

STRATEGIC PLAN

2017-2024



UPDATE JANUARY 2024



Our Vision

All students graduate ready for college and careers, and prepared to be productive citizens of Colorado.

Our Mission

Ensuring equity and opportunity for every student, every step of the way.



COLORADO
Department of Education

Our Values

ALL STUDENTS

COLLABORATION

COMMUNICATION

CUSTOMER SERVICE

HONESTY

INNOVATION

INTEGRITY

RESPECT

TRANSPARENCY

TRUST



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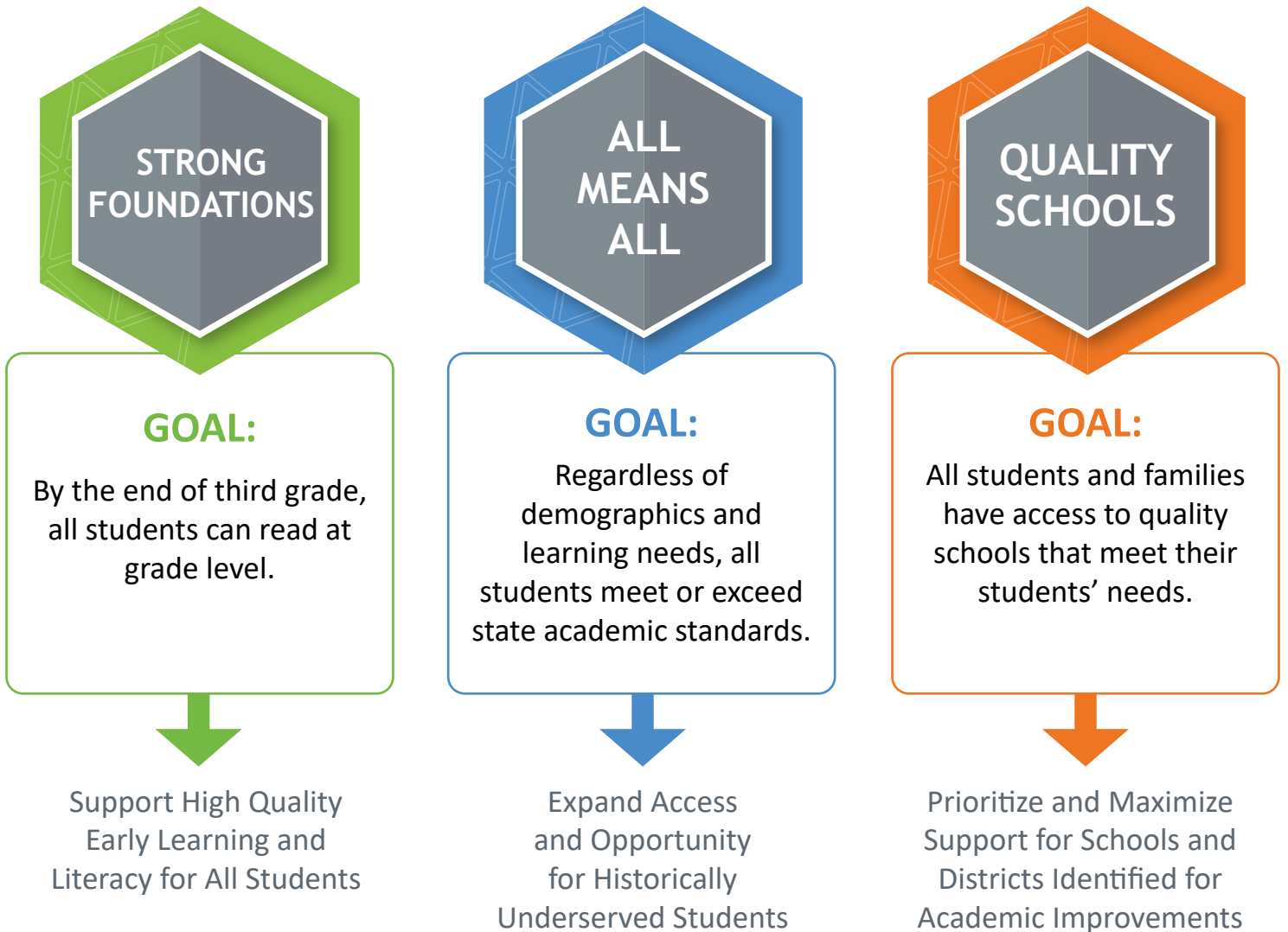
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KEY INITIATIVES

OVERVIEW





GOAL:

Students graduate high school with knowledge, skills and experience needed for career and college success.



Expand High School Options to Ensure All Students Are Ready for College and/or Living-Wage Jobs



GOAL:

High quality educators in every classroom; strong leaders in every building.



Develop a Strong Pipeline of High-Quality Teachers and Principals and Provide Deeper Support for School and District Leaders



Underpinning our success with each of our key initiatives will be our commitment to excellence with each of our core programs and operations. By holding ourselves to the highest degree of excellence in customer service and performance, we will effectively implement our key initiatives and accomplish our goals.

Guiding Principles

The following principles guide us as we undertake all of our work to implement state and federal laws and support districts, schools and teachers in Colorado.

- Equity and Access for All Students
- Flexibility, Choice and Innovation
- Continuous Improvement of Systems and Structures
- Collaboration and Partnership

Emerging from the Pandemic

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring of 2020, the impacts on students, educators, districts, and communities have been significant and varied. The initial and evolving response to the global health crisis required the Colorado education landscape to focus on the immediate health and safety needs of students and communities while, at the same time, addressing the academic and social-emotional needs of the students experiencing reductions in-person learning time and increased transitions between learning modes.

In response to these needs, CDE and districts across the state have leveraged the historic levels of education funding made available through the federal pandemic stimulus to address these needs created or exacerbated by the pandemic. In addition to expanding access to school meals, broadband, and other basic needs necessary to support students, the Colorado education community has coalesced to provide new and expanded programs to address the academic needs of the pandemic such as high-impact tutoring, high-quality curricular and instructional programming materials, strengthening efforts to recruit and retain educators, and expanding afterschool and summer programs that support academic acceleration while strengthening students' engagement in their learning.

Results from spring 2023 assessments show some improvements over the previous year, but there is still more work to be done to return to and exceed pre-pandemic levels of academic achievement and close historic opportunity and achievement gaps. When compared to 2019 assessment data (pre-pandemic), the 2023 CMAS data showed declines in every grade and subject area. In high school, the 2023 PSAT 9 and 10 and SAT scores showed declines from 2019 in both Evidence-based Reading and Writing (EBRW) and mathematics in almost every grade, with the largest drop in the SAT grade 11 math data (3.8 percentage points drop from 2019 in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations). Additionally, achievement gaps between historically lower performing and historically higher performing groups continued to persist in 2023.



However, when comparing 2023 assessment data to those of 2022, it appears that some of the strategic initiatives being implemented across the state to address lost learning time and the academic needs of students may be beginning to take hold. Specifically, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations scores improved for all CMAS Math assessments, and 3 out of 6 ELA assessments in 2023. In high school, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in PSAT and SAT scores increased in mathematics for grade 9 and both in mathematics and EBWR for grade 11 between 2022 and 2023. Similarly, K-3 reading assessment data show a slight decrease in the number of students with a significant reading deficiency from 2022 to 2023. With a focus on supporting the needs of those most impacted by the pandemic—including English language learners, students from historically underserved populations, and those struggling with mathematics achievement—the key initiatives of this strategic plan build upon and support the pandemic recovery work being undertaken in classrooms, schools, districts, and communities across Colorado so that our students can emerge stronger than before.



Support High Quality Early Learning and Literacy for All Students

GOAL: By the end of third grade, all students can read at grade level.

Research shows that proficiency in reading by the end of third grade enables students to make the shift from learning how to read to using reading skills to master more complex subjects. In fact, students who cannot read by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school. By focusing on support for our youngest students and their educators, the department can ensure more students are reading at grade level by the end of third grade which builds a strong foundation for continued success in school.

Strategic Activities

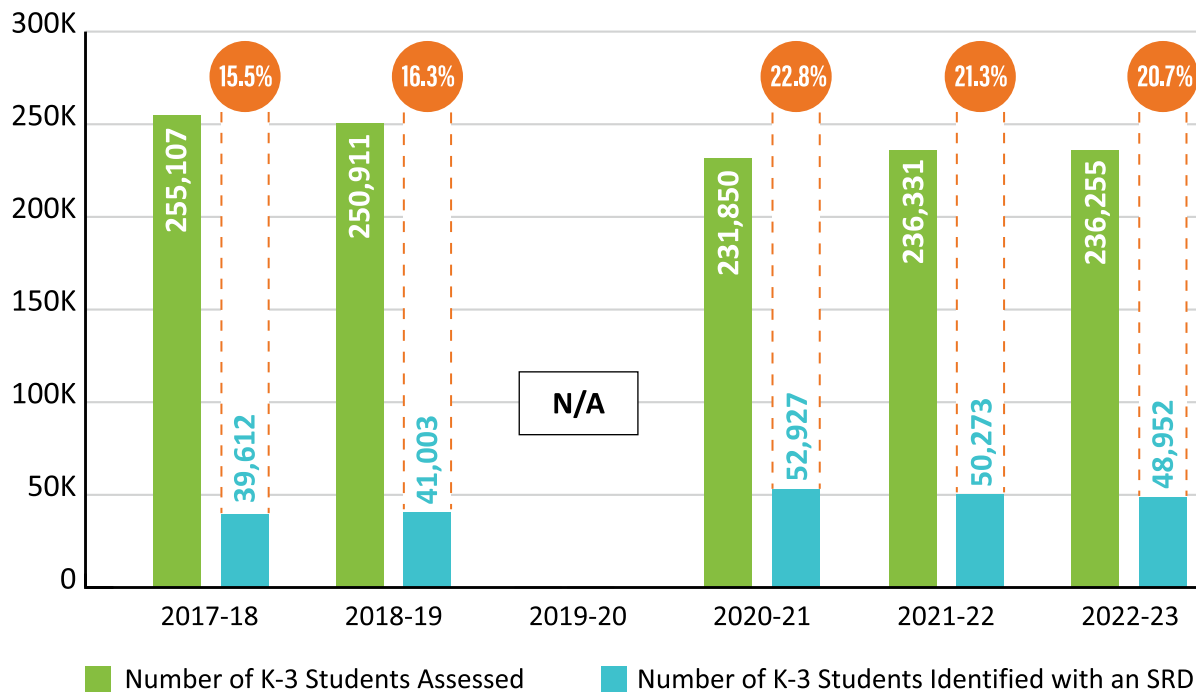
We will promote and develop high-quality, evidence-based early learning and literacy strategies.

- Support effective reading instruction and intervention for all students by providing multiple pathways for K - 3 teachers, elementary school principals and administrators and K - 12 reading interventionists to meet the evidence-based training requirement in the READ Act
- Support and review implementation of evidence-based reading instruction in teacher training programs
- Support local education providers' use of reading instructional materials that are high quality and are based on the science of reading

We will strengthen partnerships with the Colorado Department of Early Childhood as well as other state and local agencies, communities and libraries to support early learning and literacy in preschool through third grade.

- Support the transition of preschool programming to the new Department of Early Childhood (DEC) and the alignment of preschool special education services across CDE and DEC
- Support effective transitions between preschool and third grade with attention to the impact of the pandemic on enrollment
- Coordinate with university partners to develop a best practices guide for implementing effective transitions between preschool and third grade
- Provide technical assistance to districts in developing transition plans to effectively support students in preschool through third grade

Prevalence of Significant Reading Deficiencies in Colorado 2018-2023



Districts annually report the number of their K-3 students who are identified with a significant reading deficiency (SRD), meaning that a student does not meet the minimum skill levels for reading proficiency at the end of the school year. This student count is used by CDE to determine funding for intervention services. In the 2022-23 school year, 236,255 students took interim assessments, and among them, 48,952 (20.7%) were identified as having an SRD. This rate is down slightly from the 2021-22 rate of 21.3%.

What Progress Looks Like

- In spring 2023, there continued to be a reduction in significant reading deficiency rates in kindergarten through third grade from 21% in 2022 to 20.8 in 2023. CDE aims for this metric to decrease below pre-pandemic (16%) or lower levels by 2024-2025.
- Use newly updated Kindergarten School Readiness Assessment data collection to set a new baseline for kindergarten school readiness by 2022-23.
- Third-grade students meeting or exceeding expectations on the CMAS assessment in English Language Arts will return to or exceed pre-pandemic levels (41.3%) by spring 2025. In spring 2023, 94% of third graders participated in the CMAS English language arts assessment, with 40% of those tested meeting or exceeding standards.
- Children and young adult attendance (both in-person and virtual) at public library programs will increase by 2% from 1,093,915 in 2022 to 1,115,793 in 2024. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the cancellation of programming or library closures, attendance decreased from 2,362,418 in 2018 to 1,093,915 in 2022. With the addition of virtual programming, CDE hopes to start recovering towards pre-pandemic levels.



Expand Access and Opportunity for Historically Underserved Students

GOAL: Regardless of demographics and learning needs, all students meet or exceed state academic standards.

In Colorado, we are failing to ensure that students from historically underserved backgrounds – specifically those from economically challenged communities, highly mobile families, racial minority groups, English learners and students with disabilities – report academic outcomes that are truly reflective of their talents so they have a wide variety of options to thrive in our communities and succeed in today’s economy. Unfortunately, the pandemic has exacerbated opportunity and achievement gaps which have grown from pre-pandemic levels for many historically underserved student groups. By concentrating on educational equity as a foundational construct of our work at CDE, we will empower schools and districts in their efforts to increase access and opportunity for students and ultimately reduce the pervasive influence that persistent inequities have on student outcomes.

*** Educational equity means** that every student has access to the educational resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background and/ or family income. (Adopted from The Council of Chief State School Officers)

Strategic Activities

We will develop the capacity within CDE to create a knowledgeable organization that can model equity, diversity and inclusion in order to support our schools and districts across Colorado.

- Continue to build CDE staff members’ knowledge and competency to increase student equity by engaging in equity, diversity and inclusion trainings, specific learning opportunities for supervisors, and cross-department resource sharing
- Continue to implement the recommendations from CDE’s workplace equity assessment in regards to internal climate, policies and practices and conducting equity analysis when developing new or revising departmental or external policies

We will expand our engagement with districts and other external partners to address issues of equity, access and opportunity through our grant programs.

- Maximize use of state and federal funding – including pandemic relief funds – to create opportunities for high-quality and accelerated learning through programs such as high-impact tutoring, extended school day, week and/or year, summer opportunities, and instructional and curricular supports, especially for students with disabilities, English learners, students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, migrant students and other students most impacted by the pandemic
- Highlight and learn from schools that are exceptional at providing access to high-quality learning experiences for all students and support schools that are working to provide greater access

Strategic Activities Cont.

We will support school and district efforts to develop school climates that create a sense of belonging for all teachers and students and lead to effective learning conditions.

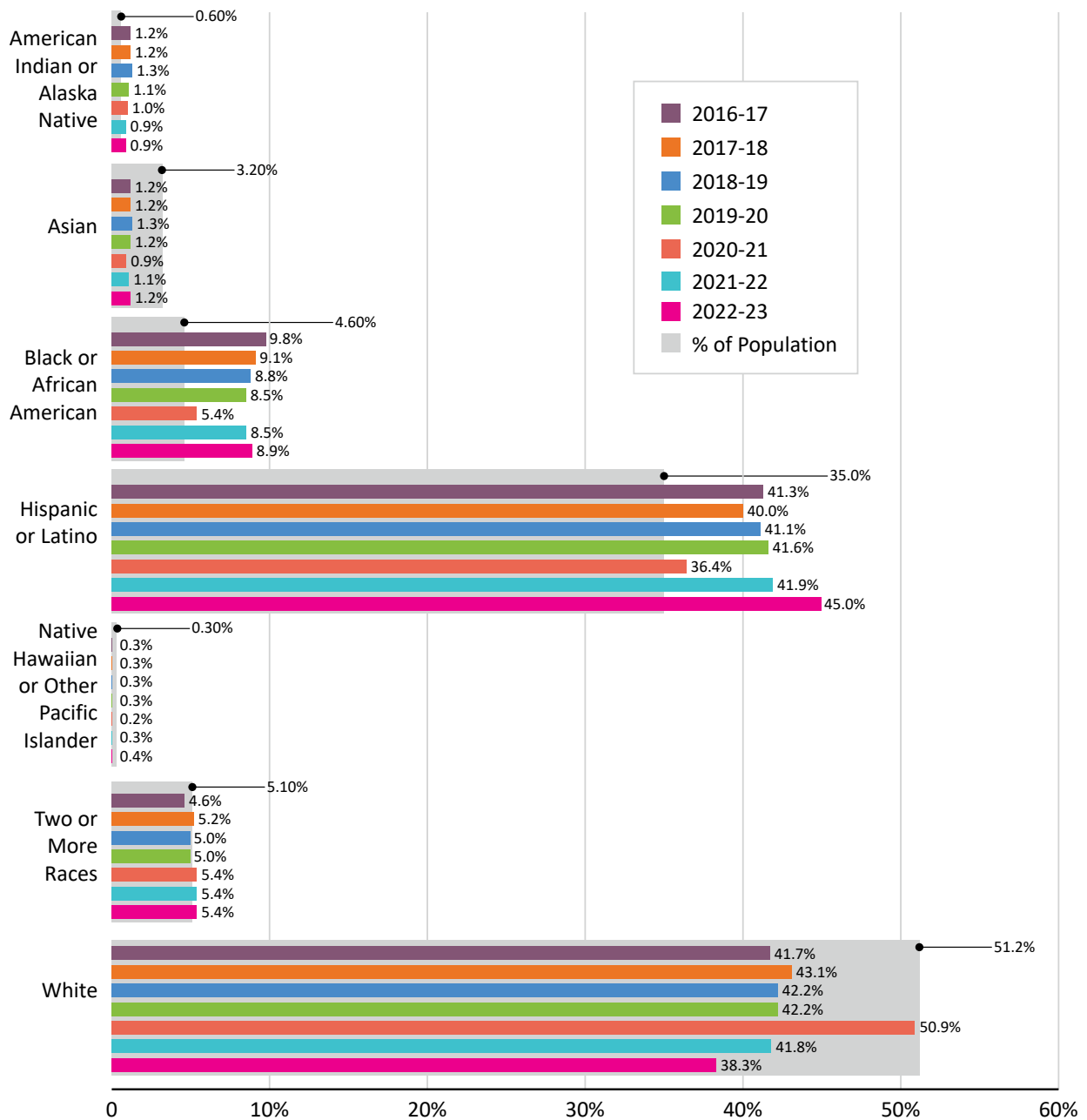
- Organize and communicate about the various resources focused on school climate and student well-being as part of an effort to decrease suspensions and expulsions involving historically underserved students
- Increase coordination of training and grant programs related to school climate work and better direct resources to those with the greatest needs
- Identify and monitor measures of school climate in our education systems

We will continue to implement and evaluate the impact of department programs that deploy resources and supports aimed at increasing equity for different disaggregated groups of historically underserved students.

- Raise awareness of existing programs that support historically underserved students, including but not limited to students who are homeless, in foster care, eligible for free or reduced price lunches, have a disability, English learners, migrants, neglected, delinquent, and other challenges
- Leverage technical assistance partners to continue to evaluate and improve existing programs and share results with stakeholders
- Continue developing and disseminating best practices and strategies for addressing student reengagement and learning needs focused on vulnerable populations and support communities in addressing potential learning gaps and student needs that were caused or exacerbated by the pandemic



Race and Ethnicity of Students Receiving Disciplinary Actions Over Time



Students cannot learn if they are not in class. Reducing discipline incidents and actions that remove students from class provides additional opportunities for those students to access learning opportunities and support.

This chart displays the data reported to CDE on the race and ethnicity of students receiving exclusionary disciplinary actions (in and out of school suspensions, expulsions, and others) compared to the race and ethnicity of the Colorado student population as a whole. The data reveals that students who are American Indian, Black, Latino or are of two or more races have consistently received exclusionary discipline at a rate disproportionate to their population in Colorado public schools.

What Progress Looks Like

- Students of color will not be over-represented in the group of students who receive 1 or more exclusionary disciplinary action (in and out of school suspensions, expulsions, and other). Since 2016-17, the percentage of students of color who received 1 or more disciplinary action has ranged from 57% to 62% with the exception of the 2020-21 school year. Over this time, students of color have represented 46% to 49% of the school population. The percentage of discipline actions that involved students of color increased to 58% in 21-22 and 62% in 22-23. CDE aims for this metric to decrease to the share of students of color in the school population.
- CDE will continue to remain within the top 5 states in the nation for students with disabilities in the general education setting.
- The percentage of districts identified as having medium or large gaps in equitable access to experienced educators or those teaching in-field based on 2020-2021 data was 38% and decreased to 35% based on 2022-2023 data. The goal is to decrease the percentage of districts identified with gaps, from 35% to 29% based on the 2023-2024 data. Note that these data are only available for districts eligible for equitable distribution of teachers analyses (small districts are exempt). They also exclude effectiveness ratings due to the pause in educator effectiveness data as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.





Prioritize and Maximize Support for Schools and Districts Identified for Academic Improvements

GOAL: All students and families have access to quality schools that meet their students' needs.

Schools and districts that are identified for improvement through the state and federal systems all have different needs based on the context of their communities. By working with each district and school to understand their needs and the reasons for their identification for support and improvement, and by investing in evidence-based strategies, we will help them progressively improve and maintain their academic performance.

Strategic Activities

We will foster relationships with Colorado local educational Providers (LEPs), including BOCES, districts, schools and charter authorizers, grounded in transparency and trust.

- Build and maintain meaningful relationships between CDE and LEPs across the state to promote improved outcomes for all students
- Ensure LEPs access streamlined resources and supports from across the department
- Build towards a transparent and accessible platform that integrates the Unified Improvement Plan system with data, grants management, and customer relationship systems to strengthen cross-CDE coordination in providing effective school and district support, including strategic allocation of funding opportunities



Strategic Activities Cont.

We will partner with districts to ensure they identify school needs, taking into consideration the reasons for identification for support and improvement, through a root cause analysis and match differentiated evidence-based practices to identified needs.

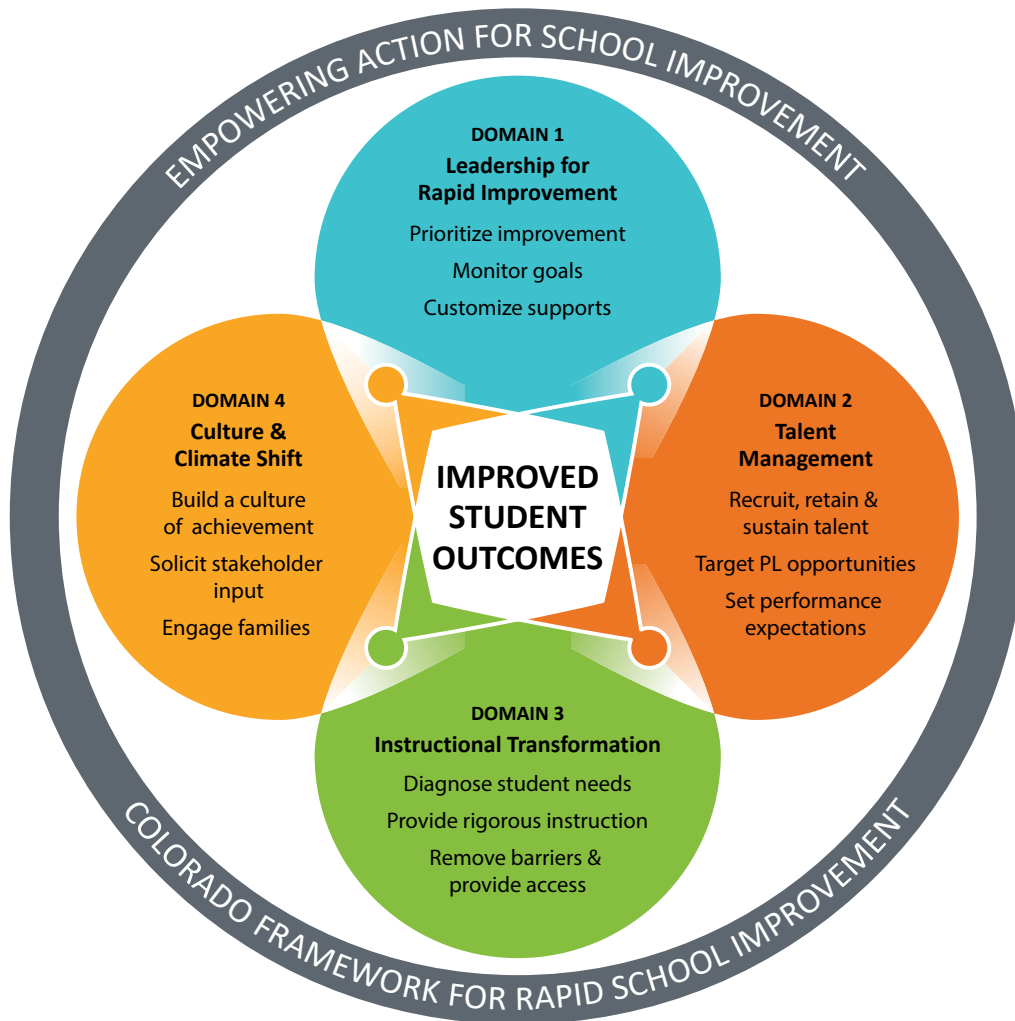
- Continue to develop needs assessment resources for districts and schools
- Support the capacity of districts and schools to accurately identify improvement needs through training and individualized technical assistance
- Define a common process and components to help districts identify school needs and match evidence-based supports aligned to the Four Domains of Rapid School Improvement

We will implement a coherent, integrated service delivery model that includes the development of evidence-based practices that are aligned with identified needs and reasons for schools being identified for support and improvement, and are grounded in Colorado's Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement: leadership for rapid improvement, talent management, instructional transformation, and culture and climate shift.

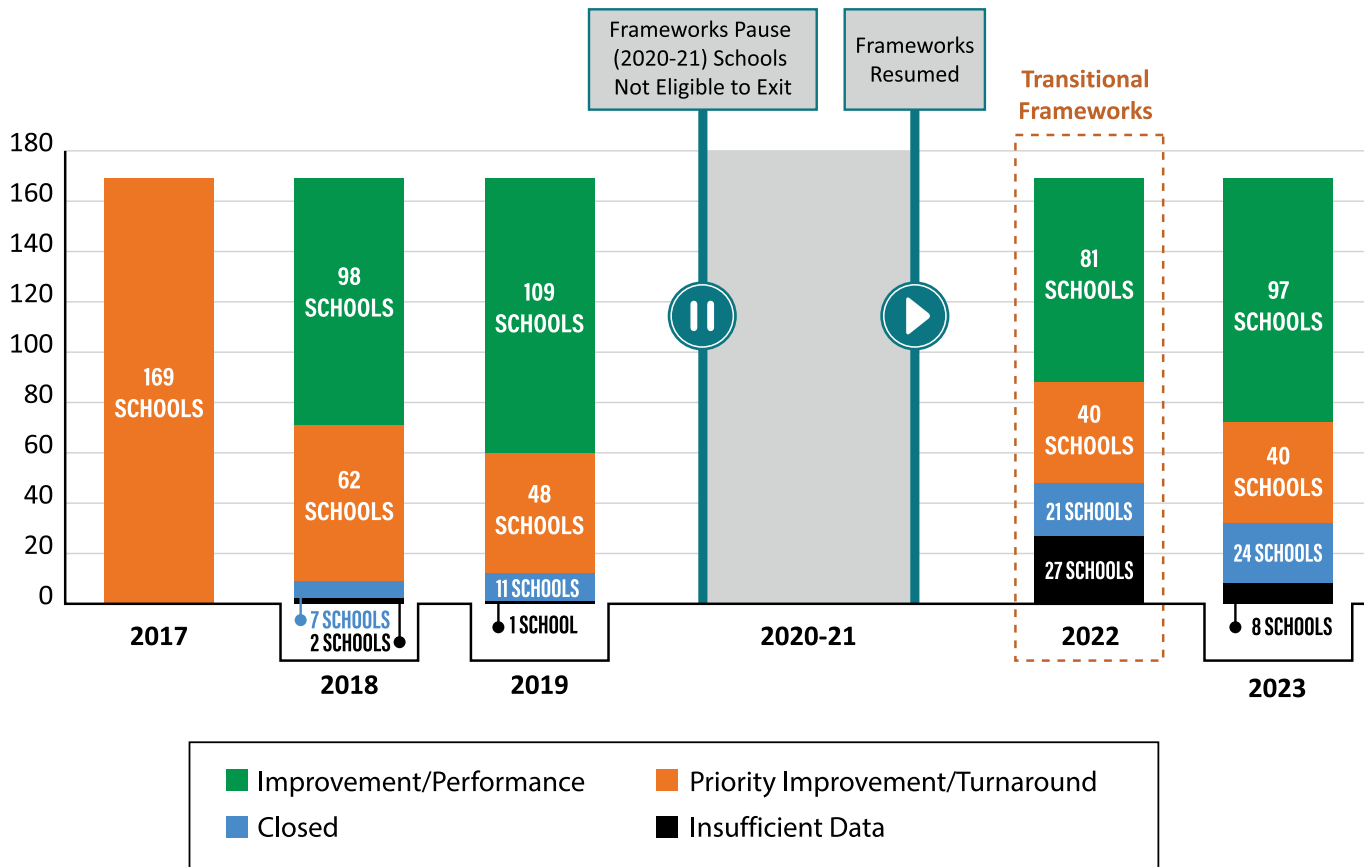
- Review and identify statewide needs of districts and schools through the use of data, taking into consideration the reasons for identification for support and improvement, program evaluation results and CDE's resources and infrastructure evaluation to determine how to leverage existing funding sources for identified schools and districts
- Implement evidence-based supports aligned to the needs of the school and/or district and focused on addressing the priority challenges of the state, with a focus on supporting those most impacted by the pandemic, including English Learners, historically underserved populations, and those struggling with math achievement
- Continue to build and refine the single grant application process for school improvement funds and expand the menu of evidence-based supports for districts to match unique local needs and reasons for identification for support and improvement with state and federal resources, decreasing the administrative burden on districts
- Design and deliver CDE support, expertise, and resources on the Colorado Four Domains of Rapid School Improvement and how they can be used to implement evidence-based practices to address needs and reasons for identification

We will provide resources and support districts and schools in progress monitoring implementation and consistently evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention to inform continuous improvement.

- Monitor the progress and implementation of supports and services to ensure progress towards addressing the needs and reasons for identification
- Evaluate the effectiveness of our support for schools and districts as measured through performance on the School Performance Frameworks and federal ESSA indicators and make adjustments needed to increase students’ academic outcomes
- Strategically coordinate program evaluation to develop internal quantitative and qualitative evaluations and impact of state supports



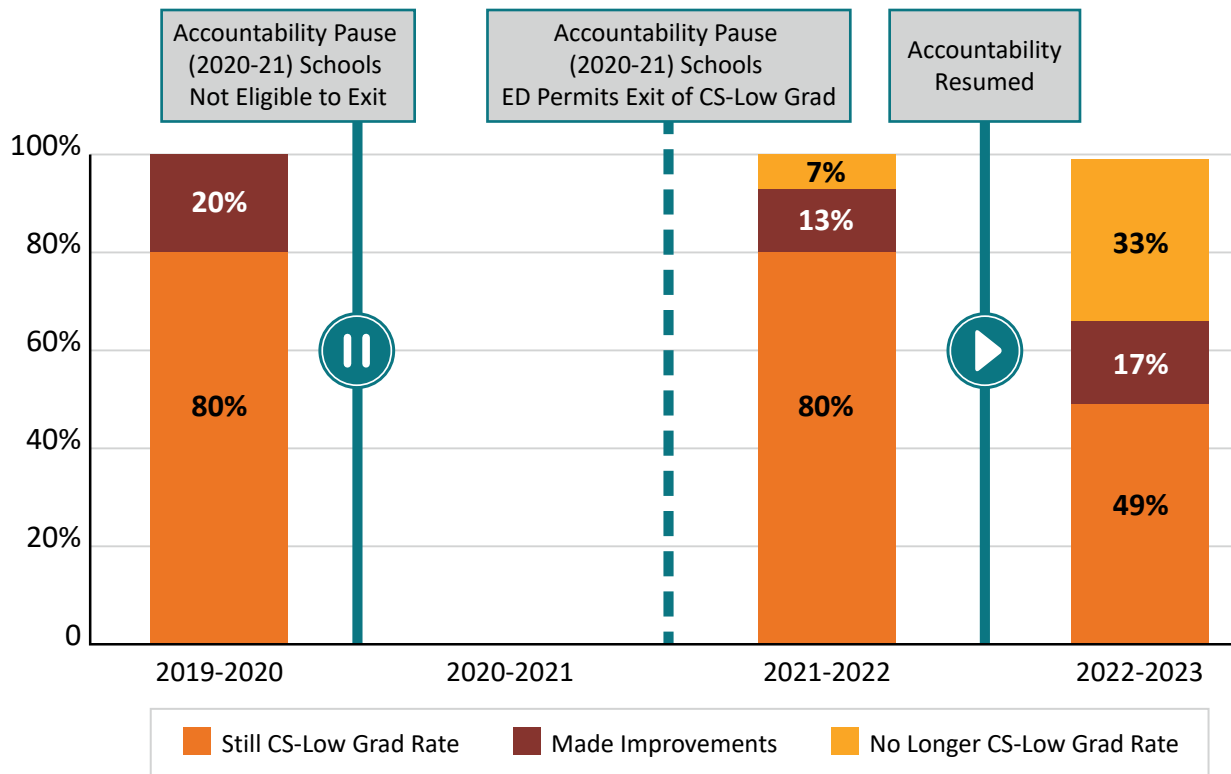
2017-2023 Schools Moving off of Priority Improvement or Turnaround



Each of the 169 schools in the Priority Improvement and Turnaround categories in 2017, the lowest two categories in the state’s accountability system, had different challenges to overcome to increase their students’ academic performance. Through grants and support programs, individual schools identified have made progress since 2017. Additional focus and clarity around support available for schools currently identified will increase the academic performance for approximately 89,997 students currently enrolled in identified schools. In particular, 31,319 students in 51 schools are receiving support from the most

recent School Transformation Grant. These data were not updated for the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school years due to the pause on calculating performance frameworks. In 2022, the General Assembly and the Colorado State Board of Education enacted policies that created Transitional Frameworks. While similar to the typical frameworks, it should be noted that there was more limited data available and some key features were changed (e.g., schools on the clock could not exit unless participating in the request to reconsider process and they needed at least 90% participation on state assessments).

Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CS) schools - Low Graduation Rate



In addition to the state’s accountability system, the [federal accountability system](#) provides insight into the performance of Colorado’s schools based on overall performance, performance of disaggregated groups, and graduation rates of high schools. One of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) identifications for support is for schools with

graduation rates below 67%. In 2022-2023, 49% of the 69 high schools identified in 2019-20 identified in this category, while 33% met the exit criteria and were no longer identified, and another 17% had improved graduation rates, which if sustained will result in the school exiting this category.

What Progress Looks Like

- Of the 169 schools with the lowest two ratings (Priority Improvement or Turnaround) on the state's accountability system in 2017, at least 136 (80%) will improve to earn a satisfactory rating or higher (Improvement or Performance) by 2024 and will sustain that rating.
- Districts with eligible schools that apply for funds will increase from 64% in 2021 to 75% in 2024.
- Final improvement plans for identified schools and districts that meet quality criteria and identify evidence-based strategies will increase from 91.8% in 2017 to 95% in 2024.





Expand High School Options to Ensure All Students Are Ready for College and/or Living-Wage Jobs

GOAL: Students graduate high school with knowledge, skills and experience needed for career and college success.

Students who graduate and work in Colorado need in-demand skills that meet business, industry and higher education standards. Three out of four jobs in Colorado (three million jobs currently) require education or training beyond high school.

By increasing options for high school students and fostering expansion of successful high school models, we can ensure that at least 66% of the class of 2023 will earn a postsecondary credential, certificate or degree within five years of graduating from high school. When we achieve this goal, we will fuel Colorado’s economy with educated students who are prepared for a college education, a good paying job or military service.

Strategic Activities

We will help school districts implement rigorous and useful Graduation Guidelines to expand options to support student engagement.

- Support community implementation strategies and expansion of options such as work-based learning experiences and industry credentials

We will foster expansion of innovative secondary, postsecondary, and work-based learning integration models and promising practices that allow students to earn postsecondary credit, industry credentials and gain work experience.

- Support the General Assembly and State Board of Education in identifying plans to leverage the [final recommendations](#) from the [H.B. 22-1215 Task Force](#).
- Identify and highlight noteworthy gains in high school completion as well as postsecondary and workforce readiness outcomes for students through ensuring that data systems are able to determine program impact
- Provide professional development and consultation to bring innovative practices to scale (such as programs where students gain workforce credentials and college credit while in high school) for the benefit of more students statewide
- Leverage federal ESSER relief funding via the Rural Coaction Grant Program to support rural districts to collaboratively develop and expand career-connected learning opportunities

Strategic Activities Cont.

We will promote Individual Career and Academic Planning (ICAP) as a tool to help students create a pathway for their future.

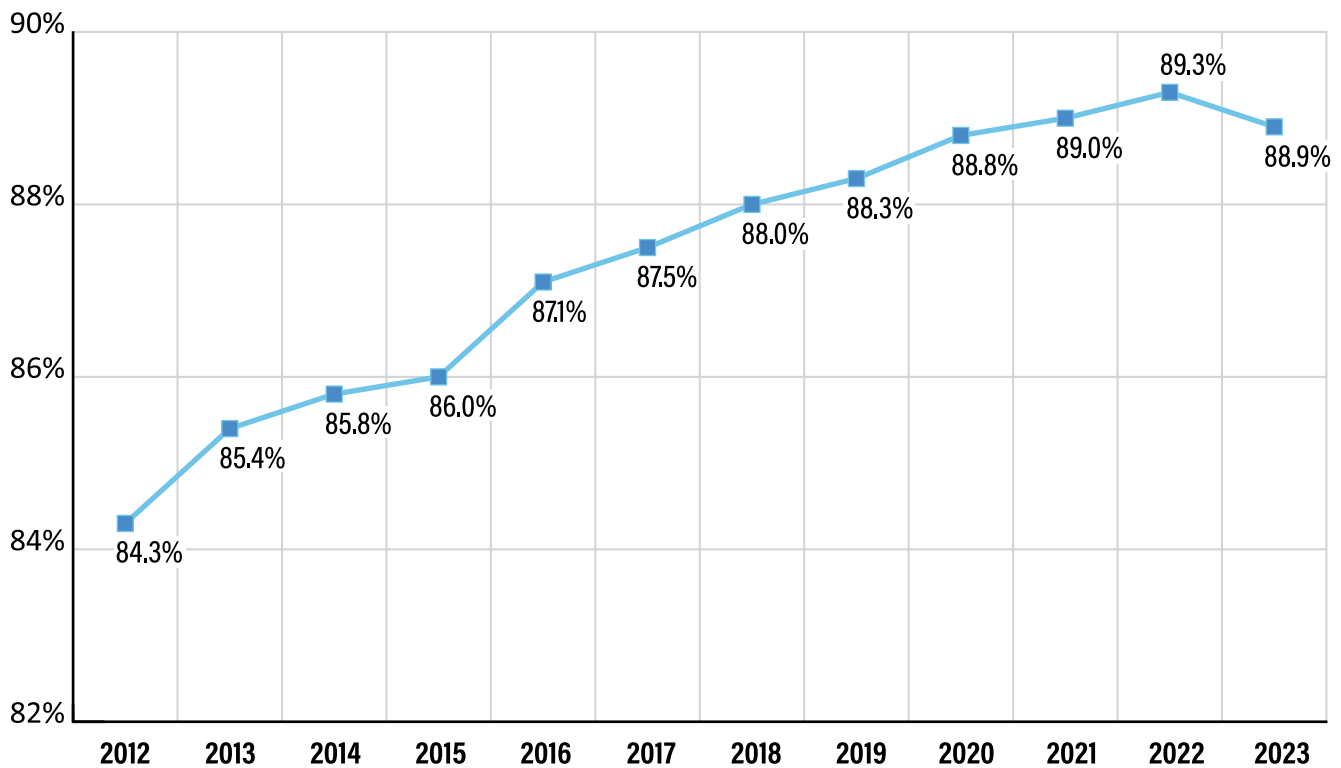
- Collect and share with stakeholders promising ICAP practices that increase students’ awareness of seamless pathways and opportunities in and beyond high school
- Equip all educators, through training such as the Colorado Career Conversations project, to have meaningful career conversations with students

We will engage community partners as an effective resource for getting students planning and ready for their futures.

- Provide flexibilities and training that support Local Education Providers to prepare students for good jobs, including expanding access to certificates and credential attainment
- Support collaborations across districts and the communities they serve in creating and expanding career-connected learning opportunities that position students for postsecondary success
- Collaborate with other state agencies, libraries, area workforce development boards and community partners to meet students’ needs, including participating in out of school time and Two-Generation programs that meet workforce training needs of student
- Provide accessible information to families about the opportunities and resources available for postsecondary and workforce learning



High School Completion Rates



Expanding high school options and graduation pathways improves student engagement and ensures that all students, regardless of their goals and needs, have a high school experience that is relevant to them. This has increased the high school completion rate over time, which in turn is key for postsecondary attainment. Strategic activities in this area are ongoing, with the goal to keep improving high school completion rates for all students, including those who need more than four years to graduate.

This chart shows 6-years completion rates, i.e., the share of a class that has finished high school by receiving a diploma, high school equivalency, or certificate of completion 6 years after they entered 9th grade. For example, in 2022, 89.3% of the class of 2020 had completed high school. In contrast, 84.3% of the class of 2010 had completed high school by 2012.

What Progress Looks Like

- Students completing a high school credential within six years will increase from 89.0% in 2021 to 91.0% by 2024.
- High school students attaining a postsecondary credential within six years of graduation will increase from 58.9% for the class of 2015 to 60.0% for the class of 2017.
- Students earning college credit while enrolled in high school will increase from 48% in 2021 to 50% in 2023. (Please note that 2023 data will not be available until 2024.)



Develop a Strong Pipeline of High-Quality Teachers and Principals and Provide Deeper Support for School and District Leaders

GOAL: High quality educators are in every classroom; strong leaders are in every building.

Research shows that teachers have a bigger impact on student performance than any other school-based factor. And the number one reason teachers leave is lack of support by a high-quality principal. We can learn from the workforce development approaches of public and private industries that focus on growing talent in a strategic and intentional way by recruiting, developing and supporting their workforce. By developing, deploying and supporting talent management and human capital development strategies for districts and schools, we can ensure that every classroom has an effective educator and all students are prepared for college, career and life.

Even more workforce challenges have come forward since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Colorado faces record shortages in other education-related areas including bus drivers, school nutrition staff, and school health professionals (such as school nurses). To help support this great need across the state, CDE has partnered with other organizations, such as the Colorado Community College System, the Department of Higher Education, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and the Colorado Workforce Development Council to recruit educational support staff from every corner of the state.

Strategic Activities

We will work in partnership to create high-quality educator preparation programs.

- Conduct a strategic analysis of educator preparation program rules, support and business practices involving educators in hard-to-fill content areas
- Complete necessary improvements in rules and support for educator preparation programs and the CDE licensing unit
- Review and ensure educator preparation programs are implementing high-quality pedagogy in face-to-face, hybrid, and online settings
- Review and ensure programs are teaching high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction strategies to teacher candidates

Strategic Activities Cont.

We will improve support to future and current educators and expand quality educator pipelines.

- Align the CDE Educator Talent division to focus on educator recruitment, development and career counseling within districts, communities, businesses and educator preparation entities
- Implement relevant Teacher Shortage Strategic Plan action items to encourage the entry of new teachers in the pipeline through focused programs and partnerships with school districts via grow your own programs, teacher apprenticeships, community colleges and state educator preparation programs
- Establish and grow the statewide mentoring program for preservice and new-to-the-profession educators
- Support the preparation of substitute educators through an online substitute training program and licensure consulting services

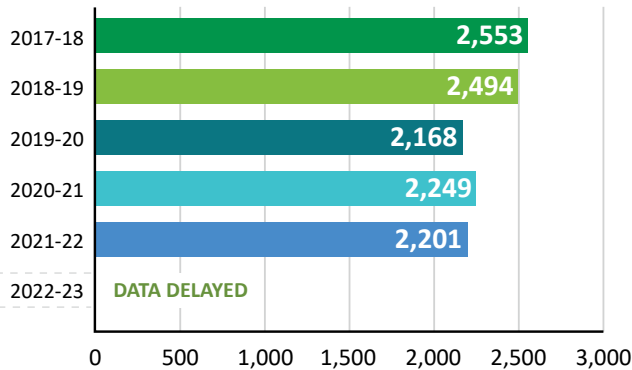
We will deepen our support for principals as they work to hire, develop and retain high-quality teachers to provide the highest outcomes for students.

- Facilitate the Principal Leadership Institute to support principals in creating a sense of collective teacher efficacy and an empowering culture and climate to increase teacher retention and satisfaction
- Assist principals' efforts to support their workforce through strategic implementation of educator effectiveness laws and human capital modeling systems
- Administer the Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey (TLCC) and assist school leaders in understanding, analyzing, and utilizing the data to improve school climate, working conditions, and educator retention

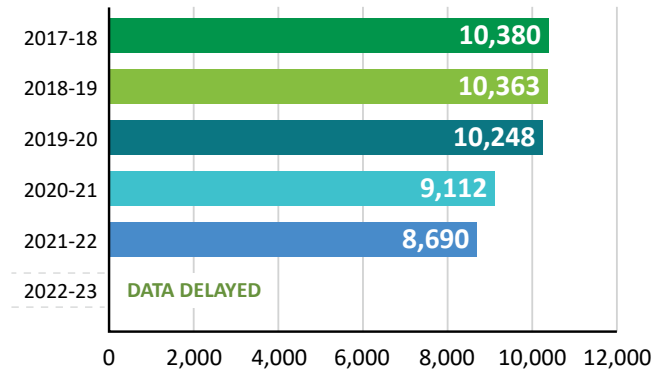


Enrollment and Completion in Educator Preparation Programs

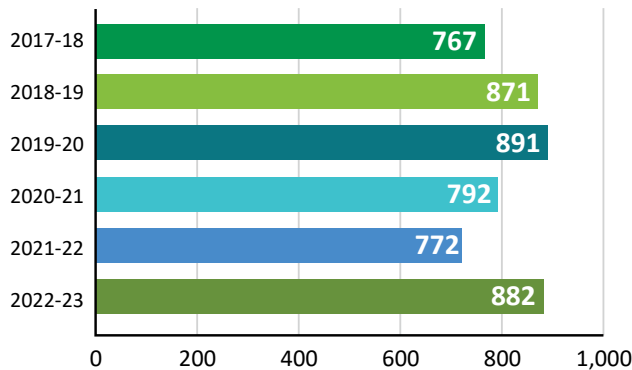
Number of individuals who completed an educator preparation program at an institute of higher education in Colorado



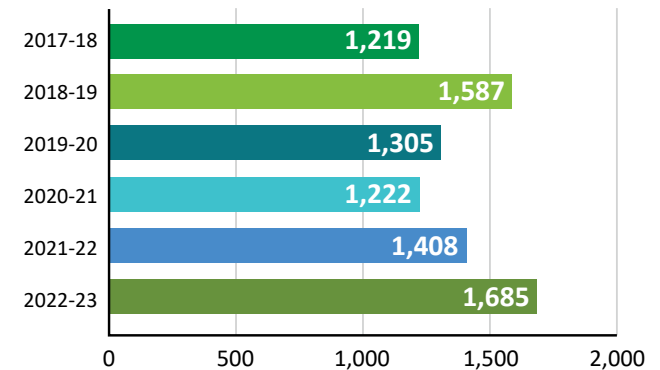
Number of individuals who enrolled in an educator preparation program at an institute of higher education in Colorado.



Number of individuals who completed an alternative licensure program in Colorado



Number of individuals who enrolled in an alternative licensure program in Colorado



During the 2022-23 school year, Colorado had approximately 9,700 teacher and special services provider openings. Of those openings, approximately 2,618 (more than a quarter) were not filled or were filled through shortage mechanisms, such as emergency licensing. Normally, these positions are filled by students graduating from educator preparation programs at colleges and universities or professionals who have completed an alternative licensure program. The annual number of new educators completing a Colorado preparation program has declined by about 11% between 2017-18 and 2021-22, the most recent five years for which both IHE and alternative licensure data are available. We continue to see areas of content and geographical shortage. Some of the open positions – especially in rural areas and in specific

endorsement areas including mathematics, early childhood and special education – end up either: (1) being filled by shortage mechanisms that include provisions for emergency authorizations, long-term substitutes, alternative licensure enrollees and retired educators; or (2) going completely unfilled during the year. The programs set in motion in the last six years were showing improvement in creating a stronger educator pipeline, declined during the pandemic and are beginning to gain traction again in the alternative licensure path. The need for educators, especially specialized service professionals, like school social workers and school psychologists, has increased significantly. Continued focus on recruiting and retaining our educators is a must.

What Progress Looks Like

- Initial educator licenses issued by CDE will increase from 4,490 in 2023 to the 2022 level of 5,958 in 2024.
- Statewide teacher turnover rate will return to the 2021 rate of 14.35% in 2024, down from the 2023 teacher turnover rate of 19.1%.





Organizational Excellence

By expanding the strength and capacity of our organizational health, we are able to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our supports to Colorado’s schools, districts and public libraries. As such, CDE is committed to continued and expanded excellence in our core programs and functions so we can effectively support each of our key initiatives. Teams across the department—including Accountability and Continuous Improvement; Accounting; Assessment; Budget; Capital Construction; Communications; Contracts & Purchasing; Educator Talent; Field Services; Human Resources;

Information Management Services; Policy & Legislative Relations; School Finance and Grants; School Nutrition; and School Transportation –are responsible for collaboratively executing essential programmatic and operational functions that allow the department to achieve our broader goals.

In order to ensure efficient and effective operations, CDE is focusing on improving internal systems and processes. The identified efforts for improvement include:

- Implementing a grants management system;
- Modernizing the data pipeline system;
- Comprehensively reviewing human resource processes and systems;
- Expanding financial supports to districts; and
- Providing districts with new data vehicles for financial transparency and nutrition.

Key Services

Distribute Funding to School Districts

Districts rely on CDE to allocate funds as part of its implementation of the School Finance Act and various other state and federal programs. Because district budgets depend on these funds, it is imperative that these allocations are timely, accurate and efficient. In addition, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress has passed three stimulus bills which include funding for education: the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (March 2020), the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act (December 2020) and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act (March 2021). This has resulted in additional education funding of over \$2 billion for Colorado, the majority of which CDE is responsible for allocating and distributing to districts, as well as conducting on-going monitoring and reporting.

Strategic Operation

We will accurately and efficiently distribute state and federal funds to Colorado districts, including state and federal recovery funds related to COVID-19. By September 2024, CDE will establish integrated data systems (including a grants management system) to provide greater transparency into the allocation of funding to districts and schools and improve strategic decisions in those allocation processes.

Metric

- By June 2024, implement a grants management system that will support districts in applying for and managing grants awarded by CDE.

Key Services Cont.

Recruit and Retain Quality Employees

CDE’s Human Resources Office (HR) works to develop, implement and support programs and processes that add value for CDE employees. The services and supports provided by HR are designed to optimize employee empowerment, mutual trust, growth, learning, retention, diversity and accountability and create an overall great place to work! To recruit and retain quality employees, HR must provide appropriate systems and structures, talent engagement, talent lifecycle management, and support and growth for CDE employees.

Strategic Operation

We will connect CDE employees and our work to CDE’s values, creating a mission-driven and values-based culture. We will focus on building and streamlining hiring, onboarding, and other HR processes to ensure that we are best supporting CDE hiring managers in recruiting and retaining high-performing staff. We will continue refining our hybrid work policies to ensure that

we offer maximum flexibility to staff and leverage efficiencies through technology while meeting the business needs and obligations of CDE teams. In addition, we will revise CDE policies based on the CDE Workplace Equity assessment, in response to the recommendations from the third party evaluator and using the feedback from the CDE equity reviews. We will then develop metrics to track the progress of these new policies and efforts.

Metrics

- CDE will monitor and measure both retention and turnover rates and, by June 2024, establish metrics and establish annual goals for retaining high-quality staff.
- By June 2024, CDE will develop metrics specific to equity, diversity and inclusion in our HR processes.
- By June 2024, CDE will develop metrics and establish annual goals for expediting recruitment processes.

Create and Disseminate Academic Performance Reports

One of CDE’s primary responsibilities is to securely collect, store and publicly report key education data. CDE is prioritizing improving the functionality of the state’s Data Pipeline, as well as creating easy-to-understand reports to empower families and communities to make informed education-related decisions.

Strategic Operation

- Provide meaningful performance data to schools, districts and the public.
- Publicly provide accurate and timely school and district performance frameworks.
- Publicly provide accurate and timely student growth reports.
- Design, develop and launch an accessible, easy-to-understand school performance reporting system intended for the general public.
- Establish integrated data systems that improve the data submission experience for districts and schools.

Metric

- Ensure that 100% of district and school performance frameworks continue to be produced error-free annually.
- Continue to ensure that 100% of student growth reports will be produced error-free annually.
- Create a comprehensive and improved public data reporting system with first phase roll-outs by 2024.

Key Services Cont.

Efficiently Process Educator License Applications

The Educator Talent Division is responsible for the regulation, support, and development of educator quality and talent, including activities related to educator licensure. For the department to meet its key initiatives and broader goals, Colorado must have a strong pool of qualified, licensed professional educators to work in our schools and support student achievement. The licensing process must be efficient to make sure these educators are available to schools in a timely manner. With this in mind, the Educator Talent Division strives to continually decrease the amount of time it takes to process educator licenses. To further assist in supporting educators through the licensing process in a seamless, transparent and informative way, a new educator licensing system was launched, Colorado Online Licensing (COOL). The system has proven to streamline the process of applying for licensure while giving the applicant more real time information.

Strategic Operation

Maintain a minimal average cycle time between receiving an educator’s completed application and issuing their license.

Metric

- The average cycle time – from receipt of a completed application and cleared fingerprint report to a license notification sent by email – will be consistently at 10 business days throughout 2023 and 2024.



Key Services Cont.

Provide Secure Technology, Applications and Information to CDE Staff and School District Employees

CDE’s Information Management Services Unit (IMS) supports the department and Colorado school districts through multiple services including providing network and Help Desk services; overseeing data collection, management and reporting; delivering project management; and ensuring information privacy and security. It is essential that the IMS teams provide secure tools for everyday use across CDE, while at the same time ensuring that technology can be used in a manner that reduces burden on school and district personnel.



Strategic Operation

We will support internal and external customer data needs and technology tools, while protecting state systems and sensitive information

- Enable secure data transfer across Colorado districts by implementing Sharepoint 365.
- Maintain industry-established security procedures by:
 - ◇ Implementing two-factor authentication for CDE supported applications
 - ◇ Implementing an upgraded Information Security Plan
 - ◇ Providing cyber security training to all permanent CDE employees
- Establish coordinated data systems (including an upgraded Data Pipeline, a grants management system and customer relations management system) to provide greater transparency into grant funding and associated processes, strengthen coordination and implementation of CDE supports for districts and to improve access to and visibility of integrated data.

Metric

- Implement a method for securely transferring data between LEAs by September 2024.
- Implement two-factor authentication for supported applications by June 2024.
- Following OIT’s approval of the department’s security plan, continue to implement security upgrades on an ongoing basis.
- Ensure 100% compliance with cyber security training yearly, by June 30.
- By September 2024, establish the systems necessary to implement and produce linked reporting for a grants management system and customer relations management system.

Key Services Cont.

Support Implementation of Existing and New Legislation, Rules and Regulations

Staff across the department are responsible for implementing new and existing legislation effectively and efficiently. In carrying out the duties prescribed by federal and state laws, the department collaborates across units to address challenges proactively and in a manner that does not create unnecessary burdens for districts, teachers or other stakeholders. We work to meet the intent of the legislation while maximizing coherence with existing structures and systems.



Strategic Operation

- Coordinate implementation of education laws while prioritizing CDE’s values.
- Collaborate with cross-department staff to understand and communicate the requirements of the law and state board rules to district staff, educators and other key stakeholders.
- Collaborate with cross-department staff to produce legislative reports that are accurate, informative, and drive continuous improvement.
- Conduct an equity analysis when developing new or revising departmental or external policies to consider possible biases in policies, potential burden created by policies, how to involve those who are impacted in decision-making, and strategies for reducing or mitigating negative impacts and reducing disparities.

Metric

- Develop and disseminate an integrated timeline document that provides superintendents with key dates for implementation of new and existing legislation annually by September 1.
- Respond to internal and external inquiries promptly, with timelines dependent on the amount of staff coordination required.
- Engage regularly with a broad set of stakeholders in order to gather feedback, listen to concerns, and provide updates on implementation of laws and CDE policy.