

# Assessing “Students in the Gap” in Colorado

Report from the  
HB 05-1246  
Study Committee

December 31, 2005

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the Fall and Winter of 2005, a legislatively-established committee (HB 1246) convened for the purpose of evaluating Colorado's educational assessment system for students who consistently score at the very lowest levels on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) tests and who are not eligible to take the Colorado Student Assessment Program Alternate (CSAPA). The committee refers to this small group of Colorado students as "students in the gap".

The committee evaluated state and national research and Colorado assessment data, and reviewed specifically designed survey data to make recommendations regarding the direction Colorado should take in order to ensure that its testing system validly assesses what "students in the gap" know in relation to Colorado State Model Content Standards.

Following its guiding principles, the committee carefully considered and ultimately rejected several proposed solutions. While the committee saw some benefit in each idea, it was determined that, on balance, there are better alternatives and/or still unexplored possibilities the state should pursue before adopting these considerations.

The committee recommends that the following proposals be adopted by Colorado's State Board of Education. These recommendations meet most or all of the guiding principles by which the committee abided and garnered the consensus of the group for what the state should do to validly assess knowledge of the Colorado Model Content Standards for all students. With unanimity, the members of this committee make these recommendations for Colorado:

- Expand the eligibility for and the difficulty of the current CSAPA assessment;
- Increase the use of standardized accommodations;
- Provide an allowable non-standard accommodation/ modification process for the CSAP for "students in the gap" to be included for the purpose of NCLB accountability;
- Promote intensive, targeted, research-based instruction;
- Investigate accountability measures that could account for longitudinal growth;
- Investigate the effect of presenting the CSAP to students in smaller sections over a longer period of days; and
- Investigate abbreviating the CSAP.

## INTRODUCTION

Federal and state laws<sup>1</sup> require that all students, including students with disabilities, participate in statewide assessments. The inclusion of all students in statewide assessments and accountability systems is a mechanism for ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities, are provided access to the general education curriculum and are meeting the required state level standards.

In Colorado, students with disabilities are assessed through the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) or through the CSAP Alternate (CSAPA). Most students with disabilities take the CSAP tests with their general education peers, while the CSAPA is intended for a very small group of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Approximately 0.87% of students in Colorado are assessed with the CSAPA.

A particular group of students, identified for purposes of this report as “students in the gap,” may not be well served by Colorado’s current state level assessment system. The committee defines “students in the gap” as those students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) whose scale scores fall in the lowest one-third of the Unsatisfactory category on the CSAP tests. A small percentage of this group of students with disabilities is consistently unable to demonstrate growth toward grade level content standards through the CSAP and does not meet the current eligibility requirements of the state’s alternate test, the CSAPA. Additionally the definition of “students in the gap” includes students taking and receiving perfect scores on the CSAPA. For either group of students, the current administration of the CSAP or CSAPA may not be the best way to measure their knowledge of state content standards.

HB 05-1246 (Section 22-7-413, CRS) created a study committee in 2005 to examine and evaluate the administration of assessments for these “students in the gap”. The charge of this committee included examination of the following:

- The effects of assessments on “students in the gap”;
- The appropriateness of off-level testing;
- Accountability for state content standards;

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<sup>1</sup> Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the reauthorization of ESEA in 2001, known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and Section 22-7-409, Colorado Revised Statutes.

- The effect of including or excluding the scores of “students in the gap” in accountability calculations;
- Assessments for “students in the gap” in other states; and
- Legal, regulatory, and constitutional issues related to testing “students in the gap”.

Committee members included representatives from the state legislature, parents, community-based organizations, special education directors, higher education, local school district boards of education, school administrators, assessment experts, teachers, and the Colorado Department of Education. The majority of the study committee was appointed by the Colorado State Board of Education.

Members of the committee had varying degrees of background knowledge and beliefs regarding who are the “students in the gap,” how many there are, and what types of assessments best serve these students. Through the review of existing state and federal law, state and national research, Colorado assessment data, and survey data from represented groups, committee members were able to dispel or confirm their previously held ideas and beliefs.

This report outlines the determinations of the committee and provides the key information, data, and findings on “students in the gap” used by this committee to reach its recommendations. Also presented are considerations for “students in the gap” which the committee evaluated but ultimately did not recommend. Finally, this report presents recommendations for improvements to the assessment system to account for “students in the gap”.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMITTEE**

At the first meeting of the committee, members debated and agreed on several principles or norms to be used to frame discussion and debate, evaluate information, and ultimately make decisions about the recommendations for “students in the gap”. The committee used the following Guiding Principles:

- Make data-driven decisions;
- Keep the focus of the recommendations specific to “students in the gap”;
- Maintain high content standards and expectations for “students in the gap”;
- Focus on best practices and assessments for “students in the gap”;
- Consider the parameters of what is permitted by state and federal law; and
- Consider state and federal funding implications.

## ASSESSMENTS IN COLORADO

Colorado's current assessment system relies on two tests to measure knowledge of state model content standards for all students.

### **CSAP**

The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) is administered to students in grades 3-10 in reading, writing, and math, and to students in grades 5, 8, and 10 in science. The vast majority of students in the state, including the vast majority of students with disabilities, take the CSAP tests. CSAP is a large scale assessment that relies on both multiple choice and constructed response items to evaluate student knowledge of state academic content standards. The CSAP allows for a limited number of standardized accommodations that are available for all students. Table 1 lists the accommodations and the frequency of use in 2005 CSAP Reading. As the table shows, about 10% of students were provided with and used accommodations on the 2005 CSAP Reading assessment.

Table 1: Accommodations on the 2005 Reading CSAP, All Students

	Number	Percent
NONE	409,015	89.61%
EXTENDED/MODIFIED TIMING/SCHEDULING	31,886	6.99%
TEACHER-READ DIRECTIONS	11,168	2.45%
SCRIBE	3,594	0.79%
ASSISTIVE COMMUNICATION DEVICE	307	0.07%
SIGNING	219	0.05%
LARGE-PRINT VERSION	193	0.04%
BRAILLE VERSION	44	0.01%
Total	456,426	100%

### **CSAPA**

The Colorado Student Assessment Program Alternate, or CSAPA, has been developed as a way to measure the academic knowledge of students who demonstrate their skills via expanded benchmarks in the content areas of the standards. The CSAPA is intended for a very small group of students with IEPs who have significant cognitive disabilities. Many of these students also require significantly different instructional delivery and technological supports.

The CSAPA differs from the CSAP in the way that students demonstrate their learning. Rather than a paper and pencil test, the CSAPA is a performance-based assessment. That is, students are observed in their abilities to participate in content-related activities,

such as attending to a story and answering comprehension questions and reading with a teacher or peer. Students who take the CSAPA are also able to show their abilities in math and science-related activities and skills through use of accommodations appropriate for the student. Each activity contains a number of performance indicators that have been validated as emerging literacy, math, and science skills. Since each student taking the assessment requires individualized supports to aid his/her learning, educators adapt materials and presentation formats appropriately.

The assessment measures how independently the student performs each indicator in the activity. Students are observed as they participate in each task to judge if they demonstrate the indicators without teacher assistance or if they need additional cues or prompts.

The CSAPA is a modified test aligned with Colorado Model Content Standards through expanded benchmarks. As such, it is intended to be helpful to educators and families when evaluating a student’s current knowledge of state standards.

Both the CSAP and CSAPA are examined by respective Technical Advisory Committees (consisting of state and national testing experts) and a federal “Peer Review” to ensure that they are valid and reliable assessments.

**Table 2:** Similarities and Differences of the CSAP and CSAPA

Similarities	
CSAP	CSAPA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Based on Colorado Standards</li> <li>▪ Measures a student’s achievement on grade level standards</li> <li>▪ Criterion-referenced assessment</li> <li>▪ Developed with teaching community and content experts</li> <li>▪ Administered in Spring each year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Based on Colorado Standards</li> <li>▪ Measures a student’s achievement on grade level standards</li> <li>▪ Criterion-referenced assessment</li> <li>▪ Developed with teaching community and content experts</li> <li>▪ Administered in Spring each year</li> </ul>
Differences	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Paper and pencil test</li> <li>▪ Scored on correct responses to multiple choice and constructed responses.</li> <li>▪ Standardized accommodations allowed for accountability (See Table 1); non-standardized accommodations are allowed, but scores are invalidated</li> <li>▪ 4 performance levels (Unsatisfactory, Partially Proficient, Proficient, Advanced)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Activity-based measure of performance</li> <li>▪ Scored on level of support needed to perform each indicator</li> <li>▪ Any adaptation necessary for student is allowed</li> <li>▪ 5 performance levels (Inconclusive, Exploring, Emerging, Developing, Novice)</li> </ul>

## FINDINGS

The committee reviewed a tremendous amount of research, assessment data, and survey information on issues related to the assessment of “students in the gap”. This review generated the following set of questions that guided the work and organize the findings.

- How many students are in the gap?
- What are the demographics of these students?
- Do these students show progress over time?
- How frequently are accommodations used on the CSAP?
- Does providing targeted instruction to these students make a difference?

### ***How many students are in the gap?***

The committee defines “students in the gap” as: 1) students with IEPs scoring in the lowest one-third of Unsatisfactory on the CSAP; and, 2) students making perfect scores on the CSAPA. Table 3 below provides a count of “students in the gap” based on one year of data (2005 Reading and Math Tests).

**Table 3:** Numbers of Students Taking State Assessments and Numbers of “Students in the Gap”, 2005 CSAP and CSAPA

Content Area	Reading		Math	
	#	%	#	%
All Students Grade 3-10	459,067	100.00%	458,849	100.00%
Taking CSAP	444,407	96.80%	444,910	96.90%
Taking/Eligible for CSAPA	4,024	.87%	4,010	0.87%
Low 1/3 Unsat. CSAP, No IEP	915	.19%	2,440	0.53%
Low 1/3 Unsat. CSAP, With IEP	1,637	.36%	4,332	0.94%
Perfect Score on CSAPA	117	.03%	16	.00%

As Table 3 indicates, very few students (117 in Reading and 16 in Math) made perfect scores on the CSAPA. As a result, the committee spent most of its time and effort investigating “students in the gap” taking the CSAP.

It is also important to note that not all students who score in the lowest one-third of the Unsatisfactory category on the CSAP test are students with disabilities. For the 2005 tests, there were 915 students in Reading and 2,440 in Math who did not have an identified disability and scored in the lowest one-third of the Unsatisfactory category.

In addition, a relatively small percentage of CSAP tests (1.97% on the 2005 Reading exams) had scores invalidated for a number of reasons (parent refusal, test misadministration, student absent, student does not read English or Spanish, extreme frustration, student withdrew from school before completion). Some of these may be “students in the gap”; but because they did not receive a score, it is impossible to determine their proficiency level.

***What are the demographics of these students?***

The committee investigated the demographic properties of “students in the gap” as well, hoping to get a better understanding of who these students are. An examination of the 2005 CSAP data for “students in the gap” revealed:

- American Indian, Black, and Hispanic students comprise a greater percentage of “students in the gap” than “non-gap” students, while Asian and White “students in the gap” made up a smaller percentage of the population relative to “non-gap” students.

Table 4: A Comparison of Ethnicity: CSAP Reading Tests 2003-2005

	Percent	
	Non-Gap	Gap
Am. Ind.	1.21%	2.04%
Asian	3.02%	1.14%
Black	5.94%	12.60%
Hispanic	24.72%	40.63%
White	65.11%	43.59%

- Disproportionate male/female ratios exist for “students in the gap”, with males outnumbering females nearly 2 to 1.

While this data may seem to indicate significant differences between “students in the gap” and the general population of students, it is very important to note that these disproportionalities are not uncommon for the population of students with disabilities. Thus the demographics of students in this group are only marginally different from all students with IEPs.

***Do “students in the gap” make progress over time?***

The committee investigated this issue by matching student records from the 2004 and 2005 CSAP assessments for Reading and Math. However, analyzing data for one year provides only a limited understanding of demonstrated achievement for this group of students. For example, reviewing results for Reading and Math for 2005, the vast majority of “students in the gap” are scoring at the very lowest possible scale score. Yet considering only one year’s data leaves a key question unanswered: “Are these students capable of making longitudinal growth?”

Unfortunately, limited data are available to answer this question, since only about 60% of students scoring in the lowest one-third of Unsatisfactory on CSAP can be matched from one year to the next. The inability to track a number of these students may be a result of some of them now taking the CSAPA. And, looking at several other variables in the CSAP database related to mobility (including “New in School”, “Migrant”, and several “Continuous Enrollment” variables) provides evidence that this group of students is more mobile than students not “in the gap”.

The available data indicate that most matched students show longitudinal growth. In fact, most of these students make substantial growth. Generally, a student needs to gain between 20 and 40 scale score points per year to remain at the same proficiency level. About 80% of “students in the gap” on the Reading tests and about 70% of “students in the gap” on the Math tests show improvements over that which a student naturally gains through scale score inflation from one grade to the next. The average student on an IEP in the lowest one-third of the Unsatisfactory category in Reading gains about 150 scale score points per year in addition to scale score inflation that occurs from one year to the next. For Math, the average student gains about 45 points per year in addition to scale score inflation. These results indicate that most students scoring in the lowest one-third of Unsatisfactory do, in fact, make tremendous gains from one year to the next. Therefore, the committee concludes that for these students the CSAP can measure academic progress.

There are, however, a relatively small number of students who do not make growth longitudinally on the CSAP. Specifically, there were 250 “students in the gap” (0.06% of students taking CSAP) on the Reading test and 658 “students in the gap” (0.15% of students taking CSAP) on the Math test whose scores either showed no growth or actually

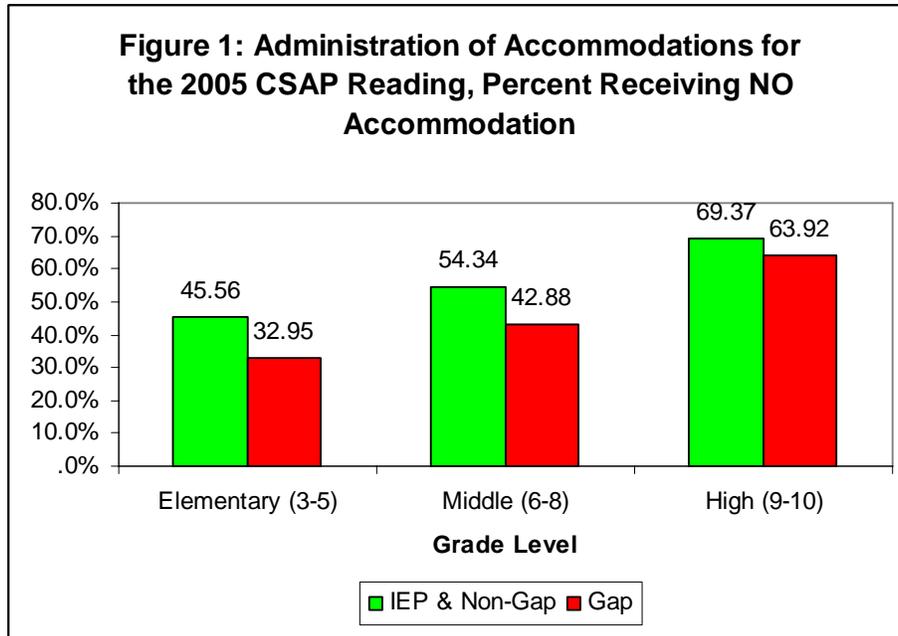
declined from 2004 to 2005. For these students, the committee determined that the current administration of the CSAP may not reflect their academic achievements.

***How frequently are accommodations used on the CSAP?***

A specific set of standardized accommodations are allowed for students to access the CSAP test and, thus, to demonstrate what they know and are able to do without altering the reliability of the results. These accommodations are listed in Table 1 and described in Appendix B.

Although any student may use these accommodations if provided in daily instruction and used in other assessment administrations, state data indicate that the use of standardized accommodations decreases at each grade level. Research has shown that accommodations can level the playing field for students with disabilities during assessment situations (Elliot, 2002; Tindal 2002). Positive results have been demonstrated when students require and receive accommodations such as extended time and oral presentation during testing administration (Chiu & Pearson, 1999; Thompson, Blount, & Thurlow, 2002).

Colorado data suggest that “students in the gap” are not administered accommodations at significantly different levels than other students with disabilities. However, the administration of accommodations decreases substantially at higher grades. As Figure 1 indicates, Colorado results from the 2005 CSAP administration show that an increasing number of special education students at higher grades are not receiving accommodations.



A number of issues arise around the determination, administration, provision, and use of accommodations that could directly impact student performance on the CSAP (Elliott, 2002; NAEP Validity Study, 2002; Polloway, Epstein, & Bursuck, 2003). Decisions about whether or not to provide accommodations and which accommodations a student will use are determined by IEP teams. The CSAP Procedures Manual provides guidelines to IEP teams when determining accommodations for each student.

([http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/csap/2006/2005\\_2006CSAPProcManFinal.pdf](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/csap/2006/2005_2006CSAPProcManFinal.pdf)).

Accommodations are intended to lead to a more accurate assessment of what students know and can do for students who need those accommodations, without affecting the scores of those who do not need them (Shepard, Taylor, & Betebenner, 1998; Zuriff, 2000). Given the current information, it is unclear how the use of appropriate and individualized accommodations for special education students at all grade levels may affect their scores on the CSAP.

***Does providing targeted instruction to these students make a difference?***

The issues of providing targeted instruction to “students in the gap” and the effects such instruction can have on student achievement were fundamental to the committee’s considerations and recommendations. The committee reviewed information from a number of school districts that provide intensive, targeted, research-based instruction that has

shown a positive correlation with student achievement. This information demonstrates that providing intensive reading instruction to low performing students yields profound growth in reading content knowledge over time.

## CONSIDERATIONS

The committee considered several options available to Colorado to better educate and assess “students in the gap”. While the committee recognizes that many of the following considerations have positive and desirable qualities, these considerations were ultimately rejected by the committee either because they did not meet the guiding principles the committee used in decision making or because the committee believed that given the available information it is premature to recommend such a change.

The Committee studied all of these considerations in depth and in the end decided not to recommend them. Instead, the committee found better solutions for “students in the gap”, which are addressed in the *Recommendations* section that follows.

### ***Administer off-grade level testing***

Off-grade level testing is a term that refers to the use of a test that is developed for students in one particular grade but used to assess a student who is in another grade. For example, an IEP team may determine that a ninth grade student should be assessed at the fifth grade level. The study committee discussed the off-grade level testing option at great length because it seems, on the surface, a fair way to assess students at their individual levels.

The committee examined the current research and recommendations in the education field concerning off-grade level testing (National Center of Educational Outcomes). The benefits for use of off-grade level testing include:

- Assessments align more closely with the instruction the student may be receiving;
- Measures of student learning are more accurate; and
- Testing may be less stressful for the student.

However, the concerns about use of off-grade level testing out-weigh the benefits and include:

- Expectations may be and may continue to be lower when students are not expected to meet the same targets as other students;

- Results fail to indicate student performance in terms of grade-level achievement standards or in comparison to peers in the same grade level;
- Research on states that have implemented off-grade level testing shows that there is wide variability in how IEP teams select the grade level at which the student should be assessed;
- Issues exist about how to equate scores across grade levels;
- Growth over time and adequacy of interventions are difficult to demonstrate when students are continually assessed with off-grade level tests;
- Aggregation of the results may not be feasible since the assessments are not comparable.

The current proposed rules released by the U.S. Department of Education on December 14, 2005<sup>2</sup>, state that off-grade level testing will not be permitted for *No Child Left Behind* purposes.

Additionally, the purpose of CSAP is to measure how well a school or district is teaching grade-level content standards to students. Off-grade level assessments would not provide this information. However, the committee does acknowledge that off-grade level testing may be appropriate for individual schools as they collect data for diagnostic and instructional purposes.

The committee does not recommend off-grade level testing at this time.

### ***Create an additional assessment***

The committee seriously considered recommending the creation of a new assessment for “students in the gap”. Further, the committee agreed that if such a recommendation were made, any resulting assessment would have to be valid and would have to have rigorous achievement standards.

The creation of an additional assessment would require tremendous resources (monetary and human) to address the following issues:

- Creation of an entirely new set of modified achievement standards, aligned with Colorado’s state standards;
- Development of an assessment for grades 3-10 in reading, writing, math and science which is aligned with the modified

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/proprule/2005-4/121505a.html>

- achievement standards;
- Contracting with a test company to, at a minimum, provide for the printing, distribution, collection, and scoring of the assessment;
  - Training of teachers and administrators in the eligibility for the new assessment and its administration to students;
  - Administration of the test to students (which would require additional personnel time in schools);
  - Conducting alignment studies; and
  - Researching the validity and reliability of the assessment.

The development of an additional assessment in Colorado for this relatively small number of students was judged by the committee to be excessive and an inefficient use of resources, especially given that there are other options to better address the assessment needs of this group of students. These costs need to be considered in relationship to the number of students that would be affected. As has been previously discussed, the number of “students in the gap” not making progress in Reading is 250 and is 658 for Math.

#### ***Adopt a modified assessment from a different state***

Another option is to use another state’s assessment. Under such an approach, Colorado would need to create modified achievement standards and then ensure the other state’s assessment aligns with our standards. The committee determined that the probability of finding such an assessment is unlikely.

#### ***Remove students with disabilities from accountability calculations entirely***

The charge of HB 05-1246 directs the committee to investigate the effect of both including and excluding the scores of students with IEPs who are not CSAPA eligible when calculating ratings for the School Accountability Reports (SARs). While the committee did investigate this issue, it is important to note the difference between the legislation’s generic definition (all students with IEPs who do not take CSAPA) and the committee’s actual definition of “students in the gap” (students with IEPs who score in the lowest one-third of Unsatisfactory). With this said, a discussion of including or excluding the scores of all students with IEPs who are not CSAPA eligible follows.

Schools and districts are indeed affected by students with disabilities in accountability measures. For example, if the state were to remove the

scores of ALL students with disabilities from the SAR rating calculations, 418 schools (22.3%) would improve their ratings by one level. On the other hand, three schools (1.6%) would decline from an "Average" rating to a "Low" rating.

The Committee believes that the consequences of removing these students from state accountability systems may not be in the best interest of student academic achievement. Moreover, the removal of students with disabilities from the accountability systems is a violation of state and federal law.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations reflect the committee's efforts to identify methodologies to best assess how "students in the gap" are meeting Colorado Model Content Standards. In an effort to provide the strongest recommendations, the committee adhered to mutually agreed upon principles to ensure that sound data-driven recommendations kept the focus on student learning and on valid measurement of that learning. The following recommendations were endorsed by the entire committee.

### ***Expand the eligibility for and the difficulty of the current CSAPA assessment***

In an effort to best capture the performance of students who are currently "topping out" on the CSAPA assessment as well as of students who have consistently shown no growth on the CSAP, expansion of the group of students eligible to take the CSAPA could provide a more valid assessment of student learning for some "students in the gap". Increasing the difficulty of the CSAPA would allow for these students to be more validly assessed. Further, moving some "students in the gap" who are not showing progress on CSAP into the CSAPA should not put Colorado over the 1% proficiency cap that the federal government allows for the number of students counted for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) purposes.

### ***Increase the use of standardized accommodations***

The committee finds that the lack of accommodations being administered to "students in the gap" is significant. The decreasing administration of these accommodations at higher grade levels was of particular concern. It is the consensus of the committee that Colorado should develop a systematic approach to encouraging, where appropriate, the use of allowable standardized accommodations on the CSAP. In addition, it is the recommendation of the committee that the Colorado Department of Education collect data on both the provision and the use of accommodations on the CSAP.

### ***Provide an allowable non-standard accommodation/ modification process for the CSAP for "students in the gap"***

Currently, students who use non-standard accommodations on the CSAP have their scores invalidated and are counted as "no-scores" for accountability purposes. The Committee recommends that the

Colorado Department of Education provide for an allowable non-standard accommodation/modification process for “students in the gap” that adheres to the following parameters:

- Development of eligibility criteria that allow IEP teams to make determinations for these accommodations;
- Documentation practices that demonstrate the students have had instructional interventions that support the learning of the specific content area being assessed;
- Standardized administration procedures to ensure that these interventions do not give any student an unfair advantage in demonstrating his/her performance nor invalidate their score;
- Documentation practices to verify that students have used nonstandard accommodations/modifications in their daily instruction and assessment;
- A process for application to the Colorado Department of Education by the IEP team through the district assessment coordinator for the use of the allowable nonstandard accommodation/modification; and
- A system to ensure that student scores approved under this process are included for SAR and AYP calculations.

The committee recommends that this option be allowed under the additional flexibility in proposed federal rules for AYP calculations for students with disabilities.

### ***Promote intensive, targeted, research-based instruction***

The committee strongly encourages Colorado school districts to use research-based interventions with a record of effectiveness. Recognizing that numerous programs may be appropriate for different populations, the Colorado Department of Education could provide a clearinghouse for research-based interventions. This approach has been highly effective for literacy improvement and would benefit math proficiency as well.

### ***Investigate accountability measurements that could account for longitudinal growth***

State assessment performance categories often do not recognize growth for students in the Unsatisfactory performance category when these students do not move from one CSAP proficiency level to the next, despite gains made. The committee recommends that the state

study longitudinal growth and reporting systems which report and recognize progress within a performance level for all students.

***Investigate the effect of presenting the CSAP in its entirety to students in smaller sections over a longer period of days***

The committee recognizes that for many “students in the gap”, the CSAP is a lengthy, frustrating, and daunting experience, due in great part to the length and volume of the tests and materials. The committee holds that permitting many “students in the gap” to take the test over a longer period of time, in effect, breaking the test into smaller components, would allow them to better demonstrate their abilities. The committee recommends that the state study the effect of presenting the CSAP in its entirety to students in smaller sections over a longer period of days.

***Investigate abbreviating the CSAP***

The committee recommends that the state investigate the impact of shortening the CSAP test so that the overall number of items and length of time required to complete the test are reduced. The committee understands that a study must be conducted to determine the effect of removing items on the validity of the test. However, it is the recommendation of the committee that a shortened version of the CSAP which preserves the validity and reliability of the test is something Colorado should consider for “students in the gap.”

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## APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

**Accommodations:** CDE defines accommodations as changes made to the assessment procedures in order to provide a student with access to information and an equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills without affecting the reliability or validity of the assessment.

**Alternate Assessment:** An assessment designed for the small number of students with disabilities who are unable to participate in the grade-level state assessment, even with appropriate accommodations.

**AYP:** Adequate Yearly Progress—participation and performance targets set forth under the federal *No Child Left Behind* for reading and math, and graduation rate.

**CSAP:** Colorado Student Assessment Program- designed for grades 3-10 in reading, writing and math and grades 5, 8, and 10 in science.

**CSAPA:** Colorado Student Assessment Program Alternate- available to students with significant cognitive disabilities; a modified test aligned with Colorado Model Content Standards through expanded benchmarks.

**IDEA:** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - federal law requiring special education services for students with disabilities.

**IEP:** Individualized education program/plan – a student with disabilities has such a plan that works in conjunction with classroom instruction and content standards.

**Modified achievement standards:** standards that are aligned with grade-level content standards, but are modified in such a manner that they reflect reduced breadth or depth of grade-level content.

**NCLB:** *No Child Left Behind*—federal law requiring every student to be tested; requires alignment with IDEA for students with disabilities and accountability provisions for all students.

**Off-grade level testing:** Refers to a test that is developed for students in one particular grade and used to assess a student who is in another grade.

**SAR:** School Accountability Report - required by state law; CDE-generated report on school performance based on CSAP and ACT scores and displaying other demographic information.

**“Students in the Gap”:** Students with IEPs scoring in the lowest one-third of Unsatisfactory on the CSAP; students making perfect scores on the CSAPA.

## APPENDIX B – STANDARD CSAP ACCOMMODATIONS

### CSAP Accommodations That MUST Be Documented for Reading

<b>Timing/Scheduling</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time extension of more than 10 minutes in a session. Any student who may need more than 60 minutes to complete a test session should be identified ahead of time whenever possible and preferably the assessment should be administered in a separate setting. This accommodation should be documented <b>only</b> if the student actually takes more than 10 extra minutes to complete the session.</li> <li>• Administering more, but shorter, sessions, when the total testing time exceeds 60 minutes. A session must be completed in a single day.</li> </ul>	
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>Response</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Braille version of the assessment.</li> <li>• Standard 18-point large-print version of the assessment. Students must be registered with the Colorado Instructional Media Center to receive a booklet with a font size greater than 18-point.</li> <li>• Reading aloud of only the directions for the reading assessment.</li> <li>• Reading aloud in the student’s native language of only the directions for the reading assessments.</li> <li>• Signing of only the directions for the reading assessments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of scribe to write oral responses or fill in bubbles in test book.</li> <li>• Use of a scribe to write oral responses to constructed-response items.</li> <li>• Use of signing or pointing as alternative responses.</li> <li>• Use of assistive technology restricted to the use of augmentative communication devices, computers, personal portable keyboards such as an AlphaSmart, and Brailers. Voice output must be disabled during the reading assessments. If the communication device produces a typed response, the response must be transcribed into a scannable test book for scoring <b>exactly</b> as it is written.</li> </ul>

## CSAP Accommodations that **MUST** Be Documented for Writing, Mathematics and Science

<b>Timing/Scheduling</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time extension of more than 10 minutes in a session. Any student who may need more than 60 or 65 minutes to complete a test session should be identified ahead of time whenever possible and preferably the assessment should be administered in a separate setting. This accommodation should be documented <b>only</b> if the student actually takes more than 10 extra minutes to complete the session.</li> <li>• Administering more, but shorter sessions, when the total testing time exceeds 60 or 65 minutes per session. A session must be completed in a single day.</li> </ul>

<b>Presentation</b>	<b>Response</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Braille version of the assessment.</li> <li>• Standard 18-point large-print version of the assessment. Students must be registered with the Colorado Instructional Media Center to receive a booklet with a font size greater than 18-point.</li> <li>• Signing of the entire assessment, including word problems.</li> <li>• Use of additional manipulatives for the mathematics assessment, such as number lines, “Touch Math,” and counting beans.</li> <li>• <b>Oral Presentation in English:</b> For writing, mathematics and science, test directions, glossary words and their definitions, questions and response options<sup>1</sup> may be read aloud.</li> <li>• <b>Oral Presentation in the Student’s Native Language:</b> For mathematics and science, test directions, glossary words and their definitions, questions and response options<sup>1</sup> may be read aloud in the student’s native language.</li> </ul> <p>For writing, test directions and glossary words and their definitions are the <b>only</b> parts of the test that may be read aloud. Translating and reading aloud of questions and/or response options is <b>not</b> allowed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of scribe to write oral responses or fill in bubbles in test book.</li> <li>• Use of a scribe to write oral responses to constructed-response items.</li> <li>• Use of a scribe to translate a student’s oral responses from a language other than English into the test book.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Use of signing or pointing as alternative responses.</li> <li>• Use of assistive technology restricted to the use of augmentative communication devices, computers, personal portable keyboards such as an AlphaSmart, and Brailers. Spell-checking and grammar-checking capabilities must be disabled during the <b>writing</b> assessment. If the communication device produces a typed response, the response must be transcribed into a scannable test book for scoring <b>exactly</b> as it is written.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Response options on multiple-choice questions may be read aloud for the writing, mathematics, and science assessments, except those designated through additional material distributed by the Colorado Department of Education.

<sup>2</sup> Translation of student responses from the student’s native language into English is not an allowable accommodation for writing tests.

**Accommodations That DO NOT Need to Be Documented for Any Content Area**

<b>Timing/Scheduling</b>	<b>Setting/Environment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time of day.</li> <li>• Time extension of up to 10 minutes in a testing session.</li> <li>• Allowing stretch breaks for groups or for individual students as needed.</li> <li>• Scheduling of sessions to include more breaks, as long as the total testing time does not exceed 10 extra minutes.</li> <li>• Scheduling more time between sessions. Any session must be completed within a single day. The entire assessment must be completed within the testing window.</li> <li>• Scheduling of sessions in a different order, except for the writing assessment. The drafting of the extended response in grades 4-10 must be completed before the editing session, and the two sessions must occur within the same week.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location appropriate to the testing needs of students.</li> <li>• Grouping students: whole classroom, small groups, and individual administration.</li> <li>• Administration of the assessment with or without accommodations by individuals other than the student's usual teacher(s) such as special educators, paraprofessionals, and teacher's aides. Students <b>may not</b> have the assessment administered to them by a relative.</li> </ul>
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>Response</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of devices normally used by students for kinesthetic, visual, or auditory assistance (e.g., pencil grips, noise buffers, visual magnification devices/technology [e.g., hand held magnifiers, CCTVs, screen enlargement programs], and auditory amplification devices such as hearing aids).</li> <li>• Rereading the script in the administration manual to all students when requested by any student. (Note that this does <b>not</b> refer to reading the test directions for students aloud.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling words to students who request it, with the exception of the writing assessment where spelling will be scored.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX C: CHARGE TO THE COMMITTEE

The department, in conjunction with the study committee, shall conduct a study of the administration of assessments for students with an individual educational program pursuant to section 22-20-108 who are not eligible to take the CSAP-A assessment. The study shall include, but need not be limited to, an examination and evaluation of:

(a) The effect of the administration of assessments on students with individual educational programs who are not eligible to take the CSAP-A assessment, including but not limited to the effect on students who are deemed unable to complete the assessment;

(b) Whether, for students with an individual education program who are not eligible for the CSAP-A assessment, it would be appropriate to designate in a student's individual educational program the grade or grades of the CSAP assessments that the student should be administered;

(c) The need for school districts to be held accountable for teaching state content standards to students with individual educational programs who are not eligible to take the CSAP-A assessment;

(d) The effect of both including and not including the scores of students with individual educational programs who are not eligible to take the CSAP-A assessment in the calculations of school performance ratings pursuant to section 22-7-604;

(e) A survey of the types of assessments used by other states in assessing students who are comparable to students in this state who have individual educational programs who are not eligible to take the CSAP-A assessment, whether other states use those assessment scores in calculating school performance ratings, whether the assessments align with the state model content standards adopted pursuant to section 22-7-406, and whether the assessments have been, or would likely be, approved by the federal department of education; and

(f) Federal constitutional, legal, and regulatory issues surrounding the assessment of students with individual educational programs who are not eligible to take the CSAP-A assessment and how federal funding of public schools may be impacted by administering such assessments.