

COLORADO PUBLIC SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY



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Colorado Public School Accountability

Significant changes to federal and state law in recent years have shaped the scope and focus of reform efforts and accountability for Colorado's public schools. At the state level, education reform begun in the early 1990s has evolved into a system of standards and assessments that measures not only student achievement and workforce preparedness, but also holds districts, school administrators, and teachers accountable for the results. In addition, the most recent reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, commonly referred to as "No Child Left Behind," in 2001 imposed new requirements for states and established a stronger nexus between the federal government and the states.

State Accountability System

State Model Content Standards
(Section 22-7-406, C.R.S.)

Requirements for the adoption and implementation of model content standards signified an early phase in education reform undertaken in Colorado during the 1990s and remain an important part of the state's accountability system. New standards adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) in December 2009 detail the broad themes, ideas, and concepts that the state expects students to learn, experience, and demonstrate for postsecondary success. The new standards replace those adopted in 1994 when the state first shifted to a common statewide understanding of what schools are expected to teach. The areas include:

- dance;
- drama and theatre arts;
- comprehensive health and physical education;
- English language proficiency;
- mathematics;
- music;
- reading, writing, and communicating;
- science;
- social studies;
- visual arts; and
- world languages.

Local school districts are required to adopt content standards that meet or exceed the state model content standards and to align their curricula accordingly.

In addition, a Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) description was adopted in June 2009 by the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE). PWR is defined as the knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential for high school graduates to be prepared to enter college and the workforce and to compete in the global economy. To be designated as postsecondary and workforce ready, secondary school students must demonstrate that the following content knowledge and learning and behavior skills have been achieved without the need for remedial instruction or training:

- I. Content Knowledge
 - literacy;
 - mathematical sciences;
 - science;
 - social studies and social sciences; and
 - arts and humanities.

- II. Learning and Behavior Skills
 - critical thinking and problem solving;
 - find and use information/information technology;
 - creativity and innovation;
 - global and cultural awareness;
 - civic responsibility;
 - work ethic;
 - personal responsibility;
 - communication; and
 - collaboration.

Demonstration of students' achievement includes: the completion of increasingly challenging, engaging, and coherent academic work and experiences; and the achievement of proficiency shown by PWR assessments and other relevant materials that document a student's PWR.

Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)
(Section 22-7-409, C.R.S.)

The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), implemented through statute in 1997, serves as a cornerstone of the state's accountability system. The administration of statewide assessments has been seen as a "key anchor" in the implementation of standards-based reform, "with the focus of education including not just what teachers teach, but what students learn." The primary purpose of the assessment program is to determine the level at which Colorado students meet the Colorado Model Content Standards in the content areas assessed. The data is used to keep abreast of individual student, school, and district progress toward attaining higher student achievement levels.

CSAP and students with special needs. The CSAP provides for the participation of almost all special education students by allowing accommodations for the test administration. According to CDE, the process under federal law requiring state policymakers and local educators to assess the individual needs of special education students through an individualized education program (IEP) results in determinations about whether a student requires testing accommodations. Accommodations are meant to give special education students an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, while retaining the integrity of the assessment. Accommodations could include "presentation accommodations," such as a qualified person reading questions aloud to a student or providing large print editions of tests and instructional materials to students with visual impairments. "Response accommodations," might allow the use of a dictionary or of a scribe to record student's response in written form.

Students who are unable to participate in the general assessments may be assessed on literacy, math, and science skills through the CSAP alternate, or CSAP-A. As a performance-based assessment, the CSAP-A allows students to demonstrate their skills, which are observed by the test administrator. For example, a student participating in the CSAP-A may listen to a story and be asked to respond to reading comprehension questions. According to the CDE, performance indicators for the CSAP-A are intended to measure how independently a student is able to perform each activity.

CSAP administration. State law prescribes a spring administration window for CSAP testing. Table 1 provides the CSAP testing schedule for 2011.

Table 1
2011 CSAP Administration Schedule

Content Area	Grade Level	Testing Period
CSAP-A	Grades 3-10	February 2, 2011 through March 25, 2011
Reading (English and Spanish)	Grade 3	February 22, 2011 through March 4, 2011
Reading (including Spanish for grade 4) Writing (including Spanish for grades 3 and 4) Math Science	Grades 4 -10 Grades 3 -10 Grades 3 -10 Grades 5, 8, 10	March 14, 2011 through April 15, 2011
ACT assessment	Grade 11	April 27, 2011

Source: Colorado Department of Education

Revision process for new assessments. CDE assembled an assessment stakeholder advisory board to help frame the issues around the current state assessment system, recommend improvements, and define the work of potential subcommittee groups. To carry out their work, the advisory board created five subcommittees to study and provide recommendations on: school readiness, postsecondary and workforce readiness, summative assessments, formative/interim assessments, and assessments for special populations. In addition, CDE presented to the advisory board the results from public surveys regarding assessment revision to assist in formulating their recommendations. The SBE 's adoption of the attributes of the new assessment system in December 2010 was the result of the work of the advisory board, subcommittees, and community input. CDE anticipates that the new assessment will be administered in spring 2014. Table 2 provides a timeline of the assessment transition plan.

Table 2
Colorado Assessment Transition Plan
Spring 2011 - Spring 2014

Date	Action
Spring 2011	Students will be tested using the current CSAP and a request for proposals (RFP) for the new assessment system will be released.
Fall 2011	The award to the vendor of the new assessment system will be announced.
Spring 2012	CSAP transition test begins using current test items that align to the new standards adopted in 2009.
Spring 2013	CSAP transition test administration continues and the pilot of the new assessment begins.
Spring 2014	The new assessment is administered to all students.

Source: Colorado Department of Education

Colorado Basic Literacy Act
 (Part 5 of Article 7 of Title 22, C.R.S.)

One component of Colorado's accountability system promotes student literacy and specifically targets the development of reading skills during students' first school years. The Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA) requires school districts annually to assess the reading skills of students in kindergarten and grades one through three. The State Board of Education has approved three assessments for school districts to measure student literacy levels. Upon administration of assessments, school districts must develop an individual literacy plan (ILP) for any student who is reading below grade level.

The CDE tracks student results on assessments administered under the CBLA. Pursuant to state law, school districts must report student results, specifically the number and percentage of:

- third grade students who read at or above grade level;
- students who have an individual literacy plan or are enrolled in an intensive literacy program; and

- students who have increased their literacy and reading comprehension levels by two or more grade levels during one year of instruction.

Colorado English Language Assessment Program
 (Article 24 of Title 22, C.R.S.)

Both federal and state law require the assessment of English language learners in order to determine their level of English proficiency and to inform their appropriate placement in language instruction programs. Beginning with the 2005-06 school year, the Colorado English Language Assessment (CELA) Program implemented new state requirements to standardize school district assessment of English language learners. The program actually utilizes two tests. The **CELA placement test** is given to any enrolling K-12 student who has been identified through the state's Home Language Survey as having a primary home language other than English. This assessment allows school districts to determine a student's level of English language proficiency and to decide appropriate instructional options.

The **CELA proficiency test** must be administered to any student who is receiving language support services and has been identified through the placement test as Non-English Proficient (NEP) or Limited English Proficient (LEP). Based on content standards, the proficiency test evaluates students' listening, speaking, writing, oral language, and comprehension skills and is used to compare and track student progress, assess instructional options, and evaluate language support services at the school and district level.

National Assessment of Educational Progress
 (NAEP)

Background. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a longstanding national assessment program that allows comparison of student performance among states, as well as evaluation of student performance nationally over time. National and state-level results are reported based on representative samples of student populations selected to take the assessments. While different academic subjects have been tested over the program's 30-plus year history, since 2003, fourth and eighth graders are assessed biennially

in math and reading. Additional testing may vary by testing cycle. While other portions of the program are considered optional, federal law requires states receiving federal Title I funds to participate in the reading and math assessment for fourth and eighth grade students, with the NAEP program selecting the sample of schools to take part.

The NAEP program also includes "long-term trend" math and reading assessments, which are administered only once every four years to students ages 9, 13, and 17. While the testing instruments used in the main NAEP assessment change periodically to reflect an evolution in curriculum and instruction, the content and testing frameworks for the math and science long-term trend assessments have stayed largely the same since the 1970s. This portion of the program allows for evaluation of national student performance over time.

2009 and 2011 NAEP assessments. Selected Colorado schools participated in the NAEP program during the 2008-09 school year. In the spring of 2009, approximately 2,600 fourth grade student representing 154 public schools and 2,700 eighth grade students representing 121 public schools participated in the federally required reading and math assessments. According to CDE, the percentage of Colorado fourth grade students performing at or above the NAEP basic level on these assessments was 72 percent, which exceeded the national average of 66 percent. In addition, the percentage of Colorado eighth grade students performing at or above the NAEP basic level on these assessments was 78 percent, which exceeded the national average of 74 percent. Selected Colorado schools will participate in the NAEP program during the 2010-11 school year. Table 3 indicates the subject areas, grade levels and schedule for the 2010-11 assessments.

**Table 3
2010-11 NAEP Administration Schedule**

Content Area	Students Assessed	Testing Period
Math Reading	Grade 4	January 31, 2011 through February 25, 2011
Math Reading Science Writing	Grade 8	January 31, 2011 through February 25, 2011
Writing Economics	Grade 12	January 31, 2011 through February 25, 2011

Source: Colorado Department of Education

Colorado Growth Model
(Section 22-11-202, C.R.S.)

The Colorado Growth Model is the tool that the state uses to measure adequate student achievement and growth on statewide assessments, currently the CSAP, each year and student academic growth over time. The growth model is used to determine not only school and school district performance on state accountability goals, but also to measure the state's ability to meet federal accountability standards pertaining to adequate yearly progress (AYP). Starting in 2014-15, educators will also be evaluated, in part, on student performance and growth, as part of the state accountability system. A student is considered to be achieving adequate growth if he or she scores proficient on the CSAP or is on track to reach proficiency within three years or the tenth grade, whichever is sooner. The department uses four achievement levels to measure proficiency:

- advanced;
- proficient;
- partially proficient; and
- unsatisfactory.

Additionally, the department projects the range of a student's achievement for the following year based on high, typical, and low growth. Table 4 shows which percentile ranges correspond with the growth levels.

**Table 4
Percentile Ranges by Growth Level**

Growth Level	Percentile Range on CSAP
Low	Below 35%
Typical	35 - 65%
High	Above 65%

Longitudinal growth. For students with valid CSAP scores in a content area for two consecutive years, the department calculates longitudinal growth for each student to determine if the growth is enough for the student to be:

- "catching up," if the student was in the unsatisfactory or partially proficient category;
- "keeping up," if the student was in the proficient or advanced category; or
- "moving up," if the student was in the proficient category.

Students who are proficient or advanced for two years are automatically deemed as achieving adequate growth. Students with an achievement level of unsatisfactory or partially proficient in their first year may demonstrate proficiency in two ways:

- attain an achievement level of proficient or advanced in the second year of CSAP scores, which places a student in the keeping up or moving up categories; or
- demonstrate that they are on track to catch up to be proficient within three years or by tenth grade, whichever comes first.

School District Accreditation
(Section 22-11-202, C.R.S.)

Each year, the State Board of Education (SBE) enters into accreditation contracts with every school district and the Charter School Institute (CSI). The department determines each district's and the CSI's accreditation category based on its performance under the contract terms and recommends to the board what kind of plan should be implemented in order to meet the goals in the contract. The department monitors each district's performance on its plan and updates its annual accreditation recommendations accordingly. The contracts for districts deemed as meeting the state's performance indicators can be renewed automatically, but school districts with performance issues must have their contract reviewed and agreed upon annually.

State review panel. The commissioner appoints a state review panel to assist in implementing the state's accountability law. The review panel assists in evaluating improvement and turnaround plans and provides recommendations for corrective actions that a school district or the CSI must undertake when they are at risk of losing accreditation. State law requires that panel members be selected on the basis of demonstrated expertise in the education field, but does not set a specific size for the panel.

Accreditation contracts. All school districts are required to have an annual accreditation contract with the SBE. It must address, at a minimum, the following:

- the district's level of attainment on four key performance indicators;
- the district's adoption and implementation of its performance, improvement, priority improvement, or turnaround plan;
- the district's implementation of its system for accrediting its schools; and
- the district's overall compliance with state and federal law.

Performance indicators. By August 15 of each year, the department reviews each district's performance based on four key performance indicators:

- academic achievement;
- academic growth;
- academic growth gaps; and
- postsecondary and workforce readiness.

Academic achievement measures whether a district is meeting the state's proficiency goal, using a district's results on the CSAP and CSAP-A.

Academic growth measures student academic progress using the Colorado growth model. The state assesses a district's performance in two ways:

- how its students performed on the CSAP compared to those in other districts, referred to as normative growth; and
- whether student achievement is sufficient for a typical student to reach proficiency in three years or by the tenth grade, whichever is sooner, referred to as adequate growth.

Academic growth gaps measure the academic progress of historically disadvantaged student populations and students who are below proficient on the CSAP. This performance indicator examines normative and adequate growth of these specific student subsets:

- students eligible for free or reduced lunch as defined under the federal National School Lunch Act;
- minority students;

- students with disabilities;
- English language learners; and
- students scoring below proficient on the CSAP.

Postsecondary and workforce readiness measures a student's preparedness for college or the workforce upon graduating high school. A district's performance is rated based on its student graduation rates, dropout rates, and average Colorado ACT composite scores.

Accreditation categories. Each August 15, a district is assigned one of five accreditation categories based on its attainment on the performance indicators and its accreditation contract. Table 5 describes the five accreditation categories.

**Table 5
School District Accreditation Categories**

Accreditation Category	Definition
Accredited with Distinction	The district meets or exceeds state expectations for attainment on the performance indicators and is required to adopt and implement a performance plan.
Accredited	The district meets state expectations for attainment on the performance indicators and is required to adopt and implement a performance plan.
Accredited with Improvement Plan	The district has not met state expectations for attainment on the performance indicators and is required to adopt and implement an improvement plan.
Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan	The district has not met state expectations for attainment on the performance indicators and is required to adopt and implement a priority improvement plan.
Accredited with Turnaround Plan	The district has not met state expectations for attainment on the performance indicators and is required to adopt and implement, with the commissioner's approval, a turnaround plan.

If a school district disagrees with the initial assignment, it may submit additional performance data by October 15 for the department's consideration. The department assigns a final accreditation category by November 15. A district with an accreditation category tied to either

improvement or turnaround plans for more than five consecutive school years will lose its accreditation.

Removal of accreditation. The department may recommend that a school district or the CSI lose its accreditation if it:

- is accredited with a turnaround plan and the department determines that a school district or the institute has failed to make substantial progress under the plan;
- has been accredited with a priority improvement plan or lower for five consecutive school years; or
- has failed comply with state law pertaining to budget, financial, and accounting policies within 90 days of being notified of noncompliance, and the loss of accreditation is required to protect the interests of the students enrolled in the district schools or institute charter schools and their parents.

After the department issues a recommendation to remove accreditation, the state review panel evaluates the school district's or CSI's performance. The panel may recommend a number of actions, depending on whether it is a school district or a charter school. The review panel may recommend that a school district:

- reorganize, which may result in consolidation with another school district;
- allow a private or public entity, with the agreement of the school district, to take over the management of the entire district or of one or more district public schools;
- convert one or more district public schools into a charter school;
- grant one or more district public schools innovation school status or designate a group of schools as an innovation school zone; or
- close one or more schools.

For the CSI, the panel may recommend that:

- the institute board be abolished and that the Governor appoint a new institute board;
- a private or public entity take over the management of the institute or one or more institute schools; or
- one or more institute schools be closed.

Based on the recommendations of the department, the panel, and the commissioner, the SBE makes a final determination of accreditation. If the SBE removes a district's or the CSI's accreditation, it must inform the respective entity of its decision and the actions it is required to take in order to be accredited again. If the school district or CSI takes the required corrective actions, the SBE may reinstate its accreditation at the level it deems appropriate. A school district and the CSI have the right to appeal to the SBE before any final action is taken to remove the school district's or the institute's accreditation.

Local Accountability
(Parts 3 and 4 of Article 11 of Title 22, C.R.S.)

Two main components comprise Colorado's local accountability framework: district plans and the accreditation of district public schools. District accountability committees and school accountability committees assist in the implementation of these accountability requirements.

Accountability committees. Under state law, each local school board is required to appoint or establish a process to elect a school district accountability committee. While the local board determines the number of people on the school district accountability committee, it must include, at a minimum:

- at least three parents of students enrolled in a district public school;
- at least one teacher who is employed by the school district;
- at least one school administrator who is employed by the school district; and
- at least one person who is involved in the business community within the school district boundaries.

State law provides a school district accountability committee with the following powers and duties:

- recommending to its local school board priorities for spending school district moneys;
- advising its local school board concerning preparation of, and annually submit to the local school board recommendations regarding the contents of, a district performance, improvement, priority improvement, or turnaround plan, whichever is required based on the school district's accreditation category;

- reviewing the charter application prior to consideration by the local school board;
- providing input and recommendations on an advisory basis to principals concerning the development and use of assessment tools used for the purpose of measuring and evaluating student academic growth as it relates to teacher evaluations; and
- receiving input from each school accountability committee concerning each principal's evaluation.

Similarly, each district public school must have a school accountability committee, comprised of at least seven members as follows:

- the principal of the school or the principal's designee;
- at least one teacher who provides instruction at the school;
- at least three parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in the school;
- at least one adult member of an organization of parents, teachers, and students that is recognized by the school; and
- at least one person from the community.

Under state law, school accountability committees are charged with five specific duties:

- recommending to the principal of its school priorities for spending school moneys;
- advising the principal of the public school and, in the case of a district public school, the superintendent of the school district concerning the preparation of a school performance or improvement plan, if either is required, and to submit recommendations to the principal, and superintendent if applicable, concerning the contents of the performance or improvement plan;
- advising the local school board or the CSI concerning the preparation of a school priority improvement or turnaround plan, if either is required pursuant to state law, and to submit recommendations to the local school board or the institute concerning the contents of the priority improvement or turnaround plan;
- meeting at least quarterly to discuss whether school leadership, personnel, and infrastructure are advancing or impeding implementation of the public school's performance,

improvement, priority improvement, or turnaround plan, whichever is applicable, or other progress pertinent to the public school's accreditation contract with the local school board or the institute; and

- providing input and recommendations on an advisory basis to district accountability committees and district administration concerning principal development plans and evaluations.

District plans. School districts develop district plans based on the accreditation category they receive from the department. However, all plans must contain the following information:

- **targets:** ambitious but attainable targets that the district will attain on the four key statewide performance indicators;
- **trends:** positive and negative trends in the levels of attainment by the district on the performance indicators;
- **priority needs:** a prioritized list of needs in each performance indicator area where the school did not meet state performance expectations;
- **root causes:** root causes for each identified priority need for the district that must be addressed to raise the levels of attainment on the performance indicators and, if the district's schools serve students in preschool and kindergarten, to improve school readiness;
- **strategies:** specific, research-based major improvement strategies that are appropriate in scope, intensity, and type to address the district's root causes of any low performance;
- **resources:** identification of local, state and federal resources that the district will use to implement the identified major improvement strategies; and
- **interim measures and implementation benchmarks:** assessment of whether the identified strategies are having the desired performance results.

If a school district is accredited with an improvement, priority improvement, or turnaround plan, the district plan must incorporate one or more of the following elements:

- employing a lead turnaround partner that uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with districts under similar circumstances;

- reorganizing the oversight and management structure within the district to provide greater, more effective support for district schools;
- recognizing individual district schools as innovation schools or clustering district schools with similar governance or management structures into one or more innovation school zones and seeking designation as a district of innovation pursuant to state law;
- hiring an entity that uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with districts under similar circumstances to operate one more district schools pursuant to a contract with the local school board or the CSI;
- converting one or more district schools to a charter school(s);
- renegotiating and significantly restructuring a charter school's charter contract; and
- other actions of comparable or greater significance or effect.

All districts must submit their plans to CDE by January 15, 2011. Those districts that have been accredited with a priority improvement plan or turnaround plan must have the plan reviewed by the state review panel. The panel may provide recommendations to the commissioner for modifying the plan. The school district must submit any revisions by March 30, 2011. All district plans will be published to the CDE website by April 15, 2011.

School accreditation and school plans. Each local school board is required to adopt its own accreditation system for its district public schools. a district issues accreditation categories to schools after the department issues an initial recommendation for what plan each school in the district should implement. From that information, the school district submits to the department the accreditation category it has issued for each school. If the district disagrees with any of the initial recommendations of the department, it may submit a statement explaining the difference. The department reviews what the school district submits and makes a final recommendation to the SBE, which the state board uses to issue final determinations for each school. The school plan is then posted to the CDE website. At a minimum, a district's accreditation policies must include:

- the use of accreditation contracts that are comparable to the state accreditation system for school districts and the CSI;
- accreditation categories that are comparable to those used by the department in accrediting school districts;

- determination of a public school's accreditation category based on the public school's level of attainment on the state's performance indicators; and
- adoption and implementation of school performance, improvement, priority improvement, and turnaround plans as required by the SBE.

A local school board may adopt more rigorous accreditation standards than set out in the state accreditation system for school districts.

Performance Reporting
(Part 5 of Article 11 of Title 22, C.R.S.)

CDE maintains an on-line data portal, School View, which reports student achievement and school and school district performance. On School View, which may be accessed through the CDE website (www.cde.state.co.us), the public may find the performance report, accreditation category, and school or district plans for each public school and school district in the state and the CSI.

Performance reports. On School View, the department publishes a performance report for each school, school district, the charter school institute, and the state as a whole. Each of the reports must contain the following information:

- the level of attainment on each of the performance indicators, including whether the targets set for the applicable school year were met;
- a comparison of how each school, school district, and the CSI performed in relation to its counterparts across the state;
- information concerning comparison of student performance over time and among student groups;
- the rates of completion, mobility, and truancy; and
- any additional information required by state law.

State law further requires that school performance reports provide the following information:

- the percentage of students not tested or not included in determining attainment on the performance indicators;
- the rate of incidence of violations of the school's conduct code;

- data on student enrollment;
- employment data pertaining to the school staff;
- the availability of courses and programs not tested on the statewide assessment; and
- the availability of student health and wellness supports and programs.

In addition to the school performance reports being available on-line, every school must notify the parent or legal guardian of each student enrolled in the school of the availability of the performance report on School View. The school must also ask parents if they would like a paper copy of the report and provide it upon request.

Measuring Educator Effectiveness
(Article 9 of Title 22, C.R.S.)

In 2010, the General Assembly enacted legislation that created a framework for evaluating teachers and principals across the state. Based on recommendations from the State Council for Educator Effectiveness and rules adopted by SBE, individual school districts will be required to develop evaluation systems. CDE will assist school districts in this effort, with full implementation expected in the 2014-15 school year. Table 6 provides detailed information on the target dates for implementation.

Table 6
Timeline for Implementation of Senate Bill 10-191

Date	Action
March 1, 2011	The State Council for Educator Effectiveness will make recommendations to the SBE concerning the implementation and testing of the new performance evaluation system.
September 1, 2011	The SBE is to adopt rules.
2011-12 school year	CDE will work with districts to develop performance evaluation systems, and will provide a resource bank of assessments, processes, tools, and policies that a district or BOCES may use to develop their local programs.

**Table 6
Timeline for Implementation of Senate Bill 10-191 (Cont.)**

Date	Action
2012 legislative session	The General Assembly is required to review the adopted rules in a separate bill during the 2012 session, and is given authority to repeal individual rules.
2012-13 school year	Beta-testing of the evaluation system will occur.
2013-14 school year	Implementation of the evaluation system will take place statewide
2014-15 school year	The evaluation system is finalized statewide.

State Council for Educator Effectiveness. The State Council for Educator Effectiveness, originally established by executive order and codified into law during the 2010 legislative session, is required to make recommendations to the SBE concerning the implementation and testing of the new performance evaluation system. The recommendations must include an implementation cost analysis, developed in consultation with experts in school finance. The council must make its recommendations by March 1, 2011, and the board must adopt rules by September 1, 2011. The General Assembly is required to review the adopted rules in a separate bill during the 2012 session, and is given authority to repeal individual rules. All school districts and BOCES must adjust their local performance evaluation systems to meet or exceed the adopted guidelines.

Required program elements. All evaluation systems must contain the following elements:

- teachers and principals are evaluated using multiple fair, transparent, timely, rigorous, and valid methods;
- at least 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation is determined by the academic growth of the teacher's students; and
- at least 50 percent of a principal's evaluation is determined by a combination of the academic growth of the students and the demonstrated effectiveness of the teachers in the principal's school.

Under the new evaluation system, a probationary teacher is defined as a teacher who has not completed three consecutive years of demonstrated effectiveness or a nonprobationary teacher who has had two consecutive years of demonstrated ineffectiveness. Until the system is implemented, the current renewal process for probationary teachers remains in place, allowing the school district to choose whether or not to renew a teacher's employment after three years.

Federal Accountability Requirements

Elementary and Secondary Education Act

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the principal federal law affecting education from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The law sets deadlines for states to expand the scope and frequency of student testing, to revamp their accountability systems, and to guarantee that every teacher is highly qualified in his or her subject area. NCLB requires states to make demonstrable progress from year to year in raising the percentage of students proficient in reading and math, and in narrowing the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students. Schools and districts that fail to make progress are subject to corrective action under the law.

Single statewide accountability system and adequate yearly progress. Under NCLB, states are required to establish a single statewide accountability system that includes baseline data and a time line for demonstrating adequate yearly progress (AYP). States, school districts, schools, *and* student subgroups all must meet AYP performance targets. All students in every school must meet state proficiency levels in reading and math by the 2013-14 school year. NCLB allows states, as part of their statewide accountability system, to:

- determine their own curriculum standards;
- develop or choose their own tests to measure progress toward the standards;
- set the cut-off scores on state tests to define "proficient" performance for AYP purposes; and
- set their own targets for the percentage of students who must score at the proficient level each year to reach the goal of 100 percent proficient by the 2013-14 school year.

While individual states are authorized to define AYP, NCLB mandates that the definition must be: based primarily on academic indicators such as assessments for all students in grades three through eight, plus one assessment in high school; technically rigorous; and applied to school, district, and state levels of progress.

The federal provisions on AYP require that its measurement be disaggregated for certain categories of students. Specifically, separate achievement objectives 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 group backgrounds;
- students with disabilities; and
- English language learners.

Colorado implementation of AYP requirements. Colorado meets federal testing and accountability requirements through the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) and uses these results to measure AYP. In accordance with federal law, for a school or district to meet AYP, *all* of the following requirements must be met:

- **participation** — 95 percent of students in all measurable subgroups must take the CSAP assessments;
- **performance** — students in the school, district, and state as a whole, and students in all measurable subgroups, must meet specified performance targets by scoring partially proficient, proficient, or advanced on the CSAP. If a school, district, or subgroup does not meet the state target, it can still make AYP if the percentage of students scoring nonproficient decreases by at least 10 percent over the prior year — a so-called "safe harbor" provision of the law; and
- **other indicator** — 1 percent of students scoring at the advanced level on reading and math at the elementary and middle school level. At the high school level, the school must meet the graduation rate target.

Tables 7 and 8 indicate the number and percentages of Colorado school districts and schools that achieved AYP in the 2005-06 through 2009-10 school years.

Table 7
Colorado School Districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) Achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) 2005-06 through 2009-10 School Years

School Year	Total Districts and BOCES	Number of Districts and BOCES Achieving AYP	Percentage of Districts and BOCES Achieving AYP
2005-06	183	112	61%
2006-07	184	104	57%
2007-08	184	78	42%
2008-09	184	85	46%
2009-10	183	88	48%

Source: Colorado Department of Education

Table 8
Colorado Schools Achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) 2005-06 through 2009-10 School Years

School Year	Total Schools	Number of Schools Achieving AYP	Percentage of Schools Achieving AYP
2005-06	1,889	1,422	75%
2006-07	1,950	1,469	75%
2007-08	1,977	1,193	60%
2008-09	2,008	1,203	60%
2009-10	2,013	1,238	62%

Source: Colorado Department of Education

Title I sanctions. The Title I provisions contained in NCLB establish consequences for Title I schools and school districts that fail to meet targets for AYP. Title I is a federal program that provides school districts with extra resources to help improve instruction in high-poverty schools and to ensure that poor and minority children have the same opportunity as other children to meet state academic standards.

A Title I 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 Title I 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 moneys. After four and five years without meeting AYP goals, a Title I school will be subject to specific corrective actions and restructuring. Colorado law also establishes state processes for school improvement, which are discussed in the state and local accountability sections of this booklet.

reviewed annually, and if there are decisions that either the parent and student or the school district feels are inappropriate, or if the family is dissatisfied with any aspect of the educational program, IDEA guarantees access to due process to ensure fair application of the law to all children with disabilities.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Originally enacted in 1975 by the U.S. Congress and most recently reauthorized in 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law mandating that all children with disabilities have access to a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual needs. Under IDEA, a child with a disability is guaranteed access to public schools and related services until the age of 21. Students with disabilities comprise 10.4 percent of total student enrollment in the state. The federal government provides funds to assist states in the education of students with disabilities, but it does not cover the full cost of providing these services. According to CDE estimates, federal and state funding represents about 35 percent of reimbursed expenses for special education services, with school districts contributing the remaining 65 percent of funding.

Individualized education programs. IDEA requires school districts to develop an individualized education program (IEP) for each child with a disability. The specific special education and related services outlined in each IEP reflect the individualized needs of each student and must be developed by a team of people including the child's teacher; the parents; the child, if determined appropriate; an agency representative who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education; and other individuals at the parents' or agency's discretion. Through Colorado's Exceptional Children's Educational Act and its implementing regulations, the state imposes additional IEP requirements not covered by IDEA. Every plan must be at least

Frequently Asked Questions

Why might a school fail to achieve AYP?

- **Disaggregated targets.** Under NCLB, all major racial and ethnic subgroups of students, as well as students from low-income families, students with disabilities, and limited English proficient students, must meet the state achievement targets for every grade and subject tested before the school or district is considered to have reached AYP. This means that even if the overall test scores for a school exceed state targets, the school may fail to meet AYP if too many students in any one subgroup score below the proficient level.
- **Participation targets.** NCLB requires that 95 percent of all students *and* 95 percent of students in each subgroup be tested. Although a school's test scores may meet state targets, the school could fail to meet AYP because the school did not meet the test participation requirement.
- **Other required indicators.** Schools that meet test score targets may fail to achieve AYP if they fail to meet state benchmarks for graduation or other indicators. Colorado requires that overall, and within each subgroup, a specified percentage of elementary and middle school students must score at the advanced level on reading and math assessments. At the high school level, the school must meet a graduation rate target overall and within each subgroup. Failure to achieve these indicators, even if the school meets test score targets, cause the school to fail to meet AYP.
- **Standardized indicators.** Annual targets for AYP are the same for all students, schools, and districts, so subgroups and schools that are far below the test score targets have more ground to make up. Schools and subgroups receive no credit for coming close or making improvements if they fail to reach the test score target, unless they qualify for NCLB's "safe harbor" provision.
- **State policies.** The factors that states are allowed to define under NCLB — the rigor of the standards, the difficulty of the tests, the cutoff scores, and the achievement targets — affect how difficult it is for schools to meet AYP. In addition, the

minimum number of students required for a subgroup to count in AYP calculations, which is set by the state, may have an impact on whether a school achieves AYP. In Colorado, if a school has 30 or more students in a subgroup for two consecutive years, that subgroup's test scores count in AYP calculations.

Are Colorado schools making progress toward AYP goals?

The CDE calculates AYP for all schools and school districts in the state. In all, 68 percent of Colorado schools made their AYP targets in the 2009-10 school year. That overall percentage increased by 2 percent from 2008-09. In the 2009-10 school year, 46 percent of districts in the state made AYP, compared to 48 percent in 2008-09.

How is "proficiency" determined in Colorado?

For AYP purposes, "proficiency" includes students scoring "partially proficient," "proficient," or "advanced" on the CSAP, and students scoring "emerging" or above on the CSAP-A.

Are all students required to take the CSAP?

Yes. Every student enrolled in a grade for which there is a CSAP assessment is expected to take it. Accommodations are allowed to assist students with special needs in taking the CSAP assessment. In addition, each school district determines when it is not appropriate to administer the CSAP to certain students and will administer the CSAP-A instead.

What happens if a student does not participate in the CSAP?

If a student does not participate in the CSAP and does not take the test during the makeup test window in their district, the student is placed in the "No Score Reported" category.

What does it cost to administer the CSAP?

According to the CDE, the FY 2009-10 per pupil costs for the CSAP are approximately \$10 per assessment. There were approximately 1.6 million CSAP tests administered to public school students in the 2009-10 school year. At approximately \$10 per assessment, the total estimated cost would be nearly \$16 million. A mix of state general fund and federal funds are used to fund the CSAP. This estimate does not include CSAP-A assessments for children with disabilities. Those assessments are funded with federal special education moneys.

Is the 11th grade ACT exam required by federal law?

No. Federal law requires that students be assessed once in high school. Under state law, 10th grade students participate in the CSAP and all 11th grade students take the ACT. Only Colorado and Illinois require all students to take the ACT.

What happens if a student does not participate in the ACT exam?

If a student does not participate in the ACT exam, the student has no score to report or show on his or her transcript.

What does it cost to administer the ACT?

According to the CDE, it costs approximately \$35 per student to administer the ACT. In the 2009-10 school year, 53,114 students took the ACT. At approximately \$35 per student, the total estimated cost would be approximately \$1.86 million.

When will the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) be reauthorized?

The ESEA was last reauthorized in 2001 with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). NCLB was scheduled to be reauthorized in 2007, but Congress has yet to act. The current law as it was passed in 2001 remains in effect until a new bill is passed.

When will the new assessments be implemented?

According to CDE, in Spring of 2011, CSAP will be administered in its same form as it has been in prior years. In spring 2013, students will take a CSAP-like exam which will include new items and methods to demonstrate understanding and proficiency of concepts. By 2014, the transition to the new state assessment system is scheduled to be complete.

When will the new teacher evaluation system be fully implemented?

It is expected that the teacher evaluation system will be fully implemented in school year 2014-15, as contemplated in the authorizing legislation, Senate Bill 10-191. Changing the implementation time frame would require legislative action by the General Assembly.

Glossary of Terms

Accreditation Category: A state measurement rating a school's overall academic performance based on four performance indicators. One of five categories is assigned: "accredited with distinction"; "accredited"; "accredited with improvement plan"; "accredited with priority improvement plan"; or "accredited with a turnaround plan."

Accreditation Contract: An annual contract between the State Board of Education and a local school board of education delineating the goals and requirements for the school district over the course of the contract. Mandatory inclusions in the contract are set forth in statute and state board rule.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): A federally mandated measurement of student progress at the state, school district, and school level, and for subgroups of students, toward meeting 100 percent state proficiency levels in reading and math by the 2013-14 school year. The federal standard also includes requirements for participation in assessments and for an additional indicator of student progress, including the high school graduation rate.

Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA): A state law that requires annual assessment of reading readiness skills of students in kindergarten and reading skills of students in grades one through grade three, that sets procedures and benchmarks for literacy, and that delineates interventions for students who are not reading at grade level.

Colorado English Language Assessment (CELA) Program: A state program to assess the English language skills of English language learners and to inform appropriate instructional placement in compliance with federal and state law. The program includes both a placement test for enrolling students with a primary language other than English and a proficiency test for those receiving English language support services.

Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP): The state testing program for students in grades three through ten in reading, writing, and math, as well as science for students in grades five, eight, and ten. The program meets federal assessment and accountability requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act.

Colorado Student Assessment Program-Alternate (CSAP-A): The alternate, performance- and demonstration-based assessments for students with special needs who are unable to participate in the general CSAP assessments.

English Language Learner (ELL): A student whose dominant language is not English. For purposes of receiving language services, the student may be determined to be limited-English proficient (LEP) or non-English proficient (NEP).

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A federally and state-required written plan for a student with a disability that is developed and reviewed in accordance with statutory and regulatory guidelines.

Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA) Act: A federal law mandating that all children with disabilities have access to a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual needs.

Individual Literacy Plan (ILP): An individualized plan for a student in kindergarten or in grades one through three whose reading readiness or literacy and reading comprehension skills are assessed at below grade level. The plan specifies strategies for improving a student's literacy skills and remains in place until the student is reading at or above grade level.

Model Content Standards: State academic standards adopted by the State Board of Education for content areas (dance; drama and theatre arts; comprehensive health and physical education; English language proficiency; mathematics; music; reading, writing, and communicating; science; social studies; visual arts; and world languages). The standards provide benchmarks for what students should know in the content area at different grade levels. Under state law, each school district must adopt content standards in these academic areas that meet or exceed state standards.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): A national assessment program, the results of which are often referred to as the "Nation's Report Card." Not meant to provide district-level, school-level, or student-level data, the program provides biennial math and reading results for the nation and for each participating state based on the performance of fourth and eighth grade students in schools selected to

participate. Other subject-area testing varies by testing cycle and includes long-term trend assessments in math and reading for students ages 9, 13, and 17.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act: The federal law that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2001 and set new accountability provisions for states and school districts. Each state seeks federal approval of its state accountability plan in order to receive federal funding for NCLB programs.

School View: An on-line data portal that reports student achievement and school and school district performance. On School View, which may be accessed through the CDE website, the public may find the performance report, accreditation category, and school or district plans for each public school and school district in the state and the Charter School Institute.

Student Academic Growth Calculation: State-required calculation of each student's individual academic growth over one year's time based on performance on CSAP assessments, and which includes an evaluation of whether the growth is adequate for the student to reach the performance level of "proficient" within three years or by grade ten, whichever is sooner.

Title I Program: A federal program that provides funding through four types of grants that flow through the state to school districts and schools with high percentages of students from low-income families.