Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K)

2026 Annual Legislative Report

Submitted to:
House Education Committee and Senate Education Committee of the Colorado General Assembly

By:
Colorado Department of Education

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Student Learning Division
201 E. Colfax Ave., Denver, CO 80203
For more information, contact:
Joanna Bruno, Ph.D., Chief Academic Officer
(303) 919-3907
Bruno_J@cde.state.co.us

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Executive Summary

The Colorado General Assembly passed the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids, SB08-212, creating alignment from preschool through postsecondary education. The law requires a regular review of academic standards, state assessments, and post-secondary and workforce readiness. In addition, annual reporting needs to include implementation of school readiness through postsecondary education.

Kindergarten School Readiness

The Kindergarten School Readiness (KSR) Data for the 2025-26 school year, reported to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), provides insights into the knowledge, skills, and abilities of Colorado's kindergarteners. This data is reported in aggregate at the school level and includes the number of students assessed in domains of learning and development, the number of students meeting or exceeding beginning-of-year expectations, and demographic data disaggregated by gender, Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL) status, and race/ethnicity.

The KSR data for 2025-26 indicate that many Colorado kindergarteners meet or exceed beginning-of-year expectations across learning and development domains. However, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in mathematics lags behind other domains. Notably, the largest percentage point decline in students meeting and exceeding expectations was observed in the social-emotional domain (3.3% points). At the same time, both the Language domain and the Literacy domain saw increased percentage points within meets or exceeds expectations. There remain notable disparities based on gender, free and reduced lunch (FRL) eligibility, and race/ethnicity. These disparities highlight areas for targeted interventions to ensure equitable school readiness for all students.

The changes in cut scores and assessment tools in the 2024-25 school year suggest caution when comparing year-over-year data. Future efforts should focus on addressing the disparities between student groups to improve school readiness outcomes for all demographic groups.

Colorado Academic Standards

The Colorado Department of Education has initiated a comprehensive three-phase process to review and revise academic standards across various content areas. All standards are reviewed on a six-year cycle with approximately one-third of the standards reviewed every two years. The phased approach allows for comprehensive stakeholder involvement and provides local education providers ample time to transition to revised standards. The goal is to enhance the quality of education for students in Colorado. This process aims to ensure that the standards remain relevant and effective in providing quality education to students. The current phase of review and revision addressed the standards for comprehensive health, mathematics, reading, writing and communicating, and science. The Colorado State Board of Education made the decision to keep the comprehensive health and the reading, writing, and communicating standards in their current form without revisions so they are finalized for this phase. The board also decided to move forward with revisions to high school mathematics and science specifically focused on climate literacy.

State Assessments

In the 2024-25 academic year, districts and schools continued to implement several academic support measures. These included high-impact tutoring, high-quality mathematics curricula, and evidence-based summer and afterschool programs.

The spring 2025 state assessment results highlighted progress in student achievement across various grades and subject areas. More students met or exceeded expectations on nearly every assessment compared to 2024, and performance was at or above pre-pandemic levels in most grades and subjects. However, significant achievement gaps persist among different student groups. These gaps, in terms of the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on CMAS or PSAT/SAT assessments, were notably large:

- Race/Ethnicity: 25-37 percentage points
- Disability Status: 22-46 percentage points
- Free/Reduced Lunch Eligibility: 20-32 percentage points
- Multilingual Learner Status: 27-60 percentage points

Interpreting district and school results requires careful consideration of participation information. Despite relatively high participation rates at the state level, particularly in elementary grades, participation rates for individual districts, schools, and specific student groups vary widely. Some student groups participate at higher rates than others, necessitating a nuanced approach to understanding the assessment results.

Postsecondary Workforce Readiness

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) have been actively measuring various factors to reflect the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) for students beyond high school. These measures include graduation rates, dropout rates, college entrance exam scores, participation in concurrent enrollment courses, matriculation and persistence rates, remediation rates, and the implementation of Colorado's graduation guidelines.

The four-year high school graduation rate for the Anticipated Year of Graduation (AYG) 2025 cohort is 85.6 percent, which signifies a 1.4 percentage point increase compared to the previous year. This cohort had 2,069 more four-year graduates than AYG 2024. Since 2010, the state's four-year graduation rate has increased by 12.1 percentage points. Improvement is also seen in the extended year rates for students taking five, six, and seven years to graduate. The 2024-25 overall dropout rate is 1.6 percent, a decrease of 0.3 percentage points from the previous year, with 7,437 dropouts in grades 7-12, a reduction of 1,510 students compared to 2024.

The Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (CEPA) passed in 2009, providing a framework for local education providers and institutions of higher education to offer college courses to high school students. Changes under S.B. 19-176 expanded concurrent enrollment opportunities, especially in areas with historically low participation. CDE continues to implement Graduation Guidelines established under H.B. 07-1118 and S.B. 08-256. These guidelines articulate shared expectations for the meaning of a high school diploma and outline minimum expectations for Reading, Writing and Communicating, and Math proficiency for local districts and the state. To support local education providers, CDE staff has offered multiple opportunities for school and district leaders to learn from each other. This includes capstone workshops and regional trainings focusing on increasing post-secondary and workforce readiness.

Based on the work of the Secondary, Postsecondary and Work-based Learning Integration Task Force (1215 Task Force) and the Postsecondary Workforce Readiness Financial Study, the General Assembly passed S.B. 25-315 Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness Programs. This legislation consolidated multiple postsecondary and workforce readiness programs and created a funding model that includes three types of funding: Start-Up funding, Sustain funding, and Buckner Innovation grant funding, and is intended to support student attainment of "The Big Three" - postsecondary credits, industry-recognized credentials and work-based learning

opportunities. Rulemaking that will govern how funding is distributed will occur with the State Board of Education from 2025 - 2027.

The progress made in 2024-25 highlights improvements in graduation and dropout rates and the continued implementation of Graduation Guidelines. S.B. 25-315 is providing streamlined funding to enhance Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness for all students in Colorado, ensuring they are prepared for success beyond high school.

Overview

In 2008, the Colorado General Assembly passed S.B. 08-212. Known as Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), the law called for an alignment of the preschool through postsecondary education system to enable Colorado students to graduate with the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in college and careers. CAP4K requires the regular review of Colorado's preschool through high school student learning standards, an aligned state assessment system, and expectations for postsecondary and workforce readiness for all Colorado high school graduates.

Pursuant to section 22-7-1019 (2), C.R.S., the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is required to provide annual reports related to the provisions of CAP4K, including the results achieved through the implementation of school readiness, the preschool through elementary and secondary education standards, and postsecondary workforce readiness.

Kindergarten School Readiness

Background

CAP4K includes an emphasis on kindergarten school readiness, calling for the State Board of Education (SBE or "state board") to define it and for educators to annually measure it. Specifically, CAP4K requires the SBE to: (1) define school readiness; (2) adopt assessments appropriate for determining students' levels of school readiness; and (3) adopt a system for reporting population-level results.

The state board has defined school readiness as the preparedness of a child to engage in learning, as well as the ability of the school to meet the needs of all students in partnership with families and the community. The kindergarten school readiness provision allows for the monitoring of the skills, knowledge, and abilities of students as they enter kindergarten. Additionally, it provides an indicator of children's experiences prior to kindergarten to better inform partnerships, prioritize needs, and select effective strategies to support ready systems.

Kindergarten School Readiness Description

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 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.

State Board of Education, April 2023.

Under CAP4K, local education providers are required to administer state board-approved kindergarten school readiness assessment tools to each student in kindergarten and to ensure that all children in publicly funded kindergarten receive an Individual School Readiness Plan.

To inform statewide progress toward school readiness, the kindergarten school readiness assessment informs:

- Individual kindergarten readiness plans and classroom instruction;
- Families of their child's progress toward school readiness; and
- Reporting to the legislature and public through this CAP4K report.

Kindergarten School Readiness Assessment

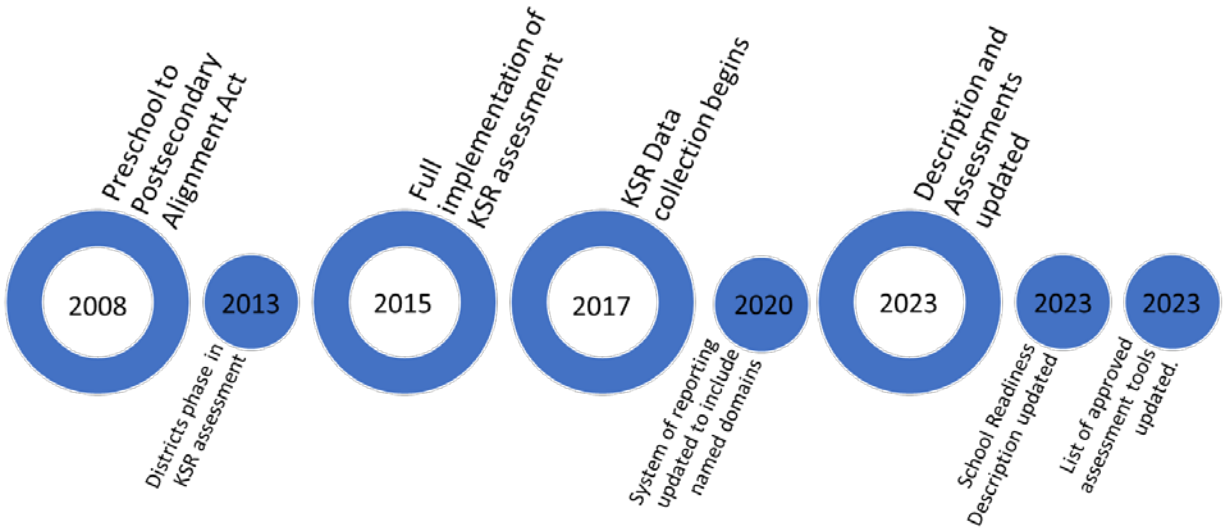
Kindergarten school readiness assessment tools measure students' knowledge, skills, and abilities as they enter kindergarten and progress toward grade-level expectations. Districts select assessment tool(s) from the State Board of Education-approved list of assessment tools.

As a snapshot of school readiness, CDE collects aggregate data on the percentage of students meeting grade-level expectations at the beginning of the year, as determined by the assessment tool. Districts annually submit aggregate assessment data for each of the required school readiness domains:

- Physical well-being and motor development;
- Social and emotional development;
- Language and comprehension development;
- Cognition; and
- General knowledge (mathematics and literacy).

For the purpose of reporting, the general knowledge domain consists of both mathematics and literacy, such that six domains are reported to the state.

Figure 1: Timeline of Kindergarten School Readiness



Colorado school districts began phasing in kindergarten school readiness assessments in 2013, with full implementation during the 2015-16 school year. The SBE adopted a reporting system for kindergarten school readiness in the spring of 2016, enabling CDE to begin collecting data from districts during the 2017-18 school year.

In March 2020, the state board updated the reporting system to include specific data around the different domains. Previously, districts submitted only aggregate information by the number of domains in which

students demonstrated readiness. Beginning in the fall of 2021, the new system reported population-level kindergarten school readiness data in each of the required domains. The system collects statewide results of aggregate student data. The data is disaggregated by school district, school, grade level, free or reduced-cost lunch eligibility status, gender, and ethnicity as required in statute.

The Colorado SBE updated the description of school readiness during the March 2023 board meeting. Additionally, the SBE updated the list of approved kindergarten school readiness assessment tools to align with this description during the June 2023 board meeting, and assessment cut scores were updated.

Individual child data may be used to inform instruction and to inform families of child progress, but it may not be shared publicly and cannot be used to deny a student admission or progression to kindergarten or first grade.

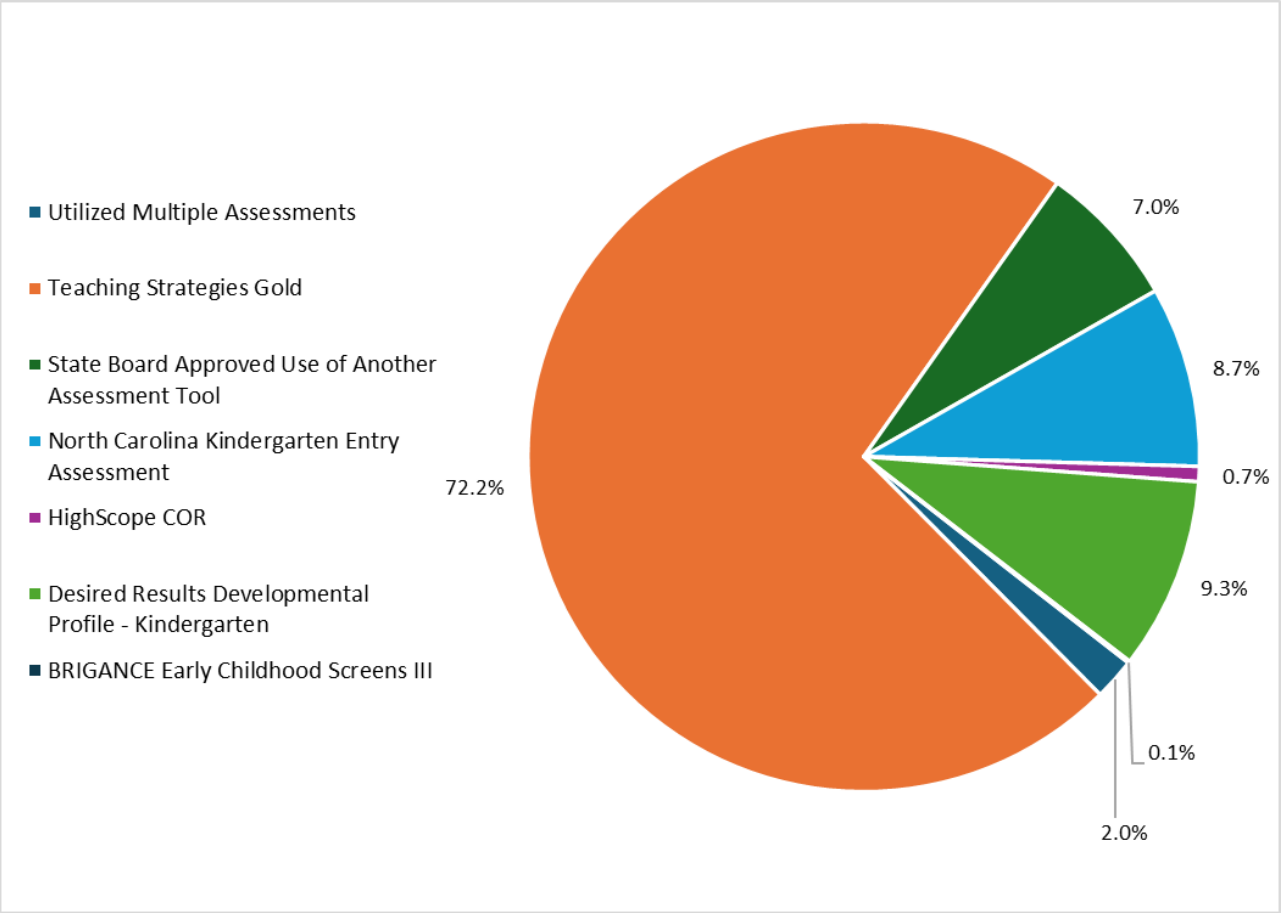
This report details data from the kindergarten school readiness collection from the fall of 2025.

Kindergarten School Readiness Findings

School districts reported data from state board-approved kindergarten school readiness assessment tools administered within the first 60 days of the 2025-2026 school year. Data were collected during the kindergarten school readiness assessment window, which ran from October to December. Teaching Strategies GOLD® was used by 72.2 percent of schools throughout the state. Desired Results Developmental Profile- Kindergarten (DRDP-K) was used by 9.3 percent of schools, North Carolina Kindergarten Entry Assessment was used by 8.7 percent of schools, HighScope COR was used by 0.7 percent of schools across the state, and BRIGANCE Early Childhood Screens III was used by 0.1 percent of schools across the state. Additionally, 2.0 percent of schools assessed students using multiple assessment tools.

Seven percent of schools used a State Board-approved alternative assessment tool. Historically, the results from these schools would have been excluded from this report due to concerns about the reliability and validity of these assessment tools. Beginning this year, this report includes data from all schools, including schools using a State Board-approved alternative assessment tool.

Figure 2: Schools' Use of Approved Assessment Tools for the Kindergarten School Readiness Data Collection, 2025-26



Overall Results

The Kindergarten School Readiness Data is reported to CDE aggregated at the school level. Districts report the following information for each of their schools:

- Total number of students assessed for each of the KSR domains
- Total number of students who met or exceeded expectations for each of the KSR domains
- Assessment tool used
- Aggregated demographic data for the students who met or exceeded expectations within each of the KSR domains
    - Gender
    - Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Status
    - Race/Ethnicity

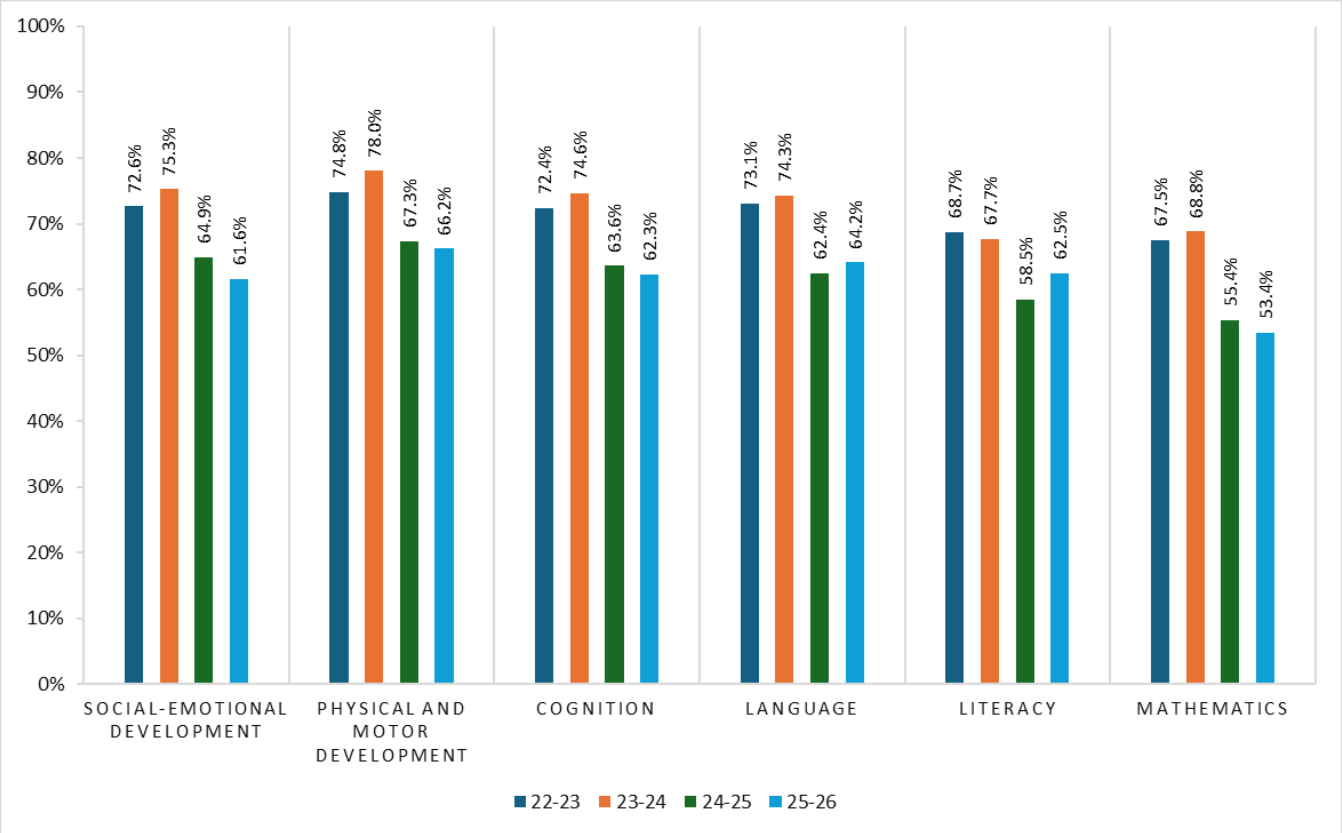
As noted previously, the results from schools and students using a State Board-approved alternative assessment tool were historically excluded from this report due to reliability and validity concerns. However, given the

reduced usage of alternative assessment tools and the desire to present results for all students, this year's analysis includes data from all schools.

As illustrated in Figure 3, the results from the 2025-26 reporting window reveal that 66.2 percent of Colorado's kindergarteners met or exceeded age expectations for physical and motor development. A total of 64.2 percent met or exceeded age expectations in language, followed by literacy (62.5 percent), then followed by cognition (62.3 percent), social-emotional development (61.6 percent), and math (53.4 percent).

Note, following the 2023 review and SBE approval of the current list of KSR assessment tools in June of 2023, all beginning-of-year kindergarten benchmarks and cut scores were updated to reflect the assessment tool review process, the assessment's most recent technical studies, and Colorado's 2020 academic standards. Data from the 2024-2025 school year and later fully reflect updated cut scores for all assessment tools for the beginning of kindergarten.

Figure 3: Percentage of Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Expectations by Domain



*SY24-25 and SY25-26 reflect a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Kindergarten school readiness results are disaggregated by gender, Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL) status, and race/ethnicity in the sections that follow. School readiness data are not disaggregated by half-day or full-day kindergarten enrollment status.

Additionally, the data reported reflect only students who met or exceeded school readiness expectations and do not include those who did not meet expectations. Because results are reported only for students meeting expectations, it is not possible to calculate or report percentages by disaggregated groups such as gender, FRL status, or race/ethnicity.

State kindergarten enrollment data are provided for contextual purposes to show how the number of students meeting readiness expectations compares to overall enrollment. However, enrollment counts may not exactly align with the kindergarten school readiness data reported in this analysis.

Kindergarten School Readiness by Gender

In 2025-26, based on the October enrollment count data, the total number of female students comprised slightly less than half of Colorado's enrolled kindergarten population (27,484 students). Male students comprised slightly more than half of the enrolled kindergarten population (29,728 students).

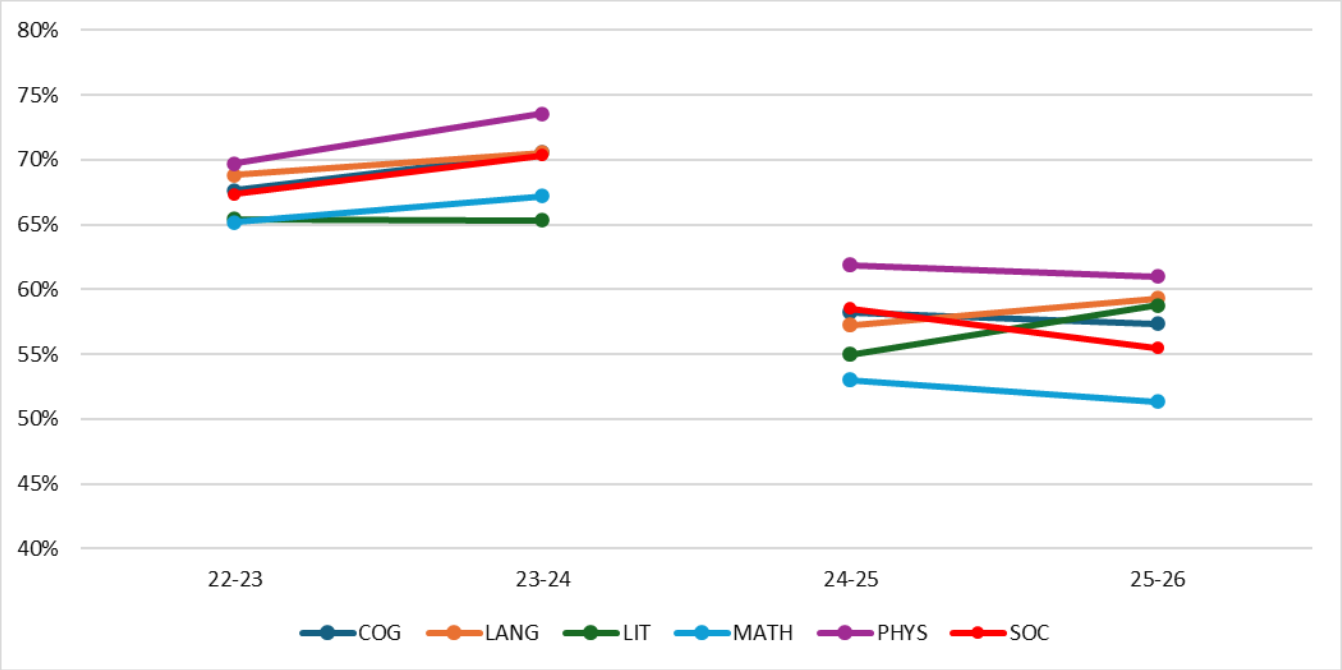
Table 1 provides the number of students by gender who met or exceeded expectations in each of the KSR domains in the 2025-26 school year.

Table 1: Number of Colorado Kindergartners by Gender Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains in 2025-26

	Male	Female	Nonbinary
State Kindergarten Enrollment	29,728 (100%)	27,484 (100%)	*
Students meeting or exceeding in Social-Emotional Development	16,496 (55.49%)	17,577 (63.95%)	*
Students meeting or exceeding in Physical and Motor Development	18,130 (60.99%)	18,527 (67.41%)	*
Students meeting or exceeding in Cognition	17,044 (57.33%)	17,467 (63.55%)	*
Students meeting or exceeding in Language	17,640 (59.34%)	17,872 (65.03%)	*
Students meeting or exceeding in Literacy	17,477 (58.79%)	17,092 (62.19%)	*
Students meeting or exceeding in Math	15,261 (51.34%)	14,317 (52.09%)	*

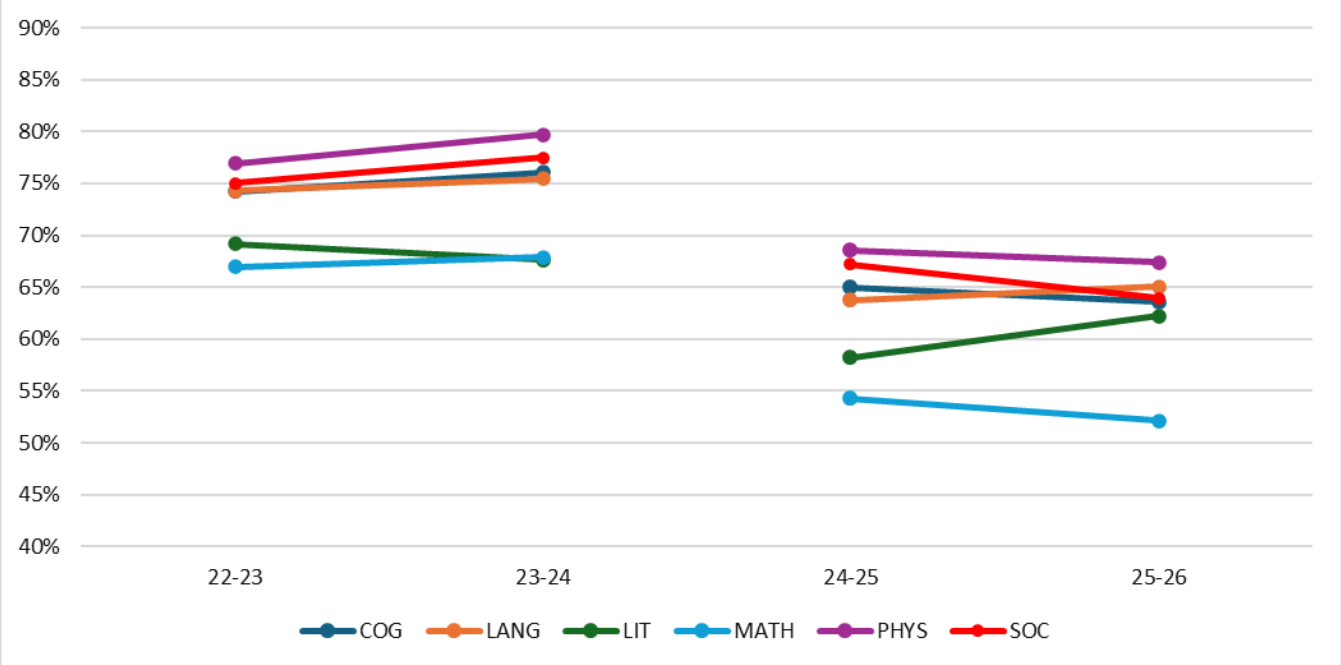
*N-size does not meet the minimum reporting threshold of 16.

Figure 4: Percentage of Colorado Male Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



*SY24-25 and SY25-26 reflect a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 5: Percentage of Colorado Female Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



*SY24-25 and SY25-26 reflect a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Kindergarten School Readiness by Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility

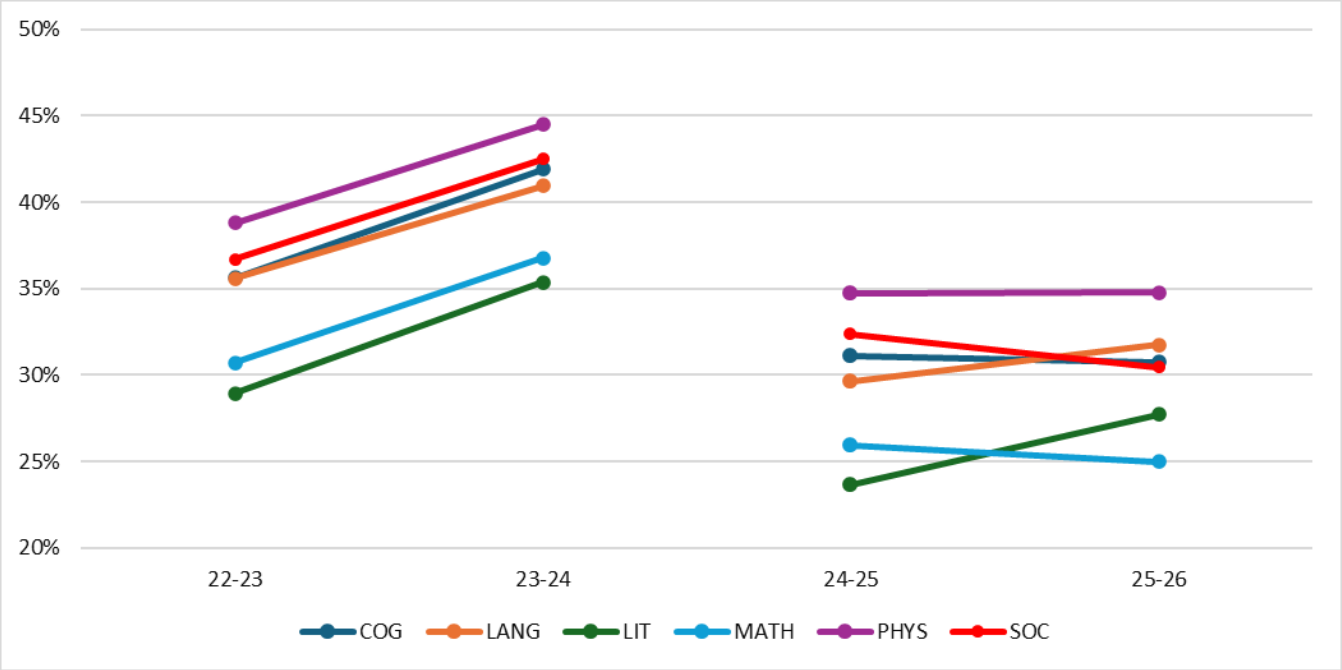
In the 2025-26 school year, based on the October enrollment count data, 31,739 students in Colorado's enrolled kindergarten population were not eligible to receive Free nor Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL), and 25,480 students were eligible to receive FRL.

Table 2 provides the FRL eligibility status for the students who met or exceeded Kindergarten Readiness expectations in each domain. When reporting state baseline data, it is important to note that the Kindergarten School Readiness data collection allows districts to use the FRL Eligibility Unknown option when reporting their student numbers. The State Kindergarten Enrollment data is collected without this option. Therefore, in the data table below, the number of students in the "FRL Unknown" category is shown as "zero."

Table 2: Number of Colorado Kindergartners by Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains in 2025-26

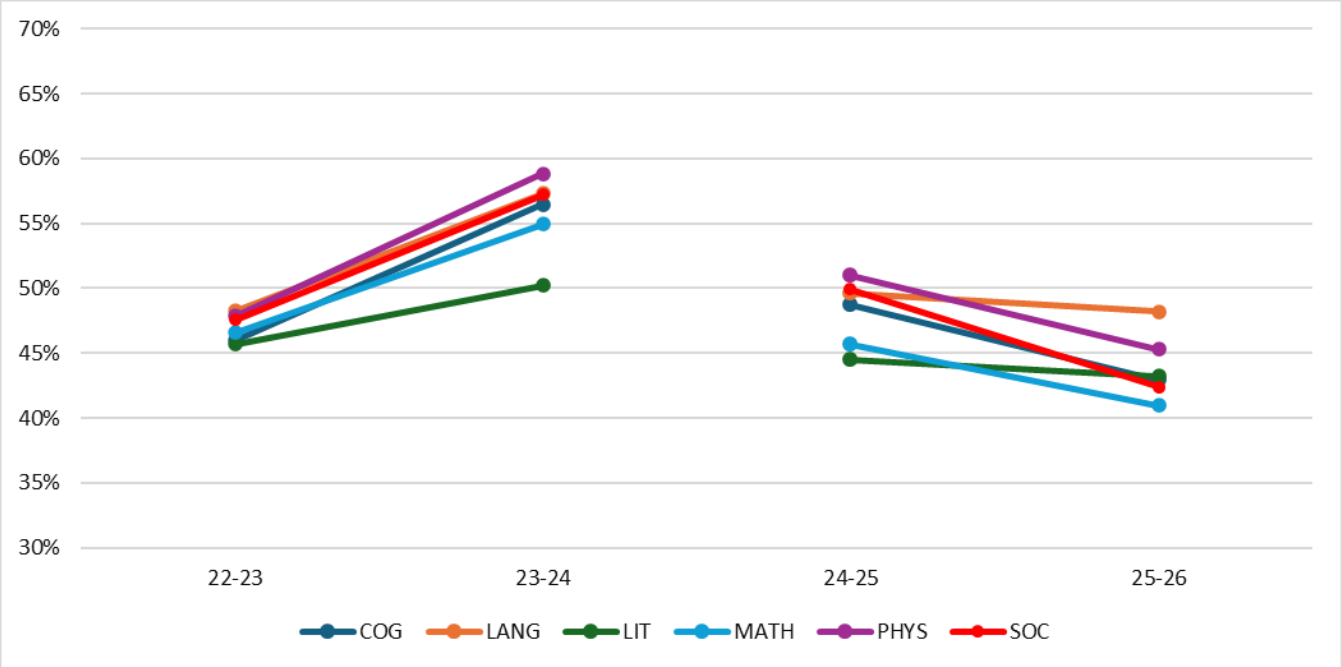
	FRL Eligible	FRL Not Eligible	FRL Unknown
State Total Kindergarten Enrollment	25,480 (100%)	31,739 (100%)	0
Students meeting or exceeding in Social-Emotional Development	7,760 (30.46%)	13,458 (42.40%)	12,861
Students meeting or exceeding in Physical and Motor Development	8,860 (34.77%)	14,368 (45.27%)	13,435
Students meeting or exceeding in Cognition	7,839 (30.77%)	13,633 (42.95%)	13,045
Students meeting or exceeding in Language	8,092 (31.76%)	15,291 (48.18%)	12,134
Students meeting or exceeding in Literacy	7,065 (27.73%)	13,717 (43.22%)	13,793
Students meeting or exceeding in Math	6,365 (24.98%)	13,001 (40.96%)	10,217

Figure 6: Percentage of Colorado Kindergartners on Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



*SY24-25 and SY25-26 reflect a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 7: Percentage of Colorado Kindergartners Not on Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



*SY24-25 and SY25-26 reflect a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Kindergarten School Readiness by Ethnicity and Race

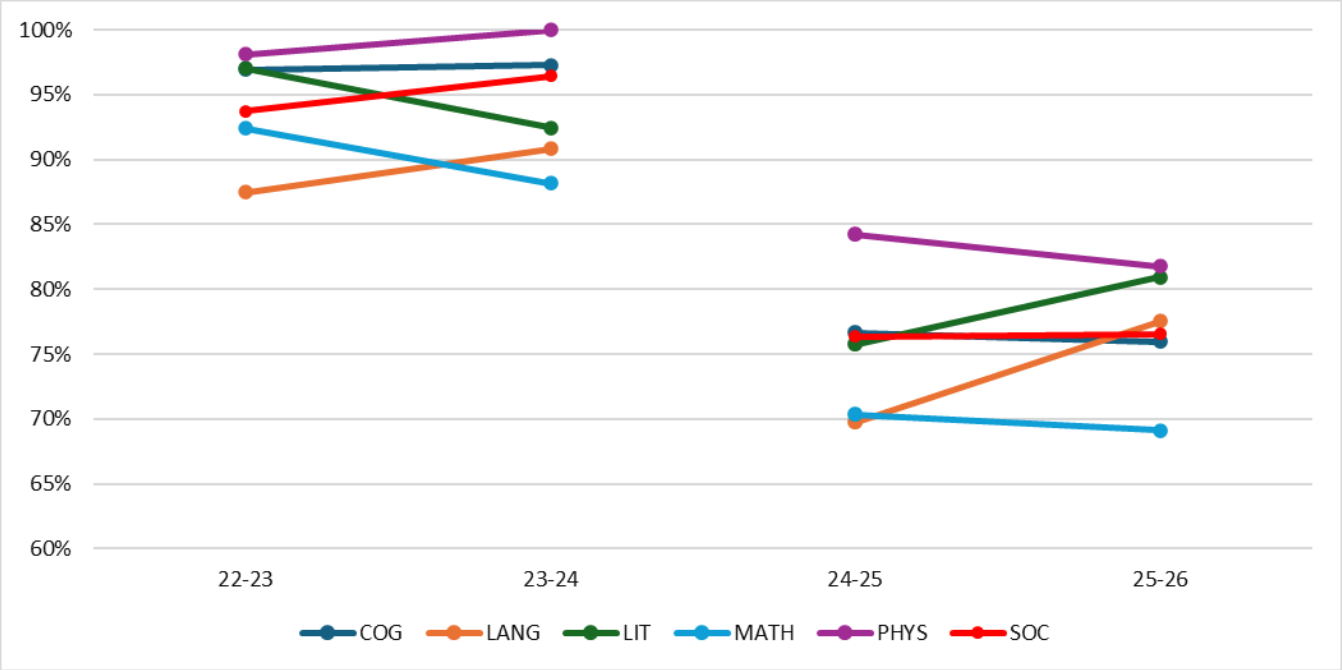
In 2025-26, based on the October enrollment count data, the majority of Colorado's enrolled kindergarten population identified as White (27,205 students). This was followed by Hispanic (21,183 students), Two or More Races (3,575 students), Black (2,795), Asian (1,977), American Indian or Alaska Native (288 students), and Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (196 students).

Table 3 provides the racial and ethnic compositions for the students who met or exceeded expectations in each Kindergarten School Readiness domain. When reporting state baseline data, it is important to note that the Kindergarten School Readiness data collection allows districts to use the Unknown Race/Ethnicity option when reporting their student numbers. The State Kindergarten Enrollment data is collected without this option. Therefore, in the enrollment row of the data table below, the number of students in the "Unknown Race/Ethnicity" category is shown as "zero."

Table 3: Percentage of Colorado Kindergartners by Race and Ethnicity Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains in 2025-26

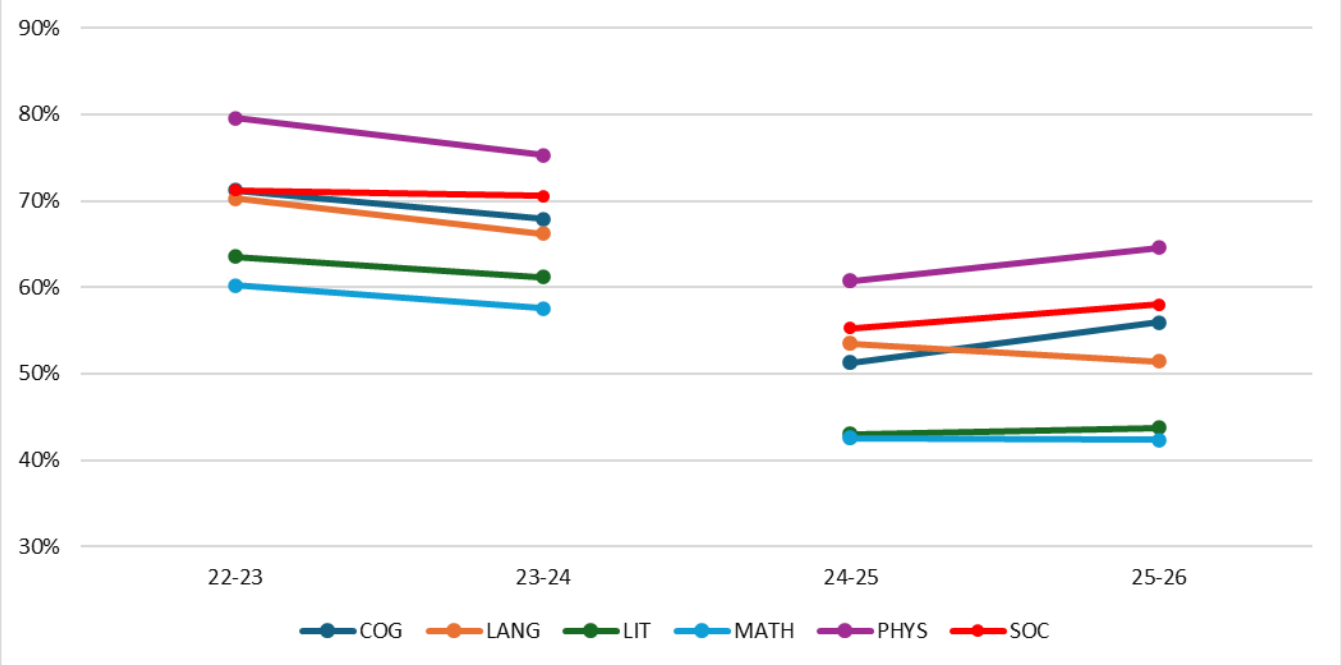
	Asian	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Black	Hispanic	White	Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Unknown Race / Ethnicity
State Kindergarten Enrollment	1,977 (100%)	288 (100%)	2,795 (100%)	21,183 (100%)	27,205 (100%)	196 (100%)	3,575 (100%)	0
Students meeting or exceeding in Social-Emotional Development	1,513 (76.53%)	167 (57.99%)	1,285 (45.97%)	10,400 (49.10%)	18,223 (66.98%)	106 (54.08%)	2,163 (60.50%)	222
Students meeting or exceeding in Physical and Motor Development	1,617 (81.79%)	186 (64.58%)	1,457 (52.13%)	11,702 (55.24%)	18,990 (69.80%)	120 (61.22%)	2,342 (65.51%)	249
Students meeting or exceeding in Cognition	1,502 (75.97%)	161 (55.90%)	1,331 (47.62%)	10,380 (49.00%)	18,607 (68.40%)	105 (53.57%)	2,192 (61.31%)	239
Students meeting or exceeding in Language	1,533 (77.54%)	148 (51.39%)	1,560 (55.81%)	9,874 (46.61%)	19,564 (71.91%)	95 (48.47%)	2,504 (70.04%)	239
Students meeting or exceeding in Literacy	1,600 (80.93%)	126 (43.75%)	1,424 (50.95%)	9,766 (46.10%)	19,037 (69.98%)	108 (55.10%)	2,216 (61.99%)	298
Students meeting or exceeding in Math	1,366 (69.09%)	122 (42.36%)	1,034 (36.99%)	7,923 (37.40%)	16,881 (62.05%)	92 (46.94%)	1,977 (55.30%)	188

Figure 8: Percentage of Asian Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



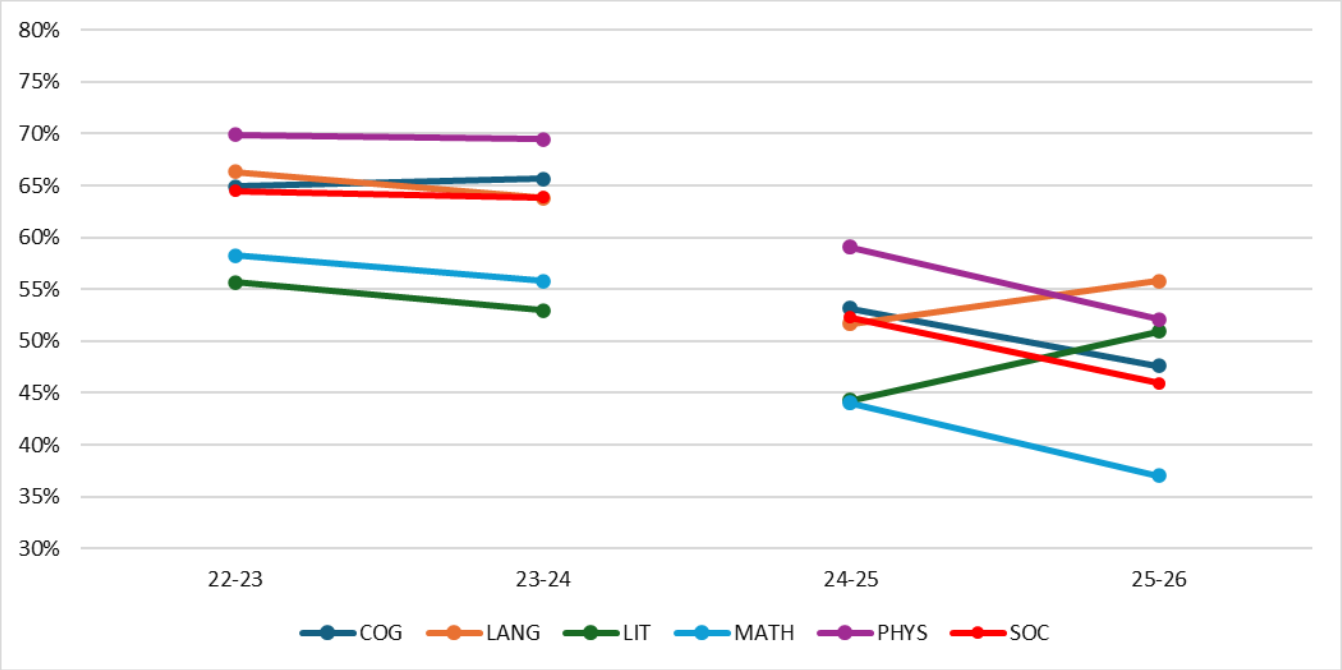
*SY24-25 and SY25-26 reflect a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 9: Percentage of American Indian or Alaskan Native Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



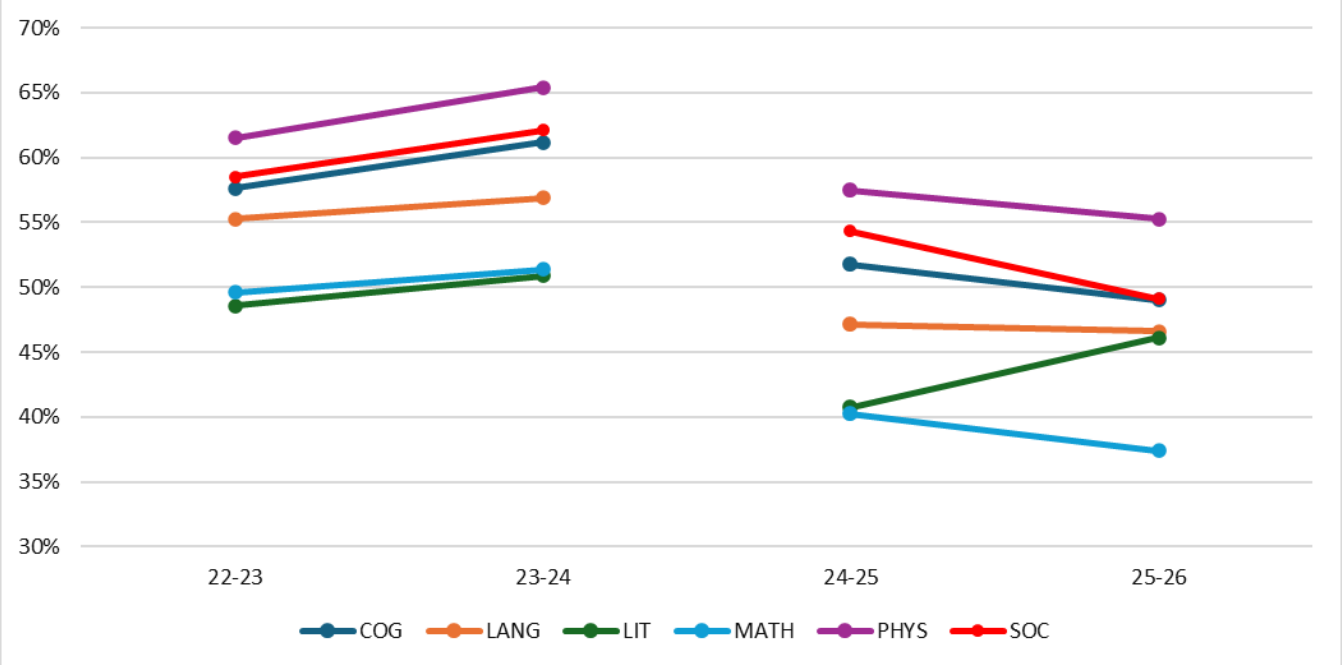
*SY24-25 and SY25-26 reflect a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 10: Percentage of Black Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



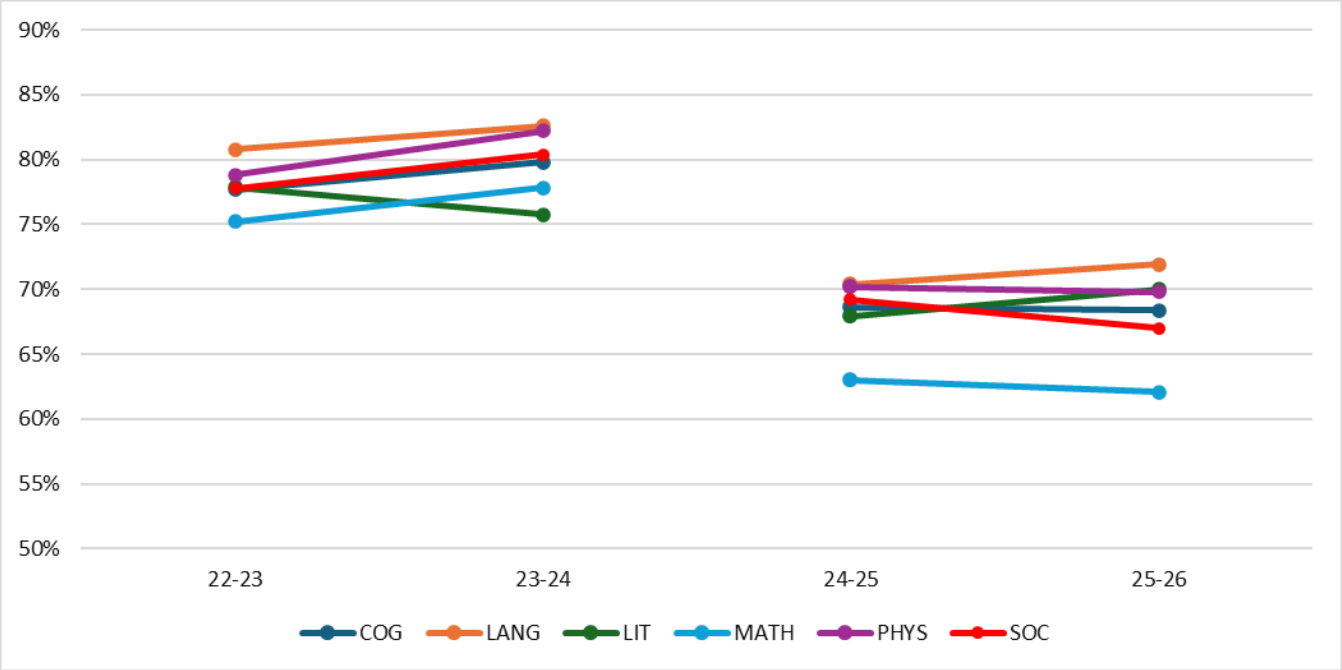
*SY24-25 and SY25-26 reflect a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 11: Percentage of Hispanic Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



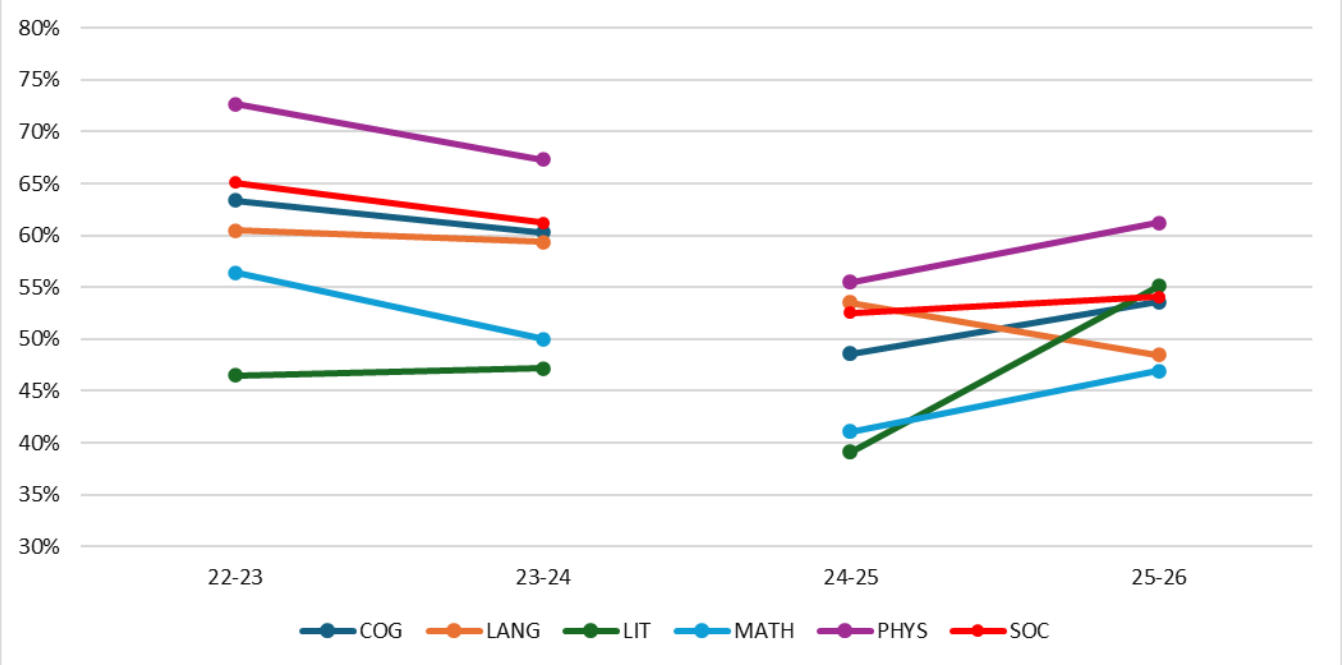
*SY24-25 and SY25-26 reflect a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 12: Percentage of White Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



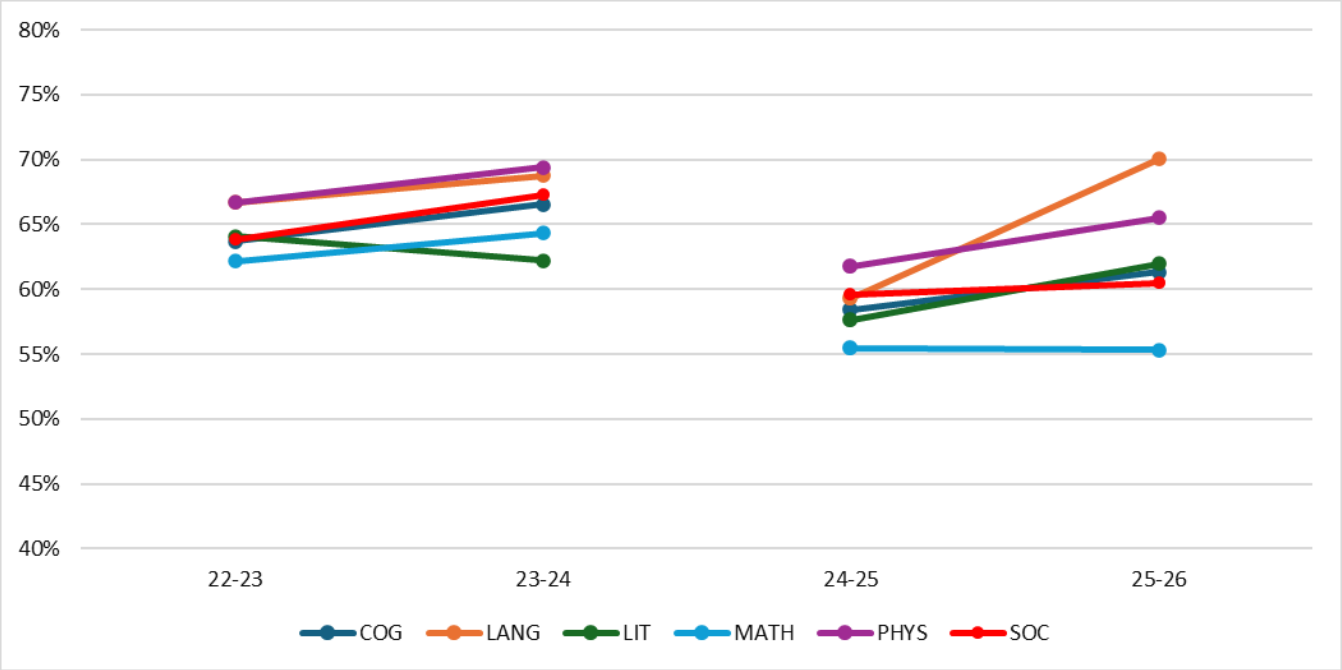
*SY24-25 and SY25-26 reflect a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 13: Percentage of Hawaiian / Pacific Islander Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



*SY24-25 and SY25-26 reflect a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

Figure 14: Percentage of Two or More Race Colorado Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains



*SY24-25 and SY25-26 reflect a change in the cut score that determines meeting or exceeding expectations.

The Colorado Academic Standards

Background

CAP4K required the state board to adopt standards that identify the knowledge and skills a student should acquire as the student progresses from preschool through elementary and secondary education. It further requires the state board to review and revise the standards every six years. In the spring of 2020, the General Assembly passed H.B. 20-1032 which amended the standards revision timeline. The state board has since then been required to review and revise approximately one-third of the standards beginning in 2022 and an additional one-third every two years thereafter.

Standards Review and Revision Process

The arts and social studies standards revisions were included in the first phase of the three-phase process. The content areas in Phase II include English Language Proficiency, world languages, physical education, and computer science. Content areas planned for Phase III overlap with state-level assessment contracts for the tested content areas of mathematics, reading, writing and communicating, and science. In addition to the tested subjects, comprehensive health will also be reviewed in Phase III.

During the 2023-24 school year, the department convened a stakeholder committee to make recommended revisions for the computer science standards, as part of Phase II. This committee was composed of 8 members who have computer science expertise (i.e., industry leaders, teachers, district leaders, higher education, parent) with CDE staff serving in a supportive role.

Initial recommended revisions were presented to the state board in November 2023, made available to the public for feedback in December 2023.

Following the adoption of revisions to the computer science standards in June 2024, local education providers will have the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years to transition to the revised standards, with implementation beginning in the 2026-27 school year.

In the fall of 2024, the State Board of Education began the review process for the Phase III content areas: comprehensive health, mathematics, reading, writing and communicating, and science. In December 2024 the board made the decision to keep the comprehensive health and the reading, writing, and communicating standards in their current form without revisions, so they are finalized for this phase. The board also decided to move forward with revisions to high school mathematics and science specifically focused on climate literacy, so decisions about revisions for these two content areas will be made in the 2025-2026 school year.

Colorado's Statewide Content Assessment System

Background

The Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) assessments in English language arts, math, science, and social studies are developed to assess the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS). The CMAS in science and social studies were administered for the first time in 2014 with English language arts (ELA) and mathematics added in 2015. The adaptive digitally based PSAT/SAT assessments were administered for the first time in spring 2024. The previously administered paper-based versions of the assessments were discontinued by the vendor. Table 4 shows the spring 2025 administration by assessment and grade.

Table 4: 2025 State Content Assessments

Spring 2025 Assessments	
CMAS*/CoAlt ELA	Grades 3-8
CMAS*/CoAlt Math	Grades 3-8
CMAS/CoAlt Science*	Grades 5, 8, and 11
CMAS/CoAlt Social Studies*	Grades 4 and 7
PSAT/SAT and CoAlt	Grades 9, 10, and 11

*Developed for Colorado in collaboration with Colorado educators to align with the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS)

2025 State Assessment Results and Interpretation Considerations

Students Instructional Experiences

Districts and schools continued to implement academic support, including high impact tutoring, high quality mathematics curricula, and evidence-based summer and afterschool programs.

2025 State Assessment Results Provide Insight into Student Learning

State assessment results from spring 2025 highlighted continued progress in student achievement across various grades and subject areas, with most grade levels at or above pre-pandemic performance levels. However, results continued to reveal notable double digit achievement gaps among student groups. Gaps in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on CMAS or PSAT/SAT assessments were particularly large based on race/ethnicity (25-37 percentage points), disability status (22-46 percentage points), free/reduced lunch eligibility (20-32 percentage points), and multilingual learner status (27-60 percentage points).

Participation Information is Critical to Interpretation of State, District and School Results

Participation information must be reviewed carefully when interpreting 2025 district and school results. Although participation rates are relatively high at the state level, especially in the elementary grade levels, participation rates for districts, schools and student groups show widespread differences across and within districts with some student groups participating at higher rates than other groups.

CMAS: English language arts, mathematics, and science achievement results and participation rates for the spring 2025 assessments are available on the Spring 2025 CMAS Data and Results webpage.

PSAT and SAT results and participation rates for spring 2025 are available on the Colorado SAT and PSAT Data and Results webpage.

Looking Ahead

CMAS and CoAlt social studies assessments were administered in spring 2025 on a sampling basis. This marked the first time these assessments have been administered since spring 2019 as the Colorado Academic Standards in social studies were undergoing a revision and implementation process. CMAS and CoAlt social studies assessments are scheduled for administration in spring 2026.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Background

CDE and the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) worked together to develop a description of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR). As required in Colorado law, every six years the Colorado State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education are required to review the PWR description and adopt any appropriate revisions.

After extensive educator, community, and business input, the updated PWR description was jointly adopted by the State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education in winter 2016. Staff from the Department of Education and the Department of Higher Education conferred and recommended that the state board and commission affirm the current description, as is. The description was reviewed and re-confirmed by the state board in October 2022 and by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education in February 2024. This description serves as the basis for the state's alignment efforts including the Colorado Academic Standards, assessments and informing student demonstrations of skills and knowledge required to be ready for college and a career upon earning a high school diploma.

Colorado high school graduates demonstrate the knowledge and skills (competencies) needed to succeed in postsecondary settings and to advance in career pathways as lifelong learners and contributing citizens.

Progress in 2024-25

In alignment with the PWR description for Colorado, CDE and CDHE measure several factors that reflect levels of PWR for students beyond high school, including graduation rates, dropout rates, college entrance exam scores, participation in concurrent enrollment courses during high school and implementation of Colorado's graduation guidelines. Due to the CDHE data incident, matriculation and persistence rates to and through postsecondary education as well as remediation rates for students who enter college at a Colorado public institution of higher education for 2024-25 are not yet available.

Graduation and Dropout Rates

The four-year high school graduation rate for the Anticipated Year of Graduation (AYG) 2025 cohort is 85.6 percent, which signifies a 1.4 percentage point increase compared to the previous year. AYG 2025 had 2,069 more four-year graduates than AYG 2024. The state's four-year graduation rate has increased 12.1 percentage points since 2010 when Colorado moved to the Anticipated Year of Graduation cohort method for calculating graduation rates. Extended year rates for high school students taking five, six and seven years to graduate also showed improvement in 2024-25. See the state's graduation data dashboard for more information. The dashboard features longitudinal data by student groups, schools, and districts.

The state's 2024-25 overall dropout rate is 1.6 percent, which is a decrease of 0.3 percentage points from the previous year. There were 7,437 dropouts in grades 7-12 - a reduction of 1,510 students compared to 2024. Details on the dropout rate are available on the CDE website.

Concurrent Enrollment

The state of Colorado passed the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (CEPA) in 2009, which provides a structure for local education providers and institutions of higher education to enter into cooperative agreements to offer college courses to high school students. Due to changes in CEPA per S.B. 19-176, to expand concurrent enrollment opportunities for high school students, especially in areas with historically low (or no) student enrollment in concurrent enrollment opportunities, local education providers are required to offer Concurrent Enrollment opportunities to qualified students in grades nine through 12 at no tuition cost to students and families. S.B. 19-176 also created a grant program to fund expansion and innovation efforts and created a statewide comprehensive website for students and parents to inform them of Concurrent Enrollment and other dual credit opportunities for students, what they cost, and the benefits and challenges of each option. The Concurrent Enrollment Expansion and Innovation Grant Program was repealed by S.B. 25-315, beginning July 1, 2025, but the eligible expenses for that grant are allowable under the three funds created within the bill.

For more information about statewide student participation in Concurrent Enrollment and other dual credit programs, please see the Colorado Department of Higher Education's Concurrent Enrollment webpage.

Graduation Guidelines

CDE continues to implement Graduation Guidelines as established under H.B. 07-1118 and S.B. 08-256, requiring the development of statewide high school Graduation Guidelines that local school boards must meet or exceed. The purpose of the Graduation Guidelines is to articulate Colorado's shared expectations for the meaning of a

high school diploma and to outline the minimum expectations and responsibilities of local districts and the state to support students in attaining their high school diploma. The Graduation Guidelines took effect for ninth graders in fall 2017, and with a one-year delay due to COVID, were required of all graduates in 2022 and beyond. Graduation Guidelines align with the state's description of postsecondary and workforce readiness and postsecondary entrance requirements.

To support local education providers in implementing the Graduation Guidelines, CDE staff has provided multiple opportunities for school and district leaders to learn from one another about the local implementation strategies that are proving effective for each learner. From capstone workshops focusing on meaningful capstone processes for all, to regional trainings focusing on strategies to increase postsecondary and workforce readiness, the Office of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness regularly seeks to highlight the best of what is happening in the field from which others can learn.

Senate Bill 25-315 Implementation

The Secondary, Postsecondary and Work-based Learning Integration Task Force (1215 Task Force) and its partners engaged with 300+ students, families and educators via panel discussions, human-centered design workshops and focus groups to inform recommendations to improve the availability of postsecondary and workforce readiness high school programs. The 1215 Task Force Report released in December 2023 included 13 recommendations.

Building on this work, the state legislature created a one-time financial study to evaluate the funding, costs, and impact of the 15+ postsecondary and workforce readiness programs overseen by the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Community College System (for Career and Technical Education). The study contractor facilitated extensive engagement opportunities with local education providers, including surveys, interviews, and workshops. The contractor also conducted quantitative data analysis of available program participation, financial and outcome data.

Based on this work, the General Assembly passed S.B. 25-315 Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness Programs. This legislation consolidated multiple postsecondary and workforce readiness programs and created a funding model that includes three types of funding: Start-Up funding, Sustain funding and Buckner Innovation grant funding. The Start-Up Fund is intended to help districts create and/or significantly expand postsecondary and workforce readiness programs so every student has access to "The Big Three" - postsecondary credits, industry-recognized credentials and work-based learning opportunities. The Sustain Fund is intended to provide outcomes-based funding to all districts for student attainment of the Big Three, similar to how the Career Development Incentive Program operated in the past. After three years, the Start-Up Fund converts to become the Buckner Innovation Fund, which will provide financial support to districts based on their performance within the postsecondary and workforce readiness state accountability sub-indicator. During the 2025-26 program year, rulemaking will occur with the State Board of Education for both the Start-Up Fund and the Sustain Fund. Rulemaking for the Buckner Innovation Fund will occur during the 2026-27 program year.