Education Accountability Act
Frequently Asked Questions

Contents

Rulemaking

Q. Did districts have an opportunity to provide input on the Education Accountability Act rules?
A. Throughout the fall and winter of 2009, the department collaborated with stakeholders on the development of the rules. Among others, these stakeholders included the advisory committee, which includes representatives from key stakeholder groups across the state, the Technical Advisory Panel for Longitudinal Growth and the Commissioner's Superintendent Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from each regional superintendent group and BOCES, as well as the Colorado Association of School Executives and the Colorado Association of School Boards. The proposed rules were submitted to the state board in December and the department accepted written comments on the proposed rules through the end of March. The state board approved the rules on April 15, 2010. The department has also continued to solicit feedback from stakeholders through the first year of implementing the accountability rules.

Q. Did the department share a draft of the performance framework before the state board hearing on the rules in March?
A. No, the performance framework was still in the development stages at that point. The department did provide notice that the framework would:
* align school and district performance framework reports;
* place greatest weight on academic growth and postsecondary and workforce readiness; and
* use the most recent year of data as well as the most recent three years of data.

District and School Accreditation

Q. Who accredits districts? Who accredits schools?
A. The department assigns districts to an accreditation category based on the district performance framework. The department assigns schools to a plan type based on the school performance framework. The district and school performance frameworks evaluate a district's and school's attainment on the key performance indicators of academic achievement, academic growth, academic gaps, and postsecondary and workforce readiness.

Districts will continue to accredit their schools. They may do so using the State's performance framework or using their own more extensive or stringent framework. In either case, the State's evaluation of both district and school performance will be guided using a single, consistent framework based on the same four key performance indicators. For more information, please refer to the District Accountability Handbook at:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/StateAccountabilityPolicyGuidance.asp.

Q. Are accreditation categories for schools (assigned by districts) the same as the accreditation categories for districts (assigned by the state)? If they are different, what does the district need to do?
A. No, accreditation categories for schools (assigned by districts) do not need to be the same as those for districts (assigned by the state). However, districts are encouraged to use the same categories. Each district's system for accrediting its schools must emphasize school attainment on the four statewide performance indicators and may, in the local school board's discretion, include additional accreditation indicators and measures adopted by the district. If a district chooses to use a school performance framework for accrediting schools that is different from the state's school performance framework for assigning plan types, the district's framework and the additional evidence used to evaluate the district's schools will need to be submitted to CDE. See Submitting School Accreditation and Requests to Reconsider.

Q. How much latitude do districts have in developing their own performance framework or accreditation process for their schools?
A. Districts are responsible for accrediting their schools in a manner that emphasizes school attainment on the four statewide performance indicators and are encouraged to use the state's school performance framework. Districts may, in the local school board's discretion, include additional accreditation indicators and measures adopted by the district. Districts' performance frameworks must place the greatest weight on growth (for all schools) and postsecondary and workforce readiness (for high schools), and must meet or exceed state rigor. If the district's performance framework differs from the state's performance framework, the district's framework and the additional evidence used to evaluate the district's schools will need to be submitted to CDE. See Submitting School Accreditation and Requests to Reconsider.

Q. Will the accreditation contracts be revised?
A. The state board will enter into an accreditation contract with each local school board and with the institute board. Each contract will have a term of one year and shall be automatically renewed each year as long as the district or the institute remains in the accreditation category of "Accredited with Distinction," "Accredited," or "Accredited with Improvement Plan." Districts on "Priority Improvement" or "Turnaround" will submit a contract to the State Board annually. To access the state's model accreditation contract, please visit: http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/StateAccountabilityPolicyGuidance.asp.

Q. How are the school performance framework reports distributed to the public?
A. Districts and schools receive a preliminary plan assignment on the draft school performance framework report by August 15 through CEDAR, and a final plan assignment following State Board approval in December. The department then posts each district and school performance framework report on School*View* for public review. Superintendents are encouraged to share preliminary copies of their performance framework report with their district and school staff (e.g., assessment coordinator, principal) as they deem appropriate, but the actual framework results for each school will not be posted publically until they are finalized.

Plan Implementation and Review
Q. How many districts and schools are expected to fall into each plan category?
A. In the first year of district and school performance frameworks, the department assigned approximately 5 percent of districts and schools to a Turnaround plan and approximately 10 percent of districts and schools to a Priority Improvement plan. The remainder of districts and schools will be identified to develop and implement an Improvement plan (approximately 25 percent of districts and schools) or a Performance plan (approximately 60% of districts and schools). In the following years, the cut-points to earn each accreditation category or plan type assignment will be baselined on the first year of the district and school performance framework reports, so

distributions can shift. The department may adjust the cut-points when it observes significant changes in the system.

Q. What timeline should districts and schools follow in developing and submitting plans?
A. The table below outlines the timeline for releasing district and school performance framework results and for district and school plan submissions. By August 15, CDE will release preliminary district accreditation ratings and preliminary school plan assignments. By November 15, CDE will finalize accreditation ratings, and, no later than December, the state board will finalize school plan assignments. Those plans that require department review (Priority Improvement and Turnaround plans, and those identified for improvement or corrective action through ESEA Title I, IIA and/or III) are due to CDE by January 15. All plans will be due April 15 for publication on School*View*. The expectation, however, is that districts and schools begin planning in the fall and that, at a minimum, plans will be 18-month plans that carry over into the following school year. This timeline was created with stakeholder input and is designed to align with the ESEA improvement planning timeline for Title I, IIA, and III.

Aug. 15	CDE releases draft DPF and SPF results with an initial district accreditation rating and initial school plan type assignment.
Oct. 15	Deadline for districts to submit school accreditation ratings to CDE. Deadline for districts to submit Requests to Reconsider district accreditation rating or school plan type assignments to CDE if they disagree with CDE's initial accreditation rating or plan type assignment.
Nov. 15	CDE finalizes district accreditation ratings and recommends school plan type assignments to the State Board.
December	State Board finalizes school plan type assignments. CDE publishes final DPF and SPF reports on SchoolView.
Jan. 15	Deadline for districts to submit district and school UIPs to CDE for: - Districts on Priority Improvement or Turnaround - Districts identified for improvement or corrective action through ESEA Title I, IIA, and/or III - Schools on Priority Improvement or Turnaround
Apr. 15	Deadline for districts to submit/re-submit district and school UIPs to CDE.
Summer	CDE publishes final district and school UIPs on School*View.*

Q. When do school and district plans go into effect?
A. District plans are due January 15 for districts "Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan" or "Accredited with Turnaround Plan," or districts identified for improvement under NCLB Title I, IIA and/or III. School plans are due to CDE by January 15 for review for schools assigned a Priority Improvement plan or a Turnaround plan, and/or due to districts for review for schools on NCLB Title IA School Improvement, Corrective Action, or Restructuring. All district and school plans are due to CDE by April for publication on School*View*.

The expectation is that districts and schools begin planning in the fall and that, at a minimum, plans will be 18-month plans that carry over into the following school year. Districts and schools should begin putting in place the processes and preparation required to effectively implement their plans along this timeline as soon as they deem necessary.

All schools and districts are now expected to use the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) template. The template has recently been updated and is available on the CDE website at:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/UnifiedImprovementPlanning.asp. Since there are minimal changes in the template, schools and districts that used the template last year should be able to cut and paste their plans

into the current template easily. The expectation is that the plan be updated and adjusted where necessary, though.

Q. Is there a limit to how long a school can continue to implement a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan?
A. A school will not be permitted to implement a Priority Improvement plan and/or Turnaround plan for longer than a total of five consecutive school years before the district is required to restructure or close the school. The calculation of the total of five consecutive school years will commence July 1 during the summer immediately following the fall in which the school is first notified that it is required to implement a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan.

Q. What happens if a district disagrees with the department's initial recommendation for which type of plan a school should implement?
A. The accountability rules specify that if a district disagrees with the department's initial recommendation and would like the state to review its recommendation in light of other evidence, the district may submit such evidence for the department's consideration. The district would submit its own recommendation for the appropriate plan type and a statement about the extent to which the school has effectively implemented its school plan during the previous academic school year, including information about specific improvements, evidence of outcomes, changes and interventions implemented and the extent to which the school has met implementation benchmarks. For schools that the department has initially assigned to a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan, the district would need to submit valid and reliable data demonstrating the progress the school has made in improving its performance and in meeting statewide and local targets, including evidence from approved third-party reviews. All information from the district must be received by CDE by October 15. See the CDE guidance on Submitting School Accreditation and Requests to Reconsider.

Q. What will CDE consider for additional data?
A.
See the CDE guidance on Submitting School Accreditation and Requests to Reconsider.

Q. If a district successfully presents additional evidence to support a change in a school's plan type assignment, how will that be noted on the school performance framework report?
A. If a district successfully presents additional evidence that the state board deems significant enough to change a school's plan type, then the school's final plan assignment will be changed on its school performance framework report. The school performance framework report will be publicly reported on School*View*, and will display only the final plan assignment, together with a notation that the plan assignment was changed, and the additional evidence submitted by the district.

Q. Local school boards have not previously created nor implemented district or school improvement plans. Why is this now their responsibility?
A. By law, local boards must ensure that their districts and schools create, adopt and implement the type of improvement plan required by the state board or department. School boards are ultimately accountable for their district or school's performance. School boards may, however, choose to delegate this responsibility to those they see best suited for the work, including district or school leadership and staff.

Q. Who will be on the State Review Panel that will review district and school Priority Improvement and Turnaround plans?
A. The commissioner is responsible for recruiting an appropriate number of highly qualified persons to serve when needed on the State Review Panel. The commissioner is required to select persons on the basis of demonstrated expertise in one or more of the following fields:

- School district or school leadership or governance;
- Standards-based elementary and secondary curriculum instruction and assessment;
- Instructional data management and analysis;
- School district, school or program evaluation;
- Educational program management;
- Teacher leadership;
- Organization management or school district and public school governance.
- School district or school budgeting and finance;
- Any other field that the commissioner deems to be relevant to the review and evaluation of school district, Institute or public school performance and improvement planning (§22-11-205, C.R.S.).

Recommendations for membership should be emailed to Jhon Penn, Executive Director of Field Services at penn_j@cde.state.co.us.

Q. Where can I access the district and school Unified Improvement Plan template?
A. The Unified Improvement Plan template can be accessed at:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/UnifiedImprovementPlanningTemplates.asp
Q. Are there changes to the district and school Unified Improvement Plan templates in 2011-12?
A. Yes, there are minimal changes. Changes to the district and school Unified Improvement Plan template are summarized here: http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/Downloads/RevisionsUIP.pdf.

Q. Where can I access previously submitted district and school Unified Improvement Plans?
A. Improvement plans can be access at http://schoolview.org/performance.asp. Click on the district or school name, then click on "Improvement Plan" in the reports section.

Q. Will the Unified Improvement Plan suffice for a school's Title I School-wide or Targeted Assistance Plan? Will schools have to write multiple plans (a unified plan, a targeted assistance plan, and a consolidated application) each year?
A. The Unified Improvement Plan template for schools works in tandem with the NCLB requirements for a Title I School-wide or a Targeted Assistance plan. Given that schools are expected to engage in an annual improvement planning process, the template will help the school to document that process. However, the school is still responsible for implementing and documenting all required elements of a school plan. Title I schools have the option of completing an addendum in the UIP for Schoolwide or Targeted Assistance programs or embedding the requirements in the UIP as outlined in the quality criteria.

Q. Will all schools receive a plan category?
A. All schools will receive a plan category using the school performance framework report, with the exception of (1) schools that do not have CSAP-tested grades (e.g., K-2) and (2) reportable state data (e.g., new schools, schools without enough students to meet minimum reporting requirements),. Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) also receive an AEC school performance framework report that is distinct from the traditional school performance framework report.

Q. If I am an Alternative Education Campus or a K-2 school and do not receive a plan type assignment via the traditional School Performance Framework, do I need to write a school improvement plan?
A. All schools must write a school improvement plan, using the Unified Improvement Plan template. For more information about how plan assignments are given to Alternative Education Campuses, please visit: http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/StateAccountabilityAECs.asp . For K-2 schools, if the department does not assign a school plan type assignment, it is the district's responsibility to recommend a school plan type to the State using the district's accreditation framework. For details, see the CDE guidance on Submitting School Accreditation and Requests to Reconsider. .

Q. How do the 1003(g) Tiered Intervention Grants (TIG) relate to CDE's performance framework?
A. There is a high degree of overlap between the school performance framework ratings and the analysis used to identify the persistently lowest-performing schools for TIG 1003(g) grant funding. In other words, almost all schools identified for 1003(g) TIG would also be identified for Turnaround plans by the School Performance Framework report.

However, while the analyses used to identify schools for 1003(g) funding and the SPF plan assignments are similar, they do not perfectly match. First, the school performance framework report uses several additional metrics that the TIG analysis does not. Specifically, the TIG analysis does not include any growth gaps metrics, dropout rate, or ACT composite scores in the calculations. Instead, any high school with a dropout rate less than 60 percent for the three most recent years is automatically flagged as Tier 2. Second, the TIG analysis is conducted with no student exclusions, using only Reading and Math CSAP data. Finally, the list of TIG 1003(g) schools represents only a select subset of the total Colorado school population. The school performance framework identifies the lowest 5 percent of schools of nearly all schools in the state (with only a handful of schools with a small N excluded), whereas the TIG status identifies the lowest 5 percent of *eligible* Title I schools. Title I eligibility, AYP performance, and School Improvement/Corrective Action/Restructuring conditions established by the U.S. Department of Education significantly limit the number of eligible schools included in the TIG analyses. For these reasons, identification as Turnaround under one system and not another does not invalidate either system, and significant overlap remains.

Q. Will there be sufficient resources to support the districts and schools that are required under the State's accountability system to implement significant interventions?
A. The lack of state funding to support districts and schools remains a major concern of the department. The Statewide System of Accountability and Support differentiates support according to performance and need, whereby demonstration of high performance results in greater autonomy and demonstration of high need results in greater support.

Districts may use their formula ESEA dollars to supplement improvement efforts. This is especially true when a district and/or school is identified for Improvement under Titles I, IIA and/or III. When using ESEA dollars in new ways, care must be taken to avoid supplanting local dollars. Furthermore, districts must target federal dollars – including Title I funds that have been set aside – on activities that address the missed targets (e.g., AYP, highly qualified teachers, AMAOs). Any questions should be directed to the Office of Federal Programs Administration at CDE.

Q. How does the Unified Improvement Plan align with other requests for budgets, for example the consolidated application?
The Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) documents the planning process. While resources are identified for the major improvement activities in the UIP, it is not a true budget. The UIP and related budgets should be aligned, however. For example, CDE will review the Consolidated Application to ensure that it is aligned with the approved UIP. The budget should build upon the activities named in the UIP and provide additional detail about the associated expenses.

Q. When will districts and schools know what their targets are?
A. Districts and schools set their own annual targets. Targets should be ambitious and attainable, and relay how they will lead the district or school to meeting or exceeding state expectations. CDE holds districts and schools accountable to their final district and school performance framework reports, as well as to any ESEA expectations (e.g., Annual Yearly Progress).

Q. Are there changes to the district and school performance framework reports in 2011-12?
A. Yes, there are minimal changes. Changes to the district and school performance framework reports are summarized here: http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/Downloads/RevisionsDPFSPF.pdf.

Q. How can I access prior years' district and school performance framework reports?

A. You can access 2010 district and school performance framework reports at http://schoolview.org/performance.asp. Click on a district or school name then click on "1 Year DPF/SPF Report" or "3 Year DPF/SPF Report" under Reports.

Q. How will schools that have only non-CSAP grades (K-2) be evaluated on the new school performance framework?
A. Schools that have only non-CSAP grades (K-2) will not receive a school performance framework report from CDE at this time. The department invites districts with a strong evaluation system in place for these schools to share their evaluation methodology with the department as we consider a K-2 performance framework.

Q. How will Alternative Education Campuses be evaluated on the new school performance framework?
A. Schools that are designated as Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) will receive a school performance framework report as all other schools do, with data on each of the performance indicators. However, given their unique populations, AECs will not receive a plan type assignment based on the results of the traditional school performance framework report. AECs and districts are responsible for submitting alternative accountability measures to CDE to determine which type of plan the AEC should implement. For more information about how plan types will be assigned to Alternative Education Campuses, please visit: http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/StateAccountabilityAECs.asp.

Q. Will Alternative Education Campuses be evaluated on the district performance framework?
A. The district performance framework report will roll up data at the student level rather than at the school level. As such, all students, including those attending Alternative Education Campuses, will be included on the district performance framework report.

Q. Will charter schools within a district be held accountable in the same way as non-charter schools in that district?
A. The state's school performance framework will be applied uniformly to charter and non-charter schools. Districts are free to evaluate their schools, for accreditation purposes, in a manner that is consistent with, but may go beyond, the State's evaluation framework. Districts may choose to evaluate their charter schools in a manner that is different from the way that their non-charter schools are evaluated. This should be clarified in the contracts negotiated between districts and their charter schools.

Q. How does the postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR) indicator apply to schools that serve only grades K-8?
A. The measures that the state will initially use to evaluate performance on the PWR indicator (ACT scores, graduation rates and dropout rates) only apply to high schools.

Q. Are there any auxiliary items included on the school performance framework? Will they be assurances in the framework, as in the past, or are they scored?
A. At the school level, safety and finance components are not reported on the department's school performance framework report. At the district level, the safety and finance components will be assurances. Districts that do not meet safety and finance requirements will default to Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan (or remain

Accredited with Turnaround Plan if already there) until they meet compliance requirements. Districts have 90 days after receiving notice from CDE to meet compliance requirements. Safety and finance data will also be published on the School*View* Data Center.

Q. Is the Colorado English Language Assessment (CELA) included in the performance frameworks?
A. At this point, CELA results are not included in the performance frameworks. CELApro student level growth data is now available to districts via CEDAR. In the coming year, CDE will research incorporating English language proficiency data into future versions of the performance frameworks, with input from stakeholders.

Q. Why do schools and districts have a one-year performance framework report and a three-year performance framework report?
A. Schools receive results for two sets of school performance framework reports:
> (1) The most recent year of data
> (2) The most recent three years of data

CDE produces a report on the basis of three years of data to enable more schools to be considered within the same performance framework. Some small schools may not have public data on the basis of a single year because of small N counts (the number of students for which there is valid data) for some performance indicator metrics, but a report on the basis of three years of data increases the N count.

 Only one of the two sets of results (one-year or three-year) will be the official accreditation rating or school plan type assignment: (1) the one under which the district/school has ratings on a higher number of the performance indicators, or, (2) if the reports have ratings for an equal number of indicators, the one under which the district/school received a higher total number of points and accreditation rating or plan type.

Q. Can a district choose to use only the one-year or only the three-year school performance framework report?
A. By default, CDE will select only one of the two sets of results as the official report that determines the school's plan assignment (the one under which the school has ratings on a higher number of performance indicators, or, if it has ratings on an equal number of indicators, the one under which it received higher points overall). However, just as with any district accreditation framework, districts have up until October 15 to submit additional indicators and measures of school performance. As such, districts can choose to use the three-year performance framework to determine their schools' accreditation categories and report that to the state. In this case, the district will need to clarify when and if this results in a misalignment in plan type assignments. District frameworks must always meet or exceed the state's framework.

Q. When three years of data are used, are the three years combined, averaged, or is each year considered individually?
When using three years of data, the way the data is rolled up depends on the performance indicator:

Academic Achievement **and** *Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness*:
The school performance framework report uses a weighted average of the three one-year values for the three most recent years. For example, if a school had five out of ten students proficient in writing in 2008, three out of four students proficient in 2009, and one out of three students proficient in 2010, the framework calculation does not just take the straight average of .50, .75 and .33. Those averages are weighted by the number of students in each denominator so that the final percentage accurately reflects the proficiency profile of that school over that three-year period.

The Academic Achievement dataset reflects all students enrolled before October 1, who tested in a school in any one of the three prior years. Students that were continuously enrolled in a school for all of these years would have their data from all of those years in the same dataset. In other words, the same students may be represented multiple times within the data set.

Academic Growth and *Academic Growth Gaps*
The school performance framework report uses a three-year rollup of data that combines all the data, from those three years, into one "pile" from that school, and performs calculations on that dataset just as if it had been a single year of data. For example, the set of the school's student growth percentiles from all grades in 2008, 2009 and 2010 in mathematics are put into one data set and ordered; the middle value of that data set is the school's three-year median growth percentile.

Likewise, the adequate median growth percentile for a school is based on the adequate growth percentiles of all its students, for a given time period. Those values themselves are based on multiple years of past data and multiple years that students have before them, to catch up or keep up.

This dataset reflects all students enrolled before October 1, who tested in a school, in any one of the three years (2008, 2009 and 2010). Students that were continuously enrolled in a school for all of these years would have their data, from all of those years, in the same dataset. In other words, the same students are represented multiple times within the dataset.

Q. Is adequate growth calculated based on one, two, or three years of data?
A. The adequate growth percentile for a school is based on the adequate growth percentiles of all its students for a given time period. Those values themselves are based on multiple years of past data, and the potentially multiple years that students have before them to catch up or keep up at the time of testing.

Q. Will the adequate growth percentiles be subject-specific? Are we going to see many more schools not making adequate growth in math as opposed to reading and writing?
A. Median growth percentiles and adequate growth percentiles are reported on the school performance framework report by content area, so you can easily see what a school's growth was, and what the level of overall growth would have had to be for its typical (median) student to reach or maintain proficiency. If some content areas provide greater challenges, either because they represent more difficult subjects or because the standards have been set higher, then the difference between observed and adequate growth will be greater for those areas. For example, the preliminary run of the school performance framework report indicates that the adequate growth percentiles for high schools in mathematics are high; this suggests that few students are on track to reach the high standards set for high school mathematics, especially with a limited number of years in which to "catch up." Although few high schools might attain adequate growth in mathematics, this reflects the current reality of the situation.

Q. Why was adequate growth added to the performance frameworks?
A. This change was required by law. The department recognizes that students/schools/districts start at varying achievement levels, and that measuring growth is critical to evaluating how well the state, district, or school is doing at improving academic outcomes. However, measuring growth alone, without any indication if that growth is sufficient in moving students towards the state's end goal of proficiency does not tell us how meaningful the growth is. Measuring the adequate growth needed on the performance framework reports allows for the department to arrive at an evaluation of the amount of growth a school/district made with its students, whether that growth was good enough for the typical student to catch up or keep up, and how that growth compares to that of other districts and schools.

Q. What are the exclusion rules used in the performance frameworks?
A. October 1 New to School is the exclusion rule currently implemented. If a student was not enrolled by October 1 in the school where he/she took CSAP later that spring, his/her data are not included in that school's performance framework report calculations.

Q. What is the analysis used to determine the cut-points on the performance frameworks?
A. In the case of achievement level, the cuts are based on an empirical distribution, baselined in the 2009-10 school year. In the case of growth and growth gaps, both empirical and qualitative considerations were taken into account. In the case of ACT scores, the cuts were based both on Colorado's empirical results as well as ACT's reported criterion level for entry into college without need for remediation. In the case of graduation rates, both federal guidance and a consideration of Colorado's state goals were used. In the case of dropout rate, a consideration of Colorado's state goals was used.

Q. How does the school performance framework report handle varying N sizes?
A. N refers to the number of students included in each performance indicator and/or measure. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), each of the school performance framework report's performance indicators and its measures requires a minimum N count in order for the data to be publicly reportable so that students are not identifiable and that the results are reliable. The school performance framework report uses the minimum N counts below.

Performance Indicator: Measure	Minimum N
Academic Achievement: Reading, writing, mathematics, science	16
Academic Growth: Reading, writing, mathematics	20
Academic Growth Gaps: Reading, writing, mathematics by disaggregated student group	20
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness: Graduation rate, Dropout rate	16
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness: Average Colorado ACT Composite Score	16
(*Test Participation Rate:* Reading, writing, mathematics, science)	20

If a school does not meet the minimum N for a metric, the data for that metric are not reported. The school will receive a rating of "N/A" for that particular metric, and the points earned will be 0 out of 0 eligible points.

If a school does not meet the minimum N count for any of the metrics within a performance indicator, the school is not eligible for the points in that indicator. This reduces the overall framework points for which the school is eligible, and the school earns 0 out of 0 framework points on that indicator. However, because the points are removed from both the points earned and the points eligible, the school's score is not negatively affected. Note that:
  (1) If a school meets the minimum N count for at least one measure within a performance indicator, it will receive a rating on that performance indicator.
  (2) Although schools receive a 1-year and 3-year report of their data, only one of the two sets results in the official plan type assignment: it is the scenario under which the school has data on a higher number of the performance indicators, or, if it has data for an equal number of indicators, the one under which it received a higher total number of points.

Q. If student count ("N") is correlated with median growth percentile, aren't large schools disadvantaged in reaching growth rates above the 50th percentile?
A. The median student growth percentiles calculated by CDE are based on the observed data and are, as such, descriptions of reality. The median is an accurate portrayal of that school's growth for all its students. There are numerous examples of large schools with growth percentiles well above as well as well below 50. Small schools

have much more volatility in their data because of the potential influence of only a few data points, so they tend to have median student growth percentiles that are much more variable. For this reason the state uses a three-year data aggregation on the school performance framework, mostly for the benefit of smaller schools whose data might be sparser or more volatile.

Q. How do we manage the disconnect that can occur within high school performance framework reports, where postsecondary measures such as graduation and dropout rates are weighted as heavily as growth, and the school is trending in different directions on these indicators? For example, what if a school has high graduation rates, but has declining performance in mathematics?
A. The performance framework rolls up statewide data in a way in that the department believes is most fair for all schools and that reflects growth and postsecondary and workforce readiness as the most important indicators of performance. The state's performance framework is, however, a floor for state performance expectations, not a ceiling. Districts should adjust the state's framework or adopt their own framework as they deem necessary to accurately accredit their schools. If doing so results in a misalignment in the type of plan assigned to the school, then the district should submit their proposed plan assignment and supporting evidence to the state by October 15. Conflicting data or trends in different directions may signal a starting point for deeper data analysis and root cause identification in the improvement planning process.

Additional Resources

Q. Where can I find additional resources?
A. Additional information about the state and federal accountability systems can be found at:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/index.asp.

District staff members also are encouraged to contact the CDE staff listed at:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/Support.asp.