

kinda sortas

...or it isn't necessarily so.



1. When kids take CMAS tests, their information goes into a national database.

Student information is highly protected by FERPA (Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act) laws. Access to the information for individual students is highly limited. Only aggregate (combined) data are looked at to learn from trends at school, district, and state levels.

2. The tests are a waste of time.

That depends on how you look at it.

- ✓ Is evaluating a student's progress a waste of time?
- ✓ is measuring school performance a waste of time?
- ✓ Is having students test their skills and knowledge in a different environment to see what they can do in a different setting worth anything?



Would you like to know more?

1. For more info about the School Performance rating system check out this link:
tinyurl.com/jit4bx5
2. To read the Colorado Department of Education's Fact Sheet about the CMAS tests, try this:
<http://tinyurl.com/yx9tmrrf>
3. For more info about CoAlt look here
<http://tinyurl.com/yx9tmrrf>
4. For more information on the benefits of PSAT and SAT check out these links:
<http://tinyurl.com/yawht5k6>
PSAT/SAT: <http://tinyurl.com/y6db9xag>
5. For some background on ACCESS for ELLs go here:
<http://tinyurl.com/y64pysu3>
6. To see a complete overview of assessments available at each grade level in D51 look here:
tinyurl.com/y8qh3jka



some things

you may not know about:

- Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS)
- Colorado Alternate Assessment (CoAlt)
- Colorado Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (CO PSAT)
- Colorado Scholastic Assessment Test (CO SAT)
- ACCESS for ELLs (WIDA ACCESS)



5 facts

...What are these tests anyway?

1. **CMAS** (Colorado Measures of Academic Success) is the name of the Colorado standardized testing program for 3rd-8th grade students. All 3rd-8th graders take the CMAS test in Math and English Language Arts.
 - The other part of testing in Colorado covers Science & Social Studies. Science at grades 5, 8, & 11; Social Studies requirement is based on a random selection process through the State of Colorado for grades 4, 7.
 - The CMAS tests are designed to see how well Colorado students are learning the Colorado Academic Standards.
2. **CoAlt** (Colorado Alternate Assessment) is the name of the Colorado standardized testing program for Social Studies and Science designed to measure what students with significant cognitive disabilities know and can do. The Alternate Math and Language arts is known as CoAlt DLM (Dynamic Learning Maps)
3. **CO PSAT** (Colorado Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) tests the same skills and knowledge as the SAT in a way that makes sense for 9th and 10th graders. PSAT focuses on the knowledge, skills, and understandings that research has identified as most important for college and career readiness success. In addition to helping sophomores practice for the SAT, it can identify student's potential for success in advanced course work.
4. **CO SAT** (Colorado Scholastic Assessment Test) is closely aligned to challenging classroom work of Colorado schools and focuses on the key skills and concepts that evidence shows matter most for college and career readiness. It also serves as an admission test and is accepted by every college in the United States.
5. **ACCESS for ELLs** (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) is a large-scale test that provides a snapshot of how well students identified as English language learners are using the English language within the school context. The test is administered to ELL students Grade K-12.



The Good Things

...or look on the bright side!

1. Outside of standardized test results, no objective method exists for policymakers to identify either poor-performing schools needing intervention or high-performing schools deserving rewards.
2. The accountability system for Colorado public schools provides a mechanism to objectively rate school performance in key areas.
3. ...and allows help to be provided to struggling schools.
4. ...and allows parents to research schools where they are considering enrolling their children.
5. ...and makes sure taxpayer money is being spent well.
6. ...and helps districts and schools recognize gaps in their instruction so they can make adjustments.
7. For instance, based on district-wide test results, D51 continues to offer substantial supports to schools and teachers.
8. Standardized testing can point out gaps in an individual student's education, making adjustments possible.
9. Standardized testing can confirm what the parent/teacher already know about a student as an objective measure and help celebrate achievement for a job well done for parent, student and school.



The Myths

...or balderdash!

1. **Since the law was passed allowing parents to “exempt” their kids from state testing, there’s no harm done if my kids skip testing.**

Actually, a school district’s performance rating (the annual “grade” from the State Department of Education) significantly depends on student test results. If not enough students participate, a school is not rated at all, making it impossible to tell how well it is doing.
2. **These tests don’t help my child.**

Actually, we use results from state assessments to help us decide if we’re on the right track as a School District. Are certain skills eluding our students? Are some grade levels struggling? When we see areas that need improvement, it helps us focus our efforts to provide resources in those areas. We also utilize this assessment as part of a body of evidence with secondary Math course placement.
3. **The tests are too hard.**

Actually, the tests are deliberately designed to be challenging (but **not** TOO hard). This is the best way to find out what students really know. Testing students on easy material doesn’t help

