Finding “Common Ground” on Common Core

Findings Report

March 2015

Produced by Great Education Colorado
Table of Contents

Findings Report..................................................................................................................................................3
Appendix...............................................................................................................................................................7
  APPENDIX A: Survey Questions.........................................................................................................................7
  APPENDIX B: Demographics.............................................................................................................................8
  APPENDIX C: Pre-Reading ..............................................................................................................................9
  APPENDIX D: Discussion Banner Questions....................................................................................................18
  APPENDIX E: Photos of Posters......................................................................................................................19
  APPENDIX F: Discussion Results....................................................................................................................20

Acknowledgements

Great Education Colorado would like to thank those who made these Conversations and this resulting report possible: Rose Community Foundation for its generous support of the project; Jim Finster, for his invaluable assistance in developing the survey and analyzing both the qualitative and quantitative results; Stacey Porter, for assistance at every step of this process, including reviewing all the data and shepherding it into this accessible and manageable report; Joan Hildebrand Alexander for donating her time and considerable expertise to helping us develop the Conversation facilitation protocol; and Heather Clifton and Maggie Miller for their masterful implementation of that protocol as they facilitated our Conversations.

Front cover: Participants were asked immediately after each Conversation to choose one word to describe how they felt at the end of the process. The graphic is a Wordle™ illustrating the frequency of the words participants chose.
INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2014, with public debate regarding “Common Core” standards and related topics becoming increasingly polarized, Great Education Colorado (“Great Ed”) embarked on a process designed to “turn down the temperature” of the emotional debate on educational K-12 standards, assessments and accountability. By providing a forum for real dialogue and a meaningful exchange of views, values and ideas among people with diverse perspectives, the “Common Ground on Common Core” project had a unique purpose: to uncover areas where consensus on key policy issues already exists underneath -- and hidden by -- the public vitriol.

This report summarizes the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative results of those Conversations, identifying previously unrecognized areas of agreement so as to inform future public discussions and policy decisions. Given the limitations of this project and moderately small participant pool, these results are not presented as scientifically representative of the general population. Rather, the project’s protocol was designed to provide a more nuanced and realistic perspective on one of the most important and divisive education issues of our time.

PROCESS

In a series of six 2-hour “Common Ground” Conversations (each with 10-15 different people), individuals with diverse views were able to discuss their opinions and values in a confidential, safe and informal environment. The goal was not to change minds on these contentious issues, but instead to unbundle the values and policies underlying participant views, and thereby uncover commonalities.

Great Ed reached out to education organizations with varying missions as well as to Great Ed supporters, with the objective to ensure that there were participants with diverse opinions in each Conversation. Toward that end, each participant completed a survey to determine his/her attitudes toward statewide standards, assessments, Common Core and the overall direction of education in Colorado. (See Appendix A for the survey questions. See Appendix B for participant demographic information.)

The survey results were used to facilitate a broad mix of perspectives at each Conversation. Survey results showed variance on each survey question, with the exception of questions 1, 2 and 15. To create variance in each Conversation, Great Education Colorado staff members looked at the answers to questions regarding the state’s trajectory on education in each participant’s survey. Staff members endeavored to group participants with the goal of ensuring the groups were somewhat heterogeneous in their opinions.
Before attending a Conversation, participants were provided with background materials about the origins of Common Core, how Colorado has incorporated Common Core into the current Colorado Academic Standards, and an historical description of Colorado’s standardized assessments since 1993. (See Appendix C)

Each 2-hour, professionally facilitated Conversation addressed the following four topics:

- The purpose of public education
- Academic standards/guidelines
- Testing/assessment
- What will make it possible for Colorado to offer quality K-12 education?

For the first three topics, participants were asked to indicate their personal level of agreement or disagreement on a series of statements (see Appendix D) within each of these topics by applying sticker “dots” on posters. (Appendix E shows a photo of the poster voting.) Participants then discussed a subset of the statements, exploring underlying values and assumptions. In some cases, edits and amendments to the statements (“re-drafts”) were suggested and voted on, in order to increase the level of consensus. (Responses to each banner question are included in Appendix F.)

A different protocol was used for the fourth topic (the second picture in Appendix E), regarding what would be necessary to have a successful system of education. Participants brainstormed policies and ideas, which Great Ed staff chronicled and then sorted into broader categories. Participants then “voted” (via a limited number of sticker dots) on which of the categories should have the highest priority.

**RESULTS:**

**PUBLIC EDUCATION**
We found broad support for a public education system that prepares students for college and/or career. Although there was some ambivalence when the concept of preparing students for college was asked separately from preparing them for career, there was almost unanimous support for statements that were “re-drafted” in the course of most of the Conversations to propose a goal of preparing all students for college or for other paths to success appropriate to the student.

**ACADEMIC STANDARDS/GUIDELINES**
For this topic, we decided to use the term “guidelines” instead of “standards” to assess participants’ reaction to the concept of minimum levels of achievement. Semantics certainly played a role in the Conversations and led to some interesting dialogue. At times,
participants became confused between the terms “guidelines” and “standards.” Participants usually understood “guidelines” to mean a general term for expectations for students, whereas they tended to interpret “standards” to mean statewide mandates.

Participant reactions were positive overall – though not uniformly or strongly so – toward the concept of statewide “guidelines for minimum academic achievement.” However, there was general agreement that schools should not be prevented from “adding or going beyond” those state guidelines, and that standards should not dictate how instruction is delivered. It was frequently noted that students learn at different rates and that grade levels don’t always accurately reflect developmental levels for all children. Additionally, participants were skeptical that Colorado’s schools and teachers have been sufficiently supported in implementing new standards.

Notably, while participants did not come to consensus about whether “We should continue on the path of using Colorado’s academic guidelines” when asked if Colorado should abandon the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS), the overwhelming consensus was that the state should NOT completely abandon them and start over.

TESTING
A strong majority of participants agreed that some kind of testing or assessment is necessary to understand where students are in the learning process. There was a broad distribution of opinions (though skewing to favorable) about whether statewide tests are necessary to gauge progress on standards. However, there was extensive concern that implementation of the Colorado Measures of Academic Success or CMAS (Colorado’s current standardized state assessments) is requiring too much time of both students and teachers. While there was no consensus about whether student growth as measured by CMAS should inform teacher evaluations, there was virtually no support for using such data to inform teacher pay.

Interestingly, “not sure” was the most common response to the statement “CMAS tests are a good measure of student achievement.” Analysis of the qualitative data (discussion comments) indicated that many participants did not feel they had sufficient information necessary to answer that question, while others believed it is too soon to know. Participants want to better understand how standards and new assessments are aligned, how the assessments affect school accountability and how they will assist students.

NECESSITIES FOR PROVIDING A QUALITY K-12 EDUCATION
While each of the six brainstorming sessions differed in tone and level of abstraction, the “dot” voting that forced participants to prioritize strategies and policies for improving K-12
revealed a strong consensus in two categories that uniformly ranked among the top three (and almost always in the top two):
• Additional resources/better funding (sustainable, equitable and adequate funding, smaller class sizes)
• Supporting the teaching profession (professional development, better working conditions, increased teacher pay, greater educator input in school policy)

Topics that arose frequently, appearing at least once in the top three include:
• A focus on every child and the whole child (differentiated learning for all children, broad curriculum)
• Addressing underlying socioeconomic conditions/poverty
• Systemic changes to the fundamentals of K-12 education (transforming education to meet 21st century needs and expectations)

Finally, a number of topics recurred in the conversations, but received fewer votes:
• Quality Early Childhood Education for all
• Parent and Student Accountability
• Increased educator influence in education policy

CONCLUSION
It seems the conventional wisdom in Colorado is that there is enormous polarization in Colorado regarding Common Core standards and the aligned assessments. The surveys conducted in preparation for this project do indeed indicate that there are widely divergent views on related topics. However, the Common Ground Conversation process demonstrates that there is more consensus on the underlying issues than is apparent on the surface. Participants with differing views on education reform came to agreement on the goals of public education as well as on retaining the current academic standards. Likewise, participants across the spectrum shared an appetite for more information about assessments and reflected a thoughtfulness about the use and frequency of assessments. Finally, there was overwhelming consensus that, for every student to be ready for the world upon graduating high school, Colorado must invest significant additional resources to support the teaching profession and to meet the differing needs of our students.
APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: Survey Questions
Note: For each question, participants answered the survey questions using a Likert scale. Participants answered the question from a scale of 1-5, with 1 meaning “Disagree” and 5 meaning “Agree.” Participants could answer in between the numbers on the scale (for example, in the middle between 1 and 2).

1. Public education is an essential function of government.

2. Well-educated high school graduates provide value to our society.

3. Having statewide standards is beneficial for students and for the state.

4. Standardized tests are a good measure of student progress toward meeting set standards.

5. I feel well informed about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

6. I like the CCSS.

7. The CCSS is good for Colorado public schools.

8. Endorsement by the federal government affects my view of the CCSS.

9. I feel well informed about the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS).

10. I like the CAS.

11. I feel well informed about the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS).

12. The CMAS program provides a good metric of student achievement.

13. Colorado is on the right track regarding education reform.

14. Colorado provides adequate resources to its public schools.

15. Colorado should invest more in public education.
APPENDIX B: Demographics*

The six conversations attracted participants from seventeen cities including: Arvada (2), Boulder (1), Broomfield (4), Centennial (4), Colorado Springs (6), Crested Butte (1), Denver (19), Evergreen (1), Greeley (1), Highlands Ranch (3), Lakewood (4), Larkspur (2), Littleton (2), Morrison (1), Peyton (1), Roxborough (1), and Westminster (1).

At least eleven school districts were represented in the six conversations including: Adams 12 Five Star Schools (5), Boulder Valley School District (3), Cherry Creek School District (3), Colorado Springs School D-11 (4), Denver Public Schools (22), Douglas County School District (6), Falcon School District (1), Gunnison Watershed School District (1), Jefferson County Public Schools (6), Littleton Public Schools (3), and Westminster 50 School District (1).

Participant ages were widely dispersed ranging from early 20s to late 70s. **50-59 year olds were the largest age group represented** with at least 24 participants who self-identified with this age group, followed by 40-49 year olds (17 participants), and 30-39 year olds (6 participants). The remaining few (7) fell into older (60+) and younger (20-29) age ranges.

A clear majority of participants were female (90%) vs. male (10%). Sixty-two females and seven males participated in the Conversations.

Participants represented a variety of roles** during each of the six conversations including: community members (28), parents (24), teachers (8), elected officials (8), school administrators (4), and students (2).

*Participants were asked to provide demographic information, however not all participants provided this information. This data is based on the best information available.

**Participants were asked to select all that apply.
APPENDIX C: Pre-reading

Common Ground on Common Core: Background Materials
A skeletal history of standards and assessments in Colorado

Standards-based education in Colorado before the Common Core

Colorado entered the sphere of statewide, standards-based education in 1993 when the state legislature adopted HB93-1313, which required the creation and adoption of state model content standards in 12 subjects. HB93-1313 also established an accompanying assessment system – the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) – which was phased in by grade and topic, starting with 4th grade reading in 1997. In 2000, the legislature passed SB00-186, which expanded annual CSAP testing to additional grades and subjects.

Those standards and assessments remained in place in 2007 when Governor Bill Ritter created the P-20 Education Coordinating Council in order to create, “a seamless education system from preschool to graduate school to prepare Colorado’s young people for the demands of the 21st century.” One recommendation of the P-20 Council was the revamping of Colorado’s state standards to more accurately reflect the skills and knowledge necessary to prepare 21st century graduates for college and career. Subsequently, in 2008, the legislature passed SB08-212, known as the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), which required the development of postsecondary and workforce ready (PWR) standards for students, also known as “college and career ready standards.”
Thereafter, in 2009, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) engaged in a drafting, public engagement, and feedback process to update academic standards in ten content areas: Dance, drama and theater arts; health and physical education; mathematics; music; reading, writing and communicating; science; social studies; visual arts; and world languages. In December of 2009, the Colorado State Board of Education adopted the resulting new standards as the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS). Because the CAS differed from the model content standards upon which the CSAP tests were based, an interim set of tests – the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) -- was instituted in 2011, pending development of tests that would be aligned to the CAS.

**Enter the Common Core State Standards**

At the same time that Colorado was adopting the CAS in 2009, the National Governor’s Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) met to create a set of common “K-12 year-by-year college and career readiness standards” in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. After a drafting and feedback period in which state education officials, educator organizations and members of the public participated, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were released in June of 2010. As of December 2013, 45 states (currently 43 states), the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) had adopted the CCSS. Colorado's incorporation of the CCSS. When the CCSS were published, the Colorado Department of Education commissioned a study to compare the math and English standards outlined in the CAS with those of the CCSS. The study found close alignment of the two sets of standards. According to CDE, “The comparison showed that the Common Core State Standards reflected Colorado’s focus on college and career readiness, the values of the Colorado educators who developed the original Colorado Academic Standards and they also reflected more rigorous and clear expectations
than the Colorado Academic Standards.”

**Colorado’s Incorporation of the CCSS**

In August of 2010, the State Board of Education adopted the CCSS in English language arts and mathematics. In December of 2010, CDE re-released the CAS, incorporating the CCSS, while keeping in place some additional, unique Colorado components (e.g., personal financial literacy in mathematics and research and reasoning in reading, writing and communicating). CDE required that local school boards review their respective academic standards in order to ensure that they met or exceeded the CAS. The 2012-13 school year was “transitional,” allowing school districts to move from their old standards to the new CAS. The 2013-14 school year was the first year in which the CAS were fully implemented.

The CAS standards that are related to content areas other than mathematics and English (e.g., science, social studies, world languages) were not affected by the adoption of the Common Core. [See Table 1 for a timeline reflecting Colorado’s adoption of standards and the Common Core.]

Notably, districts maintain autonomy to adopt their own curriculum to meet the standards and teachers retain the ability to design their instruction in ways that support students in meeting the standards.

**Assessments for the CAS**

In 2014, Colorado adopted the Colorado Measurements of Academic Success (CMAS) as the successor to the CSAP/TCAP testing program, reflecting the change to the new Colorado Academic Standards. The CMAS program includes Social Studies and Science tests that were developed in Colorado as well as English language arts and mathematics tests that were designed by the “Partnership for Assessment of
Readiness for College and Careers” (PARCC), which Colorado joined as a Governing Board Member in August 2012.

PARCC is a multi-state assessment consortium of 12 states and the District of Columbia that has developed common English language arts and mathematics assessments. As a governing member, Colorado is committed to relying on the PARCC assessment system. PARCC has ELA assessments in grades 3-11 and mathematics assessments in grades 3-8 with three high school assessments. The PARCC ELA and mathematics assessments will replace the TCAP reading, writing and mathematics assessments in the spring of 2015.

Content areas other than English language arts, math, social studies and science are not assessed under CMAS. [See Table 2 for a visual depiction of the CMAS program. See Table 3 for information about various types/categories of assessment being used in Colorado classrooms.]
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Colorado State Legislature requires creation of state standards and Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), which is to be phased in by grade and subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>CSAP testing begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Colorado State Legislature expands CSAP testing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>State school chiefs from around the U.S. discuss developing common standards during Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Annual Policy Forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Spring 2008 Colorado State Legislature passes Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) which requires &quot;college and career ready standards.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>December 2008 NGA, CCSSO and Achieve, Inc. release <em>Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive World-Class Education</em>. The report recommends states &quot;upgrade state standards by adopting a common core of internationally benchmarked standards in math and language arts for grades K-12 to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be globally competitive.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>April 2009 NGA and CCSSO converse governors’ education policy advisors and chief state school officers to discuss creation of the Common Core State Standards Initiative. NGA and CCSSO invite states to commit to a process to develop standards in English language arts and mathematics. Work begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Spring 2009 Colorado begins drafting and engaging in a public feedback process to update academic standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Fall 2009 Nationally, multiple drafts of college and career ready standards released for public comment and feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>December 2009 Colorado State Board of Education adopts Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) in ten content areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>January 2010 NGA and CCSSO requests states’ feedback on a revised draft of the standards. Several independent reviews of the standards begin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>February 2010 Revised version of the CCSS draft standards distributed for public comment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>June 2010 NGA and CCSSO release the final Common Core State Standards (CCSS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Fall 2010 Colorado State Board of Education adopts the CCSS in English language arts and mathematics. Colorado Department of Education re-releases the Colorado Academic Standards that incorporate CCSS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2011 Colorado institutes TCAPs as an interim set of tests between CSAPs and tests aligned with the CAS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2014 Colorado adopts Colorado Measurements of Academic Success (CMAS) as a successor to the CSAP/TCAP testing program. CMAS testing begins.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2

#### Transition to CMAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TCAP Reading and Writing (Grades 3-10)</td>
<td>TCAP Reading and Writing (Grades 3-10)</td>
<td>New CMAS English Language Arts (Grades 3-11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCAP Mathematics (Grades 3-10)</td>
<td>TCAP Mathematics (Grades 3-10)</td>
<td>New CMAS Mathematics (Grades 3-8 and three high school assessments)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCAP Science (Grades 5, 8 and 10)</td>
<td>New CMAS Science (Grades 5 and 8)</td>
<td>New CMAS Science (Grades 5, 8 and 12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New CMAS Social Studies (Grades 4 and 7)</td>
<td>New CMAS Social Studies (Grades 4, 7 and 12)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3

**Assessment Continuum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative Assessment and Instruction</th>
<th>Interim Assessment</th>
<th>Summative Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>To inform instruction</td>
<td>To determine progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>Broad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Student now and tomorrow</td>
<td>Classroom Curriculum or program next “quarter”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Periodic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formality</strong></td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Moderately Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical Rigor</strong></td>
<td>Less Rigorous</td>
<td>More Rigorous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Types of Scores</strong></td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Moderately Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of Scores</strong></td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>School/Classroom/Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>User of Scores</strong></td>
<td>Teacher and student</td>
<td>Teacher, student, parent, and school administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stakes</strong></td>
<td>Low Stakes Informational only</td>
<td>Moderate Stakes Grades</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Updated July 30, 2014*

Office of Standards and Assessments
Acronyms and Resources

AFT American Federation of Teachers
http://www.aft.org/about

CAS Colorado Academic Standards
http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/coloradostandards

CCSS Common Core State Standards
http://www.corestandards.org

CCSSO Council of Chief State School Officers
http://www.ccsso.org/Who_We_Are.html

CDE Colorado Department of Education
http://www.cde.state.co.us

CMAS Colorado Measures of Academic Success
http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/factsheetsandfaqs-assessment#CMAS

DoDEA Department of Defense Education Activity
http://www.dodea.edu/Ameriacas/aboutAm/aboutAM.cfm

K-12 Kindergarten through twelfth grade NCTE National Council of Teachers of English
http://www.ncte.org

NCTM National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
http://www.nctm.org

NAEP National Assessment of Educational Progress
http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about

NEA National Education Association
http://www.nea.org/home/2580.htm

NGA National Governors Association

http://www.nga.org/cms/about

PARCC Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

http://www.parcconline.org/about-parcc
APPENDIX D: Discussion Banner Questions

Banner 1: Public Education
1. Public education is a necessary state activity
2. Colorado public education should prepare students for college.
3. Public education should be offered to preschool children.
4. Colorado public education should prepare students for a career.
5. Public education should be offered to K-12 students.

Banner 2: Academic Standards/Guidelines
1. I support the idea of statewide Colorado guidelines for minimum academic achievement at each K-12 grade level
2. These guidelines should not limit schools from adding to or going BEYOND the suggested achievement guidelines
3. The statewide guidelines should NOT dictate HOW instruction is delivered in each school or classroom
4. Many teachers will require additional professional development to effectively teach the new standards
5. We should continue on the path of using Colorado’s academic guidelines

Banner 3: Testing
1. Some form of testing is necessary to determine if students are learning
2. Some form of testing should be used to help educators improve their teaching
3. Statewide testing is necessary to ensure achievement gaps among children of disadvantaged groups are recognized and addressed
4. I support statewide testing to gauge student achievement against state guidelines
5. CMAS tests are a good measure of student achievement
6. I believe students spend too much time preparing for and taking tests today
7. Colorado’s focus on testing is narrowing curriculum
8. Colorado’s focus on testing is reducing the time teachers have to meet the needs of students
9. CMAS testing is needed to ensure accountability for educators
10. Student growth (as measured by the CMAS) should inform teacher evaluations
11. Student growth (as measured by CMAS) should inform teacher pay
APPENDIX E: Photos of Posters

Photo 1: Example of Banner 2 (Academic Guidelines)

![Banner 2](image1)

Photo 2: Example of Banner 4

![Banner 4](image2)
APPENDIX F: Discussion Banner Results

Banner 1: Public Education

1. Public education is a necessary state activity

2. Colorado public education should prepare students for college

Comments: In each Conversation, many participants emphasized the importance of preparing students for the option of college, a career or other post-secondary opportunities.
3.

Public education should be offered to pre-school children

4.

Colorado public education should prepare students for a career
5. **Public education should be offered to K-12 students**

![Pie chart showing public opinion on education]

Banner 2: Academic Standards/Guidelines

1. **I support the idea of statewide Colorado guidelines for minimum academic achievement at each K-12 grade level**

![Pie chart showing support levels]

Comments:
1. Many participants in the Conversations were uncomfortable with the term “minimum,” because it implied a low level of expectations for students.
2. Other participants emphasized the need for a spectrum of expectations that meet students at their level.
2. These guidelines should not limit schools from adding to or going BEYOND the suggested achievement guidelines

3. The statewide guidelines should NOT dictate HOW instruction is delivered in each school or classroom
Comments: Many participants stated that it was important for teachers to have access to quality professional development all the time, and not just to learn to teach the new standards.
5.

We should continue on the path of using Colorado’s academic guidelines

Comments:
1. 3 Conversations voted yes or no on the statement, “We should abandon the Colorado Academic Standards” and 97% of participants in those Conversations said no.

2. Many participants felt that they did not know enough about the current standards to decide whether Colorado should continue using them.

3. Many participants agreed that there should be standards, but stated that there is less agreement in how standards should be implemented.
Banner 3: Testing

1. Some form of testing is necessary to determine if students are learning
   - No
   - Not Sure
   - Yes

2. Some form of testing should be used to help educators improve their teaching
   - No
   - Not Sure
   - Yes
3. Statewide testing is necessary to ensure achievement gaps among children of disadvantaged groups are recognized and addressed.

4. I support statewide testing to gauge student achievement against state guidelines.
5. CMAS tests are a good measure of student achievement

![Pie chart showing the distribution of opinions about CMAS tests.]

Comments:
1. Many participants emphasized that CMAS is one measure of student achievement, but is not the only measure.

2. Many participants did not believe they knew enough about CMAS to evaluate whether or not it was a good measure of student achievement.

6. I believe students spend too much time preparing for and taking tests today

![Pie chart showing the distribution of opinions about the amount of time students spend preparing for and taking tests.]

Comments:
7. Colorado's focus on testing is reducing the time teachers have to meet the needs of students

8. CMAS testing is needed to ensure accountability for educators
9. Student growth (as measured by the CMAS) should inform teacher evaluations

10. Student growth (as measured by CMAS) should inform teacher pay