

PENCILS DOWN

Changes to CMAS testing due to federal waiver.

By Madeleine Nations

CMAs, MAP, DIBELS, ACT, SAT: Assessing student performance has been an American priority since 1890 when Harvard President, Charles Eliot proposed a series of college entrance exams. However, in 1965 when the Elementary and Secondary Education act was passed, standardized testing started to become what we know it to be today. The act stated that some sort of standardized testing was required to take place in all public schools.

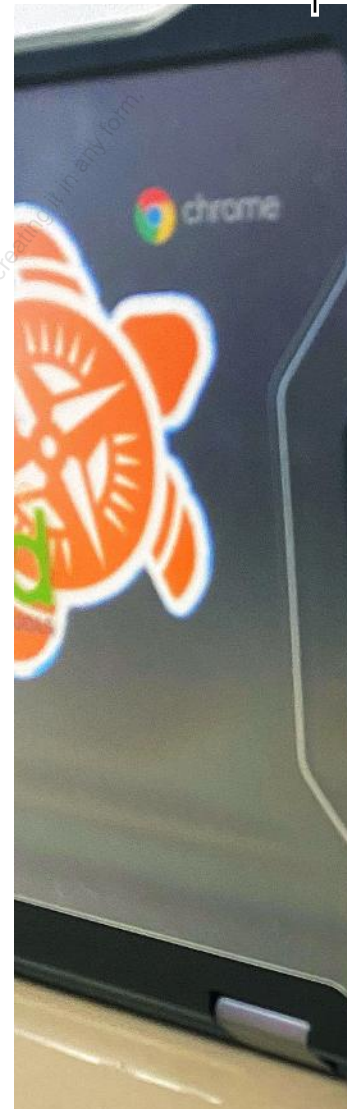
But on Tuesday, March 14th Governor Jared Polis signed a bill that sought a waiver from federal testing requirements for the school year. According to Chalkbeat Colorado "The bill represents a compromise between teachers unions and school districts, which wanted testing canceled entirely, and education advocacy groups that wanted all students to take both math and literacy tests." The federal government gave approval on March 26.

The Colorado Measures of Academic Success, otherwise known as CMAS is given annually and give educators a picture of what students have learned and what areas may need more attention. For the 20-21 academic year, Colorado students in grades 3, 5, and 7 would take the literacy test and while the grades 4, 6, and 8 would take the math test. Social studies and

science tests would be suspended.

Critics of the bill voiced concern about data gaps. Derek Briggs, a University of Colorado professor and director of the Center for Assessment Design Research and Evaluation said, "One of the reasons to test is not just to look back but to create a baseline going forward." It's going to leave some significant holes going forward. For students who test in [literacy], you won't have a math baseline going forward, and vice versa."

To that Pamela Green an 8th grade history teacher said, "I'm in favor of the federal waiver to reduce the number of tests students will take this year because we have already done MAP testing, which measures student growth." Given three times a year, MAP tests provide data on student growth in math, language arts, and science. Given so frequently, it is a reliable source that provides more immediate data. As 8th grade math teacher Amanda Hoeft said, "As an instructor for a subject that is tested, CMAS data isn't as useful, anyway. I use MAP data more often to drive instruction. Students have been exposed to the essential learning targets but not all of the standards as we have had to adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of hybrid and remote learning." Staff was also concerned that the CMAS and the spring MAP testing would overlap causing interruption to class instruction for at least two weeks. "Kids need to be with their teachers. Students need to be interacting in a normal classroom and being with their friends, not taking a test," said 8th grade English teacher Debra Swartz.



TAKE THAT: THE TEST EVOLUTION

The evolution of standardized testing throughout the years

1890

Harvard President Charles Eliot proposes a system of entrance examinations for **COLLEGES.**

10 years later, the **COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION BOARD** is established. Shortly after, the first exams are administered in 9 different subjects.

1917

The US **ARMY** develops intelligence tests, which causes the most rapid expansion of the school testing movement.

1929

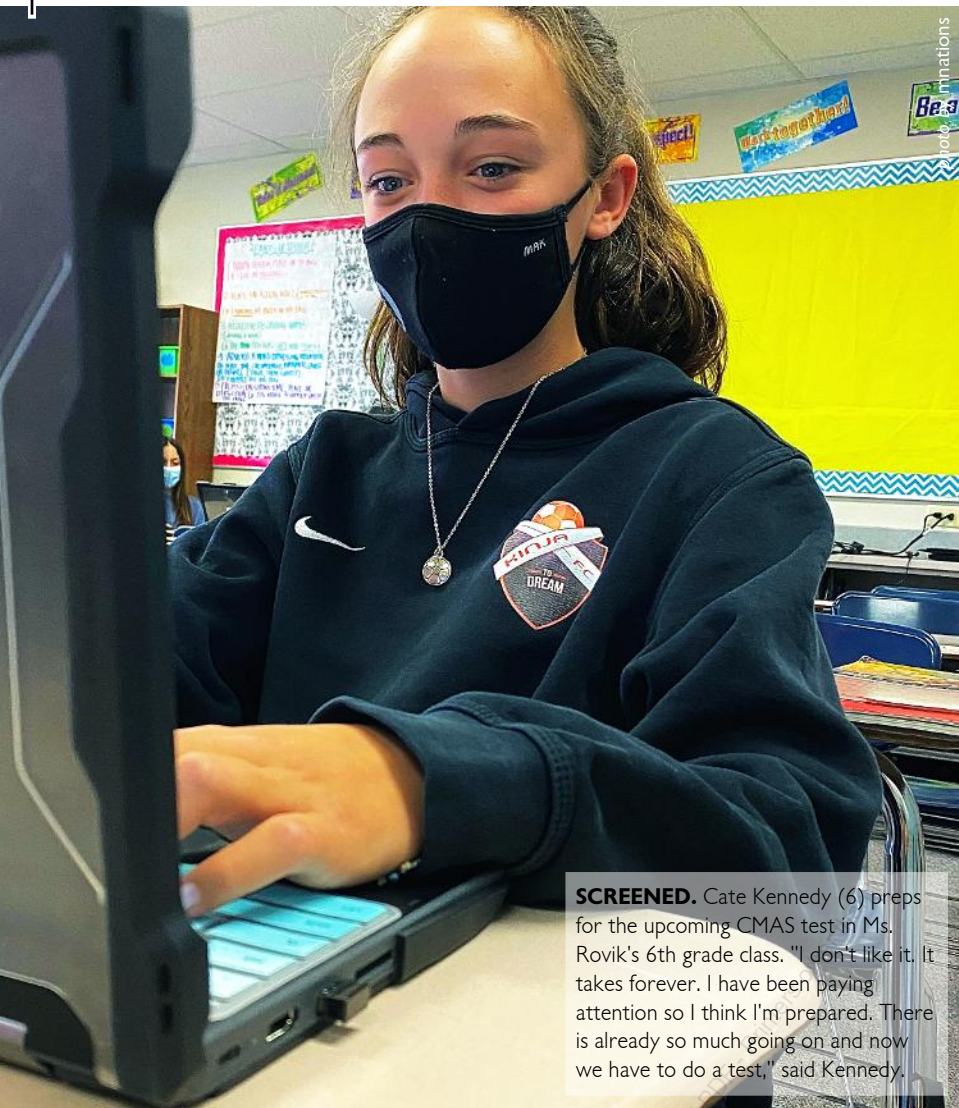
Standardized tests were not being widely favored. By 1930 most tests were **MULTIPLE CHOICE.** People thought that issuing these tests would encourage memorization and guessing.

1905

French psychologist Alfred Binet begins developing a standardized test that would later be included in the **MODERN IQ TEST.**

1926

The first **SAT TESTS** are administered. It took 90 minutes and had 315 questions. It tested on vocabulary and basic math.



SCREENED. Cate Kennedy (6) preps for the upcoming CMAS test in Ms. Rovik's 6th grade class. "I don't like it. It takes forever. I have been paying attention so I think I'm prepared. There is already so much going on and now we have to do a test," said Kennedy.

TO TEST OR NOT TO TEST?

How do students feel about taking the CMAS this year?



"It's not my favorite test. It takes up a lot of time. I think I will do well because of my test strategies. I think that it won't be easy for people due to online learning."
-Ella Williams (6)



"I am a little nervous, but I feel prepared. I definitely think that there are going to be people who have had trouble learning and will be at a disadvantage."
-Isabella Marquardt (7)



"Partially, I do think its dumb, but I feel like they can use the scores to see where people have not done well. I do not think I'm prepared. In elementary school we had preparation, but in middle school, we don't."
-Carson Welling (8)

1965

The Elementary and Secondary Education act is **PASSED.** It offered grants for textbooks, created special education centers, and scholarships for low income students.

2015

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

is passed. It starts reducing the amount of standardized tests that are given. However, statewide exams are still required for grades 3-8 and once in high school.

1935

Standardized testing gets its first boost from **COMPUTERS.** The costs for running the test drops from \$5.00 per test to \$0.50 per test.

2001

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

expands state-mandated standardized testing. Most students will now be tested each year of grade school.

2021

The federal government approves Colorado's **REDUCED** state testing plan. Grades three, five, and seven will take the literacy test. While grades four, six, and eight take math.