

STATE OF COLORADO

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

136 State Capitol Building
Denver, Colorado 80203
(303) 866 - 2471
(303) 866 - 2003 fax



Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

Governor Ritter's Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K)

Gov. Bill Ritter and bipartisan bill sponsors Sen. Chris Romer, Sen. Josh Penry, Rep. Rob Witwer and Rep. Christine Scanlan have introduced groundbreaking legislation called the **Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K)**. This legislation is a sweeping redesign of the state's "P-20" educational systems. It will align the preschool, K-12 and postsecondary educational systems around the belief that *all* students must receive an education that leads to postsecondary and career readiness.

Elements of the proposal:

TASKS THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION WITH ESTABLISHING DEFINITIONS OF SCHOOL READINESS AND POSTSECONDARY AND WORKFORCE READINESS.

- While not requiring specific "seat time" requirements, CAP4K calls for establishing clear definitions of school readiness and postsecondary and workforce readiness for the first time in Colorado history.
- Requires the State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education to jointly adopt a formal definition of postsecondary and workforce readiness.
- In creating these definitions, the State Board of Education and the Commission on Higher Education would be required to consult and collaborate with citizens, early childhood education providers, teachers/faculty, counselors, school/college administrators, board members, parents, students, and employers.

EXPANDS AND REFINES COLORADO'S INSTRUCTIONAL STANDARDS FROM PRESCHOOL TO THE FIRST YEAR OF COLLEGE.

- CAP4K calls for the expansion of CDE's Model Content Standards to span all grades, from preschool through grade 12, and requires that these standards are anchored by and aligned with definitions of school readiness and postsecondary and workforce readiness.

- Requires that the newly adopted standards are comparable in scope, relevance, and rigor to the highest national and international standards that have been implemented successfully and are consistent with the achievement goals of the legislation.
- Directs local school boards to revise their instructional standards to meet or exceed those established by the State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.
- Permits and encourages local school boards to create multiple curricular pathways to accommodate students' varying interests. In doing so, school boards are not required to base decisions on traditional conventions, such as seat time (i.e., Carnegie Units) or course titles. But, all such curricular pathways must ultimately lead students toward postsecondary and workforce readiness.

REQUIRES THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL READINESS ASSESSMENTS AND MODIFICATIONS TO THE EXISTING ASSESSMENT SYSTEM TO ALIGN WITH POSTSECONDARY AND WORKFORCE READINESS STANDARDS.

- Gov. Ritter's plan calls for the development of new or realignment of existing assessments, such as CSAPs and ACT.
- Central to this plan is the creation of greater relevance for students, parents, and teachers in the state's assessment system and a requirement that assessments administered in high school can be used for guidance and college admission purposes.
- Also central to the plan is the creation of a school readiness assessment so that achievement gaps can be identified earlier and preschool and kindergarten can be expanded and improved to ensure that every child starts 1st grade prepared to succeed.
- This section also requires the maintenance of a high level of accountability and continuous compliance with federal law.
- Requires the State Board of Education to determine the criteria for an honors-style diploma as well as permits the creation of additional yet-to-be-determined endorsements to recognize outstanding achievement in a variety of subject areas.

AMENDS CCHE ADMISSION & REMEDIATION POLICIES TO PERMIT STUDENTS TO QUALIFY FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION BY DEMONSTRATED PROFICIENCY, AND NOT BY SEAT TIME OR COURSE TITLES ALONE.

- CAP4K charges the Colorado Commission on Higher Education with amending its policies to allow students to qualify for admission and placement into credit-bearing college courses by way of demonstrations of proficiency, not simply seat time or course titles.
- Creates postsecondary and workforce readiness standards that can be used to guarantee admission to certain postsecondary institutions.