

Colorado's Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) High School Diploma Endorsement Criteria

THE FOUR READINESS INDICATORS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS NEED TO MEET IN ORDER TO EARN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA ENDORSEMENT

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JOINTLY APPROVED AND ADOPTED ON AUGUST 15, 2013 BY THE COLORADO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

P-20 partnership between the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Department of Higher Education



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This project began over two years ago and would not be possible without the dedication of a core group of Colorado practitioners and experts from P-12 and higher education who served as members of the Task Force and those currently serving on the Work Group. This work would not have been possible without each member's perspective, as well as the advice of hundreds of stakeholders who have provided online feedback, attended town hall meetings, or have been willing to pilot this effort in their high schools.

The first set of criteria was approved by every public higher education governing board in spring 2012. We would like to thank Academic Council members from institutions and staff from the Department of Higher Education who facilitated these votes at each institution.

Introduction

The 2008 Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), Colorado’s landmark education alignment bill, was designed to support student success and persistence from preschool through postsecondary education. The law was intended to address the negative impacts of a fragmented education system on both students and the state’s economic future. Beginning in 2008, the state’s K12 and higher education agencies embarked on this process with early childhood, K-12, and higher education stakeholders to adopt common policies and practices that focus on one goal: increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for success in college or the workplace. A number of sequential steps since 2008 have successfully changed state-level policies. The next step to advance the goals set forth in CAP4K is called the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) high school diploma endorsement.

The PWR endorsement rewards high school graduates for excellence by guaranteeing that the student meets: "minimum academic qualifications for admission to, and to be eligible, subject to additional institutional review of other admission and placement qualifications, for placement into credit-bearing courses at all open, modified open, or moderately selective public institutions of higher education in Colorado"; as well as to receive priority consideration for admission into Colorado’s selective and highly selective institutions.

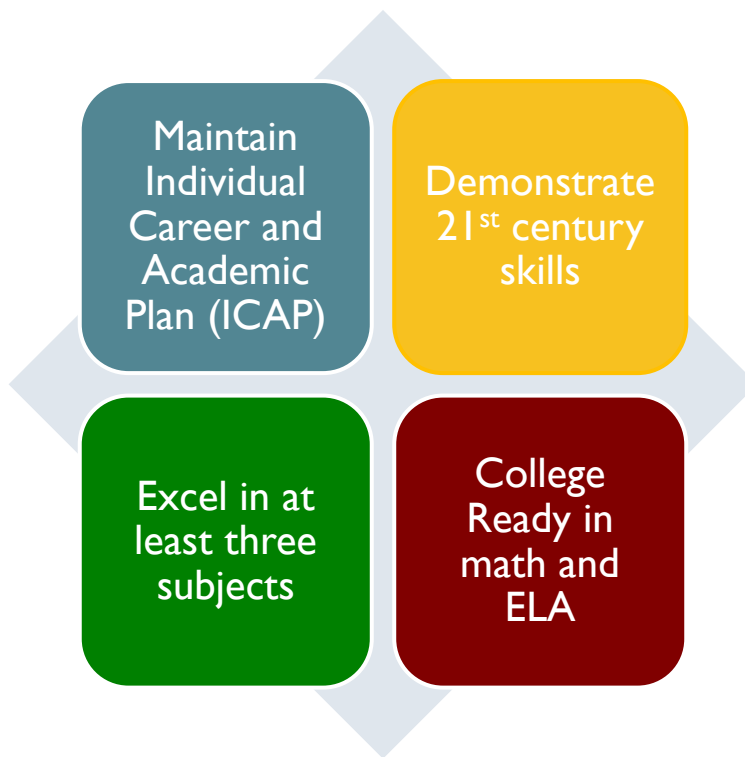
Until now, the higher education admissions policy has relied on national assessment scores, or “seat-time,” to estimate the likelihood of student success beyond high school. Yet experience and growing research suggests that students who are ready for credit-bearing coursework are more likely to transition and complete postsecondary credential. The endorsed diploma is designed to offer another pathway to higher education, beyond performance on a high-stakes exam. The PWR endorsement signifies a student has thoughtfully planned for post-high school life, and is academically prepared for credit-bearing 100-level postsecondary coursework without the need for remediation. A PWR endorsed diploma also means the student possesses the abilities and skills demanded in a rapidly changing, 21st century workplace or postsecondary education environment (*i.e.*, critical thinking and problem solving, information literacy, collaboration, self-direction, and invention skills).

Each of the desired attributes are categorized into four areas, referred to as “readiness indicators” which each need to be satisfied during high school through a number of ways, as described herein. The PWR endorsed diploma readiness indicators are as follows:

- **READINESS INDICATOR 1 – STUDENT IS COLLEGE READY IN MATH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**
- **READINESS INDICATOR 2 – STUDENT COMPLETES ICAP**
- **READINESS INDICATOR 3 – STUDENT DEMONSTRATES 21ST CENTURY SKILLS**
- **READINESS INDICATOR 4 – STUDENT DEMONSTRATES MASTERY OF ACADEMIC CONTENT IN THREE CONTENT AREAS**

Beginning in school year 2012-13, Aurora Public Schools began a pilot program to inform statewide implementation and improve the criteria and evaluate the outcomes and experiences of participating students, districts, and institutions of higher education. In May 2013, the State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education will consider adopting the set of criteria. Statewide implementation will follow as soon as possible.

THE FOUR CRITERIA: INDICATORS AND EVIDENCE



READINESS INDICATOR 1 – STUDENT IS COLLEGE READY IN MATH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

To earn a PWR endorsed diploma, a student must satisfy the existing Higher Education Admissions Requirements (HEAR) and remedial policies adopted by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. Both policies are under review and will be revised to align with the PWR definition by December 2014.** The following two steps indicate how a student can meet this requirement:

1. Satisfy current HEAR requirements or HEAR proxies, the Admissions Index and existing remedial education cut scores by:
 - a. Receiving a passing grade in seventeen academic units/credits of coursework in English, Mathematics, Natural Science, Social Science and Foreign

Language, and,

2. Demonstrate he/she does not require remediation in higher education credit-bearing classes for math and literacy based on any one of the following benchmarks:
 - a. Approved ACT cut-scores (writing 18, reading 17 and math 19)
 - b. Approved SAT cut-scores (writing 440, reading 430, and math 470)
 - c. Placement assessments: including Accuplacer, COMPASS (not yet approved by CCHE)
 - d. Successful completion of college level courses via Concurrent Enrollment
 - e. Completion of necessary remedial courses
 - f. Approved State Summative/National Consortia Assessment cut-scores*; or
 - g. ACT/SAT writing test score*

** The state summative/national assessment scores, ACT writing test have not been adopted by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and therefore are not part of the state's existing state-wide remedial education policy; both will be considered as the CCHE reviews and revises the policy.*

***This indicator will be revised automatically to reflect the revised placement policy, as adopted by CCHE.*

READINESS INDICATOR 2 – STUDENT COMPLETES INDIVIDUAL CAREER AND ACADEMIC PLAN (ICAP)

A student must provide evidence that he/she has created and maintained an updated career and academic plan (ICAP). This step is essential to encourage students to establish a goal, create an intentional course plan for high school, explore careers and put the necessary steps in place to prepare for postsecondary success. Based on existing district policies and practices, each local district will determine if a student has maintained and eventually completed an ICAP successfully.

Students demonstrate they are on track to successfully complete their Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) as established by SB09-256 and the State Board of Education Rules for Administering ICAPs, including each of the following topical areas and specific grade-level milestones:

- Career and College Interest Inventories
- Career Plan and Goals
- Work Experience
- Academic Progress (including remediation and concurrent enrollment)
- Intentional Course Plan
- Extracurricular, Contextual and Service Learning
- College Exploration and Applications
- Progress in Financial Literacy and College Finances

READINESS INDICATOR 3 – DEMONSTRATE 21st CENTURY SKILLS

A student must demonstrate his/her aptitude in the five 21st century skill areas. The skills include:

1. **Information Literacy** (e.g. *Find and Use Information & Information Technology*)
2. **Invention** (e.g. *Creativity and Innovation*)
3. **Collaboration** (e.g. *Communication*)
4. **Critical Thinking** (e.g. *Problem Solving, & Global and Cultural Awareness*)
5. **Self-Direction** (e.g. *Personal Responsibility, Civic Responsibility, Work Ethic*)

These five skills and behaviors are embedded in the new Colorado Academic Standards and include the skills listed in the statewide PWR definition. In order to meet this benchmark, a student must demonstrate all five skills at least once during high school through academic coursework *and* evidenced by a high quality extracurricular activities, as described below.

Student demonstrates high school academic achievement, as evidenced by one or more of the following indicators:

- Demonstrates mastery of skills through classroom coursework, based on district-certified valid and reliable measurements;
- Has qualifying state summative assessment results;
- Receives honors, scholarships, achievements or awards aligned with student's Career and Academic Plan;
- Meets other indicators to be determined by the Colorado Workforce Development Council; or
- Meets other indicators as certified by districts.

Student demonstrates skills and leadership qualities by actively engaging in a total of four extracurricular activities. (Though not required, preference is for student to participate in at least one activity every year the student is enrolled in the high school offering the endorsement):

- **School-based:** Student participates in one or more school activities, evidenced by a completed evaluation, based on a common rubric, by a supervisor/coach/advisor or other evidence of exemplary participation;
- **Business or Employment:** Student is employed or completes an internship or externship (minimum 3-months), evidenced by a completed evaluation, based on a common rubric, by a supervisor; or
- **Volunteer Activities:** Student completes a service-learning project (minimum 30 hours), as evidenced by a completed evaluation, based on a common rubric, by a supervisor.

READINESS INDICATOR 4 – ACADEMIC CRITERIA: STUDENT IS PROFICIENT IN AT LEAST THREE OF THE SEVEN FOLLOWING SUBJECTS

READING, WRITING, AND COMMUNICATING

Student must successfully complete four courses and:

- Earn overall 3.0 GPA or better in at least four courses within content area;
- Coursework should address all three areas: reading, intensive writing, and communicating;
- May also include qualifying CTE course(s); and
- At least one course must be taken during the student's 12th grade.

In addition to coursework, student also must either: meet one of the performance benchmarks listed below or earn college credit in this subject area.

Performance Indicators: students must meet only one of the following benchmarks:

- Advanced (or equivalent) score on State Summative Assessment (not sure if 'Assessment' should be capitalized) in Writing if administered in the 11th grade;
- AP score of 3, 4, or 5 in any of the following areas: AP English Language or English Literature;
- IB English test scores of 4, 5, 6, or 7;
- ACT English composite score of 25 or above;
- SAT Critical Reading score of 590 or above;
- Advanced scores on future qualifying assessments; or
- Other demonstrations of mastery or excellence – e.g. constitutional scholars program, winning a debate tournament, etc.

Credit in postsecondary credit-bearing coursework must:

- Be a 3 credit hour course; and
- Either Introductory Writing Course or Intermediate Writing course, (including, but not limited to the gtPathways courses as identified by GT-CO1, GT-CO2, or GT-CO3).

MATHEMATICS

Student must successfully complete four courses and:

- Earn overall 3.0 GPA or better in at least four math courses;
- Take at least one course beyond Algebra II/Integrated Math III (may also include qualifying CTE course(s)); and
- Take at least one math course in 12th grade.

In addition to coursework, student also must either meet one of the performance benchmarks listed below or earn college credit in this subject area.

Performance Indicators: students must meet one of the following benchmarks:

- Advanced (or equivalent) score on State Summative assessment in Mathematics if administered in the 11th grade;
- AP score of 3, 4 or 5 in any of the following areas: AP Calculus AB, Calculus BC, AP Physics, or Statistics;
- IB Math test scores of 4, 5, 6, or 7;
- ACT Mathematics score of 22 (ready for college algebra) or above;
- SAT Math score of 600 or above; or
- Advanced scores on future qualifying assessments.

Credit in postsecondary credit-bearing coursework must:

- Be a 3 credit hour course; and
- May include, but not limited to, the gtPathways courses as identified by GT-MA1.

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Student must meet one evidence point from any of the following three categories:

High school courses by:

- Earn overall 3.0 GPA or better in at least three courses;
- Coursework must include U.S. and World history and one course in the social or behavioral sciences; and
- May also include qualifying CTE course(s).

Performance Indicators: students must meet only one of the following benchmarks:

- Advanced (or equivalent) score on State Summative assessment in Social Studies if administered in the 11th grade;
- AP score of 3, 4 or 5 in any of the following areas: AP Comp Government & Politics, U.S. Government & Politics, Human Geography, U.S. History, World History European History, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, or Psychology;
- IB Social Science test scores of 4, 5, 6, or 7;
- Other nationally-recognized assessment scores; or
- Advanced scores on future qualifying assessments.

Credit in postsecondary credit-bearing coursework must:

- Be a 3 credit hour course; and
- May include, but not limited to the gtPathways courses as identified by GT-HI1 for History, or GT-SS1, GT-SS2, or GT-SS3 for Social and

Behavioral Sciences courses.

NATURAL AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Student must meet one evidence point from any of the following three categories

High school courses by:

- Earn overall 3.0 GPA or better in at least biology, chemistry, and physics;
- Courses must be lab-based; or
- May also include qualifying CTE course(s).

Performance Indicators: students must meet only one of the following benchmarks:

- Advanced (or equivalent) score on State Summative assessment in Science if administered in the 11th grade;
- AP score of 3, 4 or 5 in any of the following areas: AP Biology, Physics B, Physics C, Chemistry, Environmental Science, or Computer Science A;
- IB Science test scores of 4, 5, 6, or 7;
- ACT Science score of 24 or above; or
- Advanced scores on future qualifying assessments.

Credit in postsecondary credit-bearing coursework must:

- Be a 3 credit hour course; and
- Must be a Natural and Physical Science course with required laboratory, including, but not limited, to the gtPathways courses as identified by GT-SC1.

ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Student must meet one evidence point from any of the following three categories

High school courses by:

- Earn overall 3.0 GPA in three courses;
- Courses must be from one single area of focus from the arts of humanities (e.g. theater, music, fine arts, etc.); or
- May also include qualifying CTE course(s).

Performance Indicators: students must meet only one of the following benchmarks:

- AP score of 3, 4 or 5 in any of the following areas: AP Art History, Music Theory, or Studio Art;
- IB course test scores of 4, 5, 6, or 7;
- Advanced scores on future qualifying assessments;
- Nationally recognized adjudication criteria and artifacts to certify a student's body of evidence;
- Rubrics and artifacts that show evidence of mastery or above mastery of the evidence outcomes in the high school standards;
- Other external events or performances; or

- Portfolio of achievements (mastery includes “outside” experience), coaching, state choir/band, reflections, qualifying certifications.

Credit in postsecondary credit-bearing coursework must:

- Be a 3 credit hour course; and
- Must be Arts and Humanities, including but not limited to GT-AH1, GT-AH2, or GT-AH3.

WORLD LANGUAGES

Student must meet one evidence point from any of the following three categories:

High school courses by:

- Earn overall 3.0 GPA in at least three sequential units; or
- Courses must be from one single world language area (with increasing rigor).

Performance Indicators: students must meet only one of the following benchmarks:

- Successful passage of qualifying AP world courses delivered in the foreign language, Latin, Spanish Language, Spanish Literature test scores of 3, 4 or 5;
- IB test scores in language specific courses of 4, 5, 6, or 7;
- Student considered at least “Intermediate-Mid” level on national language assessments;
- CLEP cut scores; or
- Advanced scores on future qualifying assessments.

Credit in postsecondary credit-bearing coursework must:

- Be a 3 credit hour course; and
- Must include, but is not limited to the gtPathway courses as identified by GT-AH4; and
- Course must be Intermediate/200 level or above.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Student must meet one evidence point from any of the following three categories:

High school courses by:

- Earn overall 3.0 GPA in at least three years (or equivalent) of coursework in Career and Technical education;
- Two courses must be from a single area of focus; and
- Courses must be from one single career and technical education area

Performance Indicators: students must meet only one of the following benchmarks:

- Advanced score (or equivalent) on state end-of-program summative assessments;
- AP score of 3, 4 or 5 in relevant AP coursework (e.g. Environmental Science, Economics, others to be determined);
- IB test scores of 4, 5, 6, or 7 – Career Diploma Focus area
- CTE certifications;
- Career Ready Colorado Certificate - Advanced scores on future qualifying assessments;
- Nationally recognized adjudication criteria and artifacts to certify a student’s body of evidence;
- Rubrics and artifacts that show evidence of mastery or above mastery of the evidence outcomes in the high school standards;
- Other external events or performance events; or
- Portfolio of achievements (mastery includes “outside” experience), competitions, industry experiences, reflections, qualifying certifications.

Credit in postsecondary credit-bearing coursework must:

- Be a 3 credit hour course; and
- Must be transferable postsecondary CTE course credit.

NEXT STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION

State requirements and local flexibility will be communicated to the field as it is articulated within the criteria. The field will be consulted to inform implementation related to rubrics, approved CTE courses, etc. Higher education policy decisions will provide further guidance to K12 on several key considerations: aligning indicators in the admission and placement policies and providing guidance on automatic admission and priority consideration. As pilot activities progress and data become available, research and outcomes will be publically reported by the state agencies.