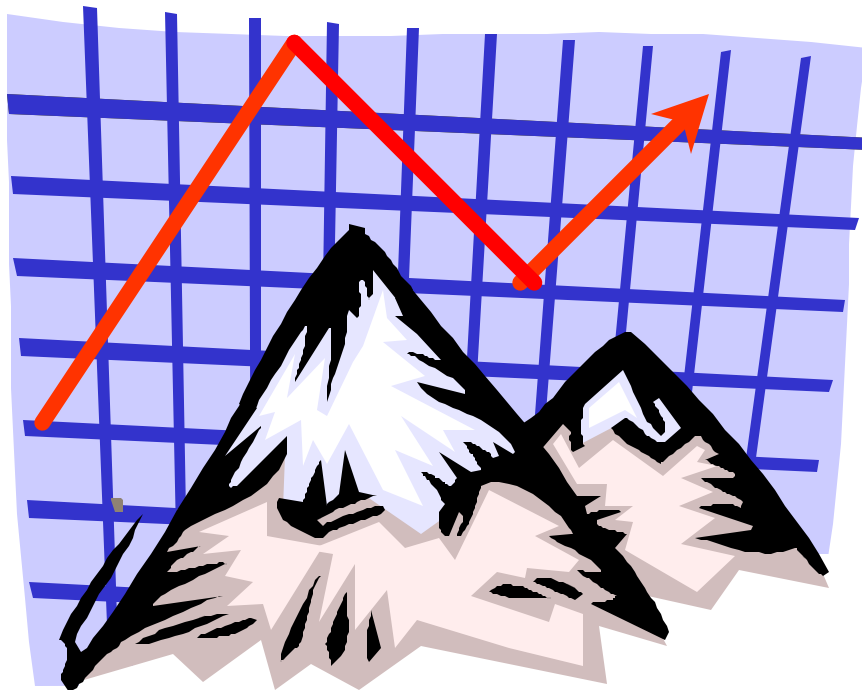




Colorado Department of Education

**STATE EVALUATION OF THE COLORADO
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM
DEMONSTRATION (CSR D) PROGRAM:
1999-2000**



March 2002

**Colorado Department of Education
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Part One: Background

I. Purpose of the CSRD Program

The purpose of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program* is to provide financial incentives for schools that need to substantially improve student achievement, particularly Title I schools, to implement comprehensive school reform programs that are based on reliable research and effective practices, and include an emphasis on basic academics and parent involvement. These programs are intended to stimulate schoolwide change covering virtually all aspects of school operations, rather than a piecemeal, fragmented approach to reform. Thus, to be considered comprehensive, a program must integrate, in a coherent manner, all nine specific components listed in the federal CSRD legislation. Through support for comprehensive school reform, the program aims to enable all children in the schools served, particularly low-achieving children, to meet challenging state content and student performance standards.

The nine components of a comprehensive school reform program are:

1. **Effective, research-based methods and strategies:** A comprehensive school reform program employs innovative strategies and proven methods for student learning, teaching and school management that are based on reliable research and effective practices, and have been replicated successfully in schools with diverse characteristics.
2. **Comprehensive design with aligned components:** The program has a comprehensive design for effective school functioning, including instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parent involvement, and school management, that aligns the school's curriculum, technology, and professional development into a schoolwide reform plan designed to enable all students – including children from low-income families, children with limited English proficiency, and children with disabilities – to meet challenging State content and performance standards and addresses needs identified through a school needs assessment.
3. **Professional development:** The program provides high-quality and continuous teacher and staff professional development and training.
4. **Measurable goals and benchmarks:** A comprehensive school reform program has measurable goals for student performance tied to the State's challenging content and student performance standards, as those standards are implemented, and benchmarks for meeting the goals.
5. **Support within the school:** The program is supported by school faculty, administrators and staff.
6. **Parental and community involvement:** The program provides for the meaningful involvement of parents and the local community in planning and implementing school improvement activities.
7. **External technical support and assistance:** A comprehensive reform program utilizes high-quality external support and assistance from a comprehensive school reform entity

(which may be a university) with experience or expertise in schoolwide reform and improvement.

8. **Evaluation strategies:** The program includes a plan for the evaluation of the implementation of school reforms and the student results achieved.
9. **Coordination of resources:** The program identifies how other resources (Federal, State, local and private) available to the school will be utilized to coordinate services to support and sustain school reform.

II. Colorado CSRD Schools Funded in 1999

In March 2000, the Colorado Department of Education funded eighteen sites throughout the state. Awards were made for three-year terms, subject to annual reporting and review for continuation funding. First year awards totaled \$1,381,868. Of these 18 sites, 13 were elementary schools, one was a K-8 school, one was a middle school, and three were high schools. The small number of middle and high schools is a function, in part, of the fact that there are fewer comprehensive reform designs to choose from at the secondary level. Furthermore, there are fewer Title I schools at the secondary level to even compete for CSR funds. Two of the 18 funded schools were charter schools.

The models being implemented by the 18 sites include:

- Success for All (including at some sites SFA extensions Roots and Wings and Math Wings) - (4)
- Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound - (3)
- Coalition of Essential Schools - (2)
- Learning Network - (2)
- California Early Literacy Learning (CELL)/Wyoming Early Literacy Learning (WELL) -(1)
- Core Knowledge - (1)
- First Steps/Collaborative Literacy Intervention Program - (1)
- Literacy and Learning Coalition - (1)

Two of the schools using the Success for All extensions also adopted companion models, including the Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) and Six-Trait Writing Program. The other three CSRD schools chose to employ a combination of national models and other components, including “home grown strategies.” About one third of the funded sites received CSR funds to build upon or expand reform strategies that they had already begun to put in place.

A listing of the schools, including contact information and abstracts of their proposed CSR programs, can be found in appendix A.

III. The Evaluation Process

The Colorado Department of Education contracted with The Clayton Foundation to undertake an independent evaluation of the CSR program in Colorado.

The following sources served as the basis for the observations and conclusions made in this report:

- The interim progress reports filed by schools on June 1, 2000 and used by CDE reviewers to make decisions regarding continuation of funding.
- The final progress reports filed by schools on October 1, 2000, which supplemented the interim progress reports with data and descriptive information that was not available to schools when they filed their interim progress reports.
- Written responses completed by a representative of the school (usually the principal or the CSRD project coordinator) to an evaluation questionnaire. The questionnaire was returned by 13 schools, but was only completed fully by about one third of those responding. The survey can be found in appendix B, along with a letter to participating schools explaining the evaluation.
- A member of the evaluation team made two site visits (one in December and one in May) to three schools that were designated as case study sites. Site visit protocols are located in appendix C.

A summary of the CSRD schools' performance on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) can be found in appendix D. Perhaps predictably, the first year quantitative results were uneven. Some sites showed significant gains in CSAP scores. Scores in other schools decreased or remained static. A caution is in order when considering trend data for CSAP. While comparing scores on a particular assessment (for example, 3rd grade reading) from one year to the next may provide useful information about a school's overall effectiveness and curricular coherence and consistency, this comparison does not capture the growth in achievement of a group of students over time. The students taking the 3rd grade CSAP in each year are a different group of students. In schools with high mobility rates (as are most of the CSRD sites) there is a substantial number of students at every grade level taking the test who have not had the benefit of being enrolled in the school's program over a sustained period of time.

In short, in state-level terms, it is simply too early in the program's evolution for the data to support any meaningful conclusions about the overall impact of the Colorado CSRD program on student achievement.

Part Two: Findings

I. Selecting the Reform Model

A. Sources of Information Used

Thirteen schools provided data about the sources of information they used to explore and consider reform models. All of the responding schools used multiple sources of information. The sources of information considered by the CSRD schools were:

- Research conducted by school staff (10 schools)
- Professional networks, peers (10 schools)
- Materials prepared by model provider (nine schools)
- Site visits to other schools implementing the model (eight schools)

- State level meeting about CSRD process (six schools)
- Directories of model providers prepared by education/research organizations (six schools)
- District level meeting about CSRD (four schools)
- District recommendation (two schools)
- Administrator/faculty experience with this model in previous school (two schools).

B. Considerations in Selecting the Model Provider

Based on some of the successes and lessons learned, here are some of the key issues sites experienced in selecting the appropriate reform model for their school. They found that they needed to:

- Explore whether the model is focused on the WHAT of reform and/or the HOW of reform. Identify early on where the model will need to be supplemented or adapted to meet the needs of a particular school and its students.
- Consider the advantage of using a reform model that offers related instructional materials, including classroom materials, teacher guides, assessments, etc. Several first year CSRD sites noted that having these resources available allowed them to hit the ground running, instead of spending much of the first year of implementation developing, identifying and aligning materials.
- Remember the need to integrate CSRD reforms with the implementation of state and local content standards. The issue of “matching” in CSRD is not only about the relationship between schools and their chosen reform models; as important is the fit between the school’s plan for reform and district and state priorities. Some models come with their own “standards.” Attention needs to be given to how these standards fit with state standards, particularly given that schools will be held accountable for performance on state assessments.
- Explore the kind of supports that the model provider can offer, including:
 - How accessible is the trainer/liaison? If the trainer/liaison is located out of state, are there other Colorado schools using the same model, so that the consultant’s visits are cost-effective?
 - On a related issue, how frequently do these consulting positions turn over? How committed is the model provider to providing stable support to the schools? On the other hand, is there a process through which a school can ask the model provider to assign a different trainer/liaison to the school if there is poor chemistry between the assigned trainer and the school’s staff?
 - Does the model provider offer regional training/networking opportunities to address the professional development needs of new teachers and continuing teachers? Regional training opportunities ease cost/time related to travel and promote networking.
 - Does the model provider offer support to the school in analyzing data and applying that data to refining program implementation?

- Take adequate time to consider the options and select the model provider. Some schools acknowledge that they had insufficient time to explore a range of reform designs in order to submit a CSRD application on time, and selected a model that, in retrospect, might not be best suited to meet the needs of their school. A more effective strategy may be spending another year researching various possibilities before starting down a road that will not prove productive.
- Ensure a solid match between the school's specific improvement needs and the strengths of the reform model.

II. Implementation Issues

A. The Importance of Broad Staff Ownership of the CSRD Program

Not surprisingly, the schools that produced the most complete record of progress generally were those that exhibited broad faculty understanding and buy-in of the reform model. The schools with more limited buy-in (for example, only teachers in a certain grade or only a designated subset of teachers) tended to have made less progress. These schools were (and continue to be) more vulnerable to losing momentum as a result of principal or staff turnover.

Development of buy-in was also related to ensuring the school community had sufficient *time* to explore the benefits of a certain model before committing to its design. It is best when the selection process is not rushed, but instead allows for the kind of staff research and analysis, and even visits to other schools using this model, that many have found so helpful. Such a deliberate approach means there is a better chance for the kind of buy-in that will make a big difference down the road, when it comes time for the hard work of day-to-day implementation.

Additionally, buy-in was a function of the “fit” of the comprehensive reform to the school's needs. As one school wrote: “In the three years before we implemented CSRD, the community had been through a comprehensive planning process that served as an in-depth needs assessment for our CSRD groundwork. It is imperative that this kind of assessment be taken or reform efforts are without focus.” Or as another school wrote: “Because this reform was not ‘imposed’ from outside the school, the staff sees it as a long-term investment, which will not be suddenly changed in favor of a new approach.”

Even after building the staff's initial commitment to the CSRD design, and being awarded the grant, school leaders needed to work hard to see that this support continues and deepens. One principal wrote that one of the “primary lessons” of her first year with the CSRD effort was to ensure that “staff is aware of the goals and expectations and have a ‘buy-in’ to what the grant contains. Without total awareness and support, it is difficult to implement new programs or ideas, especially when the goals are way above current scores.”

B. Integrating Models with Schoolwide Reform

The CSRD legislation sets out nine components of comprehensive school reform. Few models, if any, fully address all nine of these aspects of school operations. The intent of the CSRD program, which was honored in at least some of the Colorado CSRD sites, is for the model to be part of an overall reform vision. Schools meeting this intent were using CSRD as an opportunity to organize their reform efforts into a comprehensive, coherent effort.

But other schools have confined themselves primarily to implementing the model rather than addressing the entire operation of the schools. This may be due, in part, to the fact that schools were just completing their first full year of implementation. It is important, however, for schools to understand that implementation of the models is just a part of a coherent and broader reform plan.

Moreover, comprehensive reform efforts cannot focus just on one grade or one particular subject area. The concept behind comprehensive school reform is that the reforms are for all students and seek to make a difference well beyond one or two academic disciplines.

C. Maintaining Focus and Coherence

While implementing multiple models may be an acceptable approach for some schools, a great deal of attention must be paid to the coherence and coordination among the models within the schools. The point of CSRD is to help schools move away from a piecemeal approach to school reform that involves mixing and matching different programs and models together without an overarching vision and purpose.

Although a major purpose of the CSRD program is to provide a coherent framework for reform, work in some schools appeared to be hindered (and in the worst cases, fractured) by multiple and sometimes competing foci. Like all public schools, the CSRD sites found themselves pulled in many different directions, sometimes by districts that were trying to implement district-wide reform initiatives, and sometimes by outside funders willing to financially support programs that addressed certain priorities or used certain strategies. In fact, the more successful schools were in attracting grants, the more they had to work to ensure that all the funded programs melded together into a coherent whole, aimed toward a single vision and set of goals.

The state accountability infrastructure also affected the ability of schools to maintain a coherent reform focus over a sustained period. There was (and is) enormous pressure on schools to concentrate on the subjects/grades that are tested and on improving the descriptive “grade”—from low to satisfactory, for example—they might receive in the state accountability reports. When these schools initially applied for CSRD funds (in early 1999), there was a less narrow focus on CSAP results than has been the case since the Education Reform Bill (SB 00-186 expanded CSAP and called for School Report Cards) was signed into law (spring 2000).

The connection between the work of many CSRD schools and the state assessment was explicit. For example, evident throughout the building of one school were signs declaring “CSAP Skill: Cause and Effect.” Apparently, the school posted a different “CSAP Skill” on the walls regularly throughout the course of the school year. Another school exhibited its new mission statement in the front lobby: to “increase student achievement by focusing on literacy in all content areas. This improvement will be measured by state assessments (CSAP/ACT).”

D. Stability of Leadership and Staff

The U.S. Department of Education’s report *Early Implementation of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program* (2000) concluded that “leadership is an essential ingredient to school reform. In CSRD schools, the principal’s understanding of the model and how it fits in with a broader vision for school change is crucial. Sustaining that vision and implementing the necessary changes takes skill.”

It also takes consistency. Stability of leadership was an ongoing challenge to some CSRD sites, both at the school and the district level. One school representative wrote of the difficulty of trying to “recreate our journey for the new principal” who came on board after the CSRD grant was received and just as the first year of this effort was getting under way.

Where leadership does change, it is critical that the new principal be knowledgeable about and committed to the CSRD effort. Here is where a district’s understanding of and respect for the school’s commitment to the Comprehensive School Reform Design can be helpful, as the district often plays the key role in principal assignment. Natural questions in the hiring process would be: Is the principal knowledgeable about this reform design? Is it a philosophy or approach he/she can embrace, and why? How would he/she strengthen the school’s efforts to effectively implement this reform design?

As important a role as the principal plays, however, the principal cannot be the sole holder of the reform vision. If the CSRD grant is something only the principal and a small group of faculty thought about and pursued, the departure of any one individual from this initial group is likely to mean a significant decline in the commitment to the effort.

Staff turnover is a fact of life in all schools, but tends to be more problematic in schools (like the CSRD sites) that serve populations impacted by poverty. Turnover is especially disruptive during the first few years of implementing a new reform model because it undercuts teacher buy-in and makes it difficult to maintain a schoolwide “culture” related to the reform. Knowing this, it is important for schools, from the very beginning, to plan on ways to bring new teachers up to speed as they enter the school during the two or three years of implementation. At least one model insists that all new teachers take part in a three-day workshop in the summer. This is cost-effective in this particular case, as there are now 18 Colorado schools implementing this model. But where there are only a small number of schools involved with the reform design, such group training for new teachers is more problematic.

Even if new teachers have access to high quality professional development opportunities, however, one CSRD school leader wondered whether they would always have a different quality of ownership than the staff who were the pioneers. Unless there is a true culture of collegiality in the school, new teachers might feel like their questions or issues are not relevant to veteran teachers who have been at the reform longer. Without conscious outreach, new teachers may feel like “second-class” implementers or be viewed by their peers as outsiders.

Another school representative, commenting on considerable turnover, stated: “We feel like the best way to build a team at this point is to ensure that new staff members have as many common experiences and share as much common language with the current staff as possible.” Finally, one school made careful plans for the seven new staff members it would have coming on board in the second year of the grant. It had designated “teacher leaders” to provide, as the school put it, “the best mentorship program we have ever been able to offer new teachers.”

E. Grant Coordination

During the first year of this federal grant, CDE requested both a spring interim report and a fall final report from the participating schools. The original design of this bifurcated reporting process appeared to create a significant administrative burden on the schools. From CDE’s perspective, the process was an attempt to release funds to schools as early as possible (early summer), yet also to ensure full reporting of data for purposes of accountability (necessitating a

supplemental report in the fall when CSAP and other student achievement data became available). CDE took seriously its promise to hold schools to make “reasonable progress over reasonable time” on their plans contained in their grant applications. Two schools did not receive second year funding because of their failure to demonstrate sufficient commitment to or progress on the reform effort.

However, it is clear that all of the CSRD schools would have preferred a less complex means of reporting. Several schools expressed dismay at the amount of time that they spent on required paperwork (including the evaluation questionnaire) and the effort required for grant coordination. One respondent stated that the grant created “more paperwork than it was worth” and that participating schools need to be forewarned to hire a full-time grant coordinator “to alleviate pressure from the professionals in school.” Two respondents mentioned that it wasn’t fair for CDE to ask schools to complete “miles of paperwork” when it could obtain the information it was seeking more directly and effectively by simply visiting the school. “Personal visitations from qualified, knowledgeable grant evaluators seemed to be the missing element.”

As a result of frustrations expressed by the schools, CDE has significantly streamlined the reporting process for the 2000-2001 year. The process still requires the filing of two separate reports, but it is simpler and more aligned with the other forms of reporting that public schools have to complete on an annual basis. This adjustment is just one example of how CDE’s staff used formative evaluation data to improve implementation of this program on a state basis.

CDE staff also have made a concerted effort to provide clear and consistent information about the procedures for accessing and drawing down funds in response to the frustration of some first year schools about their inability to access grant funds from CDE in a timely way.

III. Technical Assistance

The design of the CSRD program includes an expectation that model developers and external assistance providers will be a key source of external support for CSRD schools. At the same time, states and districts also have a key role in reform implementation. With assistance coming from several sources, it is important for the roles to be clearly defined and coordinated and for everyone involved to work together toward a shared set of goals.

A. Assistance From Model Provider

McREL’s publication on the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program, *Guiding Comprehensive School Reform*, makes the point: “Regardless of the source of the external assistance (e.g., model developer, university, regional educational laboratory, private agency), the district or school must develop an effective relationship with the provider. Productive partnerships result when there is a shared, clear understanding about responsibilities, goals, and a plan of action. This clarity must be matched with a commitment to open and ongoing communication, including feedback about how the work and the partnership are progressing from the perspectives of everyone involved.”

The strongest partnerships seemed to exhibit this shared understanding. For example, one national model provider seemed to listen well to the concerns of several Colorado schools implementing its design, responding to issues of particular importance in light of the state’s new accountability measures. Conversely, where the partnerships seemed to suffer or wane, the relationship with the provider appeared tenuous at best.

Most of the Colorado CSRD schools seemed pleased with the support they received from their model provider. Specific training opportunities, support and resources that were helpful as they implemented the model included:

- One models' trainers visited a school "for 2 ½ days making observations of instruction and giving feedback to teachers." Such visits are often made twice a year.
- "[Our model] provides 30 days of on-site staff training each year," which included a week-long summer institute.
- Another model provider also hosts a summer institute that, according to one school, "is critical for building a more consistent, cohesive learning environment." One school associated with The Learning Network has a consultant visit three days a month.

Several schools noted the ease with which they were able to access and interact with their model provider via email, faxes, and phone. Several others remarked on the value of "networking with other local schools and schools nationwide" involved in their same reform design.

Some schools saw a need for assistance/professional development in "aligning instruction with CSAP objectives," and help in modifying their national model in a way that will provide more emphasis on the skills needed to do well on the CSAP. One school felt the model provider ought to be able to assist the school in tracking student progress.

At least one school ran into the problem of a lack of funds to effectively implement the model; it discovered there were many "hidden costs" to obtain essential items (pocket charts, sentence strips, markers, etc.) for the model, costs that "quickly ate into the regular budget."

Two other schools struggled with issues related to the "language and terminology that came with inviting the (model) provider into our buildings." Apparently these issues caused some damage to the school climate and relationships; in hindsight they would encourage more work be done from the start to find a way to be on the same page regarding the terms and language used.

Building partnership with technical assistance providers presented special challenges for schools working with homegrown approaches. Because schools that adopt locally developed models often encounter the development and implementation phases of the model simultaneously, it is especially important for there to be clear agreement on the type and intensity of services that will be provided to the schools and on the implementation timeline.

B. Assistance From Local School Districts

The Colorado Department of Education encouraged districts to take a leadership role in the CSRD program in at least two ways. First, the RFP required districts to develop a clear mutual understanding with schools about the role each district would play in support of the school's reform efforts, in conjunction with outside technical assistance providers. Second, recognizing the instrumental role that districts play in helping schools become informed consumers of school reform models, CDE sought to engage district-level staff in strategies to share information about reform models and the CSRD program.

The following are specific examples of ways that districts supported CSRD implementation

during the first year.

- Waived district assessments to allow school to give assessments related to the model.
- Paid for additional staff development opportunities (such as additional literacy training), provided substitute teachers so that a CSRD leadership team could meet monthly, or covered the costs of the model provider's consulting fees.
- Allowed school to convert textbook funds to pay for materials related to reform model.
- Highlighted the work and successes of the school, for example, by encouraging leaders of other schools in the district to visit the school or by hiring a district level consultant (part-time) to support the CSRD school (and other interested schools) in implementing the model after CSRD funds end.
- Assisted the school "with analyzing data and determining implications for instruction."
- Demonstrated commitment to the reform design through the superintendent's attendance at many of the training sessions offered by the consultant from the model provider.
- Provided assurance the district would not change the school's leadership during the course of the CSRD implementation.

The size of the district might be a factor here. In one small district (enrollment – 1,400), where the two schools involved in CSRD were the ONLY district schools serving the K-5 grade levels, it is perhaps understandable to read that the school's reform efforts are "perfectly aligned with and ... (promote) the district's accreditation efforts, as ... the goals and objectives are stated the same in both documents."

At least one CSRD school leader saw negative consequences for students when other district schools pursued a different reform course than the CSRD site, leaving the school "out of the mainstream trend" of district programs. This leader noted that the other elementary schools were pursuing a different kind of literacy model, making it difficult for its students who withdraw and then enroll in one of the other district elementary schools. "They leave a strong, familiar support system of balanced literacy, only to experience a totally unfamiliar process ... our students are not achieving as much success as possible when they move. This seems counterproductive in light of our great investment of time developing curriculum, staff procedures, energy, and finances."

The evaluators found no specific instances of the districts consciously undercutting the work of CSRD schools. However, there were many references to ways districts made success more difficult to achieve by pushing inconsistent obligations or expectations on the CSRD sites. It appears that some districts were unaware of the schools' designation as CSRD sites. Others were not respectful of the potential of the CSRD process to produce results or were simply oblivious to how their mandates or expectations might disrupt the school's commitment to pursue CSRD reforms.

One CSRD leader from a charter school noted that the school's greater autonomy "allows for greater flexibility than many district schools have, and will allow us to guide our own reform effort." Charter status, for this school at least, was a buffer against the district stepping in and setting a new reform priority for its schools, even if this focus might clash with the CSRD effort.

Such a "clash" did, in fact, occur in one district. As a result, the school was forced to put its CSRD effort on the back burner, and by the end of the first year the school's commitment to the model was perceived as too weak to deserve continued funding.

Perhaps there is a lesson in this for CDE. The CSRD grant application required the district to specify how it would support the efforts of the applicant school and to submit a letter of support. Maybe the language in the grant application can be made clearer about the district's obligation to avoid placing demands on the school that are inconsistent with the proposed CSRD reform plan. It might even be useful to underline how much the CSRD design is intended to be comprehensive, to be its central reform design for at least three years, and is not merely another program among a long list of programs. If districts understood this sufficiently, they might be more alert to the ways their demands could undermine, however unintentionally, the CSRD effort.

C. Assistance From the Colorado Department of Education

CDE played an active role in providing information to districts and schools about the CSRD program. To assist schools in making good decisions about the reform models to pursue, CDE held several meetings for schools during the planning process. CDE provided written information about many model providers and disseminated various resources (including self-assessment tools) to help schools match their needs with the offerings of model providers. The department also sponsored a grant-writing workshop and offered schools the support of on-call consultants in grant-writing at no cost to the schools.

To help the CSRD sites implement their plans effectively, CDE provided several forms of ongoing technical assistance. These included networking days, CSRD updates disseminated through listservs, and the assignment of CSRD advocates. The advocates were drawn from CDE staff who had an interest in working with a particular school or reform model. The advocates were intended to be a resource for the CSRD sites in providing an "outside" perspective on issues of concern to the schools.

The schools rated the assistance they received from CDE to implement CSRD, on a scale of 1 (very low quality) to 5 (high quality) related to various attributes:

- Clarity – 3.7
- Consistency – 3.5
- Timeliness – 3.5
- Responsiveness – 3.3
- Quality – 3.25
- Opportunity to Learn from One Another – 3.2

Overall, the average scores ranged between a three and a four. Several respondents to the evaluation questionnaire noted specific instances where CDE staff had responded to specific issues in a timely and thoughtful way. A few schools, on the other hand, expressed uniform dissatisfaction with the quality of the assistance and with the amount of paperwork related to their interactions with CDE.

The limited responses pertaining to the role of the advocates suggested a wide range in experience. Several schools apparently were never contacted by their advocates. The representative of one school reported that its advocate was only able to visit once and was then unavailable the rest of the year, and added: "Having someone on a more consistent basis would help." Another CSRD school said, "the frequent turnover" early on "slowed the process." On the other hand, however, several schools described multiple interactions with their advocates that were constructive, tailored to the their school's needs, and not at all pro forma.

In theory, the advocate approach has a lot to recommend it. Perhaps the organizational and staff changes ongoing at CDE during 1999-2000 made it difficult to implement this component of the program in a consistent way. CDE staff may want to consider how to restructure this aspect of its CSRD technical assistance in order to provide schools more consistent and high-quality contacts and support from their advocates.

IV. CSRD as a Reform Framework

Overall, the participating schools demonstrated excitement about and hope for the program. Many CSRD schools expressed their enthusiasm for being part of a three-year effort of this kind, and one that pushed them to be more “comprehensive” in their thinking. “The greatest gift of the CSRD approach,” one school leader wrote, “is that time to implement and the resources to do so are sustained across three years.” Another school representative noted that “research reveals that it takes time, three to five years, to see significant improvements in student achievement when implementing school improvement strategies.” Schools seemed quite grateful to be part of an effort that recognizes the complexity of comprehensive school change and that has a timeline that looks for improvement over several years.

School leaders who completed the evaluation questionnaire identified these aspects of the CSRD program that make it more powerful than other reform initiatives in which they have participated:

- Promotes research-based efforts.
- Gives teachers a common framework and vocabulary for talking about reform of the teaching and learning process, student work, etc.
- Builds collegiality across grades.
- Not just a program, but an overall framework. One school wrote that its model “...is becoming the way we do business, and not just another good idea that will come and go.”

A. Professional Development

Professional development was a major focus of the Colorado CSRD program from its inception. First year progress reports indicated that at least some teachers in all CSRD schools received professional development during the first grant year. In many cases, this professional development was sustained and school-based, rather than a one-shot workshop or seminar.

For the most part, the reform model being implemented drove the delivery of the professional development. Strategies employed included: summer institutes or workshops, national conferences, staff development days/release time during the school year, coaching (teacher leaders, lead teachers, etc.), leadership training, study groups, regular grade level meetings.

Creating time for professional development was a major challenge for virtually all the CSRD schools. This issue was especially problematic for rural schools in which teachers wear multiple hats and/or operate within 4-day school weeks. A key dilemma was providing time for quality professional development without reducing the quality of instruction or overly relying on substitute teachers.

Another issue for many schools was finding substitute teachers trained in the instructional strategies of the particular reform model, individuals who could step into classrooms when they were needed without disrupting the flow of instruction and student learning. Responses to this

issue on the part of the CSRD sites involved training a pool of teachers at the district level in the reform model and hiring a “roving substitute” at the building level who can provide coverage for classrooms.

Changes in the use of time and the structure of the school week to respond to this challenge were major features of reform in many CSRD sites. No matter the barriers, effective CSRD schools found it essential to provide teachers with regular forums *throughout the school year* (grade level meetings, all staff meetings, on-site workshops, etc.) to give teachers the opportunity to learn together and from each other.

One school leader said that when the school initially applied for the CSRD grant one of its main needs was for “a more cohesive professional development program.” The adoption of the CSRD model has met this school’s need. The staff development opportunities provided through the grant “foster growth as well as provide concrete methods to use in the classroom.... Literacy training for staff is already facilitating improved writing skills for students.”

To support teachers implementing the model, several schools have used funds to hire a school coordinator. At times, district funds have helped cover the coordinator’s salary. There is evidence such a person can help schools maintain consistency and high quality implementation. There is also evidence that the coordinator needs adequate “release time” or “non-class time” to be effective as a liaison between the teachers, the school, and the model provider.

B. Using Data Effectively

One purpose of CSRD is for schools to use detailed school and student-level data to make decisions to guide practice and refinements to the change process. The evaluation team’s review of the first year progress reports of the Colorado CSRD schools highlighted these issues related to how schools might improve the way they analyze and use data:

- Disaggregate the data -- not only by ethnicity and gender, but also by the number of years students have been in the school and in the CSRD program. In the second and third year of the CSRD program, it would be helpful for schools to be able to break down the data to show what the impact has been on students who have been in the school for one year, versus two years, versus three years. Schools have expressed concern about student mobility and its impact on their CSRD effort, but it should be possible to break down the data to see if there are positive results *specifically for those students who have been a part of the CSRD design over a period of two or three years.*
- Use data to explore whether the model chosen is adequately meeting the needs of all students. For example, early data on the model may show improvements for the school as a whole. Closer analysis of the data, however, might show that the progress of the lower performing students is lagging. Without such analysis, the school cannot determine if it needs to modify or supplement the model by, for example, incorporating instructional features at early grade levels that are more specifically focused on the needs of low-performing students.
- Harmonize the results (especially if they appear inconsistent on the surface) of different assessments. Where a district or model provider’s definition of grade level work appears different from “proficient on the CSAP,” some explanation would be helpful, as the differences are sometimes stark—even baffling.

- Analyze the data; don't just report it. It is important not only to present data on student achievement or in other areas (attendance, discipline, etc.) but to analyze what it means and to show what the school is learning about the model, the instruction, the curriculum, etc. Too often test results are reported without comment, indicating little self-examination about their meaning.
- Remember that the data schools need to analyze in order to improve teaching and learning are not limited to student assessment information. A handful of schools are using self-assessments or other tools to help teachers learn what elements of their instruction are going well, what needs work, and how to develop professional development activities to better meet their classroom needs.

One final thought on student achievement data. Everyone is interested in better results through education reform, but it is important to keep expectations reasonable within a sensible period. Schools should be cautious about expecting immediate results. It is not uncommon for first year results to go down, because staff is focused on learning and teaching the new program the first year. In subsequent years, staff can focus more on the individual students in front of them. As one teacher put it: "Our first year we taught the program; in our second year we are more focused on teaching the kids."

C. Parent (And Community) Involvement

The link between parent involvement in a child's learning, both at home and at school, and the child's academic achievement has been well documented over the years. One of the explicit components of CSRD is the meaningful involvement of parents in school reform.

To help gauge parental involvement, several CSRD schools are now tracking parent attendance at workshops, homework completion rates, attendance at parent conferences, and the number of parents present for open house events. Some schools have used parent surveys to ask specifically about parent satisfaction with the new CSRD model. These schools were able to produce specific data to show an increase in parent involvement as a result of CSRD strategies.

Two schools redesigned their School Improvement Teams around the CSRD grant and found much-increased attendance. A couple of schools have used parents, foster grandparents, and volunteers to help with tutoring; in some cases they received school or district training. Some SFA schools have worked to increase the number of weekly reading records (of at home reading) returned by students. One school more than met its goal for its first year of a 69% return rate.

A number of CSRD schools devised unique strategies to connect with families or to reach out to homes and the school community. For example, one school convened a Family Support Team that sponsored a monthly Second Cup of Coffee before school. The school provides coffee, tea, juice, and cookies an hour before the school day begins. Parents and grandparents were invited to come in and meet with teachers in a more casual, informal setting. These events proved a success: average attendance was close to 100 people.

Another CSRD school sought to help parents become clearer about the schools' expectations, or more specifically, about the schools' curriculum by buying the model's curriculum books for

each family. The school reported signs that as a result, “whole families” have become involved in exploring some subjects studied in the curriculum, be it the Renaissance or Western Expansion.

A CSRD charter school noted that as “parents and community members were very supportive of the changes implemented by the CSRD effort and were a part of the initial planning phase,” adoption of the CSRD model was something in which they were keenly interested.

On the other hand, another school acknowledged that chief among its “unanticipated barriers” to success was the “difficult challenge of actively involving parents.”

Where such awareness of CSRD does not exist among parents and community members, it appears worth examining how schools could facilitate a broader and deeper understanding of their work on the part of the communities they serve. Site visits to schools leave the impression that some CSRD efforts give little time to communicating effectively with parents about their school designs. Perhaps the schools worry that this reform design is too complex or esoteric for parents to understand, so instead the principal and staff speak in more generic terms about receiving a grant to improve achievement or literacy. But this lack of knowledge might weaken the resolve of the school community to stay excited about the reform design; again it becomes the private information of a small cadre of folks and not the flag around which the entire staff and parent body can rally.

V. Going Forward

A. Refinements/Issues Being Explored By Schools

The following issues were among those being reconsidered and explored by CSRD schools as they moved into their second full year of implementation:

- Whether the initial design of the program asked enough in terms of expectations for student academic growth; whether goals articulated in the grant application were high enough.
- Whether to focus additional attention on the placement of students – matching their needs with teachers who have the skills to address those needs.
- Whether to broaden or narrow the subject matter focus of the reform model.
- Whether to renegotiate the relationship with model provider.

B. Maintaining An Ambitious Vision of the CSRD Program

The CSRD sites have taken on a momentous effort. On their website, the U.S. CSRD program office sums up this effort:

“Over the past ten years, the standards and accountability movement has become a major force for school improvement. As states have adopted content standards and developed tests to measure students' mastery of those standards, schools and districts have had to write new curricula, assist teachers in creating new lessons and revise their schedules to accommodate extensive student testing. While implementing these changes some educators have decided that, if students are to have a real opportunity to meet these standards, their schools will need to completely rethink their educational and management practices. Comprehensive school reform (CSR) has emerged as a way to both implement standards and ensure that everything

happening in the school is designed to help students meet the standards. “More than yet another program, CSR is

- A systematic approach to school-wide improvement that incorporates every aspect of a school — from curriculum and instruction to school management.
- A program and a process that is designed to enable all students to meet challenging academic content and performance goals.
- A framework for using research to move from multiple, fragmented educational programs to a unified plan with a single focus — academic achievement.
- A product of the long-term, collaborative efforts of school staff, parents and district staff.”

The evaluation team encourages the Colorado Department of Education and any schools seeking to apply for CSR funds to continue to explore the meaning of a “systematic approach to school-wide improvement that incorporates every aspect of a school.” The following questions might provoke some useful discussion related to this work:

- Has the new, limited means of measuring school performance in Colorado, following the passage of the Education Reform Bill (SB 00-186), discouraged some of the CSR schools from looking at the larger school-wide changes that their model-providers, at least in some cases, advocate?
- Is there a way CDE can continue to support such “big-picture” thinking so that these efforts do not become too limited in scope, merely another good literacy program?
- To underline how much the goal of CSR is an ambitious one, might there be reason to explore whether some of the changes in instruction, curriculum, and professional development in literacy will, or might, carry over to improvement efforts in math, science, history, and geography? These subjects also are vital components of the standards effort in Colorado.

Appendix A:

Abstracts and Contact Information for 1999-2000 CSR Sites

Summary of CSR Projects and Contact Information
1999-2000 Sites (Cohort 1)
Updated February 2002

John Amesse Elementary School
Denver Public Schools
Alberta Alston, Principal
(303) 371-0940
alberta_alston@dpsk12.org

Roots and Wings builds on the Success for All program, which provides research-based curriculum for students in pre-kindergarten through grade six in reading, writing and language arts; one-to-one tutoring for primary grade students struggling in reading; and extensive family support services. The Roots and Wings national staff are providing extensive staff development support. This model primarily works with schools located in areas serving disadvantaged students and has been implemented successfully in schools with tremendously diverse student populations.

Chatfield Elementary School
Mesa County Valley School District 51
Kevin Chirdon, Principal
(970) 434-7387
kchirdon@mesa.k12.co.us

Chatfield Elementary has adopted *The Learning Network* (TLN) model of school reform, a proven model that helps schools organize for effective teaching and learning. It provides a process of working together at the leadership, and faculty levels, and with the school and its community. Schools become a collaborative effort between faculty and families. Teachers facilitate study groups. These groups focus on literacy, behaviors that support learning, parent-school partnerships, math, and developing a consistent cohesive learning environment.

Centennial Elementary School
Harrison School District 2
Jan Michal, Principal
(719) 579-2155
jmichal@hsd2.org

Centennial Elementary School is implementing *The Learning Network* in order to: Increase student achievement; develop a community of learners, increase teacher understandings and effectiveness, maintain a commitment to reform, and provide materials necessary to support changes in classroom practice. Funds for the grant are being used to develop a learning community with students, staff, and parents using the teaching and learning cycle. CSAP and individual assessments start the cycle. Teaching is then driven by identified needs, improving the rate of learning for all Centennial students.

Centennial School
Helen Vessels
(719) 672-3691

Centennial School chose the *Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound* model for reform, a comprehensive design for school improvement that enables all students to meet rigorous academic standards and personal character goals. Research shows that by the third year of implementation, nine out of ten Expeditionary Learning Schools showed significant gains in student achievement particularly in literacy and math as measured by state and district tests.

Further, improvement in student test scores has been sustained for a full five-years in the original demonstration schools. It should be noted that Centennial School was recommended for further CSRSD funding after the first year.

Columbian Elementary School
East Otero School District R1
Kay Erickson, SFA Facilitator
(719) 384-8479
kerickson@lajunta.k12.co.us

Columbian Elementary is using the **Success for All** model, a reading curriculum based on research and effective practices in beginning reading with an appropriate use of cooperative learning. Reading teachers at every grade level begin the reading time by reading children's literature to students and engaging them in a discussion of the story to enhance their understanding, listening and speaking vocabulary, and knowledge of story structure. Parents are an essential part of the formula in Success for All. A Family Support Team works in each school, serving to make families feel comfortable in the school and become active supporters of their child's education.

Hayden Valley Elementary School
Hayden School District RE-1
Michael Luppess, Principal
(970) 276-3756
mluppess@hayden.k12.co.us

Hayden Valley Elementary School has selected the **Literary and Learning Coalition** (LLC) as their comprehensive school reform model. The LLC stresses nine major program components including a school-wide philosophy, research-based classroom practice, embedded and ongoing staff development, quality assessment, management of time and resources, a supportive school environment, effective intervention strategies, parent involvement, and administrative support and supervision. The ultimate goal is student achievement--including improvement in CSAP scores over the three years of the grant.

Helen Hunt Elementary School
El Paso School District 11
Jan Noble, Principal
(719) 630-2244
noblejf@d11.org

Helen Hunt Elementary combined some **national models and home-grown strategies** for their reform approach. These programs include Success for All, Everyday Mathematics, Colorado School Mediation Project, Family Literacy Program, and Extended Instructional Time. The Hunt Elementary community (staff, students, parents and patrons) created four objectives: 1) increase proficiency levels for reading and writing; 2) involve 75% of parents in the Family Literacy Program activities; 3) 65% of students will function at proficient or advanced levels; 4) attendance rate will increase to at least 96% and decrease suspensions to less than 15. Business volunteers from throughout the community provide the countless hours necessary to help adapt success for all tutoring to all Hunt students reading below grade level. It should be noted that Helen Hunt Elementary School was not recommended for further CSRSD funding after the second year.

Lafayette Elementary School
Boulder Valley School District RE-2
Jesse Esparza, Principal
(303) 665-5046
esparza@bvsd.k12.co.us

A multi-component plan at Lafayette Elementary School incorporates the Lafayette school community's best analysis and understanding as to what will help the most in improving student performance. A central focus of the plan, **First Steps™**, is an externally developed comprehensive literacy development approach that has been tried and proven in many schools. This plan includes flexible scheduling, literacy block, cross-age tutoring, schoolwide themes and focuses, and participation in the **Collaborative Literacy Intervention Program (CLIP™)**, another research-based approach proven to raise and sustain reading performance for children demonstrating the lowest levels of literacy development.

John Mall High School
Huerfano School District RE-1
Marcia Wright-Landwehr, Principal
(719) 738-1610
marcia.landwehr@huerfano.k12.co.us

John Mall High School in Walsenburg, Colorado is implementing the **Coalition of Essential Schools** model. A major reason why the Coalition of Essential Schools model was selected is because of its emphasis on personalized education and breaking the instructional environment into smaller scale units. The project has the unanimous endorsement of John Mall's faculty and strong support from parents, members of the community, members of the Huerfano County Re 1 School Board, the district and community organizations.

Manual High School
Denver Public Schools
Nancy Sutton, Principal
(303) 391-6333
nancy_sutton@ceo.cudenver.edu

Manual is working with the **Coalition of Essential Schools**, a network engaged in school reform by redesigning the entire school environment. Research-based principles focus the school's efforts on directly improving student achievement. Manual is focusing its work in three key strategic areas: 1) development and implementation of standards-based curriculum focused on core knowledge areas, as well as instructional practices and assessments strategies aligned with this curriculum; 2) involvement of parents in students' work and progress; and 3) comprehensive, research-based, on-site professional development strategies.

Moffat School District 2
Glenn Berry, Superintendent
(719) 256-4710
gberry@moffat.k12.co.us

Moffat Consolidated School District 2 is implementing the **Core Knowledge Sequence** in grades PK-8 to address the need for increased academic achievement and academic focus at the elementary/middle schools. This project involves a collaborative effort with Mountain View Charter School. Core Knowledge is a proven model which results in increased achievement for all groups, regardless of income level. Significant efforts have been made to assure commitment by all stakeholders and to provide the professional development and parent involvement that will assure the sustainability of the project.

**Monte Vista Elementary Schools
Monte Vista School District C-8
Kristin Steed, Principal
(719) 852-2212
kristin@monte.k12.co.us**

Monte Vista elementary schools chose a **homegrown model** in order to meet two primary needs: 1) the need for focused, sustainable staff development experiences that directly impact student achievement and, 2) the need for improved instructional delivery practices in literacy. Through partnerships with Adams State College and The Learning Network, Monte Vista is creating demonstration sites, resource rooms, parent education opportunities, restructured leadership roles, policy statements, state-of-the-art staff development, and valid assessment and evaluation practices.

**Monterey Elementary School
Adams County School District 1
Lisa Roberts, Principal
(303) 853-1362
robertsl@acsd1.k2.co.us**

To improve student achievement at Monterey Elementary School, comprehensive reform has begun with the **Success for All** (SFA) program shaping instruction in reading, influencing school behavior management, and strengthening parent participation. Writing instruction is being impacted through the **Six Trait Writing Program**. Student performance on CSAP, standardized tests (Terra Nova), and the Mapleton Authentic Reading Assessment will provide evidence of student achievement.

**Monterey Elementary School
Harrison School District 2
Patty Lopez-Walker, Principal
(719) 579-2170
pwalker@harrison.k12.co.us**

Monterey Elementary School is providing materials, training, support, and expertise for the staff to implement the **Math Wings** program that is part of Success for All; a model previously adopted by Monterey. The grant will also enable them to align the reading, writing, and math curriculum, instruction, and assessments to the state standards and benchmarks. The direct alignment of Success for All, Six Trait Writing, and Math Wings with the reading, writing, and math standards and benchmarks will be shared with other sites utilizing these models. The school is also using the **Computer Curriculum Corporation** to support their math efforts.

**Odyssey Charter School
Denver Public Schools
Van Schoales, Director
(303) 316-3944
vschoales@aol.com**

The Odyssey School is the first **Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound** charter school in the nation. The school is: 1) providing a public school choice which reflects the diversity of NE Denver; 2) facilitating a rigorous standards-based education enabling all children to read and write at and above grade level; 3) creating an environment where experiential project-based learning can be at the core of the school; 4) exemplifying effective practices of a successful urban school; and, 5) building upon the commitment of local parents and community members to establish an effective urban school with a strong community foundation.

Risley Middle and Haaff Elementary Schools
Pueblo School District 60
Kathy DeNiro, Director of Secondary Education
(719) 549-7177

The ***FIE/Nexus Cluster Model***, selected by Risley Middle School, was developed in Pueblo School District 60 and has reached a significant high level of success at Haaff Elementary School. The model provides peer coaches who will mentor all faculty in standards, curricula, and assessments. The new model uses video conferencing capabilities to facilitate the communications and dialoguing. The model focuses on the professional development of all faculty members, allowing for the development of a core of in-house experts who will mentor new faculty. It should be noted that Risley Middle and Haaff Elementary Schools were not recommended for further CSRD funding after the first year.

Southwest Open High School
Southwest BOCS
Jean Lovelace, Principal
(970) 565-1150
jlovelace@cortez.k12.co.us

Southwest Open High School (SWOHS) in Cortez has chosen the ***Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound*** Model because it has been shown to be effective in improving achievement scores of students in participating schools. Expeditionary Learning includes the following practices: active learning, constructivist education, project-based instruction, authentic assessment, multiple intelligences, looping, and inclusion. The Expeditionary Learning Model is enhancing academic achievement and increase parental involvement by providing relevant, captivating learning experiences for all levels of students.

Winona Elementary School
Thompson School District R2-J
Audrey Polka, Principal
(970) 667-3273
polkaa@thompson.k12.co.us

Winona Elementary School selected the ***California Early Literacy Learning (CELL)/Wyoming Early Literacy Learning (WELL)*** model. The first component centers on having excellent balanced literacy instruction in every classroom. The second major component is implementation of Reading Recovery as a safety net in first grade to identify at-risk children and to intervene early to help all children become readers and writers. The third major component of this model is the increased time for literacy, especially in the primary grades. The school schedule will change to provide one and one-half hours of uninterrupted blocks of time for literacy as well as focusing on literacy throughout the entire school day.

Appendix B:

Letter to CSRD Sites and Questionnaire

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM DEMONSTRATION PROJECT
Colorado State Evaluation – 1999-2000

Questionnaire

1. SELECTION PROCESS

How did your school receive information about the effectiveness of the reform models considered and of the model adopted? (Check all that apply)

- State level meeting about CSRD
- District level meeting about CSRD
- Materials prepared by model provider
- Directories of model providers prepared by education/research organizations
- Site visits to other schools implementing the model
- District recommendation
- Research conducted by school staff
- Professional networks, peers
- Administrator/faculty experience with this reform model in previous school

2. EXTERNAL TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

a. Model Provider, If Applicable

- i. Please identify the types of technical assistance provided by the model provider that have been most helpful to your efforts to implement CSRD.
- ii. What kind(s) of technical assistance, if any, do you need from the model provider that you are not receiving?
- iii. What kinds of technical assistance, if any, are you receiving from the model provider that are not useful or are counterproductive?

b. District Level Support

- i. Please identify the types of technical assistance provided by your district that have been most helpful to your efforts to implement CSRD.
- ii. What kind of technical assistance, if any, do you need from your district that you are not receiving?
- iii. What forms of technical assistance, if any, are you receiving from your district that are not useful or are counterproductive?

c. CDE Support

i. Please rate the quality of assistance you received from CDE to implement CSRD. (1 means very low quality and 5 means high quality.)

Consistent leadership	1	2	3	4	5
Clarity of expectations for performance	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness of technical assistance to individual school needs.	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of technical assistance	1	2	3	4	5
Timeliness of technical assistance	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to learn from other CSRD schools	1	2	3	4	5

ii. Please identify the types of technical assistance provided by CDE that have been most effective in helping you implement your CSRD plan.

iii. What kinds of technical assistance, if any, did you need from CDE that you were not able to secure?

iv. What forms of technical assistance, if any, are you receiving from CDE that are not useful or are counterproductive?

3. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

a. What are the primary lessons learned in the first year of implementing CSCR that might be of assistance to other school communities planning and carrying out comprehensive school reform? In other words, what do you know now that you wish you had known when you started this process?

b. How does the CSRD experience compare with other reform activities in which your school has been engaged? (i.e. What are the advantages to this approach? What value has it added to prior reform efforts? What are the drawbacks of this approach? What is missing from this approach?)

c. What unanticipated barriers did you confront in your work as you implemented your CSRD plan? What support do you need from CDE or others to overcome these barriers?

d. Please indicate the degree to which you implemented the following components of your school's CSRD plan. (1 = Did not implement this component; 2 = Began implementation, but did not follow-through; 3 = Progressing or completed with refinements; 4= Progressing or completed as planned).

Component 1: Strategies, Proven Methods, Research and Effective Practices

1 2 3 4

Component 2: Comprehensive Design

1 2 3 4

Component 3: Professional Development

1 2 3 4

Component 4: Measurable Goals and Benchmarks

1 2 3 4

Component 5: School Support

1 2 3 4

Component 6: Parent Involvement

1 2 3 4

Component 7: External Support

1 2 3 4

Component 8: Evaluation

1 2 3 4

Component 9: Resource Allocation

1 2 3 4

- e. The reporting process this year (requiring an interim progress report in early June and a final progress report in mid-October) was an imperfect attempt to balance several competing interests. On the one hand, CDE wanted to release the CSRD funds to schools in early summer (as soon as the department received the funds from the federal government). This required some kind of reporting process in June on which to base the release of funds. On the other hand, not all relevant data is available to schools in June, requiring a supplemental report in the fall. Given the choice between (1) receiving the funds in the summer and filing two reports or (2) filing just one report, but not getting the funds until late fall, which approach is preferable? CDE also would welcome your suggestions regarding other ways to structure the reporting schedule that might be less burdensome to the participating schools.

Dear _____ :

As you know, the Clayton Foundation is conducting a three-year statewide evaluation of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Project under contract with the Colorado Department of Education resulting in an annual report to the commissioner, state board of education, and the public.

The goal of the external evaluation team is to produce a written report that:

- ◆ Summarizes the work and progress of the eighteen CSRD sites (both individually and as a cohort group) using a common format and narrative voice;
- ◆ Identifies and discusses major issues, barriers and trends that have arisen during the first year of implementation.
- ◆ Offers the observations of the external evaluation team about the progress of CSRD in advancing student academic achievement.

To develop the final written evaluation report scheduled for release in December 2000, the external evaluation team will rely on three sources of information:

- The Interim Progress Reports the CSRD sites submitted in early June.
- The **Final Year One Progress Reports, due to the Colorado Department of Education on October 13, 2000.**
- The responses of the CSRD sites to the enclosed questionnaire. ***Please return the completed questionnaire with your Final Year One Progress Reports.***

Please note that your Final Year One Progress Report need not be a lengthy, stand-alone document. Rather, use the final progress report to **supplement** the interim progress report, with an emphasis on data that was not available to you in early June and on professional development activities that occurred over the summer.

The annual state evaluation report will contain an individual profile of each CSRD site. You will have an opportunity to review your school profile (as well as other school-specific data) in draft form before the report goes to print. The profile will include a table that presents baseline and first year data related to each of the measurable goals identified in your CSRD plan. This review process will help ensure that the data contained in the evaluation report is complete and accurate.

In addition to clarifying next steps in the state evaluation process, this correspondence includes feedback from the external evaluation team on your interim progress report. Our intent is to provide a constructive “outside” perspective that we hope will be useful as you work toward completion of the Final Year One Progress Report. You are under no obligation to respond to those observations or comments that you do not find helpful or relevant. (Members of the evaluation team have not been and will not be involved in making funding decisions. Moreover, the evaluation team’s feedback on your interim progress report was not shared with the CDE panel that made funding decisions.)

Finally, we want to acknowledge the time and effort that you invested in the development of your interim progress report. We recognize the burdensome nature of the bifurcated reporting process and appreciate your participation in and patience with the demands and timeline of this

evaluation effort. As you will see in the questionnaire, the department is continuing to explore alternatives.

A key purpose of the required reporting is accountability. However, CDE also is strongly committed to using the information you report to advance the reform work of other schools and districts in the state of Colorado. Thank you for providing this leadership.

If you have questions about this correspondence, please contact Peter Huidekoper (303.757.1225; PETERHDKPR@aol.com) or Joy Fitzgerald (303.734-6051; joyfitz@uswest.net) of the external evaluation team or Brooke Fitchett at CDE (303.866. 6791; Fitchett_B@cde.state.co.us) We look forward to the continuing evolution of your work and thank you again for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Brooke Fitchett

Peter Huidekoper

Joy Fitzgerald

for The Clayton Foundation

Appendix C:

Case Study Protocols

**Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Project
First Year (1999-2000) Evaluation Study
State of Colorado**

PROPOSED CASE STUDY PROTOCOL

Proposed Schools

The evaluation team has tentatively selected three schools to participate in the case study portion of the evaluation. The team randomly selected the three schools from subgroups drawn to ensure representation across grade levels, geography, settings, and reform models.

A member of the evaluation team will be contacting representatives of the three schools within the next seven to ten days to discuss their interest in participating.

Proposed Process

The evaluation team proposes to make two visits to each of the case study schools during the first implementation year – one in the fall of 1999 and one in the spring of 2000. (Depending on how the process is proceeding, the evaluation team may substitute a series of telephone interviews for an on-site visit in the spring.) The evaluation team will make additional visits to each school in the spring of 2001 and 2002.

On each visit to the school, evaluation team members will meet with:

- Administrator
- Title I coordinator, where appropriate
- Person coordinating/leading the CSRD grant (if different than above)
- Literacy coordinator (if the focus of the grant is to improve literacy)
- Representative group of parents
- Representative group of teachers
- Representative group of students (in middle and high schools)

During the first visit, the evaluation team will tour the school and visit some classrooms.

The evaluation team will explore the following issues during site visits and conversations with school representatives over time:

- Progress of effort to date.
- Accomplishments/evidence of impact to date.
- Issues related to evaluation, measuring student achievement, and gathering useful data.
- Degree of faculty/community understanding of and support for the reform model.
- Challenges of implementation; unanticipated barriers to doing what they planned.
- Satisfaction with the reform model; modifications being made.
- What are they learning, especially what lessons might be applicable to other schools seeking to implement this reform model.
- Alignment of CSRD with other things going on in the school. (Is CSRD one among many reform initiatives in the school or the focal point of reform efforts?)
- Evidence of broad understanding of and progress toward achieving the nine components of comprehensive school reform.

Other interviews/conversations:

- The evaluation team will speak with the CDE advocates early in fall of the first program year (1999-2000) to elicit their impressions of the school's work to date, and again in the spring to hear their thoughts on the school's progress. The advocates will provide a useful third-party perspective on the work at the school.
- The evaluation team will speak with a representative from the model provider and ask for feedback regarding the status and progress of the school.
- If the district has an active role in supporting the reform model in the school, the evaluation team will also contact a representative of the district to elicit his/her perspective how the work in the school is progressing.

The evaluation team also will request these materials from the case study schools:

- Copies of the reports the school prepares for its district and community, such as the School Improvement Plan and Annual Report to the Community.
- Copies of any written evaluations the school has undertaken of its own work and/or evaluations being conducted by any outside group with whom the school has contracted.

Appendix D:

Summary of CSRD Schools' Performance on the CSAP

**CSRD Student Performance on CSAP for the SY 1997-1998 through SY 1999-2000
Student Proficiency in Reading for 3rd Grade**

School Name	LEA/ District	Award Date	Percentage of Students by Proficiency Level 1997-1998				Percentage of Students by Proficiency Level 1998-1999				Percentage of Students by Proficiency Level 1999-2000			
			#1	#2	#3	#4	#1	#2	#3	#4	#1	#2	#3	#4
John Amesse Elementary	Denver 1	3/1/99	36.56	26.87	34.41	1.08	32.08	36.79	28.3	1.89	20	37	41	1
Centennial Elementary	Harrison 2	3/1/99	31.46	34.83	31.45	2.25	30.77	25.63	37.18	3.85	12	26	59	2
Chatfield Elementary	Mesa County Valley 51	3/1/99	21	31	44	1	18.38	25.29	47.13	5.75	21	25	46	4
Columbian Elementary	East Otero R1	3/1/99	27.45	15.69	54.9	1.96	21.28	21.28	44.68	8.51	0	22	71	7
Haaff Elementary/ Risley Middle	Pueblo 60	3/1/99	0	7.27	85.45	5.46	3.18	22.21	71.43	3.18	0	14	83	3
Hayden Valley Elementary	Hayden Re-1	3/1/99	5	22.5	67.5	5	9.52	19.04	69.05	2.38	12	17	67	5
Helen Hunt Elementary	El Paso 11	3/1/99	30.91	23.63	40	3.64	32.56	25.58	37.21	4.65	22	29	49	0
Lafayette Elementary	Boulder Valley Re-2	3/1/99	18.52	19.75	49.38	7.41	7.04	21.12	57.75	11.27	14	18	52	13
Monte Vista Elementary Schools	Monte Vista C-8	3/1/99	6.25	26.04	61.45	4.17	13.13	20.2	58.59	7.07	5	17	67	9
Monterey Elementary	Harrison 2	3/1/99	13.75	22.5	61.26	2.5	15.07	34.25	49.32	1.37	9	19	65	6
Monterey Elementary	Mapleton 1	3/1/99	9.76	36.59	48.77	4.88	11.77	39.22	43.14	5.88	19	47	35	0
Odyssey Charter School	Denver 1	3/1/99									20	20	48	8

CSRD Student Performance on CSAP for the SY 1997-1998 through SY 1999-2000
Student Proficiency in Reading for 4th Grade

School Name	LEA/ District	Award Date	Percentage of Students by Proficiency Level 1997-1998				Percentage of Students by Proficiency Level 1998-1999				Percentage of Students by Proficiency Level 1999-2000			
			#1	#2	#3	#4	#1	#2	#3	#4	#1	#2	#3	#4
John Amesse Elementary	Denver 1	3/1/99	32.56	40.7	23.26	2.33	33.33	48.81	15.48	0	26	42	22	0
Centennial Elementary	Harrison 2	3/1/99	18.29	41.45	34.15	2.44	23.26	46.5	27.91	0	15	47	35	4
Chatfield Elementary	Mesa County Valley 51	3/1/99	7.22	44.33	45.36	1.03	11.22	41.84	42.86	0	10	35	51	2
Columbian Elementary	East Otero R1	3/1/99	18.18	45.45	34.54	0	23.91	39.13	36.93	0	15	29	49	5
Haaff Elementary/ Risley Middle	Pueblo 60	3/1/99	0	20.37	61.11	18.52	0	9.26	74.07	16.67	3	20	67	9
Hayden Valley Elementary	Hayden Re-1	3/1/99	4.55	22.73	68.18	4.55	6.52	23.91	65.22	4.35	11	30	50	7
Helen Hunt Elementary	El Paso 11	3/1/99	15.56	40	33.33	0	22.21	53.7	20.37	0	17	43	30	2
Lafayette Elementary	Boulder Valley Re-2	3/1/99	23.53	29.41	36.47	5.88	17.11	22.37	48.68	9.21	8	24	53	12
Monte Vista Elementary Schools	Monte Vista C-8	3/1/99	10.64	44.68	44.68	0	11.46	39.58	46.88	1.04	12	41	43	5
Monterey Elementary	Harrison 2	3/1/99	15.25	49.15	35.59	0	12	38.66	45.33	4	15	44	35	1
Monterey Elementary	Mapleton 1	3/1/99	2	46	50	2	20	35	42.5	2.5	10	29	53	4
Odyssey Charter School	Denver 1	3/1/99									10	43	24	14
Winona Elementary	Thompson R2-J	3/1/99	14.89	34.04	42.54	6.38	15.79	36.84	42.11	5.26	7	34	52	5

CSRD Student Performance on CSAP for the SY 1997-1998 through SY 1999-2000
Student Proficiency in Math for 5th Grade

School Name	LEA/ District	Award Date	Percentage of Students by Proficiency Level 1997-1998				Percentage of Students by Proficiency Level 1998-1999				Percentage of Students by Proficiency Level 1999-2000			
			#1	#2	#3	#4	#1	#2	#3	#4	#1	#2	#3	#4
John Amesse Elementary	Denver 1	3/1/99								37	51	10	0	
Centennial Elementary	Harrison 2	3/1/99								47	45	5	3	
Chatfield Elementary	Mesa County Valley 51	3/1/99								6	63	27	2	
Columbian Elementary	East Otero R1	3/1/99								12	55	31	2	
Haaff Elementary/ Risley Middle	Pueblo 60	3/1/99								4	25	35	37	
Hayden Valley Elementary	Hayden Re-1	3/1/99								8	40	46	6	
Helen Hunt Elementary	El Paso 11	3/1/99								40	42	10	4	
Lafayette Elementary	Boulder Valley Re-2	3/1/99								14	38	31	12	
Monte Vista Elementary Schools	Monte Vista C-8	3/1/99								19	49	22	8	
Monterey Elementary	Harrison 2	3/1/99								25	52	16	6	
Monterey Elementary	Mapleton 1	3/1/99								18	63	18	3	
Odyssey Charter School	Denver 1	3/1/99								22	33	30	11	
Winona Elementary	Thompson R2-J	3/1/99								24	49	24	0	

CSRD Student Performance on CSAP for the SY 1997-1998 through SY 1999-2000
Student Proficiency in Reading for 7th Grade

School Name	LEA/ District	Award Date	Percentage of Students by Proficiency Level 1997-1998				Percentage of Students by Proficiency Level 1998-1999				Percentage of Students by Proficiency Level 1999-2000			
			#1	#2	#3	#4	#1	#2	#3	#4	#1	#2	#3	#4
Centennial Schools	Centennial R-1	3/1/99					43.48	21.74	26.09	4.35	16	40	40	0
Risley Middle/ Haaff Elementary	Pueblo 60	3/1/99					54.07	29.62	10.37	0	40	37	19	0