COLORADO
Department of Education

District Accountability Handbook

July 2025

The purpose of this handbook is to provide an outline of the requirements and responsibilities for state, district, and school level stakeholders in the state's accountability process established by the Education Accountability Act of 2009 (S.B. 09-163). Federal requirements and responsibilities under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) pertaining to accountability have also been integrated into this document.

Table of Contents

Overview of the Accountability System 5

2025 State Accountability Timeline 7

General Accountability Cycle 8

2025 Legislation related to State Accountability 8

HB 25-1278 - Education Accountability System 9

HB 25-1210 - Data Reporting Requirements for Kindergarten Through 12th Grade Schools 9

HB25-1167 - Alternative Education Campuses 9

Stakeholder Roles 11

Performance Frameworks 13

Performance Framework Indicators 14

Safety and Finance Assurances 15

Participation Ratings and Descriptors 15

Alternative Education Campuses 16

Request to Reconsider 16

Federal Accountability 16

Public Reporting 17

Accountability Tools & Reports 17

Improvement Planning 20

Improvement Plan Process and Timeline 21

Major Dates for Improvement Planning Process 21

Plan Requirements and Review Process 22

Plan Adoption 23

UIP Online System 23

Major Components of the Improvement Planning Process 24

Stakeholder Engagement in the Planning Process 24

Stakeholder Engagement 26
District Accountability Committees 26
Composition of District Accountability Committees 26
District Accountability Committee Responsibilities 27
School Accountability Committees 28
Composition of School Accountability Committees 28
School Accountability Committee Responsibilities 29
School Accountability Committees for Charter Schools 30
State Advisory Groups 31
Technical Advisory Panel 31
Accountability Work Group 31
State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education 31
Support 32
Department Staff Support 32
Empowering Action for School Improvement Grant 33
Intervention 34
Accountability Clock Process 34
State Review Panel 35
State Board of Education Hearings 35
Accreditation 36
Accreditation Process for Districts 37
Accreditation Process for Schools 38
Submission of the Accreditation Form and Request to Reconsider 38
Accreditation Form Submission - Required for All Districts 39
Request to Reconsider Submission - Optional 39
District Accreditation Contracts 39
Contract Contents 39
Compliance with Contract Terms 41
Awards 42
Types of Awards 42

Appendices 44

Appendix A: Colorado Educational Accountability System Terminology 44

Appendix B: Description of Federal Accountability for Districts and Schools 54

Federal Accountability for Districts 54

Federal Accountability for Schools 55

Appendix C: General Accountability Cycle 57

Appendix D: Understanding the Role of School Accountability Committees in Charter Schools 58

Are charter schools required to have School Accountability Committees? 58

What is the relationship between a charter school's governing board and its School Accountability Committee? 58

How are members of the School Accountability Committee selected? 58

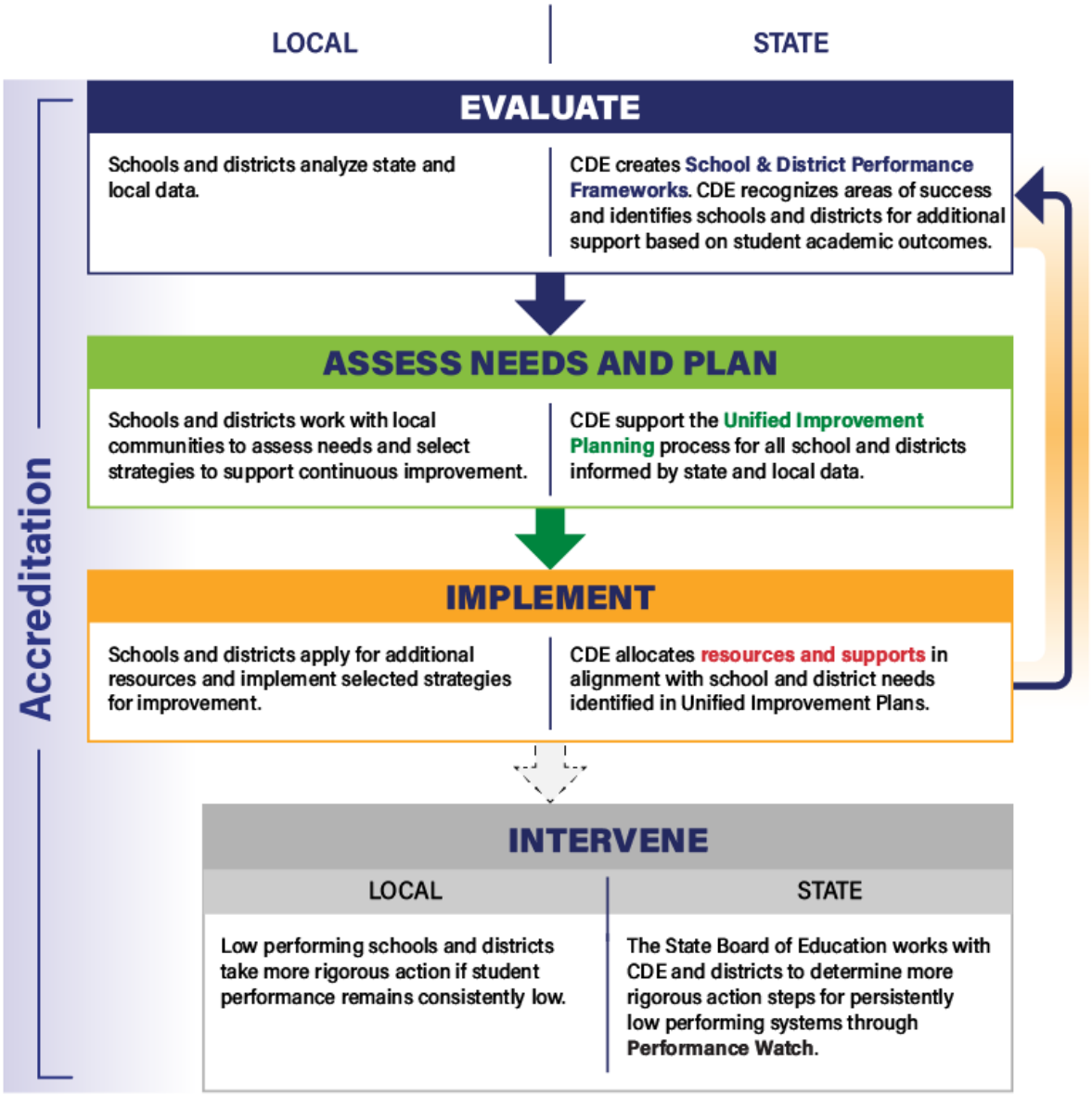
Overview of the Accountability System

Colorado's education accountability system is based on the belief that every student should receive an excellent education and graduate ready to succeed. The accountability system consists of local, state, and federal processes:

- **Local accountability** is driven by locally elected boards and reflects locally-held values. Boards oversee superintendent and district policies.
- **State accountability** is informed by the Education Accountability Act of 2009 and by rules set by the Colorado Board of Education. This policy context drives the creation of performance frameworks, public reporting, improvement planning, performance watch, accreditation contracts, accountability committees, supports and interventions, and several state awards programs.
- **Federal accountability** is informed by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the approved Colorado state plan. The state plan establishes the criteria to identify schools on improvement. More detail about federal accountability can be found in *Appendix B*.

While all different types of accountability overlap, this handbook focuses primarily on the elements of the state accountability system for schools and for districts. The figure below summarizes the state's theory of action for how these elements interact each year. The state is expected to evaluate school and district performance (e.g., performance frameworks), schools and districts engage with their data to plan (e.g., improvement planning) and implement approaches to improvement. The state also provides supports (e.g., school improvement grants) and interventions to identified schools and districts. Stakeholder engagement is woven through each step. Together, along with an agreement to implement statutes and regulations, the accountability elements contribute to district accreditation.

Figure: Accountability Theory of Action



Colorado's state accountability system is built on multiple elements to bring the theory of action to life. Seven main elements are highlighted in the figure below: Performance frameworks, public reporting, improvement planning, public engagement, supports and interventions, accreditation, and awards. This handbook describes the infrastructure to unify its system of support. For a more general overview of these elements, go to the Accountability Overview fact sheet.

Figure: Elements of the Accountability System

Districts and schools on Performance Watch (i.e., those that received a Priority Improvement or Turnaround rating on their Performance Framework) or those with a federal identification (i.e., Comprehensive Support, Targeted Support, Additional Targeted Support) should refer to the "Priority Improvement and Turnaround Supplement" handbook for more details on their specific requirements. Districts and schools who have been on Performance Watch for two or more years, must receive a Performance or Improvement rating for two consecutive years before exiting Performance Watch.

2025 State Accountability Timeline

Anticipated Timeframe	Activities/Actions
April 15, 2025	Rollover to the 2025-26 Unified Improvement Plan template
July 1	Districts receive ACCESS Growth Data
Mid-August	Districts receive performance framework data files for Achievement, Growth, Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness indicators, and Participation Data; UIP and Secure Data Explorer (N of 1) Data Dashboards available

Anticipated Timeframe	Activities/Actions
Late August - Early September	Public release of Colorado growth data results; Alternative Education Campus (AEC) designations finalized; Public data dashboards updated Preliminary Performance Frameworks released to districts. Public release 3 days later. Performance data updated in online UIP system for assurances and plan requirements.
Early-Mid September	Identification letter sent to districts with schools on the accountability clock (i.e., Priority Improvement, Turnaround, On Watch) and/or ESSA Identifications (i.e., CS, TS, A-TS).
Mid-September	AEC Performance Frameworks released to districts. Public release 3 days later.
September 26, 2025	Accreditation Form submissions due - *ALL districts*
October 15, 2025	Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) submissions due Final Request to Reconsider (R2R) materials due - *participating districts*
November 12-13, 2025 (SBE Meeting)	District Accreditation Ratings & School Plan Types finalized for districts/schools *not* participating in R2R
December 10-11, 2025 (SBE Meeting)	District Accreditation Ratings & School Plan Types finalized for districts/schools participating in R2R
By December 31, 2025	District Accreditation Contracts due
January 15, 2026	January UIP submissions due - *Newly identified, Sites that participated in R2R*

General Accountability Cycle

A more general annual accountability cycle is available in Appendix C.

2025 Legislation related to State Accountability

The section below summarizes bills pertaining to the accountability system that passed during the 2025 legislative session.

Changes to 2025 Accountability and Continuous Improvement Processes: CDE is not anticipating any substantial changes to the 2025 Performance Frameworks or other parts of our accountability system

this next year. A summary of final accountability changes, along with information about anticipated future changes, is available in the Summary Accountability and Improvement Planning Changes for 2025 fact sheet.

HB 25-1278 - Education Accountability System

Based upon 30 recommendations from the 1241 Task Force, HB 25-1278's main themes include:

- State assessments (e.g., segmenting state assessments, translating assessments into other languages);
- Performance frameworks (e.g., moving disaggregated student groups into a single combined group, revisions to the Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness performance indicator, increased expectations for sites with an Insufficient State Data plan type due to low participation, additional criteria for the Distinction rating);
- Public reporting (e.g., a study and cost analysis for a statewide education accountability dashboard);
- Insufficient State Data: Low Participation (e.g., Adds a corrective action plan when ISD is assigned for low participation, requires a meeting with the state board in Year 3);
- Continuous improvement, including the accountability clock (e.g., increased supports to the field, adjustments to the accountability clock process, improvements to the awards process); and
- Additional studies (e.g., studying ways to work with small systems and state assessments).

CDE staff hosted a webinar on H.B. 25-1278 in June, see the recording, PowerPoint, and fact sheet.

HB 25-1210 - Data Reporting Requirements for Kindergarten Through 12th Grade Schools

For accountability purposes, HB25-1210 focuses on data reporting requirements for the Unified Improvement Planning (UIP) process, including:

- Developing a streamlined format;
- Flexibility on the action plan; and
- Centralized reporting to guide the distribution of resources and supports.

The School Improvement Planning team hosted an informational webinar about the streamlined template in April, see the recording and fact sheet.

HB25-1167 - Alternative Education Campuses

For alternative education campuses (AECs), HB25-1167 directs CDE to:

- Allocate grant priority points to AECs;

- Include students who are 21 years of age or younger in the AEC's high-risk student pupil count;
- Prepare and post a report on enrollment trends, student demographics, and student mobility in AECs; and
- Exempt AECs with a student enrollment of less than 250 students from losing their designation due to a fluctuation in enrollment for one school year.

Additional information about AECs is in the Performance Frameworks section of this handbook and more information about AEC guidance and policy is available in the AEC Handbook.

Stakeholder Roles

Colorado's system of accountability and support requires the coordinated efforts of several key stakeholder groups:

- The **Colorado Department of Education** (Department) is responsible for providing high-quality information to a variety of stakeholders about school and district performance. The Department evaluates the performance of all public schools and local education agencies (i.e., school districts, Charter School Institute, BOCES that operate schools) using a set of common Performance Indicators (i.e., achievement, growth, and postsecondary and workforce readiness). The Department accredits districts and supports them in evaluating student performance at the district and school levels so that information can be used to inform improvement planning. The Department provides a template and process for all schools and districts to meet state, federal and grant planning requirements (i.e., Unified Improvement Plan), including public posting on SchoolView.org. The Department also reviews all improvement plans for schools and districts on performance watch (i.e., Priority Improvement, Turnaround, On Watch). To meet ESEA requirements, the Department identifies schools for support and improvement (i.e., Comprehensive, Targeted, and Additional Targeted Support - ATS - and Improvement), notifies the districts of identified schools and approves and monitors the implementation of improvement plans for Comprehensive Support and Improvement schools (CS). Where possible, the Department has aligned evaluation metrics, reporting, and supports for state and federal identification processes.
- The **Colorado State Board of Education** (state board) is responsible for entering into accreditation contracts with local school boards and directing local school boards regarding the types of plans each district's schools implement. The state board directs actions when districts and schools earn a Turnaround or Priority Improvement plan for more than five years. The state board also reviews and directs the Department on the contents of the ESSA state plan.
- **Local school boards** are responsible for accrediting their schools and ensuring that the academic programs offered by their schools meet or exceed state and local performance expectations for attainment in the performance frameworks. Local school boards also are responsible for creating, adopting and implementing a Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, or Turnaround district plan, whichever is required by the Department, and ensuring that their schools create, adopt and implement their assigned plan type.
- **District leaders** are responsible for overseeing that the academic programs offered by district schools meet or exceed state and local performance expectations on the performance frameworks. Leaders play a key role in creating, adopting, implementing, and monitoring their district plan in the category of Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, Turnaround, Insufficient State Data, whichever is required by the state.

District staff also play a key role in recommending school accreditation categories to their local school board. Related, district leaders are also expected to ensure schools update their assigned plans and submit them to the Department for review (if applicable) and public posting. Under ESSA, districts with CS schools must support them in developing improvement plans, in consultation with stakeholders that address the reason(s) schools were identified. Districts also have the responsibility to review, approve, and monitor Targeted Support and Improvement (TS) school improvement plans.

- **District Accountability Committees (DACs) and School Accountability Committees (SACs)** advise education leaders (i.e., DACs advise local school board members and SACs advise principals). They are responsible for: (1) making recommendations to their local school boards/school principals concerning budget priorities; (2) making recommendations concerning the preparation of the district/school Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, or Turnaround plan (whichever is applicable); (3) providing input and recommendations, on an advisory basis, concerning the principal development plans/principal evaluations and teacher evaluations; (4) discussing implementation of the district/school plan; and (5) cooperatively determining other areas and issues to address and make recommendations upon. DACs/SACs also are expected to publicize opportunities to serve on District and School Accountability Committees and solicit families to do so, assist the district in implementing its family engagement policy, and assist school personnel in increasing family engagement with educators. DACs and SACs in small rural school districts may waive out of some family engagement requirements. A more comprehensive description of the composition of accountability committees and their responsibilities is available later in this handbook (section: District & School Accountability Committees).
- **School leaders** are responsible for overseeing that the academic programs offered by their school meet or exceed state and local performance expectations for attainment on the performance frameworks. They also play a key role in the creation, adoption, implementation, and monitoring of a school plan in the category of Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, Turnaround, or Insufficient State Data, whichever is required by the state. If identified, school leaders also play a role in the development, approval, and implementation of CS, TS, and ATS plans as required under ESSA.

NOTE ON ACCOUNTABILITY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Two key Stakeholder groups are routinely consulted in policy development and implementation practices for accountability:

Technical Advisory Panel

Accountability Work Group

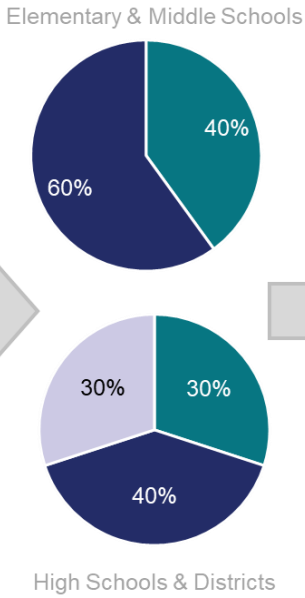
A description of these groups is available in the section on Public Engagement.

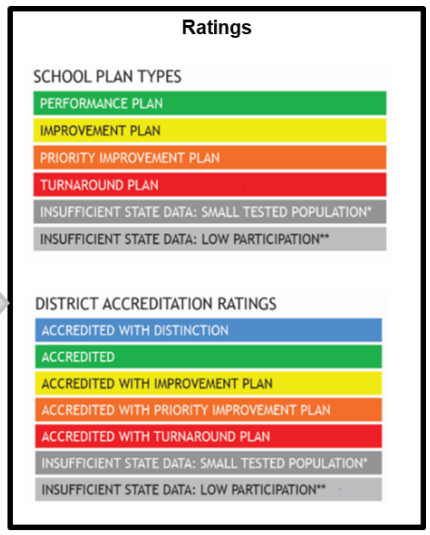
Performance Frameworks

The Department is responsible for providing high-quality information to a variety of stakeholders about school and district performance. The Department evaluates the performance of all public schools, all districts, and the state using a set of common Performance Indicators identified in the Education Accountability Act of 2009 (article 11 of title 22). This information is used along with assessment, safety, and finance compliance indicators to determine the district's accreditation rating. The Department reviews each district's/school's performance annually and releases preliminary Performance Frameworks by late August. All adjustments to this year's frameworks are reflective of state assessment and statutory requirement changes. A summary of final accountability changes, along with information about anticipated future changes, is available in Summary Accountability and Improvement Planning Changes for 2025 . The image below describes the process of assigning ratings based on indicator weights. More detailed information about performance indicators is also available in the Performance Framework Calculation Guidebook.

Figure: Performance Indicator Weights and Performance Framework Ratings

Performance Indicator	Weight
Academic Achievement	40% Elementary & Middle Schools 30% High Schools & Districts
Academic Growth	60% Elementary & Middle Schools 40% High Schools & Districts
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	30% High Schools & Districts





Performance Framework Indicators

- **Academic Achievement:** The Academic Achievement Indicator reflects how well district students are meeting the state's proficiency goal, based on mean scale scores and percentile ranks of schools on Colorado's standardized assessments. Performance is determined by overall content area, as well as by disaggregated student groups. Disaggregated groups include free or reduced-price lunch eligible students, minority students, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities. This Indicator includes results from:
    - CMAS English language arts, mathematics, science
    - PSAT 9 & 10
    - Alternate DLM/CoAlt assessments
- **Academic Growth:** The Academic Growth Indicator reflects academic progress calculated using the Colorado Growth Model. This Indicator reflects normative (median) growth: how the academic progress of the students in the district/school compared to their academic peers (i.e., other students statewide with a similar content proficiency score history or similar English language proficiency score history). As is the case with the achievement indicator, CMAS and PSAT 9 & 10 results are calculated at both the overall level and by disaggregated student groups. WIDA ACCESS (i.e., English Language Proficiency and On Track to EL Proficiency) is calculated at the overall level. More information is available in the Growth and ACCESS On Track Growth fact sheets.
- **Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness:** The Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Indicator reflects student preparedness for college or careers upon completing high school. This indicator reflects student graduation rates (best of 4-, 5-, 6- or 7-years), disaggregated

graduation rates for historically disadvantaged students (i.e., free/reduced price lunch eligible, minority students, students with disabilities, multilingual learners), dropout rates, Colorado SAT mean scale scores, and matriculation rates that represent the percent of high school graduates that go on to Career & Technical Education (CTE) programs, community colleges, 4-year institutions, the military, or postsecondary programs (i.e., ASCENT, P-TECH, T-REP). Additionally, industry credentials, as recognized by the Colorado Workforce Development Council, are included in CTE and overall matriculation rates calculations. Lastly, students that have earned a college degree during high school are also included in the overall, 2-yr, and/or 4-yr rates. More information is available in the PWR fact sheet.

- Another performance indicator, On Track Growth, is listed in state statute. The state has been working on a new On Track Growth metric based upon feedback from the field. In November 2023, the state board voted to delay implementation of the measure in performance frameworks until all school levels are available for inclusion. In the meantime, public reports for elementary and middle schools are available within the District and School Dashboard, under the "On Track Growth" tab. More information is available in the On Track Growth fact sheet.

Districts and schools receive a rating on each Performance Indicator that evaluates if they exceeded, met, approached, or did not meet the state's expectations. These Performance Indicators are then combined for an overall evaluation of a district/school's performance. More information about these calculations are available in the District and School Performance Framework Calculation Guidebook. Annotated versions of the Performance Frameworks and the Alternative Education Campus (AEC) Performance Framework are available.

Safety and Finance Assurances

Districts are accountable for meeting minimum safety and finance assurances, included on the first page of the performance framework. Districts do not receive points that contribute to their overall rating for finance and safety assurances. However, districts that do not meet requirements in at least one area are lowered to Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan (or remain Accredited with Turnaround Plan). Once the state certifies that the district meets minimum expectations, then the district will be eligible to earn a rating through the typical process at the next performance frameworks release.

Participation Ratings and Descriptors

Accountability Participation (Impacts for Ratings). Districts and schools are accountable for meeting minimum participation rates in the state assessments. If the 95% accountability participation rate requirement is not met in English language arts and Math, then the plan type is lowered by one level. Since its reintroduction in 2024, Science participation has not been included in these calculations.

Students who have a parent excusal from state assessments are not factored into accountability participation calculations, per state board rules (1 CCR 301-1, rule 5.02).

Total Participation (Informational only). Total participation rates (i.e., parent excusals are included in the calculation) of less than 95% will be noted in the performance framework as "Does Not Meet 95% Total Participation" for informational purposes to assist with the interpretation of data. Districts and schools that have total participation rates above 95% in two or more content areas will receive a descriptor of "Meets 95% Total Participation." These descriptors are not attached to the plan type and are available on the front page of the performance framework for planning purposes. Additional information about participation ratings and descriptors is available in the Participation and Accountability Guide.

Alternative Education Campuses

Alternate Education Campuses (AECs) are schools with specialized missions designed to serve high-risk student populations. The Department conducts a distinct performance review for schools that meet the definition of an AEC and obtain an AEC designation through an application/renewal process. The state's performance framework for AECs takes into account the unique purposes of the campuses and the unique circumstances of the challenges posed by the students enrolled in the campuses. For more information, see the AEC Handbook or visit the AEC accountability website.

Request to Reconsider

The request to reconsider process is a district's opportunity to request a change to the state-calculated district or school performance framework rating. If the district disagrees with the preliminary framework plan type, they may submit additional evidence to make a case for a different plan type. For more information about request to reconsider, see the section on the Submission of the Accreditation Form and Request to Reconsider or visit the request to reconsider website.

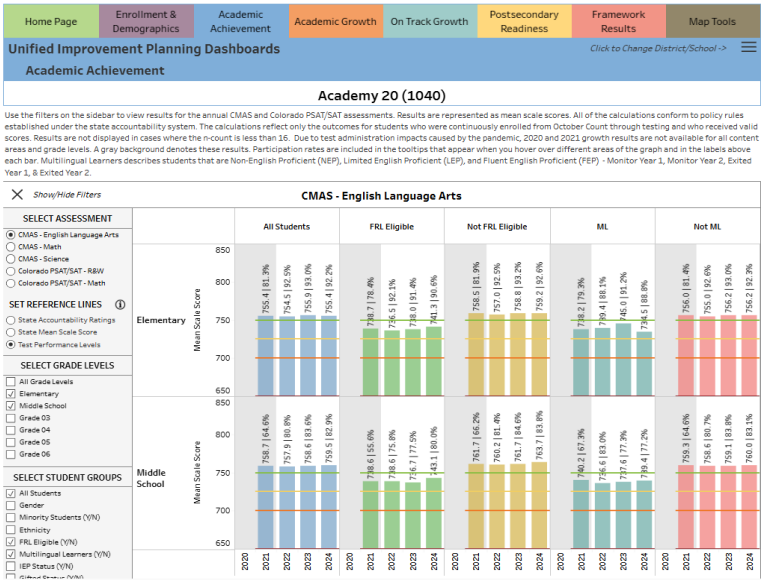
Federal Accountability

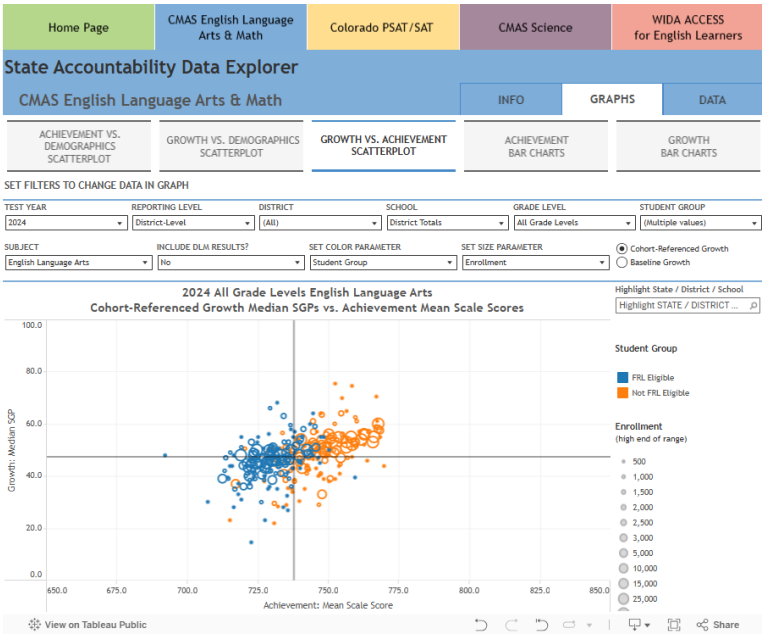
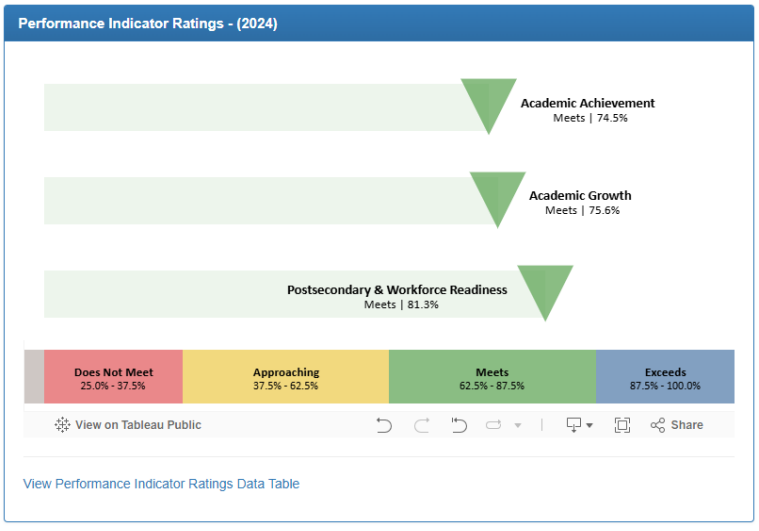
In addition to the state statute that governs accountability, there is also federal legislation – the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) – that contributes to the overall accountability system. ESEA has undergone several reauthorizations, the most recent being the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Under ESSA, the Department is required to identify schools for improvement and support as Comprehensive (CS), Targeted (TS), or Additional Targeted (ATS) Support and Improvement. Districts are not identified under ESSA; however, they are accountable for their schools identified as CS and TS/ATS. For more information about federal accountability under ESSA, see *Appendix B* or visit the Methods for Identification and Exit Criteria for ESSA Support and Improvement website. Information about these requirements are also integrated into other resources like the improvement planning materials (e.g., Quality Criteria) and the Identification Supplement handbook.

Public Reporting

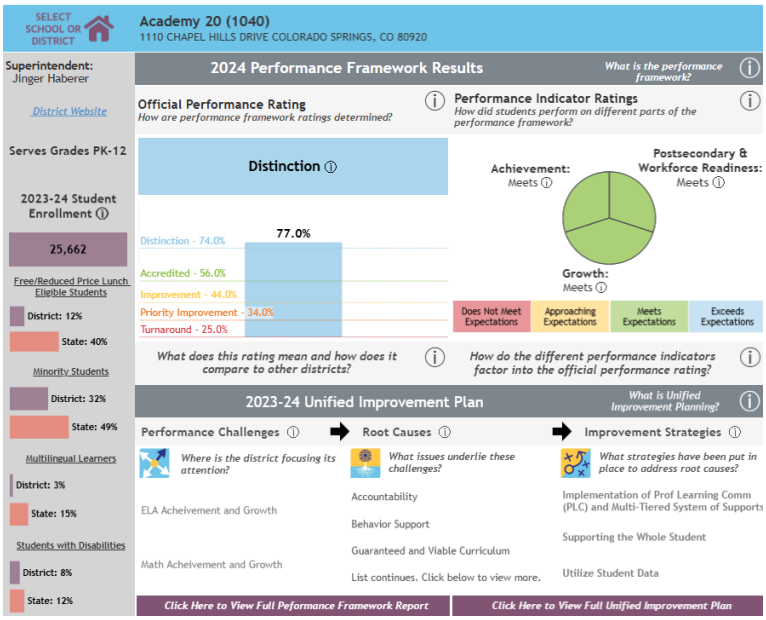
The Department is responsible for developing and maintaining a web portal, SchoolView, to provide high-quality information about school, district and state performance to the public. Within SchoolView, there is a set of state accountability data tools and reports dedicated to describing district and school performance and improvement planning processes.

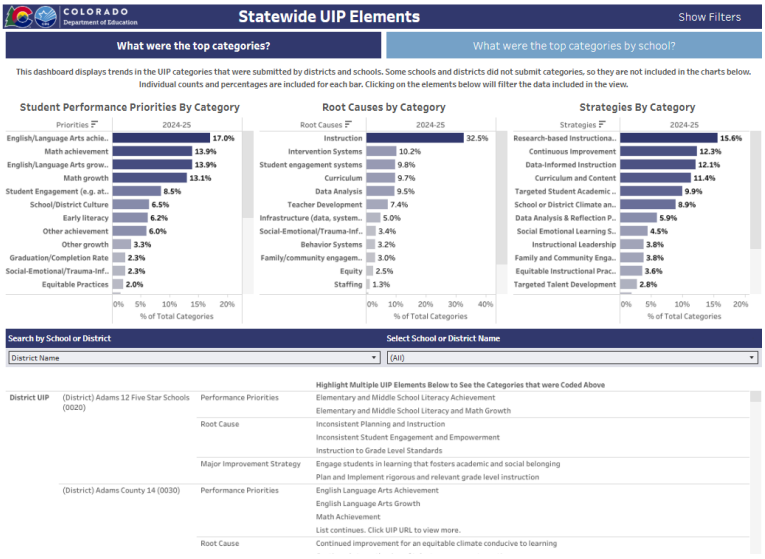
Accountability Tools & Reports

Dashboard Example	Description
	**School and District Dashboard** This dashboard is made up of a suite of reports with longitudinal data. The dashboard allows users to interact with graphs and tables showing demographic information along with performance data and ratings generated under the state accountability system. **Purpose:** Offers five-year school and district data trends to inform improvement planning. **Release/Refresh Timeline:** Every August, December, and March

Dashboard Example	Description
	**[State Accountability Data Explorer]** This tool provides access to graphs and tables showing performance outcome measures calculated at the state, district, and school levels. Data tables can be exported to spreadsheets, and graphs can be downloaded in PDF format or as image files. *District users may access a [secure version] that displays data even in cases where there are not enough records to meet the minimum n-count thresholds for public reporting.* **Purpose:** Compare schools and districts across the current year and download longitudinal performance framework data. **Release/Refresh Timeline:** Every August
	**[Online Frameworks and Unified Improvement Plans]** This tool provides an interactive version of the frameworks that is designed for the public. Users can see high level reports and then can dig into accountability data more deeply. There are links to official SPF/DPF PDF reports, school and district UIPs, and district accreditation contracts. *Every district's most recently signed accreditation contract is also available in the [online accreditation contract portal].* **Purpose:** Access historical performance framework data (including PDF reports), UIPs, and district accreditation contracts to better understand accountability outcomes. **Release/Refresh Timeline:** Every December

Dashboard Example





Description

Performance Snapshot

The Snapshot provides an overview of key elements from the most recent District and School Transitional Performance Framework Reports and Unified Improvement Plans. This report is primarily designed for users with existing knowledge of the performance frameworks and improvement planning process, but provides a significant amount of explanatory information that makes it accessible to broader audiences. Use this tool to access reports for individual districts and schools.

Purpose: A single-year snapshot of performance framework and UIP data to understand accountability and improvement planning processes.

Release/Refresh Timeline: Every December

Statewide Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) Elements Dashboard

This tool is intended to make UIP data more transparent and actionable. The dashboard can be used to identify trends in Student Performance Priorities, Root Causes, and Improvement Strategies statewide and within districts. The dashboard displays UIP elements data for schools and districts that self-selected from predefined categories (available in the Category Guidance).

Purpose: Access state, district, and schoolwide UIP data trends to enhance the development of targeted supports, foster collaboration across sites that are working on similar focus areas, and support planning processes.

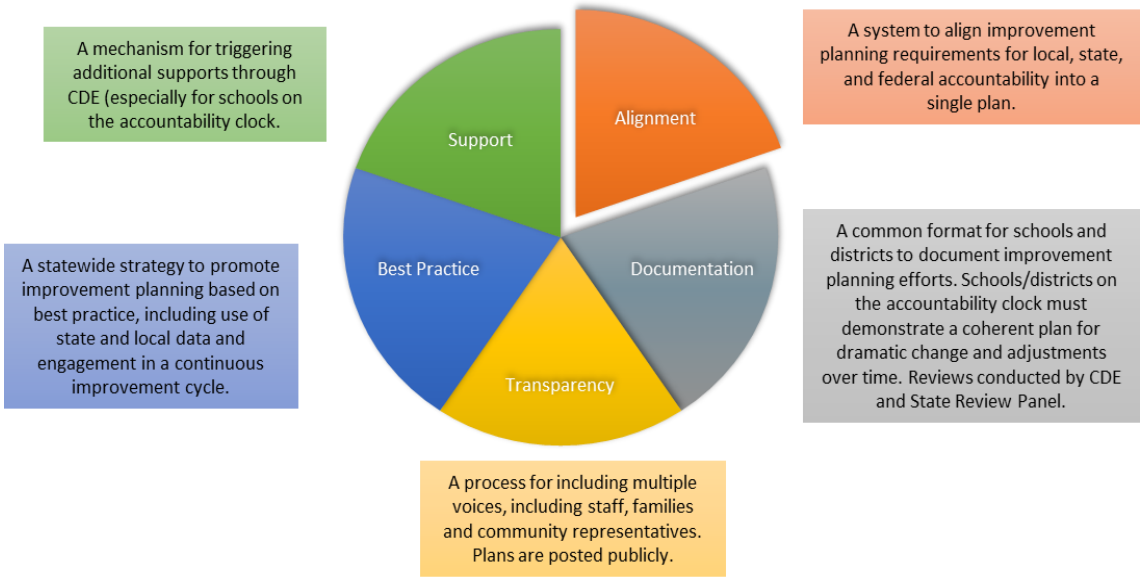
Release/Refresh Timeline: Every October and January

Improvement Planning

Colorado schools and districts can improve student learning and system effectiveness by engaging in a cycle of continuous improvement to manage their performance. To support this purpose, the Education Accountability Act of 2009 requires each Colorado district and school to submit an improvement plan that addresses how they will improve their performance. The intent is that schools and districts create a single plan that has true meaning for stakeholders. With that in mind, the Department developed a unified improvement planning template and processes to support schools and districts in their performance management efforts, ultimately reducing the total number of separate plans required and varying timelines. The figure below highlights the multiple purposes of improvement planning.

Figure: Multiple Purposes for Improvement Planning

CDE has developed both a **process** and **template** to support schools and districts in their performance management efforts.



Improvement Plan Process and Timeline

As improvement planning is on a continuous cycle, districts and schools should be monitoring and adjusting the existing improvement plan throughout the year. Typically, sites begin revising the UIP in late spring or summer based upon local assessment data. New planning templates are available by April 15 of each school year. State data can be used to verify and refine the plan when it is available in summer/fall. A general outline of the accountability cycle is included in *Appendix C*.

Districts submit final plans no later than **October 15** to CDE for public posting on SchoolView. At the discretion of the district, newly identified sites (i.e., Priority Improvement, Turnaround, ESSA Comprehensive Support) or sites that participate in the request to reconsider may have flexibility for a **January 15** submission. Note: The state has fully moved to the new streamlined improvement planning template. The older version of the template is no longer available. Most districts have already transitioned to the new template and report finding it to be more efficient and user friendly. For sites transitioning to the new template, the "copy from last year" button will not be available. Additional information about the streamlined template can be found here. Assistance from CDE is also available upon request.

Major Dates for Improvement Planning Process

Timeline	Activity

October 15	All school and district plans submitted to CDE for public posting (unless eligible for biennial flexibility); Some plans are reviewed by the state (e.g., accountability clock, ESSA Comprehensive Support).
January 15	Plan submission extension available for some sites (e.g., newly identified, request to reconsider)
April 15	New planning templates available for the next school year

For districts and schools that earn a Performance plan type (and Distinction for districts), the district may choose to submit plans every other year (biennially). This flexibility is not available to sites that are considered to be On Watch, nor sites that have an Insufficient State Data rating. If submitted biennially, the plan must cover at least two academic years (the current school year and the next). All other sites must submit annually for public posting.

Plan Requirements and Review Process

There are different requirements for submission and plan content based on the specific district's accreditation category or school plan type and other program expectations. These requirements can be found in UIP Guidance documents, including the UIP Handbook and Quality Criteria (includes school and district requirements). The UIP template (available in the UIP/ACI online system) is intended to document improvement planning efforts, help schools and districts understand UIP requirements, and support facilitation of the continuous improvement cycle.

Certain district and school plans may be reviewed - and even approved - at the state level by the department and/or by the State Review Panel. In addition to the universal planning requirements, some programs have specific requirements that pertain to some sites, including: READ Act, Improving Mathematics Outcomes (HB23-1231), Early Learning Needs Assessment (K-3), Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI) Grant, Title I, and ESSA Comprehensive Support.

Improvement Plans. Districts and schools that earn an accreditation rating of Improvement must submit plans annually and have additional planning requirements associated with the Improving Mathematics Outcomes legislation (HB23-1231).

Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plans. There are additional requirements for submission for sites with these plan types, including additional planning requirements, parent notification requirements and plan adoption by the local board. Timelines on these expectations can be tight, so district and school leaders are encouraged to access information and supports from the department rapidly. The state will also review the plan and provide feedback. For sites further on the accountability clock, the State Review Panel may review the plan as a part of their reporting to the Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Commissioner of Education. Additional information on processes and requirements can be found in the "Priority Improvement and Turnaround Supplement" handbook.

Insufficient State Data. There are unique considerations for districts and schools that do not have enough available data for the state to assign a rating. For planning purposes, these sites must follow the requirements connected to their most recently assigned plan type. Sites with an ISD rating are not eligible for biennial flexibility. Additional information can be found in the Insufficient State Data Ratings fact sheet.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) School Improvement Plan Requirements. ESSA requires that schools identified for improvement develop and implement improvement plans in collaboration with stakeholders including principals, other school leaders, teachers, and parents. The federal requirements have been integrated into the UIP. Comprehensive Support (CS) school plans must be approved by the school, Local Education Agency (LEA), and the Department. Upon approval, the Department is responsible for monitoring and periodically reviewing CS plans. LEAs are responsible for reviewing, approving, and monitoring Targeted Support (TS) and Additional Targeted Support (ATS) plans.

Plan Adoption

Prior to submitting plans to CDE for public posting, there are statutory expectations on local bodies reviewing and adopting the plans. For district plans, local boards review and adopt the plan regardless of the rating type. For schools that earn a Performance or Improvement plan type, the principal and the superintendent or designee may adopt the plan. Local boards are encouraged to review and approve the plans, but that is determined by local policy and practice. For schools that earn Priority Improvement or Turnaround, the local board must adopt the plan. A resource to support Local boards in understanding the UIP review and adoption process is available here.

Plan Type	District Plan	School Plan
Distinction/Accredited/ Performance or Improvement	Adopted by local board	Adopted by principal and superintendent or designee. Local board is encouraged to review and approve.
Priority Improvement or Turnaround	Adopted by local board	Adopted by local board
Insufficient State Data	Adopted by local board	Based on previous identification

UIP Online System

The department has invested in the UIP/ACI Online System to support documentation of the district and school level plans. Because this information lives within the online system, the department has been able to pull key reporting elements into other reports (e.g., Performance Snapshot), as well as

conduct analysis that are used to shape future supports. It should be noted that a few districts have been approved to explore local approaches to documenting their improvement planning efforts while still meeting all state, federal and grant requirements. This is through the Local Accountability Systems Grant.

Over the last several years, the department has engaged in a process for streamlining the online template for schools and districts based upon feedback from the field. This document provides an overview on the changes to the template including using assurances, synthesizing the data presentation, and strategically clarifying terminology. All users of the online template will use this new streamlined version beginning in the 2025-26 school year.

Major Components of the Improvement Planning Process

The basic flow of improvement plans involves data analysis (e.g., student performance, root cause analysis, target setting) and research-based strategies (including action plans). There are also state and federal requirements that planning and monitoring of implementation involve broad stakeholder engagement.

Data Analysis. All schools and districts are expected to engage in a data analysis process that builds the case for any selected strategies. Consulting a variety of data sources (e.g., state and local assessments) sites summarize the priority areas for student level needs. These summary statements drive the rest of the plan. To ensure strong alignment, the state requires a root cause analysis that helps sites to identify the "why" behind these areas of need that are under the control of the system by using other systems level data (e.g., TLCC Survey, diagnostic reviews). Plans must also capture targets that define how the system will measure success over time, as well as adjust direction if needed.

Research-Based Strategies. Improvement plans are expected to portray actions that are research-based and that are at the appropriate level of scope and intensity depending on the specific district's accreditation category or school plan type. In particular, districts/schools with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan must select major improvement strategies that will result in dramatic outcomes for students. Furthermore, districts/schools with a Turnaround Plan must, at a minimum, include one or more required turnaround strategies, as defined by law.

Stakeholder Engagement in the Planning Process

State and federal expectations include specific roles for stakeholders in the planning and implementation process. This includes the involvement of district and building leaders, local boards, classroom educators, and families and community members. Within the state accountability system, great attention is given to district and school-level accountability committees (DACs and SACs).

Generally, the DACs and SACs have similar responsibilities for participating in the school improvement planning process. The DAC/SAC advises on the plan based upon the assigned plan type: Distinction

(district only), Accredited/Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, Turnaround, or Insufficient State Data. DACs advise local boards; SACs advise building leadership. Given the tight timelines in the fall, the department recommends a year-round approach to the planning process, including the meaningful engagement of the accountability committees throughout the year. With the availability of local/state data in the spring, schools and districts are encouraged to begin planning or refining their plan for the following year. State level data can then be used in the summer/fall to validate the direction of the plan, as well as shore up any new or different requirements attached to the assigned plan type. Once the plan is adopted, the accountability committees are then expected to monitor progress quarterly throughout the school year.

Stakeholder Engagement

Both state and federal accountability place great emphasis on engaging external stakeholders (including families) in the accountability process. State statute requires the formation of certain state advisory groups and accountability committees. Accountability committees can also be activated to help meet Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) expectations (e.g., stakeholder engagement in the planning and implementation process under school improvement). Regardless of the structure, external stakeholders are expected to engage in meaningful consultation in accountability and improvement planning. Furthermore, schools and districts are expected to report school data and document plans in a transparent manner. Likewise, the state works with different stakeholder groups that advise on accountability matters (e.g., Technical Advisory Panel, Accountability Work Group, State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education).

District Accountability Committees

Composition of District Accountability Committees

A District Accountability Committee (DAC)'s primary responsibility is to advise their local school board. Each local school board is responsible for either appointing or creating a process for electing the members of a DAC. At minimum, DACs must consist of the following:

- Three parents of students enrolled in the district;
- One teacher employed by the district;
- One school administrator employed by the district; and
- One person involved in business in the community within district boundaries.

A person may not be appointed or elected to fill more than one of the required positions in a single term. If the local school board chooses to increase the number of persons on the DAC, it must ensure that the number of parents exceeds the number of representatives from the group with the next highest representation.

To the extent practicable, the local school board must ensure that the parents appointed reflect the student populations significantly represented within the district. Such representation might include, for example, a variety of different races/ethnicities, families eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, families whose dominant language is not English, migrant families, families with children with disabilities and/or identified as gifted.

Note: Generally, a parent who is a district employee or spouse, son, daughter, sister, brother, mother or father of a district employee is not eligible to serve on a DAC. However, such an individual may serve as a parent on the DAC if the district makes a good faith effort but is unable to identify a sufficient number of eligible parents who are willing to serve on the DAC.

A local school board that appoints DAC members should, to the extent practicable, ensure that at least one of the parents has a student enrolled in a charter school authorized by the board (if the board has authorized any charter schools) and ensure that at least one person appointed to the committee has demonstrated knowledge of charter schools.

DACs must select one of their parent representatives to serve as chair or co-chair. Local school boards will establish the length of the term for DAC chair/co-chairs.

If a DAC vacancy arises, the remaining members of the DAC will fill the vacancy by majority action.

District Accountability Committee Responsibilities

Each DAC is responsible for the following:

- Recommending to its local school board priorities for spending school district moneys;
- Submitting recommendations to the local school board concerning preparation of the district's Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan;
- Reviewing any charter school applications received by the local school board and reviewing any renewal application prior to consideration by the local school board (upon request of the district and at the DAC's option);
- Cooperatively determining, with the local school board, the areas and issues, in addition to budget, the DAC shall study and make recommendations upon each year;
- Providing input and recommendations to principals, concerning the development and use of assessment tools to measure and evaluate student academic growth as it relates to teacher evaluations*;
- Assisting the district in implementing its family engagement policy (small rural districts may waive this state requirement). Note: districts accepting Title I funds must still meet the Title I

requirement in adopting a districtwide parent involvement policy);

- Assisting school personnel to increase family engagement with educators, including families' engagement in creating READ plans, Individual Career and Academic Plans, and plans to address habitual truancy (small rural districts may waive this requirement);
- Meeting at least quarterly to discuss whether school district leadership, personnel, and infrastructure are advancing or impeding implementation of the school district's performance, improvement, priority improvement or turnaround plan or other progress pertinent to the school district's accreditation contract; and
- For districts receiving ESSA funds, consulting with all required stakeholders regarding federally funded activities and publicizing opportunities and soliciting parents to serve on the DAC (small rural districts may waive this requirement.

Whenever the DAC recommends spending priorities or updates to the district UIP, it must make reasonable efforts to consult, in a substantive manner, with the School Accountability Committees (SACs) in the district. In a district with 500 or fewer enrolled students, members of the local school board may serve on a SAC, and the DAC may serve as a SAC.

* The Educator Evaluation and Support Act (S.B. 10-191) authorized DACs to recommend assessment tools used in the district to measure and evaluate academic growth, as they relate to teacher evaluations. This should not in any way interfere with a district's compliance with the statutory requirements of the Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act. For more information, visit the School and District Accountability Committees website.

School Accountability Committees

Composition of School Accountability Committees

A School Accountability Committee (SAC)'s primary responsibility is to advise their school principal. Each school is responsible for establishing a School Accountability Committee (SAC), which should consist of at least the following seven members:

- The principal of the school or the principal's designee;
- One teacher who provides instruction in the school;
- Three parents of students enrolled in the school;
- One adult member of an organization of parents, teachers, and students recognized by the school; and
- One person from the community.

The local school board may determine the actual number of people on the SAC and the method for selecting members. If the board chooses to increase the number on the SAC, it must ensure that the number of parents exceeds the number of representatives from the group with the next highest

representation. A person may not be appointed or elected to fill more than one of these required positions in a single term.

If the local school board determines that members are to be appointed, the appointing authority must, to the extent practicable, ensure the parent representatives reflect the school's student population. If the local school board determines that the members are to be elected, the school principal must encourage persons who reflect the school's student populations to seek election. Such representation might include, for example, a variety of different races/ethnicities, families eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, families whose dominant language is not English, migrant families, families with children with disabilities and/or identified as gifted. SACs must select one of their parent representatives to serve as chair or co-chair of the committee. If a vacancy arises on a SAC for any reason, the remaining members will fill the vacancy by majority action.

Note: Generally, a parent who is an employee of the school or who is a spouse, son, daughter, sister, brother, mother or father of an employee is not eligible to serve on a SAC. However, if, after making good-faith efforts, a principal or organization of parents, teachers and students is unable to find a sufficient number of persons willing to serve on the SAC, the principal, with advice from the organization of parents, teachers and students, may establish an alternative membership plan for the SAC that reflects the membership specified above as much as possible.

The members of the governing board of a charter school may serve on the SAC. In a district with 500 or fewer enrolled students, members of the local school board may serve on a SAC, and the DAC may serve as a SAC.

School Accountability Committee Responsibilities

Each SAC is responsible for the following:

- Making recommendations to the principal on the school priorities for spending school moneys, including federal funds, where applicable;
- Making recommendations to the principal and the superintendent concerning preparation of a school Performance or Improvement plan, (if applicable);
- Publicizing and holding a SAC meeting to discuss strategies to include in a school Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan (if applicable), and using this input to make recommendations to the local school board concerning preparation of the school plan prior to the plan being written;
- Publicizing the district's public meeting of the local school board to review a written school Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan;
- Meeting at least quarterly to discuss whether school leadership, personnel, and infrastructure are advancing or impeding implementation of the school's Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, or Turnaround plan and other progress pertinent to the school's accreditation contract;

- Providing input and recommendations to the DAC and district administration concerning principal development plans and evaluations. (Note: this should not in any way interfere with a district's compliance with the statutory requirements of the Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act);
- Publicizing opportunities to serve and soliciting parents to serve on the SAC (small rural districts may waive this requirement);
- Assisting the district in implementing at the school level the district's family engagement policy (small rural districts may waive this requirement); and
- Assisting school personnel to increase family engagement with teachers, including family engagement in creating READ plans, Individual Career and Academic Plans, and plans to address habitual truancy (small rural districts may waive this requirement).

For more information, visit the School and District Accountability Committees website.

School Accountability Committees for Charter Schools

For information about School Accountability Committees in the charter school context, see Appendix D.

State Advisory Groups

State advisory groups provide non-binding recommendations and formal feedback to the Department related to the state accountability system and other topics prescribed by future statute and/or as requested by CDE staff members. These advisory groups include the Technical Advisory Panel for Longitudinal Growth (TAP), Accountability Work Group (AWG), and the State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education (SACPIE). In general, for these state advisory groups:

- Meetings are open to the public
- There is a membership appointment process with specific candidate requirements
- Members have terms and serve without compensation
- Regular meetings occur throughout the school year

Technical Advisory Panel

The TAP consists of state and national experts on longitudinal measurement of academic growth for state accountability purposes, convened by the Commissioner to provide technical recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding the implementation of the Colorado Growth Model and the Educational Accountability Act. All members are appointed by the Commissioner and are expected to serve three-year terms. The TAP was created in accordance with the Education Accountability Act of 2009 (S.B. 09-163) and state statute (C.R.S. § 22-11-202). For more information, visit the TAP website.

Accountability Work Group

The AWG serves as a policy advisory group to research and explore ideas in support of federal and state accountability policies and decision points (e.g., ESSA implementation). This group seeks to collect input from additional stakeholders in developing recommendations. It was first convened by the Commissioner in 2014 to gather input on improving the state accountability performance framework reports. Members consist of regional superintendent representatives, school and district leadership, charter school leadership, Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE), Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB), Colorado Education Association (CEA) leaders, advocacy and civil rights group members and parents. For more information, visit the AWG website.

State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education

The SACPIE is a legislatively-required body of diverse stakeholders charged to advise state organizations and school districts on issues related to increasing parent involvement in education. The premise is that, by promoting family-school partnerships, the quality of public education will improve and the level of students' academic performance throughout the state will increase (C.R.S. § 22-7-301 and C.R.S. § 22-7-304). This responsibility specifically includes involving families in programs to increase high school and college graduation rates, decrease drop-out rates, and close the achievement and growth gaps between learner groups in the state. For more information, visit the SACPIE website.

Support

Through Colorado's accountability system, successful schools and districts are recognized and serve as models, while those that are struggling receive additional support and increased monitoring. The state support system is driven by the state needs assessment, which uses state-level trends to identify potential areas of need and direct staff support. The Department then uses the Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement as an organizing structure to provide examples, considerations, and practical applications of what it takes to successfully lead systemic efforts to achieve rapid school improvement. Supports are distributed through tiers (e.g., universal, targeted, intensive) and are driven by the Department staff and improvement funding channels. District participation in the Department's support is encouraged but voluntary.

Department Staff Support

There are multiple School Quality and Supports contacts (shared with districts in September) that are meant to support districts in specific areas of the accountability system:

- **Support Leads:** Districts are assigned a support lead to act as a single point of contact and broker to other services. The support lead is available to assist with targeted support for identified schools (e.g., On Clock, Comprehensive Support), the Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI) application, and to connect districts with other resources to support the district with improvement efforts, as appropriate.
- **Transformation Specialist:** When a district or school has been identified for three or more years, Transformation Specialists provide more intensive engagement from the Department with more opportunities for schools and districts to receive support in their transformation efforts.

- **Unified Improvement Planning (UIP) Contact:** UIP contacts provide universal support to districts to assist with completing improvement planning requirements, engaging with the UIP template, and leading continuous improvement efforts.
- **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Regional Contacts:** ESEA regional contacts provide targeted support to ensure that grant applications, application and program review protocols, and plan approval criteria reflect quality program standards, maximize efficiency, and improve program design and implementation in ways that optimize student outcomes.
- **Field Services:** The Field Services and Supports Unit provides universal support for all 178 Colorado school districts. Field Services also emphasizes targeted support for the 147 rural school districts across the state.

Empowering Action for School Improvement Grant

Additional funds are provided through the Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI) grant program. EASI is a streamlined approach to distribute school improvement funds (1003a through ESSA and the School Transformation Grant through H.B. 18-1355) to districts with schools that are designated as (1) Comprehensive Support (CS) and Targeted Support (TS), Additional Targeted Support (ATS) under ESSA, and (2) Priority Improvement, Turnaround, or On Watch through the state accountability system. For more information on the EASI grant, go to the EASI Application website.

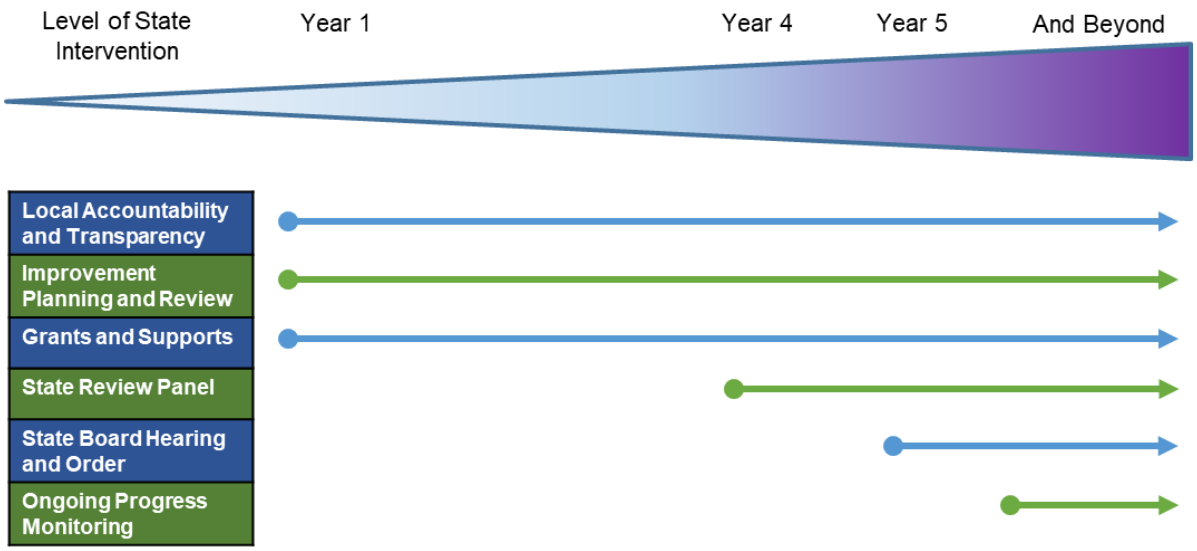
Intervention

The state's Accountability Clock requires the State Board of Education to direct a course of action to the local board of education if the school or district has received Priority Improvement or Turnaround ratings for five consecutive years. The Accountability Clock Process is detailed in this section and is described in further detail in the Identification Supplement to this handbook.

Accountability Clock Process

Districts and schools with Priority Improvement Plans or Turnaround Plans are on the accountability clock. This means there are additional requirements and supports available. See the below figure for a description of the accountability clock process.

Figure: Accountability Clock Process



More details about accountability clock requirements can be found in the "Priority Improvement and Turnaround Supplement" handbook and in the Performance Watch Labels and Progression fact sheet.

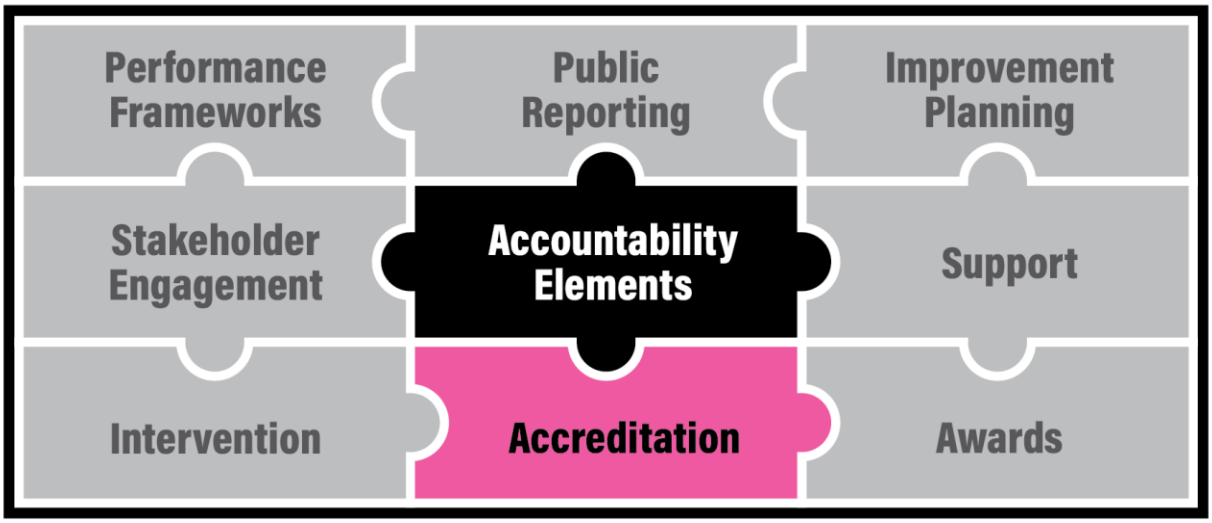
State Review Panel

The Commissioner may assign the State Review Panel (SRP) to critically evaluate a school implementing a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan or a district Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan or Accredited with Turnaround Plan. Such critical evaluation typically includes an on-site visit and document review to consider the school or district's leadership and capacity to implement the needed change for rapid improvement. For more information, go to the SRP fact sheet or the State Review Panel website.

State Board of Education Hearings

The state's accountability clock requires the State Board of Education to direct a course of action to the local board of education if the school or district has received Priority Improvement or Turnaround ratings for five consecutive years. These courses of action are called "Accountability Pathways" and are directed by the state board during an Accountability Hearing. For more information, go to the Accountability Pathways and Hearings fact sheet. For a list of active state board orders, go to the State Board Accountability Hearings website.

Accreditation

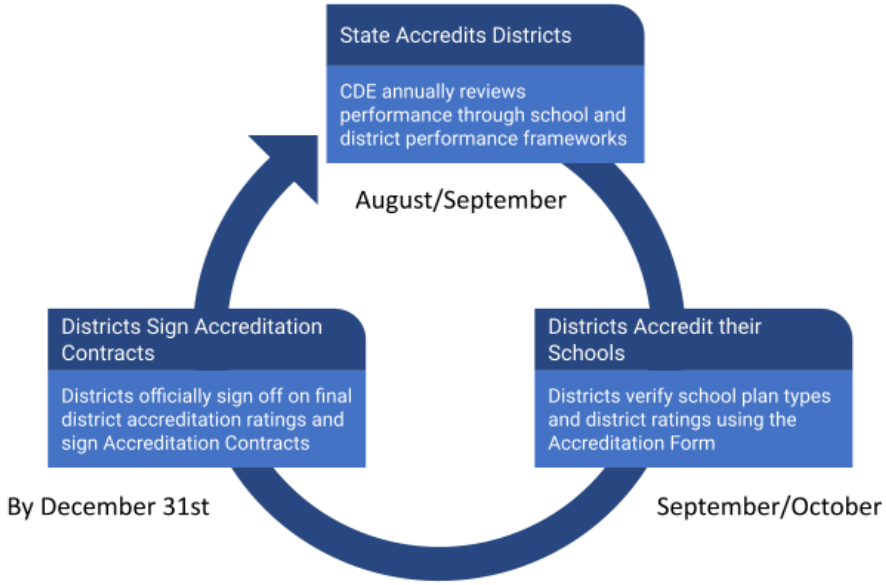


The State Board of Education is responsible for the annual accreditation of school districts. Accreditation ratings are based on the results of each district's performance framework and selected compliance indicators (e.g., safety and finance indicators, state assessment participation).

Districts are responsible for accrediting their schools based upon the state's appraisal of the school's performance. After performance frameworks are released in the fall, all districts are responsible for verifying their district rating and school plan types in the Accreditation Form (within the UIP/ACI online system). Under some conditions, districts may submit additional evidence to adjust a school or district's plan type through the request to reconsider process.

Once school and district plan types are finalized, the Accreditation Contract is signed by state and local leadership. This documents that the district is in good standing with the state and remains in compliance as laid out by state statute and regulated by the state board. The image below describes the annual accreditation cycle at a high level.

Figure: Accreditation Process



Accreditation Process for Districts

By late August of each school year, the Department determines whether each district exceeds, meets, approaches, or does not meet state expectations for attainment on the key Performance Indicators (i.e., achievement, growth, and postsecondary and workforce readiness). The Department also considers each district's compliance with the requirements specified in that district's accreditation contract (e.g., safety and finance indicators, state assessment participation). Based on these results, the Department provides each district with a District Performance Framework (DPF) Report with a preliminary accreditation assignment according to one of the following accreditation categories:

- **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 and is considered to be on performance watch;
- **Accredited with Turnaround Plan -** The district has not met state expectations for attainment on the Performance Indicators and is required to adopt, with the commissioner's approval, and implement a Turnaround plan. The district is considered to be on performance watch.

- **Insufficient State Data -** The Department does not have enough information to determine if the district has met state expectations for attainment on the Performance Indicators. If the district was previously on performance watch, then the district will continue to implement a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan. The clock, however, will not advance. For more information, visit the Insufficient State Data Ratings Fact Sheet.

No later than the December State Board of Education meeting, the Department determines a final accreditation category for each district and notifies the district of their final accreditation category. Every districts' most recently signed accreditation contract is available in the online accreditation contract portal.

Accreditation Process for Schools

Districts are responsible for accrediting their schools in a manner that emphasizes attainment on the statewide Performance Indicators (i.e., achievement, growth, and postsecondary and workforce readiness) and, at the local school board's discretion, any additional accreditation indicators and measures adopted by the district. The Department reviews the performance of each public school annually, and the state board assigns the type of plan each school will be responsible for implementing.

In late August, the Department determines whether each school exceeds, meets, approaches, or does not meet state expectations on each of the Performance Indicators, as well as whether the school meets the assessment participation and administration requirements. The Department provides each school with the data used to analyze their schools' performance and a School Performance Framework (SPF) Report with a preliminary plan type assignment. School plan types include:

- **Performance Plan**
- **Improvement Plan**
- **Priority Improvement Plan**
- **Turnaround Plan**
- **Insufficient State Data**

No later than the December State Board of Education Meeting, the Department formulates a final recommendation as to which type of plan each school should implement. This recommendation considers both the results reported on the SPF report and any additional information submitted by the district through the request to reconsider process. By December, the state board makes a final determination regarding the type of plan each school shall implement, and each school's plan assignment is published on SchoolView.

Submission of the Accreditation Form and Request to Reconsider

Accreditation Form Submission - Required for All Districts

The Accreditation Form (within the UIP/ACI online system) is a required submission for all districts to finalize school plan types and begin the district accreditation contract process. This form indicates whether any changes are requested for preliminary district accreditation ratings and school plan types. Once the form is submitted, districts do not need to provide any additional materials until ratings are finalized by the state board, unless they are participating in a request to reconsider. Note that districts participating in request to reconsider have additional requirements and timelines for submission.

All districts must submit the Accreditation Form by ***September 26, 2025***. If a district does not submit the form by the deadline, the department will consider the district accreditation rating and school plan types final and will submit them to the state board for approval. Additional information about form submission is available in the Accreditation and Request to Reconsider Guidance.

Request to Reconsider Submission - Optional

Districts may choose to participate in the request process if the district would like to request the Department reconsider their preliminary district accreditation rating or school plan type. The Department only considers requests that meet one or more of the conditions for a request to reconsider (R2R) detailed in state board rule (1 CCR 301-1; sections 5.07-5.09 and 8.07-8.09) and the Accreditation and Request to Reconsider Guidance. Upon receipt of any final materials in the Accreditation Portal, the Department reviews the request and formulates a recommendation as to the district's final accreditation rating or the school's plan type. The commissioner will request the state board approve the Department's recommendations on school plan types at the state board meeting in December. Note: Request to reconsider is available to review overall rating changes (e.g., change from *Priority Improvement* to *Improvement*), but does not impact indicator or sub-indicator data reported within performance framework data tools or reports.

To meet the tight timeline for state board approval, R2R submissions that do not include all applicable criteria by the deadline of ***October 15, 2025*** will not be accepted. All documentation received by the deadline will be considered final and part of public record. For more information about how to submit information for reconsideration, including dates and opportunities for support, see the request to reconsider website.

District Accreditation Contracts

Contract Contents

The state is responsible for annually accrediting all school districts. Accreditation contracts have a term of one year:

- **Districts that are Accredited or Accredited with Distinction:** Contracts are automatically renewed for up to four years, if the district's rating remains at Accredited or Accredited with Distinction. A district may choose to renew earlier. The department encourages districts with

new superintendents or new board presidents to consider signing their contracts.

- **Districts that are Accredited with Insufficient State Data, Improvement, Priority Improvement, or Turnaround:** Contracts must be signed annually.

The Department sends districts individualized accreditation contract templates when the contract needs to be renewed or upon request of the district. Signed contracts (by the superintendent and local board president) are due back to CDE, and then are signed by the commissioner and state board chair. Additional information about submitting District Accreditation Contracts can be found in the Accreditation and Request to Reconsider Guidance. Current accreditation contracts are available on the District Accreditation website.

Parties to the contract may renegotiate the contract at any time during the term of the contract, based upon appropriate and reasonable changes in circumstances. Each contract, at a minimum, must address the following elements:

- The district's level of attainment on key Performance Indicators— Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, and Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness;
- The district's adoption and implementation of its Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan (whichever is appropriate based on the district's accreditation category). It is possible for a district to receive an Insufficient State Data rating, if there is not enough reportable data to calculate a plan type.
- The district's implementation of its system for accrediting schools, which must emphasize school attainment on the key Performance Indicators and may, at the local school board's discretion, include additional accreditation indicators and measures adopted by the district (in consultation with the Department) while exceeding minimum state expectations; and
- The district's substantial, good-faith compliance with the provisions of Title 22 and other statutory and regulatory requirements applicable to districts and all Department policies and procedures applicable to the district, including the following provisions of:
    - Article 44 of title 22 concerning budget and financial policies and procedures;
    - Article 45 of title 22 concerning accounting and financial reporting; and
    - §22-32-109.1, C.R.S., concerning school safety, and the Gun Free Schools Act, 20 U.S.C. 7961.
    - Provisions of section 22-7-1013, C.R.S., concerning the periodic review and adoption of standards that meet or exceed the state preschool through elementary and secondary education standards and concerning administration of statewide assessments, including that:
        - The District and District's public schools will not impose negative consequences—including prohibiting school attendance, imposing an unexcused absence, or prohibiting participation in extracurricular activities—on a student or parent if the

parent excuses his or her student from participating in a statewide assessment. If a parent excuses his or her student from participating in a statewide assessment, the District and the District's public schools will not prohibit the student from participating in an activity, or receiving any other form of reward the District or District's public schools provide to students for participating in the statewide assessment; and

- The District and District's public schools will not impose an unreasonable burden or requirement on a student that would discourage the student from taking a statewide assessment or encourage the student's parent to excuse the student from taking the statewide assessment.

Compliance with Contract Terms

If the Department has reason to believe that a district is not in substantial compliance with one or more statutory or regulatory requirements applicable to districts, it will notify the local school board and the board will have 90 days after the date of the notice to come into compliance. If, at the end of the 90-day period, the Department finds that the district is not substantially in compliance with the application requirements (e.g., the district has not yet taken the necessary measures to ensure that it will meet all legal requirements as soon as practicable), the district may be subject to loss of accreditation and the interventions specified in sections 22-11-207 through 22-11-210, C.R.S.

A district's failure to administer statewide assessments in a standardized and secure manner so that resulting assessment scores are reflective of independent student performance will be considered by the Department in assigning the district to an accreditation category. It may result in the district being assigned to a Priority Improvement plan, or if the district already is accredited with Priority Improvement, a Turnaround plan.

Awards

The Department has a variety of Award Programs that recognize the success of high performing schools and districts each fall. These awards are included on the front page of final performance frameworks. In addition, award-winning districts and schools may participate in a CDE-hosted award ceremony and may also receive banners to display in their schools.

Types of Awards

Blue Ribbon Schools: The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes schools whose students achieve at very high levels or schools that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap. The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program sets a standard of excellence for all schools striving for the highest level of achievement.

- **Colorado School Awards Program**
    - **John Irwin Schools of Excellence:** The John Irwin awards are given to schools that demonstrate exceptional academic achievement over time. These schools received an Exceeds Expectations rating on the Academic Achievement indicator of the School Performance Frameworks reflecting exceptional performance in Math, English Language Arts, and Science.
    - **Governor's Distinguished Improvement Award:** The Governor's Distinguished Improvement Awards are given to schools that demonstrate exceptional student growth. On the school performance framework, these schools "exceed" expectations on the indicator related to longitudinal academic growth at all grade levels.
    - **Colorado Centers of Excellence Award:** Each year, the Department recognizes public schools in the state that enroll a student population of which at least 75% are at-risk pupils

and that demonstrate the highest rates of student longitudinal growth, as measured by the Colorado Growth Model.

High School Academic Growth Award: The High School Academic Growth Awards recognize high schools that demonstrate the highest levels of students' academic growth in reading, writing and math, within each classification used by the statewide association for high school activities for the sport of football.

- **Green Ribbon Schools**: The U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools honors America's public and private elementary, middle and high schools for their efforts toward improving student health and achievement and reducing their environmental impact.
- **National ESEA Distinguished Schools**: Schools are selected based on a combination of academic achievement of the students in the school and the creative and innovative programs that contribute to their success. These Colorado schools join hundreds of other distinguished schools nationwide making a difference for Title I children.

Appendices

Appendix A: Colorado Educational Accountability System Terminology

Term	Definition
Academic Achievement **Or** **Achievement** **Or** **Status**	A proficiency score on an assessment. Achievement for an individual is expressed as a test (scale) score or as an achievement level. Academic achievement is a performance indicator used to evaluate schools and districts in Colorado. Colorado uses the average score, or mean scale score, to measure achievement.
Academic Growth	For an individual student, academic growth is the progress shown by the student, in a given subject area, over a given span of time. Academic growth is a performance indicator used to evaluate schools and districts in Colorado.
Academic Peers	Students currently in the same grade, being tested in the same subject, with a similar achievement score history in that subject. For the Colorado Growth Model, these are a particular student's comparison group when interpreting the student's growth percentile.
ACCESS	WIDA ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State) is a secure large-scale English proficiency assessment for K-12th graders identified as Multilingual Learners (ML). The assessment measures student achievement in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
Achievement Level	Descriptions of score levels on an assessment, using ranges of scores, separated by cut-points. On the CMAS assessments, for example, the five achievement levels are: 1-did not yet meet expectations, 2-partially met expectations, 3-approached expectations, 4-met expectations, and 5-exceeded expectations.
Accountability Clock / Performance Watch	The accountability clock refers to the number of consecutive years a school/district remains in the two lowest accountability categories (Priority Improvement and Turnaround or PI/T). Also referred to as the 5-year-clock. Beginning in 2019, the term "Performance Watch" is used to describe (1) schools/districts on the accountability clock (e.g., a school or district in Priority improvement or Turnaround), (2) schools/districts that are considered "On Watch" (i.e., after receiving two consecutive PI/T ratings, a school or district must receive an Improvement rating or higher for two consecutive years to no longer be considered "On Watch"), and (3) schools/districts that are considered "On Hold" (i.e., a school or district that was on the accountability clock that then received an Insufficient State Data rating). After five years of consecutive or nonconsecutive PI/T ratings while on performance watch, the state board must direct the school, district or Institute to take one of the actions, or pathways, outlined in statute. More details, including

Term	Definition
	actions directed by the State Board of Education at the end of the accountability clock, are detailed in the Identification Supplement to the Accountability Handbook.
Action Step	Something done to make progress toward goals. Action steps are created for each strategy and identify resources (people, time, money) that will be brought to bear so that goals and targets can be reached. This is a component of the UIP process.
Additional Targeted Support (ATS)	School identified for support and improvement under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) based on having at least one student group performing in the lowest 5% for that student group. If the school does not exit this category within 3 years of identification and is supported with Title IA funds, the school would become comprehensive support and improvement under ESSA.
Average	A summary of a collection of numbers, calculated by adding all of the numbers together and dividing by how many numbers were in the collection. Also known as the mean. See also: ***Mean***
Baseline Growth	Is a normative measure of student progress based on comparison to historical pre-pandemic academic peer groups. This approach provides a comparison to past performance to detect statewide shifts.
CoAlt: ELA and Math (DLM)	Colorado Alternate Assessment: ELA and Math Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) is the standards-based assessment used to measure academic content knowledge in English Language Arts and Mathematics for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
The Colorado Growth Model	The Colorado Growth Model is a statistical model to calculate each student's progress on state assessments. The Colorado Growth Model expresses annual growth, for an individual, with a student growth percentile in language arts, mathematics and English proficiency. For a school, district, or other relevant student grouping, student growth is summarized using the median of the student growth percentiles for that grouping.
Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS)	Colorado's assessments were created to measure the Colorado Academic Standards. They include assessments in ELA, math, science and social studies.
Colorado SAT, PSAT10, PSAT09	Colorado has given a college entrance exam each spring to all 11th graders enrolled in public schools since 2001. All Colorado 9th graders are administered the PSAT09; 10th graders are administered the PSAT10; and all 11th graders have the opportunity to take the SAT. These assessment results are used in the accountability system.
Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CS)	Schools that are identified for support and improvement under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), based on one of the 3 following categories: • Performing in the lowest 5% of Title I schools; • Having a graduation rate below 67%; or

Term	Definition
	• Having at least one chronically underperforming student group.
Consolidated Application [ESEA]	Colorado's grant application process for LEAs to apply for ESEA (also known as ESSA) funds.
Cut-Score Or Cut-Point	The number required for a school or district to attain a particular level of performance on the performance framework reports. The cut-point for each performance indicator level is defined on the performance framework scoring guide.
Disaggregated Group	A demographic group of students. Colorado reports student academic growth, on the performance framework reports, for four historically disadvantaged student groups: students eligible for free/reduced cost meals, minority students, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners. Additional information is reported by race, ethnicity, gender, and gifted.
Disaggregated Graduation Rate	Graduation rates are disaggregated by student groups. On the performance framework reports, disaggregated groups include students eligible for free/reduced cost lunch, minority students, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners. See also: ***Graduation Rate***
District Performance Framework (DPF)	The framework with which the state evaluates the level to which districts meet the state's expectations for attainment on the performance indicators, and makes an accreditation level determination.
Drop-Out Rate	The Colorado dropout rate is an annual rate, reflecting the percentage of all students enrolled in grades 7-12 who leave school during a single year, without subsequently attending another school or educational program. It is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by a membership base, which includes all students who were in membership any time during the year. District Performance Frameworks use the grades 7-12 rate. School Performance Frameworks only include dropout rate at the high school level (grades 9-12).
Equitable Distribution of Teachers (EDT)	The requirement in ESSA that LEAs examine and address the degree to which inexperienced, ineffective, and out-of-field teachers are more likely assigned to teach low-income and minority students. EDT analyses are conducted and posted on the CDE website.
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act, the version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorized in 2015.

Term	Definition

ESSA Indicators	The performance of all students, Multilingual learners (MLs), students with disabilities, students of poverty, and students from major races and ethnic groups are evaluated on the following indicators as a part of the ESSA identification process:
	• English language arts (ELA) achievement and growth
	• Math achievement and growth
	• English language proficiency (of MLs only)
	• Graduation rates (of high school students only)
	• School Quality and Student Success Indicator, in Colorado defined as
	  ○ Chronic Absenteeism rates for elementary and middle school and
	  ○ Drop-out rates for high schools

FELL (Former English Language Learner)	Students that have been formally exited from an English language development program for more than two years.
Fluent English Proficient (FEP)	This is the highest level of English proficiency designations for multilingual learners, and split into four sub-designations: FEP, Monitor Year 1; FEP Monitor Year 2; FEP Exited Year 1; FEP, Exited Year 2. Students at this level are able to understand and communicate effectively with various audiences, on a wide range of familiar and new topics, to meet social and academic demands in English. They are able to score comparably, in content areas, to native speakers, but may still need some linguistic support. Compare to: ***NEP, LEP***
Framework Points	The point values schools/districts can earn on each performance indicator included in the SPFs/DPFs. Framework points define the relative weighting of each performance indicator within the overall framework. They can be directly understood as percentage weights of the indicators when the school or district has data on all three indicators. For elementary and middle level schools only, framework points possible are: 40 for Academic Achievement and 60 for Academic Growth. For high schools and districts with high school levels, framework points possible are: 30 for Academic Achievement, 40 for Academic Growth, and 30 for Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness. When a school/district does not have sufficient data to calculate a score on a particular performance indicator, the remaining indicators are used, and their weighted contributions change.
Framework Score **Or** **Overall Points Earned**	The sum of the framework points a school or district earns on all performance indicators on the school/district performance framework. The framework score determines a school plan type or a district accreditation category.

Term	Definition
Graduation Rate	Colorado calculates "on-time" graduation as the percent of students who graduate from high school within 4 years of entering 9th grade. A student is assigned a graduating class when they enter 9th grade, and the graduating class is assigned by adding 4 years to the year the student enters 9th grade. The formula anticipates that a student entering 9th grade in fall 2016 will graduate with the Class of 2020. On the 1-year District/School Performance Framework reports, districts/schools earn points based on the highest value among the following graduation rates: 4-year, 5-year, 6-year, and 7-year. For District/School Performance Framework reports, the "best of" graduation rate is bolded and italicized on the Performance Indicators detail page.
Growth Percentile	See Student Growth Percentile.
Improvement Plan	The Educational Accountability Act of 2009 requires all schools and districts in Colorado to implement one of four plan types: Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, or Turnaround. Districts that earn 44% - 55.9% of their DPF points or schools that earn 42% - 52.9% of their SPF points will be assigned to the "Improvement Plan" category.
Implementation Benchmark	A measure (with associated metric) used to assess the degree to which action steps have been implemented. This is a component of the UIP process. See also: ***Measure*** and ***Metric***
Insufficient State Data (ISD)	A district may be Accredited with Insufficient State Data or a school may receive a plan type of Insufficient State Data. Insufficient State Data (ISD) ratings are assigned when the state does not have enough data to assign a rating or plan type. There are multiple reasons an ISD rating can be assigned, including: (1) small tested populations, (2) no students at grade levels tested for state assessments, (3) no achievement, growth, or postsecondary workforce readiness data (for multilevel schools, this also applies if one or more elementary, middle, or high school levels do not have reportable data for achievement or growth), or (4) less than 25% total participation in English language arts and math (science participation is included for informational purposes only in 2023). The criteria to assign an ISD rating to Alternative Education Campus (AEC) schools is the same as non-AEC schools.
Interim Measure	A measure (and associated metric) used to assess student performance at various times during a school year. This is a component of the UIP process.
LEA	Local Educational Agency; this can be a School District, BOCES, the Colorado Charter School Institute, or the lead school district in a multi-school district consortium.
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	This is the middle English proficiency designation for multilingual learners. LEP students are able to understand and be understood in many to most social communication situations, in English. They are gaining increasing competence in the more cognitively demanding requirements of content areas; however, they are not yet ready to fully participate in academic content areas without linguistic support. Compare to: ***NEP, FEP***

Term	Definition
Major Improvement Strategy	An overall approach that describes a series of related maneuvers or actions intended to result in performance improvements. This is a component of the UIP process.
Matriculation Rate	A measure of students that enroll in higher education opportunities following high school. The matriculation rate is a postsecondary workforce readiness sub-indicator in the DPFs/SPFs. It reflects all high school graduates that enlist in the military, enroll in a career and technical education program, or 2- or 4-year higher education institution during the summer or fall term following high school graduation. The calculated rates also include graduates that earned a college degree or CWDC approved credential during high school.
Mean	A summary measure of a collection of numbers, calculated by adding all the numbers together and dividing by how many numbers were in the collection (commonly known as the average). See also: **Average.**
Measure	Instrument(s) to assess performance in an area identified by an indicator.
Median	A number that summarizes a set of numbers, similar to an average. When a collection of numbers is ordered from smallest to largest, the median is the middle score of the ordered list. The median is therefore the point below which 50 percent of the scores fall. Medians may be more appropriate than averages in particular situations, such as when percentiles are grouped.
Median Student Growth Percentile **Or** **Median Growth Percentile (MGP)**	Summarizes student growth by district, school, grade-level, or other group of interest. It is calculated by ordering the individual Student Growth Percentiles of the students in the group of interest and determining the middle score. See also: ***Median***
Metric	A numeric scale indicating the level of some variable of interest. For example, your credit score is a metric that companies use to decide whether to give you a loan.
Multilingual Learners (MLs)	For accountability purposes, multilingual learners include Not English Proficient (NEP), Limited English Proficient (LEP), and Fully English Proficient (FEP) – Monitor Year 1, Monitor Year 2, Exited Year 1, & Exited Year 2 students. Formerly known as English Learners (ELs) on the frameworks.
Non-English Proficient (NEP)	The lowest English proficiency designation, for multilingual learners. NEP students may be just beginning to understand and respond to simple routine communication in English, or they may be beginning to have the ability to respond, with more ease, to a variety of social communication tasks. Compare to: ***LEP, FEP***
Normative (Cohort) Growth	One student's growth is understood in comparison to that of similar students. The Colorado Growth Model describes growth, normatively, as how each student's progress compares to other students with a similar achievement history—his/her academic peers.

Term	Definition
Participation Rate (Total)	Total participation rates combine all the assessment records for each subject area (English, math and science) across all grade levels within a given school or district. For multi-level schools and districts that serve high school, the PSAT/SAT Evidence-based Reading and Writing results are combined with the English language arts results. Parent excusals are counted as non-participants (they are included in the denominator). Total participation rates best reflect the actual percentage of students enrolled that participated in testing.
Participation Rate (Accountability)	The rules for accountability participation rates are the same as those for the total participation rate except that parent excusals are removed from the numerator and denominator. Multilingual learners who have been in the U.S. for less than one year also count as participants (they are included in the numerator and denominator) for the ELA test regardless of whether they received a valid test score. On the performance frameworks, schools/districts that do not meet the minimum 95% accountability participation rate in two or more subject areas are assigned a plan type one category lower than their framework points indicate.
Percentage/Percent	A way of expressing a fraction in a single number. For example, 1 out of 17 is 5.9%.
Percentile	A percentile is a way of showing how a particular score compares with all other scores in a dataset by ranking ranges of scores from 1 to 99. The higher the percentile, the higher ranking the score is among all the other values. Each range of scores represents 1% of the pool of scores. For example, if your vocabulary knowledge is at the 60th percentile for people your age, that means that you are higher in the distribution than 60% of people – in other words, you know more words than 60% of your peers. Conversely, 40% know more words than you do. The percentile is useful because you do not need to know anything about the scales used for particular metrics or tests – if you know that your percentile was the 50th, you know that your score is right in the middle of all the other scores, an average score.
Performance	General term used to encompass growth and achievement. Used to discuss both student and school level of attainment.
Performance Indicator	A specific component of school or district quality. Colorado has identified three performance indicators to evaluate all schools and districts in the state: student achievement, student academic growth, and postsecondary/workforce readiness.
Performance Plan	The type of plan required for schools that already meet the state's expectations for attainment on the performance indicators. Districts that earn at least 65% of their DPF points or schools that earn at least 53% of their SPF points are assigned to the Performance plan category.
PHLOTE	A data element used to represent students that have a Primary or Home Language Other than English.
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR)	The preparedness of students for college or a job after completing high school. This is one of the performance indicators used to evaluate the performance of schools and districts in Colorado. This indicator includes graduation, dropout, and matriculation rates and Colorado SAT scores.

Term	Definition
Priority Improvement Plan	One of the types of plans required for those schools that do not meet the state's performance standards. Districts that earn 34% - 44%, of their DPF points are assigned to a Priority Improvement Plan category. Schools that earn 34% - 42%, of their SPF points are assigned to a Priority Improvement Plan category.
Priority Performance Challenges (PPC)	Specific statements about the school's or district's student performance challenges, which have been prioritized. (Does not include statements about budgeting, staffing, curriculum, instruction, etc.). This is a component of the Unified Improvement Planning (UIP) process.
Rating	On the performance framework reports, CDE's evaluation of the extent to which the school/district has met the state's standards on the performance indicators and their component parts. The rating levels on the performance framework reports are: Does Not Meet, Approaching, Meets, and Exceeds.
Root Cause	The deepest underlying cause(s) of a problem or situation that, if resolved, would result in elimination or substantial reduction of the symptom. If action is required, the cause should be within one's ability to control, and not a purely external factor such as poverty that is beyond one's ability to control. This is a component of the UIP process.
SASID	State Assigned Student Identifier Number – the number that Colorado uses to identify students in public schools.
Scale Score	Exact test score - this is considered a measure of student achievement. Such scores are calculated from participants' responses to test questions. On CMAS, students receive a scale score in English language arts, math, science and social studies. See also: ***Achievement***
School Performance Framework (SPF)	The framework used by the state to provide information to stakeholders about each school's performance based on the key performance indicators: student achievement, student academic growth, and postsecondary/workforce readiness. Schools are assigned to a type of improvement plan based on their performance across all indicators.
School Plan Type	The type of plan to which a school is assigned by the state on the SPF report. The school plan types are: Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, and Turnaround. This is also the type of plan that must be adopted and implemented, for the school, by either the local board (Priority Improvement or Turnaround) or the principal and superintendent (Performance or Improvement).
SEA	State Education Agency (i.e., Colorado Department of Education)
State Review Panel	A panel of education experts appointed by the commissioner to assist the Department and the state board in implementing the Education Accountability Act of 2009. The State Review Panel may review Priority Improvement Plans and Turnaround Plans for schools and districts, which may include a site visit. The State Review Panel must review all schools and districts nearing the end of the accountability clock.

Term	Definition
Strategy	Methods to reach goals. Which strategies are chosen depends on coherence, affordability, practicality, and efficiency and should be research-based. This is a component of the UIP process.
Student Growth Percentile (SGP)	A way of understanding a student's current growth in achievement based on his/her prior scores and relative to other students with similar prior scores. A growth percentile of 60 in math means the student's growth exceeds that of 60% of his/her academic peers. Also referred to as a "growth percentile."
Target	A specific, quantifiable outcome that defines what would constitute success in a particular area of intended improvement, within a designated period of time. This is a component of the UIP process.
Targeted Support and Improvement (TS)	Schools identified for support and improvement under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), based on having at least one student group that is consistently underperforming on at least 3 of the ESSA indicators.
Test Participation Rate	See ***participation rate*** for a description of total and accountability participation rates.

Term	Definition
Turnaround Plan	One of the types of plans required for schools that do not meet state expectations for attainment on the performance indicators. Schools and districts that earn less than 34% of their DPF or SPF points are assigned to a Turnaround plan category. In Colorado's state accountability system, schools assigned to the turnaround plan category must engage in one of the following strategies: ● Employ a lead turnaround partner that uses research-based strategies and has proven successful working with schools under similar circumstances, which turnaround partner will be immersed in all aspects of developing and collaboratively executing the plan and will serve as a liaison to other school partners. ● Reorganize the oversight and management structure within the school to provide greater, more effective support. ● Seek recognition as an innovation school or cluster with other schools that have similar governance management structures to form an innovation school zone pursuant to the Innovation Schools Act. ● Hire a public or private entity that uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with schools under similar circumstances to manage the school pursuant to a contract with the local school board or the Charter School Institute. ● For a school that is not a charter school, convert to a charter school; ● For a charter school, renegotiate and significantly restructure the charter school's charter contract. ● Closing a school. ● Investing in research-based strategies focused on early learning and development to address any deficiencies identified in the early childhood learning needs assessment. This may be done in combination with at least one other research-based strategy named in this list. ● Other actions of comparable or greater significance or effect, including those interventions required for low-performing schools under the ESEA of 1965 and accompanying guidance (turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model).

Appendix B: Description of Federal Accountability for Districts and Schools

Federal Accountability for Districts

Title IA Accountability

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), all districts are required to prepare and disseminate annual report cards to inform families and the community about school performance, particularly those identified as Comprehensive Support (CS), Targeted Support (TS), or Additional Targeted Support (ATS) and Improvement. Local Education Agency (LEA) report cards must include performance on long-term and interim accountability indicators, including academic achievement and growth, the progress of multilingual learners (MLs) toward English proficiency, and graduation and dropout rates. District and school information must be presented for all students and disaggregated groups, and compared to state-level data. The report card must name and include the reasons why schools were identified for federal support and improvement. Districts may link to CDE's ESSA Local Reports website to meet this requirement or may develop their own local report that includes all required data elements. If a district opts to develop its own local report card, a link to the report on the LEA's website must be emailed to CDE and posted on CDE's website.

Under ESSA, districts are required to provide state- and locally-funded services in schools receiving support under Title I, Part A that, taken as a whole, are at least comparable to services provided in schools that do not receive support under Title I, Part A. This requirement must be met for schools in the same grade spans – elementary, middle, and high school (EMH). Title I, Part A funds are intended to provide additional resources for low-performing students from high-poverty neighborhoods, beyond what is provided with State and local funds. The comparability requirement within ESSA seeks to ensure that Title I, Part A funds are not used to provide services that would otherwise be paid for with State and local funds, thus undermining the supplemental nature of Title I, Part A funds. Districts must submit demonstration of compliance with the comparability requirements if the district has at least one Title I school, with at least 100 students, in a grade span that has two or more schools. As a support to districts, CDE conducts comparability analyses and shares the results with the district. Districts have the option to conduct their own data to provide a more accurate reflection of the comparability status of its schools. For additional information, visit the Title I Comparability website.

ESSA identified schools have improvement planning requirements which are described in the Improvement Planning section of this document.

Title IIA Accountability

CDE calculates the rates at which teachers in schools with the highest proportions of poor and minority students are designated ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced, compared to schools with the lowest proportions of poor and minority students, and identifies districts that must implement plans to reduce the identified gap(s). Plans must directly address the root causes of the identified gaps and provide for a more equitable distribution of effective, experienced, and in-field teachers. More detailed information regarding expectations for these plans, as well as relevant data, can be found on CDE's Equitable

Distribution of Teachers website.

Although accountability sanctions under Title IIA were discontinued, Title IA requires districts to report the professional qualifications of teachers (i.e., number and percentage of inexperienced teachers, principals, and other school leaders; teachers with emergency or provisional credentials; and those teaching in a subject or field for which they are not certified or licensed) to CDE and in their LEA report cards.

Title IIIA Accountability

While ESSA calls for equitable supports and opportunities for MLs, it has shifted state- and district-level accountability requirements from Title IIIA to Title IA. Colorado's ESSA plan includes indicators and targets for the English language development and proficiency of MLs as well as indicators and targets for meeting academic growth and proficiency.

Districts report the numbers and percentages of MLs served by Title III programs and activities, how many are making progress toward English proficiency, attaining English proficiency, exiting ELD services based on attaining English proficiency, and meeting academic standards for four years (Monitored Years 1 and 2, Exited Years 1 and 2) after exiting Title III services. Districts report the number and percentage of MLs who attain English proficiency within five years of initial classification, as well as the number and percentage of MLs who do not. Districts are also required to report the language instruction educational programs being offered by the district. For training resources, visit the Training & Technical Assistance website.

Federal Accountability for Schools

Under ESSA, state accountability systems must incorporate the following five indicators, calculated for all students and separately for multilingual learners (MLs), students with disabilities (SWDs), economically disadvantaged students (in Colorado, qualifying for free or reduced meals, FRM), and major racial and ethnic groups:

- **Academic achievement**: Based on CMAS and CoAlt mean scale scores for English language arts (and Spanish language arts for eligible 3rd and 4th graders) and math, and SAT mean scale scores for math and evidence-based reading and writing. Under ESSA, schools are required to assess at least 95 percent of students on the state assessments. Non- participants (including parent excusals) in excess of 5 percent must be counted as non- proficient and assigned the lowest possible scale score on the missed assessment. Colorado identifies schools for support and improvement based on actual mean scale scores first, then runs a second round of identifications based on participation-adjusted mean scale scores.
- **Academic progress**: Based on median growth percentiles for CMAS English language arts and math, and SAT math and evidence-based reading and writing.
- **Graduation rates**: Based on the 4-year and 7-year adjusted cohort rates.

- **Progress in achieving English language proficiency**: Based on WiDA ACCESS median growth percentiles and the percent of students on-track to attain fluency within the state- determined timeline.
- **Indicators of school quality or student success (SQSS)**: Based on chronic absenteeism rates (elementary and middle schools) and dropout rates (high schools). Chronic absenteeism rates are calculated based on unexcused absences only.

States must have a method for identifying schools for Comprehensive (CS), Targeted (TS), and Additional Targeted (ATS) support and improvement based on these indicators and establish long-term goals and measures of interim progress for academic achievement, graduation rates, and progress toward English proficiency. States are also required to identify schools for these categories based on the academic achievement scores being adjusted for non-participants. Therefore, it is possible for a school to be identified for CS or TS, due to participation only.

Although stakeholder input in CDE's process to develop Colorado's ESSA plan favored criteria and methodology that aligned with its state accountability system as much as possible, ESSA statutory specifications for identification have resulted in schools identified for support and improvement under ESSA that have not been identified under state accountability and vice versa.

More information about these identifications can be found in the "Priority Improvement and Turnaround Supplement" handbook. For updates about ESSA identification, visit the Methods for Identification and Exit Criteria for ESSA Support and Improvement website.

Appendix C: General Accountability Cycle

Time Period	Frameworks	Public Reporting	Improvement Planning	Accountability Committees	Support & Interventions	Accreditation	Awards
Fall	(Aug) CDE releases prelim frameworks	Updated based upon available data	(Oct) Due for public posting	Locally decided timeline	Available	Local boards accredit schools	
Winter	(Nov/Dec) State board finalizes frameworks	Available	Implement and monitor plan	Locally decided timeline	Available	(Dec) State Board accredits districts	(Dec) Awards announced
Spring		Updated based upon available data	Major updates for next school year based on local data	Locally decided timeline	Available		Awards Ceremony
Summer		Available		Locally decided timeline	Available		

Appendix D: Understanding the Role of School Accountability Committees in Charter Schools

Are charter schools required to have School Accountability Committees?

Yes, the requirements of the Education Accountability Act of 2009 apply to *all* Colorado public schools, including charter schools. For more information about the role of School Accountability Committees as related to accreditation, see the state board of Education's Rules for the Administration of Statewide Accountability Measures, available on the web page for the Education Accountability Act: http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/stateaccountabilityregulations.

What is the relationship between a charter school's governing board and its School Accountability Committee?

Charter schools are administered and governed by a governing body in a manner agreed to and set forth in the charter contract. The duties and function of the SAC are set forth in statute (CRS 22-11-401), and these duties cannot be waived by the state board (CRS 22-30.5-104(6)(c)(I)).

Charter schools may choose to have members of their governing body serve on the School Accountability Committee to complete any of the required duties of the School Accountability Committee. In the alternative, governing boards may establish a School Accountability Committee that reports to the governing board on all tasks that are delegated to them, including making recommendations for the school's improvement plan and making recommendations on school spending priorities.

How are members of the School Accountability Committee selected?

The Education Accountability Act of 2009 indicates that local school boards and the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI) must determine the actual number of persons on School Accountability Committees and the method for selecting the members of the committees. (See section 22-11-401, C.R.S.) For charter schools, local school boards or CSI may delegate these responsibilities to the charter school governing board or negotiate an arrangement in the charter contract. Ultimately, it is the charter school's authorizer that determines how a school implements its School Accountability Committee.