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**ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS AND ACADEMIC GROWTH:
NEW MEASURES OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

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With the passage of landmark federal education legislation last fall, the "No Child Left Behind Act," the Congress and President Bush have given federal direction to an era of educational accountability. Policymakers and educators across the country are learning and discussing what the new federal requirements mean for their states. Links between student assessments and accountability have consequences for states, school leaders, and students.

A leading principle behind the new legislation, "adequate yearly progress," has been prescribed previously under federal Title I requirements, but now has wider applicability and consequences for states. This issue brief examines provisions for adequate yearly progress (AYP) in the "No Child Left Behind Act," and the context those provisions provide for legislation passed by the Colorado General Assembly in 2002.

Adequate Yearly Progress

The "No Child Left Behind Act" requires each state to establish a single statewide accountability system that includes baseline data and a time line for demonstrating AYP. All students must meet state proficiency levels in reading and math within 12 years, with a baseline school year of 2001-02.

While individual states are authorized to define AYP, the new federal legislation stipulates that the definition must be:

- based primarily on academic indicators such

as assessments;

- technically rigorous; and
- applied to school, district, and state levels of progress.

In addition to assessments, at least two additional *valid* and *reliable* indicators, including graduation rates for secondary schools, must be integrated into measurement of AYP.

The new federal provisions on AYP further require that its measurement be disaggregated for certain categories of students. Specifically, separate achievement objectives for reading and math must be met not only at the school, district, and state levels, but also by each of the following subgroups:

- economically disadvantaged students;
- students from major ethnic and racial backgrounds;
- students with disabilities; and
- English language learners.

School Improvement and Corrective Action

The new Title I provisions also establish consequences for schools and school districts that fail to meet targets for AYP. A school that fails to make AYP for two consecutive years will be identified for school improvement and will be required to develop a two-year plan for improvement. At this point, the school district must provide the students at the school the option of attending another public school not identified for improvement, as well as the

transportation to exercise that option.

If a school fails to make AYP for a third consecutive year, students and parents at that school will have the opportunity to seek supplemental services such as tutoring, which will be paid out of the district's Title I monies. After four and five years without meeting AYP goals, a school will be subject to specific corrective actions and restructuring, respectively.

Academic Growth Pilot Program

As in other states, Colorado policymakers are becoming educated about the new federal legislation and discussing the implications and requirements for schools. They will also be considering what the provisions of recent state legislation will bring to bear in meeting those new requirements.

In 2001, the General Assembly required the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to establish the capability for longitudinal analysis of student assessments within the current state data reporting system. A year later, the General Assembly passed legislation that builds upon existing accountability requirements and provides a new framework for measurements of progress. In addition to the new academic improvement ratings that schools will receive for the 2001-02 school year, school districts will have the opportunity to participate in a pilot program next year and to anticipate the issuance of academic growth ratings and student academic growth information reports by the 2005-06 school year.

House Bill 02-1349 initially creates a pilot program in which school districts may choose to participate and appropriates \$229,000 from the State Education Fund for its implementation. For the 2002-03 school year, schools participating in the pilot program will be assigned a rating based on a composite of student academic growth on the CSAP assessments in reading, with growth in writing and math included in subsequent years.

Every school will receive an academic growth rating beginning with the 2005-06 school year. The CDE will determine specified levels of annual academic growth in reading, writing, and math, with

the State Board of Education then adopting rules establishing categories of "excellent," "high," "average," "low," and "unsatisfactory" academic growth for schools.

The new law allows school districts to determine whether to include a school's academic growth rating as an addendum to the school's accountability report, but does not incorporate the rating into the school accountability report. School accountability reports will continue to reflect academic performance ratings, as well as academic improvement ratings of "significant improvement," "improvement," "stable," "decline," or "significant decline."

The other component of Colorado's new academic growth program concerns student reports. Beginning with the pilot program, and continuing in subsequent years, each school district will receive individual student academic growth information reports. School districts will be required to implement policies on the use of the student reports and to prepare student academic growth profiles for teachers and parents.

In 2005, as the program is implemented statewide, the CDE will issue a report assessing the pilot program. This report will address a variety of issues, including whether academic growth effectively measures AYP and whether academic growth ratings should be included in the school accountability reports.

Considerations for Policymakers and Educators

As Colorado's assessment and accountability system continues to evolve, so too will policy considerations in regard to the implementation of AYP and the 12-year goal for student achievement.

- How do Colorado's current accreditation and accountability systems align with new federal requirements for a unitary accountability system?
- How will Colorado identify its intermediate AYP goals for the state and its AYP goals for the subgroups of students identified in the legislation?

- What are the potential impacts of federal provisions for school improvement and corrective action?