

SUPPORTING School Readiness

Building a foundation for success

Senate Bill 08-212, Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), passed in 2008 with the goal of aligning Colorado's preschool through postsecondary education system. The act included provisions related to school readiness for both the State Board of Education and local education providers.

School Readiness: Ready Child, Ready School

The State Board of Education defined school readiness in 2008:

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.

School readiness describes the status and ongoing progress a child makes within the domains of physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language and comprehension development, and cognition and general knowledge. By monitoring each child's progress across multiple domains, teachers, parents, schools, and caregivers can provide needed support to ensure each child's success in school. Information gathered from school readiness assessments is to be used for supportive and instructional purposes and cannot be used to deny a student admission or progression to kindergarten or first grade.

School District and State Board School Readiness Requirements

CAP4K has requirements for both local education providers and the State Board of Education related to school readiness.

Local Education Providers

Beginning in the fall of 2013, local education providers are required to ensure all children in publicly-funded preschool or kindergarten receive an individual school readiness plan. Also, local education providers must administer the school readiness assessment to each student in kindergarten. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is advising districts to phase-in this provision of CAP4K in either the 2013-14 or 2014-15 school year.

School Readiness Timeline

2008 Colorado Legislature passes SB 212, Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), with the purpose of aligning Colorado's education system.

- CAP4K is also called the Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act.
- CAP4K required the revision of standards and design of a new state assessment system, including school readiness assessment.
- CAP4K required the State Board of Education to define school readiness and postsecondary workforce readiness.

2010 The State Board of Education adopted the design attributes of the state's new assessment system, including school readiness assessment.

2012 The State Board of Education voted to adopt a menu of school readiness assessments. The Colorado Department of Education advises districts to phase-in implementation of the school readiness provisions of CAP4K in either the 2013-14 or 2014-15 school year.

State Board of Education

The State Board of Education is required to define school readiness, which was accomplished in 2008. The State Board is also required to adopt one or more assessments aligned with the definition of school readiness.

The remainder of this document provides more detail on the individual school readiness plans and school readiness assessments.

Individual School Readiness Plans

CAP4K indicates that local education providers are required to ensure all children in publicly-funded preschool or kindergarten receive an individual school readiness plan. The legislation does not specify the contents of school readiness plans except that the plans be informed by the school readiness assessment. The department recommends that school readiness plans be considered as living documents, documenting the progress children are making across the developmental and academic domains. To assist districts with developing these plans, the department will be making available sample school readiness plan templates that districts may adapt and use as desired. The samples will be available in the spring of 2013. CDE is advising districts to phase-in school readiness plans in either the 2013-14 or 2014-15 school year to coincide with implementation of school readiness assessments.

School Readiness Assessments

In approving school readiness assessments, CAP4K directs the State Board of Education to consider assessments that are research-based, recognized nationwide as reliable instruments for measuring school readiness; and suitable for determining the instruction and interventions students need to improve their readiness to succeed in school. In December 2012, the State Board of Education voted to offer districts a menu of school readiness assessments. The first approved assessment tool for the menu is Teaching Strategies GOLD. Pending positive technical reports and final review, the State Board will approve additional school readiness assessment tools for the menu.

The department is supporting a phased-in implementation of these assessments over the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. Those districts who are ready to implement TS GOLD in 2013-14 may begin doing so; those needing more time and interested in accessing possible additional assessments that may be added to the approved menu in the next year can use 2013-14 to prepare for implementation in 2014-15.

Funding for School Readiness Assessments

CAP4K did not provide funding for school readiness assessments. As school readiness assessment is phased in for kindergarten students during 2013-14 and 2014-15, Colorado's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund grant will cover the initial cost of Teaching Strategies GOLD subscriptions. Districts interested in accessing funding for the 2013-14 school year should complete a brief form located at

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dFlwaVRHRFNsZDJyZTc0VHhvOWtuREE6MQ>.

Frequently Asked Questions

How is the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund related to school readiness?

The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund will provide funds to cover the initial district cost of subscriptions to Teaching Strategies GOLD for each kindergarten student. This grant will also cover some costs related to training and technical assistance provided by CDE. More information on the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund as it pertains to school readiness can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/early/>

What support will CDE provide with implementation of school readiness?

Through funds provided within the Race to the Top Early Challenge Fund, the department will be able to provide financial support for school readiness assessment subscriptions, training, and school readiness plan templates.

How are efforts related to increasing access to the Colorado Preschool Program and full day Kindergarten related to school readiness?

Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) does not address an increase in the access to the Colorado Preschool Program or provision of full-day kindergarten. However, both of these possibilities have been considered within the Governor's proposed budget and by the School Finance Partnership as they prepare recommend revisions of the School Finance Act.

Are assessments required by the READ Act the same as school readiness assessments?

While the information gathered by school readiness assessments and literacy assessments required by the READ Act are complementary, the assessments serve different purposes. CAP4K requires the school readiness assessment to consider the whole child (i.e., physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language and comprehension development, and cognition) not only areas of academic content mastery. The READ Act requires assessment on the components of reading to inform instruction and intervention in literacy skills.

What are the rules about using and sharing school readiness data?

School readiness assessment results shall not be publicly reported for individual students. The State Board of Education is required to adopt a system for reporting population-level results that provide baseline data for measuring overall change and improvement in students' skills and knowledge over time. Action on these rules is anticipated in 2013.

Where can I learn more?

CDE's early learning and school readiness website: www.cde.state.co.us/early

The Colorado Department of Education

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