



The Colorado Department of Education has engaged in the standards development process on multiple occasions. The first set of standards, the Colorado Model Content Standards, were developed between 1994 – 96 in response to HB 93-1313. The second standards development process was initiated by SB 08-212, Colorado’s Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K). The department uses a process that is shared across states and nations that is outlined below. This process would be followed to develop new standards should the state choose to change its math and reading, writing, and communicating standards. To follow the process with fidelity generally takes one year. Schools and districts then need at least two years to adequately transition to the new standards.

Guiding Principles

The department bases its standards development process on the principles of transparency and inclusion. Transparency is achieved by (1) communicating each stage of the development process upfront and while in process, (2) opening all meetings to the public and (3) disseminating meeting agendas and notes publicly. Inclusion is achieved by (1) soliciting public input prior to the standards development process, (2) soliciting public feedback on the initial drafts of the standards and on the final drafts of the standards and (3) engaging content area, educator experts and members of the public in the standards development committees.

Standards Development Process

The standards development process would follow this process over the course of one year: (1) soliciting public input, (2) engaging external experts to provide analyses of current standards in relation to national and international models, (3) convening standards development committees to draft the standards, (4) presenting the draft standards to the State Board of Education for feedback, (5) seeking public feedback on the first draft of the standards, (6) reconvening the standards development committees to revise the standards based on feedback, (7) seeking national content area experts to provide research-based analyses of the final version of the standards, (8) presenting the second draft of the standards and expert report to the State Board of Education, (9) seeking public feedback on the second draft of the standards, (10) reconvening the standards development committees to finalize the standards based on State Board of Education feedback and expert reviews, and (11) presenting the standards to the State Board of Education for consideration for adoption.





Stakeholder Engagement Process

CDE actively seeks public input on the standards revision process through news releases, online communication, regional public meetings, and regular information dissemination to superintendents. Prior to the standards review process, CDE conducts regional meetings across the state to solicit public input for the standards for mathematics and reading, writing, and communicating. Public feedback (through regional meetings and online surveys) is sought after the initial draft of the standards are developed to inform revisions. Public feedback is also sought on the second draft of the standards prior to finalization.

Standards Development Committees

CDE conducts an open and transparent standards development process by engaging educators, business, higher education, and parents in standards development committees. CDE solicits committee participation through an online application process. Applicants are required to demonstrate their content area expertise and willingness to serve. Applications are reviewed using a blind-review process, considering only the applicants' qualifications. The standards development committees chose co-chairs to guide the meetings. CDE content specialists staff the committees, meet with co-chairs to plan meetings, provide resources, ensure consistency across committee work plans, and take notes for each of the meetings. All meetings are open to the public. All notes for the committee meetings are shared with the State Board of Education and posted on the CDE website.

External Expert Consultation

External experts are engaged to provide committees with gap analyses and benchmarking resources to guide the standards revision work. Following the completion of the second draft of each content area standards, CDE engages national content area experts to provide reviews. Each review includes a gap and benchmarking analysis summarized in a report to the department. Reports are posted on the CDE website and presented to the State Board of Education. Following public input and content area reviews by national experts, committees are reconvened to finalize the standards.

Estimated Costs

The costs to engage in this process for one content area are approximately \$128,000. This includes costs to do benchmarking analysis across states/nations, expenses for standards review committee members and meetings, stipends to expert reviewers, stakeholder outreach, and communication. Some savings can be realized on meeting and related costs when multiple standards groups convene. To conduct a development process as outlined above in two content areas is estimated to cost approximately \$218,000. These costs are minimal when compared to the millions of dollars that districts invest in developing new curriculum and procuring new resources aligned to the standards. Districts have just completed this significant investment to begin implementing the Colorado Academic Standards in 2013-14. Changes to the standards would result in significant cost burden to districts as outlined below.

Implications of Changes to the Standards for Colorado School Districts

The process to prepare for and transition to the Colorado Academic Standards began in the 2010-11 school year with the first full year of implementation in the 2013-14 school year. This timeline was necessary for teachers and school districts to (1) engage in professional development related to the new standards, (2) develop new curriculum based on the standards, and (3) procure instructional resources to address the standards. Details about what these processes entail are provided below.

When considering changes to the standards, it is important to note that these processes would be re-initiated for Colorado school districts and teachers requiring time and resources for a transition. Any changes to the standards would require sufficient time and resources for districts to engage in these processes once again. CAP4K contemplated this when it set up a six year horizon for reviewing and updating the standards, with the first revision cycle to be completed by July 2018.



The implications of new standards for Colorado school districts and teachers fall into the categories of curriculum development, resource procurement, and professional development.

Curriculum Development

The process to develop curriculum based on new standards can take one to two years. This entails groups of educators who work to sequence the topics within the standards into instructional units and developing each of the instructional units to include specific learning objectives, assessments, and resources.

Resource Procurement

In order to determine whether new resources are necessary, districts conduct a crosswalk to compare the previous standards to the new standards to identify the degree of change of topics and learning expectations. District personnel compare their current instructional resources (i.e., textbooks, activity banks, online learning materials) to the new standards to determine whether these resources adequately address the standards or whether new materials are necessary. Typically districts finalize their budgets for the next school year in early winter.

Professional Development

As new standards are introduced, teachers need to have significant opportunities for professional development to (1) learn about the new expectations, (2) become familiar with a new district curriculum, and (3) become adept at accessing and using new instructional resources. It is common to provide one to two years of professional at a minimum before initiating a change to the district's curriculum. For teachers to become skilled with a new curriculum three to five years is needed.