary stakeholder

¹ The TAC is comprised of national-level consultants with particular expertise in assessments/psychometrics.

groups including admissions personnel; chief academic officers from Colorado's public institutions of postsecondary education; senior level representatives from the student services departments of institutions; and guidance professionals such as counselors and pre-collegiate advisors.

From the work of these committees, recommendations were provided and were shared with the larger Colorado community with a 10 city tour that took place late October and early November, 2010. These recommendations were compiled by staff from DHE and CDE and were presented to members of the CCHE and SBE for review, input, and adoption. The recommended design attributes and assessment specifications were presented and formally adopted by CCHE and SBE on November 29, 2010. The new assessment system includes summative, formative, interim, early childhood measures, ICAPs, and a dashboard to display individual student progress.

III. NEXT STEPS

According to SB08 212, both DHE and CDE are to jointly determine the details of an "endorsed diploma," to review and modify, if necessary, the Higher Education Admission Requirements (HEAR) standards. As part of the assessment system design, a decision was made to include the revisions, if necessary, to educator preparation programs to ensure these programs are preparing educators who know and can use PWR measures. Further, it may be necessary to expand the ICAP (Individual Career and Academic Plan) to make sure it is aligned with PWR requirements. It is also necessary to address the critical aspect of policy makers and practitioners being able to use the assessment system data to inform student progression.

IV. NEW COLORADO POSTSECONDARY AND WORKFORCE READINESS (PWR) ASSESSMENT DESIGN/ATTRIBUTES

Please see attachment.